

· SEVASTOPOL ·

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The Sevastopol Sketches, Leo Tolstoy

Sevastopol Sketches

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THESE SKETCHES ARE comprised of three short stories published in 1855, which record Tolstoy's experiences at the Siege of Sevastopol (1854–1855). Sevastopol is a city in Crimea.

Please note: the translation's original footnotes have also been included to aid reading.

SEVASTOPOL IN DECEMBER 1854

EARLY DAWN IS just beginning to colour the horizon above the Sapun Hill. The dark blue surface of the sea has already thrown off the gloom of night and is only awaiting the first ray of the sun to begin sparkling merrily. A current of cold misty air blows from the bay; there is no snow on the hard black ground, but the sharp morning frost crunches under your feet and makes your face tingle. The distant, incessant murmur of the sea, occasionally interrupted by the reverberating boom of cannon from Sevastopol, alone infringes the stillness of the morning. All is quiet on the ships. It strikes eight bells.

On the north side the activity of day is beginning gradually to replace the quiet of night: here some soldiers with clanking muskets pass to relieve the guard, there a doctor is already hurrying to the hospital, and there a soldier, having crept out of his dug-out, washes his weather-beaten face with icy water and then turning to the reddening horizon says his prayers, rapidly crossing himself: a creaking Tartar cart drawn by camels crawls past on its way to the cemetery to bury the blood-stained dead with which it is loaded almost to the top. As you approach

the harbour you are struck by the peculiar smell of coal-smoke, manure, dampness, and meat.

Thousands of different objects are lying in heaps by the harbour: firewood, meat, gabions, sacks of flour, iron, and so on. Soldiers of various regiments, some carrying bags and muskets and others empty-handed, are crowded together here, smoking, quarrelling, and hauling heavy loads onto the steamer which lies close to the wharf, its funnel smoking. Private boats crowded with all sorts of people — soldiers, sailors, merchants, and women — keep arriving at the landing stage or leaving it. 'To the Grafskaya, your Honour? Please to get in!' two or three old salts offer you their services, getting out of their boats.

You choose the one nearest to you, step across the half-decayed carcass of a bay horse that lies in the mud close to the boat, and pass on towards the rudder. You push off from the landing stage, and around you is the sea, now glittering in the morning sunshine. In front of you the old sailor in his camel-hair coat, and a flaxen-haired boy, silently and steadily ply the oars.

You gaze at the enormous striped ships scattered far and wide over the bay, at the ships' boats that move about over the sparkling azure like small black dots, at the opposite bank where the handsome light-coloured buildings of the town are lit up by the rosy rays of the morning sun, at the foaming white line by the breakwater and around the sunken vessels, the black tops of whose masts here and there stand mournfully out of the water, at the enemy's fleet looming on the crystal horizon of the sea, and at the foaming and bubbling wash of the oars. You listen to the steady sound of voices that reaches you across the water, and to the majestic sound of firing from Sevastopol which as it seems to you is growing more intense.

It is impossible for some feeling of heroism and pride not to penetrate your soul at the thought that you, too, are in Sevastopol, and for the blood not to run faster in your veins.

'Straight past the Kistentin'¹ your Honour!' the old sailor tells you, turning round to verify the direction towards the right in which you are steering.

'And she's still got all her guns!'² says the flaxen-headed boy, examining the ship in passing.

'Well, of course. She's a new one. Kornilov lived

1 The vessel, the Constantine.

2 The guns were removed from most of the ships for use on the fortifications.

on her,' remarks the old seaman, also looking up at the ship.

'Look where it's burst!' the boy says after a long silence, watching a small white cloud of dispersing smoke that has suddenly appeared high above the South Bay accompanied by the sharp sound of a bursting bomb.

'That's him firing from the new battery to-day,' adds the old seaman, calmly spitting on his hand. 'Now then, pull away Mishka! Let's get ahead of that long-boat.' And your skiff travels faster over the broad swell of the roadstead, gets ahead of the heavy long-boat laden with sacks and unsteadily and clumsily rowed by soldiers, and making its way among all sorts of boats moored there, is made fast to the Grafsky landing.

Crowds of grey-clad soldiers, sailors in black, and gaily-dressed women, throng noisily about the quay. Here are women selling buns, Russian peasants with samovars¹ are shouting, 'Hot sbiten!',² and here too on the very first steps lie rusty cannon-balls, bombs, grape-shot, and cannon of various sizes. A little farther on is a large open space where some enormous beams are lying, together with gun carriages and sleeping soldiers. Horses, carts, cannon, green ammunition wagons, and stacked muskets, are standing there. Soldiers, sailors, officers, women, children, and tradespeople, are moving about, carts loaded with hay, sacks, and casks, are passing, and now and then a Cossack, a mounted officer, or a general in a vehicle. To the right is a street closed by a barricade on which some small guns are mounted in embrasures and beside which sits a sailor smoking a pipe. To the left is a

1 The samovar, or 'self-boiler', is an urn in which water can be boiled and kept hot without any other fire having to be lit.

2 A hot drink made with treacle and lemon, or honey and spice.

handsome building with Roman figures engraved on its frontage and before which soldiers are standing with blood-stained stretchers. Everywhere you will see the unpleasant indications of a war camp. Your first impressions will certainly be most disagreeable: the strange mixture of camp-life and town-life — of a fine town and a dirty bivouac — is not only ugly but looks like horrible disorder: it will even seem to you that every one is scared, in a commotion, and at a loss what to do. But look more closely at the faces of these people moving about around you and you will get a very different impression.

Take for instance this convoy soldier muttering something to himself as he goes to water those three bay horses, and doing it all so quietly that he evidently will not get lost in this motley crowd which does not even exist as far as he is concerned, but will do his job be it what it may — watering horses or hauling guns — as calmly, self-confidently, and unconcernedly as if it were all happening in Tula or Saransk. You will read the same thing on the face of this officer passing by in immaculate white gloves, on the face of the sailor who sits smoking on the barricade, on the faces of the soldiers waiting in the portico of what used to be the Assembly Hall, and on the face of that girl who, afraid of getting her pink dress muddy, is jumping from stone to stone as she crosses the street.

Yes, disenchantment certainly awaits you on entering Sevastopol for the first time. You will look in vain in any of these faces for signs of disquiet, perplexity, or even of enthusiasm, determination, or readiness for death — there is nothing of the kind. What you see are ordinary people quietly occupied with ordinary activities, so that perhaps you may reproach yourself for having felt undue enthusiasm and may doubt the justice of the ideas you had formed of the heroism of the defenders of Sevastopol, based on the tales and descriptions and sights and sounds seen and heard from the North Side. But before yielding to such doubts go to the bastions and see the defenders of Sevastopol at the

very place of the defence, or better still go straight into that building opposite which was once the Sevastopol Assembly Rooms and in the portico of which stand soldiers with stretchers. There you will see the defenders of Sevastopol and will see terrible and lamentable, solemn and amusing, but astounding and soul-elevating sights.

You enter the large Assembly Hall. As soon as you open the door you are struck by the sight and smell of forty or fifty amputation and most seriously wounded cases, some in cots but most of them on the floor. Do not trust the feeling that checks you at the threshold, it is a wrong feeling. Go on, do not be ashamed of seeming to have come to look at the sufferers, do not hesitate to go up and speak to them. Sufferers like to see a sympathetic human face, like to speak of their sufferings, and to hear words of love and sympathy. You pass between the rows of beds and look for a face less stern and full of suffering, which you feel you can approach and speak to.

‘Where are you wounded?’ you inquire hesitatingly and timidly of an emaciated old soldier who is sitting up in his cot and following you with a kindly look as if inviting you to approach him. I say ‘inquire timidly’ because, besides strong sympathy, sufferings seem to inspire a dread of offending, as well as a great respect for him who endures them.

‘In the leg,’ the soldier replies, and at the same moment you yourself notice from the fold of his blanket that one leg is missing from above the knee. ‘Now, God be thanked,’ he adds, ‘I am ready to leave the hospital.’

‘Is it long since you were wounded?’

‘Well, it’s over five weeks now, your Honour.’

‘And are you still in pain?’ ‘No, I’m not in any pain now; only when it’s bad weather I seem to feel a pain in the calf, else it’s all right.’

‘And how did it happen that you were wounded?’

‘It was on the Fifth Bastion, your Honour, at the first bombardment I trained the gun and was stepping across to the next embrasure, when he hits me in the leg, just as if I had stumbled into a hole. I look — and the leg is gone.’

‘Do you mean to say you felt no pain the first moment?’

‘Nothing much, only as if something hot had shoved against my leg.’

‘And afterwards?’

‘And nothing much afterwards except when they began to draw the skin together, then it did seem to smart. The chief thing, your Honour, is not to think; if you don’t think it’s nothing much. It’s most because of a man thinking.’

At this moment a woman in a grey striped dress and with a black kerchief tied round her head comes up to you and enters into your conversation with the sailor. She begins telling you about him, about his sufferings, the desperate condition he was in for four weeks, and of how when he was wounded he stopped his stretcher-bearers that he might see a volley fired from our battery; and how the Grand Duke spoke to him and gave him twenty-five rubles, and how he had told them he wanted to go back to the bastion to teach the young ones, if he could not himself work any longer. As she says all this in a breath, the woman keeps looking now at you and now at the sailor, who having turned away is picking lint on his pillow as if not listening, and her eyes shine with a peculiar rapture.

‘She’s my missus, your Honour!’ he remarks with a look that seems to say: ‘You must excuse her. It’s a woman’s way to talk nonsense.’ You begin now to understand the defenders of Sevastopol, and for some reason begin to feel ashamed of yourself in the presence of this man. You want to say too much, in order to express your sympathy and admiration, but you can’t find the right words and are dissatisfied with those that occur to you, and so you silently bow your head before this taciturn and unconscious grandeur and firmness of spirit — which is ashamed to have its worth revealed.

‘Well, may God help you to get well soon,’ you say to him, and turn to another patient who is lying on the floor apparently awaiting death in unspeakable torment.

He is a fair-haired man with a puffy pale face. He is lying on his back with his left arm thrown back in a position that indicates cruel suffering.

His hoarse breathing comes with difficulty through his parched, open mouth; his leaden blue eyes are rolled upwards, and what remains of his bandaged right arm is thrust out from under his tumbled blanket. The oppressive smell of mortified flesh assails you yet more strongly, and the feverish inner heat in all the sufferer's limbs seems to penetrate you also.

'Is he unconscious?' you ask the woman who follows you and looks at you kindly as-at someone akin to her.

'No, he can still hear, but not at all well,' and she adds in a whisper: 'I gave him some tea to drink to-day — what if he is a stranger, one must have pity — but he hardly drank any of it.'

'How do you feel?' you ask him.

The wounded man turns his eyes at the sound of your voice, but neither sees nor understands you.

'My heart's on fire,' he mumbles.

A little farther on you see an old soldier who is changing his shirt. His face and body are a kind of reddish brown and as gaunt as a skeleton. Nothing is left of one of his arms. It has been amputated at the shoulder. He sits up firmly, he is convalescent; but his dull, heavy look, his terrible emaciation and the wrinkles on his face, show that the best part of this man's life has been consumed by his sufferings.

In a cot on the opposite side you see a woman's pale, delicate face, full of suffering, a hectic flush suffusing her cheek.

'That's the wife of one of our sailors: she was hit in the leg by a bomb on the 5th,'¹ your guide will tell you. 'She was taking her husband's dinner to him at the bastion.'

'Amputated?'

'Yes, cut off above the knee.'

Now, if your nerves are strong, go in at the door to the left; it is there they bandage and operate. There you will see doctors with pale, gloomy faces, and arms red with blood up to the elbows, busy at a bed on which a wounded man lies under chloroform. His eyes are open and he utters, as if in delirium, incoherent but sometimes simple and

pathetic words. The doctors are engaged on the horrible but beneficent work of amputation. You will see the sharp curved knife enter the healthy white flesh; you will see the wounded man come back to life with terrible, heart-rending screams and curses.

You will see the doctor's assistant toss the amputated arm into a corner and in the same room you will see another wounded man on a stretcher watching the operation, and writhing and groaning not so much from physical pain as from the mental torture of anticipation. You will see ghastly sights that will rend your soul; you will see war not with its orderly beautiful and brilliant ranks, its music and beating drums, its waving banners, its generals on prancing horses, but war in its real aspect of blood, suffering, and death. . . .

1 The first bombardment of Sevastopol was on the 5th of October 1854, old style, that is, the 17th of October, new style. On coming out of this house of pain you will be sure to experience a sense of relief, you will draw deeper breaths of the fresh air, and rejoice in the consciousness of your own health. Yet the contemplation of those sufferings will have made you realize your own insignificance, and you will go calmly and unhesitatingly to the bastions.

'What matters the death and suffering of so insignificant a worm as I, compared to so many deaths, so much suffering?' But the sight of the clear sky, the brilliant sun, the beautiful town, the open church, and the soldiers moving in all directions, will soon bring your spirit back to its normal state of frivolity, its petty cares and absorption in the present. You may meet the funeral procession of an officer as it leaves the church, the pink coffin accompanied by waving banners and music, and the sound of firing from the bastions may reach your ears. But these things will not bring back your former thoughts. The funeral will seem a very beautiful military pageant, the sounds very beautiful warlike sounds; and neither to these sights nor these sounds will you attach the clear and personal sense of suffering and death that came to you in the hospital.

Passing the church and the barricade you enter that Part of the town where everyday life is most active. On both sides of the street hang the signboards¹ of shops and restaurants. Tradesmen, women with bonnets or kerchiefs on their heads, dandified officers — everything speaks of the firmness, self-confidence, and security of the inhabitants. If you care to hear the conversation of army and navy officers, enter the restaurant on the right. There you are sure to hear them talk about last night, about Fanny, about the affair of the

¹ Among a population largely illiterate, the signboards were usually pictorial. The bakers showed loaves and rolls, the bootmakers boots and shoes, and so on. 24th,¹ about how dear and badly served the cutlets are, and how such and such of their comrades have been killed. 'Things were confoundedly bad at our place today!' a fair beardless little naval officer with a green knitted scarf round his neck says in a bass voice.

'Where was that?' asks another.

'Oh, in the Fourth Bastion,' answers the young officer, and at the words 'Fourth Bastion' you will certainly look more attentively and even with a certain respect at this fair-complexioned officer. The excessive freedom of his manner, his gesticulations, and his loud voice and laugh, which had appeared to you impudent before, now seem to indicate that peculiarly combative frame of mind noticeable in some young men after they have been in danger, but all the same you expect him to say how bad the bombs and bullets made things in the Fourth Bastion. Not at all! It was the mud that made things so bad. 'One can scarcely get to the battery,' he continues, pointing to his boots, which are muddy even above the calves. 'And I have lost my best gunner,' says another, 'hit right in the forehead.' 'Who's that? Mitukhin?' 'No . . . but am I ever to have my veal, you rascal?' he adds, addressing the waiter. 'Not Mitukhin but Abramov — such a fine fellow. He was out in six sallies.'

At another corner of the table sit two infantry officers with plates of cutlets and peas before them and a bottle of sour Crimean wine called 'Bordeaux'. One of them, a young man with a red collar and two little stars on his cloak, is talking to the other, who has a black collar and no stars, about the Alma affair. The former has already been drinking and

the pauses he makes, the indecision in his face — expressive of his doubt of being believed — and especially the fact

1 The 24th October o.s. = 5th November n.s., the date of the Battle of Inkerman.

that his own Part in the account he is giving is too important and the thing is too terrible, show that he is diverging considerably from the strict truth. But you do not care much for stories of this kind, which will long be current all over Russia; you want to get quickly to the bastions, especially to that Fourth Bastion about which you have been told so many and such different tales. When anyone says: 'I am going to the Fourth Bastion' he always betrays a slight agitation or too marked an indifference; if anyone wishes to chaff you, he says: 'You should be sent to the Fourth Bastion.'

When you meet someone carried on a stretcher and ask, 'Where from?' the answer usually is, 'From the Fourth Bastion', Two quite different opinions are current concerning this terrible bastion¹: that of those who have never been there and who are convinced it is a certain grave for any one who goes, and that of those who, like the fair-complexioned midshipman, live there and who when speaking of the Fourth Bastion will tell you whether it is dry or muddy, whether it is cold or warm in the dug-outs, and so forth.

During the half-hour you have spent in the restaurant the weather has changed. The mist that spread over the sea has gathered into dull grey moist clouds which hide the sun, and a kind of dismal sleet showers down and wets the roofs, the pavements, and the soldiers' overcoats.

Passing another barricade you go through some doors to the right and up a broad street. Beyond this barricade the houses on both sides of the street are unoccupied: there are no sign-boards, the doors are boarded up, the windows smashed, here a corner of the wall is knocked down and there a roof is broken in. The buildings look like old veterans who have borne much sorrow and privation; they even seem to gaze proudly and somewhat contemptuously at

1 Called by the English the 'Flagstaff Bastion'.

you. On the road you stumble over cannon-balls that lie about, and into holes made in the stony ground by bombs and full of water. You meet and overtake detachments of soldiers, Cossacks, officers, and occasionally a woman or a child; only it will not be a woman wearing a bonnet, but a sailor's wife wearing an old cloak and soldiers' boots. After you have descended a little slope farther down the same street you will no longer see any houses, but only ruined walls amid strange heaps of bricks, boards, clay, and beams, and before you, up a steep hill, you see a black untidy space cut up by ditches. This space you are approaching is the Fourth Bastion. . . . Here you will meet still fewer people and no women at all, the soldiers walk briskly by, there are traces of blood on the road, and you are sure to meet four soldiers carrying a stretcher and on the stretcher probably a pale yellow face and a blood-stained overcoat. If you ask, 'Where is he wounded?' the bearers without looking at you will answer crossly, 'in the leg' or 'in the arm' if the man is not severely wounded, or will remain sternly silent if no head is raised on the stretcher and the man is either dead or seriously wounded.

The whiz of cannon-ball or bomb near by impresses you unpleasantly as you ascend the hill, and the meaning of the sounds is very different from what it seemed to be when they reached you in the town. Some peaceful and joyous memory will suddenly flash through your mind; self-consciousness begins to supersede the activity of your observation: you are less attentive to all that is around you and a disagreeable feeling of indecision suddenly seizes you. But silencing this despicable little voice that has suddenly made itself heard within you at the sight of danger — especially after seeing a soldier run past you laughing, waving his arms, and slipping downhill through the yellow mud — you involuntarily expand your chest, raise your head higher, and clamber up the slippery clay hill.

You have climbed only a little way before bullets begin to whiz past you to the right and left, and you will perhaps consider whether you had not better walk inside the trench which runs parallel to the road; but the trench is full of such yellow liquid stinking mud, more than knee deep, that you are sure to choose the road, especially as everybody

does so. After walking a couple of hundred yards you come to a muddy place much cut up, surrounded by gabions, cellars, platforms, and dug-outs, and on which large cast-iron cannon are mounted and cannon-balls lie piled in orderly heaps. It all seems placed without any plan, aim, connexion, or order.

Here a group of sailors are sitting in the battery; here in the middle of the open space, half sunk in mud, lies a shattered cannon; and there a foot-soldier is crossing the battery, drawing his feet with difficulty out of the sticky mud. Everywhere, on all sides and all about, you see fragments of bombs, unexploded bombs, cannon balls, and various traces of an encampment, all sunk in the liquid, sticky mud. You think you hear the thud of a cannon-ball not far off and you seem to hear the different sounds of bullets all around, some humming like bees, some whistling, and some rapidly flying past with a shrill screech like the string of some instrument. You hear the dreadful boom of a shot that sends a shock all through you and seems most terrible.

‘So this is the Fourth Bastion! This is that terrible, truly dreadful spot!’ So you think, experiencing a slight feeling of pride and a strong feeling of suppressed fear. But you are mistaken, this is not the Fourth Bastion yet. This is only Yaz6novsky Redoubt — comparatively a very safe and not at all dreadful place. To get to the Fourth Bastion you must turn to the right along that narrow trench where a foot-soldier has just passed, stooping down. In this trench you may again meet men with stretchers and perhaps a sailor or a soldier with a spade. You will see the mouths of mines, dug-outs into which only two men can crawl, and there you will see the Cossacks of the Black Sea battalions changing their boots, eating, smoking their pipes, and in short living. And again you will see the same stinking mud, the traces of camp life and cast-iron refuse of every shape and form.

When you have gone some three hundred steps more you will come out at another battery — a flat space with many holes, surrounded with gabions filled with earth, and cannons on platforms, and the whole walled in with earthworks. Here you will perhaps see four or five soldiers playing cards under shelter of the breastworks, and a naval

officer, noticing that you are a stranger and inquisitive, will be pleased to show you his 'household' and everything that can interest you. This officer sits on a cannon rolling a yellow cigarette so composedly, walks from one embrasure to another so quietly, talks to you so calmly and with such an absence of affectation, that in spite of the bullets whizzing around you oftener than before you yourself grow cooler, question him carefully and listen to his stories.

He will tell you (but only if you ask) about the bombardment on the 5th of October; will tell you that only one gun of his battery remained usable and only eight gunners of the crew were left, and that nevertheless he fired all his guns next morning, the 6th. He will tell you how a bomb dropped into one of the dug-outs and knocked over eleven sailors; from an embrasure he will show you the enemy's batteries and trenches which are here not more than seventy-five to eighty-five yards distant. I am afraid though, that when you lean out of the embrasure to have a look at the enemy the whiz of the flying bullets will hinder you from seeing anything, but if you do see anything you will be much surprised to find that this whitish stone wall — which is so near you and from which puffs of white smoke keep bursting — is the enemy: he, as the soldiers and sailors say.

It is even very likely that the naval officer from vanity, or merely for a little recreation, will wish to show you some firing. 'Call the gunner and crew to the cannon!' and fourteen sailors — their hob-nailed boots clattering on the platform, one putting his pipe in his pocket, another still chewing a rusk — will quickly and cheerfully man the gun and begin loading. Look well into these faces and note the bearing and carriage of these men. In every wrinkle of that tanned face with its high cheek-bones, in every muscle, in the breadth of those shoulders, the thickness of those legs in their enormous boots, in every movement, quiet, firm, and deliberate, can be seen the chief characteristic of the strength of the Russian — his simplicity and obstinacy.

Suddenly the most fearful roar strikes not only your ears but your whole being and makes you shudder all over. It is followed by the whistle of the deParting ball, and a thick cloud of powder-smoke

envelops you, the platform, and the black moving figures of the sailors. You will hear various comments made by the sailors concerning this shot of ours and you will notice their animation, the evidences of a feeling you had not perhaps expected: the feeling of animosity and thirst for vengeance which lies hidden in each man's soul. You will hear joyful exclamations: 'It's gone right into the embrasure! It's killed two, I think.... There, they're carrying them off!' 'And now he's riled and will send one this way,' some one remarks; and really, soon after, you will see before you a flash and some smoke; the sentinel standing on the breastwork will call out 'Ca-n-non!', and then a ball will whiz past you and bury itself in the earth, throwing out a circle of stones and mud.

The commander of the battery will be irritated by this shot and will give orders to fire another and another cannon, the enemy will reply in like manner, and you will experience interesting sensations and see interesting sights. The sentinel will again call 'Cannon!' and you will have the same sound and shock, and the mud will be splashed around as before. Or he will call out 'Mortar!' and you will hear the regular and rather pleasant whistle — which it is difficult to connect with the thought of anything dreadful — of a bomb; you will hear this whistle coming nearer and faster towards you, then you will see a black ball, feel the shock as it strikes the ground, and will hear the ringing explosion. The bomb will fly aPart into whizzing and shrieking fragments, stones will rattle in the air, and you will be bespattered with mud.

At these sounds you will experience a strange feeling of mingled pleasure and fear. At the moment you know the shot is flying towards you, you are sure to imagine that it will kill you, but a feeling of pride will support you and no one will know of the knife that cuts at your heart. But when the shot has flown past without hitting you, you revive and are seized, though only for a moment, by an inexpressibly joyful emotion, so that you feel a peculiar delight in the danger — in this game of life and death — and wish the bombs and balls to fall nearer and nearer to you.

But again the sentinel in his loud gruff voice shouts 'Mortar!', again a whistle, a fall, an explosion; and mingled with this last you are startled by a man's groans. You approach the wounded sailor just as the stretchers are brought. Covered with blood and dirt he presents a strange, scarcely human, appearance. Part of his breast has been torn away. For the first few moments only terror and the kind of feigned, premature, look of suffering, common to men in this state, appear on his mud-besprinkled face, but when the stretcher is brought and he himself lies down on it on his healthy side you notice that his expression changes. His eyes shine more brightly, his teeth are clenched, he raises his head higher with difficulty, and when the stretcher is lifted he stops the bearers for a moment and turning to his comrades says with an effort, in a trembling voice, 'Forgive me, brothers!'¹ He wishes to say more, something pathetic, but only repeats, 'Forgive me, brothers!' At this moment a sailor approaches him, places the cap on the head the wounded man holds up towards him, and then placidly swinging his arms returns quietly to his cannon.

'That's the way with seven or eight every day,' the naval officer remarks to you, answering the look of horror on your face, and he yawns as he rolls another yellow cigarette.

So now you have seen the defenders of Sevastopol where they are defending it, and somehow you return with a tranquil heightened spirit, paying no heed to the balls and bombs whose whistle accompanies you all the way to the ruined theatre. The principal thought you have brought away with you is a joyous conviction of the strength of the Russian people; and this conviction you have gained not by looking at all those traverses, breastworks, cunningly interlaced trenches, mines, cannon, one after another, of which you could make nothing; but from the eyes, words, and actions — in short from seeing what is called the 'spirit' — of the defenders of Sevastopol. What they do is all done so simply, with so little effort, that you feel convinced that they could do a hundred times as much. . . . You understand that the feeling which actuates them is not that petty ambition or forgetfulness which you yourself experienced, but something more powerful, which has made them able to live so

1 'Forgive me' and 'farewell' are almost interchangeable expressions in Russian. 'Good-bye' (prostchayte) etymologically means 'forgive'. The form (prostite) here used, however, means primarily 'forgive me'.

quietly under the flying balls, exposed to a hundred chances of death besides the one all men are subject to — and this amid conditions of constant toil, lack of sleep, and dirt. Men could not accept such terrible conditions of life for the sake of a cross, or promotion, or because of a threat: there must be some other and higher motive power.

It is only now that the tales of the early days of the siege of Sevastopol are no longer beautiful historical legends for you, but have become realities: the tales of the time when it was not fortified, when there was no army to defend it, when it seemed a physical impossibility to retain it and yet there was not the slightest idea of abandoning it to the enemy — of the time when Kornilov, that hero worthy of ancient Greece, making his round of the troops, said, 'Lads, we will die, but will not surrender Sevastopol!' and our Russians, incapable of phrase-making, replied, 'We will die! Hurrah!' You will clearly recognize in the men you have just seen those heroes who gladly prepared for death and whose spirits did not flag during those dismal days, but rose.

The evening is closing in. Just before setting, the sun emerges from behind the grey clouds that covered the sky and suddenly lights up with its bright red glow the purple clouds, the greenish sea with the ships and boats rocking on its broad even swell, the white buildings of the town, and the people moving in the streets. The sound of some old valse played by a military band on the boulevard is carried across the water and mingles strangely with the sound of firing on the bastions. Sevastopol, 25 April o.s. 1855.

Tolstoy in uniform

SEVASTOPOL IN MAY 1855

I

SIX MONTHS HAVE passed since the first cannon-ball went whistling from the bastions of Sevastopol and threw up the earth of the enemy's entrenchments. Since then bullets, balls, and bombs by the thousand have flown continually from the bastions to the entrenchments and from the entrenchments to the bastions, and above them the angel of death has hovered unceasingly.

Thousands of human ambitions have had time to be mortified, thousands to be gratified and extend, thousands to be lulled to rest in the arms of death. What numbers of pink coffins and linen palls! And still the same sounds from the bastions fill the air; the French still look from their camp with involuntary trepidation and fear at the yellowy earth of the bastions of Sevastopol and count the embrasures from which the iron cannon frown fiercely; as before, through the fixed telescope on the elevation of the signal-station the pilot still watches the bright-coloured figures of the French, their batteries, their tents, their columns on the green hill, and the puffs of smoke that rise from the entrenchments; and as before, crowds of different men, with a still greater variety of desires, stream with the same ardour from many Parts of the world to this fatal spot. But the question the diplomatists did not settle still remains unsettled by powder and blood.

II

A regimental band was playing on the boulevard near the pavilion in the besieged town of Sevastopol, and crowds of women and military men strolled along the paths making holiday. The bright spring sun had risen in the morning above the English entrenchments, had reached the bastions, then the town and the Nicholas Barracks, shining with equal joy on all, and was now sinking down to the distant blue sea which, rocking with an even motion, glittered with silvery light.

A tall infantry officer with a slight stoop, drawing on a presentable though not very white glove, passed out of the gate of one of the small sailors' houses built on the left side of the Morskaya Street and gazing thoughtfully at the ground ascended the hill towards the boulevard. The expression of his plain face did not reveal much intellectual power, but rather goodnature, common sense, honesty, and an inclination to

respectability. He was badly built, and seemed rather shy and awkward in his movements. His cap was nearly new, a gold watch-chain showed from under his thin cloak of a rather peculiar lilac shade, and he wore trousers with foot-straps, and clean, shiny calf-skin boots. He might have been a German (but that his features indicated his purely Russian origin), an adjutant, or a regimental quartermaster (but in that case he would have worn spurs), or an officer transferred from the cavalry or the Guards for the duration of the war. He was in fact an officer who had exchanged from the cavalry, and as he ascended the hill towards the boulevard he was thinking of a letter he had received from a former comrade now retired from the army, a landed proprietor in the government of T — , and of his great friend, the pale, blue-eyed Natasha, that comrade's wife. He recalled a Part of the letter where his comrade wrote:

'When we receive the Invalids Pripka' (so the retired Uhlan called his wife) 'rushes headlong into the hall, seizes the paper, and runs with it to a seat in the arbour or the drawing-room — in which, you remember, we spent such jolly winter evenings when your regiment was stationed in our town — and reads

1 The Army and Navy Gazette, of your heroic deeds with an ardour you cannot imagine. She often speaks of you. "There now," she says, "Mikhaylov is a darling. I am ready to cover him with kisses when I see him. He [is fighting on the bastions and] is certain to receive a St. George's Cross, and they'll write about him in the papers," &c., &c., so that I am beginning to be quite jealous of you.'

In another place he wrote: 'The papers reach us awfully late, and though there are plenty of rumours one cannot believe them all. For instance, those musical young ladies you know of, were saying yesterday that Napoleon has been captured by our Cossacks and sent to St. Petersburg, but you can imagine how much of this I believe. One fresh arrival from Petersburg tells us for certain (he is a capital fellow, sent by the Minister on special business — and now there is no one in the town you can't think what a resource he is to us), that we have taken Eupatoria [so that the French are cut off from Balaclava], and that we lost two hundred in the affair and the French as many as fifteen

thousand. My wife was in such raptures that she caroused all night and said that a presentiment assured her that you distinguished yourself in that affair.'

In spite of the words and expressions I have purposely italicized, and the whole tone of the letter, Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov thought with an inexpressibly melancholy pleasure about his pale-faced provincial friend and how he used to sit with her of an evening in the arbour, talking sentiment. He thought of his kind comrade the Uhlan: how the latter used to get angry and lose when they played cards in the study for kopek points and how his wife used to laugh at him. He recalled the friendship these people had for him (perhaps he thought there was something more on the side of the pale-faced friend): these people and their surroundings flitted through his memory in a wonderfully sweet, joyously rosy light and, smiling at the recollection, he put his hand to the pocket where this dear letter lay.

From these recollections Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov involuntarily passed to dreams and hopes. 'How surprised and pleased Natasha will be,' he thought as he passed along a narrow side-street, 'when she reads in the Invalide of my being the first to climb on the cannon, and receiving the St. George! I ought to be made full captain on that former recommendation. Then I may easily become a major this year by seniority, because so many of our fellows have been killed and no doubt many more will be killed this campaign. Then there'll be more fighting and I, as a well-known man, shall be entrusted with a regiment ... then a lieutenant-colonel, the order of St. Anna . . . a colonel'... and he was already a general, honouring with a visit Natasha, the widow of his comrade (who would be dead by that time according to his daydream) — when the sounds of the music on the boulevard reached his ears more distinctly, a crowd of people appeared before his eyes, and he realized that he was on the boulevard and a lieutenant-captain of infantry as before.

He went first to the pavilion, beside which stood the band with soldiers of the same regiment acting as music-stands and holding open the music books, while around them clerks, cadets, nursemaids, and children formed a circle, looking on rather than listening. Most of the people who were standing, sitting, and sauntering round the pavilion were naval officers, adjutants, and white-gloved army officers. Along the broad avenue of the boulevard walked officers of all sorts and women of all sorts — a few of the latter in hats, but the greater Part with kerchiefs on their heads, and some with neither kerchiefs nor hats — but it was remarkable that there was not a single old woman amongst them — all were young. Lower down, in the scented alleys shaded by the white acacias, isolated groups sat or strolled.

No one was Particularly glad to meet Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov on the boulevard, except perhaps Captain Obzhogov of his regiment and Captain Suslikov who pressed his hand warmly, but the first of these wore camel-hair trousers, no gloves, and a shabby overcoat, and his face was red and perspiring, and the second shouted so loud and was so free and easy that one felt ashamed to be seen walking with him, especially by those white-gloved officers — to one of whom, an adjutant, Mikhaylov bowed, and he might have bowed to another, a Staff officer whom he had twice met at the house of a mutual acquaintance. Besides, what was the fun of walking with Obzhogov and Suslikov when as it was he met them and shook hands with them six times a day? Was this what he had come to hear the music for?

He would have liked to accost the adjutant whom he had bowed to and to talk with those gentlemen, not at all that he wanted Captains Obzhogov and Suslikov and Lieutenant Pashtetski and others to see him talking to them, but simply because they were pleasant people who knew all the news and might have told him something.

But why is Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov afraid and unable to muster courage to approach them? ‘Supposing they don’t return my greeting,’ he thinks, ‘or merely bow and go on talking among themselves as if I were not there, or simply walk away and leave me standing among the aristocrats?’ The word aristocrats (in the sense of the highest and most select circle of any class) has lately gained great popularity in Russia,

where one would think it ought not to exist. It has made its way to every Part of the country, and into every grade of society which can be reached by vanity — and to what conditions of time and circumstance does this pitiful propensity not penetrate? You find it among merchants, officials, clerks, officers — in Saratov, Mamadishi, Vinnitza, in fact wherever men are to be found. And since there are many men, and consequently much vanity, in the besieged town of Sevastopol, aristocrats are to be found here too, though death hangs over everyone, be he aristocrat or not.

To Captain Obzhogov, Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov was an aristocrat, and to Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov, Adjutant Kalugin was an aristocrat, because he was an adjutant and intimate with another adjutant. To Adjutant Kalugin, Count Nordov was an aristocrat, because he was an aide-de-camp to the Emperor.

Vanity! vanity! vanity! everywhere, even on the brink of the grave and among men ready to die for a noble cause. Vanity! It seems to be the characteristic feature and special malady of our time. How is it that among our predecessors no mention was made of this passion, as of small-pox and cholera? How is it that in our time there are only three kinds of people: those who, considering vanity an inevitably existing fact and therefore justifiable, freely submit to it; those who regard it as a sad but unavoidable condition; and those who act unconsciously and slavishly under its influence? Why did the Homers and Shakespeares speak of love, glory, and suffering, while the literature of to-day is an endless story of snobbery and vanity?

Twice the lieutenant-captain passed irresolutely by the group of his aristocrats, but drawing near them for the third time he made an effort and walked up to them. The group consisted of four officers: Adjutant Kalugin, Mikhaylov's acquaintance, Adjutant Prince Galtsin who was rather an aristocrat even for Kalugin himself, Lieutenant-Colonel Neferdov, one of the so-called two hundred and twenty-two' society men, who being on the retired list re-entered the army for this war, and Cavalry-Captain Praskrikhin, also of the 'two hundred and twenty-two'. Luckily for Mikhaylov, Kalugin was in splendid spirits (the General had

just spoken to him in a very confidential manner, and Prince Galtsin who had arrived from Petersburg was staying with him), so he did not think it beneath his dignity to shake hands with Mikhaylov, which was more than Praskukhin did though he had often met Mikhaylov on the bastion, had more than once drunk his wine and vodka, and even owed him twelve and a half rubles lost at cards. Not being yet well acquainted with Prince Galtsin he did not like to appear to be acquainted with a mere lieutenant-captain of infantry. So he only bowed slightly.

‘Well, Captain,’ said Kalugin, ‘when will you be visiting the bastion again? Do you remember our meeting at the Schwartz Redoubt? Things were hot, weren’t they, eh?’

‘Yes, very,’ said Mikhaylov, and he recalled how when making his way along the trench to the bastion he had met Kalugin walking bravely along, his sabre clanking smartly.

‘My turn’s to-morrow by rights, but we have an officer ill’, continued Mikhaylov, ‘so-’

He wanted to say that it was not his turn but as the Commander of the 8th Company was ill and only the ensign was left in the company, he felt it his duty to go in place of Lieutenant Nepshisetski and would therefore be at the bastion that evening. But Kalugin did not hear him out.

‘I feel sure that something is going to happen in a day or two,’ he said to Prince Galtsin.

‘How about to-day? Will nothing happen to-day?’ Mikhaylov asked shyly, looking first at Kalugin and then at Galtsin.

No one replied. Prince Galtsin only puckered up his face in a curious way and looking over Mikhaylov’s cap said after a short silence:

‘The girl that, with the red kerchief. You know her, don’t you, Captain?’

‘She lives near my lodgings, she’s a sailor’s daughter,’ answered the lieutenant-captain.

‘Come, let’s have a good look at her.’

And Prince Galtsin gave one of his arms to Kalugin and the other to the lieutenant-captain, being sure he would confer great pleasure on the latter by so doing, which was really quite true.

The lieutenant-captain was superstitious and considered it a great sin to amuse himself with women before going into action; but on this occasion he pretended to be a roue, which Prince Galtsin and Kalugin evidently did not believe and which greatly surprised the girl with the red kerchief, who had more than once noticed how the lieutenant-captain blushed when he passed her window. Praskukhin walked behind them, and kept touching Prince Galtsin's arm and making various remarks in French, but as four people could not walk abreast on the path he was obliged to go alone until, on the second round, he took the arm of a well-known brave naval officer, Servyagin, who came up and spoke to him, being also anxious to join the aristocrats. And the well-known hero gladly passed his honest muscular hand under the elbow of Praskukhin, whom everybody, including Servyagin himself, knew to be no better than he should be. When, wishing to explain his acquaintance with this sailor, Praskukhin whispered to Prince Galtsin that this was the well-known hero, Prince Galtsin — who had been in the Fourth Bastion the day before and seen a shell burst at some twenty yards' distance — considering himself not less courageous than the newcomer, and believing that many reputations are obtained by luck, paid not the slightest attention to Servyagin. Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov found it so pleasant to walk in this company that he forgot the nice letter

from T-and his gloomy forebodings at the thought of having to go to the bastion. He remained with them till they began talking exclusively among themselves, avoiding his eyes to show that he might go, and at last walked away from him. But all the same the lieutenant-captain was contented, and when he passed Cadet Baron Pesth — who was Particularly conceited and self-satisfied since the previous night, when for the first time in his life he had been in the bombproof of the Fifth Bastion and had consequently become a hero in his own estimation — he was not at all hurt by the suspiciously haughty expression with which the cadet saluted him.

But the lieutenant-captain had hardly crossed the threshold of his lodgings before very different thoughts entered his head. He saw his little room with its uneven earth floor, its crooked windows, the broken panes mended with paper, his old bedstead with two Tula pistols and a rug (showing a lady on horseback) nailed to the wall beside it,¹ as well as the dirty bed of the cadet who lived with him, with its cotton quilt. He saw his man Nikita, with his rough greasy hair, rise from the floor scratching himself, he saw his old cloak, his common boots, a little bundle tied in a handkerchief ready for him to take to the bastion, from which peeped a bit of cheese and the neck of a porter bottle containing vodka — and he suddenly remembered that he had to go with his company to spend the whole night at the lodgements.

‘I shall certainly be killed to-night,’ thought he, ‘I feel I shall. And there was really no need for me to

¹ A common way in Russia of protecting a bed from the damp or cold of a wall, is to nail a rug or carpet to the wall by the side of the bed. go — I offered to do it of my own accord. And it always happens that the one who offers himself gets killed. And what is the matter with that confounded Nepshisetski? He may not be ill at all, and they’ll go and kill me because of him — they’re sure to. Still, if they don’t kill me I shall certainly be recommended for promotion. I saw how pleased the regimental commander was when I said: “Allow me to go if Lieutenant Nepshisetski is ill.” If I’m not made a major then I’ll get the Order of Vladimir for certain. Why, I am going to the bastion for the thirteenth time. Oh dear, the thirteenth! Unlucky number! I am certain to be killed. I feel I shall . . . but somebody had to go: the company can’t go with only an ensign. Supposing something were to happen. . . . Why, the honour of the regiment, the honour of the army is at stake. It is my duty to go. Yes, my sacred duty. . . . But I have a presentiment.’

The lieutenant-captain forgot that it was not the first time he had felt this presentiment: that in a greater or lesser degree he had it whenever he was going to the bastion, and he did not know that before going into action everyone has such forebodings more or less strongly. Having calmed himself by appealing to his sense of duty — which was highly developed and very strong — the lieutenant-captain sat down at the

table and began writing a farewell letter to his father. Ten minutes later, having finished his letter, he rose from the table his eyes wet with tears, and repeating mentally all the prayers he knew he began to dress. His rather tipsy and rude servant lazily handed him his new cloak — the old one which the lieutenant-captain usually wore at the bastion not being mended.

‘Why isn’t my cloak mended? You do nothing but sleep,’ said Mikhaylov angrily.

‘Sleep indeed!’ grumbled Nikita, ‘I do nothing but run about like a dog the whole day, and when I get fagged I mayn’t even go to sleep!’ ‘I see you are drunk again.’

‘It’s not at your expense if I am, so you needn’t complain.’

‘Hold your tongue, you dolt!’ shouted the lieutenant-captain, ready to strike the man.

Already upset, he now quite lost patience and felt hurt by the rudeness of Nikita, who had lived with him for the last twelve years and whom he was fond of and even spoilt.

‘Dolt? Dolt?’ repeated the servant. ‘And why do you, sir, abuse me and call me a dolt? You know in times like these it isn’t right to abuse people.’

Recalling where he was about to go Mikhaylov felt ashamed.

‘But you know, Nikita, you would try anyone’s patience!’ he said mildly.

‘That letter to my father on the table you may leave where it is. Don’t touch it,’ he added reddening.

‘Yes, sir,’ said Nikita, becoming sentimental under the influence of the vodka he had drunk, as he said, at his own expense, and blinking with an evident inclination to weep.

But at the porch, when the lieutenant-captain said, ‘Good-bye, Nikita,’ Nikita burst into forced sobs and rushed to kiss his master’s hand, saying, ‘Good-bye, sir,’ in a broken voice. A sailor’s widow who was also standing in the porch could not, as a woman, help joining in this tender scene, and began wiping her eyes on her dirty sleeve, saying something about people who, though they were gentlefolk, took such sufferings upon themselves while she, poor woman, was left a widow. And she

told the tipsy Nikita for the hundredth time about her sorrows; how her husband had been killed in the first bombardment, and how her hut had been shattered (the one she lived in now was not her own) and so on. After his master was gone Nikita lit his pipe, asked the landlady's little girl to get some vodka, very soon left off crying, and even had a quarrel with the old woman about a pail he said she had smashed for him.

'But perhaps I shall only be wounded,' reasoned the lieutenant-captain as he drew near the bastion with his company when twilight had already begun to fall. 'But where, and how? Here or here?' he said to himself, mentally passing his chest, his stomach, and his thighs in review. 'Supposing it's here' (he thought of his thighs) 'and goes right round. ... Or goes here with a piece of a bomb, then it will be all up.'

The lieutenant-captain passed along the trenches and reached the lodgements safely. In perfect darkness he and an officer of Engineers set the men to their work, after which he sat down in a pit under the breastwork. There was little firing; only now and again there was a lightning flash on our side or his, and the brilliant fuse of a bomb formed a fiery arc on the dark, star-speckled sky. But all the bombs fell far beyond or far to the right of the lodgement where the lieutenant-captain sat in his pit. He drank some vodka, ate some cheese, smoked a cigarette, said his prayers, and felt inclined to sleep for a while.

V

Prince Galtsin, Lieutenant-Colonel Neferdov, and Praskukhin — whom no one had invited and to whom no one spoke, but who still stuck to them — went to Kalugin's to tea.

'But you did not finish telling me about Vaska Mendel,' said Kalugin, when he had taken off his cloak and sat in a soft easy chair by the window unbuttoning the collar of his clean starched shirt. 'How did he get married?'

'It was a joke, my boy! . . . Je vous dis, il y avait un temps, on ne parlait que de ga d Petersburg,' I said Prince

1 'I tell you, at one time it was only the only thing talked of in Petersburg.' Galtsin, laughing as he jumped up from the piano-stool

and sat down near Kalugin on the window-sill,¹ 'a capital joke. I know all about it.'

And he told, amusingly, cleverly, and with animation, a love story which, as it has no interest for us, we will omit.

It was noticeable that not only Prince Galtsin but each of these gentlemen who established themselves, one on the window-sill, another with his legs in the air, and a third by the piano, seemed quite different people now from what they had been on the boulevard. There was none of the absurd arrogance and haughtiness they had shown towards the infantry officers; here among themselves they were natural, and Kalugin and Prince Galtsin in Particular showed themselves very pleasant, merry, and good-natured young fellows. Their conversation was about their Petersburg fellow officers and acquaintances.

'What of Maslovski?'

'Which one — the Leib-Uhlan, or the Horse Guard?'

'I know them both. The one in the Horse Guards I knew when he was a boy just out of school. But the eldest — is he a captain yet?'

'Oh yes, long ago.'

'Is he still fussing about with his gipsy?'

'No, he has dropped her. . . And so on in the same strain.

Later on Prince Galtsin went to the piano and gave an excellent rendering of a gipsy song. Praskukhin, claiming in unmasked, put in a second and did it so well that he was invited to continue, and this delighted him.

A servant brought tea, cream, and cracknels on a silver tray.

'Serve the prince,' said Kalugin.

'Isn't it strange to think that we're in a besieged

1 The thick walls of Russian houses allow ample space to sit or lounge at the windows. town,' said Galtsin, taking his tea to the window, 'and here's a pianerforty, tea with cream, and a house such as I should really be glad to have in Petersburg?'

'Well, if we hadn't even that much,' said the old and ever-dissatisfied lieutenant-colonel, 'the constant uncertainty we are living in — seeing

people killed day after day and no end to it — would be intolerable. And to have dirt and discomfort added to it — ‘But our infantry officers live at the bastions with their men in the bomb-proofs and eat the soldiers’ soup’, said Kalugin, ‘what of them?’ ‘What of them? Well, though it’s true they don’t change their shirts for ten days at a time, they are heroes all the same — wonderful fellows.’ Just then an infantry officer entered the room.

‘I ... I have orders . . . may I see the Gen ... his Excellency? I have come with a message from General N.,’ he said with a timid bow. Kalugin rose and without returning the officer’s greeting asked with an offensive, affected, official smile if he would not have the goodness to wait; and without asking him to sit down or taking any further notice of him he turned to Galtsin and began talking French, so that the poor officer left alone in the middle of the room did not in the least know what to do with himself.

‘It is a matter of the utmost urgency, sir,’ he said after a short silence. ‘Ah! Well then, please come with me,’ said Kalugin, putting on his cloak and accompanying the officer to the door.

‘Eh bien, messieurs, je crois que cela chauffer a cette mat,’¹ said Kalugin when he returned from the General’s.

‘Ah! What is it — a sortie?’ asked the others.

¹ ‘Well, gentlemen, I think there will be warm work to-night.’ ‘That I don’t know. You will see for yourselves,’ replied Kalugin with a mysterious smile.

‘And my commander is at the bastion, so I suppose I must go too,’ said Praskukhin, buckling on his sabre.

No one replied, it was his business to know whether he had to go or not.

Praskukhin and Neferdov left to go to their appointed posts.

‘Good-bye gentlemen. Au revolt! We’ll meet again before the night is over,’ shouted Kalugin from the window as Praskukhin and Neferdov, stooping on their Cossack saddles, trotted past. The tramp of their Cossack horses soon died away in the dark street.

'Non, dites-moi, est-ce qu'il y aura veritablement quelque chose cette nuit ?' 1 said Galtsin as he lounged in the window-sill beside Kalugin and watched the bombs that rose above the bastions.

'I can tell you, you see . . . you have been to the bastions?' (Galtsin nodded, though he had only been once to the Fourth Bastion). 'You remember just in front of our lunette there is a trench,' — and Kalugin, with the air of one who without being a specialist considers his military judgement very sound, began, in a rather confused way and misusing the technical terms, to explain the position of the enemy, and of our own works, and the plan of the intended action.

'But I say, they're banging away at the lodgements! Oho! I wonder if that's ours or his? . . . Now it's burst,' said they as they lounged on the window-sill looking at the fiery trails of the bombs crossing one another in the air, at flashes that for a moment lit up the dark sky, at puffs of white smoke, and listened to the more and more rapid reports of the firing.

'Quel charmant coup d'ail! a?' 2 said Kalugin, drawing his guest's attention to the really beautiful sight. 'Do

1 'No, tell me, will there really be anything to-night?'

2 'What a charming sight, eh?' you know, you sometimes can't distinguish a bomb from a star.'

'Yes, I thought that was a star just now and then saw it fall . . . there! it's burst. And that big star — what do you call it? — looks just like a bomb.'

'Do you know I am so used to these bombs that I am sure when I'm back in Russia I shall fancy I see bombs every starlight night — one gets so used to them.'

'But hadn't I better go with this sortie?' said Prince Galtsin after a moment's pause.

'Humbug, my dear fellow! Don't think of such a thing. Besides, I won't let you,' answered Kalugin. 'You will have plenty of opportunities later on.'

'Really? You think I need not go, eh?'

At that moment, from the direction in which these gentlemen were looking, amid the boom of the cannon came the terrible rattle of

musketry, and thousands of little fires flaming up in quick succession flashed all along the line.

‘There! Now it’s the real thing!’ said Kalugin. ‘I can’t keep cool when I hear the noise of muskets. It seems to seize one’s very soul, you know. There’s an hurrah!’ he added, listening intently to the distant and prolonged roar of hundreds of voices— ‘Ah — ah — ah’ — which came from the bastions.

‘Whose hurrah was it? Theirs or ours?’

‘I don’t know, but it’s hand-to-hand fighting now, for the firing has ceased.’

At that moment an officer followed by a Cossack galloped under the window and alighted from his horse at the porch.

‘Where are you from?’

‘From the bastion. I want the General.’

‘Come along. Well, what’s happened?’

‘The lodgements have been attacked — and occupied. The French brought up tremendous reserves — attacked us — we had only two battalions,’ said the officer, panting. He was the same officer who had been there that evening, but though he was now out of breath he walked to the door with full self-possession.

‘Well, have we retired?’ asked Kalugin.

‘No,’ angrily replied the officer, ‘another battalion came up in time — we drove them back, but the colonel is killed and many officers. I have orders to ask for reinforcements.’

And saying this he went with Kalugin to the General’s, where we shall not follow him.

Five minutes later Kalugin was already on his Cossack horse (again in the semi-Cossack manner which I have noticed that all adjutants, for some reason, seem to consider the proper thing), and rode off at a trot towards the bastion to deliver some orders and await the final result of the affair. Prince Galtsin, under the influence of that oppressive excitement usually produced in a spectator by proximity to an action in which he is not engaged, went out, and began aimlessly pacing up and down the street.

Soldiers passed carrying the wounded on stretchers or supporting them under their arms. It was quite dark in the streets, lights could be seen here and there, but only in the hospital windows or where some officers were sitting up. From the bastions still came the thunder of cannon and the rattle of muskets,¹ and flashes kept on lighting up the dark sky as before. From time to time the tramp of hoofs could be heard as an orderly galloped past, or the groans of a

¹ Rifles, except some clumsy stutzers, had not been introduced into the Russian army, but were used by the besiegers, who had a still greater advantage in artillery. It is characteristic of Tolstoy that, occupied with men rather than mechanics, he does not in these sketches dwell on this disparity of equipment. wounded man, the steps and voices of stretcher-bearers, or the words of some frightened women who had come out onto their porches to watch the cannonade.

Among the spectators were our friend Nikita, the old sailor's widow with whom he had again made friends, and her ten-year-old daughter. 'O Lord God! Holy Mary, Mother of God!' said the old woman, sighing as she looked at the bombs that kept flying across from side to side like balls of fire; 'What horrors! What horrors! Ah, ah! Oh, oh! Even at the first bombardment it wasn't like that. Look now where the cursed thing has burst just over our house in the suburb.'

'No, that's further, they keep tumbling into Aunt Irene's garden,' said the girl.

'And where, where, is master now?' drawled Nikita, who was not quite sober yet. 'Oh! You don't know how I love that master of mine! I love him so that if he were killed in a sinful way, which God forbid, then would you believe it, granny, after that I myself don't know what I wouldn't do to myself! I don't! . . . My master is that sort, there's only one word for it. Would I change him for such as them there, playing cards? What are they? Ugh! There's only one word for it!' concluded Nikita, pointing to the lighted window of his master's room to which, in

the absence of the lieutenant-captain, Cadet Zhvadchevski had invited Sub-Lieutenants Ugrovich and Nepshisetski — the latter suffering from face-ache — and where he was having a spree in honour of a medal he had received.

‘Look at the stars! Look how they’re rolling!’ the little girl broke the silence that followed Nikita’s words as she stood gazing at the sky. ‘There’s another rolled down. What is it a sign of, mother?’ ‘They’ll smash up our hut altogether,’ said the old woman with a sigh, leaving her daughter unanswered. ‘As we went there to-day with uncle, mother,’ the little girl continued in a sing-song tone, becoming loquacious, ‘there was such a b — i — g cannon-ball inside the room close to the cupboard. Must have smashed in through the passage and right into the room! Such a big one — you couldn’t lift it.’

‘Those who had husbands and money all moved away,’ said the old woman, ‘and there’s the hut, all that was left me, and that’s been smashed. Just look at him blazing away! The fiend!... O Lord! O Lord!’ ‘And just as we were going out, comes a bomb flying, and goes and bursts and co-o-vers us with dust. A bit of it nearly hit me and uncle.’

VII

Prince Galtsin met more and more wounded carried on stretchers or walking supported by others who were talking loudly.

‘Up they sprang, friends,’ said the bass voice of a tall soldier with two guns slung from his shoulder, ‘up they sprang, shouting “Allah! Allah!”¹ and just climbing one over another. You kill one and another’s there, you couldn’t do anything; no end of ‘em— ‘

But at this point in the story Galtsin interrupted him.

‘You are from the bastion?’

‘Yes, your Honour.’

‘Well, what happened? Tell me.’

‘What happened? Well, your Honour, such a force of ‘em poured down on us over the ramPart, it was all up. They quite overpowered us, your Honour!’

‘Overpowered? . . . But you repulsed them?’

‘How could we repulse them when his whole force came on, killed all our men, and no re’forcements were given us?’

1 Our soldiers fighting the Turks have become so accustomed to this cry of the enemy that they now always say that the French also shout ‘Allah!’ The soldier was mistaken, the trench had remained ours; but it is a curious fact which anyone may notice, that a soldier wounded in action always thinks the affair lost and imagines it to have been a very bloody fight.

‘How is that? I was told they had been repulsed,’ said Galtsin irritably. ‘Perhaps they were driven back after you left? Is it long since you came away?’

‘I am straight from there, your Honour,’ answered the soldier, ‘it is hardly possible. They must have kept the trench, he quite overpowered us.’

‘And aren’t you ashamed to have lost the trench? It’s terrible!’ said Galtsin, provoked by such indifference.

‘Why, if the strength is on their side . . .’ muttered the soldier.

‘Ah, your Honour,’ began a soldier from a stretcher which had just come up to them, ‘how could we help giving it up when he had killed almost all our men? If we’d had the strength we wouldn’t have given it up, not on any account. But as it was, what could we do? I stuck one, and then something hits me. Oh, oh-h! Steady, lads, steady! Oh, oh!’ groaned the wounded man.

‘Really, there seem to be too many men returning,’ said Galtsin, again stopping the tall soldier with the two guns. ‘Why are you retiring? You there, stop!’

The soldier stopped and took off his cap with his left hand.

‘Where are you going, and why?’ shouted Galtsin severely, ‘you scoun—’

But having come close up to the soldier, Galtsin noticed that no hand was visible beneath the soldier’s right cuff and that the sleeve was soaked in blood to the elbow.

‘I am wounded, your Honour.’

‘Wounded? How?’

'Here. Must have been with a bullet,' said the man, pointing to his arm, 'but I don't know what struck my head here,' and bending his head he showed the matted hair at the back stuck together with blood.

'And whose is this other gun?'

'It's a French rifle I took, your Honour. But I wouldn't have come away if it weren't to lead this fellow — he may fall,' he added, pointing to a soldier who was walking a little in front leaning on his gun and painfully dragging his left leg.

Prince Galtsin suddenly felt horribly ashamed of his unjust suspicions. He felt himself blushing, turned away, and went to the hospital without either questioning or watching the wounded men any more.

Having with difficulty pushed his way through the porch among the wounded who had come on foot and the bearers who were carrying in the wounded and bringing out the dead, Galtsin entered the first room, gave a look round, and involuntarily turned back and ran out into the street: it was too terrible.

VIII

The large, lofty, dark hall, lit up only by the four or five candles with which the doctors examined the wounded, was quite full. Yet the bearers kept bringing in more wounded — laying them side by side on the floor which was already so packed that the unfortunate patients were jostled together, staining one another with their blood — and going to fetch more wounded. The pools of blood visible in the unoccupied spaces, the feverish breathing of several hundred men, and the perspiration of the bearers with the stretchers, filled the air with a peculiar, heavy, thick, fetid mist, in which the candles burnt dimly in different Parts of the hall. All sorts of groans, sighs, death-rattles, now and then interrupted by shrill screams, filled the whole room. Sisters with quiet faces, expressing no empty feminine tearful pity, but active practical sympathy, stepped here and there across the wounded with medicines, water, bandages, and lint, flitting among the blood-stained coats and shirts. The doctors, kneeling with rolled-up sleeves beside the wounded, by the light of the candles their assistants held, examined,

felt, and probed their wounds, heedless of the terrible groans and entreaties of the sufferers. One doctor sat at a table near the door and at the moment Galtsin came in was already entering No. 532.

‘Ivan Bogdev, Private, Company Three, S — Regiment, fractura femuris complicata!’ shouted another doctor from the end of the room, examining a shattered leg. ‘Turn him over.’

‘Oh, oh, fathers! Oh, you’re our fathers!’ screamed the soldier, beseeching them not to touch him.

‘Perforatio capitis!’

‘Simon Neferdov, Lieutenant-Colonel of the N — Infantry Regiment. Have a little patience, Colonel, or it is quite impossible: I shall give it up!’ said a third doctor, poking about with some kind of hook in the unfortunate colonel’s skull.

‘Oh, don’t! Oh, for God’s sake be quick! Be quick! Ah-!’

Perforatio pectoris . . . Sebastian Sereda, Private . . . what regiment? But you need not write that: moritur. Carry him away,’ said the doctor, leaving the soldier, whose eyes turned up and in whose throat the death-rattle already sounded.

About forty soldier stretcher-bearers stood at the door waiting to carry the bandaged to the wards and the dead to the chapel. They looked on at the scene before them in silence, only broken now and then by a heavy sigh.

IX

On his way to the bastion Kalugin met many wounded, but knowing by experience that in action such sights have a bad effect on one’s spirits, he did not stop to question them but tried on the contrary not to notice them. At the foot of the hill he met an orderly-officer galloping fast from the bastion.

‘Zobkin! Zobkin! Wait a bit!’

‘Well, what is it?’

‘Where are you from?’

‘The lodgements.’

‘How are things there — hot?’

'Oh, awful!'

And the orderly galloped on.

In fact, though there was now but little small-arm firing, the cannonade had recommenced with fresh heat and persistence.

'Ah, that's bad!' thought Kalugin with an unpleasant sensation, and he too had a presentiment — a very usual thought, the thought of death. But Kalugin was ambitious and blessed with nerves of oak — in a word, he was what is called brave. He did not yield to the first feeling but began to nerve himself. He recalled how an adjutant, Napoleon's he thought, having delivered an order, galloped with bleeding head full speed to Napoleon. 'Vous etes blesse?'¹ said Napoleon. 'Je vous demande pardon, sire, je suis mort,'² and the adjutant fell from his horse, dead.

That seemed to him very fine, and he pictured himself for a moment in the role of that adjutant. Then he whipped his horse, assuming a still more dashing Cossack seat, looked back at the Cossack who, standing up in his stirrups, was trotting behind, and rode quite gallantly up to the spot where he had to dismount. Here he found four soldiers sitting on some stones smoking their pipes.

'What are you doing there?' he shouted at them.

'Been carrying off a wounded man and sat down to rest a bit, your Honour,' said one of them, hiding his pipe behind his back and taking off his cap.

¹ 'You are wounded?'

² 'Excuse me, sire, I am dead.' 'Resting, indeed! ... To your places, march!'

And he went up the hill with them through the trench, meeting wounded men at every step.

After ascending the hill he turned to the left, and a few steps farther on found himself quite alone. A splinter of a bomb whizzed near him and fell into the trench. Another bomb rose in front of him and seemed flying straight at him. He suddenly felt frightened, ran a few steps at full speed, and lay down flat. When the bomb burst a considerable distance

off he felt exceedingly vexed with himself and rose, looking round to see if anyone had noticed his downfall, but no one was near.

But when fear has once entered the soul it does not easily yield to any other feeling. He, who always boasted that he never even stooped, now hurried along the trench almost on all fours. He stumbled, and thought, 'Oh, it's awful! They'll kill me for certain!' His breath came with difficulty, and perspiration broke out over his whole body. He was surprised at himself but no longer strove to master his feelings.

Suddenly he heard footsteps in front. Quickly straightening himself he raised his head, and boldly clanking his sabre went on more deliberately. He felt himself quite a different man. When he met an officer of the Engineers and a sailor, and the officer shouted to him to lie down, pointing to a bright spot which growing brighter and brighter approached more and more swiftly and came crashing down close to the trench, he only bent a little, involuntarily influenced by the frightened cry, and went on.

'That's a brave one,' said the sailor, looking quite calmly at the bomb and with experienced eye deciding at once that the splinters could not fly into the trench, 'he won't even lie down.'

It was only a few steps across open ground to the bomb-proof shelter of the Commander of the bastion, when Kalugin's mind again became clouded and the same stupid terror seized him: his heart beat more violently, the blood rushed to his head, and he had to make an effort to force himself to run to the bombproof.

'Why are you so out of breath?' said the General, when Kalugin had reported his instructions.

'I walked very fast, your Excellency!'

'Won't you have a glass of wine?'

Kalugin drank a glass of wine and lit a cigarette. The action was over, only a fierce cannonade still continued from both sides. In the bomb-proof sat General N — , the Commander of the bastion, and some six other officers among whom was Praskukhin. They were discussing various details of the action. Sitting in this comfortable room with blue

wall-paper, a sofa, a bed, a table with papers on it, a wall-clock with a lamp burning before it, and an icon¹ — looking at these signs of habitation, at the beams more than two feet thick that formed the ceiling, and listening to the shots that sounded faint here in the shelter, Kalugin could not understand how he had twice allowed himself to be overcome by such unpardonable weakness. He was angry with himself and wished for danger in order to test his nerve once more.

‘Ah! I’m glad you are here, Captain,’ said he to a naval officer with big moustaches who wore a staff-officer’s coat with a St. George’s Cross and had just entered the shelter and asked the General to give him some men to repair two embrasures of his battery which had become blocked. When the General had finished speaking to the captain, Kalugin said: ‘The Commander-in-Chief told me to ask if your guns can fire case-shot into the trenches.’

¹ The Russian icons are paintings in Byzantine style of God, the Holy Virgin, Christ, or some saint, martyr, or angel. They are usually on wood and often covered over, except the face and hands, with an embossed gilt cover. ‘Only one of them can,’ said the captain sullenly, ‘All the same, let us go and see.’

The captain frowned and gave an angry grunt.

‘I have been standing there all night and have come in to get a bit of rest — couldn’t you go alone?’ he added. ‘My assistant, Lieutenant Kartz, is there and can show you everything.’

The captain had already been more than six months in command of this, one of the most dangerous batteries. From the time the siege began, even before the bomb-proof shelters were constructed, he had lived continuously on the bastion and had a great reputation for courage among the sailors. That is why his refusal struck and surprised Kalugin. ‘So much for reputation,’ thought he.

‘Well then, I will go alone if I may,’ he said in a slightly sarcastic tone to the captain, who however paid no attention to his words.

Kalugin did not realize that whereas he had spent some fifty hours all in all at different times on the bastions, the captain had lived there for six months. Kalugin was still actuated by vanity, the wish to shine, the

hope of rewards, of gaining a reputation, and the charm of running risks. But the captain had already lived through all that: at first he had felt vain, had shown off his courage, had been foolhardy, had hoped for rewards and reputation and had even gained them, but now all these incentives had lost their power over him and he saw things differently. He fulfilled his duty exactly, but quite understanding how much the chances of life were against him after six months at the bastion, he no longer ran risks without serious need, and so the young lieutenant who had joined the battery a week ago and was now showing it to Kalugin, with whom he vied in uselessly leaning out of the embrasures and climbing out on the banquette, seemed ten times braver than the captain. Returning to the shelter after examining the battery, Kalugin in the dark came upon the General, who accompanied by his staff officers was going to the watch-tower.

‘Captain Praskukhin,’ he heard the General say, ‘please go to the right lodgement and tell the second battalion of the M — Regiment which is at work there to cease their work, leave the place, and noiselessly rejoin their regiment which is stationed in reserve at the foot of the hill. Do you understand? Lead them yourself to the regiment.’

‘Yes, sir.’

And Praskukhin started at full speed towards the lodgements. The firing was now becoming less frequent.

X

‘Is this the second battalion of the M — Regiment?’ asked Praskukhin, having run to his destination and coming across some soldiers carrying earth in sacks.

‘It is, your Honour.’

‘Where is the Commander?’

Mikhaylov, thinking that the commander of the company was being asked for, got out of his pit and taking Praskukhin for a commanding officer saluted and approached him.

‘The General’s orders are ... that you... should go . . . quickly . . . and above all quietly . . . back — no not back, but to the reserves,’ said Praskukhin, looking askance in the direction of the enemy’s fire.

Having recognized Praskukhin and made out what was wanted, Mikhaylov dropped his hand and passed on the order. The battalion became alert, the men took up their muskets, put on their cloaks, and set out.

No one without experiencing it can imagine the delight a man feels when, after three hours' bombardment, he leaves so dangerous a spot as the lodgements. During those three hours Mikhaylov, who more than once and not without reason had thought his end at hand, had had time to accustom himself to the conviction that he would certainly be killed and that he no longer belonged to this world. But in spite of that he had great difficulty in keeping his legs from running away with him when, leading the company with Praskukhin at his side, he left the lodgement.

'Au revoir' said a major with whom Mikhaylov had eaten bread and cheese sitting in the pit under the breastwork and who was remaining at the bastion in command of another battalion. 'I wish you a lucky journey.'

'And I wish you a lucky defence. It seems to be getting quieter now.'

But scarcely had he uttered these words before the enemy, probably observing the movement in the lodgement, began to fire more and more frequently. Our guns replied and a heavy firing recommenced.

The stars were high in the sky but shone feebly. The night was pitch dark, only the flashes of the guns and the bursting bombs made things around suddenly visible. The soldiers walked quickly and silently, involuntarily outpacing one another; only their measured footfall on the dry road was heard besides the incessant roll of the guns, the ringing of bayonets when they touched one another, a sigh, or the prayer of some poor soldier lad: 'Lord, O Lord! What does it mean?' Now and again the moaning of a man who was hit could be heard, and the cry, 'Stretchers!' (In the company Mikhaylov commanded artillery fire alone carried off twenty-six men that night.) A flash on the dark and distant horizon, the cry, 'Can-n-on!' from the sentinel on the bastion, and a ball flew buzzing above the company and plunged into the earth, making the stones fly.

‘What the devil are they so slow for?’ thought Praskrikhin, continually looking back as he marched beside Mikhaylov. I’d really better run on. I’ve delivered the order. . . . But no, they might afterwards say I’m a coward. What must be will be. I’ll keep beside him.’

‘Now why is he walking with me?’ thought Mikhaylov on his Part. ‘I have noticed over and over again that he always brings ill luck. Here it comes, I believe, straight for us.’

After they had gone a few hundred paces they met Kalugin, who was walking briskly towards the lodgements clanking his sabre. He had been ordered by the General to find out how the works were progressing there. But when he met Mikhaylov he thought that instead of going there himself under such a terrible fire — which he was not ordered to do — he might just as well find out all about it from an officer who had been there. And having heard from Mikhaylov full details of the work and walked a little way with him, Kalugin turned off into a trench leading to the bomb-proof shelter.

‘Well, what news?’ asked an officer who was eating his supper there all alone.

‘Nothing much. It seems that the affair is over.’

‘Over? How so? On the contrary, the General has just gone again to the watch-tower and another regiment has arrived. Yes, there it is. Listen! The muskets again! Don’t you go — why should you?’ added the officer, noticing that Kalugin made a movement.

‘I certainly ought to be there,’ thought Kalugin, ‘but I have already exposed myself a great deal today: the firing is awful!’

‘Yes, I think I’d better wait here for him,’ he said.

And really about twenty minutes later the General and the officers who were with him returned. Among them was Cadet Baron Pesth but not Praskukhin. The lodgements had been retaken and occupied by us. After receiving a full account of the affair Kalugin, accompanied by Pesth, left the bomb-proof shelter.

'There's blood on your coat! You don't mean to say you were in the hand-to-hand fight?' asked Kalugin.

'Oh, it was awful! Just fancy-'

And Pesth began to relate how he had led his company, how the company-commander had been killed, how he himself had stabbed a Frenchman, and how if it had not been for him we should have lost the day.

This tale was founded on fact: the company-commander had been killed and Pesth had bayoneted a Frenchman, but in recounting the details the cadet invented and bragged.

He bragged unintentionally, because during the whole of the affair he had been as it were in a fog and so bewildered that all he remembered of what had happened seemed to have happened somewhere, at some time, and to somebody. And very naturally he tried to recall the details in a light advantageous to himself. What really occurred was this:

The battalion the cadet had been ordered to join for the sortie stood under fire for two hours close to some low wall. Then the battalion-commander in front said something, the company-commanders became active, the battalion advanced from behind the breastwork, and after going about a hundred paces stopped to form into company columns. Pesth was told to take his place on the right flank of the second company.

Quite unable to realize where he was and why he was there, the cadet took his place, and involuntarily holding his breath while cold shivers ran down his back he gazed into the dark distance expecting something dreadful. He was however not so much frightened (for there was no firing) as disturbed and agitated at being in the field beyond the fortifications.

Again the battalion-commander in front said some-thing. Again the officers spoke in whispers passing on the order, and the black wall, formed by the first company, suddenly sank out of sight. The order was to lie down. The second company also lay down and in lying down Pesth hurt his hand on a sharp prickle. Only the commander of the second company remained standing. His short figure brandishing a sword moved in front of the company and he spoke incessantly.

‘Mind lads! Show them what you’re made of! Don’t fire, but give it them with the bayonet — the dogs! — when I cry “Hurrah!”
Altogether, mind, that’s the thing! We’ll let them see who we are. We won’t disgrace ourselves, eh lads? For our father the Tsar!’
‘What’s your company-commander’s name?’ asked Pesth of a cadet lying near him. ‘How brave he is!’
‘Yes he always is, in action,’ answered the cadet. ‘His name is Lisinkovski.’

Just then a flame suddenly flashed up right in front of the company, who were deafened by a resounding crash. High up in the air stones and splinters clattered. (Some fifty seconds later a stone fell from above and severed a soldier’s leg.) It was a bomb fired from an elevated stand, and the fact that it reached the company showed that the French had noticed the column.

‘You’re sending bombs, are you? Wait a bit till we get at you, then you’ll taste a three-edged Russian bayonet, damn you!’ said the company-commander so loud that the battalion-commander had to order him to hold his tongue and not make so much noise.

After that the first company got up, then the second. They were ordered to fix bayonets and the battalion advanced. Pesth was in such a fright that he could not in the least make out how long it lasted, where he went, or who was who. He went on as if he were drunk. But suddenly a million fires flashed from all sides, and something whistled and clattered. He shouted and ran somewhere, because everyone shouted and ran. Then he stumbled and fell over something. It was the company-commander, who had been wounded at the head of his company, and who taking the cadet for a Frenchman had seized him by the leg.

Then when Pesth had freed his leg and got up, someone else ran against him from behind in the dark and nearly knocked him down again. ‘Run him through!’ someone else shouted. ‘Why are you stopping?’ Then someone seized a bayonet and stuck it into something soft. ‘Ah Dieu!’ came a dreadful, piercing voice and Pesth only then understood that he had bayoneted a Frenchman. A cold sweat Covered

his whole body, he trembled as in a fever and threw down his musket. But this lasted only a moment; the thought immediately entered his head that he was a hero. He again seized his musket, and shouting 'Hurrah!' ran with the crowd away from the dead Frenchman. Having run twenty paces he came to a trench. Some of our men were there with the battalion-commander.

'And I have killed one!' said Pesth to the commander.

'You're a fine fellow, Baron!'

XII

'Do you know Praskukhin is killed?' said Pesth, while accompanying Kalugin on his way home.

'Impossible!'

'It is true. I saw him myself.'

'Well, good-bye ... I must be off.'

'This is capital!' thought Kalugin, as he came to his lodgings. 'It's the first time I have had such luck when on duty. It's first-rate. I am alive and well, and shall certainly get an excellent recommendation and am sure of a gold sabre. And I really have deserved it.' After reporting what was necessary to the General he went to his room, where Prince Galtsin, long since returned, sat awaiting him, reading a book he had found on Kalugin's table.

It was with extraordinary pleasure that Kalugin found himself safe at home again, and having put on his night-shirt and got into bed he gave Galtsin all the details of the affair, telling them very naturally from a point of view where those details showed what a capable and brave officer he, Kalugin, was (which it seems to me it was hardly necessary to allude to, since everybody knew it and had no right or reason to question it, except perhaps the deceased Captain Praskukhin who, though he had considered it an honour to walk arm in arm with Kalugin, had privately told a friend only yesterday that though Kalugin was a first-rate fellow, yet, 'between you and me, he was awfully disinclined to go to the bastions').

Praskukhin, who had been walking beside Mikhaylov after Kalugin had slipped away from him, had scarcely begun to revive a little on approaching a safer place, than he suddenly saw a bright light flash up behind him and heard the sentinel shout 'Mortar!' and a soldier walking behind him say: 'That's coming straight for the bastion!'

Mikhaylov looked round. The bright spot seemed to have stopped at its zenith, in the position which makes it absolutely impossible to define its direction. But that only lasted a moment: the bomb, coming faster and faster, nearer and nearer, so that the sparks of its fuse were already visible and its fatal whistle audible, descended towards the centre of the battalion.

'Lie down!' shouted someone.

Mikhaylov and Praskukhin lay flat on the ground. Praskukhin, closing his eyes, only heard the bomb crash down on the hard earth close by. A second passed which seemed an hour: the bomb had not mentally and repeated, 'Thy will be done.' And at the same time he thought, 'Why did I enter the army? And why did I join lie infantry to take Part in this campaign? Wouldn't it have been better to have remained with the Uhlan regiment at T — and spent my time with my friend Natasha? And now here I am . . .' and he began to count, 'One, two, three, four,' deciding that if the bomb burst at an even number he would live but if at an odd number he would be killed. 'It is all over, I'm killed!' he thought when the bomb burst (he did not remember whether at an odd or even number) and he felt a blow and a cruel pain in his head. 'Lord, forgive me my trespasses!' he muttered, folding his hands. He rose, but fell on his back senseless.

When he came to, his first sensations were that of blood trickling down his nose, and the pain in his head which had become much less violent. 'That's the soul passing,' he thought. 'How will it be there? Lord, receive my soul in peace!... Only it's strange,' thought he, 'that while dying I should hear the steps of the soldiers and the sounds of the firing so distinctly.'

'Bring stretchers! Eh, the Captain has been hit!' shouted a voice above his head, which he recognized as the voice of the drummer Ignatyev.

Someone took him by the shoulders. With an effort he opened his eyes and saw above him the sky, some groups of stars, and two bombs racing one another as they flew over him. He saw Ignatyev, soldiers with stretchers and guns, the embankment, the trenches, and suddenly realized that he was not yet in the other world.

He had been slightly wounded in the head by a stone. His first feeling was one almost of regret: he had prepared himself so well and so calmly to go there that the return to reality, with its bombs, stretchers, and blood, seemed unpleasant. The second feeling was unconscious joy at being alive, and the third a wish to get away from the bastion as quickly as possible. The drummer tied a handkerchief round his commander's head and taking his arm led him towards the ambulance station.

'But why and where am I going?' thought the lieutenant-captain when he had collected his senses. 'My duty is to remain with the company and not leave it behind — especially,' whispered a voice, 'as it will soon be out of range of the guns.'

'Don't trouble about me, my lad,' said he, drawing his hand away from the attentive drummer. 'I won't go to the ambulance station: I'll stay with the company.'

And he turned back.

'It would be better to have it properly bandaged, your honour,' said Ignatyev. 'It's only in the heat of the moment that it seems nothing. Mind it doesn't get worse. . . . And just see what warm work it is here. . . Really, your honour-'

Mikhaylov stood for a moment undecided, and would probably have followed Ignatyev's advice had he not reflected how many severely wounded there must be at the ambulance station. 'Perhaps the doctors will smile at my scratch,' thought the lieutenant-captain, and in spite of the drummer's arguments he returned to his company.

'And where is the orderly officer Praskukhin, who was with me?' he asked when he met the ensign who was leading the company.

'I don't know. Killed, I think,' replied the ensign unwillingly.

‘Killed? Or only wounded? How is it you don’t know? Wasn’t he going with us? And why didn’t you bring him away?’

‘How could we, under such a fire?’

‘But how could you do such a thing, Michael Ivanych?’ said Mikhaylov angrily. ‘How could you leave him supposing he is alive? Even if he’s dead his body ought to have been brought away.’ ‘Alive indeed, when I tell you I went up and saw him myself!’ said the ensign. ‘Excuse me. ... It’s hard enough to collect our own. There, those villains are at it again!’ he added. ‘They’re sending up cannon-balls now.’

Mikhaylov sat down and lifted his hands to his head, which ached terribly when he moved.

‘No, it is absolutely necessary to go back and fetch him,’ he said. ‘He may still be alive. It is our duty, Michael Ivanych.’

Michael Ivanych did not answer.

‘O Lord! Just because he didn’t bring him in at the time, soldiers will have to be sent back alone now . . . and yet can I possibly send them under this terrible fire? They may be killed for nothing,’ thought Mikhaylov.

‘Lads! Someone will have to go back to fetch the officer who was wounded out there in the ditch,’ said he, not very loudly or peremptorily, for he felt how unpleasant it would be for the soldiers to execute this order. And he was right. Since he had not named any one in Particular no one came forward to obey the order.

‘And after all he may be dead already. It isn’t worth exposing men-uselessly to such danger. It’s all my fault, I ought to have seen to it. I’ll go back myself and find out whether he is alive. It is my duty?’ said Mikhaylov to himself.

‘Michael Ivanych, you lead the company, I’ll catch you up,’ said he, and holding up his cloak with one hand while with the other he kept touching a small icon of St. Metrophanes that hung round his neck and in which he had great faith, he ran quickly along the trench.

Having convinced himself that Praskukhin was dead he dragged himself back panting, holding the bandage that had slipped on his head, which was beginning to ache very badly. When he overtook the battalion it was already at the foot of the hill and almost beyond the range of the shots. I say 'almost', for a stray bomb reached even here now and then. 'To-morrow I had better go and be entered at the ambulance station,' thought the lieutenant-captain, while a medical assistant, who had turned up, was bandaging his head.

XIV

Hundreds of bodies, which a couple of hours before had been men full of various lofty or trivial hopes and wishes, were lying with fresh bloodstains on their stiffened limbs in the dewy, flowery valley which separated the bastions from the trenches and on the smooth floor of the mortuary chapel in Sevastopol. Hundreds of men with curses or prayers on their parched lips, crawled, writhed, and groaned, some among the dead in the flowery valley, some on stretchers, or beds, or on the blood-stained floor of the ambulance station. Yet the dawn broke behind the Sapun hill, the twinkling stars grew pale and the white mists spread from the dark roaring sea just as on other days, and the rosy morning glow lit up the east, long streaks of red clouds spread along the pale-blue horizon, and just as in the old days the sun rose in power and glory, promising joy, love, and happiness to all the awakening world.

XV

Next evening the Chasseurs' band was again playing on the boulevard, and officers, cadets, soldiers, and young women, again promenaded round the pavilion and along the side-walks under the acacias with their sweet-scented white blossoms.

Kalugin was walking arm in arm with Prince Galtsin and a colonel near the pavilion and talking of last night's affair. The main theme of their conversation, as usual in such cases, was not the affair itself, but the Part each of the speakers had taken in it. Their faces and the tone of

their voices were serious, almost sorrowful, as if the losses of the night had touched and saddened them all. But to tell the truth, as none of them had lost any one very dear to him, this sorrowful expression was only an official one they considered it their duty to exhibit.

Kalugin and the colonel in fact, though they were first-rate fellows, were ready to see such an affair every day if they could gain a gold sword and be made major-general each time. It is all very well to call some conqueror a monster because he destroys millions to gratify his ambition, but go and ask any Ensign Petrushev or Sub-Lieutenant Antanov on their conscience, and you will find that everyone of us is a little Napoleon, a petty monster ready to start a battle and kill a hundred men merely to get an extra medal or one-third additional pay. 'No, I beg your pardon,' said the colonel. 'It began first on the left side. I was there myself.'

'Well, perhaps,' said Kalugin. 'I spent more time on the right. I went there twice: first to look for the General, and then just to see the lodgements. It was hot there, I can tell you!'

'Kalugin ought to know,' said Galtsin. 'By the way, V — told me to-day that you are a trump—'

'But the losses, the losses are terrible!' said the colonel. 'In my regiment we had four hundred casualties. It is astonishing that I'm still alive.'

Just then the figure of Mikhaylov, with his head bandaged, appeared at the end of the boulevard walking towards these gentlemen.

'What, are you wounded, Captain?' said Kalugin.

'Yes, slightly, with a stone,' answered Mikhaylov.

'Est-ce que le pavilion est baisse deja?'¹ asked Prince Galtsin, glancing at the lieutenant-captain's cap and not addressing anyone in Particular. ¹ 'Is the flag (of truce) lowered already?' 'Non, pas encore,'¹ answered Mikhaylov, wishing to show that he understood and spoke French.

'Do you mean to say the truce still continues?' said Galtsin, politely addressing him in Russian and thereby (so it seemed to the lieutenant-captain) suggesting: 'It must no doubt be difficult for you to have to speak French, so hadn't we better simply . . .and with that the adjutants

went away. The lieutenant-captain again felt exceedingly lonely, just as he had done the day before. After bowing to various people — some of whom he did not wish and some of whom he did not venture to join — he sat down near the Kazarski monument and smoked a cigarette. Baron Pesth also turned up on the boulevard. He mentioned that he had been at the parley and had spoken to the French officers. According to his account one of them had said to him: 'S'il n'avait pas fait clair encore pendant me demi-heure, les ambuscades auraient eti reprises,'² and he replied, 'Monsieur, je ne dis pas non, pour ne pas vous dormer un dementi,'³ and he told how pat it had come out, and so on.

But though he had been at the parley he had not really managed to say anything in Particular, though he much wished to speak with the French ('for it's awfully jolly to speak to those fellows'). He had paced up and down the line for a long time asking the Frenchmen near him: (De quel rigiment etes-vous'⁴ and had got his answer and nothing more. When he went too far beyond the line, the French sentry, not suspecting that 'that soldier' knew French, abused him in the third person singular: 'Il vient regarder nos travaux, ce sacre— '⁵ in consequence of which Cadet

1 'No, not yet.'

2 'Had it remained dark for another half-hour, the ambuscades would have been recaptured.'

3 'Sir, I will not say no, lest I give you the lie.'

4 'What regiment do you belong to?'

s 'He's come to look at our w6rks, the confounded-' Baron Pesth, finding nothing more to interest him at the parley, rode home, and on his way back composed the French phrases he now repeated.

On the boulevard was Captain Zobov talking very loud, and Captain Obzhogov, the artillery captain who never curried favour with anyone, was there too, in a dishevelled condition, and also the cadet who was always fortunate in his love affairs, and all the same people as yesterday, with the same motives as always. Only Praskukhin, Neferdov, and a few more were missing, and hardly anyone now

remembered or thought of them, though there had not yet been time for their bodies to be washed, laid out, and put into the ground.

XVI

White flags are hung out on our bastions and on the French trenches, and in the flowery valley between them lie heaps of mangled corpses without boots, some clad in blue and others in grey, which workmen are removing and piling onto carts. The air is filled with the smell of decaying flesh. Crowds of people have poured out from Sevastopol and from the French camp to see the sight, and with eager and friendly curiosity draw near to one another.

Listen to what these people are saying.

Here, in a circle of Russians and Frenchmen who have collected round him, a young officer, who speaks French badly but sufficiently to be understood, is examining a guardsman's pouch.

'Eh sussy, poor quah se waso lie?'¹

'Parce que c'esi une giberne d'un regiment de la garde, monsieur, qui porte l'aigle imperial.'²

'Eh voo de la guard?'³

1 'And what is this tied bird for?'

2 'Because this is a cartridge pouch of a guard regiment, monsieur, and bears the Imperial eagle.'

3 'And do you belong to the Guards?' 'Pardon, monsieur, du 6-eme de ligne.'¹

'Eh sussy oo ashtay?'² pointing to a cigarette-holder of yellow wood, in which the Frenchman is smoking a cigarette.

'A Balaclava, monsieur. C'est tout simple en bois de palme.'³

'Joli,'⁴ says the officer, guided in his remarks not so much by what he wants to say as by the French words he happens to know.

'Si vous voulez bien garder cela comme souvenir de cette rencontre, vous m'obligerez.'⁵

And the polite Frenchman puts out his cigarette and presents the holder to the officer with a slight bow. The officer gives him his, and all present, both French and Russian, smile and seem pleased.

Here is a bold infantryman in a pink shirt with his cloak thrown over his shoulders, accompanied by other soldiers standing near him with their hands folded behind their backs and with merry inquisitive faces. He has approached a Frenchman and asked for a light for his pipe. The Frenchman draws at and stirs up the tobacco in his own short pipe and shakes a light into that of the Russian.

‘Tabac boon?’ says the soldier in the pink shirt, and the spectators smile. ‘Oui, bon tabac, tabac turc,’ says the Frenchman. ‘Chez vous autres tabac — Russe ? Bon ?’⁶

‘Roos boon,’ says the soldier in the pink shirt while the onlookers shake with laughter. ‘Fransay not boon. Bongjour, mossier!’ and having let off his whole stock

1 ‘No, monsieur, to the 6th regiment of the line.’

2 ‘And where did you buy this?’

3 ‘At Balaclava, monsieur. It’s only made of palm wood.’

4 ‘Pretty.’

5 ‘If you will be so good as to keep it as a souvenir of this meeting you will do me a favour.’

6 ‘Yes, good tobacco, Turkish tobacco . . . You others have Russian tobacco. Is it good?’ of French at once, he slaps the Frenchman on the stomach and laughs. The French also laugh.

‘Ils ne sont pas jolis ces b-de Russes,’¹ says a Zouave among the French.

‘De quoi est-ce qu’ils rient donc?’² says another with an Italian accent, a dark man, coming up to our men.

‘Coat boon,’ says the cheeky soldier, examining the embroidery of the Zouave’s coat, and everybody laughs again.

‘Ne sors pas de ta ligne, a vos places, sacre nom!’³ cries a French corporal, and the soldiers separate with evident reluctance.

And here, in the midst of a group of French officers, one of our young cavalry officers is gushing. They are talking about some Count Sazonov,

'que fai beaucoup connu, monsieur,' says a French officer with only one epaulette— 'c'est un de ces vrais comtes russes, comme nous les aimons.'⁴

'Il y a un Sazonoff, que j'ai connu' says the cavalry officer, 'mais il n'est pas comte, a moins que je sache, un petit brun de voire age a peu pres.'⁵

'C'est ca, monsieur, c' est lui. Oh ! que je voudrais le voir, ce cher comte. Si vous le voyez, je vous prie bien de lui faire mes compliments — Capitaine Latour,'⁶ he said, bowing.

'N'est-ce pas terrible la triste besogne que nous faisons? Ca chauffait cette nuit, n'est-ce pas?'⁹ said the cavalry

1 'They are not handsome, these d — Russians.'

2 'What are they laughing about?'

3 'Don't leave your ranks. To your places, damn it!'

4 'Whom I knew very intimately, monsieur. He is one of those real Russian counts of whom we are so fond.'

5 'I am acquainted with a Sazonov, but he is not a Count, as far as I know — a small dark man, of about your age.'

6 'Just so, monsieur, that is he. Oh, how I should like to meet the dear count. If you should see him, please be so kind as to give him my compliments — Captain Latour.'

7 'Isn't it terrible, this sad duty we are engaged in? It was warm work last night, wasn't it?' officer, wishing to maintain the conversation and pointing to the corpses.

' Oh, monsieur, c'est affreux! Mais quels gaillards vos soldats, quels gaillards! C'est unplaisir que de se battre avec des gaillards comme eux.'¹

'Il faut avouer que les votres ne se mouchent pas du pied non plus,'² said the cavalry officer, bowing and imagining himself very agreeable. But enough.

Let us rather look at this ten-year-old boy in an old cap (probably his father's), with shoes on his stockingless feet and nankeen trousers held up by one brace. At the very beginning of the truce he came over the entrenchments, and has been walking about the valley ever since, looking with dull curiosity at the French and at the corpses that lie on

the ground and gathering the blue flowers with which the valley is strewn. Returning home with a large bunch of flowers he holds his nose to escape the smell that is borne towards him by the wind, and stopping near a heap of corpses gazes for a long time at a terrible headless body that lies nearest to him. After standing there some time he draws nearer and touches with his foot the stiff outstretched arm of the corpse. The arm trembles a little. He touches it again more boldly; it moves and falls back to its old position. The boy gives a sudden scream, hides his face in his flowers, and runs towards the fortifications as fast as his legs can carry him.

Yes, there are white flags on the bastions and the trenches but the flowery valley is covered with dead bodies. The glorious sun is sinking towards the blue sea, and the undulating blue sea glitters in the golden
1 'Ah, monsieur, it is terrible! But what fine fellows your men are, what fine fellows! It is a pleasure to fight with such fellows!'

2 'It must be admitted that yours are no fools either.' (Literally, 'don't wipe their noses with their feet'.) light. Thousands of people crowd together, look at, speak to, and smile at one another. And these people — Christians professing the one great law of love and self-sacrifice — on seeing what they have done do not at once fall repentant on their knees before Him who has given them life and laid in the soul of each a fear of death and a love of the good and the beautiful, and do not embrace like brothers with tears of joy and gladness.

The white flags are lowered, the engines of death and suffering are sounding again, innocent blood is flowing and the air is filled with moans and curses.

There, I have said what I wished to say this time. But I am seized by an oppressive doubt. Perhaps I ought to have left it unsaid. What I have said perhaps belongs to that class of evil truths that lie unconsciously hidden in the soul of each man and should not be uttered lest they become harmful, as the dregs in a bottle must not be disturbed for fear of spoiling the wine. . . .

Where in this tale is the evil that should be avoided, and where the good that should be imitated? Who is the villain and who the hero of the story? All are good and all are bad.

Not Kalugin, with his brilliant courage — bravoure de gentilhomme — and the vanity that influences all his actions, not Praskukhin, the empty harmless fellow (though he fell in battle for faith, throne, and fatherland), not Mikhaylov with his shyness, nor Pesth, a child without firm principles or convictions, can be either the villain or the hero of the tale.

The hero of my tale — whom I love with all the power of my soul, whom I have tried to portray in all his beauty, who has been, is, and will be beautiful — is Truth.

SEVASTOPOL IN AUGUST 1855

I

Towards the end of August, through the hot thick dust of the rocky and hilly highway between Duvankal and Bakhchisariy, an officer's vehicle was slowly toiling towards Sevastopol (that peculiar kind of vehicle you never meet anywhere else — something between a Jewish britzka, a Russian cart, and a basket).

In the front of the trap, pulling at the reins, squatted an orderly in a nankeen coat and wearing a cap, now quite limp, that had once belonged to an officer: behind, on bundles and bales covered with a soldier's overcoat, sat an infantry officer in a summer cloak. The officer, as far as one could judge while he was sitting, was not tall but very broad and massive, not across the shoulders so much as from back to chest. His neck and the back of his head were much developed and very solid.

He had no waist, and yet his body did not appear to be stout in that Part: on the contrary he was rather lean, especially in the face, which was burnt to an unwholesome yellow. He would have been good-looking had it not been for a certain puffiness and the broad soft

wrinkles, not due to age, that blurred the outlines of his features, making them seem larger and giving the face a general look of coarseness and lack of freshness. His small eyes were hazel, with a daring and even insolent expression: he had very thick but not wide moustaches the ends of which were bitten off, and his chin and especially his jaws were covered with an exceedingly strong, thick, black stubble of two days' growth.

This officer had been wounded in the head by a bomb splinter on 10 May² and still wore a bandage,

1 The last posting-station north of Sevastopol.

2 There were a series of desperate night conflicts on the 9 to 11 May o.s. (21 to 23 May n.s.) but having felt well again for the past week, he had left the hospital at Simferopol and was now on his way to rejoin his regiment stationed somewhere in the direction of the firing — but whether in Sevastopol itself, on the North Side, or at Inkerman, no one had yet been able to tell him for certain. The sound of frequent firing, especially at times when no hills intercepted it and the wind carried it this way, was already very distinct and seemed quite near. Now an explosion shook the air and made one start involuntarily, now less violent sounds followed one another in quick succession like the roll of drums, broken now and then by a startling boom, and now again all these sounds mingled into a kind of rolling crash, like peals of thunder when a storm is raging in all its fury and rain has just begun to fall in torrents.

Everyone was remarking (and one could moreover hear for oneself) that a terrific bombardment was going on. The officer kept telling his orderly to drive faster; he seemed in a hurry to get to his destination. They met a train of Russian peasant-carts that had taken provisions to Sevastopol and were now returning laden with sick and wounded soldiers in grey uniforms, sailors in black cloaks, volunteers with red fezes on their heads, and bearded militiamen. The officer's trap had to stand still in the thick motionless cloud of dust raised by this train of carts and, frowning and blinking at the dust that filled his eyes, he sat looking at the faces of the sick and wounded as they drove past.

‘There’s a soldier of our company — that one who is so weak!’ said the orderly, turning to his master and pointing to a cart laden with wounded men which had just come up to them.

A bearded Russian in a felt hat sat sideways in the front of the cart plaiting the lash of a whip, the handle of which he held to his side with his elbow. Behind him in the cart five or six soldiers were being jolted along, some lying and some sitting in different positions.

One with a bandaged arm and his cloak thrown loosely over his very dirty shirt, though he looked pale and thin, sat upright in the middle of the cart and raised his hand as if to salute the officer, but probably remembering that he was wounded, pretended that he only meant to scratch his head. Beside him on the bottom of the cart lay a man of whom all that was visible was his two hands holding on to the sides of the cart and his lifted knees swaying to and fro like rags. A third, whose face was swollen and who had a soldier’s cap stuck on the top of his bandaged head, sat on the side of the cart with his legs hanging down over the wheel, and, resting his elbows on his knees, seemed to be dozing. The officer addressed him: ‘Dolzhnikov!’ he cried.

‘Here!’ answered the soldier, opening his eyes and taking off his cap and speaking in such a deep and abrupt bass that it sounded as if twenty soldiers had shouted all together.

‘When were you wounded, lad?’

The soldier’s leaden eyes with their swollen lids brightened. He had evidently recognized his officer.

‘Good-day, your honour!’ said he in the same abrupt bass.

‘Where is your regiment stationed now?’

‘In Sevastopol. We were going to move on Wednesday, your honour!’

‘Where to?’

‘Don’t know, your honour — to the North Side, maybe. . . . Now they’re firing right across, your honour!’ he added in a long-drawn tone, replacing his cap. ‘Mostly bombs — they reach us right across the bay. He’s giving it us awful hot now . . .’

What the soldier said further could not be heard, but the expression of his face and his pose showed that his words, spoken with the bitterness of one suffering, were not reassuring.

The officer in the trap, Lieutenant Kozeltsov, was not an ordinary type of man. He was not one of those who live and act this way or that because others live and act so: he did what he chose, and others followed his example and felt sure it was right. He was by nature endowed with many minor gifts: he sang well, played the guitar, talked to the point, and wrote very easily (especially official papers — a knack for writing which he had acquired when he was adjutant of his battalion), but his most remarkable characteristic was his ambitious energy, which though chiefly founded on those same minor talents was in itself a marked and striking feature. He had ambition of a kind most frequently found among men and especially in military circles, and this had become so much a Part of his life that he could imagine no other course than to lead or to perish. Ambition was at the root of his innermost impulses and even in his private thoughts he liked to put himself first when he compared himself with others.

‘It’s likely I should pay attention to the chatter of a private!’ he muttered, with a feeling of heaviness and apathy at heart and a certain dimness of thought left by the sight of the convoy of wounded men and the words of the soldier, enforced as they were by the sounds of the cannonade.

‘Funny fellow, that soldier! Now then, Nikolaev, get on! . . . Are you asleep?’ he added rather fretfully as he arranged the skirt of his cloak. Nikolaev jerked the reins, clicked his tongue, and the trap rolled on at a trot.

‘We’ll only stop just to feed the horse, and then go on at once, to-night,’ said the officer.

II

When he was entering what was left of a street of ruined stone Tartar houses in Duvanka, Lieutenant Kolzeltsov was stopped by a convoy of bombs and cannon-balls on its way to Sevastopol, that blocked the road.

Two infantrymen sat on the stones of a ruined wall amid a cloud of dust, eating a water-melon and some bread.

'Going far, comrade?' asked one of them, with his mouth full of bread, as another soldier with a little bag on his back stopped beside them.

'Going to join our regiment,' answered the soldier, looking past the water-melon and readjusting his bag. 'We've been nearly three weeks in the province looking for hay for our company, and now we've all been recalled, but we don't know where the regiment is. Some say it crossed to the Korabelnaya last week. Perhaps you have heard, friends?'

'In the town, mate. It's quartered in the town,' muttered the other, an old convoy soldier who was digging a clasp-knife into an unripe, whitish watermelon. 'We only left there this afternoon. [It's so awful there, mate, you'd better not go, but fall down here somewhere among the hay and lie there for a day or two!]

'What do you mean, friend?'

'Why, can't you hear? They're firing from all sides to-day, there's not a place left whole. As for the likes of us as has been killed — there's no counting 'em!' And making an expressive gesture with his hand, the speaker set his cap straight.

The soldier who had stopped shook his head thoughtfully and clicked his tongue, then he took a pipe out of the leg of his boot, and not filling it but merely loosening the scorched tobacco in it, he lit a bit of tinder at the pipe of one of the others. Then he raised his cap and said:

'One can't get away from God, friends! Good-bye.' And straightening his bag with a jerk he went his way.

'It would be far better to wait!' the man who was digging into the water-melon said with conviction. 'It can't be helped!' muttered the newcomer, as he squeezed between the wheels of the crowded carts. ['It seems I too must buy a water-melon for my supper. Just think what people are saying!']

The post-station was full of people when Kozeltsov drove up. The first one he met in the porch was a very thin young man, the superintendent, bickering with two officers who were following him. 'It's not only three days you'll have to wait but maybe ten. . . . Even generals have to wait, my good sir!' said the superintendent, evidently wishing to hurt the travellers' feelings. 'I can't hitch myself to a cart for you, can I?'

'Then don't give horses to anyone, if you have none! Why did you give them to that lackey with the baggage?' shouted the elder of the officers, who had a tumbler of tea in his hand.

'Just consider a moment, Mr. Superintendent,' said the other, a very young officer, hesitatingly. 'We are not going for our own pleasure. You see, we are evidently wanted there, since we have been summoned. I shall really have to report it to the general. It will never do, you know. . . . It seems you don't respect an officer's position.'

But the elder man interrupted him crossly. 'You always spoil everything! You only hinder me . . . a man has to know how to speak to these people. There you see, he has lost all respect.... Horses, I say, this very minute!'

'Willingly, my dear sir, but where am I to get them from?'

The superintendent was silent for a few minutes. Then he suddenly flared up and waving his arms began:

'I know it all very well, my dear sir, and fully understand it, but what am I to do? You give me but' (a ray of hope showed itself on the faces of the officers) . . . 'let me but hold out to the end of the month, and I'll stay here no longer. I'd rather go to the Malakhov Hill than remain here, I swear I would! Let them do what they please. There's not a single sound vehicle left in the whole place, and it's the third day the horses haven't had a wisp of hay.' And the superintendent disappeared through the gate.

Kozeltsov entered the room together with the officers.

'Well,' said the elder calmly to the younger, though the moment before he had seemed quite beside himself, 'we've been three months on the

road already and can wait a bit longer. No matter, we'll get there soon enough!'

The dirty, smoky room was so full of officers and trunks that Kozeltsov had some difficulty in finding a seat on the window-sill. While observing the faces and listening to the conversation of the others he began rolling himself a cigarette. To the right of the door sat the principal group round a crooked, greasy table on which stood two samovars with verdigris showing on them here and there, and with sugar spread on various bits of paper. A young officer who had not yet grown a moustache, in a new, quilted Caucasian coat which had certainly been made out of a woman's dressing-gown, was filling a teapot, and there were four other equally young officers in different Parts of the room. One of them lay asleep on the sofa with a fur coat of some kind rolled up under his head; another was standing at the table cutting up some roast mutton for a one-armed officer who sat there.

Two officers, one in an adjutant's cloak, the other in infantry uniform made of fine cloth and with a satchel across his shoulders, were sitting by the stove, and from the way they looked at the others and the manner in which the one with the satchel smoked his cigar, it was plain that they were not officers of the line and were glad they were not. Their manner did not show contempt so much as a certain calm self-satisfaction founded Partly on money and Partly on intimacy with generals — a consciousness of superiority extending even to a desire to conceal it. Then there was a thick-lipped young doctor and an artillery officer who looked like a German — these were sitting on the sofa almost on the feet of the sleeping officer, counting money. There were also several orderlies, some dozing, others near the door busy with bundles and portmanteaux.

Among all these people Kozeltsov did not recognize a single acquaintance, but he listened with interest to their conversation. He liked the young officers who, as he at once concluded from their appearance, had come straight from the Cadet College; they reminded him of the fact that his brother, who was coming straight from the College too, ought to reach one of the batteries in Sevastopol in a few days' time. But he did not like the officer with the satchel, whose face

he had seen somewhere before — everything about him seemed insolent and repellent. 'We'll put him down if he ventures to say anything!' he thought, and he even moved from the window to the stove and sat down there. Belonging to a line regiment and being a good officer, he had a general dislike for those 'on the Staff', and such he at once recognized these officers to be.

IV

'I say, isn't it an awful nuisance that being so near we can't get there?' said one of the young officers. 'There may be an action to-day and we shan't be in it.'

The high-pitched voice and the fresh rosy spots which appeared on his face betrayed the charming youthful bashfulness of one in constant fear of not saying the right thing. The officer who had lost an arm looked at him with a smile.

'You'll get there soon enough, believe me,' he said.

The young officer looked respectfully at the crippled man, whose emaciated face suddenly lit up with a smile, and then silently turned his attention to making his tea. And really the face, the attitude, and especially the empty sleeve of the officer expressed a kind of calm indifference that seemed to say in reply to every word and action: 'Yes, all that is admirable, but I know it all, and can do it all if only I wish to.'

'Well, and how shall we decide it?' the young officer began again, turning to his comrade in the Caucasian coat. 'Shall we stay the night here or go on with our own horse?'

His comrade decided to stay.

'Just fancy, Captain,' continued the one who was making the tea, addressing the one-armed officer and handing him a knife he had dropped, 'we are told that horses were awfully dear in Sevastopol, so we two bought one together in Simferopol.'

'I expect they made you pay a stiff price.'

'I really don't know, Captain. We paid ninety rubles for it with the trap. Is that very much?' he said, turning to the company in general, including Kozeltsov, who was looking at him.

'It's not much if it's a young horse,' said Kozeltsov.

'You think not? . . . And we were told it was too much. Only it limps a bit, but that will pass. We were told it's strong.'

'What Cadet College were you at?' asked Kozeltsov, who wished to get news of his brother.

'We are now from the Nobles' Regiment. There are six of us and we are all going to Sevastopol — by our own desire,' said the talkative young officer. 'Only we don't know where our battery is. Some say it is Sevastopol, but those fellows there say it's in Odessa.' 'Couldn't you have found out in Simferopol?' asked Kozeltsov.

'They didn't know. . . . Only think, one of our comrades went to the Chancellery there and got nothing but rudeness. Just think how unpleasant! Would you like a ready-made cigarette?' he said to the one-armed officer who was trying to get out his cigar-case.

He attended to this officer's wants with a kind of servile enthusiasm. 'And are you from Sevastopol too?' he continued. 'How wonderful it is! How all of us in Petersburg used to think about you all and all our heroes!' he said, addressing Kozeltsov with respect and kindly affection.

'Well then, you may find that you have to go back?' asked the lieutenant.

'That's just what we are afraid of. Just fancy, when we had bought the horse and got all we needed — a coffee-pot with a spirit-lamp and other necessary little things — we had no money left at all,' he said in a low tone, glancing at his comrade, 'so that if we have to return we don't at all know how we are to manage.'

'Didn't you receive your travelling allowance, then?' asked Kozeltsov.

'No,' answered the young officer in a whisper, 'they promised to give it us here.'

'Have you the certificate?'

'I know that a certificate is the principal thing, but when I was in Moscow, a senator — he's my uncle and I was at his house — told me they would give it to me here, or else he would have given it me himself. But will they give me one in Sevastopol?'

'Certainly they will.'

‘Yes, I think so too,’ said the lad in a tone which showed that, having asked the same question at some thirty other post-stations and having everywhere received different answers, he did not now quite believe anyone.

V

(Previously suppressed by the Censor)

[‘How can they help giving it?’ suddenly remarked the officer who had quarrelled with the station-master on the porch and had now approached the speakers, addressing himself Partly to the staff-officers who were sitting near by, as to listeners more worthy of attention.

‘Why, I myself wanted to join the active army just as these gentlemen do. I even gave up a splendid post and asked to be sent right into Sevastopol. And they gave me nothing but a hundred and thirty-six rubles for post-horses from Petersburg and I have already spent more than a hundred and fifty rubles of my own money. Only think of it! It’s only eight hundred versts and this is the third month we have been on the way. I have been travelling with these gentlemen here for two months. A good thing I had money of my own, but suppose I hadn’t had any?’

‘The third month? Is it possible?’ someone asked.

‘Yes, and what can one do?’ the speaker continued. ‘You see if I had not wanted to go I would not have volunteered and left a good post, so I haven’t been stopping at places on the road because I was afraid. ... It was just impossible. For instance I lived a fortnight in Perekop, and the station-master wouldn’t even speak to me. . . . “Go when you like; here are a whole pile of requisition forms for couriers alone.” ... It must be my fate. . . . You see I want — but it’s just my fate. It’s not because there’s a bombardment going on, but it evidently makes no difference whether one hurries or not — and yet how I should like. . . .’

The officer was at such pains to explain his delays and seemed so keen to vindicate himself that it involuntarily occurred to one that he was afraid. This was still more evident when he began to ask where his regiment was, and whether it was dangerous there. He even grew pale

and his voice faltered when the one-armed officer, who belonged to the same regiment, told him that during those last two days they had lost seventeen officers.

In fact this officer was just then a thorough coward, though six months previously he had been very different. A change had come over him which many others experienced both before and after him. He had had an excellent and quiet post in one of our provincial towns in which there is a Cadet College, but reading in the papers and in private letters of the heroic deeds performed at Sevastopol by his former comrades, he was suddenly inspired by ambition and still more by patriotic heroism.

He sacrificed much to this feeling: his well-established position, his little home with its comfortable furniture painstakingly acquired by five years' effort, his acquaintances, and his hopes of making a good marriage. He threw all this up, and in February already had volunteered for active service, dreaming of deathless honours and of a general's epaulettes. Two months after he had sent in his application he received an official inquiry whether he would require assistance from the government. He replied in the negative, and continued to wait patiently for an appointment, though his patriotic ardour had had time to cool considerably during those eight weeks. After another two months he received an inquiry as to whether he belonged to a Freemasons' Lodge,¹ and other similar questions, and having replied in the negative, he at last, in the fifth month, received his appointment. But all that time his friends, and still more that subconscious feeling which always awakens

¹ A number of Freemasons were involved in the Decembrist mutiny in 1825, when Nicholas I ascended the throne. He was consequently very suspicious of that organization, which at the time of the Crimean War was prohibited in Russia. The inquiry made would therefore be offensive to a loyal and patriotic volunteer. At any change in one's position, had had time to convince him that he was committing an act of extreme folly by entering the active army. And when he found himself alone, with a dry throat and his face covered with dust, at the

first post-station — where he met a courier from Sevastopol who told him of the horrors of the war, and where he had to spend twelve hours waiting for relay horses — he quite repented of his thoughtlessness, reflecting with vague horror on what awaited him, and without realizing it continued on his way as to a sacrifice. This feeling constantly increased during his three months' travelling from station to station, at which he always had to wait and where he met officers returning from Sevastopol with dreadful stories, and at last this poor officer — from being a hero prepared for desperate deeds, as in the provincial town he had imagined himself to be — arrived in Djanka a wretched coward, and having a month ago come across some young fellows from the Cadet College, he tried to travel as slowly as possible, considering these days to be his last on earth, and at every station put up his bed, unpacked his canteen, played preference, looked through the station complaint-book for amusement, and felt glad when horses were not to be had.

Had he gone at once from home to the bastions he would really have been a hero, but now he would have to go through much moral suffering before he could become such a calm, patient man, facing toil and danger, as Russian officers generally are. But it would by this time have been difficult to reawaken enthusiasm in him.]

VI

'Who ordered soup?' demanded the landlady, a rather dirty, fat woman of about forty, as she came into the room with a tureen of cabbage-soup.

The conversation immediately stopped, and every-one in the room fixed his eyes on the landlady. One officer even winked to another with a glance at her.

'Oh, Kozeltsov ordered it/ said the young officer.

'We must wake him up... Get up for dinner!' he said, going up to the sofa and shaking the sleeper's shoulder. A lad of about seventeen, with merry black eyes and very rosy cheeks, jumped up energetically and stepped into the middle of the room rubbing his eyes.

'Oh, I beg your pardon,' he said to the doctor, whom he had knocked against in rising.

Lieutenant Kozeltsov at once recognized his brother and went up to him.

'Don't you know me?' he asked with a smile.

'Ah-h-h!' cried the younger Kozeltsov. 'This is wonderful!' And he began kissing his brother.

They kissed three times, but hesitated before the third kiss, as if the thought, 'Why has it to be just three times?' had struck them both.

'Well, I am glad!' said the elder, looking into his brother's face. 'Come out into the porch and let's have a chat.'

'Yes, come along. I don't want any soup. You eat it, Federson,' he said to his comrade.

'But you wanted something to eat.'

'I don't want anything now.'

Out on the porch the younger one kept asking his brother: 'Well, and how are you? Tell me how things are!' and saying how glad he was to see him, but he did not tell him anything about himself.

When five minutes had passed and they had paused for a moment, the elder brother asked why the younger had not entered the Guards as everyone had expected him to do.

['Oh, yes!' the younger replied, blushing at the very recollection, 'that upsets me terribly. I never expected such a thing could happen. Just imagine, at the very end of the term three of us went to have a smoke — you remember that little room by the hall-porter's lodge? It must have been there in your time — but just imagine, that beast of a hall-porter saw us and ran to tell the officer on duty (though we had tipped that porter several times) and the officer crept up on tiptoe. As soon as we noticed him the others threw away their cigarettes and bolted out by the side door — you know — but I hadn't the chance. The officer was very nasty to me, and of course I answered him back. Well, he told the Inspector, and there was a row. Because of that, you see, they didn't give me full marks for conduct, though for everything else my marks were excellent, except for mechanics, for which I got twelve. And so they wouldn't let me enter the Guards. They promised to transfer

me later . . . but I no longer wanted it, and applied to be sent to the front.'

'Dear me!'

'Really, I tell you seriously, I was so disgusted with everything that] I wanted to get to Sevastopol as quickly as possible. And you see, if things turn out well here one can get on quicker than in the Guards. There it takes ten years to become a colonel, but here in two years Todleben from a lieutenant-colonel has become a general. And if one gets killed — well, it can't be helped.'

'So that's the sort of stuff you are made of!' said his brother, with a smile.

'But the chief thing, you know,' said the younger brother, smiling and blushing as if he were going to say something very shameful— 'the chief thing was that I felt rather ashamed to be living in Petersburg while here men are dying for the Fatherland. And besides, I wanted to be with you,' he added, still more shyly.

The other did not look at him. 'What a funny fellow you are!' he said, taking out his cigarette-case. 'Only the pity is that we shan't be together.'

'I say, tell me quite frankly: is it very dreadful at the bastions?' asked the younger suddenly. 'It seems dreadful at first but one gets used to it. You'll see for yourself.'

'Yes . . . and another thing: Do you think they will take Sevastopol? I don't think they will. I'm certain they won't.'

'Heaven only knows.'

'It's so provoking... Just think what a misfortune! Do you know, we've had a whole bundle of things stolen on the way and my shako was inside so that I am in a terrible position. Whatever shall I appear in? [You know we have new shakos now, and in general there are many changes, all improvements. I can tell you all about it. I have been everywhere in Moscow.']

The younger Kozeltsov, Vladimir, was very like his brother Michael, but it was the likeness of an opening rosebud to a withered dog-rose. He had the same fair hair as his brother, but it was thick and curled about

his temples, and a little tuft of it grew down the delicate white nape of his neck — a sign of luck according to the nurses. The delicate white skin of his face did not always show colour, but the full young blood rushing to it betrayed his every emotion.

His eyes were like his brother's, but more open and brighter, and seemed especially so because a slight moisture often made them glisten. Soft, fair down was beginning to appear on his cheeks and above the red lips, on which a shy smile often played disclosing his white and glistening teeth. Straight, broad-shouldered, the uniform over his red Russian shirt unbuttoned — as he stood there before his brother, cigarette in hand, leaning against the banisters of the porch, his face and attitude expressing naive joy, he was such a charming, handsome boy that one could not help wishing to look at him. He was very pleased to see his brother, and looked at him with respect and pride, imagining him to be a hero; but in some respects, namely, in what in society is considered good form (being able to speak good French, knowing how to behave in the presence of people of high position, dancing, and so on) he was rather ashamed of his brother, looked down on him, and even hoped if possible to educate him. All his views were still those he had acquired in Petersburg, Particularly in the house of a lady who liked good-looking lads and had got him to spend his holidays at her house; and at a senator's house in Moscow, where he had once danced at a grand ball.

VII

Having talked almost their fill, and reached that stage which often comes when two people find that though they are fond of one another they have little in common, the brothers remained silent for some time. 'Well then, collect your things and let us be off!' said the elder. The younger suddenly blushed and became confused. 'Do we go straight to Sevastopol?' he asked after a moment's silence. 'Well of course. You haven't got much luggage, I suppose. We'll get it all in.'

'All right! Let's start at once,' said the younger with a sigh, and went towards the room.

But he stopped in the passage without opening the door, hung his head sorrowfully and began thinking.

‘Now, at once, straight to Sevastopol. . . into that hell. . . terrible! Ah well, never mind. It had to be sooner or later. And now at least I’ll have my brother with me. . . .’

In fact, only now, at the thought that after getting into the trap there would be nothing more to detain him and that he would not alight again before reaching Sevastopol, did he clearly realize the danger he had been seeking, and he grew confused and frightened at the mere thought of the nearness of that danger. Having mastered himself as well as he could, he went into the room; but a quarter of an hour passed and he did not return to his brother, so the latter at last opened the door to call him. The younger Kozeltsov, in the attitude of a guilty schoolboy, was talking to an officer. When his brother opened the door he seemed quite disconcerted.

‘Yes, yes, I’m just coming!’ he cried, waving his hand to prevent his brother coming in. ‘Please wait for me there.’

A few minutes later he came out and went up to his brother with a sigh. ‘Just fancy,’ he said, ‘it turns out that I can’t go with you, after all!’

‘What? What nonsense!’

‘I’ll tell you the whole truth, Misha . . . none of us have any money left and we are all in debt to that lieutenant-captain whom you saw in there. It’s such a shame!’

The elder brother frowned, and remained silent for some time.

‘Do you owe much?’ he asked at last, looking at his brother from under his brows.

‘Much? No, not very much, but I feel terribly ashamed. He paid for me at three post-stations, and the sugar was always his, so that I don’t.... Yes, and we played preference . . . and I lost a little to him.’

‘That’s bad, Volodya! Now what would you have done if you hadn’t met me?’ the elder remarked sternly without looking at him.

‘Well, you see, I thought I’d pay when I got my travelling allowance in Sevastopol. I could do that, couldn’t I? ... So I’d better drive on with him to-morrow.’

The elder brother drew out his purse and with slightly trembling fingers produced two ten-ruble notes and one of three rubles.

‘There’s the money I have,’ he said. ‘How much do you owe?’ Kozeltsov did not speak quite truly when he made it appear as if this were all the money-he had. He had four gold coins sewn into his cuff in case of special need, but he had resolved not to touch them.

As it turned out the younger Kozeltsov owed only eight rubles, including the sugar and the preference, his brother gave them to him, merely remarking that it would never do to go playing preference when one had no money.

‘How high did you play?’

The younger did not reply. The question seemed to suggest a doubt of his honour.

Vexed with himself, ashamed of having done anything that could give rise to such suspicions, and hurt at such offensive words from the brother he so loved, his impressionable nature suffered so keenly that he did not answer. Feeling that he could not suppress the sobs that were gathering in his throat he took the money without looking at it and returned to his comrades.

VIII

Nikolaev, who had fortified himself in Duvanka with two cups of vodka¹ sold by a soldier he had met on the bridge, kept pulling at the reins, and the trap bumped along the stony road that leads by the Belbek² to Sevastopol. The two brothers, their legs touching as they jolted along, sat in obstinate silence though they never ceased to think about each other.

‘Why did he say that?’ thought the younger. ‘Couldn’t he have left it unsaid? Just as if he thought me a thief! And I believe he’s still angry, so that we have gone aPart for good. And yet how fine it would have been for us to be together in Sevastopol! Two brothers, friends with one another, fighting the enemy

¹ Vodka is a spirit distilled from rye. It is the commonest form of strong drink in Russia.

2 The Belbek is a river. side by side: one, the elder, not highly educated but a brave warrior, and the other young but . . . also a fine fellow.... In a week's time I would have proved to everybody that I am not so very young! I shall leave off blushing and my face will look manly; my moustaches, too, will have grown by that time — not very big but quite sufficiently,' and he pulled at the short down that showed at the corners of his mouth. 'Perhaps when we get there to-day we may go straight into action, he and I together. And I'm certain he is very brave and steadfast — a man who says little, but does more than others. I wonder whether he is pushing me to the very edge of the trap on purpose? I expect he knows I am uncomfortable but pretends he doesn't notice me.'

Pressing close to the edge of the trap for fear of his brother's noticing his discomfort, he continued his meditations: 'Well then, we shall get there to-day, and then perhaps straight to the bastion — I with the guns and my brother with his company, both together. Suddenly the French will fall upon us. I shall fire and fire. I shall kill quite a lot of them, but they will still keep coming straight at me. I can no longer fire and of course there is no escape for me, but suddenly my brother rushes to the front with his sword drawn and I seize a musket, and we run on with the soldiers. The French attack my brother: I run forward, kill one Frenchman, then another, and save my brother. I am wounded in the arm, I seize the gun in the other hand and still run on.

Then my brother falls at my side, shot dead by a bullet. I stop for a moment, bend sadly over him, draw myself up and cry: "Follow me, we will avenge him! I loved my brother more than anything on earth," I shall say. "I have lost him. Let us avenge him, let us annihilate the foe or let us all die here!" They will all rush after me shouting. Then all the French army, with Pelissier himself, will advance. We shall slaughter them, but at last I shall be wounded a second and a third time and shall fall down dying. Then they will all rush to me and Gorchakov himself will come and ask if I want anything. I shall say that I want nothing — only to be laid near my brother: that I wish to die beside him. They will carry me and lay me down by the blood-stained corpse of my brother. I

shall raise myself, and say only, "Yes, you did not know how to value two men who really loved the Fatherland: now they have both fallen. May God forgive you!" . . . and then I'll die.'

Who knows how much of these dreams will come true?

'I say, have you ever been in a hand-to-hand fight?' he suddenly asked, having quite forgotten that he was not going to speak to his brother.

'No, never,' answered the elder. 'We lost two thousand men from the regiment, but it was all at the trenches, and I was wounded while doing my work there. War is not carried on at all in the way you imagine, Volodya.'

The pet name Volodya touched the younger brother. He longed to put matters right with the elder, who had no idea that he had given offence.

'You are not angry with me, Misha?' he asked after a minute's pause.

'Angry? What for?'

'Oh, nothing . . . only because of what happened . . . it's nothing.'

'Not at all,' answered the other, turning towards him and slapping him on the knee.

'Then forgive me if I have pained you, Misha!' And the younger brother turned away to hide the tears that suddenly filled his eyes.

IX

'Can this be Sevastopol already?' asked the younger brother when they reached the top of the hill.

Spread out before them they saw the Roadstead with the masts of the ships, the sea with the enemy's fleet in the distance, the white shore-batteries, the barracks, the aqueducts, the docks, the buildings of the town, and the white and purple clouds of smoke that, rising continually from the yellow hills surrounding the town, floated in the blue sky lit up by the rosy rays of the sun, which was reflected brilliantly in the sea towards whose dark horizon it was already sinking.

Volodya looked without the slightest trepidation at the dreadful place that had so long been in his mind. He even gazed with concentrated attention at this really splendid and unique sight, feeling aesthetic pleasure and an heroic sense of satisfaction at the thought that in another half-hour he would be there, and he continued gazing until they came to the commissariat of his brother's regiment, on the North Side, where they had to ascertain the exact location of the regiment and of the battery.

The officer in charge of the commissariat lived near the so-called 'new town' (a number of wooden sheds constructed by the sailors' families) in a tent connected With a good-sized shed constructed of green oak branches that had not yet had time to dry completely.

The brothers found the officer seated at a dirty table on which stood a tumbler of cold tea, a tray with a vodka bottle, and bits of dry caviare and bread. He was wearing a dirty yellowish shirt, and, with the aid of a big abacus, was counting an enormous pile of bank-notes. But before speaking of the personality of this officer and of his conversation, we must examine the interior of the shed more attentively and see something of his occupations and way of living. His newly built shed was as big, as strongly wattled, and as conveniently arranged with tables and seats made of turf, as though it were built for a general or the commander of a regiment. To keep the dry leaves from falling in, the top and sides were lined with three carpets, which though hideous were new and must have cost money.

On the iron bedstead, beside which a most striking carpet was fastened to the wall (the pattern of which represented a lady on horseback), lay a bright red plush coverlet, a torn and dirty leather pillow, and an overcoat lined with racoon fur. On the table was a looking-glass in a silver frame, an exceedingly dirty silver-backed hairbrush, a broken horn comb full of greasy hair, a silver candlestick, a bottle of liqueur with an enormous red and gold label, a gold watch with a portrait of Peter I, two gold rings, a box of some kind of capsules, a crust of bread, and a scattered pack of old cards.

Bottles, full and empty, were stowed away under the bed. This officer was in charge of the regimental commissariat and the forage for the horses. With him lived his great friend, the commissioner employed on contracts. When the brothers entered, the latter was asleep in the tent while the commissariat officer was making up the regimental accounts for the month. He had a very handsome and military appearance: tall, with large moustaches and a portly figure. What was unpleasant about him was merely that his white face was so puffy as almost to hide his small grey eyes (as if he were filled with porter), and his extreme lack of cleanliness, from his thin greasy hair to his big bare feet thrust into ermine-lined slippers of some kind.

‘What a heap of money!’ said the elder Kozeltsov on entering the shed, as he fixed his eyes eagerly on the pile of banknotes. ‘If only you’d lend me half, Vasili Mikhaylovich!’

The commissariat officer shrank back when he saw his visitor, as if caught stealing, and gathering up the money bowed without rising.

‘Oh, if it were mine! But it’s Government money, my dear fellow. . . . And who is that with you?’ he asked, placing the money in a cash-box that stood near him and looking at Volodya. •It’s my brother, straight from the training college. We’ve come to learn from you where our regiment is stationed.’

‘Take a seat, gentlemen. Won’t you have something to drink? A glass of porter perhaps?’ he said, and without taking any further notice of his visitors he rose and went out into the tent.

‘I don’t mind if I do, Vasili Mikhaylovich.’

Volodya was struck by the grandeur of the commissariat officer, his off-hand manner, and the respect with which his brother addressed him.

‘I expect this is one of their best officers, whom they all respect — probably simple-minded but hospitable and brave,’ he thought as he sat down modestly and shyly on the sofa.

‘Then where is our regiment stationed?’ shouted the elder brother across to the tent.

‘What?’

The question was repeated.

‘Seifert was here this morning. He says the regiment has gone over to the Fifth Bastion.’

‘Is that certain?’

‘If I say so of course it’s certain. Still, the devil only knows if he told the truth! It wouldn’t take much to make him tell a lie either. Well, will you have some porter?’ said the commissariat officer, still speaking from the tent.

‘Well, yes, I think I will,’ said Kozeltsov.

‘And you, Osip Ignatevich, will you have some?’ continued the voice from the tent, apparently addressing the sleeping contractor. ‘Wake up, it’s past four!’

‘Why do you bother me? I’m not asleep,’ answered a thin voice lazily, pronouncing the Is and rs with a pleasant lisp.

‘Well, get up, it’s dull without you,’ and the commissariat officer came out to his visitors.

‘A bottle of Simfer6pol porter!’ he cried. The orderly entered the shed with an expression of pride as it seemed to Volodya, and in getting the porter from under the seat he even jostled Volodya.

[‘Yes, sir,’ said the commissariat officer, filling the glasses. ‘We have a new commander of the regiment now. Money is needed to get all that is required.’

‘Well, this one is quite a special type of the new generation,’ remarked Kozeltsov, politely raising his glass.

‘Yes, of a new generation! He’ll be just as close-fisted as the battalion-commander was. How he used to shout when he was in command! But now he sings a different tune.’

‘Can’t be helped, old fellow. It just is so.’

The younger brother understood nothing of what was being said, but vaguely felt that his brother was not expressing what he thought, and spoke in that way only because he was drinking the commissariat officer’s porter.]

The bottle of porter was already emptied and the conversation had continued for some time in the same strain, when the flap of the tent opened and out stepped a rather short, fresh-looking man in a blue satin dressing-gown with tassels and a cap with a red band and a cockade. He came in twisting his little black moustaches, looking somewhere in the direction of one of the carpets, and answered the greetings of the officers with a scarcely perceptible movement of the shoulders.

‘I think I’ll have a glass too,’ he said, sitting down to the table.

‘Have you come from Petersburg, young man?’ he remarked, addressing Volodya in a friendly manner.

‘Yes, sir, and I’m going to Sevastopol’

‘At your own request?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Now why do you do it, gentlemen? I don’t understand it,’ remarked the commissioner. ‘I’d be ready to walk to Petersburg on foot, I think, if they’d let me go. My God, I’m sick of this damned life!’

‘What have you to complain of?’ asked the elder Kozeltsov— ‘As if you weren’t well enough off here!’

The contractor gave him a look and turned away.

‘The danger, privations, lack of everything,’ he continued, addressing Volodya. ‘Whatever induces you to do it? I don’t at all understand you, gentlemen. If you got any profit out of it — but no! Now would it be pleasant, at your age, to be crippled for life?’

‘Some want to make a profit and others serve for honour,’ said the elder Kozeltsov crossly, again intervening in the conversation.

‘Where does the honour come in if you’ve nothing to eat?’ said the contractor, laughing disdainfully and addressing the commissariat officer, who also laughed. ‘Wind up and let’s have the tune from Lucia j he added, pointing to a musical box. T like it.’

‘What sort of a fellow is that Vasili Mikhaylovich?’ asked Volodya when he and his brother had left the shed and were driving to Sevastopol in the dusk of the evening.

‘So-so, but terribly stingy! [You know he gets at least three hundred rubles a month, but lives like a pig, as you saw.] But that contractor I

can't bear to look at. I'll give him a thrashing some day! [Why, that rascal carried off some twelve thousand rubles from Turkey. . . .'] And Kozeltsov began to enlarge on the subject of usury, rather (to tell the truth) with the bitterness of one who condemns it not because it is an evil, but because he is vexed that there are people who take advantage of it.]

X

It was almost night when they reached Sevastopol. Driving towards the large bridge across the Roadstead Volodya was not exactly dispirited, but his heart was heavy. All he saw and heard was so different from his past, still recent, experience: the large, light examination hall with its parquet floor, the jolly, friendly voices and laughter of his comrades, the new uniform, the beloved Tsar he had been accustomed to see for the past seven years, and who at Parting from them with tears in his eyes had called them his children — all he saw now was so little like his beautiful, radiant, high-souled dreams.

'Well, here we are,' said the elder brother when they reached the Michael Battery and dismounted from their trap. 'If they let us cross the bridge we will go at once to the Nicholas Barracks. You can stay there till the morning, and I'll go to the regiment and find out where your battery is and come for you to-morrow.'

'Oh, why? Let's go together,' said Volodya. 'I'll go to the bastion with you. It doesn't matter. One must get used to it sooner or later. If you go, so can I.'

'Better not.'

'Yes, please! I shall at least find out how. . . .'

'My advice is don't go . . . however— '

The sky was clear and dark. The stars, the flash of the guns and the continual flare of the bombs already showed up brightly in the darkness, and the large white building of the battery and the entry to the bridge¹ loomed out. The air was shaken every

1 This pontoon bridge was erected during the summer of 1855. At first it was feared that the water was too rough in the Roadstead for a secure bridge to be built, but it served its purpose, and later on even stood the strain put upon it by the retreat of the Russian army to the North Side. second by a quick succession of artillery shots and explosions which became ever louder and more distinct. Through this roar, and as if answering it, came the dull murmur of the Roadstead. A slight breeze blew in from the sea and the air smelt moist. The brothers reached the bridge. A recruit, awkwardly striking his gun against his hand, called out, 'Who goes there?'

'Soldier!'

'No one's allowed to pass!'

'How is that? We must.'

'Ask the officer.'

The officer, who was sitting on an anchor dozing, rose and ordered that they should be allowed to pass.

'You may go there, but not back.'

'Where are you driving, all of a heap?' he shouted to the regimental wagons which, laden high with gabions, were crowding the entrance. As the brothers were descending to the first pontoon, they came upon some soldiers going the other way and talking loudly.

'If he's had his outfit money his account is squared — that's so.'

'Ah, lads,' said another, 'when one gets to the North Side one sees light again. It's a different air altogether.'

'Is it though?' said the first. 'Why, only the other day a damned ball flew over and tore two soldiers' legs off for them, even there. . . .'

Waiting for the trap the brothers after crossing the first pontoon stopped on the second, which was washed here and there by the waves. The wind which seemed gentle on land was strong and gusty here; the bridge swayed and the waves broke noisily against beams, anchors, and ropes, and washed over the boards. To the right, divided from the light blue-grey starry horizon by a smooth, endless black line, was the sea, dark, misty, and with a hostile sullen roar. Far off in the distance gleamed the lights of the enemy's fleet. To the left loomed the

black hulk of one of our ships, against whose sides the waves beat audibly.

A steamer too was visible moving quickly and noisily from the North Side. The flash of a bomb exploding near the steamer lit up for a moment the gabions piled high on its deck, two men standing on the paddle-box, and the white foam and splash of the greenish waves cut by the vessel. On the edge of the bridge, his feet dangling in the water, a man in his shirt sat chopping something on the pontoon. In front, above Sevastopol, similar flashes were seen, and the terrible sounds became louder and louder. A wave flowing in from the sea washed over the right side of the bridge and wetted Volodya's boots, and two soldiers passed by him splashing their feet through the water. Suddenly something came crashing down which lit up the bridge ahead of them, a cart driving over it, and a horseman, and fragments of a bomb fell whistling and splashing into the water.

'Ah, Michael Semenich!'¹ said the rider, stopping his horse in front of the elder Kozeltsov. 'Have you recovered?'

'As you see. And where is fate taking you?'

'To the North Side for cartridges. You see I'm taking the place of the regimental adjutant to-day. . . . We're expecting an attack from hour to hour.'

'And where is Martsov?'

¹ In addressing anyone in Russian, it is usual to employ the Christian name and patronymic: i.e. to the Christian name (in this case Michael) the father's Christian name is joined (in this case Semen) with the termination vich (o-vich or e-vich) which means 'son of'. The termination is often shortened to ich, and colloquially toych. Surnames are less used than in English, for the patronymic is suitable for all circumstances of life — both for speaking to and of any one — except that people on very intimate terms use only the Christian name, or a pet name. 'His leg was torn off yesterday while he was sleeping in his room in town. . . . Did you know him?'

'Is it true that the regiment is at the Fifth Bastion now?'

'Yes, we have replaced the M — regiment. You'd better call at the Ambulance, you'll find some of our fellows there — they'll show you the way.'

'And my lodgings in the Morskaya Street, are they safe?'

'Safe, my dear fellow! They've long since been shattered by bombs. You won't know Sevastopol again. Not a woman left, not a restaurant, no music! The last brothel left yesterday. It's melancholy enough now. Good-bye!'

And the officer trotted away.

Terrible fear suddenly overcame Volodya. He felt as if a ball or a bomb-splinter would come the next moment and hit him straight on the head. The damp darkness, all these sounds, especially the murmur of the splashing water — all seemed to tell him to go no farther, that no good awaited him here, that he would never again set foot on this side of the bay, that he should turn back at once and run somewhere as far as possible from this dreadful place of death. 'But perhaps it is too late, it is already decided now,' thought he shuddering, Partly at that thought and Partly because the water had soaked through his boots and was making his feet wet.

He sighed deeply and moved a few steps away from his brother.

'O Lord! Shall I really be killed — just I? Lord, have mercy on me!' he whispered, and made the sign of the cross.

'Well, Volodya, come on!' said the elder brother when the trap had driven on to the bridge. 'Did you see the bomb?'

On the bridge they met carts loaded with wounded men, with gabions, and one with furniture driven by a woman. No one stopped them at the farther side.

Keeping instinctively under the wall of the Nicholas Battery and listening to the bombs that here were bursting overhead, and to the howling of the falling fragments, the brothers came silently to that Part of the battery where the icon hangs. Here they heard that the Fifth Light Artillery, to which Volodya was appointed, was stationed at the Korabelnaya¹ and they decided that Volodya, in spite of the danger, should spend the night with his elder brother at the Fifth Bastion and

go from there to his battery next morning. After turning into a corridor and stepping across the legs of the soldiers who lay sleeping all along the wall of the battery they at last reached the Ambulance Station.

XI

On entering the first room, full of beds on which lay wounded men and permeated by a horribly disgusting hospital smell, they met two Sisters of Mercy just going out.

One, a woman of fifty, with black eyes and a stern expression, was carrying bandages and lint and giving orders to a young lad, a medical assistant, who was following her. The other, a very pretty girl of about twenty whose pale, delicate, fair face looked from under her white cap with a peculiarly sweet helplessness, was walking by the side of the older woman with her hands in her apron pockets, and seemed afraid of being left behind.

Kozeltsov asked them if they knew where Martsov was, whose leg had been torn off the day before.

1 The Korabelnaya was a suburb of Sevastopol lying to the east of the South Bay and to the south of the Roadstead. Like the 'North Side' it was connected with Sevastopol by a floating bridge. (See map.) 'He is of the P — regiment, I think?' asked the elder. 'Is he a relation of yours?' 'No, just a comrade.'

'Take them to him,' she said to the young sister in French. 'It is this way,' and she herself went up to one of the patients, followed by the assistant.

'Come along, what are you looking at?' said Kozeltsov to Volodya, who stood with raised eyebrows and a look of suffering on his face, unable to tear his eyes from the wounded. 'Come now!'

Volodya followed his brother but still kept looking back and repeating unconsciously, 'O, my God! My God!'

'I suppose he has not been here long?' the sister remarked to Kozeltsov, indicating Volodya, who followed them along the corridor with exclamations and sighs.

‘He has only just come.’

The pretty sister looked at Volodya and suddenly began to cry.

‘My God! My God! When will it all end?’ she said in a despairing voice.

They entered the officers’ ward. Martsov was lying on his back, his sinewy arms bare to the elbow thrown back behind his head, and on his yellow face the expression of one who has clenched his teeth to prevent himself from screaming with pain. His sound leg with a stocking on showed from under the blanket and one could see the toes moving spasmodically.

‘Well, how are you?’ asked the sister, raising his slightly bald head with her slender delicate fingers (on one of which Volodya noticed a gold ring) and arranging his pillow.

‘In pain of course!’ he answered angrily. ‘That’ll do — the pillow’s all right!’ and the toes in the stocking moved still faster. ‘How d’you do? What’s your name?’ . . . ‘Excuse me,’ he added, when Kozeltsov had told him. ‘Ah yes, I beg your pardon. One forgets everything here. Why, we lived together,’ he remarked without any sign of pleasure, and looked inquiringly at Volodya.

‘This is my brother, arrived to-day from Petersburg.’

‘H’m! And I have got my discharge!’ said the wounded man, frowning.

‘Oh, how it hurts! If only it would be over quicker!’

He drew up his leg and, moving his toes still more rapidly, covered his face with his hands.

‘He must be left alone,’ said the sister in a whisper while tears filled her eyes. ‘He is very ill.’

While still on the North Side the brothers had agreed to go to the Fifth Bastion together, but as they passed out of the Nicholas Battery it was as if they had agreed not to run unnecessary risks and for each to go his own way.

‘But how will you find it, Volodya?’ said the elder. ‘Look here! Nikolaev shall take you to the Korabelnaya and I’ll go on alone and come to you tomorrow.’

Nothing more was said at this last Parting between the brothers.

The thunder of the cannonade continued with unabated violence. Ekaterina Street, down which Volodya walked followed by the silent Nikolaev, was quiet and deserted. All he could distinguish in the dark was the broad street with its large white houses, many of them in ruins, and the stone pavement along which he was walking. Now and then he met soldiers and officers. As he was passing by the left side of the Admiralty Building, a bright light inside showed him the acacias planted along the side-walk of the streets with green stakes to support them and sickly, dusty leaves. He distinctly heard his own footsteps and those of Nikolaev, who followed him breathing heavily.

He was not thinking of anything: the pretty Sister of Mercy, Martsov's foot with the toes moving in the stocking, the darkness, the bombs, and different images of death, floated dimly before his imagination. His whole young impressionable soul was weighed down and crushed by a sense of loneliness and of the general indifference shown to his fate in these dangerous surroundings. 'I shall be killed, I shall suffer, endure torments, and no one will shed a tear!' And all this instead of the heroic life abounding in energy and sympathy of which he had had such glorious dreams. The bombs whistled and burst nearer and nearer. Nikolaev sighed more and more often, but did not speak. As they were crossing the bridge that led to the Korabelnaya he saw a whistling something fall and disappear into the water near by, lighting the purple waves to a flaming red for a second and then come splashing up again.

'Just look! Not quenched!' said Nikolaev in a hoarse voice.

'No,' answered Volodya in an involuntarily high-pitched plaintive tone which surprised him.

They met wounded men carried on stretchers and more carts loaded with gabions. In the Korabelnaya they met a regiment, and men on horseback rode past. One of these was an officer followed by a Cossack. He was riding at a trot, but seeing Volodya he reined up his horse, looked in his face, turned away, and rode on, touching his horse with the whip.

‘Alone, alone! No one cares whether I live or not,’ thought the lad, and felt inclined to cry in real earnest.

Having gone up the hill past a high white wall he came into a street of small shattered houses, continually lit up by the bombs. A dishevelled, tipsy woman, coming out of a gate with a sailor, knocked up against Volodya. ‘Because if he’sh an on’ble man,’ she muttered— ‘pardon y’r exshensh offisher!’

The poor lad’s heart ached more and more. On the dark horizon the lightnings flashed oftener and oftener and the bombs whistled and exploded more and more frequently around them. Nikolaev sighed and suddenly began to speak in what seemed to Volodya a lifeless tone.

‘There now, and we were in such a hurry to leave home! “We must go! We must go!” Fine place to hurry to! [Wise gentlemen when they are the least bit wounded lie up quietly in ‘orspital. It’s so nice, what better can you want?]’

‘Well, but if my brother had recovered his health,’ answered Volodya, hoping by conversation to disperse the dreadful feeling that had seized him.

‘Health indeed! Where’s his health, when he’s quite ill? Even them as is really well had best lie in ‘orspital these times. Not much pleasure to be got. All you get is a leg or an arm carried off. It’s done before you know where you are! It’s horrible enough even here in the town, but what’s it like at the baksions! You say all the prayers you know when you’re going there. See how the beastly thing twangs past you!’ he added, listening to the buzzing of a flying fragment.

‘Now,’ he continued, ‘I’m to show y’r honour the way. Our business is o’ course to obey orders: what’s ordered has to be done. But the trap’s been left with some private or other, and the bundle’s untied. . . . “Go, go!” but if something’s lost, why Nikolaev answers for it!’

A few more steps brought them to a square. Nikolaev did not speak but kept sighing. Then he said suddenly:

‘There, y’r honour, there’s where your antillaries stationed. Ask the sentinel, he’ll show you.’ A few steps farther on Volodya no longer

heard Nikolaev sighing behind him. He suddenly felt himself utterly and finally deserted. This sense of loneliness, face to face as it seemed to him with death, pressed like a heavy, cold stone on his heart. He stopped in the middle of the square, glanced round to see if anyone was looking, seized his head and thought with horror:

'O Lord, am I really a vile, miserable coward . . . when it's for my Fatherland, for the Tsar for whom I used to long to die? Yes! I am a miserable, wretched being!' And Volodya, filled with despair and disappointed at himself, asked the sentinel the way to the house of the commander of the battery and went where he was directed.

XIII

The commander of the battery lived in a small two-storied house with an entrance from the yard, which the sentinel pointed out. The faint light of a candle shone through a window patched up with paper. An orderly, who sat on the steps smoking his pipe, went in to inform the commander of the battery of Volodya's arrival and then showed him into the room. In the room, under a broken mirror between two windows, was a table littered with official papers; there were also several chairs and an iron bedstead with clean bedding, with a small rug beside it.

Just beside the door stood a handsome sergeant-major with large moustaches, wearing side-arms, and with a cross and an Hungarian medal¹ on his uniform. A staff-officer, a short man of about forty in a thin old cloak and with a swollen cheek tied round with a bandage, was pacing up and down the room.

I have the honour to report myself, Ensign Kozeltsov, secundus, ordered to join the Fifth Light

¹ That is, a medal granted for service in the suppression of the Hungarian rising in 1849, when Nicholas I helped Austria to suppress the insurgent Hungarians. Artillery,' said Volodya on entering the room, repeating the sentence he had been taught.

The commander answered his greeting dryly and without shaking hands asked him to take a seat.

Volodya sat down shyly on a chair by the writing table, and began playing with a pair of scissors his hand happened to fall on. The commander, with his hands at his back and with drooping head, continued to pace the room in silence as if trying to remember something, only now and then glancing at the hand that was playing with the scissors.

The commander of the battery was rather stout, with a large bald patch on his head, thick moustaches hanging straight down over his mouth, and pleasant hazel eyes. His hands were plump, well-shaped, and clean, his small feet were much turned out and he trod with firmness in a way that indicated that he was not a diffident man.

‘Yes,’ he said, stopping opposite the sergeant-major, ‘the ammunition horses must have an extra peck beginning from to-morrow. They are getting very thin. Don’t you think so?’

‘Well, we can manage an extra peck, your honour! Oats are a bit cheaper now,’ answered the sergeant-major, standing at attention but moving his fingers, which evidently liked to aid his conversation by gestures. ‘Then our forage-master, Frantchuk, sent me a note from the convoy yesterday that we must be sure, your Excellency, to buy axles there. They say they can be got cheap. Will you give the order?’

‘Well, let him buy them — he has the money,’ said the commander, and again began to pace the room. ‘And where are your things?’ he suddenly asked, stopping short in front of Volodya.

Poor Volodya was so oppressed by the thought that he was a coward, that he saw contempt for himself as a miserable craven in every look and every word. He felt as if the commander of the battery had already discerned his secret, and was chaffing him. He was abashed, and replied that his things were at the Grafskaya and that his brother had promised to send them on next day.

The commander did not stop to hear him out, but turning to the sergeant-major asked, ‘Where could we put the ensign up?’

‘The ensign, sir?’ said the sergeant-major, making Volodya still more confused by casting a rapid glance at him which seemed to ask: ‘What sort of an ensign is he?’

‘Why, downstairs, your Excellency. We can put his honour up in the lieutenant-captain’s room,’ he continued after a moment’s thought. ‘The lieutenant-captain is at the baksion at present, so there’s his bed empty.’

‘Well then, if you don’t mind for the present,’ said the commander. ‘I should think you are tired, and we’ll make better arrangements tomorrow.’

Volodya rose and bowed.

‘Would you like a glass of tea?’ said the commander of the battery when Volodya had nearly reached the door. ‘The samovar can be lit.’ Volodya bowed and went out. The colonel’s orderly showed him downstairs into a bare, dirty room, where all sorts of rubbish was lying about and a man in a pink shirt and covered with a thick coat lay asleep on a bed without sheets or blankets. Volodya took him for a soldier.

‘Peter Nikolaevich!’ said the orderly, shaking the sleeper by the shoulder. ‘The ensign will sleep here. . . . This is our cadet,’ he added, turning to Volodya.

‘Oh, please don’t let me disturb you!’ said Volodya, but the cadet, a tall, solid young man with a handsome but very stupid face, rose from the bed, threw the cloak over his shoulders, and evidently not yet quite awake, left the room saying: ‘Never mind, I’ll lie down in the yard.’

XIV

Left alone with his thoughts Volodya’s first feeling was one of fear at the disordered and cheerless state of his own soul. He longed to fall asleep, to forget all that surrounded him and especially himself. Putting out the candle, he took off his cloak and lay down on the bed, drawing the cloak over his head to shut out the darkness, of which he had been afraid from childhood. But suddenly the thought occurred to him that now, immediately, a bomb would crash through the roof and kill him, and he began listening. Just above his head he heard the steps of the commander of the battery.

'If it does come,' he thought, 'it will first kill those upstairs and then me — anyway not me alone.' This thought comforted him a little and he was about to fall asleep.

'But supposing that suddenly, to-night, Sevastopol is taken and the French break in here? What shall I defend myself with?' He rose and paced up and down the room. The fear of real danger drove away the fanciful fear of the darkness. A saddle and a samovar were the only hard things in the room.

'What a wretch I am — a coward, a despicable coward!' he thought again, and once more the oppressive feeling of contempt and even disgust for himself came over him. He lay down again and tried not to think. Then, under the influence of the unceasing noise which made the panes rattle in the one window of the room, the impressions of the day rose in his imagination, reminding him of danger. Now he seemed to see wounds and blood, then bombs and splinters flying into the room, then the pretty Sister of Mercy bandaging his wounds and crying over him as he lay dying, then his mother seeing him off in the little country town and praying fervently with tears in her eyes before the wonder-working icon — and again sleep seemed impossible. But suddenly the thought of God Almighty, who can do anything and hears every prayer, came clearly into his mind. He knelt down, crossed himself, and folded his hands as he had been taught to do when a child. This attitude suddenly brought back to him an old, long-forgotten sense of comfort.

'If I must die, if I must cease to exist, then do it, Lord,' he thought, 'do it quickly, but if courage is needed and firmness, which I lack, grant them to me! Deliver me from the shame and disgrace which are more than I can bear, and teach me what I must do to fulfil Thy Will.'

The frightened, cramped, childish soul suddenly matured, brightened, and became aware of new, bright, and broad horizons. He thought and felt many things during the short time this state continued, but soon fell into a sweet untroubled slumber, amid the continued booming of the cannonade and rattle of the window-panes.

O Lord Almighty! Thou alone hast heard and knowest the simple yet burning and desperate prayers of ignorance, of confused repentance, prayers for bodily health and for spiritual enlightenment, that have risen to Thee from this dreadful place of death: from the general who, an instant after his mind has been absorbed by the Order of St. George upon his neck, feels with trepidation the nearness of Thy presence — to the private soldier prostrate on the bare floor of the Nicholas Battery, who prays for the future reward he dimly expects for all his sufferings.

XV

The elder Kozeltsov happening to meet a soldier of his regiment in the street went with him straight to the Fifth Bastion.

‘Keep to the wall, your honour!’ said the soldier. ‘Why?’

‘It’s dangerous, your honour. There it is, flying over us!’ said the soldier, listening to the sound of a ball that whistled past and fell on the hard ground on the other side of the road.

[Without heeding the soldier’s words Kozeltsov went boldly down the middle of the road.]

Here were still the same streets, the same or even more frequent firing, the same sounds, the same groans from the wounded one met on the way, and the same batteries, breastworks, and trenches, as when he was in Sevastopol in the spring; but somehow it all seemed more melancholy now and yet more vigorous. There were more holes in the houses, there were no lights in any of the windows except those of Kustchin’s house (a hospital), not a woman was to be seen, and the place no longer bore its former customary character and air of unconcern, but seemed burdened with heavy suspense and weariness.

But here is the last trench and the voice of a soldier of the P — regiment who has recognized his former company-commander, and there stands the third battalion, pressing against the wall in the darkness, now and then lit up for an instant by the firing, and sounds are heard, subdued talking and the clatter of muskets.

‘Where is the commander of the regiment?’ asked Kozeltsov.

‘In the naval officers’ casemate, your honour,’ answers an obliging soldier. ‘Let me show you the way.’

Passing from trench to trench, the soldier led the way to a cutting in the trench. A sailor sat there smoking a pipe. Behind him was a door through a chink in which a light shone.

‘Can I go in?’

‘I’ll announce you at once,’ and the sailor went in at the door. Two voices were heard talking inside.

‘If Prussia remains neutral,’ said one voice, ‘Austria will too. . . .’

‘What does Austria matter?’ said the other, ‘when the Slavonic lands. . . . Well, ask him in.’

Kozeltsov had never been in this casemate and was struck by its elegance. It had a parquet floor and a screen in front of the door, two beds stood against the walls, and in a corner of the room there was a large icon — the Mother of God with an embossed gilt cover — with a pink lamp alight before it. A naval officer, fully dressed, was lying asleep on one of the beds. On the other, before a table on which stood two uncorked bottles of wine, sat the speakers — the new regimental commander and his adjutant. Though Kozeltsov was far from being a coward and was not at all guilty of any offence either against the government or the regimental commander, still he felt abashed in the presence of his former comrade the colonel, so proudly did that colonel rise and give him his attention.

[And the adjutant who was sitting there also made Kozeltsov feel abashed by his pose and look, that seemed to say: ‘I am only a friend of your regimental commander’s. You have not come to present yourself to me, and I can’t and don’t wish to demand any deference from you.’]

‘How strange!’ thought Kozeltsov as he looked at his commander, ‘It’s only seven weeks since he took the command, and yet all his surroundings — his dress, manner, and looks — already indicate the power a regimental commander has: [a power based not so much on his age, seniority, or military worth, as on his wealth as a regimental commander.] It isn’t long since this same Batrishchev used to hobnob

with us, wore one and the same dark cotton print shirt a whole week, ate rissoles and curd dumplings every day, never asking any one to share them — but look at him now! [A fine linen shirt showing from under his wide-sleeved cloth coat, a ten-ruble cigar in his hand, a six-ruble bottle of claret on the table — all bought at incredible prices through the quartermaster at Simferopol — and] in his eyes that look of the cold pride of a wealthy aristocrat, which says: though as a regimental commander of the new school I am your comrade [don't forget that your pay is sixty rubles once in four months, while tens of thousands pass through my hands, and] believe me I know very well that you'd give half your life to be in my place!'

'You have been under treatment a long time,' said the colonel, with a cold look at Kozeltsov.

'I have been ill, Colonel. The wound is not thoroughly closed even now.'

'Then it's a pity you've come,' said the colonel, looking suspiciously at the officer's solid figure. 'But still, you are capable of taking duty?'

'Certainly sir, I am.'

'I am very glad to hear it. Then you'll take over from Ensign Zaytsev the Ninth Company that you had before. You will receive your orders at once.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Be so good as to send the regimental adjutant to me when you go.'

The commander finished with a slight bow, thereby intimating that the audience was at an end.

On leaving the casemate Kozeltsov muttered something to himself several times, and shrugged his shoulders as if he were hurt, or uncomfortable, or provoked — and provoked not with the colonel (he had no ground to be so) but with himself, and he felt dissatisfied with everything around him.

[Discipline and the subordination that goes with it, like every legalized relationship, is pleasant only when it rests on a mutual consciousness of its necessity, and of a superiority in experience, military worth, or simply on a moral superiority recognized by the inferior. But if the discipline is founded on arbitrary or pecuniary considerations, as is

often the case among us, it always turns into pretentiousness on the one side and into suppressed envy and irritation on the other, and instead of a useful influence uniting the mass into one whole it produces a quite opposite effect. A man who does not feel that he can inspire respect by his own worth, instinctively fears intimacy with his subordinates and tries by ostentation to keep criticism at a distance. The subordinates, seeing only this external side which is offensive to themselves, suppose (often unjustly) that there is nothing good behind it.]

XVI

Before going to join his fellow officers Kozeltsov went to greet the men of his company and to see where it was stationed. The breastworks of gabions, the plan of the trenches, the cannon he passed, and even the fragments and bombs he stumbled over on the way, all lit up incessantly by the flashes of the firing, were quite familiar to him. All this had vividly impressed itself on his memory three months before, when he had spent two consecutive weeks at this bastion. Though there was much that was dreadful in the recollection, a certain charm of old times was mingled with it and he recognized all the familiar places and objects with pleasure, as if the fortnight spent there had been an agreeable one. His company was stationed against the wall of defence on the side towards the Sixth Bastion.

Kozeltsov entered a long bomb-proof, quite open on the entrance side, where he was told he would find the Ninth Company. There was literally no room to set one's foot in the whole shelter: it was crowded with soldiers from the very entrance. At one side burned a crooked tallow candle which a soldier, lying on the ground, held over the book another was reading from, spelling out the words. Through the smoky atmosphere of the place, in the dim light near the candle, heads were visible, raised eagerly to listen to the reader. The book was a primer, and on entering the bomb-proof Kozeltsov heard the following:

'Prayer af-ter les-sons. We Thank Thee, O Cre-a-tor. . . .'

'Snuff the candle!' said a voice. 'It's a fine book.'

'God . . . is' . . . continued the reader.

When Kozeltsov asked for the sergeant-major the reader stopped and the soldiers began moving, coughing and blowing their noses, as is usual after a restrained silence. The sergeant-major, buttoning his uniform, rose not far from the reader's group, and stepping over and onto the legs of those who could not get out of his way for lack of room, came up to the officer.

'Good evening, friend! Is this the whole of our company?'

'We wish your honour health. Welcome back, your honour!' answered the sergeant-major with a cheerful and friendly look at Kozeltsov. 'How is your health getting on, your honour? Thank God you're better! We have missed you.'

It was easy to see that Kozeltsov was liked by his company.

Far back in the bomb-proof voices were heard saying: 'Our old company-commander has come back!' 'Him that was wounded.' 'Kozeltsov.' 'Michael Semenich,' and so on. Some men even moved nearer to him, and the drummer greeted him.

'How do you do, Obantchrik?' said Kozeltsov. 'Still whole? Good evening, lads!' he added, raising his voice.

The answer, 'Wish your honour health!' resounded through the casemate.

'How are you getting on, lads?'

'Badly, your honour. The French are getting the better of us. They give it us hot from behind their 'trenchments, but don't come out into the open.' 'Perhaps it will be my luck to see them coming out into the open, lads,' said Kozeltsov. 'It won't be the first time . . . you and I will give them a thrashing.'

'We'll do our best, your honour,' several voices replied.

'Yes, he's really brave!' said a voice.

'Awfully brave!' said the drummer to another soldier, not loud but so as to be heard, and as if justifying the commander's words to himself and proving that there was nothing boastful or unlikely in what he had said.

From the soldiers, Kozeltsov went to join his fellow officers in the Defence Barracks.

XVII

In the large caserne there was a crowd of naval, artillery, and infantry officers. Some slept, others talked, sitting on a chest of some kind and on the carriage of a garrison gun, but the largest and noisiest group sat on two Cossack cloaks spread out on the floor beyond the arch, and were drinking porter and playing cards.

‘Ah, Kozeltsov! Kozeltsov! ... So you’ve come! That’s good. . . . You’re a brick. . . . How’s your wound?’ It was evident that he was liked here also, and that his return gave pleasure.

When he had shaken hands with those he knew, Kozeltsov joined the noisy group of officers playing cards. With some of them he was acquainted. A thin, dark, handsome man, with a long thin nose and large moustaches which joined his whiskers, was keeping the bank and dealt the cards with thin white fingers on one of which he wore a large seal-ring with a crest.

He dealt straight ahead and carelessly, being evidently excited about something, and only trying to appear at ease. On his right lay a grey-haired major leaning on his elbows who with affected coolness kept staking half-rubles and paying at once. On his left squatted an officer with a red perspiring face, smiling unnaturally and joking. When his cards lost he kept fumbling with one hand in his empty trouser pocket. He was playing high, but evidently no longer for ready money, and it was this that upset the handsome dark man. A bald, thin, pale officer with a huge nose and mouth paced the room with a large bundle of paper money in his hand and continually staked va-banque for ready money and won. Kozeltsov drank a glass of vodka and sat down with the players.

‘Stake something, Michael Semenich!’ said the banker. ‘You must have brought back heaps of money.’

'Where should I get money? On the contrary, what I had I've spent in the town.'

'Never! . . . You've surely cleared someone out in Simferopol!'

'I've really very little,' said Koseltsov, but evidently not wishing to be believed he unbuttoned his uniform and took up an old pack of cards.

'Well, suppose I have a try! Who knows what the devil may do for one? Even a mosquito, you know, wins his battles sometimes. But I must have a drink to keep up my courage.'

And having drunk another glass of vodka and some porter he soon lost his last three rubles.

A hundred and fifty rubles were noted down against the perspiring little officer.

'No, I've no luck,' he said, carelessly preparing another card.

'I'll trouble you to hand up the money,' said the banker, ceasing to deal the cards for a moment and looking at him..

'Allow me to send it to-morrow,' replied the other, rising and fumbling with renewed vigour in his empty pocket.

The banker cleared his throat loudly, and angrily throwing the cards right and left finished the deal. 'But this won't do. I give up the bank. This won't do, Zakhar Ivanich,' he repeated. 'We were playing for cash, not on credit.'

'What? Don't you trust me? It's really too ridiculous!'

'Who am I to receive from?' muttered the major, who was quite drunk by this time and had won some eight rubles. 'I have paid up more than twenty rubles and when I win I get nothing.'

'What am I to pay with,' said the banker, 'when there's no money on the board?'

'That's not my business,' shouted the major, rising. 'I'm playing with you, with honest people, and not with him.'

The perspiring officer suddenly flared up:

'I shall pay to-morrow, I tell you. How dare you insult me?'

'I shall say what I please! Honest people don't behave like that. So there!' shouted the major.

'That's enough, Fedor Fedorich!' said everybody, trying to pacify him.

But let us hasten to drop the curtain on this scene. To-morrow or to-day, perhaps, each of these men will cheerfully and proudly go to face death, and die steadfastly and calmly; but the only relief in these inhuman conditions, horrible even to the coldest imagination and from which there is no hope of escape, is to forget and to suppress consciousness. Deep in each soul is a noble spark capable of making its possessor a hero, but it wearies of burning brightly — till a fateful moment comes when it will flash into flame and illumine great deeds.

XVIII

The bombardment continued with equal vigour the next day. At about eleven o'clock Volodya Kozeltsov was sitting among the officers of his battery whom he was already beginning to get used to. He was examining the new faces, observing, asking questions, and talking. The modest conversation, with some pretension to knowledge, of these artillery officers inspired him with respect and pleased him, and on the other hand, Volodya's bashful and innocent good looks inclined the officers in his favour. The senior of the battery, a captain, a short man with reddish hair standing up in a tuft above his forehead and brushed smooth on his temples, brought up in the old artillery traditions, a ladies' man with pretensions to scientific knowledge, questioned Volodya about what he knew of artillery and new inventions, joked in a friendly manner about his youth and his pretty face, and in general treated him like a son — and this pleased Volodya very much.

Sub-lieutenant Dyadenko, a young officer who spoke with an Ukrainian accent and who wore a torn cloak and had dishevelled hair — though he talked loudly, snatched every opportunity to begin a hot dispute, and was abrupt in his movements — nevertheless seemed attractive to Volodya, for he could not help seeing that a very kind heart and much that was good lay beneath this rough exterior. Dyadenko kept offering to be of use to Volodya, and demonstrating to him that none of the guns in Sevastopol were placed according to rule.

The only one Volodya did not like was Lieutenant Tchernovitski with his arched eyebrows, though he was the most polite of them all, and wore

a coat which was clean enough and neatly patched if not very new, and though he displayed a gold chain over his satin waistcoat. He kept asking what the Emperor and the Minister of War were doing, and told him with unnatural rapture of feats of valour performed in Sevastopol, regretted [the ill-advised arrangements that were being made, and] that there were so few real patriots, and in general displayed much knowledge, intelligence, and noble feeling; but for some reason it all seemed unnatural and unpleasant. Volodya noticed in Particular that the other officers hardly spoke to Tchernovitski. Cadet Vlang, whom Volodya had disturbed the night before, was also there.

He did not speak, but sitting modestly in a corner laughed when there was anything funny, helped to recall anything that was forgotten, handed the vodka bottle, and made cigarettes for all the officers. Whether it was the modest, courteous manner of Volodya, who treated him as an officer and did not order him about as if he were a boy, or whether Volodya's attractive appearance charmed Vlanga (as the soldiers called him, giving a feminine form to his name), at any rate he did not take his large kindly eyes from the new officer, foresaw and anticipated his wants, and was all the time in a state of enamoured ecstasy which of course the officers noticed and made fun of.

Before dinner the lieutenant-captain was relieved from the bastion and joined them. Lieutenant-Captain Kraut was a fair-haired, handsome, vivacious officer with big sandy moustaches and whiskers. He spoke Russian excellently, but too accurately and elegantly for a Russian. In the service and in his life he was just the same as in his speech: he served admirably, was a first-rate comrade, most reliable in money matters, but as a man he seemed to lack something just because everything about him was so satisfactory. Like all Russo-Germans, in strange contradistinction to the idealist German-Germans, he was *praktisch* in the extreme.

'Here he comes — our hero I' said the captain, as Kraut entered the room swinging his arms and jingling his spurs. 'What will you take, Friedrich Christianich, tea or vodka?'

'I have already ordered some tea,' answered Kraut, 'but meanwhile I do not mind taking a drop of vodka as a refreshment for my soul.... Very pleased to make your acquaintance. I hope you will favour me with your company and your friendship,' he added, turning to Volodya, who rose and bowed to him. 'Lieutenant-Captain Kraut. ... The master-gunner at our bastion told me yesterday that you had arrived.'

'I am very grateful to you for your bed: I slept on it.'

'But were you comfortable? One of the legs is broken; no one has time to mend it in this state of siege, it has to be propped up.'

'Well, what luck have you had on duty?' asked Dyadenko.

'Oh, all right; only Skvortsov was hit, and yesterday we had to mend a gun-carriage — the cheek was blown to shivers.'

He rose and began to walk up and down. It was evident that he was under the influence of that pleasant feeling men experience who have just left a post of danger.

'Well, Dmitri Gavrilich,' he said, shaking the captain by his knee, 'how are you getting on? What of your recommendation? Is it still silent?'

'There's no news as yet.'

'And there won't be any,' began Dyadenko. 'I told you so before.'

'Why won't there be?'

'Because the report was not written properly.'

'Ah, you wrangler! You wrangler!' said Kraut, smiling merrily. 'A real obstinate Ukrainian! There now, just to spite you you'll get a lieutenancy.'

'No I shan't!'

'Vlang, get me my pipe and fill it,' said Kraut, turning to the cadet, who rose at once and readily ran for the pipe.

Kraut brightened them all up: he talked of the bombardment, asked what had been going on in his absence, and spoke to everybody.

XIX

Well, have you established yourself satisfactorily among us?' Kraut asked Volodya. 'Excuse me, what is your name and patronymic? You know that's our custom in the artillery. . . . Have you a horse?'

'No,' said Volodya, 'I don't know what I'm to do. I was telling the captain ... I have no horse nor any money until I get my forage-money and travelling expenses paid. I thought meanwhile of asking the commander of the battery to let me have a horse, but I'm afraid he'll refuse.'

'Apollon Sergeich . . .?' and Kraut made a sound with his lips expressive of strong doubt, and looking at the captain added, 'Hardly!'

'Well, if he does refuse there'll be no harm done,' said the captain. 'To tell you the truth, a horse is not much wanted here. Still, it's worth trying. I will ask him to-day.'

'How little you know him,' Dyidenko put in: 'he might refuse anything else, but not that. . . . Will you bet?'

'Oh, we know you can't help contradicting!'

'I contradict because I know. He's close in other matters, but he'll give a horse because he gains nothing by refusing.'

'Gains nothing when oats are eight rubles?' said Kraut. 'The gain is not having to keep an extra horse.'

'You ask for Skvoretz, Vladimir Semenich,' said Vlang, returning with Kraut's pipe. 'He's a capital horse.'

'Off which you fell into a ditch in Soroki, eh, Vlanga?' remarked the lieutenant-captain.

'What does it matter if oats are eight rubles, when in his estimates they figure at ten and a half?¹ That's

¹ Referring to the custom of charging the government more than the actual price of supplies, and thereby where the gain comes in,' said Dyadenko, continuing to argue.

'Well naturally you can't expect him to keep nothing. When you're commander of a battery I daresay you won't let a man have a horse to ride into town.'

'When I'm commander of a battery my horses will get four measures each and I shan't make an income, no fear!'

'We shall see if we live . . . said the lieutenant-captain. 'You'll act in just the same way — and so will he,' pointing to Volodya.

'Why do you think that he too would wish to make a profit?' said Tcheraovitski to Kraut. 'He may have private means, then why should he want to make a profit?'

'Oh no, I . . . excuse me, Captain,' said Volodya, blushing up to his ears, 'but I should think such a thing dishonourable.'

'Dear me! What a severe fellow he is!' said Kraut.

'No, I only mean that I think that if the money is not mine I ought not to take it.'

'But I'll tell you something, young man,' began the lieutenant-captain in a more serious tone. 'Do you know that if you are commanding a battery you have to conduct things properly, and that's enough. The commander of a battery doesn't interfere with the soldiers' supplies: that's always been the custom in the artillery. If you are a bad manager you will have no surplus. But you have to spend over and above what's in the estimates: for shoeing—that's one' (he bent down one finger), 'and for medicine — that's two' (and he bent down another finger), 'for office expenses — that's three: then for off-horses one has to pay up to five hundred rubles my dear fellow — that's four: you have to supply the soldiers with new

making an income which was supposed to go for the benefit of the regiment, but Part of which frequently remained unaccounted for. collars, spend a good bit on charcoal for the samovars, and keep open table for the officers. If you are in command of a battery you must live decently: you must have a carriage and a fur coat, and one thing and another. ... It's quite plain!'

'And above all,' interrupted the captain, who had been silent all the time, 'look here, Vladimir Semenich — imagine a man like myself say, serving for twenty years with a pay of first two hundred, then three hundred rubles a year. Can one refuse him a crust of bread in his old age, after all his service?'

'Ah, what's the good of talking,' began the lieutenant-captain again. 'Don't be in a hurry to judge, but live and serve.'

Volodya felt horribly confused and ashamed of what he had so thoughtlessly said. He muttered something, and then listened in silence

while Dyadenko began very irritably to dispute and to argue the contrary of what had been said. The dispute was interrupted by the colonel's orderly who came to call them to dinner.

'Ask Apollon Sergeich to give us some wine to-day,' said Tchernovitski to the captain, buttoning his uniform. 'Why is he so stingy? If we get killed, it will all be wasted.'

'Ask him yourself.'

'Oh no, you're the senior officer. We must observe order in everything.'

XX

In the room where Volodya had presented himself to the colonel the evening before, the table had been moved away from the wall and covered with a dirty table-cloth. To-day the commander of the battery shook hands with him and asked him for the Petersburg news, and about his journey.

'Well, gentlemen, who takes vodka? Please help yourselves —— Ensigns don't take any,' he added with

a smile. Altogether he did not seem at all as stern as the night before; on the contrary he seemed a kind and hospitable host and an elder comrade among fellow officers. But in spite of it all, the officers from the old captain down to Ensign Dyadenko showed him great respect, if only by the way they addressed him, politely looking him straight in the eyes, and by the timid way they came up one by one to the side-table to drink their glass of vodka.

The dinner consisted of Polish cutlets with mustard, dumplings with butter that was not very fresh, and a large tureen of cabbage-soup in which floated pieces of fat beef with an enormous quantity of pepper and bay-leaves. There were no napkins, the spoons were of tin or wood, there were only two tumblers, and there was only water on the table, in a bottle with a broken neck; but the meal was not dull and the conversation never flagged. At first they talked about the battle of Inkerman, in which the battery had taken Part, and each gave his own impressions of it and reasons for our reverse, but all were silent as soon as the commander spoke.

Then the conversation naturally passed to the insufficient calibre of our field-guns, and to the subject of the new lighter guns, which gave Volodya an opportunity to show his knowledge of artillery. But the conversation never touched on the present terrible condition of Sevastopol: it was as if each man had thought so much on this subject that he did not wish to speak of it. Nor to Volodya's great surprise and regret was there any mention at all of the duties of the service he would have to perform. It was as if he had come to Sevastopol solely to discuss lighter guns and to dine with the commander of the battery. During dinner a bomb fell near the house they were in. The floor and walls shook as if from an earthquake, and the windows were darkened by the powder smoke.

'You didn't see that sort of thing in Petersburg, I fancy, but here we get many such surprises,' said the commander of the battery. 'Vlang, go and see where it burst.'

Vlang went out to see, and reported that it had fallen in the square, and no more was said about the bomb.

Just before dinner ended, a little old man, the battery clerk, came into the room with three sealed envelopes and handed them to the commander: 'This one is very important: a Cossack has just brought it from the Chief of the Artillery.'

The officers all watched with eager impatience as the commander with practised fingers broke the seal and drew out the very important paper. 'What can it be?' each one asked himself. It might be an order to retire from Sevastopol to recuperate, or the whole battery might be ordered to the bastions.

'Again!' said the commander, angrily throwing the paper on the table. 'What is it, Apollon Sergeich?' asked the senior officer.

'They order an officer and men to some mortar-battery or other. ... As it is I have only four officers, and not enough men for the gun detachments,' grumbled the commander of the battery, 'and here they are taking more away. . . . However, gentlemen, some one will have to

go,' he said after a short silence, 'the order is, to be at the outposts at seven. Send the sergeant-major to me. Well, who will go? Decide, gentlemen.'

There's your man — he's not been anywhere yet,' said Tchernovitski, pointing to Volodya.

The commander of the battery did not answer.

'Yes, I should like to go,' said Volodya, feeling a cold sweat break out on his back and neck.

'No, why should he?' interrupted the captain. 'Of course no one would refuse, but one need not offer oneself either: if Apollon Sergeich leaves it to us, let us cast lots as we did last time.' All agreed. Kraut cut up some paper, rolled up the pieces, and threw them into a cap. The captain joked and on this occasion even ventured to ask the colonel for some wine — to keep up their courage, as he said. Dyadenko sat looking grim, something made Volodya smile. Tchernovitski declared he was sure to draw it. Kraut was perfectly calm. Volodya was allowed to draw first. He took a roll of paper a bit longer than the others but then decided to change it, and taking a thinner and shorter one unrolled it and read, 'Go.'

'It's I,' he said with a sigh.

'Well, God be with you! You'll get your baptism of fire at once,' said the commander, looking at the ensign's perturbed face with a kindly smile. 'But make haste and get ready, and to make it more cheerful for you, Vlang shall go with you as gun-sergeant.'

XXI

Vlang was extremely pleased with his appointment, ran off quickly to get ready, and when dressed came to help Volodya, trying to persuade him to take with him a bed, a fur coat, some back numbers of Fatherland Records, the coffee-pot with the spirit lamp, and other unnecessary things. The captain advised Volodya to read up in the Handbook (Bezak's Artillery Officer's Handbook) about firing mortars, and especially to copy out the tables in it. Volodya set to work at once and noticed to his surprise and joy that his fear of the danger and even

greater fear that he was a coward, though it still troubled him a little, was far from what it had been the night before. This was Partly the effect of daylight and activity, but was chiefly due to the fact that fear, like every strong feeling, cannot long continue with the same intensity. In short he had already had time to live through the worst of it. At about seven o'clock, just as the sun began to disappear behind the Nicholas Barracks, the sergeant-major came and announced that the men were ready and waiting.

'I have given Vlanga the list, your honour will please receive it from him/ said he.

About twenty artillerymen, with side-arms only, stood behind the corner of the house. Volodya and the cadet walked up to them. 'Shall I make them a little speech or simply say "Good-day lads," or say nothing at all?' he thought. 'But why not say "Good-day lads", it is even right that I should,' and he cried boldly with his ringing voice, 'Good-day lads!' The soldiers answered gaily. The fresh young voice sounded pleasantly in the ears of each. Volodya went briskly in front of the soldiers, and though his heart beat as fast as if he had run full-speed for miles his step was light and his face cheerful.

As they approached the Malakhov Redoubt and mounted the hill he noticed that Vlang, who kept close to him all the time and had seemed so brave before leaving the house, was continually dodging and stooping, as if all the bombs and cannon-balls, which whistled past very frequently here, were flying straight at him. Some of the soldiers did the same, and in general most of the faces expressed uneasiness if not exactly alarm. These circumstances emboldened Volodya and completely comforted him.

'So here am I too on the Malakhov mound, which I fancied a thousand times more terrible. And I get along without bowing to the balls, and am even much less frightened than die others. So I am no coward,' he thought with pleasure, and even with a certain self-complacent rapture.

This feeling however was quickly shaken by a sight he came upon in the twilight at the Kornilov Battery while looking for the commander of the

bastion. Four sailors stood by the breastwork holding by its arms and legs the blood-stained corpse of a man without boots or coat and swinging it before heaving it over. (On the second day of this bombardment it was found impossible in some Parts to clear away the corpses from the bastions, and they were therefore thrown out into the ditch so as not to be in the way at the batteries.) Volodya felt stunned for a moment when he saw the body bump on the top of the breastwork and then roll down into the ditch, but luckily for him the commander of the bastion met him just then and gave him his orders and a guide to show him the way to the battery and to the bomb-proof assigned to his men.

We will not speak of all the dangers and disenchantments our hero lived through that evening: how — instead of the firing he was used to on the Volkov field amid conditions of perfect exactitude and order which he had expected to meet with here also — he found two damaged mortars, one with its muzzle battered in by a ball, the other standing on the splinters of its shattered platform; how he could not get workmen before the morning to mend the platform; how not a single charge was of the weight specified in the Handbook; how two of the men under him were wounded, and how he was twenty times within a hair's-breadth of death. Fortunately a gigantic gunner, a seaman who had served with the mortars since the commencement of the siege, had been appointed to assist Volodya, and convinced him of the possibility of using the mortars. By the light of a lantern this gunner showed him all over the battery as he might have shown him over his own kitchen-garden, and undertook to have everything right by the morning. The bomb-proof to which his guide led him was an oblong hole dug in the rocky ground, twenty-five cubic yards in size and covered with oak beams two and a half feet thick. He and all his soldiers installed themselves in it.

As soon as he discovered the little door, not three feet high, Vlang rushed in headlong before anyone else, and at the risk of breaking his limbs against the stone bottom squeezed into the farthest corner and remained there. Volodya, when all the soldiers had settled on the

ground along the walls and some had lit their pipes, made up his own bed in a corner, lit a candle, and after lighting a cigarette, lay down.

The reports of continuous firing could be heard overhead but not very distinctly, except from one cannon which stood quite close and shook the bombproof with its thunder. In the bomb-proof all was quiet, except when one or other of the soldiers, still rather shy in the presence of the new officer, spoke, asking a neighbour to move a little or to give him a light for his pipe, when a rat scratched somewhere among the stones, or when Vlang, who had not yet recovered and was still looking wildly around him, heaved a deep sigh.

Volodya, on his bed in this quiet corner crammed with people and lighted by a solitary candle, experienced a sensation of cosiness such as he had felt as a child when, playing hide-and-seek, he used to creep into a cupboard or under his mother's skirt and sit listening in breathless silence, afraid of the dark yet conscious of enjoyment. It felt rather uncanny, yet his spirits were high.

XXII

After ten minutes or so the soldiers grew bolder and began to talk. The more important ones — two noncommissioned officers: an old grey-haired one with every possible medal and cross except the St. George, and a young one, a Cantonist,¹ who was smoking cigarettes he had rolled himself — settled nearest to the light and to the officer's bed. The drummer had as usual assumed the duty of waiting upon the officer. The bombardiers and those who had medals came

¹ The Cantonists, under serfdom, which still prevailed at the time of the Crimean War, were the sons of soldiers, condemned by law and heredity to be soldiers also. Next, and farther off, in the shadow nearer the entrance, sat the humbler folk. It was these last who started a conversation, caused by the noise a man made who came tumbling hurriedly into the bombproof.

'Hullo, old fellow! Why don't you stay outside? Don't the lasses play merrily enough out there?' said a voice.

'They're playing such tunes as we never hear in our village,' laughingly replied the man who had just run in.

'Ah, Vasin don't like bombs — that he don't!' said some one in the aristocratic corner.

'If it was necessary, that would be a different matter,' replied Vasin slowly, and when he spoke all the others were silent. 'On the 24th we were at least firing, but why grumble at me now? The authorities won't thank the likes of us for getting killed uselessly.'

At these words everyone laughed.

'There's Melnikov — he's out there now, I fancy,' said someone.

'Go and send Melnikov in here,' said the old sergeant, 'or else he really will get killed uselessly.'

'Who is Melnikov?' asked Volodya.

'Oh, he's a poor silly soldier of ours, your honour. He's just afraid of nothing, and he's walking about outside now. You should have a look at him, he's just like a bear.'

'He knows a charm,' came Vasin's long-drawn accents from the other corner,

Melnikov entered the bomb-proof. He was stout (an extremely rare thing among soldiers), red-haired and red-faced, with an enormous bulging forehead and prominent pale-blue eyes.

'Aren't you afraid of the bombs?' asked Volodya.

'What's there to be afraid of in them bombs?' answered Melnikov, wriggling and scratching himself. 'They won't kill me with a bomb, I know.' 'So you'd like to live here?'

'Course I should. It's jolly here,' he said and burst out laughing.

'Oh, then they should take you for a sortie! Shall I speak to the general about it?' said Volodya, though he did not know a single general in the place.

'Like, indeed! 'Course I should!' And Melnikov hid behind the others.

'Let's have a game of "noses" lads! Who has the cards?' his voice was heard to say hurriedly.

And soon the game had started in the far corner: laughter could be heard, and noses being smacked and trumps declared. The drummer having heated the samovar for him, Volodya drank some tea, treated the non-commissioned officers to some, and, wishing to gain popularity, joked and talked with them and felt very pleased at the respect paid him.

The soldiers, seeing that the gentleman gave himself no airs, became talkative too. One of them explained that the siege of Sevastopol would not last much longer, because a reliable fellow in the fleet had told him that Constantine, the Tsar's brother, was coming with the 'merican fleet to help us, and also that there would soon be an agreement not to fire for a fortnight, but to have a rest, and that if anyone did fire, he'd have to pay a fine of seventy-five kopeks for each shot. Vasin, who was a small man with whiskers and large kind eyes, as Volodya had already noticed, related, first amid general silence and then amid roars of laughter, how he had gone home on leave and at first everyone was glad to see him, but then his father had begun sending him to work while the forester-lieutenant sent a horse and trap to fetch his wife! All this amused Volodya very much. He not only felt no fear or annoyance because of the overcrowding and bad air in the bomb-proof, but on the contrary felt exceedingly bright and contented.

Many of the soldiers were already snoring. Vlang bad also stretched himself out on the floor, and the old sergeant having spread his cloak on the ground was crossing himself and muttering prayers before going to sleep, when Volodya felt moved to go out of the bomb-proof and see what was happening outside.

'Draw in your legs!' the soldiers called to one another as soon as he rose, and the legs were drawn in to make room for him.

Vlang, who had seemed to be asleep, suddenly raised his head and seized Volodya by the skirts of his cloak.

‘Don’t go! Don’t go — how can you?’ he began in a tearfully persuasive voice. ‘You don’t know what it’s like. Cannon-balls are falling all the time out there. It’s better in here.’

But in spite of Vlang’s entreaties Volodya made his way out of the bomb-proof and sat down on the threshold, where Melnikov was already sitting making his feet comfortable.

The air was pure and fresh, especially after that of the bomb-proof, and the night was clear and calm. Mingling with the booming of the cannon could be heard the rumbling of the wheels of carts bringing gabions, and voices of men at work in the powder-vault. High overhead stretched the starry sky, across which the fiery trails of the bombs ran incessantly. On the left was another bomb-proof, through the three-foot opening of which the legs and backs of the sailors who lived there could be seen and their voices heard. In front was the roof of the powder-vault, past which flitted the figures of stooping men, while on the top of it, under the bullets and bombs that kept flying past, was a tall figure in a black cloak with its hands in its pockets, treading down the earth the others carried up in sacks. Many a bomb flew past and exploded very near the vault. The soldiers who were carrying the earth stooped and stepped aside, but the black figure continued calmly to stamp the earth down with its feet and remained on the spot in the same position.

‘Who is that black fellow there?’ said Volodya to Melnikov.

‘Can’t say. I’ll go and see.’

‘No, don’t. There’s no need.’

But Melnikov rose without heeding him, approached the black figure, and for a long time stood beside it just as indifferent and immovable.

‘That’s the powder-master, your honour!’ he said when he returned.

‘The vault has been knocked in by a bomb, so the infantry are carrying earth there.’

Now and then a bomb seemed to fly straight at the door of the bomb-proof. Then Volodya pressed behind the corner, but soon crept out again looking up to see if another was coming that way. Though Vlang from inside the bomb-proof again and again entreated him to come in,

Volodya sat at the threshold for about three hours, finding a kind of pleasure in tempting fate and watching the flying bombs. By the end of the evening he knew how many guns were firing, from which positions, and where their shots fell.

XXIII

The next morning, 27 August, Volodya, fresh and vigorous after ten hours' sleep, stepped across the threshold of the bomb-proof. Vlang too came out, but at the first sound of a bullet rushed wildly back to the entrance, pushing his way through the crowd with his head amid the general laughter of the soldiers, most of whom had also come out into the fresh air.

Vlang, the old sergeant, and a few others only came out into the trench at rare intervals, but the rest could not be kept inside: they all crept out of the stuffy bomb-proof into the fresh morning air and in spite of the firing, which continued as violently as on the day before, settled themselves — some by the threshold of the bomb-proof and some under the breastwork. Melnikov had been strolling about from battery to battery since early dawn, looking calmly upwards.

Near the threshold sat two old soldiers and one young curly-haired one, a Jew transferred to the battery from an infantry regiment. This latter had picked up one of the bullets that were lying about, and after flattening it out on a stone with the fragment of a bomb, was now carving out a cross like the Order of St. George. The others sat talking and watching his work. The cross was really turning out very well.

'T say,' said one of them, 'if we stay here much longer we shall all have served our time and get discharged when there's peace.'

'You're right. Why I had only four years left to serve, and I've been five months already in Sevastopol.'

'That won't be reckoned specially towards our discharge, it seems,' said another.

At that moment a cannon-ball flew over the heads of the speakers and fell a couple of feet from Melnikov, who was coming towards them through the trench.

'That one nearly killed Melnikov,' said one of them.

'It won't kill me,' said Melnikov.

'Then I present you with this cross for your courage,' said the young soldier, giving him the cross he had made.

'... No, my lad, a month's service here counts as a year for everything — that was said in the proclamation,' continued one of the soldiers.

'You may say what you like, but when we have peace we're sure to have an Imperial review at Warsaw, and then if we don't all get our discharge we shall be put on the permanent reserve.'

Just then a shrieking, glancing rifle-bullet flew just over the speakers' heads and struck a stone. 'Look out, or you'll be getting your discharge in full before to-night,' said one of the soldiers.

They all laughed.

And not only before night, but before two hours had passed, two of them had got their discharge in full and five more were wounded, but the rest went on joking just the same.

By the morning the two mortars had really been put into such a condition that they could be fired, and at ten o'clock Volodya called out his company and marched with it to the battery, in accordance with the order he had received from the commander of the bastion.

Not a trace of the fear noticeable the day before remained among the men as soon as they were actively engaged. Only Vlang could not master himself, but hid and ducked in the same old way, and Vasin lost some of his composure, fidgetted, and kept dodging. Volodya was in ecstasies, the thought of danger never entered his head. Joy at fulfilling his duty, at finding that not only was he no coward but that he was even quite brave, the sense of commanding and being in the presence of twenty men who were he knew watching him with curiosity, made him quite valiant. He was even vain of his courage and showed off before the soldiers, climbing out onto the banquette and unfastening his cloak on purpose to be more conspicuous.

The commander of the bastion making the round of his 'household' as he expressed it, accustomed as he had grown during the last eight

months to courage of all kinds, could not help admiring this handsome lad, with his coat unbuttoned showing a red shirt fitting close to his delicate white neck, who with flushed face and shining eyes clapped his hands, gave the order, 'One — two!' in ringing tones, and ran gaily onto the breastwork to see where his bombs were falling. At half-past eleven the firing slackened on both sides, and at twelve o'clock precisely the storming of the Malakhov Redoubt, and of the Second, Third (the Redan), and Fifth Bastions, began.

XXIV

On the North Side of the Roadstead, towards midday, two sailors were standing on the telegraph hill between Inkerman and the Northern entrenchment: one of them, an officer, was looking at Sevastopol through the telescope fixed there. Another officer with a Cossack had just ridden up to the signal-post.

The sun shone brightly high above the Roadstead, and with its warm bright light played on the stationary vessels, the flapping sails, and the rowing boats. A light wind scarcely swayed the withering leaves of the oak-scrub near the telegraph post, filled the sails of the boats, and ruffled the waves. Sevastopol, still the same, with its unfinished church, its column, its quay, its boulevard showing green on the hill, and the elegant building of its library; with its little azure creeks bristling with masts, the picturesque arches of its aqueducts, and with clouds of blue powder-smoke now and then lit up by red flashes from the guns — this same beautiful, festive, proud Sevastopol, surrounded on one side by yellow smoking hills and on the other by the bright blue sea playing in the sunlight — could still be seen on the opposite side of the Roadstead.

Above the rim of the sea, along which spread a streak of black smoke from a steamer, drifted long white clouds that portended rain. Along the whole line of entrenchments, especially on the hills to the left, compressed puffs of thick white smoke continually appeared several at a time, accompanied by flashes that sometimes gleamed like lightning even in the noontide light; and these puffs grew larger and assumed

various shapes, rising and seeming darker against the sky. They started now here now there from the hills, from the enemy's batteries, from the town, and high up in the sky. The noise of the reports never ceased, and mingling with one another they shook the air.

Towards noon the cloudlets of smoke showed less and less often and the air was less shaken by the booming.

“There now, the Second Bastion doesn't reply at all!” said the mounted hussar officer. ‘It's absolutely knocked to bits. It's terrible!’

‘Yes, and the Malakhov hardly fires one shot for three of theirs,’ replied the man who was looking through the telescope. ‘It makes me mad that ours are silent. They are firing straight into the Kornilov Battery and it doesn't reply at all.’

‘But look here, I told you they always stop bombarding at noon. And it's the same to-day. We'd better go to lunch ... they'll be waiting for us as it is. . . . There's nothing to look at now.’

‘Wait a bit! Don't bother me!’ said the man in possession of the telescope, looking eagerly at Sevastopol.

‘What is it? What?’

‘A movement in the trenches — dense columns advancing.’

‘Yes, one can see it with the naked eye,’ said the sailor. ‘They are advancing in columns. We must give the alarm.’

‘Look! Look! They have left the trenches.’

And one could really see with the naked eye what seemed like dark spots coming down the hill, across the ravine from the French batteries towards our bastions. In front of these spots, dark streaks could already be seen near our lines. From our bastions white cloudlets of firing burst out at different points as if crossing one another. The wind brought a sound of small-arm firing, like rain pelting against window-panes. The dark streaks were moving nearer and nearer right amid the smoke. The sounds of firing grew louder and louder and merged into a prolonged rumbling peal. The smoke, rising more and more often, spread rapidly along the lines and at last merged into one light-purple cloud curling and uncurling, amid which here and there flashes just flickered and

dark dots appeared: all the separate sounds blended into one thundering crash.

‘An assault!’ said the officer, growing pale and letting the sailor have the telescope.

Cossacks galloped down the road, officers on horseback passed by, and the commander-in-chief in a carriage accompanied by his suite. On every face there was an expression of painful agitation and expectancy.

‘They can’t have taken it!’ cried the mounted officer.

‘By God, a standard! Look! Look!’ said the officer, panting and moving away from the telescope— ‘A French standard on the Malakhov!’
‘Impossible!’

XXV

The elder Kozeltsov, who had found time that night to win back his money and to lose it all again, including the gold pieces sewn in his cuff, was lying towards morning in a heavy, unhealthy, and deep sleep in the Defence Barracks of the Fifth Bastion, when a desperate cry arose, repeated by many voices —

‘The alarm!’

‘Why are you sleeping, Michael Semenich? We are attacked!’ shouted someone.

‘It must be a hoax,’ he said, opening his eyes incredulously.

Then he saw an officer running from one corner of the barracks to the other without any apparent reason and with such a pale face that he realized it all. The thought that they might take him for a coward who did not wish to be with his company at a critical moment upset him terribly, and he rushed full speed to join it. The artillery firing had ceased, but the clatter of musketry was at its height. The bullets did not whistle as single ones do but came in swarms like a flock of autumn birds flying overhead.

The whole place where his battalion had been stationed the day before was hidden in smoke, and enemy shouts and exclamations could be heard. As he went he met crowds of wounded and unwounded

soldiers. Having run another thirty paces he saw his own company pressed to the wall.

“The Schwartz Redoubt is taken!” said a young officer, whose teeth were chattering. ‘All is lost!’

‘Nonsense!’ said Kozeltsov angrily, and [wishing to rouse himself by a gesture] he drew his blunt little iron sword and cried:

‘Forward, lads! Hurrah!’

His voice sounded loud and clear and roused Kozeltsov himself. He ran forward along the traverse, and about fifty soldiers ran shouting after him. From the traverse he ran out into the open ground. The bullets fell just like hailstones. Two hit him, but where, and what they had done — bruised him or wounded him — he had no time to determine. Before him through the smoke he could already see blue coats and red trousers, and hear shouts that were not Russian.

One Frenchman stood on the breastwork waving his cap and shouting something. Kozeltsov felt sure he would be killed, and this increased his courage. He ran on and on. Several soldiers outran him, others appeared from somewhere else and also ran. The blue uniforms were always at the same distance from him, running back to their trenches, but there were dead and wounded on the ground under his feet. When he had run to the outer ditch, everything became blurred in Kozeltsov’s eyes and he felt a pain in his chest.

Half an hour later he was lying on a stretcher near the Nicholas Barracks and knew that he was wounded, but felt hardly any pain. He only wished for something cool to drink, and to lie more comfortably.

A plump little doctor with large black whiskers came up to him and unbuttoned his cloak. Kozeltsov looked over his chin to see the doctor’s face and what he was doing to his wound, but he still felt no pain. The doctor covered the wound with the shirt, wiped his fingers on the skirt of his cloak and silently, without looking at the wounded man, passed on to another patient. Kozeltsov unconsciously watched what was going on around him and, remembering what had happened at the Fifth Bastion with exceedingly joyful self-satisfaction, felt that he had

performed his duty well — that for the first time in the whole of his service he had acted as well as it was possible to act, and that he had nothing to reproach himself with. The doctor, bandaging another man, pointed to Kozeltsov and said something to a priest with a large red beard, who stood near by with a cross.

‘Am I dying?’ asked Kozeltsov when the priest approached him. The priest did not reply, but said a prayer and held a cross to the wounded man’s lips.

Death did not frighten Kozeltsov. He took the cross with his weak hands, pressed it to his lips, and began to weep.

‘Were the French driven back?’ he asked the priest firmly.

‘The victory is ours at all points,’ answered the latter to console the wounded man, concealing from him the fact that a French standard was already waving from the Malakhov Redoubt.

‘Thank God!’ exclaimed the dying man, not feeling the tears that ran down his cheeks, [and experiencing inexpressible delight at the consciousness of having performed an heroic deed.]

The thought of his brother flashed through his brain. ‘God grant him as good a fate!’ thought he.

XXVI

But a different fate awaited Volodya. He was listening to a tale Vasin was telling when he heard the cry ‘The French are coming!’ The blood suddenly rushed to his heart and he felt his cheeks grow cold and pale. He remained immovable for a moment, but glancing round saw the soldiers fastening their uniforms and crawling out one after the other fairly coolly. One of them — Melnikov probably — even joked, saying, ‘Take them some bread and salt.’¹

Volodya, and Vlang who followed him like a shadow, climbed out of the bomb-proof and ran to the battery. There was no artillery firing at all from either side. The coolness of the soldiers did less to rouse Volodya than the pitiful cowardice of the cadet. ‘Can I possibly be like him?’ he thought, and ran gaily to the breastwork where his mortars stood. He

could plainly see the French running straight towards him across the open ground, and crowds of them moving in the nearer trenches, their bayonets glittering in the sunshine. One short, broad-shouldered fellow in a Zouave uniform was running in front, sword in hand, jumping across the pits.

‘Fire case-shot!’ cried Volodya, running back from the banquette, but the soldiers had already arranged matters without him and the metallic ring of the discharged case-shot whistled over his head first from one mortar and then from the other. ‘One — Two!’ ordered Volodya, running the distance between the two mortars and quite forgetting the danger. From one side and near at hand was heard the clatter of the musketry of our supports, and excited cries.

Suddenly a wild cry of despair arose on the left. ‘They’re behind us! Behind us!’ repeated several voices. Volodya looked round. About twenty French-

1 It is a Russian custom to offer bread and salt to new arrivals. men appeared behind him. One of them, a handsome man with a black beard, was in front of the rest, but having run up to within ten paces of the battery he stopped, fired point-blank at Volodya, and then again started running towards him. For a moment Volodya stood petrified, unable to believe his eyes. When he recovered and glanced round he saw French uniforms on the breastwork before him; two Frenchmen were even spiking a cannon some ten paces from him. No one was near but Melnikov, who had fallen at his side killed by a bullet, and Vlang, who had seized a linstock and was rushing forward with a furious look on his face, rolling his eyes and shouting.

‘Follow me, Vladimir Semenich! . . . Follow me!’ he cried in a desperate voice, brandishing his linstock at the Frenchmen who had appeared from behind. The furious figure of the cadet perplexed them. Vlang hit the front one on the head, the others involuntarily hesitated, and he ran to the trench where our infantry lay firing at the French, continually looking back and shouting desperately, ‘Come with me, Vladimir Semenich! Why are you stopping? Run!’ Having jumped in, he climbed out again to see what his adored ensign was doing. Something in a

cloak lay prostrate where Volodya had stood, and that whole place was occupied by Frenchmen firing at our men.

XXVII

Vlang found his battery at the second line of defence. Of the twenty soldiers belonging to the mortar battery only eight were left. Towards nine in the evening Vlang crossed over with the battery to the North Side on a steamer crowded with soldiers, cannon, horses, and wounded men. There was no firing anywhere. The stars shone as brightly in the sky as they had done the night before, but the sea was rocked by a strong wind. On the First and Second Bastions flames kept bursting up along the ground, explosions rent the air and lit up strange dark objects and the stones flying in the air around them. Something was burning near the docks and the red glare was reflected on the water.

The bridge thronged with people was illuminated by a fire at the Nicholas Battery. A large flame seemed to stand above the water on the distant little headland of the Alexander Battery, lighting up from below the clouds of smoke that hung above it, and quiet, bold lights gleamed over the sea, as they had done yesterday, from the distant enemy fleet, and the fresh wind raised waves in the Roadstead. By the glaring light of the conflagration one could see the masts of our sinking ships as they slowly descended deeper and deeper into the water. There was no talking on board, only words of command given by the captain, the snorting and stamping of the horses on the vessel, and the moaning of the wounded, could be heard above the steam and the regular swish of the Parting waters. Vlang, who had had nothing to eat all day, took a piece of bread from his pocket and began munching it, but suddenly remembering Volodya he began to sob so loud that the soldiers near him heard it.

‘Look! He’s eating bread and yet he’s sobbing, is our Vlang!’ said Vasin. ‘That’s queer!’ said another.

‘Look! Our barrack’s been set on fire too,’ he continued with a sigh.
‘What a lot of the likes of us perished there; and now the Frenchmen have got it for nothing.’
‘At all events we have got off alive, thank God!’ said Vasin.
‘All the same, it’s a shame.’

‘Where’s the shame? D’you think they’ll get a chance of amusing themselves there? See if ours don’t retake it. No matter how many of the likes of us are lost; if the Emperor gives the word, as sure as there’s a God we’ll take it back. You don’t suppose we’ll leave it like that? No fear! There, take the bare walls.... The ‘trenchments are all blown up.... Yes, I daresay.-... He’s stuck his flag on the mound, but he’s not shoved himself into the town. . . . You wait a bit! The real reckoning will come yet — only wait a bit!’ he concluded, admonishing the French.

‘Of course it will!’ said another with conviction.
Along the whole line of the Sevastopol bastions — which for so many months had been seething with such extraordinary life and energy, for so many months had seen heroes relieved by death as they fell one after another, and for so many months had aroused the fear, the hatred, and at last the admiration of the enemy — no one was now to be seen: all was dead, ghastly, terrible.

But it was not silent: destruction was still going on. Everywhere on the ground, blasted and strewn around by fresh explosions, lay shattered gun-carriages crushing the corpses of foes and Russians alike, cast-iron cannons thrown with terrific force into holes and half-buried in the earth and silenced for ever, bombs, cannon-balls and more dead bodies; then holes and splintered beams of what had been bomb-proofs, and again silent corpses in grey or blue uniforms. All this still shuddered again and again, and was lit up by the lurid flames of the explosions that continued to shake the air.

The enemy saw that something incomprehensible was happening in awe-inspiring Sevastopol. The explosions and the deathly stillness on the bastions made them shudder, but under the influence of the strong and firm resistance of that day they did not yet dare to believe that

their unflinching foe had disappeared, and they awaited the end of the gloomy night silently, motionless and anxious.

The Sevastopol army, surging and spreading like the sea on a rough dark night, its whole mass anxiously palpitating, slowly swayed through the thick darkness by the bridge over the Roadstead and onto the North Side, away from the place where it was leaving so many brave comrades, from the place saturated with its blood, the place it had held for eleven months against a far stronger foe, but which it was now ordered to abandon without a struggle.

The first effect this command had on every Russian was one of oppressive bewilderment. The next feeling was a fear of pursuit. The men felt helpless as soon as they had left the places where they were accustomed to fight, and crowded anxiously together in the darkness at the entrance to the bridge which was rocked by the strong wind. With bayonets clashing, regiments, vehicles, and militia crowded together and pressed forward to the bay. While mounted officers pushed through with orders, the inhabitants wept, orderlies carrying forbidden luggage entreated, and artillery with rattling wheels hurried to get away.

Notwithstanding the diversion resulting from their various and bustling occupations, the instinct of self-preservation and the desire to get away as quickly as possible from this dreadful place of death was present in the soul of each.

It was present in the mortally wounded soldier who lay among the five hundred other wounded men on the pavement of the Pavlov Quay praying to God for death; in the militiaman pushing with all his might among the dense crowd to make way for a general who was riding past; in the general who conducted the crossing, firmly restraining the impetuosity of the soldiers; in the sailor who, having got among a moving battalion, was squeezed by the swaying crowd till he could scarcely breathe; in the wounded officer whom four soldiers had been carrying on a stretcher, but stopped by the throng had put down on the ground near the Nicholas Battery; in the artilleryman who having

served with the same gun for sixteen years was now, in obedience to an officer's order quite incomprehensible to him, with the help of his comrades pushing that gun down the steep bank into the Roadstead, and in the sailors of the fleet who, having just scuttled their ships, were briskly rowing away from them in the long-boats.

On reaching the North Side and leaving the bridge almost every man took off his cap and crossed himself. But behind this feeling of self-preservation there was another, a deeper feeling, sad and gnawing, akin to remorse, shame, and anger. Almost every soldier looking back at the abandoned town from the North Side, sighed with inexpressible bitterness in his heart and made a menacing gesture towards the enemy.

The End