



# The Short Stories of Leo Tolstoy

The Short Stories

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The Raid

A volunteer's story

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

This short story was first published in 1853 and is set in the Caucasus. The story takes the form of a conversation between the narrator and a military captain about the nature of bravery. The Raid was based on Tolstoy's own experiences as an artillery cadet stationed in the Caucasus.

The portions of this story enclosed in square brackets are those the Censor suppressed, and are now published in English for the first time. The translation's original footnotes have also been included.

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Chapter I

[WAR ALWAYS INTERESTED me: not war in the sense of manoeuvres devised by great generals — my imagination refused to follow such immense movements, I did not understand them — but the reality of war, the actual killing. I was more interested to know in what way and under the influence of what feeling one soldier kills another than to know how the armies were arranged at Austerlitz and Borodino.

I had long passed the time when, pacing the room alone and waving my arms, I imagined myself a hero instantaneously slaughtering an immense number of men and receiving a generalship as well as imperishable glory for so doing. The question now occupying me was different: under the influence of what feeling does a man, with no apparent advantage to himself, decide to subject himself to danger and, what is more surprising still, to kill his fellow men? I always wished to think that this is done under the influence of anger, but we cannot suppose that all those who fight are angry all the time, and I had to postulate feelings of self-preservation and duty.

What is courage — that quality respected in all ages and among all nations? Why is this good quality — contrary to all others — sometimes met with in vicious men? Can it be that to endure danger calmly is merely a physical capacity and that people respect it in the same way that they do a man's tall stature or robust frame? Can a horse be called brave, which fearing the whip throws itself down a steep place where it will be smashed to pieces; or a child who fearing to be punished runs into a forest where it will lose itself; or a woman who for fear of shame kills her baby and has to endure penal prosecution; or a man who from vanity resolves to kill a fellow creature and exposes himself to the danger of being killed?

In every danger there is a choice. Does it not depend on whether the choice is prompted by a noble feeling or a base one whether it should be called courage or cowardice? These were the questions and the doubts that occupied my mind and to decide which I intended to avail myself of the first opportunity to go into action.

In the summer of 184- I was living in the Caucasus at the small fortified post of N-.]

On the twelfth of July Captain Khl6pov entered the low door of my earth-hut. He was wearing epaulettes and carrying a sword, which I had never before seen him do since I had reached the Caucasus.

'I come straight from the colonel's,' he said in answer to my questioning look. 'To-morrow our battalion is to march.'

'Where to?' I asked.

'To M. The forces are to assemble there.'

'And from there I suppose they will go into action?'

'I expect so.'

'In what direction? What do you think?'

'What is there to think about? I am telling you what I know. A Tartar galloped here last night and brought orders from the general for the battalion to march with two days' rations of rusks. But where to, why, and for how long, we do not ask, my friend. We are told to go — and that's enough.'

'But if you are to take only two days' rations of rusks it proves that the troops won't be out longer than that'

'It proves nothing at all.'

'How is that?' I asked with surprise.

'Because it is so. We went to Dargo and took one week's rations of rusks, but we stayed there nearly a month.'

'Can I go with you?' I asked after a pause.

'You could, no doubt, but my advice is, don't. Why run risks?'

'Oh, but you must allow me not to take your advice. I have been here a whole month solely on the chance of seeing an action, and you wish me to miss it!'

'Well, you must please yourself. But really you had better stay behind. You could wait for us here and might go hunting — and we would go our way, and it would be splendid,' he said with such conviction that for a moment it really seemed to me too that it would be 'splendid'. However, I told him decidedly that nothing would induce me to stay behind.

'But what is there for you to see?' the captain went on, still trying to dissuade me. 'Do you want to know what battles are like? Read Mikhaylovski Danllevski's Description of War. It's a fine book, it gives a detailed account of everything. It gives the position of every corps and describes how battles are fought.'

'All that does not interest me,' I replied.

‘What is it then? Do you simply wish to see how people are killed? — In 1832 we had a fellow here, also a civilian, a Spaniard I think he was. He took Part with us in two campaigns, wearing some kind of blue mantle. Well, they did for the fine fellow. You won’t astonish anyone here, friend!’

Humiliating though it was that the captain so misjudged my motives, I did not try to disabuse him.

‘Was he brave?’ I asked.

‘Heaven only knows: he always used to ride in front, and where there was firing there he always was.’

‘Then he must have been brave/ said I.

‘No. Pushing oneself in where one is not needed does not prove one to be brave.’ ‘Then what do you call brave?’

‘Brave? . . . Brave?’ repeated the captain with the air of one to whom such a question presents itself for the first time. ‘He who does what he ought to do is brave/ he said after thinking awhile.

I remembered that Plato defines courage as ‘The knowledge of what should and what should not be feared’, and despite the looseness and vagueness of the captain’s definition I thought that the fundamental ideas of the two were not so different as they might appear, and that the captain’s definition was even more correct than that of the Greek philosopher. For if the captain had been able to express himself like Plato he would no doubt have said that, ‘He is brave who fears only what should be feared and not what should not be feared’.

I wished to explain my idea to the captain.

‘Yes,’ said I, ‘it seems to me that in every danger there is a choice, and a choice made under the influence of a sense of duty is courage, but a choice made under the influence of a base motive is cowardice.

Therefore a man who risks his life from vanity, curiosity, or greed, cannot be called brave; while on the other hand he who avoids a danger from honest consideration for his family, or simply from conviction, cannot be called a coward.’

The captain looked at me with a curious expression while I was speaking.

‘Well, that I cannot prove to you,’ he said, filling his pipe, ‘but we have a cadet here who is fond of philosophizing. You should have a talk with him. He also writes verses.’

I had known of the captain before I left Russia, but I had only made his acquaintance in the Caucasus. His mother, Mary Ivanovna Khlopova, a small and poor landowner, lives within two miles of my estate. Before I left for the Caucasus I had called on her. The old lady was very glad to hear that I should see her ‘Pashenka’, by which pet name she called the grey-haired elderly captain, and that I, ‘a living letter’, could tell him all about her and take him a small parcel from her. Having treated me to excellent pie and smoked goose, Mary Ivanovna went into her bedroom and returned with a black bag to which a black silk ribbon was attached.

‘Here, this is the icon of our Mother Mediatress of the Burning Bush,’ said she, crossing herself and kissing the icon of the Virgin and placing it in my hands. ‘Please let him have it. You see, when he went to the Caucasus I had a Mass said for him and promised, if he remained alive and safe, to order this icon of the Mother of God for him. And now for eighteen years the Mediatress and the Holy Saints have had mercy on him, he has not been wounded once, and yet in what battles has he not taken Part? ... What Michael who went with him told me was enough, believe me, to make one’s hair stand on end. You see, what I know about him is only from others. He, my pet, never writes me about his campaigns for fear of frightening me.’

(After I reached the Caucasus I learnt, and then not from the captain himself, that he had been severely wounded four times and of course never wrote to his mother either about his wounds or his campaigns.)

‘So let him now wear this holy image,’ she continued. ‘I give it him with my blessing. May the Most Holy Mediatress guard him. Especially when going into battle let him wear it. Tell him so, dear friend. Say “Your mother wishes it.”’

I promised to carry out her instructions carefully.



'I know you will grow fond of my Pashenka,' continued the old lady. 'He is such a splendid fellow. Will you believe it, he never lets a year pass without sending me some money, and he also helps my daughter Annushka a good deal, and all out of his pay! I thank God for having given me such a child,' she continued with tears in her eyes.

'Does he often write to you?' I asked.

'Seldom, my dear: perhaps once a year. Only when he sends the money, not otherwise. He says, "If I don't write to you, mother, that means I am alive and well. Should anything befall me, which God forbid, they'll tell you without me."' "

When I handed his mother's present to the captain (it was in my own quarters) he asked for a bit of paper, carefully wrapped it up, and then put it away. I told him many things about his mother's life. He remained silent, and when I had finished speaking he went to a corner of the room and busied himself for what seemed a long time, filling his pipe.

'Yes, she's a splendid old woman!' he said from there in a rather muffled voice. 'Will God ever let me see her again?'

These simple words expressed much love and sadness.

'Why do you serve here?' I asked.

'One has to serve,' he answered with conviction.

'You should transfer to Russia. You would then be nearer to her.'

'To Russia? To Russia?' repeated the captain, dubiously swaying his head and smiling mournfully. 'Here I am still of some use, but there I should be the least of the officers. And besides, the double pay we get here also means something to a poor man.'

'Can it be, Pavel Ivanovich, that living as you do the ordinary pay would not suffice?'

'And does the double pay suffice?' interjected the captain. 'Look at our officers! Have any of them a brass farthing? They all go on tick at the sutler's, and are all up to their ears in debt. You say "living as I do". ... Do you really think that living as I do I have anything over out of my salary? Not a farthing! You don't yet know what prices are like here; everything is three times dearer. . . .' The captain lived economically,

did not play cards, rarely went carousing, and smoked the cheapest tobacco (which for some reason he called home-grown tobacco). I had liked him before — he had one of those simple, calm, Russian faces which are easy and pleasant to look straight in the eyes — and after this talk I felt a sincere regard for him.

## Chapter II

NEXT MORNING AT four o'clock the captain came for me. He wore an old threadbare coat without epaulettes, wide Caucasian trousers, a white sheepskin cap the wool of which had grown yellow and limp, and had a shabby Asiatic sword strapped round his shoulder. The small white horse he rode ambled along with short strides, hanging its head down and swinging its thin tail. Although the worthy captain's figure was not very martial or even good-looking, it expressed such equanimity towards everything around him that it involuntarily inspired respect.

I did not keep him waiting a single moment, but mounted my horse at once, and we rode together through the gates of the fort.

The battalion was some five hundred yards ahead of us and looked like a dense, oscillating, black mass. It was only possible to guess that it was an infantry battalion by the bayonets which looked like needles standing close together, and by the sound of the soldiers' songs which occasionally reached us, the beating of a drum, and the delightful voice of the Sixth Company's second tenor, which had often charmed me at the fort. The road lay along the middle of a deep and broad ravine by the side of a stream which had overflowed its banks.

Flocks of wild pigeons whirled above it, now alighting on the rocky banks, now turning in the air in rapid circles and vanishing out of sight. The sun was not yet visible, but the crest of the right side of the ravine was just beginning to be lit up. The grey and whitish rock, the yellowish-green moss, the dew-covered bushes of Christ's Thorn, dogberry, and dwarf elm, appeared extraordinarily distinct and salient in the golden morning light, but the other side and the valley, wrapped in thick mist which floated in uneven layers, were damp and gloomy and presented

an indefinite mingling of colours: pale purple, almost black, dark green, and white. Right in front of us, strikingly distinct against the dark-blue horizon, rose the bright, dead-white masses of the snowy mountains, with their shadows and outlines fantastic and yet exquisite in every detail.

Crickets, grasshoppers, and thousands of other insects, awoke in the tall grasses and filled the air with their clear and ceaseless sounds: it was as if innumerable tiny bells were ringing inside our very ears. The air was full of the scent of water, grass, and mist: the scent of a lovely early summer morning. The captain struck a light and lit his pipe, and the smell of his cheap tobacco and of the tinder seemed to me extraordinarily pleasant

To overtake the infantry more quickly we left the road. The captain appeared more thoughtful than usual, did not take his Daghestan pipe from his mouth, and at every step touched with his heels his horse, which swaying from side to side left a scarcely perceptible green track in the tall wet grass. From under its very feet, with the cry and the whirr of wings which involuntarily sends a thrill through every sportsman, a pheasant rose, and flew slowly upwards. The captain did not take the least notice of it.

We had nearly overtaken the battalion when we heard the thud of a horse galloping behind us, and that same moment a good-looking youth in an officer's uniform and white sheepskin cap galloped past us. He smiled in passing, nodded to the captain, and flourished his whip. I only had time to notice that he sat his horse and held his reins with peculiar grace, that he had beautiful black eyes, a fine nose, and only the first indications of a moustache. What specially pleased me about him was that he could not repress a smile when he noticed our admiration. This smile alone showed him to be very young.

'Where is he galloping to?' muttered the captain with a dissatisfied air, without taking the pipe from his mouth.

'Who is he?' I replied.

‘Ensign Alanin, a subaltern in my company. He came from the Cadet Corps only a month ago.’

‘I suppose he is going into action for the first time,’ I said.

‘That’s why he is so delighted/ answered the captain, thoughtfully shaking his head. ‘Youth !’

‘But how could he help being pleased? I can fancy how interesting it must be for a young officer.’

The captain remained silent for a minute or two.

‘That is just why I say “youth”,’ he added in a deep voice. ‘What is there to be pleased at without ever having seen the thing? When one has seen it many times one is not so pleased. There are now, let us say, twenty of us officers here: one or other is sure to be killed or wounded, that is quite certain. To-day it may be I, to-morrow he, the next day a third. So what is there to be pleased about?’

### Chapter III

AS SOON AS the bright sun appeared above the hill and lit up the valley along which we were marching, the wavy clouds of mist cleared and it grew hot. The soldiers, with muskets and sacks on their shoulders, marched slowly along the dusty road. Now and then Ukrainian words and laughter could be heard in their ranks. Several old soldiers in white blouses (most of them non-commissioned officers) walked together by the roadsides smoking their pipes and conversing gravely. Heavily laden wagons drawn by three horses moved steadily along, raising thick clouds of dust that hung motionless in the air. The officers rode in front: some of them caracoled — whipping their horses, making them take three or four leaps and then, pulling their heads round, stopping abruptly. Others were occupied with the singers, who in spite of the heat and sultriness sang song after song.

With the mounted Tartars, about two hundred yards ahead of the infantry, rode a tall handsome lieutenant in Asiatic costume on a large white horse. He was known in the regiment as a desperate daredevil who would spit the truth out at anybody. He wore a black tunic trimmed with gold braid, leggings to match, soft closely fitting gold-

braided oriental shoes, a yellow coat and a tall sheepskin cap pushed back from his forehead. Fastened to the silver strap that lay across his chest and back, he carried a powder-flask, and a pistol behind him. Another pistol and a silver-mounted dagger hung from his girdle, and above these a sword in a red leather sheath, and a musket in a black cover, were slung over his shoulder. By his clothing, by the way he sat his horse, by his general bearing, in fact by his every movement, one could see that he tried to resemble a Tartar. He even spoke to the Tartars with whom he was riding in a language I did not know, and from the bewildered and amused looks with which they glanced at one another I surmised that they did not understand him either. He was one of our young officers, dare-devil braves who shape their lives on the model of Lermontov's and Marlinsky's heroes. These officers see the Caucasus only through the prism of such books as A Hero of our Time, and Mullah-Nur<sup>1</sup>, and are guided in their actions not by their own inclinations but by the examples of their models.

<sup>1</sup> Novels by the above-mentioned authors. The lieutenant, for instance, may perhaps have liked the company of well-bred women and men of rank: generals, colonels, and aides-de-camp (it is even my conviction that he liked such society very much, for he was exceedingly ambitious), but he considered it his imperative duty to turn his roughest side to all important men, though he was strictly moderate in his rudeness to them; and when any lady came to the fort he considered it his duty to walk before her window with his bosom friends, in a red shirt and with slippers on his bare feet, and shout and swear at the top of his voice. But all this he did not so much with the intention of offending her as to let her see what beautiful white feet he had, and how easy it would be to fall in love with him should he desire it.

Or he would often go with two or three friendly Tartars to the hills at night to lie in ambush by the roadside to watch for passing hostile Tartars and kill them: and though his heart told him more than once that there was nothing valiant in this, he considered himself bound to cause suffering to people with whom he affected to be disillusioned and whom he chose to hate and despise. He always carried two things:

a large icon hanging round his neck, and a dagger which he wore over his shirt even when in bed. He sincerely believed that he had enemies. To persuade himself that he must avenge himself on someone and wash away some insult with blood was his greatest enjoyment. He was convinced that hatred, vengeance, and contempt for the human race were the noblest and most poetic of emotions.

But his mistress (a Circassian of course) whom I happened to meet subsequently, used to say that he was the kindest and mildest of men, and that every evening he wrote down his dismal thoughts in his diary, as well as his accounts on ruled paper, and prayed to God on his knees. And how much he suffered merely to appear in his own eyes what he wished to be! For his comrades and the soldiers could never see him as he wished to appear. Once on one of his nocturnal expeditions on the road with his bosom friends he happened to wound a hostile Chechen with a bullet in the leg, and took him prisoner.

After that the Chechen lived for seven weeks with the lieutenant, who attended to him and nursed him as he would have nursed his dearest friend, and when the Chechen recovered he gave him presents and set him free. After that, during one of our expeditions when the lieutenant was retreating with the soldiers of the cordon and firing to keep back the foe, .he heard someone among the enemy call him by name, and the man he had wounded rode forward and made signs to the lieutenant to do the same. The lieutenant rode up to his friend and pressed his hand. The hillsmen stood some way back and did not fire, but scarcely had the lieutenant turned his horse to return before several men shot at him and a bullet grazed the small of his back. Another time, at night, when a fire had broken out in the fort and two companies of soldiers were putting it out, I myself saw how the tall figure of a man mounted on a black horse and lit up by the red glow of the fire suddenly appeared among the crowd and, pushing through, rode up to the very flames. When quite close the lieutenant jumped from his horse and rushed into the house, one side of which was burning. Five minutes later he came out with singed hair and scorched elbow, carrying in his bosom two pigeons he had rescued from the flames.

His name was Rosenkranz, yet he often spoke of his descent, deducing it somehow from the Varangians (the first rulers of Russia), and clearly demonstrated that he and his ancestors were pure Russians.

#### Chapter IV

THE SUN HAD done half its journey, and cast its hot rays through the glowing air onto the dry earth. The dark blue sky was perfectly clear, and only the base of the snowy mountains began to clothe itself in lilac-tinged white clouds. The motionless air seemed full of transparent dust, the heat was becoming unbearable.

Half-way on their march the troops reached a small stream and halted. The soldiers stacked their muskets and rushed to the stream; the commander of the battalion sat down in the shade on a drum, his full face assuming the correct expression denoting the greatness of his rank. He, together with some other officers, prepared to have a snack. The captain lay down on the grass under his company's wagon. The brave Lieutenant Rosenkranz and some other young officers disposed themselves on their outspread cloaks and got ready for a drinking-bout, as could be gathered from the bottles and flasks arranged round them, as well as from the peculiar animation of the singers who, standing before them in a semicircle, sang a Caucasian dance-song with a whistling obbligato interjected:

Shamyl, he began to riot  
In the days gone by,  
Try-ry-rataty,  
In the days gone by!

Among these officers was the young ensign who had overtaken us in the morning. He was very amusing: his eyes shone, he spoke rather thickly, and he wished to kiss and declare his love to everyone. Poor boy! He did not know that he might appear funny in such a situation, that the frankness and tenderness with which he assailed every one predisposed them not to the affection he so longed for, but to ridicule;

nor did he know that when, quite heated, he at last threw himself down on the cloak and rested on his elbow with his thick black hair thrown back, he looked uncommonly charming.

[In a word, everyone was cheerful, except perhaps one officer who, sitting under his company's cart, had lost the horse he was riding to another officer at cards and had agreed to hand it over when they reached head-quarters. He was vainly trying to induce the other to play again, offering to stake a casket which everyone could confirm he had bought for thirty rubles from a Jew, but which — merely because he was in difficulties — he was now willing to stake for fifteen. His opponent looked casually into the distance and persistently remained silent, till at last he remarked that he was terribly anxious to have a doze.

I confess that from the time I started from the fort and decided to take Part in this action, gloomy reflections involuntarily rose in my mind, and so — since one has a tendency to judge of others by oneself]

I listened with curiosity to the conversation of the soldiers and officers and attentively watched the expression of their faces, but could find absolutely no trace of the anxiety I myself experienced: jokes, laughter and anecdotes, gambling and drunkenness, expressed the general carelessness and indifference to the impending danger [as if all these people had long ago finished their affairs in this world. What was this — firmness, habituation to danger, or carelessness and indifference to life? Or was it all these things together as well as others I did not know, forming a complex but powerful moral motive of human nature termed esprit de corps — a subtle code embracing within itself a general expression of all the virtues and vices of men banded together in any permanent condition, a code each new member involuntarily submits to unmurmuringly and which does not change with the individuals, since whoever they may be the sum total of human tendencies everywhere and always remains the same?]

Chapter V



TOWARDS SEVEN THAT evening, dusty and tired, we entered the wide fortified gate of Fort M. The sun was already setting and threw its rosy slanting rays on the picturesque little batteries, on the gardens with their tall poplars which surrounded the fortress, on the yellow gleaming cultivated fields, and on the white clouds that crowding round the snowy peaks had, as if trying to imitate them, formed a range not less fantastic and beautiful. On the horizon the new moon appeared delicate as a little cloud. In the Tartar village, from the roof of a hut, a Tartar was calling the faithful to prayer, and our singers raised their voices with renewed energy and vigour.

After a rest and after tidying myself up a bit, I went to an adjutant of my acquaintance to ask him to let the general know of my intention. On my way from the suburb where I had put up I noticed in Fort M. something I did not at all expect: a pretty little brougham overtook me, in which I caught sight of a fashionable bonnet and from which I overheard some French words. The sounds of some 'Lizzie' or 'Katenka' polka, played on a bad ramshackle piano, reached me through the windows of the commander's house. In a little grocery and wine shop which I passed, some clerks with cigarettes in their fingers sat drinking wine, and I heard one of them say to another, \*No, excuse me, as to politics, Mary Greg6revna is first of our ladies.'

A Jew in a worn-out coat, with a bent back and sickly countenance, was dragging along a wheezy barrel-organ and the whole suburb resounded to the tones of the finale of 'Lucia'. Two women in rustling dresses with silk kerchiefs on their heads and carrying bright-coloured parasols passed by along the planks that did duty for a pavement. Two girls, one in a pink, the other in a blue dress, stood bareheaded beside the earth-embankments of a low-roofed house, and shrieked with high-pitched, forced laughter, evidently to attract the attention of passing officers. Officers, dressed in new uniforms with glittering epaulettes and white gloves, flaunted along the street and on the boulevard.

I found my acquaintance on the ground floor of the general's house. I had scarcely had time to explain my wish to him and to get his reply that it could easily be fulfilled, when the pretty little brougham I had

noticed outside rattled past the window we were sitting at. A tall, well-built man in an infantry major's uniform and epaulettes got out and entered the house.

'Oh, please excuse me,' said the adjutant, rising, 'I must go and announce them to the general.'

'Who is it?' I asked.

'The countess,' he replied, and buttoning his uniform he rushed upstairs.

A few minutes later a very handsome man in a frock coat without epaulettes and with a white cross in his buttonhole went out into the porch. He was not tall but remarkably good-looking. He was followed by the major, an adjutant, and a couple of other officers. The general's gait, voice, and all his movements, showed him to be a man well aware of his own value.

'Bonsoir, madame la comtesse,'<sup>1</sup> he said, offering his hand through the carriage window.

A small hand in a kid glove pressed his, and a pretty smiling face in a yellow bonnet appeared at the carriage window.

Of the conversation which lasted several minutes I only overheard the general say laughingly as I passed by:

'Vous savez que j'ai fait voeu de combattre les infideles; prenez donc garde de la devenir.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Good evening, Countess.'

<sup>2</sup> 'You know I have sworn to fight the infidels (the unfaithful), so beware of becoming one.' A laugh replied from inside the carriage, 'Adieu donc, cher general.'<sup>1</sup>

'Nont au revoir?' said the general, ascending the steps of the porch.

'N'oubliez pas, que je m'invite pour la soiree de demain.'

The carriage rattled off [and the general went into the sitting-room with the major. Passing by the open window of the adjutant's room, he noticed my un-uniformed figure and turned his kind attention to me. Having heard my request he announced his complete agreement with it and passed on into his room.]

'There again,' I thought as I walked home, 'is a man who possesses all that Russians strive after: rank, riches, distinction; and this man, the day before an engagement the outcome of which is known only to God, jokes with a pretty woman and promises to have tea with her next day, just as if they had met at a ball!'

[I remembered a reflection I had heard a Tartar utter, to the effect that only a pauper can be brave. 'Become rich, become a coward,' said he, not at all to offend his comrade but as a common and unquestionable rule. But the general could lose, together with his life, much more than anyone else I had had an opportunity of observing and, contrary to the Tartar's rule, no one had shown such a pleasant, graceful indifference and confidence as he. My conceptions of courage became completely confused.]

At that same adjutant's I met a young man who surprised me even more. He was a young lieutenant of the K. regiment who was noted for his almost feminine meekness and timidity and who had come to the adjutant to pour out his vexation and resentment against those who, he said, had intrigued against him to keep him from taking Part in the impending

1 'Good-bye then, dear general.'

3 'No,, au revoir. Don't forget that I am inviting myself for to-morrow's soiree.' action. He said it was mean to behave in that way, that it was unfriendly, that he would not forget it, and so forth. Intently as I watched the expression of his face and listened to the sound of his voice, I could not help feeling convinced that he was not pretending but was genuinely filled with indignation and grief at not being allowed to go and shoot Circassians and expose himself to their fire. He was grieving like a little child who has been unjustly birched ... I could make nothing at all of it.

## Chapter VI

THE TROOPS WERE to start at ten in the evening. At half-past eight I mounted and rode to the general's, but thinking that he and his

adjutant were busy I tied my horse to the fence and sat down on an earth-bank intending to catch the general when he came out.

The heat and glare of the sun were now replaced by the coolness of night and the soft light of the young moon, which had formed a pale glimmering semicircle around itself on the deep blue of the starry sky and was already setting. Lights appeared in the windows of the houses and shone through cracks in the shutters of the earth huts. The stately poplars, beyond the white moonlit earth huts with their rush-thatched roofs, looked darker and taller than ever against the horizon.

The long shadows of the houses, the trees, and the fences, stretched out daintily on the dusty road. . . . From the river came the ringing voices of frogs;<sup>1</sup> along the street came the sound of hurried steps and voices talking, or the gallop of a horse, and from the suburb the tones of a barrel-organ playing now 'The winds are blowing', now some 'Aurora Waltz'.

I will not say in what meditations I was absorbed:

<sup>1</sup> Frogs in the Caucasus make a noise quite different from the croaking of frogs elsewhere. first, because I should be ashamed to confess the gloomy waves of thought that insisently flooded my soul while around me I noticed nothing but gaiety and joy, and secondly, because it would not suit my story. I was so absorbed in thought that I did not even notice the bell strike eleven and the general with his suite ride past me. [Hastily mounting my horse I set out to overtake the detachment.]

The rear-guard was still within the gates of the fort. I had great difficulty in making my way across the bridge among the guns, ammunition wagons, carts of different companies, and officers noisily giving orders. Once outside the gates I trotted past the troops who, stretching out over nearly three-quarters of a mile, were silently moving on amid the darkness, and I overtook the general. As I rode past the guns drawn out in single file, and the officers who rode between them, I was hurt as by a discord in the quiet and solemn harmony by the German accents of a voice shouting, 'A linstock, you devil!' and the voice of a soldier hurriedly exclaiming, 'Shevchenko, the lieutenant wants a light!'

The greater Part of the sky was now overcast by long strips of dark grey clouds; it was only here and there that a few stars twinkled dimly among them. The moon had already sunk behind the near horizon of the black hills visible to the right and threw a faint trembling light on their peaks, in sharp contrast to the impenetrable darkness enveloping their base. The air was so warm and still that it seemed as if not a single blade of grass, not a single cloudlet, was moving. It was so dark that even objects close at hand could not be distinguished. By the sides of the road I seemed to see now rocks, now animals, now some strange kind of men, and I discovered that they were merely bushes only when I heard them rustle, or felt the dew with which they were sprinkled. Before me I saw a dense heaving wall followed by some dark moving spots; this was the cavalry vanguard and the general with his suite. Another similar dark mass, only lower, moved beside us; this was the infantry.

The silence that reigned over the whole division was so great that all the mingling sounds of night with their mysterious claim were distinctly audible: the far-off mournful howling of jackals, now like agonized weeping, now like chuckling; the monotonous resounding song of crickets, frogs, and quails; a sort of rumbling I could not at all account for but which seemed to draw nearer; and all those scarcely audible motions of Nature which can neither be understood nor defined, mingled into one beautiful harmony which we call the stillness of night. This stillness was interrupted by, or rather combined with, the dull thud of hoofs and the rustling of the tall grass caused by the slowly advancing detachment.

Only very occasionally could the clang of a heavy gun, the sound of bayonets touching one another, hushed voices, or the snorting of a horse, be heard. [By the scent of the wet juicy grass which sank under our horses' feet, by the light steam rising from the ground and by the horizons seen on two sides of us, it was evident that we were moving across a wide, luxuriant meadow.] Nature seemed to breathe with pacifying beauty and power.

Can it be that there is not room for all men on this beautiful earth under those immeasurable starry heavens? Can it be possible that in the midst of this entrancing Nature feelings of hatred, vengeance, or the desire to exterminate their fellows, can endure in the souls of men? All that is unkind in the hearts of men should, one would think, vanish at contact with Nature — that most direct expression of beauty and goodness.

[War! What an incomprehensible phenomenon! When one's reason asks: 'Is it just, is it necessary?' an inner voice always replies 'No'. Only the persistence of this unnatural occurrence makes it seem natural, and a feeling of self-preservation makes it seem just.

Who will doubt that in the war of the Russians against the mountain-tribes, justice — resulting from a feeling of self-preservation — is on our side? Were it not for this war, what would secure the neighbouring rich and cultured Russian territories from robbery, murder, and raids by wild and warlike tribes? But consider two private persons. On whose side is the feeling of self-preservation and consequently of justice? Is it on the side of this ragamuffin — some Djenni or other — who hearing of the approach of the Russians snatches down his old gun from the wall, puts three or four charges (which he will only reluctantly discharge) in his pouch and runs to meet the giaours, and on seeing that the Russians still advance, approaching the fields he has sown which they will tread down and his hut which they will burn, and the ravine where his mother, his wife, and his children have hidden themselves, shaking with fear — seeing that he will be deprived of all that constitutes his happiness — in impotent anger and with a cry of despair tears off his tattered jacket, flings down his gun, and drawing his sheepskin cap over his eyes sings his death-song and flings himself headlong onto the Russian bayonets with only a dagger in his hand?

Is justice on his side or on that of this officer on the general's staff who is singing French chansonettes so well just as he rides past us? He has a family in Russia, relations, friends, serfs, and obligations towards them, but has no reason or desire to be at enmity with the hillsmen, and has come to the Caucasus just by chance and to show his courage. Or is it on the side of my acquaintance the adjutant, who only wishes to obtain

a captaincy and a comfortable position as soon as possible and for that reason has become the hillsmen's enemy? Or is it on the side of this young German who, with a strong German accent, is demanding a linstock from the artillerymen? What devil has brought him from his fatherland and set him down in this distant region? Why should this Saxon, Kaspar Lavrentich, mix himself up in our blood-thirsty conflict with these turbulent neighbours?]

## Chapter VII

WE HAD BEEN riding for more than two hours. I was beginning to shiver and feel drowsy. Through the gloom I still seemed to see the same indefinite forms; a little way in front the same black wall and the moving spots. Close in front of me I could see the crupper of a white horse which swung its tail and threw its hind legs wide apart, the back of a white Circassian coat on which could be discerned a musket in a black case, and the glimmering butt of a pistol in an embroidered holster; the glow of a cigarette lit up a fair moustache, a beaver collar and a hand in a chamois glove. Every now and then I leant over my horse's neck, shutting my eyes and forgetting myself for a few minutes, then startled by the familiar tramping and rustling I glanced round, and felt as if I were standing still and the black wall in front was moving towards me, or that it had stopped and I should in a moment ride into it. At one such moment the rumbling which increased and seemed to approach, and the cause of which I could not guess, struck me forcibly: it was the sound of water. We were entering a deep gorge and approaching a mountain-stream that was overflowing its banks.<sup>1</sup> The rumbling increased, the damp grass became thicker and taller and the bushes closer, while the horizon gradually narrowed. Now and then bright lights appeared here

<sup>1</sup> In the Caucasus rivers are apt to overflow in July. and there against the dark background of the hills, and vanished instantly.

'Tell me, please, what are those lights?' I asked in a whisper of a Tartar riding beside me.

'Don't you know?' he replied.

'No.'

'The hillsmen have tied straw to poles and are waving it about alight.'

'Why are they doing that?'

'So that everyone should know that the Russians have come. Oh, oh! What a bustle is going on now in the aouls! Everybody's dragging his belongings into the ravine,' he said laughing.

'Why, do they already know in the mountains that a detachment is on its way?' I asked him.

'How can they help knowing? They always know. Our people are like that.'

'Then Shamyl<sup>1</sup> too is preparing for action?' I asked.

'No,' he answered, shaking his head, 'Shamyl won't go into action; Shamyl will send his naibs<sup>2</sup> and he himself will look on through a telescope from above.'

'Does he live far away?'

'Not far. Some eight miles to the left.'

'How do you know?' I asked. 'Have you been there?'

'I have. Our people have all been.'

'Have you seen Shamyl?'

'Such as we don't see Shamyl! There are a hundred, three hundred, a thousand murids<sup>3</sup> all round him, and Shamyl is in the centre,' he said, with an expression of servile admiration.

Looking up, it was possible to discern that the sky,

1 Shamyl was the leader (in 1834-59) of the Caucasian hill-tribes in their resistance to Russia.

2 A naib was a man to whom Shamyl had entrusted some administrative office. L. T.

3 The word murid has several meanings, but here it denotes something between an adjutant and a bodyguard. now cleared, was beginning to grow lighter in the east and the Pleiades to sink towards the horizon, but the ravine through which we were marching was still damp and gloomy.

Suddenly a little way in front of us several lights flashed through the darkness; at the same moment some bullets flew whizzing past amid the surrounding silence [and sharp abrupt firing could be heard and loud cries, as piercing as cries of despair but expressing instead of fear



such a passion of brutal audacity and rage that one could not but shudder at hearing it.] It was the enemy's advanced picket. The Tartars who composed it whooped, fired at random, and then ran in different directions.

All became silent again. The general called up an interpreter. A Tartar in a white Circassian coat rode up to him and, gesticulating and whispering, talked with him for some time.

'Colonel Khasanov! Order the cordon to take open order,' commanded the general with a quiet but distinct drawl.

The detachment advanced to the river, the black hills and gorges were left behind, the dawn appeared. The vault of the heavens, in which a few pale stars were still dimly visible, seemed higher; the sunrise glow beyond shone brightly in the east, a fresh penetrating breeze blew from the west and the white mists rose like steam above the rushing stream.

## Chapter VIII

OUR GUIDE POINTED out a ford and the cavalry vanguard, followed by the general, began crossing the stream. The water which reached to the horses' chests rushed with tremendous force between the white boulders which here and there appeared on a level with its surface, and formed foaming and gurgling ripples round the horses' legs. The horses, surprised by the noise of the water, lifted their heads and pricked their ears, but stepped evenly and carefully against the current on the uneven bottom of the stream. Their riders lifted their feet and their weapons. The infantry, literally in nothing but their shirts, linked arm in arm by twentys and holding above the water their muskets to which their bundles of clothing were fastened, made great efforts (as the strained expression of their faces showed) to resist the force of the current. The mounted artillerymen with loud shouts drove their horses into the water at a trot. The guns and green ammunition wagons, over which the water occasionally splashed, rang against the stony bottom, but the sturdy little horses, churning the water, pulled at the traces in unison and with dripping manes and tails clambered out on the opposite bank.

As soon as the crossing was accomplished the general's face suddenly assumed a meditative and serious look and he turned his horse and, followed by the cavalry, rode at a trot down a broad glade which opened out before us in the midst of the forest. A cordon of mounted Cossacks was scattered along the skirts of the forest.

In the woods we noticed a man on foot dressed in a Circassian coat and wearing a tall cap — then a second and a third. One of the officers said: 'Those are Tartars.' Then a puff of smoke appeared from behind a tree, a shot, and another. . . . Our rapid fire drowns the enemy's. Only now and then a bullet, with a slow sound like the buzzing of a bee's wings, passes by and proves that the firing is not all ours. Now the infantry at a run and the guns at a trot pass into the cordon. You can hear the boom of the guns, the metallic sounds of flying grape-shot, the hissing of rockets, and the crackle of musketry. Over the wide glade on all sides you can see cavalry, infantry, and artillery. Puffs of smoke mingle with the dew-covered verdure and the mist. Colonel Khasanov, approaching the general at full gallop, suddenly reins in his horse.

'Your Excellency, shall we order the cavalry to charge?' he says, raising his hand to his cap. 'The enemy's colours<sup>1</sup> are in sight,' and he points with his whip to some mounted Tartars in front of whom ride two men on white horses with bits of blue and red stuff fastened to poles in their hands.

'Go, and God be with you, Ivan Mikhaylovich!' says the general.

The colonel turns his horse sharply round, draws his sword, and shouts 'Hurrah!'

'Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!' comes from the ranks, and the cavalry gallop after him. . . .

Everyone looks on with interest: there is a colour, another, a third and a fourth. . . .

The enemy, not waiting for the attack, hides in the wood and thence opens a small-arms fire. Bullets come flying more and more frequently.

'Quel charmant coup d'oeil!'<sup>2</sup> says the general, rising slightly, English fashion, in his saddle on his slim-legged black horse.

'Charmant!' answers the major, rolling his r's, and striking his horse he rides up to the general: 'C'est un vrai plaisir que la guerre dans un aussi beau pays,'<sup>3</sup> he says.

'Et surtout en bonne compagnie,'<sup>4</sup> replies the general with a pleasant smile.

The major bows.

At that moment a hostile cannon-ball flies past with a disagreeable whiz, and strikes something. We hear behind us the moan of a wounded man.

1 The colours among the hillsmen correspond to those of our troops, except that every dzhigit or 'brave' among them may make his own colours and carry them.

2 'What a charming view.'

3 'Charming... War in such beautiful country is a real pleasure.'

4 'Especially in good company.' This moaning strikes me so strangely that the warlike scene instantly loses all its charm for me. But no one except myself seems to notice it: the major laughs with apparently greater gusto, another officer repeats with perfect calm the first words of a sentence he had just been saying, the general looks the other way and with the quietest smile says something in French.

'Shall we reply to their fire?' asks the commander of the artillery, galloping up.

'Yes, frighten them a bit!' carelessly replies the general, lighting a cigar. The battery takes up its position and the firing begins. The earth groans under the shots, the discharges flash out incessantly, and smoke, through which it is scarcely possible to distinguish the artillerymen moving round their guns, veils your sight.

The aoul has been bombarded. Colonel Khasanov rides up again, and at the general's command gallops towards the aoul. The war-cry is again heard and the cavalry disappears in the cloud of dust it has raised.

The spectacle was truly magnificent. The one thing that spoilt the general impression for me — who took no part in the affair and was unaccustomed to it — was that this movement and the animation and

the shouting appeared unnecessary. The comparison involuntarily suggested itself to me of a man swinging his arms vigorously to cut the air with an axe.

## Chapter IX

OUR TROOPS HAD taken possession of the village and not a single soul of the enemy remained in it when the general and his suite, to which I had attached myself, rode up to it.

The long clean huts, with their fiat earthen roofs and shapely chimneys, stood on irregular stony mounds between which flowed a small stream. On one side were green gardens with enormous pear and small plum trees brightly lit up by the sun, on the other strange upright shadows, the perpendicular stones of the cemetery, and long poles with balls and many-coloured flags fastened to their ends. (These marked the graves of dzhigits.)

The troops were drawn up outside the gates.

[‘Well, how about it, Colonel?’ said the general, ‘Let them loot. I see they are terribly anxious to,’ he added with a smile, pointing at the Cossacks.

You cannot imagine how striking was the contrast between the carelessness with which the general uttered these words, and their import and the military surroundings.]

A moment later, dragoons, Cossacks, and infantry spread with evident delight through the crooked lanes and in an instant the empty village was animated again. Here a roof crashes, an axe rings against the hard wood of a door that is being forced open, here a stack of hay, a fence, a hut, is set on fire and a pillar of thick smoke rises up in the clear air. Here is a Cossack dragging along a sack of flour and a carpet, there a soldier, with a delighted look on his face, brings a tin basin and some rag out of a hut, another is trying with outstretched arms to catch two hens that struggle and cackle beside a fence, a third has somewhere discovered an enormous pot of milk and after drinking some of it throws the rest on the ground with a loud laugh.

The battalion with which I had come from Fort N. was also in the aoul. The captain sat on the roof of a hut and sent thin whiffs of cheap tobacco smoke through his short pipe with such an expression of indifference on his face that on seeing him I forgot that I was in a hostile aoul and felt quite at home.

‘Ah, you are here too?’ he said when he noticed me.

The tall figure of Lieutenant Rosenkranz flitted here and there in the village. He gave orders unceasingly and appeared exceedingly engrossed in his task. I saw him with a triumphant air emerge from a hut followed by two soldiers leading an old Tartar. The old man, whose only clothing consisted of a mottled tunic all in rags and patchwork trousers, was so frail that his arms, tightly bound behind his bent back, seemed scarcely to hold onto his shoulders, and he could scarcely drag his bare crooked legs along. His face and even Part of his shaven head were deeply furrowed. His wry toothless mouth kept moving beneath his close-cut moustache and beard, as if he were chewing something; but a gleam still sparkled in his red lashless eyes which clearly expressed an old man’s indifference to life.

Rosenkranz asked him, through an interpreter, why he had not gone away with the others.

‘Where should I go?’ he answered, looking quietly away.

‘Where the others have gone,’ someone remarked.

‘The dzhigits have gone to fight the Russians, but I am an old man.’

‘Are you not afraid of the Russians?’

‘What will the Russians do to me? I am old,’ he repeated, again glancing carelessly round the circle that had formed about him.

Later, as I was returning, I saw that old man bareheaded, with his arms tied, being jolted along behind the saddle of a Cossack, and he was looking round with the same expression of indifference on his face. He was needed for the exchange of prisoners.

I climbed onto the roof and sat down beside the captain.

[A bugler who had vodka and provisions was sent for. The captain’s calmness and equanimity involuntarily produced an effect on me. We

ate roasted pheasant and chatted, without at all reflecting that the owners of that hut had not merely no desire to see us there but could hardly have imagined our existence.]

'There don't seem to have been many of the enemy,' I said, wishing to know his opinion of the action that had taken place.

'The enemy?' he repeated with surprise. 'The enemy was not there at all! Do you call those the enemy? . . . Wait till the evening when we go back, and you will see how they will speed us on our way: what a lot of them will pour out from there,' he said, pointing to a thicket we had passed in the morning.

'What is that?' I asked anxiously, interrupting the captain and pointing to a group of Don Cossacks who had collected round something not far from us.

A sound of something like a child's cry came from there, and the words: 'Stop . . . don't hack it. . . you'll be seen . . . Have you a knife, Evstigneich . . . Lend me a knife. . . .'

'They are up to something, the scoundrels . . . replied the captain calmly.

But at that moment the young ensign, his comely face flushed and frightened, came suddenly running from behind a corner and rushed towards the Cossacks waving his arms.

'Don't touch it! Don't kill it!' he cried in a childish voice.

Seeing the officer, the Cossacks stepped aPart and released a little white kid. The young ensign was quite abashed, muttered something, and stopped before us with a confused face. Seeing the captain and me on the roof he blushed still more and ran leaping towards us.

'I thought they were killing a child,' he said with a bashful smile.

## Chapter X

THE GENERAL WENT ahead with the cavalry. The battalion with which I had come from Fort N. remained in the rear-guard. Captain Khl6pov's and Lieutenant Rosenkranz's battalions retired together.

The captain's prediction was fully justified. No sooner had we entered the narrow thicket he had mentioned, than on both sides of us we caught glimpses of hillsmen mounted and on foot, and so near were they that I could distinctly see how some of them ran stooping, rifle in hand, from one tree to another.

The captain took off his cap and piously crossed himself, some of the older soldiers did the same. From the wood were heard war-cries and the words 'lay giaour', 'Urus! iay' Sharp short rifle-shots, following one another fast, whizzed on both sides of us. Our men answered silently with a running fire, and only now and then remarks like the following were made in the ranks: 'See where he<sup>1</sup> fires from! It's all right for him inside the wood. We ought to use cannon,' and so forth.

Our ordnance was brought out, and after some grape-shot had been fired the enemy seemed to grow weaker, but a moment later and at every step taken by our troops, the enemy's fire again grew hotter and the shouting louder.

We had hardly gone seven hundred yards from the village before enemy cannon-balls began whistling over our heads. I saw a soldier killed by one. . . . But why should I describe the details of that terrible picture which I would myself give much to be able to forget!

Lieutenant Rosenkranz kept firing, and incessantly shouted in a hoarse voice at the soldiers and galloped from one end of the cordon to the other. He was rather pale and this suited his martial countenance very well.

The good-looking young ensign was in raptures: his beautiful dark eyes shone with daring, his lips were slightly smiling, and he kept riding up to the captain and begging permission to charge.

<sup>1</sup> He is a collective noun by which the soldiers indicate the enemy. 'We will repel them,' he said persuasively, 'we certainly will.'

'It's not necessary,' replied the captain abruptly. 'We must retreat.'

The captain's company held the skirts of the wood, the men lying down and replying to the enemy's fire. The captain in his shabby coat and shabby cap sat silent on his white horse, with loose reins, bent knees, his feet in the stirrups, and did not stir from his place. (The soldiers knew and did their work so well that there was no need to give them any orders.) Only at rare intervals he raised his voice to shout at those who exposed their heads. There was nothing at all martial about the captain's appearance, but there was something so sincere and simple in it that I was unusually struck by it. 'It is he who is really brave,' I involuntarily said to myself.

He was just the same as I had always seen him: the same calm movements, the same guileless expression on his plain but frank face, only his eyes, which were brighter than usual, showed the concentration of one quietly engaged on his duties. 'As I had always seen him' is easily said, but how many different shades have I noticed in the behaviour of others; one wishing to appear quieter, another sterner, a third merrier, than usual, but the captain's face showed that he did not even see why he should appear anything but what he was.

The Frenchman at Waterloo who said, 'La garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas,'<sup>1</sup> and other, Particularly French, heroes who uttered memorable sayings were brave, and really uttered remarkable words, but between their courage and the captain's there was this difference, that even if a great saying had in any circumstance stirred in the soul of my hero, I am convinced that he would not have uttered it: first because by uttering a great saying he would have feared to spoil a great deed, and secondly because

I 'The Guard dies, but does not surrender.' when a man feels within himself the capacity to perform a great deed no talk of any kind is needed. That, I think, is a peculiar and a lofty characteristic of Russian courage, and that being so, how can a Russian heart help aching when our young Russian warriors utter trivial French phrases intended to imitate antiquated French chivalry?



Suddenly from the side where our young ensign stood with his platoon we heard a not very hearty or loud 'Hurrah!' Looking round to where the shout came from, I saw some thirty soldiers with sacks on their shoulders and muskets in their hands managing with very great difficulty to run across a ploughed field. They kept stumbling, but nevertheless ran on and shouted. In front of them, sword in hand, galloped the young ensign.

They all disappeared into the wood. . . .

After a few minutes of whooping and clatter a frightened horse ran out of the wood, and soldiers appeared bringing back the dead and wounded. Among the latter was the young ensign. Two soldiers supported him under his arms. He was as pale as a sheet, and his pretty head, on which only a shadow remained of the warlike enthusiasm that had animated him a few minutes before, was dreadfully sunk between his shoulders and drooped on his chest. There was a small spot of blood on the white shirt beneath his unbuttoned coat.

'Ah, what a pity!' I said, involuntarily turning away from this sad spectacle.

'Of course it's a pity,' said an old soldier, who stood leaning on his musket beside me with a gloomy expression on his face. 'He's not afraid of anything. How can one do such things?' he added, looking intently at the wounded lad. 'He was still foolish and now he has paid for it!'

'And you?' I asked. 'Are you afraid?'

'What do you expect?'

## Chapter XI

FOUR SOLDIERS WERE carrying the ensign on a stretcher and behind them an ambulance soldier was leading a thin, broken-winded horse with two green boxes on its back containing surgical appliances. They waited for the doctor. Some officers rode up to the stretcher and tried to cheer and comfort the wounded lad.

‘Well, friend Alanin, it will be some time before you will dance again with castanets,’ said Lieutenant Rosenkranz, riding up to the stretcher with a smile.

He probably supposed that these words would raise the young ensign’s spirits, but as far as one could judge by the latter’s coldly sad look the words had not the desired effect.

The captain rode up too. He looked intently at the wounded man and his usually calm and cold face expressed sincere sympathy. ‘Well, my dear Anatol Ivanich,’ he said, in a voice of tender sympathy such as I never expected from him, ‘evidently it was God’s will.’

The wounded lad looked round and his pale face lit up with a sad smile. ‘Yes, I disobeyed you.’

‘Say rather, it was God’s will,’ repeated the captain.

The doctor when he arrived, [as far as could be judged by the shakiness of his legs and the redness of his eyes, was in no fit condition to bandage the patient: however, he] took from his assistant bandages, a probe, and another instrument, rolled up his sleeves and stepped up to the ensign with an encouraging smile.

‘So it seems they have made a hole in a sound spot for you too,’ he said in a carelessly playful tone. ‘Let me see.’

The ensign obeyed, but the look he gave the merry doctor expressed astonishment and reproof which the inebriated practitioner did not notice. He touched the wound so awkwardly, quite unnecessarily pressing on it with his unsteady fingers, that the wounded ensign, driven beyond the limits of endurance, pushed away his hand with a deep groan.

‘Let me alone!’ he said in a scarcely audible voice. ‘I shall die anyway.’

[Then, addressing the captain, he said with difficulty: ‘Please, Captain .. . yesterday I lost.. . twenty rubles to Dronov. . . . When my things are sold ... let him be paid.’]

With those words he fell back, and five minutes later when I passed the group that had formed around him, and asked a soldier, ‘How is the ensign?’ the answer was, ‘Passing away.’

## Chapter XII

IT WAS LATE in the day when the detachment, formed into a broad column and singing, approached the Fort.

[The general rode in front and by his merry countenance one could see that the raid had been successful. In fact, with little loss, we had that day been in Mukay aoul — where from immemorial times no Russian foot had trod.

The Saxon, Kaspar Lavrentich, narrated to another officer that he had himself seen how three Chechens had aimed straight at his breast. In the mind of Ensign Rosenkranz a complete story of the day's action had formulated itself. Captain Khlopov walked with thoughtful face in front of his company, leading his little white horse by its bridle.]

The sun had hidden behind the snowy mountain range and threw its last rosy beams on a long thin cloud stretching motionless across the clear horizon. The snow peaks began to disappear in purple mist and only their top outline was visible, wonderfully distinct in the crimson sunset glow. The delicate moon, which had risen long since, began to grow pale against the deep azure. The green of the grass and trees was turning black and becoming covered with dew. The dark masses of troops moved with measured sounds over the luxuriant meadows. Tambourines, drums, and merry songs were heard from various sides. The voice of the second tenor of the Sixth Company rang out with full force and the sounds of his clear chest-notes, full of feeling and power, floated through the clear evening air.

1852

Recollections Of A Billiard-Marker

Translated by Nathan Dole 1887

WELL, IT HAPPENED about three o'clock. The gentlemen were playing. There was the tall visitor, as our men called him. The prince was there, — the two are always together. The mustached barin was there; also the little hussar, Oliver, who was an actor; there was the Polish pan. It was a pretty good crowd.

The tall visitor and the prince were playing together. Now, here I was walking up and down around the billiard-table with my stick, keeping tally, — ten and forty-seven, twelve and forty-seven.

Everybody knows it's our business to score. You don't get a chance to get a bite of anything, and you don't get to bed till two o'clock o' nights, but you're always being screamed at to bring the balls. I was keeping tally; and I look, and see a new barin comes in at the door. He gazed and gazed, and then sat down on the divan. Very good! "Now, who can that be?" thinks I to myself. "He must be somebody." His dress was neat, — neat as a pin, — checkered tricot pants, stylish little short coat, plush vest, and gold chain and all sorts of trinkets dangling from it.

He was dressed neat; but there was something about the man neater still; slim, tall, his hair brushed forward in style, and his face fair and ruddy, — well, in a word, a fine young fellow.

You must know our business brings us into contact with all sorts of people. And there's many that ain't of much consequence, and there's a good deal of poor trash. So, though you 're only a scorer, you get used to telling folks; that is, in a certain way you learn a thing or two.

I looked at the barin. I see him sit down, modest and quiet, not knowing anybody; and the clothes on him are so brand-new that, thinks I, "Either he 's a foreigner, — an Englishman maybe, — or some count just come. And though he's so young, he has an air of some distinction."

Oliver sat down next him, so he moved along a little.

They began a game. The tall man lost. He shouts to me. Says he, "You 're always cheating. You don't count straight. Why don't you pay attention?"

He scolded away, then threw down his cue, and went out. Now, just look here! Evenings, he and the prince plays for fifty silver rubles a game; and here he only lost a bottle of Makon wine, and got mad. That's the kind of a character he is.

Another time he and the prince plays till two o'clock. They don't bank down any cash; and so I know neither of them's got any cash, but they are simply playing a bluff game.

"I'll go you twenty-five rubles," says he.

"All right."

Just yawning, — and not even stopping to place the ball, — you see, he was not made of stone, — now just notice what he said. "We are playing for money," says he, "and not for chips."

But this man puzzled me worse than all the rest. Well, then, when the big man left, the prince says to the stranger, "Wouldn't you like," says he, "to play a game with me?"

"With pleasure," says he.

He sat there, and looked rather foolish, indeed he did. He may have been courageous in reality; but, at all events, he got up, went over to the billiard-table, and did not seem flustered as yet. But whether he was flustered or not, you couldn't help seeing that he was not quite at his ease.

Either his clothes were a little too new, or he was embarrassed because everybody was looking at him; at any rate, he seemed to have no energy. He sort of sidled up to the table, caught his pocket on the edge, began to chalk his cue, dropped his chalk.

Whenever he hit the ball, he always glanced around, and reddened.

Not so the prince. He was used to it; he chalked and chalked his hand, tucked up his sleeve; he goes and sits down when he pockets the ball, even though he is such a little man.

They played two or three games; then I notice the prince puts up the cue, and says, "Would you mind telling me your name?"

"Nekhliudof," says he.

Says the prince, "Was your father commander in the corps of cadets?"

"Yes," says the other.

Then they began to talk in French, and I could not understand them. I suppose they were talking about family affairs.

“Au revoir” says the prince. “I am very glad to have made your acquaintance.”

He washed his hands, and went to get a lunch; but the other stood by the billiard-table with his cue, and was knocking the balls about.

It’s our business, you know, when a new man comes long, to be rather sharp; it ‘s the best way. I took the balls, and went to put them up. He reddened, and says, “Can’t I play any longer?”

“Certainly you can,” says I. “That’s what billiards is for.” But I don’t pay any attention to him. I straighten the cues.

“Will you play with me?”

“Certainly, sir,” says I.

I place the balls.

“Shall we play for odds?”

“What do you mean,— ‘play for odds’?”

“Well,” says I, “you give me a half-ruble, and I crawl under the table.”

Of course, as he had never seen that sort of thing, it seemed strange to him; he laughed.

“Go ahead,” says he.

“Very well,” says I, “only you must give me odds.”

“What!” says he, “are you a worse player than I am?”

“Most likely,” says I. “We have few players who can be compared with you.”

We began to play. He certainly had the idea that he was a crack shot. It was a caution to see him shoot; but the Pole sat there, and kept shouting out every time: —

“Ah, what a chance! ah, what a shot!”

But what a man he was! His ideas were good enough, but he didn’t know how to carry them out. Well, as usual I lost the first game, crawled under the table, and grunted.

Thereupon Oliver and the Pole jumped down from their seats, and applauded, thumping with their cues.

“Splendid! Do it again,” they cried, “once more.”

Well enough to cry “once more,” especially for the Pole. That fellow would have been glad enough to crawl under the billiard-table, or even under the Blue bridge, for a half-ruble! Yet he was the first to cry, “Splendid! but you haven’t wiped off all the dust yet.”

I, Petrushka the marker, was pretty well known to everybody.

Only, of course, I did not care to show my hand yet. I lost my second game.

“It does not become me at all to play with you, sir,” says I.

He laughed. Then, as I was playing the third game, he stood forty-nine and I nothing. I laid the cue on the billiard-table, and said, “Barin, shall we play off?”

“What do you mean by playing off?” says he. “How would you have it?”

“You make it three rubles or nothing,” says I.

“Why,” says he, “have I been playing with you for money?” The fool!

He turned rather red.

Very good. He lost the game. He took out his pocket-book, quite a new one, evidently just from the English shop, opened it; I see he wanted to make a little splurge. It was stuffed full of bills, nothing but hundred-ruble notes.

“No,” says he, “there’s no small stuff here.”

He took three rubles from his purse.

“There,” says he, “there’s your two rubles; the other pays for the games, and you keep the rest for vodka.”

“Thank you, sir, most kindly.”

I see that he is a splendid fellow. For such a one I would crawl under anything. For one thing, it’s a pity that he won’t play for money. For then, thinks I, I should know how to work him for twenty rubles, and maybe I could stretch it out to forty.

As soon as the Pole saw the young barin’s money, he says, “Wouldn’t you like to try a little game with me? You play so admirably.”

Such sharpers prowl around.

“No,” says he, “excuse me; I have not the time.”

And he went out.

I don't know who that man was, that Pole. Some one called him Pan, and it stuck to him. Every day he used to sit in the billiard-room, and always look on. He was no longer allowed to take a hand in any game whatever; but he always sat by himself, and got out his pipe, and smoked. But then he could play well.

Very good. Nekhliudof came a second time, a third time; he began to come frequently. He would come morning and evening. He learned to play French carom and pyramid pool, — everything, in fact. He became less bashful, got acquainted with everybody, and played tolerably well. Of course, being a young man of a good family, with money, everybody liked him. The only exception was the "tall visitor"; he quarreled with him.

And the whole thing grew out of a trifle.

They were playing pool, — the prince, the "tall visitor," Nekhliudof, Oliver, and some one else. Nekhliudof was standing near the stove talking with some one. When it came the big man's turn to play, it happened that his ball was just opposite the stove. There was very little space there, and he liked to have elbow-room.

Now, either he didn't see Nekhliudof, or he did it on purpose; but, as he was flourishing his cue, he hit Nekhliudof in the chest, a tremendous rap. It actually made him groan. What then? He did not think of apologizing, he was so boorish. He even went farther: he didn't look at him; he walks off grumbling: —

"Who's jostling me there? It made me miss my shot. Why can't we have some room?"

Then the other went up to him, pale as a sheet, but quite self-possessed, and says so politely: —

"You ought first, sir, to apologize; you struck me," says he.

"Catch me apologizing now! I should have won the game," says he, "but now you have spoiled it for me."

Then the other one says: —

"You ought to apologize."

"Get out of my way! I insist upon it, I won't."

And he turned away to look after his ball.

Nekhliudof went up to him, and took him by the arm.

"You're a boor," says he, "my dear sir."



Though he was a slender young fellow, almost like a girl, still he was all ready for a quarrel. His eyes flashed fire; he looked as if he could eat him alive. The big guest was a strong, tremendous fellow, no match for Nekhliudof.

“Wha-at!” says he, “you call me a boor?”

Yelling out these words, he raises his hand to strike him.

Then everybody there rushed up, and seized them both by the arms, and separated them.

After much talk, Nekhliudof says: —

“Let him give me satisfaction; he has insulted me.”

“Not at all,” said the other. “I don’t care a whit about any satisfaction. He’s nothing but a boy, a mere nothing. I’ll pull his ears for him.”

“If you aren’t willing to give me satisfaction, then you are no gentleman.”

And, saying this, he almost cried.

“Well, and you, you are a little boy; nothing you say or do can offend me.”

Well, we separated them, — led them off, as the custom is, to different rooms. Nekhliudof and the prince had become friends.

“Go,” says the former; “for God’s sake make him listen to reason.”....

The prince went. The big man says: —

“I’m not afraid of any one,” says he. “I am not going,” says he, “to have any explanation with such a baby. I won’t do it, and that’s the end of it.”

Well, they talked and talked, and then the matter died out, only the “tall visitor” ceased to come to us any more.

As a result of this, — this row, I might call it, — he was regarded as quite the cock of the walk. He was quick to take offense, — I mean Nekhliudof; — as to so many other things, however, he was as unsophisticated as a new-born babe.

I remember once, the prince says to Nekhliudof, “Whom do you keep here?”

“No one,” says he.

“What do you mean, ‘no one’!”

“Why should I?” says Nekhliudof.

“How so, why should you?”

“I have always lived thus. Why shouldn't I continue to live the same way?”

“You don't say so! It is incredible!”

And saying this, the prince burst into a peal of laughter, and the mustached barin also roared. They couldn't get over it.

“What, never?” they asked.

“Never!”

They were dying with laughter. Of course I understood well enough what they were laughing at him for.

I keep my eyes open. “What,” thinks I, “will come of it?”

“Come,” says the prince, “come with me now.”

“No; not for anything,” was his answer.

“Now, that is absurd,” says the prince. “Come along!”

They went out.

They came back at one o'clock. They sat down to supper; quite a crowd of them were assembled. Some of our very best customers, — Atanof, Prince Razin, Count Shustakh, Mirtsof. And all congratulated Nekhliudof, laughing as they did so. They called me in; I saw that they were pretty jolly.

“Congratulate the barin,” they shout.

“What on?” I ask.

How did he call it? His initiation or his enlightenment; I can't remember exactly.

“I have the honor,” says I, “to congratulate you.”

And he sits there very red in the face, yet he smiles. Didn't they have fun with him, though!

Well and good. They went afterward to the billiard-room, all very gay; and Nekhliudof went up to the billiard-table, leaned on his elbow, and said:

“It 's amusing to you, gentlemen,” says he, “but it's sad for me. Why,” says he, “why did I do it? Prince,” says he, “I shall never forgive you or myself as long as I live.”

And he actually burst into tears. Evidently he did not know himself what he was saying. The prince went up to him with a smile.

“Don’t talk nonsense,” says he. “Let ‘s go home, Anatoli.”

“I won’t go anywhere,” says the other. “Why did I do that?”

And the tears poured down his cheeks. He would not leave the billiard-table, and that was the end of it. That’s what it means for a young and inexperienced man to...

In this way he used often to come to us. Once he came with the prince, and the mustached man who was the prince’s crony; the gentlemen always called him “Fedotka.” He had prominent cheek-bones, and was homely enough, to be sure; but he used to dress neatly and drove in a carriage. Why did the gentlemen like him so well? I really could not tell. “Fedotka! Fedotka!” they’d call, and ask him to eat and to drink, and they’d spend their money paying up for him; but he was a thoroughgoing beat. If ever he lost, he would be sure not to pay; but if he won, you bet he wouldn’t fail to collect his money. Often, too, he came to grief; yet there he was, walking arm in arm with the prince. “You are lost without me,” he would say to the prince.

“I am, Fedot,” says he; “but not a Fedot of that sort.”

And what jokes he used to crack, to be sure! Well, as I said, they had already arrived that time, and one of them says, “Let’s have the balls for three-handed pool.”

“All right,” says the other.

They began to play at three rubles a stake. Nekhliudof and the prince chat about all sorts of things.

“Ah!” says one of them, “you mind only what a neat little ankle she has.”

“Oh,” says the other, “her ankle is well enough; but what beautiful hair.”

Of course they paid no attention to the game, only kept on talking to one another.

As to Fedotka, that fellow was alive to his work; he played his very best, but they didn’t do themselves justice at all.

And so he won six rubles from each of them. God knows how many games he had won from the prince, yet I never knew them to pay each other any money; but Nekhliudof took out two greenbacks, and handed them over to him.

“No,” says he, “I don’t want to take your money. Let’s square it: play ‘quits or double,’ — either double or nothing.”

I set the balls. Fedotka began to play the first hand. Nekhliudof seemed to play only for fun; sometimes he would come very near winning a game, yet just fail of it. Says he, “It would be too easy a move, I won’t have it so.” But Fedotka did not forget what he was up to. Carelessly he proceeded with the game, and thus, as if it were unexpectedly, won.

“Let us play double stakes once more,” says he.

“All right,” says Nekhliudof.

Once more Fedotka won the game.

“Well,” says he, “it began with a mere trifle. I don’t wish to win much from you. Shall we make it once more or nothing?”

“Yes.”

Say what you may, but fifty rubles is a pretty sum, and Nekhliudof himself began to propose, “Let us make it double or quit.” So they played and played.

It kept growing worse and worse for Nekhliudof. Two hundred and eighty rubles were written up against him. As to Fedotka, he had his own method; he would lose a simple game, but when the stake was doubled, he would win sure.

But the prince sits by and looks on. He sees that the matter is growing serious.

“Enough!” says he, “hold on.”

My! they keep increasing the stake.

At last it went so far that Nekhliudof was in for more than five hundred rubles. Fedotka laid down his cue, and said:

“Aren’t you satisfied for to-day? I’m tired,” says he.

Yet I knew he was ready to play till dawn of day, provided there was money to be won. Stratagem, of course. And the other was all the more anxious to go on. “Come on! Come on!”

“No, — by God, I’m tired. Come,” says Fedot; “let’s go up-stairs; there you shall have your revanche.”

Up-stairs with us meant the place where the gentlemen used to play cards.

From that very day, Fedotka wound his net round him so that he began to come every day. He would play one or two games of billiards, and then proceed up-stairs, every day up-stairs.

What they used to do there, God only knows; but it is a fact that from that time he began to be an entirely different kind of man, and seemed hand in glove with Fedotka. Formerly he used to be stylish, neat in his dress, with his hair slightly curled even; but now it would be only in the morning that he would be anything like himself; but as soon as he had paid his visit up-stairs, he would not be at all like himself.

Once he came down from up-stairs with the prince, pale, his lips trembling, and talking excitedly.

“I cannot permit such a one as he is,” says he, “to say that I am not... “ How did he express himself? I cannot recollect, something like “not defined enough,” or what,— “and that he won’t play with me any more. I tell you I have paid him ten thousand, and I should think that he might be a little more considerate, before others, at least.”

“Oh, bother!” says the prince, “is it worth while to lose one’s temper with Fedotka?”

“No,” says the other, “I will not let it go so.”

“Why, old fellow, how can you think of such a thing as lowering yourself to have a row with Fedotka?”

“That is all very well; but there were strangers there, mind you.”

“Well, what of that? “ says the prince; “ strangers? Well, if you wish, I will go and make him ask your pardon.”

“No,” says the other.

And then they began to chatter in French, and I could not understand what it was they were talking about.

And what would you think of it? That very evening he and Fedotka ate supper together, and they became friends again.

Well and good. At other times again he would come alone.

“Well,” he would say, “do I play well?”

It’s our business, you know, to try to make everybody contented, and so I would say, “Yes, indeed;” and yet how could it be called good play, when he would poke about with his cue without any sense whatever.

And from that very evening when he took in with Fedotka, he began to play for money all the time. Formerly he didn't care to play for stakes, even for a dinner or for champagne. Sometimes the prince would say: "Let's play for a bottle of champagne."

"No," he would say. "Let us rather have the wine by itself. Hollo, there! bring a bottle!"

And now he began to play for money all the time; he used to spend his entire days in our establishment. He would either play with some one in the billiard' room, or he would go "up-stairs."

Well, thinks I to myself, every one else gets something from him, why don't I get some advantage out of it?

"Well, sir," says I, one day, "it's a long time since you have had a game with me."

And so we began to play. Well, when I won ten half-rubles of him, I says: —

"Don't you want to make it double or quit, sir?"

He said nothing. Formerly, if you remember, he would call me durak, fool, for such a boldness. But now we went to playing "quit or double." I won eighty rubles of him.

Well, what would you think? Since that first time he used to play with me every day. He would wait till there was no one about, for of course he would have been ashamed to play with a mere marker in presence of others. Once he had got rather warmed up by the play (he already owed me sixty rubles), and so he says:

"Do you want to stake all you have won?"

"All right," says I.

I won. "One hundred and twenty to one hundred and twenty?"

"All right," says I.

Again I won. "Two hundred and forty against two hundred and forty?"

"Isn't that too much?" I ask.

He made no reply. We played the game. Once more it was mine. "Four hundred and eighty against four hundred and eighty?"

I says, "Well, sir, I don't want to wrong you. Let us make it a hundred rubles that you owe me, and call it square."

You ought to have heard how he yelled at this, and yet he was not a proud man at all.

“Either play, or don’t play!” says he.

Well, I see there’s nothing to be done. “Three hundred and eighty, then, if you please,” says I.

I really wanted to lose. I allowed him forty points in advance. He stood fifty-two to my thirty-six. He began to cut the yellow one, and missed eighteen points; and I was standing just at the turning-point. I made a stroke so as to knock the ball off of the billiard-table. No so luck would have it. Do what I might, he even missed the doublet. I had won again. “Listen,” says he. “Piotr,” — he did not call me Petrushka then, — “I can’t pay you the whole on the spot. In a couple of months I can pay three thousand even, if it were necessary.”

And there he stood just as red, and his voice kind of trembled.

“Very good, sir,” says I.

With this he laid down the cue. Then he began to walk up and down, up and down, the sweat running down his face.

“Piotr,” says he, “let ‘s try it again, double or quit.”

And he almost burst into tears.

“What, sir, what! would you play against such luck?”

“Oh, let us play, I beg of you.”

And he brought the cue, and put it in my hand.

I took the cue, and I threw the balls on the table so that they bounced over on to the floor; I could not help showing off a little, naturally. I say, “All right, sir.”

But he was in such a hurry that he went and picked up the balls himself, and I thinks to myself, “Anyway, I’ll never be able to get the seven hundred rubles from him, so I can lose them to him all the same.”

I began to play carelessly on purpose. But no — he won’t have it so.

“Why,” says he, “you are playing badly on purpose.”

But his hands trembled, and when the ball went toward a pocket, his fingers would spread out and his mouth would screw up to one side, as if he could by any means force the ball into the pocket. Even I couldn’t stand it, and I say:

“That won’t do any good, sir.”

Very well. As he won this game, I says:

“This will make it one hundred and eighty rubles you owe me, and fifty games; and now I must go and get my supper.”

So I put up my cue, and went off.

I went and sat down all by myself, at a small table opposite the door; and I look in and see, and wonder what he will do. Well, what would you think? He began to walk up and down, up and down, probably thinking that no one’s looking at him; and then he would give a pull at his hair, and then walk up and down again, and keep muttering to himself; and then he would pull his hair again.

After that he wasn’t seen for a week. Once he came into the dining-room as gloomy as could be, but he didn’t enter the billiard-room.

The prince caught sight of him.

“Come,” says he, “let’s have a game.”

“No,” says the other, “I am not going to play any more.”

“Nonsense! come along.”

“No,” says he, “I won’t come, I tell you. For you it’s all one whether I go or not, yet for me it’s no good to come here.”

And so he did not come for ten days more. And then, it being the holidays, he came dressed up in a dress suit: he’d evidently been into company. And he was here all day long; he kept playing, and he came the next day, and the third...

And it began to go in the old style, and I thought it would be fine to have another trial with him.

“No,” says he, “I’m not going to play with you; and as to the one hundred and eighty rubles that I owe you, if you’ll come at the end of a month, you shall have it.”

Very good. So I went to him at the end of a month.

“By God,” says he, “I can’t give it to you; but come back on Thursday.”

Well, I went on Thursday. I found that he had a splendid suite of apartments.

“Well,” says I, “is he at home?”

“He hasn’t got up yet,” I was told.

“Very good, I will wait.”



For a body-servant he had one of his own serfs, such a gray-haired old man! That servant was perfectly single-minded, he didn't know anything about beating about the bush. So we got into conversation.

"Well," says he, "what is the use of our living here, master and I? He 's squandered all his property, and it's mighty little honor or good that we get out of this Petersburg of yours. When he started from the country, he thought it would be as it was with the last barin (the kingdom of heaven be his!), I shall go about with princes and counts and generals; he thought to himself, 'I'll find a countess for a sweetheart, and she'll have a big dowry, and we'll live on a big scale.' But it's quite a different thing from what he expected; here we are, running about from one tavern to another as bad off as we could be! The Princess Rtishcheva, you know, is his own aunt, and Prince Borotintsef is his godfather. What do you think? He went to see them only once, that was at Christmas time; he never shows his nose there. Yes, and even their people laugh about it to me. 'Why,' says they, 'your barin is not a bit like his father!' And once I take it upon myself to say to him: —  
"Why wouldn't you go, sir, and visit your aunt? They are feeling bad because you haven't been for so long.'

"It 's stupid there, Demyanitch,' says he. Just to think, he found his only amusement here in the saloon! If he only would enter the service! yet, no; he has got entangled with cards and all the rest of it. When men get going that way, there's no good in anything; nothing comes to any good... E-ekh! we are going to the dogs, and no mistake The late mistress (the kingdom of heaven be hers!) left us a rich inheritance: no less than a thousand souls, and about three hundred thousand rubles worth of timber lands. He has mortgaged it all, sold the timber, let the estate go to rack and ruin, and still no money on hand.

When the master is away, of course, the overseer is more than the master. What does he care? He only cares to stuff his own pockets. "A few days ago a couple of peasants brought complaints from the whole estate. 'He has wasted all the property,' they say. What do you think? he pondered over the complaints, and gave the peasants ten

rubles apiece. Says he, 'I'll be there very soon. I shall have some money, and I will settle all accounts when I come,' says he.

"But how can he settle accounts when we are getting into debt all the time? Money or no money, yet the winter here has cost eighty thousand rubles, and now there isn't a silver ruble in the house. And allowing to his kind-heartedness. You see, he's such a simple barin that it would be hard to find his equal; that's the very reason that he's going to ruin, going to ruin, all for nothing."

And the old man almost wept.

Nekhliudof woke up about eleven, and called me in.

"They haven't sent me any money yet," says he, "But it isn't my fault. Shut the door," says he.

I shut the door.

"Here," says he, "take my watch or this diamond pin, and pawn it. They will give you more than one hundred and eighty rubles for it, and when I get my money I will redeem it," says he.

"No matter, sir," says I. "If you don't happen to have any money, it's no consequence; let me have the watch, if you don't mind. I can wait for your convenience."

I can see that the watch is worth more than three hundred.

Very good. I pawned the watch for a hundred rubles, and carried him the ticket.

"You will owe me eighty rubles," says I, "and you had better redeem the watch."

And so it happened that he still owed me eighty rubles.

After that he began to come to us again every day. I don't know how matters stood between him and the prince, but at all events he kept coming with him all the time, or else they would go and play cards upstairs with Fedotka. And what queer accounts those three men kept between them! this one would lend money to the other, the other to the third, yet who it was that owed the money you never could find out.

And in this way he kept on coming our way for well-nigh two years; only it was to be plainly seen that he was a changed man, such a devil-may-care manner he assumed at times. He even went so far at times as to borrow a ruble of me to pay a hack-driver; and yet he would still play with the prince for a hundred rubles' stake.

He grew gloomy, thin, sallow. As soon as he came he used to order a little glass of absinthe, take a bite of something, and drink some port wine, and then he would grow more lively.

He came one time before dinner; it happened to be carnival time, and he began to play with a hussar.

Says he, "Do you want to play for a stake?"

"Very well," says he. "What shall it be?"

"A bottle of Claude Vougeaux? What do you say?"

"Il right."

Very good. The hussar won, and they went off for their dinner. They sat down at table, and then Nekhliudof says, "Simon, a bottle of Claude Vougeaux, and see that you warm it to the proper point."

Simon went out, brought in the dinner, but no wine.

"Well," says he, "where 's the wine?"

Simon hurried out, brought in the roast.

"Let us have the wine," says he.

Simon makes no reply.

"What's got into you ? Here we've almost finished dinner, and no wine. Who wants to drink with dessert?"

Simon hurried out.

"The landlord," says he, "wants to speak to you."

Nekhliudof turned scarlet. He sprang up from the table.

"What's the need of calling me?"

The landlord is standing at the door.

Says he, "I can't trust you any more, unless you settle my little bill."

"Well, didn't I tell you that I would pay the first of the month?"

“That will be all very well,” says the landlord, “but I can’t be all the time giving credit, and having no settlement. There are more than ten thousand rubles of debts outstanding now,” says he.

“Well, that’ll do, monshoor, you know that you can trust me! Send the bottle, and I assure you that I will pay you very soon.”

And he hurried back.

“What was it? why did they call you out?” asked the hussar.

“Oh, some one wanted to ask me a question.”

“Now it would be a good time,” says the hussar, “to have a little warm wine to drink.”

“Simon, hurry up!”

Simon came back, but still no wine, nothing. Too bad! He left the table, and came to me.

“For God’s sake,” says he, “Petrushka, let me have six rubles!”

He was pale as a sheet.

“No, sir,” says I; “by God, you owe me quite too much now.”

“I will give forty rubles for six, in a week’s time.”

“If only I had it,” says I, “I should not think of refusing you, but I haven’t.”

What do you think! He rushed away, his teeth set, his fist doubled up, and ran down the corridor like one mad, and all at once he gave himself a knock on the forehead.

“O my God!” says he, “hat has it come to?”

But he did not return to the dining-room; he jumped into a carriage, and drove away. Didn’t we have our laugh over it! The hussar asks:

“Where is the gentleman who was dining with me?”

“He has gone,” said some one.

“Where has he gone? What message did he leave?”

“He didn’t leave any; he just took to his carriage, and went off.”

“That’s a fine way of entertaining a man!” says he.

Now, thinks I to myself, it’ll be a long time before he comes again after this; that is, on account of this scandal. But no. On the next day he came about evening. He came into the billiard-room. He had a sort of a box in his hand. Took off his overcoat.

“Now, let us have a game,” says he.

He looked out from under his eyebrows, rather fierce like.

We played one game.

“That’s enough now,” says he; “go and bring me a pen and paper; I must write a letter.”

Not thinking anything, not suspecting anything, I bring some paper, and put it on the table in the little room.

“It ‘s all ready, sir,” says I.

“Very good.”

He sat down at the table. He kept on writing and writing, and muttering to himself all the time; then he jumps up, and, frowning, says:

“Look and see if my carriage has come yet.”

It was on a Friday, during carnival time, and so there weren’t any of the customers on hand; they were all at some ball. I went to see about the carriage, and just as I was going out of the door, “Petrushka!

Petrushka!” he shouted, as if something suddenly frightened him.

I turn round. I see he’s pale as a sheet, standing there, and looking at me.

“Did you call me, sir?” says I.

He made no reply.

“What do you want?” says I.

He says nothing.

“Oh, yes!” says he. “Let ‘s have another game.”

Then, says he:

“Haven’t I learned to play pretty well?”

He had just won the game. “ Yes,” says I.

“All right,” says he; “go now, and see about my carriage.”

He himself walked up and down the room.

Without thinking anything, I went down to the door. I didn’t see any carriage at all. I started to go up again.

Just as I was going up, I heard what sounded like the thud of a billiard-cue. I went into the billiard-room. I noticed a peculiar smell.

I looked around; and there he was, lying on the floor, in a pool of blood, with a pistol beside him. I was that scared that I could not speak a word.

He kept twitching, twitching his leg, and stretched himself a little. Then he sort of snored, and stretched out his full length in such a strange way.

And God knows why such a sin came about, — how it was that it occurred to him to ruin his own soul, — but as to what he left written on this paper, I don't understand it at all.

Truly, you can never account for what is going on in the world.

“God gave me all that a man can desire, wealth, name, intellect, noble aspirations. I wanted to enjoy myself, and I trod in the mire all that was best in me.

“I have done nothing dishonorable, I am not unfortunate, I have not committed any crime; but I have done worse: I have destroyed my feelings, my intellect, my youth.

“I became entangled in a filthy net, from which I cannot escape, and to which I cannot accustom myself. I feel that I am falling lower and lower every moment, and I cannot stop my fall.

“ And what ruined me? Was there in me some strange passion which I might plead as an excuse? No!

“...My recollections are pleasant.

“One fearful moment of forgetfulness, which can never be erased from my mind, led me to come to my senses. I shuddered when I saw what a measureless abyss separated me from what I desired to be, and might have been. In my imagination arose the hopes, the dreams, and the thoughts of my youth.

“ Where are those lofty thoughts of life, of eternity, of God, which at times filled my soul with light and strength? Where that aimless power of love which kindled my heart with its comforting warmth?

“...But how good and happy I might have been, had I trodden that path which, at the very entrance of life, was pointed out to me by my fresh mind and true feelings! More than once did I try to go from the ruts in which my life ran, into that sacred path.

“I said to myself, Now I will use my whole strength of will; and yet I could not do it. When I happened to be alone, I felt awkward and timid.

When I was with others, I no longer heard the inward voice; and I fell all the time lower and lower.

“At last I came to a terrible conviction that it was impossible for me to lift myself from this low plane. I ceased to think about it, and I wished to forget all; but hopeless repentance worried me still more and more. Then, for the first time, the thought of suicide occurred to me.

“ I once thought that the nearness of death would rouse my soul. I was mistaken. In a quarter of an hour I shall be no more, yet my view has not in the least changed. I see with the same eyes, I hear with the same ears, I think the same thoughts; there is the same strange incoherence, unsteadiness, and lightness in my thoughts.”

The Wood-Felling, The A Cadet's Story

The Wood-felling

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

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### Chapter I

IN THE MIDDLE of the winter of 185-a division of one battery was on service with the detachment operating in that Part of the Terek Territory<sup>1</sup> called the Great Chechnya. On the evening of February 14, knowing that the platoon which I in the absence of any officer was commanding, was to join a column told off to fell wood next day, and having given and received the necessary orders, I retired to my tent earlier than usual. As I had not contracted the bad habit of warming my tent with hot charcoal, I lay down without undressing on my bed, which was supported on stakes driven into the ground, drew my fur cap over my eyes, tucked myself up in my sheepskin cloak, and fell into that peculiar, heavy, and deep sleep which comes at times of anxiety and when one is awaiting danger. The expectation of the next day's affair had this effect on me.

At three next morning, while it was still quite dark, the warm sheepskin was pulled off me and my eyes, heavy with sleep, were unpleasantly struck by the red light of a candle.

'Get up, please,' said a voice. I shut my eyes, unconsciously pulled the sheepskin back over myself, and again fell asleep. 'Get up, please,' said Dmitry once more, remorselessly shaking me by the shoulder: 'the infantry are starting.' The reality suddenly flashed on my mind, I sat up and jumped to my feet. After hurriedly drinking a glass of tea and washing

<sup>1</sup> The Terek Territory lies to the north-east of the Caucasian Mountains. The Great and Little Chechnya are districts in the southern Part of it.

myself with icy water I crept out of the tent and went to the 'park' (the place where the cannon were). It was dark, misty, and cold. The dim red light of the night-fires, which gleaming here and there in the camp showed up the figures of the sleepy soldiers who lay near them, seemed only to make the darkness more intense.



Near by, quiet regular snoring could be heard, and from farther off, sounds of movements, voices, and the clatter of the muskets of the infantry preparing to start. There was a smell of smoke, manure, torches, and mist; the morning air caused cold shivers to run down one's back, and one's teeth chattered involuntarily.

It was only by the snorting and occasional stamping of the horses harnessed to them that we could tell where the limbers and ammunition wagons stood in the impenetrable darkness; and only the fiery dots of the linstocks showed where the guns were. 'God be with us!' With these words came the clanging sound of the first gun moving, then the noise of the ammunition wagon — and the platoon started. We all took off our caps and crossed ourselves. Having occupied the interval between the infantry companies, the platoon stopped and waited a quarter of an hour for the whole column to collect and for the commander to appear.

'One of our men is missing, Nicholas Petrovich.' With these words a black figure approached me, whom I only knew by the voice to be the gun-sergeant of the platoon, Maksimov.

'Who is it?'

'Velenchuk is missing. He was there all the time they were harnessing — I saw him myself — but now he's gone.'

As the column could not be expected to start at once, we decided to send Corporal Antonov to look for Velenchuk. Directly after that, several horsemen trotted past us in the dark. They were the commander and his suite; and immediately the head of the column moved and started and so at last did we also, but Antonov and Velenchuk were still absent. We had, however, hardly gone a hundred yards before they both overtook us.

'Where was he?' I asked Antonov.

'Asleep in the "park".'

'Why, has he had a drop too much?'

'Oh, no.'

'Then how is it he fell asleep?'

'I can't make out.'

For about three hours we moved slowly on in silence and darkness over some unploughed fields bare of snow and over low bushes that crackled under the wheels of the gun-carriages. At last, after we had crossed a shallow but extremely rapid stream, we were stopped, and we heard the abrupt reports of vintovkas<sup>1</sup> in the direction of the vanguard.

These sounds as usual had a most exhilarating effect on everyone. The detachment seemed to wake up: sounds of talking, movement, and laughter were heard in the ranks. Here a soldier wrestled with a comrade, there another hopped from foot to foot. Here was one chewing hard-tack, or to while away the time shouldering and grounding arms. Meanwhile the mist began to grow distinctly whiter in the east, the damp became more intense, and the surrounding objects gradually emerged from the gloom. I could already discern the green gun-carriages and ammunition wagons, the brass of the guns covered with moisture by the mist, the familiar figures of my soldiers, every minute detail of which I had involuntarily studied, the bay horses, and the lines of infantry

<sup>1</sup> The vintduka was a long Asiatic rifle used by the Circassians (Cherkeses). When firing, they rested the barrel on a support formed by two thin spiked sticks tied at the top by a strap. with their bright bayonets, their bags, their ramrods, and the kettles they carried on their backs.

We were soon again moved forward a few hundred yards where there was no road, and then we were shown our position. To the right one could see the steep bank of a winding stream and the high wooden posts of a Tartar cemetery; to the left and in front a black strip was visible through the mist. The platoon unlimbered. The Eighth Company, which covered us, piled their muskets, and a battalion with axes and muskets went to the forest.

Before five minutes were over fires were crackling and smoking in all directions. The soldiers dispersed, blew the fires and stirred them with

hands and feet, dragged logs and branches, while the forest resounded with the unceasing noise of hundreds of axes and the crashing of falling trees.

The artillery, with a certain rivalry of the infantry, heaped their pile high, and though it was already burning so that one could hardly come within two paces of it and thick black smoke was rising through the frozen branches, which the soldiers pressed down into the fire (and from which drops fell sizzling into the flames), and though the charcoal was glowing beneath and the grass was scorched all around, the soldiers were not satisfied, but kept throwing great logs on to the pile, feeding it with dry grass beneath and heaping it higher and higher. When I came up to the fire to smoke a cigarette, Velenchuk, always officious, but to-day feeling guilty and bustling about more than any one, in a fit of zeal snatched a piece of charcoal from the fire with his bare hand and, after tossing it from hand to hand a couple of times, dropped it on the ground.

‘Light a twig and hold it up,’ said a soldier.

‘No, better get a linstock, lad,’ said another.

When I had at length lit my cigarette without the aid of Velenchuk, who was again trying to take a piece of charcoal in his hand, he rubbed his burnt fingers on the skirts of his sheepskin coat and then, probably for want of something else to do, lifted a large piece of plane-tree wood and swung it into the fire. When at last he felt free to rest a bit, he came close up to the fire, threw open his cloak which he wore like a mantle fastened by one button, spread out his legs, held out his big, black hands, and drawing his mouth a bit to one side, screwed up his eyes.

‘Ah, I’ve gone and forgot my pipe. Here’s a go, lads!’ said he after a short silence, not addressing any one in Particular.

Chapter II

IN RUSSIA THERE are three predominant types of soldier under which the men of all our forces — whether line, guards, infantry, cavalry, artillery, army of the Caucasus, or what not — may be classified. These principal types, including many sub-divisions and combinations, are:

1. The submissive;
2. The domineering;
3. The reckless.

The submissive are divided into (a) the calmly submissive and (b) the bustlingly submissive.

The domineering are divided into (a) the sternly domineering and (b) the diplomatically domineering.

The reckless are divided into (a) the amusingly reckless and (b) the viciously reckless.

The type most often met with — a type more lovable and attractive than the others and generally accompanied by the best Christian virtues, — meekness, piety, patience, and devotion to the will of God, — is the submissive type in general. The distinctive feature of the calmly submissive is his invincible resignation to and contempt for all the reverses of fate which may befall him; the distinctive features of the submissive drunkard are a mild, poetic disposition and sensibility; the distinctive feature of the bustlingly submissive is limited mental capacity combined with purposeless industry and zeal.

The domineering type in general is found chiefly among the higher grade of soldiers: the corporals, sergeants, sergeant-majors and so on. The first subdivision, the sternly domineering, is a noble, energetic, pre-eminently military type and does not exclude high poetic impulses (Corporal Antonov, with whom I wish to acquaint the reader, belonged to this type). The second sub-division, formed by the diplomatically domineering, has for some time past been increasing largely. A man of this type is always eloquent and literate,<sup>1</sup> wears pink shirts, won't eat out of the common pot, sometimes smokes tobacco of Mousatov's brand, and thinks himself much superior to the common soldier, but is

rarely himself as good a soldier as the domineering of the first subdivision.

The reckless type, like the domineering type, is good in its first subdivision, the amusingly reckless, whose characteristic traits are irresistible mirth, great capacity of all kinds, and a highly gifted and daring nature. As with the domineering class, the second subdivision is bad; the viciously reckless are terribly bad, but to the honour of the Russian army it must be said that this type is very rare, and when found it is excluded from companionship by the public opinion of the soldiers themselves. Unbelief and a kind of boldness in vice are the chief traits characteristic of this class.

Velenchuk belonged to the bustlingly submissive. He was an Ukrainian by birth, had already served for fifteen years, and although not a showy or smart soldier he was simple-minded, kindly, extremely

1 A distinction very frequently met with in Russian is between literate and illiterate people; i.e. between those who can and those who cannot read and write.

though often inopportunately zealous, and also exceedingly honest. I say exceedingly honest, because an incident had occurred the year before which made this characteristic quality of his very evident. It must be remembered that almost every soldier knows a trade. The most usual trades are tailoring and boot-making. Velenchuk taught himself the former, and judging from the fact that even Michael Dorofeich, the sergeant-major, ordered clothes from him, he must have attained some proficiency at his craft.

Last year, in camp, Velenchuk undertook to make a fine cloth coat for Michael Dorofeich; but that very night after he had cut out the coat and measured out the trimmings and put them all under his pillow in the tent, a misfortune befell him: the cloth that had cost seven rubles, disappeared during the night! Velenchuk, with tears in his eyes, trembling white lips and suppressed sobs, informed the sergeant-major of the occurrence. Michael Dorofeich was enraged. In the first moment of irritation he threatened the tailor; but afterwards, being a man with

means and kindly, he just waved his hand and did not demand from Velenchuk payment of the value of the cloth.

In spite of all the fuss made by the fussy Velenchuk, in spite of all the tears he shed when telling of his mishap, the thief was not found. A strong suspicion fell on the viciously reckless soldier Chernov, who slept in the same tent; but there were no positive proofs. The diplomatically domineering Michael Dorofeich, being a man with means and having some little business transactions with the master-at-arms and the caterer of the mess (the aristocracy of the battery), very soon forgot all about the loss of his mufti coat. Not so Velenchuk. He did not forget his misfortune.

The soldiers said they feared at the time that he might commit suicide or run away into the mountains, so great was the effect of his mishap upon him. He neither ate nor drank and could not even work, but was continually crying. When three days had passed he appeared, quite pale, before Michael Dorofeich, took with trembling fingers a gold coin from under his cuff and gave it him. 'Heaven's my witness, Michael Dorofeich, that it's all I have, and even that I borrowed from Zhdanov/ said he, sobbing again; 'and the other two rubles I swear I will also return as soon as I have earned them. He' (whom 'he' meant Velenchuk did not himself know) 'has made me appear like a rascal before you. He — with his loathsome, viper soul — he takes the last morsel from his brother soldier, after I have served for fifteen years. . . .' To the honour of Michael Dorofeich be it said, he did not take the remaining two rubles, though Velenchuk brought them to him two months later.

### Chapter III

BESIDES VELENCHUK, FIVE other soldiers of my platoon sat warming themselves by our fire.

In the best place, on a butt with his back to the wind, sat Maksimov, the gun-sergeant of the platoon, smoking a pipe. The habit of commanding and the consciousness of his dignity were betrayed by the pose, the look, and by every movement of this man, not to mention his nankeen-

covered sheepskin coat and the butt he was sitting on, which latter is an emblem of power at a halting-place.

When I came up he turned his head towards me without removing his eyes from the fire, and his look, following the direction his head had taken, only fell on me some time later. Maksimov was not a serf but a peasant-yeoman; he had some money, had qualified to take a class in the school-brigade, and had stuffed his head with erudition. He was awfully rich and awfully learned, so the soldiers said. I remember how once when we were practising plunging fire with a quadrant, he explained to the soldiers gathered round, that a spirit level is nothing but as it occurs that atmospheric mercury has its motion.

In reality, Maksimov was far from being stupid, and understood his work thoroughly; but he had the unfortunate peculiarity of sometimes purposely speaking so that there was no possibility of understanding him and so that, I am convinced, he did not understand his own words. He was Particularly fond of the words 'as it occurs' and 'continues', so that when I heard him say 'as it occurs' or 'continues', I knew beforehand that I should understand nothing of what followed. The soldiers on the other hand, as far as I could judge, liked to hear his 'as it occurs' and suspected it of being fraught with deep meaning, though they did not understand a word of it any more than I did. This they attributed entirely to their own stupidity, and respected Theodor Maksimov all the more. In a word, Maksimov was one of the diplomatically domineering.

The soldier next to him, who had bared his sinewy red legs and was putting on his boots again by the fire, was Antonov, — that same Corporal Antonov who in 1837, remaining with only two others in charge of an exposed gun, persisted in firing back at a powerful enemy and, with two bullets in his leg, continued to serve his gun and to reload it.

The soldiers used to say that he would have been made a gun-sergeant long ago but for his character. And his character really was very peculiar. No one could have been calmer, gentler, or more accurate

than he was when sober; but when he had a fit of drinking he became quite another man; he would not submit to authority, fought, brawled, and became a perfectly good-for-nothing soldier. Only the week before this, during the Carnival, he had had a drinking-bout, and in spite of all threats, persuasions, and being tied to a cannon, he went on drinking and brawling up to the first day of Lent.

During the whole of Lent, though the division had been ordered not to fast, he fed on dried bread, and during the first week would not even drink the regulation cup of vodka. But one had to see his sturdy thick-set figure, as of wrought iron, on its stumpy bandy legs, and his shiny moustached visage when in a tipsy mood he took the balaldyka in his sinewy hands and looking carelessly round played Lady, or walked down the street with his cloak thrown loosely over his shoulders, his medals dangling, his hands in the pockets of his blue nankeen trousers, and a look on his countenance of soldierly pride and of contempt for all that was not of the artillery — one had to see all this in order to understand how impossible it was for him at such a moment to abstain from fighting an orderly, a Cossack, an infantry-man, a peasant (in fact, anyone not of the artillery) who was rude to him or happened merely to be in his way. He fought and rioted not so much for his own pleasure as to maintain the spirit of soldiership in general, of which he felt himself to be the representative.

The third soldier, who sat on his heels smoking a clay pipe, was the artillery driver Chikin. He had an ear-ring in one of his ears, bristling little moustaches, and the physiognomy of a bird. 'Dear old Chikin,' as the soldiers called him, was a wit. During the bitterest frost, or up to his knees in mud, or after going two days without food, on the march, on parade, or at drill, the 'dear fellow' was always and everywhere making faces, twisting his legs about, or cracking jokes that convulsed the whole platoon with laughter. At every halting-place, and in the camp, there was always a circle of young soldiers collected round Chikin, who played Filka<sup>1</sup> with them, told them stories about the cunning soldier and the English milord, personated a Tartar or a German, or simply made remarks of his own at which everyone roared with laughter. It is true that his reputation as a wit



1 A soldier's card game. was so well established in the battery that it was sufficient for him to open his mouth and wink in order to produce a general guffaw, but really there was much in him that was truly humorous and surprising. He saw something special, something that never entered anybody else's head, in everything, and above all, this capacity for seeing the funny side of things was proof against any and every trial.

The fourth soldier was an insignificant-looking boy recruited the year before and this was his first campaign. He stood surrounded by the smoke and so near the flames that his threadbare cloak seemed in danger of catching fire, yet judging by the way he extended the skirts of his cloak and bent out his calves, and by his quiet self-satisfied pose, he was feeling highly contented.

The fifth and last of the soldiers was Daddy Zhdanov. He sat a little way off, cutting a stick. Zhdanov had been serving in the battery longer than anyone else, had known all the others as recruits, and they were all in the habit of calling him 'daddy'. It was said of him that he never drank, smoked, or played cards (not even 'noses'), and never used bad language. He spent all his spare time boot-making, went to church on holidays where that was possible, or else put a farthing taper before his icon and opened the book of psalms, the only book he could read. He seldom kept company with the other soldiers. To those who were his seniors in rank though his juniors in years he was coldly respectful; with his equals he had few opportunities of mixing, not being a drinker. He liked the recruits and the youngest soldiers best: he always took them under his protection, admonished them, and often helped them. Everyone in the battery considered him a capitalist because he had some twenty-five rubles, out of which he was always ready to lend something to a soldier in real need.

The same Maksimov who was now gun-sergeant told me that ten years ago, when he first came as a recruit and drank all he had with the old soldiers who were in the habit of drinking, Zhdanov, noticing his unfortunate position, called him up, severely reprimanded him for his

conduct and even beat him, delivered a lecture on how one should live in the army, and sent him away after giving him a shirt (which Maksimov lacked) and half-a-ruble in money. 'He made a man of me,' Maksimov always used to say with respect and gratitude. He also helped Velenchuk (whom he had taken under his protection since he was a recruit) at the time of his misfortune. When the coat was stolen he helped him as he had helped many and many another during the twenty-five years of his service.

One could not hope to find a man in the service who knew his work more thoroughly or was a better or more conscientious soldier than he; but he was too meek and insignificant-looking to be made a gun-sergeant, though he had been bombardier for fifteen years. Zhdanov's one enjoyment and passion was song. He had a few favourite songs, always collected a circle of singers from among the younger soldiers, and though he could not sing himself he would stand by them, his hands in the pockets of his cloak, his eyes closed, showing sympathy by the movements of his head and jaw. I don't know why, but that regular movement of the jaws below the ears, which I never noticed in anyone else, seemed to me extremely expressive. His snow-white head, his blackened moustaches, and his sunburnt, wrinkled face, gave him at first sight a stern and harsh expression; but on looking closer into his large round eyes, especially when they smiled (he never laughed with his lips), you were suddenly struck by something remarkable in their unusually mild, almost childlike look.

#### Chapter IV

'I'LL BE BLOWED! I've gone and forgot my pipe. Here's a go, lads!' repeated Velenchuk.

'You should smoke cigars, old fellow!' began Chikin, drawing his mouth to one side and winking. 'There, now, I always smoke cigars when I'm at home — them's sweeter.'

Of course everybody burst out laughing.

'Forgot your pipe, indeed!' interrupted Maksimov without heeding the general mirth, and beating the tobacco out of his pipe into the palm of

his left hand with the proud air of a superior; 'where did you vanish to — eh, Velenchuk?'

Velenchuk, half turning round to him, was about to raise his hand to his cap, but dropped it again.

'Seems to me you hadn't your sleep out after yesterday — falling asleep when you are once up! It's not thanks the likes of you get for such goings on.'

'May I die, Theodor Maksimov, if a drop has passed my lips; I don't myself know what happened to me,' answered Velenchuk. 'Much cause I had for revelling,' he muttered.

'Just so; but we have to answer to the authorities because of the likes of you, and you continue — it's quite scandalous!' the eloquent Maksimov concluded in a calmer tone.

'It's quite wonderful, lads,' Velenchuk went on after a moment's silence, scratching his head and addressing no one in Particular; 'really quite wonderful, lads! Here have I been serving for the last sixteen years and such a tiling never happened to me. When we were ordered to appear for muster I was all right, but at the "park", there it suddenly clutches hold of me, and clutches and clutches, and down it throws me, down on the ground and no more ado — and I did not myself know how I fell asleep, lads! That must have been the trances,' he concluded. 'True enough, I hardly managed to wake you,' said Antonov as he pulled on his boot. 'I had to push and push just as if you'd been a log!' 'Fancy now,' said Velenchuk, 'if I'd been drunk now! . . .'

'That's just like a woman we had at home,' began Chikin; 'she hardly got off the stove for two years. Once they began waking her — they thought she was asleep — and she was already dead. She used to be taken sleepy that way. That's what it is, old fellow!'

'Now then, Chikin, won't you tell us how you set the tone during your leave of absence?' said Maksimov, looking at me with a smile as if to say: 'Would you, too, like to hear the stupid fellow?'

'What tone, Theodor Maksimov?' said Chikin, giving me a rapid side-glance. 'In course I told them what sort of a Caw-cusses we'd got here.'

'Well, yes, how did you do it? There! don't give yourself airs; tell us how you administrated it to them.'

'How should I administrate it? In course they asked me how we live,' Chikin began rapidly with the air of a man recounting something he had repeated several times before. ' "We live well, old fellow," says I.

"Provisions in plenty we get: morning and night a cup of chokolad for every soldier lad, and at noon barley broth before us is set, such as gentlefolks get, and instead of vodka we get a pint of Modera wine from Devirier, such as costs forty-four — with the bottle ten more!"

'Fine Modera,' Velenchuk shouted louder than anyone, rolling with laughter: 'that's Modera of the right sort!'

'Well, and what did you tell them about the Asiaites?' Maksimov went on to ask when the general mirth had subsided a little.

Chikin stooped over the fire, poked out a bit of charcoal with a stick, put it to his pipe, and long continued puffing at his shag as though not noticing the silent curiosity awakened in his hearers. When he had at last drawn enough smoke he threw the bit of charcoal away, pushed his cap yet farther back, and, stretching himself, continued with a slight smile —

'Well, so they asked, "What's that Cherkes fellow or Turk as you've got down in your Cawcusses", they say, "as fights?" and so I says, "Them's not all of one sort; there's different Cherkeses, old fellow. There's the Wagabones, them as lives in the stony mountains and eat stones instead of bread. They're big," says I, "as big as a good-sized beam, they've one eye in the forehead and wear burning red caps," just such as yours, old fellow,' he added, turning to the young recruit, who really wore an absurd cap with a red crown.

At this unexpected sally the recruit suddenly collapsed, slapped his knees, and burst out laughing and coughing so that he hardly managed to utter in a stifled voice, 'Them Wagabones is the right sort!'

"Then", says I, "there's also the Mopingers," continued Chikin, making his cap slip onto his forehead with a movement of his head: ' "These others are little twins, so big ... all in pairs," says I, "they run about hand in hand at such a rate," says I, "that you couldn't catch 'em on a

horse!” — “Then how’s it, lad,” they say, “how’s them Mopingers, be they born hand in hand?”” He said this in a hoarse bass, pretending to imitate a peasant. ““Yes,” says I, “he’s naturally like that. Tear their hands aPart and they’ll bleed just like a Chinaman: take a Chinaman’s cap off and it’ll bleed.” — “And tell us, lad, how do they fight?” — - “That’s how,” says I, “they catch you and rip your belly up and wind your bowels round your arm, and wind and wind. They go on winding and you go on laughing till your breath all goes.””

‘Well, and did they believe you, Chikin?’ said Maksimov with a slight smile, while all the rest were dying with laughter. ‘Such queer people, Theodor Maksimych, they believe everything. On my word they do. But when I told them about Mount Kazbek and said that the snow didn’t melt on it all the summer, they mocked at me! “What are you bragging for, lad,” they says; “a big mountain and the snow on it don’t melt? Why, lad, when the thaw sets in here every tiny bit of a hillock thaws first while the snow still Lies in the hollows.” There now!’ Chikin concluded with a wink.

## Chapter V

THE BRIGHT DISK of the sun shining through the milky-white mist had already risen to a considerable height. The purple-grey horizon gradually widened, but though it had receded considerably it was still as sharply outlined by a deceptive white wall of mist.

Beyond the felled wood a good-sized plain now opened in front of us. The black or milky-white or purple smoke of the fires expanded and fantastic shapes of white mist-clouds floated above the plain. An occasional group of mounted Tartars appeared far in the distance before us and at rare intervals the reports of our rifles<sup>1</sup> and of their vintoukas and cannon were to be heard.

This, as Captain Khlopov said, was ‘not yet business, but only play.’

The commander of the 8th Company of Chasseurs, that formed our support, came up to our guns, pointed to three Tartars<sup>2</sup> on horseback skirting the

1 Most of the Russian army at that time were armed with smooth-bore muskets, but a few had wide-calibred muzzle-loading rifles [stutzers), which were difficult to handle and slow to load. Vintovkas were also rifles.

2 Russians in the Caucasus used the word 'Tartar' loosely for any of the native Mohammedan tribes (Circassians, Kabardans, etc.), much as among ourselves the word 'Niggers' is used to denote almost any dark race. forest some 1,400 yards from us, and with the fondness for artillery fire common among infantry officers in general, asked me to let off a ball or bomb at them.

'Do you see?' he said with a kind and persuasive smile as he stretched his hand from behind my shoulder, 'in front of those big trees there . . . one on a white horse and in a black Circassian cloak and two others behind. Do you see? Could you not, please?'

'And there are three more riding at the outskirts of the forest,' said Antónov, who had astonishingly sharp eyesight, coming up to us, and hiding behind his back the pipe he had been smoking. 'There, the one in front has taken his gun out of its case. They can be seen distinctly, y'r honor!'

'Look there! he's fired, lads. D'ye see the white smoke?' said Velenchuk, who was one of a group of soldiers standing a little behind us.

'At our line surely, the blackguard!' remarked another.

'See what a lot of 'em come streaming out of the forest. Must be looking round... want to place a gun,' said a third.

'Supposing now a bomb was sent right into that lot, wouldn't they spit!'

'And what d'ye think, old fellow — that it would just reach 'em?' said Chikin.

'Twelve hundred or twelve hundred and fifty yards: not more than that,' said Maksimov calmly and as if speaking to himself, though it was evident he was just as anxious to fire as the rest: 'if we were to give an elevation of forty-five lines to our "unicorn"<sup>1</sup> we could hit the very point, that is to say, perfectly.'

'D'ye know, if you were now to aim at that group you would be sure to hit somebody. There now, they are all together — please be quick and give the order

1 The 'unicorn' was a type of gun, narrowing towards the muzzle, used in the Russian artillery at that time. to fire,' the company commander continued to entreat me.

'Are we to point the gun?' suddenly asked Antónov in an abrupt bass with a look as if of gloomy anger.

I must admit that I also felt a strong wish to fire, so I ordered the second gun to be trained.

I had hardly given the order before the shell was charged and rammed in and Antónov, leaning against the cheek of the gun-carriage and holding two of his thick fingers to the base-ring, was directing the movement of the tail of the gun. 'Right, left — a bit to the left, a wee bit — more — more — right!' he said, stepping from the gun with a look of pride.

The infantry officer, I, and Maksimov, one after the other, approached, put our heads to the sights, and expressed our various opinions.

'By Heavens, it will shoot over,' remarked Velenchuk, clicking his tongue, though he was only looking over Antónov's shoulder and therefore had no grounds for this supposition. 'By Heavens it will shoot over; it will hit that there tree, my lads!'

I gave the order: 'Two.'

The men stepped away from the gun. Antonov ran aside to watch the flight of the shot. The touch-hole flashed and the brass rang. At the same moment we were enveloped in a cloud of powder-smoke and, emerging from the overpowering boom of the discharge, the humming, metallic sound of the flying shot receded with the swiftness of lightning and died away in the distance amid general silence.

A little beyond the group of horsemen a white cloudlet appeared; the Tartars galloped away in all directions and the report of the explosion reached us. 'That was very fine!' 'Ah, how they galloped!' 'The devils don't like that!' came the words of approval and ridicule from the ranks of the artillery and infantry.

'If we had had the gun pointed only a touch lower we should just have caught him. I said it would hit the tree and sure enough it did go to the right,' remarked Velenchuk.

## Chapter VI

LEAVING THE SOLDIERS to discuss how the Tartars galloped off when they saw the shell, why they had been riding there, and whether there were many of them in the forest, I went and sat down with the company commander under a tree a few steps off to wait while the cutlets he had invited me to share were being warmed up. The company commander, Bolkhov, was one of the officers nicknamed 'bonjourists' in the regiment. He was a man of some means, had formerly served in the Guards, and spoke French.

But in spite of all this his comrades liked him. He was clever enough, and had tact enough, to wear a coat of Petersburg make, to eat a good dinner, and to speak French, without too much offending his fellow officers. After talking about the weather, the military operations, our mutual acquaintances among the officers, and having assured ourselves of the satisfactory state of each other's ideas by questions and answers and the views expressed, we involuntarily passed to more intimate conversation. And when people belonging to the same circle meet in the Caucasus a very evident, even if unspoken, question arises: 'Why are you here?' and it was to this silent question of mine that, as it seemed to me, my companion wished to reply.

'When will this expedition end?' he said lazily. 'It is so dull.'  
'I don't think it dull,' said I. 'It's much worse on the staff.'  
'Oh, it's ten thousand times worse on the staff,' he said irascibly. 'No, I mean when will the whole thing end?' In the distance a puff of bluish smoke expanded and rose, blown about by the wind. When I had understood that this was a shot fired at us by the enemy, all before my eyes at the moment assumed a sort of new and majestic character. The piles of arms, the smoke of the fires, the blue sky, the green gun-carriages, Nikolayev's sunburnt, moustached face — all seemed telling me that the ball that had already emerged from the smoke and was at



that moment flying through space might be directed straight at my breast.

‘Where did you get the wine?’ I asked Bolkhov lazily, while deep in my soul two voices spoke with equal clearness. One said, ‘Lord receive my soul in peace,’ the other, ‘I hope I shall not stoop, but smile, while the ball is passing,’ and at that moment something terribly unpleasant whistled past our heads and a cannon ball crashed down a couple of paces from us.

‘There now, had I been a Napoleon or a Frederick I should certainly have paid you a compliment,’ Bolkhov remarked, turning towards me quite calmly.

‘You have done so as it is,’ I answered, with difficulty hiding the excitement produced in me by the danger just passed.

‘Well, what if I have? — no one will write it down.’

‘Yes, I will.’

‘Well, if you do put it down, it will only be “for criticism”, as Mischenkov says,’ he added with a smile.

‘Ugh! the damned thing!’ just then remarked Antónov behind us, as he spat over his shoulder with vexation, ‘just missed my legs!’

All my attempts to seem calm, and all our cunning phrases, suddenly seemed to me insufferably silly after that simple exclamation.

## Chapter VII

THE ENEMY HAD really placed two guns where we had seen the Tartars riding, and they fired a shot every twenty or thirty minutes at our men who were felling the wood. My platoon was ordered forward to the plain to answer the enemy’s fire. A puff of smoke appeared on the outskirts of the forest, then followed a report and a whistle, and a ball fell in front or behind us. The enemy’s shots fell fortunately for us and we sustained no losses.

The artillerymen behaved splendidly as they always do; loaded quickly, pointed carefully at the spots where the puffs of smoke were, and quietly joked with one another.

The infantry supports lay near in silent inaction awaiting their turn. The wood-fellers went on with their work, the axes rang faster and more unintermittently through the forest; but when the whistle of a shot became audible all were suddenly silent and, in the midst of the deathly stillness, voices not quite calm exclaimed, 'Scatter, lads!' and all eyes followed the ball ricocheting over wood piles and strewn branches.

The mist had now risen quite high and, turning into clouds, gradually disappeared into the dark-blue depths of the sky; the unveiled sun shone brightly, throwing sparkling reflections from the steel bayonets, the brass of the guns, the thawing earth, and the glittering hoar-frost. In the air one felt the freshness of the morning frost together with the warmth of the spring sunshine; thousands of different hues and tints mingled in the dry leaves of the forest, and the shining, beaten track plainly showed the traces left by wheels and the marks of rough-shod horses' feet.

The movement became greater and more noticeable between the two forces. On all sides the blue smoke of the guns appeared more and more frequently. Dragoons rode forward, the streamers of their lances flying; from the infantry companies one heard songs, and the carts laden with firewood formed into a train in our rear. The general rode up to our platoon and ordered us to prepare to retire. The enemy settled in the bushes on our left flank and their snipers began to molest us seriously. A bullet came humming from the woods to the left and struck a gun-carriage, then came another, and a third. . . . The infantry supports that had been lying near us rose noisily, took up their muskets and formed into line.

The small-arm firing increased and bullets flew more and more frequently. The retreat commenced and consequently the serious Part of the action, as is usual in the Caucasus.

Everything showed that the artillerymen liked the bullets as little as the infantry had liked the cannon-balls. Antanov frowned, Chikin imitated the bullets and joked about them, but it was easy to see he did not like them. 'It's in a mighty hurry,' he said of one of them; another he called 'little bee'; a third, which seemed to fly slowly past overhead with a

kind of piteous wail, he called an 'orphan', which caused general laughter.

The recruit who, unaccustomed to such scenes, bent his head to one side and stretched his neck every time a bullet passed, also made the soldiers laugh. 'What, is that a friend of yours you're bowing to?' they said to him. Velenchuk also, usually quite indifferent to danger, was now excited: he was evidently vexed that we did not fire case-shot in the direction whence the bullets came. He repeated several times in a discontented tone, 'Why is he allowed to go for us and gets nothing in return? If we turned a gun that way and gave them a taste of case-shot they'd hold their noise, no fear!'

It was true that it was time to do this, so I ordered them to fire a last bomb and then to load with case-shot. 'Case-shot!' Antonov called out briskly as he went through the thick of the smoke to sponge out the gun as soon as it was discharged.

At that moment I heard just behind me the rapid whiz of a bullet suddenly stopped by something, with a dull thud. My heart ceased beating. 'Someone of the men has been hit,' I thought, while a sad presentiment made me afraid to turn round. And really that sound was followed by the heavy fall of a body, and the heart-rending 'Oh-o-oh' of someone who had been wounded. 'I'm hit, lads!' a voice I knew exclaimed with an effort. It was Velenchuk. He was lying on his back between the limbers and a cannon. The cartridge-bag he had been carrying was thrown to one side. His forehead was covered with blood, and a thick red stream was running down over his right eye and nose. He was wounded in the stomach but hardly bled at all there; his forehead he had hurt against a log in falling.

All this I made out much later; the first moment I could only see an indistinct mass and, as it seemed to me, a tremendous quantity of blood.

Not one of the soldiers who were loading said a word, only the young recruit muttered something that sounded like 'Dear me! he's bleeding', and Antonov, frowning, gave an angry grunt; but it was clear that the

thought of death passed through the soul of each. All set to work very actively and the gun was loaded in a moment, but the ammunition-bearer bringing the case-shot went two or three steps round the spot where Velenchuk still lay groaning.

## Chapter VIII

EVERYONE WHO HAS been in action undoubtedly knows that strange and though illogical yet powerful feeling of aversion for the spot where some one has been killed or wounded. It was evident that for a moment my men gave way to this feeling when Velenchuk had to be taken to the cart that came up to fetch him. Zhdanov came up angrily to the wounded man and, taking him under the arms, lifted him without heeding his loud screams. 'Now then, what are you standing there for? take hold!' he shouted, and about ten assistants, some of them superfluous, immediately surrounded Velenchuk. But hardly had they moved him when he began screaming and struggling terribly.

'What are you screaming like a hare for?' said Antonov roughly, holding his leg; 'mind, or we'll just leave you.'

And the wounded man really became quiet and only now and then uttered, 'Oh, it's my death! Oh, oh, oh, lads!'

When he was laid in the cart he even stopped moaning and I heard him speak to his comrades in low clear tones, probably saying farewell to them.

No one likes to look at a wounded man during an action and, instinctively hurrying to end this scene, I ordered him to be taken quickly to the ambulance, and returned to the guns. But after a few minutes I was told that Velenchuk was asking for me, and I went up to the cart.

The wounded man lay at the bottom of the cart holding on to the sides with both hands. His broad healthy face had completely changed during those few moments; he seemed to have grown thinner and years older, his lips were thin and pale and pressed together with an evident strain. The hasty and dull expression of his glance was replaced by a kind of bright clear radiance, and on the bloody forehead and nose already lay

the impress of death. Though the least movement caused him excruciating pain, he nevertheless asked to have a small chirez<sup>1</sup> with money taken from his left leg.

The sight of his bare, white, healthy leg, when his

<sup>1</sup> The chirez is a purse in the form of a garter, usually worn by soldiers below the knee. Jack-boot had been taken off and the purse untied, produced on me a terribly sad feeling.

'Here are three rubles and a half,' he said, as I took the purse: 'you'll take care of them.'

The cart was starting, but he stopped it.

I was making a cloak for Lieutenant Sulimovsky. He gave me two rubles. I bought buttons for one and a half, and half a ruble is in my bag with the buttons. Please let him have it.'

'All right! all right!' said I. 'Get well again, old fellow.'

He did not answer; the cart started and he again began to groan and cry out in a terrible, heartrending voice. It was as if, having done with the business of this life, he did not think it necessary to restrain himself and considered it permissible to allow himself this relief.

## Chapter IX

'WHERE ARE YOU off to? Come back! Where are you going?' I shouted to the recruit, who with his reserve linstock under his arm and a stick of some sort in his hand was, in the coolest manner, following the cart that bore the wounded man.

But the recruit only looked at me lazily, muttered something or other, and continued his way, so that I had to send a soldier to bring him back. He took off his red cap and looked at me with a stupid smile.

'Where were you going?' I asked.

'To the camp.'

'Why?'

'Why? . . . Velenchuk is wounded,' he said, again smiling.

'What's that to you? You must stay here.'

He looked at me with surprise, then turned quietly round, put on his cap, and went back to his place.

The affair in general was successful. The Cossacks, as we heard, had made a fine charge and brought back three dead Tartars;<sup>1</sup> the infantry had provided itself with firewood and had only half-a-dozen men wounded; the artillery had lost only Velenchuk and two horses. For that, two miles of forest had been cut down and the place so cleared as to be unrecognizable. Instead of the thick outskirts of the forest you saw before you a large plain covered with smoking fires and cavalry and infantry marching back to camp.

Though the enemy continued to pursue us with artillery and small-arm fire up to the cemetery by the little river we had crossed in the morning, the retirement was successfully accomplished. I was already beginning to dream of the cabbage-soup and mutton-ribs with buckwheat that were awaiting me in camp, when a message came from the General ordering a redoubt to be constructed by the river, and the

3rd battalion of the K-Regiment and the platoon of the 4th Battery to remain there till next day.

The carts with the wood and the wounded, the Cossacks, the artillery, the infantry with muskets and faggots on their shoulders, all passed us with noise and songs. Every face expressed animation and pleasure caused by the escape from danger and the hope of rest. Only we and the 3rd battalion had to postpone those pleasant feelings till tomorrow.

## Chapter X

WHILE WE OF the artillery were busy with the guns — parking the limbers and the ammunition wagons and arranging the picket-ropes — the infantry had already piled their muskets, made up camp-fires, built little

<sup>1</sup> The 'Tartars', being Mohammedans, made a point of not letting the bodies of their slain fall into the hands of the 'unbelievers', but

removed them and buried them as heroes. The capture of three bodies therefore indicates the vigour of the attack and the demoralization of the enemy. huts of branches and maize straw, and begun boiling their buckwheat.

The twilight had set in. Bluish white clouds crept over the sky. The mist, turning into fine dank drizzle, wetted the earth and the soldiers' cloaks; the horizon narrowed and all the surroundings assumed a gloomier hue. The damp I felt through my boots and on my neck, the ceaseless movement and talk in which I took no part, the sticky mud on which my feet kept slipping, and my empty stomach, all combined to put me into the dreariest, most unpleasant frame of mind after the physical and moral weariness of the day. I could not get Velenchuk out of my head. The whole simple story of his soldier-life depicted itself persistently in my imagination.

His last moments were as clear and calm as his whole life had been. He had lived too honestly and been too artless for his simple faith in a future heavenly life to be shaken at the decisive moment.

'Your honour!' said Nikoldyev, coming up to me, 'the Captain asks you to come and have tea with him.'

Having scrambled through, as best I could, between the piles of arms and the camp-fires, I followed Nikolayev to where Bolkhov was, thinking with pleasure of a tumbler of hot tea and a cheerful conversation which would disperse my gloomy thoughts.

'Have you found him?' I heard Bolkhov's voice say from inside a maize-hut in which a light was burning.

'I've brought him, y'r honour,' answered Nikolayev's bass voice.

Inside the hut Bolkhov was sitting on a dry mantle, with unbuttoned coat and no cap. A samovar stood boiling by his side and on a drum were light refreshments. A bayonet holding a candle was stuck into the ground.

'What do you think of it?' he asked, looking proudly round his cosy establishment. It really was so nice inside the hut that at tea I quite forgot the damp, the darkness, and Velenchuk's wound. We talked of

Moscow and of things that had not the least relation to the war or to the Caucasus.

After a moment of silence such as sometimes occurs in the most animated conversation, Bólkhov looked at me with a smile.

'I think our conversation this morning struck you as being very strange,' he said.

'No, why do you think so? It only seemed to me that you were too frank; there are things which we all know, but which should never be mentioned.'

'Why not? If there were the least possibility of changing this life for the lowest and poorest without danger and without service, I should not hesitate a moment.'

'Then why don't you return to Russia?' I asked.

'Why?' he repeated. 'Oh, I have thought about that long ago. I can't return to Russia now until I have the Anna and Vladimir orders: an Anna round my neck and the rank of major, as I planned when I came here.'

'Why? — if, as you say, you feel unfit for the service here.'

'But what if I feel still more unfit to go back to Russia to the same position that I left? That is also one of the traditions in Russia, confirmed by Passek, Sleptsov and others, that one need only go to the Caucasus to be laden with rewards. Everyone expects and demands it of us; and I have been here for two years, have been on two expeditions, and have got nothing. But still I have so much ambition that I won't leave on any account until I am a major with a Vladimir and Anna round my neck. I have become so concerned about it that it upsets me when Gniloklshkin gets a reward and I don't. And then how am I to show myself in Russia, to the village elder, to the merchant Kotelnikov to whom I sell my corn, to my Moscow aunt, and to all those good people, if after two years spent in the Caucasus I return without any reward? It is true I don't at all wish to know all those people, and they no doubt care very little about me either; but man is so made that, though I don't want to know them, yet on account of them I'm wasting the best years of my life, all my life's happiness, and am mining my future.'



## Chapter XI

JUST THEN WE heard the voice of the commander of the battalion outside, addressing Bolkhov.

‘Who is with you, Nicholas Fedorovich?’

Bolkhov gave him my name, and then three officers scrambled into the hut — Major Kirsanov; the adjutant of his battalion; and Captain Trosenko.

Kirsanov was not tall but stout, he had black moustaches, rosy cheeks, and oily little eyes. These eyes were his most remarkable feature. When he laughed nothing remained of them but two tiny moist stars, and these little stars together with his wide-stretched lips and outstretched neck often gave him an extraordinarily senseless look. In the regiment Kirsanov behaved himself and bore himself better than anyone else; his subordinates did not complain of him and his superiors respected him — though the general opinion was that he was very limited. He knew the service, was exact and zealous, always had ready money, kept a carriage and a man-cook, and knew how to make an admirable pretence of being proud.

‘What were you talking about, Nicholas Fedorovich?’

‘Why, about the attractions of the service here.’

But just then Kirsanov noticed me, a cadet, and to impress me with his importance he paid no attention to Bólkhov’s reply, but looked at the drum and said— ‘Are you tired, Nicholas Fedorovich?’

‘No, you see we-’ Bolkhov began.

But again the dignity of the commander of the battalion seemed to make it necessary to interrupt, and to ask another question.

‘That was a famous affair to-day, was it not?’

The adjutant of the battalion was a young ensign recently promoted from being a cadet, a modest, quiet lad with a bashful and kindly-pleasant face. I had met him at Bólkhov’s before. The lad would often come there, bow, sit down in a corner, and remain silent for hours making cigarettes and smoking them; then he would rise, bow, and go away. He was the type of a poor Russian nobleman’s son who had

chosen the military career as the only one possible to him with his education, and who esteemed his position as an officer above everything else in the world — a simple-minded and lovable type notwithstanding the comical appurtenances inseparable from it: the tobacco-pouch, dressing-gown, guitar, and little moustache-brush we are accustomed to associate with it. It was told of him in the regiment that he bragged about being just but strict with his orderly, and that he used to say, 'I punish seldom, but when I am compelled to do it it's no joke,' but that when his tipsy orderly robbed him outrageously and even began to insult him, he, the master, took him to the guard-house and ordered everything to be prepared for a flogging, but was so upset at the sight of the preparations that he could only say, 'There now, you see, I could-' and becoming quite disconcerted,

ran home in great confusion and was henceforth afraid to look his man Chernov in the eyes. His comrades gave the simple-minded boy no rest but teased him continually about this episode, and more than once I heard how he defended himself, and blushing to the tips of his ears assured them that it was not true, but just the contrary. The third visitor, Captain Trosenko, was a thoroughgoing old Caucasian — that is, a man for whom the company he commanded had become his family; the fortress where the staff was, his home; and the soldiers' singing his only pleasure in life.

He was a man for whom everything unconnected with the Caucasus was contemptible and scarcely worthy of being considered probable, and everything connected with the Caucasus was divided into two halves: ours and not ours. The first he loved, the second he hated with all the power of his soul; but above all he was a man of steeled, calm courage, wonderfully kind in his behaviour to his comrades and subordinates and desperately frank and even rude to aides-de-camp and 'bonjourists', for whom for some reason he had a great dislike. On entering the hut he nearly caved the roof in with his head, then suddenly sank down and sat on the ground.

'Well?' he said, and then suddenly remarking me whom he did not know, he stopped and gazed at me with a dull, fixed look.

'Well, and what have you been conversing about?' asked the major, taking out his watch and looking at it, though I am perfectly certain he had no need to.

'Why, I've been asked my reasons for serving here—'

'Of course, Nicholas Fedorovich wishes to distinguish himself here, and then to return home,' said the major.

'Well, and you, Abram Ilych,' said Bolkhov, addressing Kirsanov, 'tell me why you are serving in the Caucasus.'

'I serve because in the first place, as you know, it is everyone's duty to serve.... What?' he then added, though no one had spoken. 'I had a letter from Russia yesterday, Nicholas Fedorovich,' he continued, evidently wishing to change the subject; 'they write that... they ask such strange questions.' 'What questions?' asked Bolkhov.

The major began laughing.

'Very queer questions. . . . They ask, can jealousy exist where there is no love. . . . What?' he asked, turning round and glancing at us all.

'Dear me!' said Bolkhov, with a smile.

'Yes, you know, it is nice in Russia,' continued the major, just as if his sentences flowed naturally from one another. 'When I was in Tamba<sup>6</sup>v in '52 they received me everywhere as if I had been some emperor's aide-de-camp. Will you believe it that at a ball at the Governor's, when I came in, you know . . . well, they received me very well. The General's wife herself, you know, talked to me and asked me about the Caucasus, and everybody was ... so that I hardly knew. . . . They examined my gold sabre as if it were some curiosity; they asked for what I had received the sabre, for what the Anna, for what the Vladimir ... so I just told them...What? That's what the Caucasus is good for, Nicholas Fedorovich!' he continued without waiting for any reply:— 'There they think very well of us Caucasians. You know a young man that's a staff-officer and has an Anna and a Vladimir . . . that counts for a good deal in Russia...What?'

'And you, no doubt, piled it on a bit, Abram Ilych?' said Bolkhov.

'He — he!' laughed the major stupidly, 'You know one has to do that. And didn't I feed well those two months!'

'And tell me, is it nice there in Russia?' said Trosenko, inquiring about Russia as though it were China or Japan.

'Yes, and the champagne we drank those two months, it was awful!'

'Eh, nonsense! You'll have drunk nothing but lemonade. There now, I'd have burst to let them see how Caucasians drink. I'd have given them some-thing to talk about. I'd have shown them how one drinks; eh, Bolkhov?' said Trosenko.

'But you, Daddy, have been more than ten years in the Caucasus,' said Bolkhov, 'and you remember what Ermolov<sup>1</sup> said? . . . And Abram Ilych has been only six.'

'Ten indeed! . . . nearly sixteen. . . . Well, Bolkhov, let us have some sage-vodka. It's damp, b-r-r-r! . . . Eh?' said Trosenko, smiling, 'Will you have a drink, Major?'

But the major had been displeased by the old captain's first remarks to him, and plainly drew back and sought refuge in his own grandeur. He hummed something, and again looked at his watch.

'For my Part I shall never go there!' Trosenko continued without heeding the major's frowns. 'I have lost the habit of speaking and walking in the Russian way. They'd ask, "What curious creature is this coming here? Asia, that's what it is." Am I right, Nicholas Fedorovich? Besides, what have I to go to Russia for? What does it matter? I shall be shot here some day. They'll ask, "Where's Trosenko?" "Shot!" What will you do with the 8th Company then, eh?' he added, always addressing the major.

'Send the officer on duty!' shouted the major, without answering the captain, though I again felt sure there was no need for him to give any orders.

'And you, young man, are glad, I suppose, to be drawing double pay?'<sup>2</sup> said the major, turning to the adjutant of the battalion after some moments of silence.

<sup>1</sup> General A. P. Ermolov (1772-1861), who was renowned for his firmness and justness as a ruler in the Caucasus, and who subdued Chechnya and Daghestan, used to say that after ten years in the Caucasus an officer 'either takes to drink or marries a loose woman'.

2 An officer's allowance in Russia proper was very small, but when on service in Poland, the Caucasus, Siberia, etc, they received a higher rate of pay. 'Yes, sir, very glad of course.'

'I think our pay now very high, Nicholas Fedorovich,' continued the major; 'a young man can live very decently and even permit himself some small luxuries.'

'No, really, Abram Ilych,' said the adjutant bashfully. 'Though it's double it's barely enough. You see one must have a horse.'

'What are you telling me, young man? I have been an ensign myself and know. Believe me, one can live very well with care. But there! count it up,' added he, bending the little finger of his left hand.

'We always draw our salaries in advance; isn't that account enough for you?' said Trosenko, emptying a glass of vodka.

'Well, yes, but what do you expect. . . . What?'

Just then a white head with a fiat nose thrust itself into the opening of the hut and a sharp voice said with a German accent —

'Are you there, Abram Ilych? The officer on duty is looking for you.'

'Come in, Kraft!' said Bolkhov.

A long figure in the uniform of the general staff crept in at the door and began shaking hands all round with peculiar fervour.

'Ah, dear Captain, are you here too?' said he, turning to Trosenko.

In spite of the darkness the new visitor made his way to the captain and to the latter's extreme surprise and dismay as it seemed to me, kissed him on the lips.

'This is a German trying to be hail fellow well met,' thought I.

## Chapter XII

MY SURMISE WAS at once confirmed. Captain Kraft asked for vodka, calling it a 'warmer', croaked horribly, and throwing back his head emptied the glass.

'Well, gentlemen, we have scoured the plains of Chechnya to-day, have we not?' he began, but seeing the officer on duty, stopped at once to allow the major to give his orders.

'Have you been round the lines?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Have the ambuscades been placed?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then give the company commanders orders to be as cautious as possible.'

'Yes, sir.'

The major screwed up his eyes in profound contemplation.

'Yes, and tell the men they may now boil their buckwheat.'

'They are already boiling it, sir.'

'All right! you may go, sir.'

'Well, we were just reckoning up how much an officer needs,' continued the major, turning to us with a condescending smile. 'Let us count. You want a uniform and a pair of trousers, don't you?'

'Certainly.'

'That, let us say, is 50 rubles for two years; therefore 25 rubles a year for clothes. Then for food, 40 kopeks a day — is that right?'

'Oh yes, that is even too much.'

'Well, never mind, I'll leave it so. Then for a horse and repair of harness and saddle — 30 rubles. And that is all. So it's 25, and 120, and 30 — that's 175 rubles. So you have for luxuries — tea, sugar, tobacco — a matter of 20 rubles left. So you see ... Isn't it so, Nicholas Fedorovich?'

'No, but excuse me, Abram Ilych,' said the adjutant timidly, 'nothing remains for tea and sugar. You allow one suit in two years; but it's hardly possible to keep oneself in trousers with all this marching. And boots? I wear out a pair almost every month. Then underclothing — shirts, towels, leg-bands,<sup>1</sup> — it all has to be bought. When one comes to reckon it all up nothing remains over. That's really so, Abram Ilych.'

'Ah, it's splendid to wear leg-bands,' Kraft suddenly remarked after a moment's silence, uttering the word 'leg-bands' in specially tender tones. 'It's so simple, you know; quite Russian!'

'I'll tell you something,' Trosenko remarked. 'Reckon what way you like and you'll find we might as well put our teeth away on a shelf, and yet here we are all alive, drinking tea, smoking tobacco, and drinking vodka. When you've served as long as I have,' he went on, turning to

the ensign, 'you'll have also learned how to live. Why, gentlemen, do you know how he treats the orderlies?'

And Trosenko, dying with laughter, told us the whole story about the ensign and his orderly, though we had all heard it hundreds of times. 'Why do you look so like a rose, old chap?' continued he, addressing the ensign, who blushed, perspired, and smiled, so that it was pitiful to see him. 'Never mind, old chap! I was just like you once and now look what a fine fellow I am. You let a young fellow straight from Russia in here — haven't we seen them? — and he gets spasms or rheumatism or something; and here am I settled here, and it's my house and my bed and all, d'you see?'

And thereupon he drank another glass of vodka and looking fixedly at Kraft, said, 'Eh?'

'That is what I respect! Here's a genuine old Caucasian! Permit me to shake hands.'

And Kraft, pushing us all aside, forced his way to Trosenko and catching hold of his hand shook it with peculiar emotion.

'Yes,' continued Kraft, 'we may say we have gone

1 It is customary, especially among the peasants and soldiers, to wrap long strips of linen round the feet and legs instead of wearing stockings. through every kind of experience here. In '45 you were present, Captain, were you not? — you remember the night between the 12th and 13th, when we spent the night knee-deep in mud and next day captured the barricades they had made of felled trees. I was attached to the commander-in-chief at the time and we took fifteen barricades that one day, — you remember, Captain?'

Trosenko nodded affirmatively, stuck out his nether lip and screwed up his eyes.

'You see . . . began Kraft with great animation, making unsuitable gestures with his hands and addressing the major.

But the major, who had in all probability heard the story more than once, suddenly looked at the speaker with such dim, dull eyes that Kraft turned away from him and addressed me and Bolkhov, looking

alternately at one and the other. But he did not give a single glance at Trosenko during the whole of his narration.

‘Well then, you see, when we went out in the morning the commander-in-chief said to me, “Kraft, take those barricades!” Well, you know, a soldier’s duty is not to reason — it’s hand to cap, and “Yes, your Excellency!” and off. Only as we drew near the first barricade I turned and said to the soldiers, “Now then, lads, don’t funk it but look sharp. If anyone hangs back I’ll cut him down myself!” With Russian soldiers, you know, one has to speak straight out. Suddenly a bomb ... I look, one soldier down, another, a third, . . . then bullets came whizzing . . . vzin! . . . vzin! . . . vzin! . . . “On!” I cry, “On, follow me!” Just as we got there I look and see a . . . a . . . you know . . . what do you call it?’ and the narrator flourished his arms, trying to find the word he wanted. ‘A scarp?’ suggested Bólkhov.

‘No . . . Ach! what is the word? Good heavens, what is it? ... A scarp!’ he said quickly. ‘So, “fix bayonets! Hurrah! ta-ra, ta-ta-ta!” not a sign of the enemy! Everybody was surprised, you know. Well, that’s all right; we go on to the second barricade. Ah, that was a totally different matter. Our mettle was now up, you know. Just as we reached it I look and see the second barricade, and we could not advance. There was a what’s-its-name . . . now what do you call it? Ach, what is it? . . .’

‘Another scarp, perhaps,’ I suggested.

‘Not at all,’ he said crossly: ‘not a scarp but — oh dear, what do you call it?’ and he made an awkward gesture with his hands. ‘Oh, good heavens, what is it?’ He seemed so distressed that one involuntarily wished to help him.

‘A river, perhaps,’ said Bolkhov.

‘No, only a scarp! Hardly had we got down, when, will you believe it, such a hell of fire . . .’

At this moment someone outside the tent asked for me. It was Maksimov. And as after having heard the different histories of these two barricades there were still thirteen left, I was glad to seize the excuse to return to my platoon. Trosenko came out with me.



'It's all lies,' he said to me when we were a few steps from the hut; 'he never was near those barricades at all,' and Trosenko laughed so heartily that I, too, enjoyed the joke.

### Chapter XIII

IT WAS ALREADY dark and only the watch-fires dimly lit up the camp when, after the horses were groomed, I rejoined my men. A large stump lay smouldering on the charcoal. Only three men sat round it: Antanov, who was turning a little pot of ryabco<sup>1</sup> on the fire; Zhdanov, who was dreamily poking the

<sup>1</sup> Ryabco, soldier's food, made of soaked hard-tack and dripping. embers with a stick, and Chikin, with his pipe, which never would draw well. The rest had already lain down to sleep — some under the ammunition wagons, some on the hay, some by the camp-fires. By the dim light of the charcoal I could distinguish familiar backs, legs, and heads, and among the latter that of the young recruit who, drawn close to the fire, seemed to be already sleeping. Antonov made room for me. I sat down by him and lit a cigarette. The smell of mist and the smoke of damp wood filled the air and made one's eyes smart and, as before, a dank drizzle kept falling from the dismal sky.

One could hear the regular sound of snoring near by, the crackling of branches in the fire, a few words now and then, and the clattering of muskets among the infantry. The camp watch-fires glowed all around, lighting up within narrow circles the dark shadows of the soldiers near them. Where the light fell by the nearest fires I could distinguish the figures of naked soldiers waving their shirts close over the fire. There were still many who had not lain down, but moved and spoke, collected on a space of some eighty square yards; but the gloomy dull night gave a peculiar mysterious character to all this movement as if each one felt the dark silence and feared to break its calm monotony.

When I began to speak I felt that my voice sounded strange, and I discerned the same frame of mind reflected in the faces of all the soldiers sitting near me. I thought that before I joined them they had

been talking about their wounded comrade, but it had not been so at all. Chikin had been telling them about receiving supplies at Tiflis and about the scamps there.

I have noticed always and everywhere, but especially in the Caucasus, the peculiar tact with which our soldiers avoid mentioning anything that might have a bad effect on a comrade's spirits. A Russian soldier's spirit does not rest on easily inflammable enthusiasm which cools quickly like the courage of Southern nations; it is as difficult to inflame him as it is to depress him.

He does not need scenes, speeches, war-cries, songs, and drums; on the contrary he needs quiet, order, and an absence of any affectation. In a Russian, a real Russian, soldier you will never find any bragging, swagger, or desire to befog or excite himself in time of danger; on the contrary, modesty, simplicity and a capacity for seeing in peril something quite else than the danger, are the distinctive features of his character. I have seen a soldier wounded in the leg, who in the first instant thought only of the hole in his new sheepskin cloak; and an artillery outrider who, creeping from beneath a horse that was killed under him, began unbuckling the girths to save the saddle.

Who does not remember the incident at the siege of Gergebel when the fuse of a loaded bomb caught fire in the laboratory and an artillery sergeant ordered two soldiers to take the bomb and run to throw it into the ditch, and how the soldiers did not run to the nearest spot by the colonel's tent, which stood over the ditch, but took it farther on so as not to wake the gentlemen asleep in the tent and were consequently both blown to pieces? I remember also how, in the expedition of 1852, something led a young soldier while in action to say he thought the platoon would never escape, and how the whole platoon angrily attacked him for such evil words which they did not like even to repeat.

And now, when the thought of Velenchuk must have been in the mind of each one and when we might expect Tartars to steal up at any moment and fire a volley at us, everyone listened to Chikin's sprightly stories and no one referred either to the day's action, or to the present danger, or to the wounded man; as if it had all happened goodness

knows how long ago or had never happened at all. But it seemed to me that their faces were rather sterner than usual, that they did not listen to Chikin so very attentively, and that even Chikin himself felt he was not being listened to, but talked for the sake of talking.

Maksimov joined us at the fire and sat down beside me. Chikin made room for him, stopped speaking, and started sucking at his pipe once more.

'The infantry have been sending to the camp for vodka,' said Maksimov after a considerable silence; 'they have just returned.' He spat into the fire. 'The sergeant says they saw our man.'

'Is he alive?' asked Antonov, turning the pot.

'No, he's dead.'

The young recruit suddenly raised his head in the little red cap, looked intently for a minute over the fire at Maksimov and at me, then quickly let his head sink again and wrapped himself in his cloak.

'There now, it wasn't for naught that death had laid its hand on him when I had to wake him in the "park" this morning,' said Antonov.

'Nonsense!' said Zhdanov, turning the smouldering log, and all were silent.

Then, amid the general silence, came the report of a gun from the camp behind us. Our drummers beat an answering tattoo. When the last vibration ceased Zhdanov rose first, taking off his cap. We all followed his example.

Through the deep silence of the night rose an harmonious choir of manly voices:

'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one.'

'We had a man in '45 who was wounded in the same , place,' said Antonov when we had put on our caps and again sat down by the fire.

'We carried him about with us on a gun for two days — do you remember Shevchenko, Zhdanov ? — and then we just left him there under a tree.'

At this moment an infantryman with tremendous whiskers and moustaches came up to our fire, carrying a musket and pouch.

‘Give me a light for my pipe, comrades,’ said he.

‘All right, smoke away: there’s fire enough,’ remarked Chikin.

‘I suppose it’s about Dargo<sup>1</sup> you are telling, comrade,’ said the infantry soldier to Antónov.

‘Yes, about Dargo in ‘45,’ Antónov replied.

The infantryman shook his head, screwed up his eyes, and sat down on his heels near us.

‘Yes, all sorts of things happened there,’ he remarked.

‘Why did you leave him behind?’ I asked Antonov.

‘He was suffering a lot with his stomach. As long as we halted it was all right, but as soon as we moved on he screamed aloud and asked for God’s sake to be left behind — but we felt it a pity. But when he began to give it us hot, killed three of our men from the guns and an officer besides and we somehow got separated from our battery. ... It was such a go! We thought we shouldn’t get our guns away. It was muddy and no mistake!’

‘The mud was worst under the Indeysky<sup>2</sup> Mountain,’ remarked one of the soldiers.

‘Yes, it was there he got more worse! So we considered it with Anoshenka — he was an old artillery sergeant. “Now really he can’t live and he’s asking for God’s sake to be left behind; let us leave him here.”

So we decided. There was a tree, such a

<sup>1</sup> Dargo, in the T6rek Territory, was the head-quarters of ShamyI until 1845.

<sup>2</sup> The soldier miscalls the Andiysky chain of mountains ‘Indeysky,’ apparently connecting them with India. branchy one, growing there. Well, we took some soaked hard-tack Zhdanov had, and put it near him, leant him against the tree, put a clean shirt on him, and said good-bye, — all as it should be — and left him.’

‘And was he a good soldier?’

‘Yes, he was all right as a soldier,’ remarked Zhdanov.

‘And what became of him God only knows,’ continued Antonov; ‘many of the likes of us perished there.’

‘What, at Dargo?’ said the infantryman as he rose, scraping out his pipe and again half-closing his eyes and shaking his head; ‘all sorts of things happened there.’

And he left us.

‘And have we many still in the battery who were at Dargo?’ I asked.

‘Many? Why, there’s Zhdanov, myself, Patsan who is now on furlough, and there may be six others, not more.’

‘And why’s our Patsan holiday-making all this time?’ said Chikin, stretching out his legs and lying down with his head on a log. ‘I reckon he’s been away getting on for a year.’

‘And you, have you had your year at home?’ I asked Zhdanov.

‘No, I didn’t go,’ he answered unwillingly.

‘You see, it’s all right to go,’ said Antonov, ‘if they’re well off at home or if you are yourself fit to work; then it’s tempting to go and they’re glad to see you.’

‘But where’s the use of going when one’s one of two brothers?’ continued Zhdanov. ‘It’s all they can do to get their bread; how should they feed a soldier like me? I’m no help to them after twenty-five years’ service. And who knows whether they’re alive still?’

‘Haven’t you ever written?’ I asked.

‘Yes, indeed! I wrote two letters, but never had an answer. Either they’re dead, or simply won’t write because they’re living in poverty themselves; so where’s the good?’

‘And is it long since you wrote?’ ‘I wrote last when we returned from Dargo . . . Won’t you sing us “The Birch-Tree”?’ he said, turning to Antonov, who sat leaning his elbows on his knees and humming a song. Antonov began to sing ‘The Birch-Tree’.

‘This is the song Daddy Zhdanov likes most best of all,’ said Chikin to me in a whisper, pulling at my cloak. ‘Sometimes he right down weeps when Philip Antonych sings it.’

Zhdanov at first sat quite motionless with eyes fixed on the glimmering embers, and his face, lit up by the reddish light, seemed very gloomy; then his jaws below his ears began to move faster and faster, and at

last he rose, and spreading out his cloak, lay down in the shadow behind the fire. Either it was his tossing and groaning as he settled down to sleep, or it may have been the effect of Velenchuk's death and of the dull weather, but it really seemed to me that he was crying.

The bottom of the charred log, bursting every now and then into flames, lit up Antonov's figure with his grey moustaches, red face, and the medals on the cloak that he had thrown over his shoulders, or it lit up someone's boots, head, or back. The same gloomy drizzle fell from above, the air was still full of moisture and smoke, all around were the same bright spots of fires, now dying down, and amid the general stillness came the mournful sound of Antonov's song; and when that stopped for an instant the faint nocturnal sounds of the camp — snoring, clanking of sentries' muskets, voices speaking in low tones — took Part.

'Second watch! Makatyuk and Zhdanov!' cried Maksimov. Antonov stopped singing. Zhdanov rose, sighed, stepped across the log, and went slowly towards the guns.

15 June 1855.

## The Sevastopol Sketches

Translated by Frank D. Millet 1887

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.

Sevastopol Sketches

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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'<sup>1</sup> 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!'<sup>2</sup> 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 samovars<sup>1</sup> are shouting, ‘Hot sbiten!’<sup>2</sup> 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,'<sup>1</sup> 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 signboards<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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 bastion<sup>1</sup>: 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 cheekbones, 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!”<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> ‘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 phrasemaking, 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.

III

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:

'Tine 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.

#### IV

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,<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> '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 unasked, 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,'<sup>1</sup> said Kalugin when he returned from the General's.

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

<sup>1</sup> '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 ?'<sup>1</sup> 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?’<sup>2</sup> 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.

## VI

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,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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!”<sup>1</sup> 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?’

<sup>1</sup> 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?'<sup>1</sup> said Napoleon. 'Je vous  
demande pardon, sire, je suis mort,'<sup>2</sup> 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 icon<sup>1</sup> — 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.

## XI

‘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?’<sup>1</sup> asked Prince Galtsin, glancing at the lieutenant-captain’s cap and not addressing anyone in Particular. <sup>1</sup> ‘Is the flag (of truce) lowered already?’ ‘Non, pas encore,’<sup>1</sup> 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,’<sup>2</sup> and he replied, ‘Monsieur, je ne dis pas non, pour ne pas vous dormir un dementi,’<sup>3</sup> 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 regiment etes-vous’<sup>4</sup> 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—’<sup>5</sup> 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 works, 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 carried 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?'<sup>1</sup>

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

'Eh voo de la guard?'<sup>3</sup>

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.'<sup>1</sup>

'Eh sussy oo ashtay?'<sup>2</sup> 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.'<sup>3</sup>

'Joli,'<sup>4</sup> 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.'<sup>5</sup>

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 ?'<sup>6</sup>

'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,'<sup>1</sup> says a Zouave among the French.

'De quoi est-ce qu'ils rient donc?'<sup>2</sup> 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!'<sup>3</sup> 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.'<sup>4</sup>

'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.'<sup>5</sup>

'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,'<sup>6</sup> he said, bowing.

'N'est-ce pas terrible la triste besogne que nous faisons? Ca chauffait cette nuit, n'est-ce pas?'<sup>9</sup> 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 un plaisir que de se battre avec des gaillards comme eux.'<sup>1</sup>

'Il faut avouer que les vôtres ne se mouchent pas du pied non plus,'<sup>2</sup> 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

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 May<sup>2</sup> 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: 'Dolzhevikov!' 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!’]

III

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,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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, he had had time to convince himself 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 vodka<sup>1</sup> 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 Belbek<sup>2</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 bridge<sup>1</sup> loomed out. The air was shaken every

<sup>1</sup> 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!’<sup>1</sup> 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?’

<sup>1</sup> 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 Korabelnaya<sup>1</sup> 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.

## XII

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 'ospital. 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 'ospital 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 Voldya'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 medal<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 to-morrow.’

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.

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.]

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 Kozeltsov, 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.

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.'

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,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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!’



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.'<sup>1</sup>

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 dusk 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 Vlanga!’ 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 Snowstorm

Translated by Robert Nisbet Bain 1901

I

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At seven o'clock in the evening, after drinking tea I deParted from a post-station, the name of which I don't remember, but I recollect it was somewhere in the military district of the Don, near Novochirkask. It was already dark when, wrapped up in my furs, I sat down with Alec in the sledge. In the shelter of the post-station it seemed warm and still. Although there was no snow above us, not a single tiny star was visible above our heads, and the sky appeared to be extraordinarily low and black in comparison with the pure snowy plain stretching out before us.

We had scarce passed the dark figures of the mills — one of which was clumsily waving one of its huge wings — and got clear of the station when I observed that the road was heavier and more obstructed, and the wind began to blow upon my left side more violently and beat upon the flank, tail, and mane of the horse and regularly raise and carry away the snow torn up by the curved shafts of the sledge and the hoofs of the horses. The little sledge-bell began to be silent, a current of cold air began to flow from some opening into my sleeve and down my back, and the advice of the inspector not to go at all, lest I should wander about the whole night and be frozen to death on the road, at once occurred to me.

"Haven't we lost our way?" I said to the driver; and receiving no answer, I repeated the question in a still plainer form: "Do you think we shall reach the post-station, driver, or shall we lose our way?"

"God knows!" he replied, without turning his head, "it's only human to go astray, and the road is nowhere visible, my little master!"

"Will you tell me whether you think we shall get to the post-station or not?" I continued to ask. "Shall we get there, I say?"

"We ought to get there," said the driver, and he murmured something else which I could not quite catch because of the wind.

I didn't want to turn back, but to wander about all night in the frost and snow in the absolutely barren steppe as this Part of the military district



of the Don really is, was also not a very pleasant prospect to contemplate. Moreover, although I was unable to examine him very well in the darkness, my driver, somehow or other, did not please me, nor did he inspire me with confidence. He sat squarely instead of sideways; his body was too big; his voice had too much of a drawl; his hat, somehow or other, was not a driver's hat — it was too big and bulgy; he did not urge on the horses as he should have done; he held the reins in both hands as a lacquey does who sits on the box behind the coachman and, above all, I did not believe in him because his ears were tied round with a cloth. In a word, I did not like the look of him, and that serious hunched back of his bobbing up and down before me boded no good.

"In my opinion it would be better to turn back," said Alec; "it is no joke to get lost."

"My little master, you see what sort of driving it is: no road to be seen, and your eyes all bunged up!" growled the driver.

We hadn't gone a quarter of an hour when the driver stopped the horses, gave the reins to Alec, clumsily disengaged his legs from their sitting position and, trampling over the snow in his big boots, went to try and find the road.

"I say, where are you?" I cried, "have we gone astray, or what?"

But the driver did not answer, me and turning his face in the opposite direction to that in which the wind was blowing — it had cut him in the very eyes — went away from the sledge.

"Well, what is it?" I asked when he had turned back again.

"Nothing at all," said he with sudden impatience and anger, as if it was my fault that he had lost the road, and slowly thrusting his big boots into the front Part of the sledge again, he slowly grasped the reins together with his frozen mittens.

"What shall we do?" I asked when we had again moved forward.

"Do? Why, go whither God allows us!" And on we went at the same jig-trot, obviously across country, sometimes over snow piled op bushels high, sometimes over brittle, naked ice.

Notwithstanding the cold, the snow on our collars thawed very quickly; the snow drift below increased continually, and fine dry flakes began to fall from above.

It was plain we were going God only knew whither, for after going along for another quarter of an hour we did not see a single verst post.

“What do you think, eh?” I said again to the driver; “do you think we shall get to the station?”

“To which station? We may get back, if the horses take it into their heads to try, they’ll take us right enough, but as to reaching the other station, scarcely, we might perish, that’s all.”

“Then turn back by all means,” said I, “at any rate. . .”

“Turn the horses round, do you mean?”

“Yes, turn ’em round!”

The driver let go the reins. The horses began to run more quickly, and although I observed that we had turned round, yet the wind had changed too, and soon, through the snow the windmills were visible. The driver took heart again and began to be loquacious.

“The Anudiuses got into the drifts and turned back just in the same way when they came from this station,” said he, “and passed the night by the haystacks; they only got in by morning. They were only too thankful for the shelter of the haystacks; they might have easily frozen to death. It was cold, and one of them did have his legs frostbitten, so that he died of it three weeks later.”

“But now you see it is not so cold, and it has grown quieter; might not we drive on now, eh?”

“It’s fairly warm, warm, oh yes! and the snow’s coming down. Now we’ll turn back, as it seems easier going and the snow comes down thicker. You might drive if you had a courier, but you’ll do it at your own risk. Are you joking? Why, you’d be frozen! And what should I say who am responsible for your honour?”

II.

Just then there was a sound of little bells behind us, the bells of some troika, a three-horse sledge, which was rapidly overtaking us.

“That is a courier’s bell,” said my driver; “there’s one such courier at every post-station.”

And, indeed, the little bell of the front troika, the sound of which was now plainly borne to us by the wind, was an extraordinarily welcome sound to hear: a pure, musical, sonorous, and slightly droning sound. As I afterwards ascertained, it was a hunter’s arrangement of three little bells — one big one in the centre and two little ones adjusted to tierce. The sound of this tierce and the droning quinte, resounding through the air, was extraordinarily penetrating and strangely pleasant in that vast and voiceless steppe.

“The post is in haste,” said my driver when the foremost of the three horses was level with us.

“What sort of a road, eh? Can one get through?” cried he to the hindmost driver; but the fellow only shouted to his horses and didn’t answer him.

The sound of the little bells quickly died away on the wind as soon as the post-car had passed us.

My driver must now have felt a bit ashamed, I fancy.

“We’ll go on, sir,” said he; “these people have gone on before us and have left a fresh track, which we can now follow.”

I agreed, and again we turned towards the wind and crawled along a bit through the deep snow. I kept a side-long glance upon the road so as to see that we did not wander away from the track made by the sledge. For two versts the track was plainly visible, after that the only thing observable was a very slight unevenness under the curved sides of the sledge, and I began to look straight in front of me. The third verst pole we could still make out, but the fourth we could not find at all. As before, we were driving both against and with the wind, both left and right, and at last it got to such a pass that the driver said we had deviated to the right. I said we had gone to the left, while Alec proved that we were absolutely going back again. Once more we stopped for a while, the driver extricated his big feet and crawled out to find the road; but it was all in vain. I also made up my mind to get out for once and see for myself whether that was not the road which I saw glimmering indistinctly; but scarcely had I taken six steps forward, with the utmost difficulty, against the wind and persuaded myself that

everywhere were the selfsame uniform white layers of snow and that the road existed only in my imagination — than I no longer saw the sledge.

“Driver! Alec!” I cried, but my voice! — well I felt that the wind snatched it right out of my mouth and carried it in the twinkling of an eye away from me. I have a very distinct recollection of the loud, penetrating, and even desperate voice with which I once more yelled: “Driver!” when he was only two good paces distant from me. His black figure, whip in hand, and with his large hat perched on one side, suddenly grew up in front of me. He led me to the sledge.

“Still warm, thank goodness!” said he, “but it’s bad if the frost does catch you, my little master!” said he.

“Let the horses go; we must go back,” said I, taking my seat on the sledge. “I suppose you can guide them, driver?”

“I must guide them.”

He threw aside the reins, struck the saddle of the thill horse thrice with his whip and again we went on somewhither for a bit. We went along for about half an hour. Suddenly we again heard in front of us the, to me, familiar little hunting-bell and two more besides; but this time they were coming towards us. It was the same three troikas returning to the post-station after delivering the mails, with the fresh horses fastened on behind. The couriers troika, with its three powerful horses with the hunting bells came rapidly forward. A single driver sat on the box, shouting lustily. Behind, in the middle of the empty sledge, sat a couple of drivers. I could hear their loud and merry discourse. One of them was smoking a pipe, and the sparks, kindled by the wind, lit up part of his face.

As I looked at them I began to be ashamed that I had been afraid to go on, and my driver must have experienced much the same sensation, for we said with one voice: “Let us go after them.”

III.

The hindmost troikas had not yet passed when my driver turned clumsily and struck the attached horses with the sledge shafts. One of

the troika team thereupon fell heavily, tearing away the traces and plunging to one side.

“You cock-eyed devil, don’t you see where you’re going, driving over people like that? Devil take you!” began one of the drivers in a hoarse, quavering voice.

He was smallish and an old fellow, as far as I could judge from his voice and his position. He had been sitting in the hinder troika, but now leaped quickly out of the sledge and ran to the horses, never ceasing the whole time to curse my driver in the most coarse and cruel manner. But the horses would not be pacified. The driver ran after them, and in a minute both horses and driver had vanished in the white mist of the snowstorm.

“Vas-il-y! bring the chestnut hither, we shall never get them else,” his voice still resounded.

One of the drivers, a very tall man, got out of the sledge, silently detached his three horses,” saddled and bridled one of them, and, crunching the snow beneath him, disappeared in the direction of his comrade. We, with the two other horses, went after the courier’s troika, which, ringing its bell, set off in front at full gallop; we just let ourselves go without troubling any more about the road, “A pretty way of catching them !” said my driver, alluding to the other driver, who had gone off after the horses; “he’ll never catch’ em, and he’s leading the spare horse to a place he’ll never get him out of again.”

Ever since my driver had begun to go back, he had become in better spirits and more inclined to be talkative, which I, of course, did not fail to take advantage of as, so far, I had no desire to sleep. I began to ask him all about himself and whence he came, and soon found out that he was a fellow countryman, hailing from Tula country, being a small proprietor in the village of Kirpechny; that their land was of very little good to them and had quite ceased to produce grain since the cholera visitation; that there were two brothers at home, while a third had enlisted as a soldier; that the supply of bread would not hold out till Christmas, and they had to hire themselves out to make more money; that the younger brother was master in the house because he was

married, while my friend was a widower; that an artel, or society of drivers, went forth from their village every year; that though he was not a coachman by profession he served at the post-station in order to be of some help to his brother; that he lived here, thank God, on 120 paper roubles a year, of which he sent a hundred home to his family, and that he had a pretty good time of it, but that couriers were veritable beasts, and that the people he had to do with here were always cursing him.

“That driver, for instance, why should he curse me? my little master! Did I overturn his horses on purpose? Why, I wouldn’t do any harm to anyone! And why should he go scurrying after them? They would be sure to come back of their own accord. And now, he’ll only make the horses starve to death besides coming to grief himself” repeated the God-fearing little muzhik.

“But what is that black thing yonder?” said I, observing some black objects just in front of us.

“A train of wagons! — a nice way of going along, I must say,” continued he when we had come abreast with the huge wagons covered with mats, going one after another on wheels. “Look! not a soul to be seen; they are all asleep. The horse is the wisest of them all. He knows very well what he is about. Nothing in the world will make him miss the road. We too will go alongside of them and then we shall be all right,” added he, “and know where we are going.”

It really was a curious sight. There were those huge wagons covered with snow from the matting atop to the wheels below, moving along absolutely alone. Only in the front corner the snow-covered mat was raised a couple of inches for a moment as our little bells resounded close to the wagons and a hat popped up. The big piebald horse, with outstretched neck and straining back, deliberately proceeded along the absolutely hidden road, monotonously shaking his shaggy head beneath the whitening shaft and pricking up one snow-covered ear as we came abreast of him.

After we had gone on for another half-hour the driver again turned to me.

“What do you think, sir; we are going nicely along now, eh?”

“I don’t know,” I replied.

“Before, the wind was anyhow, but now we are going right in the midst of the storm. No, we shall not get there; we too have lost our way,” he concluded with the utmost calmness.

Evidently, although a great coward, and afraid of his own shadow, he had become quite tranquil as soon as there were a good many of us together and he was not obliged to be our guide and responsible for us. With the utmost sang froid he criticised the mistakes of the driver in front of us as if it had anything whatever to do with him. I observed indeed that now and then the troika in front was sometimes in profile, from my point of view, to the left and sometimes to the right, and it also seemed to me as if we were encircling a very limited space. However, it might have been an optical delusion, as also the circumstance that, occasionally, it seemed to me as if the troika in front was climbing up a mountain, or going along a declivity, or under the brow of a hill, whereas the steppe was everywhere uniformly level.

After we had proceeded for some time longer I observed, or so it seemed to me, far away, on the very horizon, a long, black, moving strip of something; but in a moment it became quite plain to me that this was the very same train of wagons which we had overtaken and outstripped. Just the same creaking wheels, some of them no longer turning, enveloped in snow; just the same people asleep beneath their mats, and just the same leading piebald horse, with steaming, distended nostrils, smelling out the road and pricking up his ears.

“Look, we have gone round and round and are coming out by this train of wagons again!” said my driver in a sulky tone. “The courier’s horses are good ones, though he drives them villainously, but ours are so-so and always stopping, just as if we had been driving all night long.”

He coughed a bit.

“Shall we turn off somewhere, sir, for our sins?”

“Why? We are bound to arrive somewhere as it is.”

“Arrive somewhere! We shall have to make a night of it in the steppe: that’s what we shall do. How it is snowing, my little master!”

Although it did seem strange to me that the driver in front of us, who had obviously lost his road and had no idea of the direction in which he was going, took no trouble to find it again, but continued to drive at full tilt, cheerily shouting to his horses, I did not want to separate from him all the same.

“Follow after them!” I said.

The driver went on, but he drove along even more unwillingly than before and no longer conversed with me.

IV.

The snowstorm was growing more and more violent. The flakes descended fine and dry, apparently it was freezing hard. My nose and cheeks grew numb with cold, currents of cold air penetrated my furs more and more frequently and it was necessary to huddle up in them more closely. Occasionally the sledge bumped up against a bare, ice-clad hummock, from which it scattered the snow in every direction.

As I had travelled some score or so of versts without a night's rest, notwithstanding the fact that I was very much interested in the issue of our wanderings, I involuntarily shut my eyes and dozed off. All at once, when I opened my eyes again, I was struck by what seemed to me in the first moment a bright light illuminating the white plain; the horizon had considerably widened, the low, black sky had suddenly disappeared; in every direction were visible white oblique lines of falling snow; the figures of the troika people in front appeared more plainly, and when I looked upwards it seemed to me for the first moment as if the clouds had parted and that only the falling snow covered the sky. Whilst I had been slumbering the moon had arisen and threw her cold and clear light through the scattered clouds and falling snow.

The one thing I saw clearly was my sledge, the horses, the driver, and the three troikas going on in front: the first troika, the courier's, on the box of which one of the drivers was still sitting urging his horses on at a good round pace; the second, in which sat the two other drivers, who had thrown the reins aside and made themselves a shelter against the wind out of their armyaks never ceasing to smoke their pipes the whole



time, as was clear from the sparks proceeding from that quarter, and the third troika, in which nobody was visible — presumably the driver was sleeping in the middle of it. Before I went to sleep, however, the leading driver had at rare intervals stopped his horses and tried to find the way.

Then, every time we stopped, the howling of the wind became more audible and the enormous quantity of snow suspended in the air more strikingly visible. I now saw by the light of the moon, half obscured by the snowstorm, the small, squat figure of the driver, with the big whip in his hand, with which he flicked at the snow in front of him, moving backwards and forwards in the bright mist and coming back again to the sledge, leaping sideways on to the box seat, and amidst the monotonous whistling of the wind the alert, sonorous ringing and clanging of the little bells was audible once more. Every time the driver in front leaped out to look for the road or the verst posts one could hear the brisk, self-confident voice of one of the drivers shouting to the driver in front:

“Do you hear, Ignashka! take the road to the left! You’ll find more shelter to the right!” Or, “Why are you going round and round like a fool? Go by the snow; take the lee of it, and you’ll come out all right!” Or, “A little more to the right, a little more to the right, my brother! Don’t you see there’s something black yonder — some sign-post or other?” Or, “Where are you going? Where are you going? Loose the piebald nag and go on in front and he’ll guide you to the road straight away. It’ll be much better if you do that!”

This selfsame person, who was so fond of giving advice, not only did not loose the side-horse and go over the snow to look for the road, but did not even so much as thrust his nose from out of his arnyak, and when Ignashka, the driver in front, in reply to one of his counsels, shouted to him to go in front himself if he knew where to go so well, the counsellor replied that if he had been travelling with courier’s horses he would have gone on and led them to the right road straight away, “but our horses cannot go on in front in snow-drifts, not such nags as these, anyway.”

“Then you can hold your jaw!” replied Ignashka, cheerily whistling to his horses.

The other driver, sitting in the same sledge with the counsellor, said not a word to Ignashka, and in fact did not interfere at all, although he was not asleep either, at least I assumed as much from the fact that his pipe continued unextinguished, and also from the circumstance that whenever we stopped I heard his measured, uninterrupted narration. He was telling some tale or other. Only when Ignashka suddenly halted for the sixth or seventh time, this other driver plainly became very angry at being interrupted by such leisurely procedure, and he shouted at him:

“What! stopping again! You want to find the road, eh? It’s a snowstorm we’re in, and there’s an end of it! Why, even a land-surveyor wouldn’t be able to find the road now. Go on as long as the horses can drag us! Never fear; we shan’t freeze to death! Go on, I say!”

“Never fear, indeed! Last year a postilion was frozen to death!” observed my driver.

The driver of the third troika did not wake the whole time, only once, during a stoppage, the counsellor shouted:

“Philip! I say, Philip!” and receiving no answer observed: “I wonder if he’s frozen? You might go and see, Ignashka!”

Ignashka, who hastened to do everyone’s bidding, went to the sledge and began to shake the sleeper.

“Why, he’s drunk as drunk — like a log!” said he, “I say! you! are you frozen?” he said, shaking him violently.

The sleeper babbled something or other and cursed him.

“He’s alive, all right, my brother!” said Ignashka; and again he ran forward and again we went on, and so quickly indeed, this time, that the little brown side horse attached to my troika, constantly lashed up from behind, more than once broke into a clumsy gallop.

V.

I think it must have been almost midnight when we were joined by the little old man and Vas-il-y, who had been in pursuit of the stampeded horses. They had found the horses and pursued and overtaken us; but

how they had done so in the dark, blinding snowstorm, in the midst of the barren steppe, has always remained unintelligible to me. The little old man, moving his elbows and legs, rode up at a gallop on the brown horse. The two other horses were attached to the collar: in the snowstorm it was impossible to leave the horses to themselves. On coming up to his, the old fellow began attacking my driver again. "Look here, you cock-eyed devil, really if . . ."

"Hie, Uncle Matvich!" shouted the tale-teller from the second sledge, "alive, eh? Crawl in here I" But the old man did not answer him, but went on with his cursing. When it appeared to him that he had cursed enough, he did go to the second sledge.

"Caught 'em all?" they said to him from that quarter.

"Of course! Why not?"

And his diminutive figure, on the trot, with the upper Part of his body bobbing up and down on the back of the horse, after leaping out on to the snow, ran forward without stopping behind the sledge, and scrambled in to where they were, with his legs sticking up in the air as he forced his way through the orifice. Tall Vas-il-y, as before, took his seat in silence on the box seat in the foremost sledge alongside Ignashka, whom he helped to look for the road.

"You see what a curser he is, my little master!" murmured my driver.

We went along for some time after this, without stopping, over the white wilderness, in the cold, trans-parent, and quivering light of the snowstorm. Every time I opened my eyes, there in front of me was the selfsame clumsy hat and back, covered with snow; there, too, was the selfsame low shaft-bow, beneath which, between the tightly drawn leather reins, and always the same distance off, the head of the brown horse with the black mane deliberately bending in the direction of the wind, moved slowly up and down. Behind its back one could also see, to the right, the bay side-horse, with its tail tied up into a bunch, occasionally bumping against the front board of the sledge. Look down — and there was the selfsame snow thumping against the sides of the sledge, which the wind stubbornly lifted and carried off in one direction.

In front, always at the same distance, the leading troika ran steadily along; on the right and on the left everything was white and twinkling. In vain the eye sought for some new object: not a post, not a rick, not a fence — nothing at all was visible. Everywhere everything was white, white and mobile; sometimes the horizon seemed incomprehensibly far off, sometimes compressed within two paces distance in every direction. Sometimes a high white wall would grow up suddenly on the right and run alongside the sledge, then it would as suddenly disappear and grow up in front only to run further and further off and again disappear.

If you looked up it would appear quite light the first instant, and you would seem to see little stars through the mist; but the little stars vanished from your view ever higher and higher, and all you saw was the snow, which fell past your eyes on to your face and into the collar of your furs; the sky was identically bright everywhere, identically white, colourless, uniform, and constantly mobile. The wind seemed to be perpetually shifting.

Now it blew right against you and blinded your eyes, now it blew teasingly sideways and flung the collar of your fur coat over your head and mockingly flapped it in your face, now it would howl from behind through some unprotected crevice. Audible throughout was the faint, miserable crunching of hoofs and sledge-boards over the snow and the expiring tinkle of the little bells when we passed over deep snow.

Only very rarely, when we drove against the wind, and over naked, frozen, stony ground, did the energetic whistling of Ignaty and the thrilling sound of the little bell with the resonant, droning quinte come flying, plainly audible, towards us, and then these sounds would immediately and pleasantly disturb the melancholy character of the wilderness, subsequently falling into a monotonous melody persisting with intolerable fidelity always on one and the same motif, which I involuntarily imagined to myself as I listened to them. One of my feet presently began to grow numb, and when I turned about a bit in order the better to shelter it, the snow which had accumulated on my collar

and hat plunged down my neck and made me shiver; but, on the whole, I was still warm enough in my well-warmed furs, and a feeling of drowsiness came over me.

VI.

Recollections and ideas alternated with the most strenuous rapidity in my imagination.

The counsellor also kept on bawling out of the second sledge — I wondered what sort of a yokel he might be. No doubt a rufus, well set up, with short legs, I thought to myself, something in the style of Theodor Filipovich, our old waiter. And then I saw before me the staircase of our big house, and four of the men-servants in linen suits, walking heavily and dragging the pianoforte out of one of the wings. Theodor Filipovich, with the sleeves of his nankeen surtout turned up, and carrying a pedal, was running on in front, unloosening the bars and bolts, and there he stood, tugging away at a napkin, bustling about, insinuating himself between their legs and making a mess of everything, never ceasing all the time to screech with a funny voice: “This way, this way, you fellows in front! Like this, tail up, up, up, up, I say, carry it through the door! Like this! “

“We can manage it; leave us alone, Theodor Filipovich!” timidly observed the gardener, clinging to the balustrade, all red with the exertion and supporting one corner of the grand-piano with all his remaining strength.

But Theodor Filipovich would not be quiet.

“What an idea?” I thought as I deliberated about it. Does he fancy he is useful, indispensable, or is he simply glad because God has given him the self-confident, convincing eloquence which he dispenses with such sweet satisfaction? It must be so.” And then I saw somewhere or other a pond, a lot of tired men-servants up to their knees in water dragging a fishing-net, and there again was Theodor Filipovich with a watering-can, running along the bank and shouting at them, but only very rarely approaching the water’s edge in order to touch with his hands some golden carp and pour away the dirty water and fill his can with fresh. And then it was midday in the month of July. I was walking along

somewhere, over some quite newly mown garden grass, beneath the burning, perpendicular rays of the sun; I was still very young; there was something I lacked, something I very much wanted. I was going to a pond, to my favourite spot, between beds of wild eglantine and an avenue of birch trees, and I lay down to sleep.

I remember the feeling with which I lay down: I looked through the pretty, prickly branches of the eglantine at the black, dry hummocks of earth and at the translucent, bright-blue mirror of the pond. It was a sort of feeling of naive self-satisfaction and melancholy. Everything around me was so exceedingly beautiful, and this beauty had such a strong effect upon me that it seemed to me as if I also were good, and the only vexatious thing was that nobody admired me. It was hot; I tried to sleep in order to get some rest, but the flies, the intolerable flies, gave me no respite even here, and they began to collect around me, and doggedly, thickly, like so many little pebbles, they darted about from my temples to my arms. The bees were humming not far from me, in the sun-burnt patches of the grass, and yellow-winged butterflies, as if wearied by the sultriness, were flitting from blade to blade of grass. I looked up: it pained my eyes — the sun shone too strongly through the bright leaves of the thick-foliaged birch tree loftily, but very gently, rocking its branches above my head, and it seemed hotter than ever. I covered my face with a pocket handkerchief.

I felt oppressed, and the flies regularly stuck to my arms, on which a light sweat burst forth. The sparrows were busy in the dog-rose hedges. One of them hopped along the ground a few yards from me, pretended once or twice to be pecking the ground energetically, and making the tiny twigs crackle beneath his feet and chirping merrily, flew out of the bosque; another sparrow also perched upon the ground, trimmed his tail, glanced around him, and then, like a dart, flew chirping after the first sparrow. The blows of the mangling stick on the wet linen were audible from the pond, and the sound of these blows was borne downwards and carried along the surface of the pond. Audible also were the laughter, talking, and splashing of the bathers.

The breeze shook noisily the summits of those birches that were further from me; nearer at hand I heard it begin to flutter the grass, and now the leaves of the dog-rose bosque fell a-quivering and rustled upon their branches, and now, raising the corner of the handkerchief and tickling my perspiring face, the fresh current of air careered right up to me. Through the opening made by the lifted 'kerchief flew a fly and buzzed terror-stricken round my moist mouth. An odd piece of dried twig insinuated itself under my back. No, lying down was impossible. Suppose I went and had a refreshing bath. But at that very moment I hear quite close to the bosque hastening footsteps and a terrified female voice saying:

“Alas Batyushka! What is to be done? There’s not a man in sight!”

“What is it? what is it?” I ask, running out into the sun to the maid-servant who ran past me crying and wailing. She only looked round at me, waved her hands and ran on further. And now there appears old Martha, who is seventy years of age, holding a handkerchief in her hand which she had torn from her head, bounding along and dragging one leg after her in a woollen stocking and hastening to the pond. Two little girls were also running, holding each other by the hand, and a boy of ten, in his father’s surtout, holding on to the skirt of one of them, hastened on behind.

“What’s the matter?” I asked them.

“A muzhik has been drowned.”

“Where?”

“In the pond.”

“One of our people, eh?”

“No, a vagabond.”

Ivan, the coachman, shuffling with his big slippers over the mown grass, and the fat messenger Yakov, breathing with difficulty, were also running to the pool, and I ran after them.

I remember the feeling within me, which said to me: “Go ahead! throw yourself into the pond and drag out the muzhik; save him and they’ll all admire you so,” which was what I desired above all.

“Where is he? where is he?” I inquired of the crowd of house-servants collected round the shores of the pond.

“There he is, right at the bottom, over yonder, near to the bathing-place,” said a washerwoman, placing her wet linen on a drying pole. “I saw him go under, and then he appeared somewhere else, and then he disappeared, and then he came up again once more; and how he shrieked, ‘I’m sinking, Batyushka!’ and down below he went again, and only bubbles came up after him; and as soon as I saw that a muzhik was drowning I cried out, ‘Batyushka, there’s a muzhik drowning!’”

And the washerwoman, throwing the yoke-beam over her shoulder, waddled along the narrow path away from the pond.

“It is a sin and a shame!” said Yakov Ivanov, the steward, with a despairing voice; “what a to-do the County Court will make about it! There will be no end to it!”

At last a muzhik, with a scythe in his hand, forced his way through the crowd of women, children and old men, elbowing each other on the shore, and hanging his scythe on the branch of a cytisus, very deliberately began to pull off his boots.

“Where was it? Where was he drowned?” I kept on asking, wishing to pitch myself in there and do something or other out of the way. But they only pointed out to me the smooth surface of the pond, which was rarely ruffled by a passing breeze. It was incomprehensible to me how he could have got drowned; the water, as smooth, beautiful, and indifferent as ever, stood above him, glistening like gold in the midday sun, and it seemed to me as if I could do nothing and astonish nobody, especially as I swam but awkwardly; but the muzhik had already drawn his shirt over his head and flung himself into the water straight away. They all kept looking at him with confidence and intense expectation; but when he had got up to his shoulders in the water the muzhik deliberately turned back again and put on his shirt: he did not know how to swim.

People came running together; the crowd grew denser and denser; the old women held on to each other, but none rendered the slightest assistance. Those who had only just arrived at once began to give



advice, made a fuss, and their faces wore an expression of fear and despair; of those who had been there sometime already, some becoming tired of standing, sat down on the grass, and others turned back and went away. Old Matrena inquired of her daughter whether she had closed the door of the stove; the little boy in his father's surtout violently flung stones into the water.

But now, barking loudly and looking back doubtfully, Trezerka, the dog of Theodor Filipovich, came running down the hill, and presently the form of Theodor himself, also running down the hill and bawling something or other, emerged from behind the dog-rose hedge. "What's up?" he cried, taking off his surtout as he came along, "A man drowned and all of you stand gaping here! Give me a rope!" They all gazed upon Theodor Filipovich with hope and terror, while he, resting one hand on the shoulder of one of the house-servants, worked off the boot on his right leg with the toe of his left foot.

"Over yonder, where the crowd is, on the right side of the willow, that's the spot, Theodor Filipovich, just there," someone said to him. "I know," he answered, and frowning, no doubt in response to the indications of shamefacedness visible in the mob of women, he took off his shirt and little cross, which latter he gave to the gardener's little boy, who stood before him in a cringing attitude, and energetically strutting over the mown grass, drew near to the pond.

Trezerka, who, in doubt as to the meaning of the rapid movements of his master, had stopped close to the crowd and, sitting down on the bank, snapped off several blades of grass, now looked inquiringly at him, and suddenly, with a joyful yelp, plunged into the water with his master. During the first moment nothing was visible except foam and water drops, which flew right over to where we stood; but presently Theodor Filipovich, gracefully waving his arms and rhythmically raising and lowering his back, was seen swimming briskly towards the shore. Trezerka too, snorting and choking, was also coming rapidly back, shaking himself in the midst of the crowd and rolling on his back on the shore to dry himself. At the selfsame moment when Theodor Filipovich swam up to the shore two coachmen came running up to the willow

with a net wound round a pole. Theodor Filipovich, for some reason or other, lifted up his hands, sneezed once, twice, thrice, each time spurting a jet of water out of his mouth, shaking his hair neatly and making no answer to the questions which showered down upon him from all sides. At last he emerged on to the bank and, as far as I could make out, he was occupying himself solely with the proper adjustment of the net. They drew out the net, but at the bottom of it there was nothing but mud and a few little carp swimming about in it. Just as the net was being dragged in a second time I arrived on that side of the pond.

The only sounds audible were the voice of Theodor Filipovich distributing commands, the splashing in the water of the net-rope, and groans of horror.

“Now, then, put some heart into it and pull all together!” cried the voice of Theodor Filipovich.

“There’s something this time! it drags heavily, my brethren!” cried a voice.

But now the net, in which two or three carp were floundering, all wet, and crushing the grass beneath it, was dragged ashore. And then dimly seen through the thin agitated layer of turbid water, something white was apparent in the extended net. A groan of horror, not loud but penetratingly audible in the death-like silence, ran through the crowd. “Put a little more heart into it; drag it on to the dry ground!” sounded the authoritative voice of Theodor Filipovich; and the doomed man was dragged by main force over the cropped stalks of the burdocks and thistles right up to the willow tree.

And now I see before me my dear old aunt in her white dress; I see her fringed lilac sunshade so utterly out of place in this picture of death so horrible from its very simplicity, and I see her face ready at that very instant to burst into tears. I remember the expression of disenchantment in her face at the idea that these drag-nets were altogether useless, and I remember the sick, sorrowing feeling I experienced when she said to me with the naive egoism of love: “Let us

go, my friend! Ah! how horrible it is! And you to go and bathe and swim all alone as you do, too!”

I remember how bright and sultry the sun was; how it burnt up the dry, crumbling earth beneath our feet; how it played on the surface of the pond; how gigantic carp were hurrying and scurrying near the banks; how the smoothness of the centre of the pond was disturbed by shoals of fishes; how high in the sky a vulture was wheeling right above some ducks, who, quacking and splashing, were making for the middle of the pond through the reeds; how threatening, white, curly clouds were collecting on the horizon; how the mud, dragged ashore by the net, was gradually being trampled into the ground; and how, walking along the dyke, I again heard the stroke of a paddle resounding over the pond.

But this paddle was now ringing just as if the sound of the paddles was blending together into a tierce; and this sound tormented and wearied me all the more because I knew that this paddle was a bell and Theodor Filipovich could not make it keep quiet. And this paddle, like an instrument of torture, was pressing my leg, which was freezing, and I awoke.

It seemed to me as if I had been awakened by a sudden jolt and by two voices speaking close beside me.

“Hillo! Ignat! Ignat, I say!” cried the voice of my driver, “take a passenger ! It’s all one to you, and it’s no use my trying to keep up. Take one, I say!”

The voice of Ignat answered close beside me:

“Why should I be responsible for a passenger? You’ve got half a stoop yet, haven’t you?”

“Half a stoop, indeed ! There’s a quarter of a stoop, already!”

“A quarter of a stoop! What an idea!” screeched the other voice.

“Fancy plaguing a horse for the sake of a quarter of a stoop!”

I opened my eyes. Always the same unendurable, quivering snow blizzard in one’s eyes, and the selfsame drivers and horses, but close beside me I saw a sledge. My driver had caught up Ignat, and we had been going on side by side for some timie. Notwithstanding that the

voice from the other sledges had advised my driver not to take in less weight than a half stoop, Ignat had suddenly stopped the troika.

“Let us change about then! A good job for you! Put in a quarter stoop, as we shall arrive to-morrow. How much do you make it, eh?”

My driver, with unusual vivacity, leaped out into the snow, bowed down before me, and begged me to transfer myself to Ignat. I was quite willing to do so, but it was clear that the God-fearing little muzhik was so satisfied with the new arrangement that he must needs pour forth his joy and gratitude on some one or other; he bowed down before me and thanked me and Alec and Ignashka.

“Well, there you are now, thank God. And I tell you what it is, my little master, we have been wandering about half the night, without knowing whither. That chap there will bring us in all right, my little master, and my horses are done up already.”

And he transferred my things with energetic officiousness.

While they were transferring the things I, following the direction of the wind, which carried me along, as it were, went to the second sledge. The sledge, especially on that side on which the armyak was hung up over the heads of the two drivers, was a quarter covered with snow, but behind the armyak it was quiet and comfortable. The little old man was lying there with his legs stretched wide apart, and the tale-teller was going on with his tale: “At the very time when the general, in the King’s name, you know, came, you know, to Mary in the dungeon, at that very time Mary said to him: General, I have no need of you and I cannot love you and, you know, you cannot be my lover, but my lover is the Prince himself.

“At that very time,” he was going on, but perceiving me, he was silent for a moment and began to puff away at his pipe.

“What, sir, come to listen to the tale too?” said the other, whom I have called the Counsellor.

“You are having a rare fine time of it,” said I. “It passes the time anyhow and prevents one from brooding.”

“But tell me, do you know where we are now?”

This question did not appear to please the drivers.

“Where? Who can make that out? We may be going right away to the Calmucks,” answered the Counsellor.

“But what shall we do then?”

“Do? We must go on, and perhaps we shall get through,” said he surlily.

“And what if we don’t get through, and the horses stop in the snow? What then?”

“What then? Why, nothing.”

“We might be frozen.”

“It’s possible, certainly, for we cannot see any ricks, which means that we’re going right into the Calmuck country. The first thing to do is to look at the snow.”

“And aren’t you at all afraid of being frozen?” asked the old man, with a tremulous voice.

Notwithstanding that he was making merry with me, it was plain that he was all of a tremble to the very last bone.

“Well, it’s pretty cold,” I said.

“Alas, for you, sir! If you were only like me; no, no, run along, that will make you warm.”

“First of all, we ought to show him how to run after the sledge,” said the Counsellor.

VII.

“Ready if you please,” bawled Alec to me from the sledge in front. The snowstorm was so violent that only with the utmost exertion, bending right forward and grasping with both hands the folds of my mantle, was I able to traverse the few yards which separated me from the sledge, through the shifting snow, which the wind carried away from under my very feet. My former driver was already on his knees in the midst of the empty sledge, but seeing me, he took off his large hat, whereupon the wind furiously lifted his long locks on high, and he began asking me for vodka. He evidently didn’t expect to get it, for he was not a bit offended at my refusal. He even thanked me, put on his hat, and said to me: “ Well, God be with you, sir, and seizing the reins

and smacking his lips, he departed from us immediately afterwards, Ignashka meanwhile waving his arms with all his might and shouting at his horses. Again the crunching of hoofs and the jangling of the little sledge bells superseded the whining of the wind, which was particularly audible whenever we stopped short.

For a quarter of an hour after the transfer I did not sleep, and amused myself by studying the figures of the new driver and the horses. Ignashka had all the ways of a young man; he was perpetually springing up, waving his arms, with his whip dangling over the horses, shouting at them, shifting from one foot to the other, bending forward from time to time, and readjusting the reins of the thill horse, which had a tendency perpetually to shift to the right. He was not big, but well put together apparently.

Above his short pelisse he wore an ungirdled artnyak, the collar of which was almost entirely thrown back, leaving the neck quite bare; his boots were not of felt but of leather, and his hat, which he was incessantly doffing and setting right, was a smallish one. In all his movements was observable not merely energy, but, as it seemed to me, the longing to stimulate this energy. But the further we went and the more frequently he pulled himself together, and bounded on to the box-seat and fidgeted about with his feet and conversed with me and Alec, the more it seemed to me that at the bottom of his soul he was sore afraid.

And the reason was this: his horses were good, but at every step the road became more and more difficult, and it was obvious that the horses were running unwillingly; already it was necessary to whip them up a bit, and the thill horse, a good, big, shaggy beast, had stumbled once or twice, although, immediately afterwards, terror-stricken, it tore on ahead again, bowing its shaggy head almost lower than the very sledge bell.

The right-hand-side horse, which I watched involuntarily, together with the long leather cluster of the reins, jolting and plunging on the field-side, was visibly breaking away from the traces and required a touch of

the whip, but, as is the way with good horses, even when excited, as if sorry for his weakness, he angrily lowered and raised his head, again readjusting the bridle. It was really terrible to see how the snowstorm and the cold were increasing; how the horses were getting weaker. The road was become worse and worse, and we absolutely did not know where we were or whither we were going.

We were no longer sure of reaching, I will not say a posting station, but even a place of refuge — and it was ridiculous and terrible to hear how the sledge-bell kept on tinkling so unconcernedly and merrily, and how Ignashka boisterously and bravely shouted at the horses as if we were rolling away to church on a hard-frozen, sunny, rustic road at midday on the “Feast of the Epiphany,” and especially terrible it was to think that we were driving continually and driving rapidly nobody knew whither, right away from the place where we were. Ignashka began to sing some song or other, in a villainous falsetto indeed, but so sonorously and with such long pauses, during which he fell a-whistling, that it was strange to feel timid while you listened to him.

“Hie, hie! What a throat you’ve got, Ignat!” sounded the voice of the Counsellor; “do stop for a bit.”

“What?”

“Sto-o-o-op!”

Ignat stopped. Again all was silent, and the wind howled and whined, and the whirling snow began to fall more thickly into the sledge. The Counsellor came to us.

“Well, what is it?”

“What, indeed! Whither are we going?”

“Who knows!”

“Our feet are frozen, eh! why are you clapping your hands?”

“We are quite benumbed.”

“And as for you,” this to Ignat, “just turn out and stir your stumps and see if there isn’t a Calmuck encampment about here: it will warm up your feet a bit!”

“All right! hold the horses. Now for it.”

And Ignat ran off in the direction indicated.

“One always ought to look out and pick one’s way, you’ll find it’s all right; and, besides, there’s such a thing as foolish driving,” said the Counsellor to me. “Just see how the horses are steaming.”

All this time Ignat was gone, and this lasted so long that I was beginning to be afraid that he would lose himself altogether. The Counsellor, in the calmest, most self-confident tone of voice, explained to me how people ought to act in a snowstorm; he said that the best thing of all was to outspan the horse and let her go right on, God only knows where, or sometimes it was possible to see and go by the stars, and he added that if he had gone on before as a pioneer, we should long ago have reached the station.

“Well, how is it?” he asked Ignat, who could now be seen returning, walking with the utmost difficulty, being up to his knees in snow.

“Yes, it’s there right enough. I can make out a Calmuck encampment,” answered Ignat, puffing and blowing, “but which it is I don’t know. We ought, my brother, to be going straight towards the Prologovsky Manor House. We ought to go more to the left”

“But why this delay? It must be those encampments of ours which are behind the post-station!” exclaimed the Counsellor. “But I say it is not !”

“What I’ve seen I know: it’ll be what I say and not the Tomushenko lot. We must keep going more to the right all along. We shall be out on the great bridge presently; it is only eight versts off.”

“But I say it is not I tell you I’ve just seen it” answered Ignat angrily.

“Ah, my brother, and you a driver too!”

“Driver be hanged! Go yourself! “

“Why should I go when I know already?”

It was plain that Ignat was very angry. Without answering, he leaped upon the box-seat and drove on further.

“You see how your feet grow numb if you don’t warm them a bit,” he said to Alec, continuing to hug his arms more and more frequently and wipe and shake off the snow which kept pouring into the leg of his boot.

I had a frightful desire to go to sleep.



## VIII.

“Can it be possible that I am already freezing to death?” I thought in the midst of my slumbers. Freezing to death always begins during slumber, they say. Why, it would be better to be drowned than to freeze and let myself be drawn out in a net, yet 'tis all one whether I drown or freeze if only this stick — it seems to be a stick — were not beating against my back and I could lose consciousness.

And for a second or so I did lose consciousness.

“Yet, how will all this end?” I suddenly said within my mind, opening my eyes for a moment and glancing at the white expanse; “how will all this end if we do not find the ricks and the horses stop, which will happen pretty soon? We shall all be frozen.” I confess that although a little afraid, the wish that something extraordinary, something tragical, might happen to us was stronger within me than my tiny bit of fear. It seemed to me that it would not be half bad if, by the morning, the horses were to drag us into some distant, unknown village half frozen; or, better still, some of us perhaps might be frozen to death outright.

And in this mood a vision presented itself before me, with extraordinary rapidity and vividness. The horses stopped; the snow heaps grew bigger, and bigger, and now only the shaft-bow and the ears of the horses were visible; but suddenly Ignashka appeared on the surface with his troika and drove past us. We implored him with shrieks and yells to take us, but our cries were carried away by the wind, and there were no voices at all. Ignashka smoked slightly; shouted at his horses; whistled a bit, and vanished from our eyes into some deep abyss of drifted snow. Then the little old man leaped to the surface and began waving his arms, and wanted to spring off, but could not move from the spot; my old driver, with the large hat, flung himself upon him, dragged him to the ground, and trampled him in the snow. “You old sorcerer,” he shrieked, “you curser; we’ll sink or swim together.” But

the little old man burrowed in the snow drift with his head; he was not so much a little old man as a hare, and he slipped away from us.

All the dogs came leaping after him. The counsellor, who was Theodor Filipovich, said that we should all sit round in a circle, and that it didn't matter a bit if the snow covered us, it would make us warm. And, indeed, we were very warm and comfortable, only we wanted something to drink. I got a case bottle, served out rum and sugar to them all, and drank myself with great satisfaction. The tale-teller was telling some tale about the rainbow — and above us, indeed, was a ceiling of snow and rainbow. "And now let each of us take his apartment in the snow and go to sleep," said I. The snow was warm and soft like fur.

I made a room for myself, and was about to go into it, but Theodor Filipovich, who saw some money in my case bottle, said: "Stop, give me the money; it's all one if we die!" and caught me by the leg. I gave him the money, merely asking them to let me out; but they would not believe it was all the money I had, and wanted to kill me. I caught the arm of the old man and, with unspeakable delight, began to kiss it. The arm of the little old man was fresh and smooth.

At first he tore it away from me, but afterwards he let me have it, and even began caressing me with the other arm. But Theodor Filipovich drew near and threatened me. I ran into my room, but it was not a room, but a long white corridor, and something held me by the leg. I tore myself away, but in the hands of him who held me remained my clothing and part of my skin; but I only felt cold and bashful, and all the more bashful because my aunt, with her sunshade, and with her homoeopathic pharmacopoeia under her arm, was coming towards me with the drowned man. They were laughing, and did not understand the signs I was making to them.

I threw myself into the sledge, and my feet were dragging along the snow; but the little old man pursued me, waving his arms. The little old man was already close to me when I heard two little bells, and knew that I was safe if I could get to them. The little bells sounded more and

more violently, but the little old man caught me up, and fell like a beast on my face, so that the bells were scarce audible. I again seized his arm and began to kiss it, but the little old man was not the little, old man, but the man who had been drowned, and he cried out: "Stop, Ignashka, these are the Akhmetkin ricks, I think; go and see!"

This was too terrible; far better to wake up! I opened my eyes. The wind had flapped my face with the corner of Alec's mantle; my knee was uncovered; we were going over a bare, frozen crest of snow, and the tierce of the little bells was very faintly audible in the air, along with the jangling quinte.

I looked to see where the rick was, but instead of the ricks, I saw with my wide-open eyes a house with a balcony and the crenelated wall of a fortress. It interested me very little to look at this house and fortress; my chief desire was to see again the white corridor along which I had run to hear the sound of the church bell, and to kiss the hand of the old man. I again closed my eyes and went to sleep.

IX.

I slept deeply; but the tierce of the bell was audible the whole time, and there appeared to me in my dreams, sometimes in the shape of a dog, which barked and fell upon me; and sometimes as an organ, in which I was one of the pipes; sometimes the shape of French verses which I was composing. Sometimes it seemed to me as if this tierce was some instrument of torture continually squeezing my right heel. This was so violent that I woke, and opened my eyes, rubbing my foot. It was beginning to be frost-bitten. The night was just the same as before — bright. The selfsame sort of movement was jolting me and the sledge; the selfsame Ignashka was sitting on the box-seat and shuffling about with his feet; the selfsame side horse, distending its neck and scarce lifting its feet, was trotting along over the deep snow; the little tassel of the harness was jumping up and down, and lashing the belly of the horse.

The head of the thill horse, with dishevelled mane, the distended and loosening harness attached to the shaft-bow, was gently rocking up and down. But all this, far more than before, was covered, was loaded with snow. The snow came whirling down from in front, and sideways, was beginning to cover up the sledge-boards; the legs of the horses were up to their knees in snow, and the snow was pouring down from above upon our collars and hats. The wind was now from the right, and now from the left, and played with our collars, with the flap of Ignashka's armyak, and with the mane of the thill horse, and howled above the shaft-bow and in the shafts.

It had become frightfully cold; and scarcely had I wriggled myself free of my collar, than the frozen, dry snow, whirling along, fell full upon my eyelashes, nose, mouth, and flopped down my neck. All round about everything was white, bright, and snowy; there was nothing to be seen anywhere but turbid light and snow. I became seriously alarmed. Aleshka was asleep at my feet in the very bottom of the sledge, the whole of his back was covered by a thick layer of snow. Ignashka I did not see; he was tugging at the reins, shouting to the horses, and shuffling with his feet perpetually. The little bell sounded as strangely as ever. The horses kept snorting, yet on they ran, stumbling more and more frequently, and somewhat more softly. Ignashka again leaped up, waved his sleeves, and began singing his song in a thin, tense voice.

Without finishing it he stopped the troika, threw the reins on to the upper part of the sledge, and dismounted. The wind was howling furiously, the snow, pouring down as if from a sieve, covered the skirt of his pelisse. I looked around, the third troika was no longer behind us, it had stopped somewhere. Round the second troika, which was visible through a snowy mist, I could see how the little old man was hopping about from foot to foot. Ignashka took three steps away from the sledge, sat down in the snow, ungirded himself, and set about taking off his shoes.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"I must change my boots, my feet are quite frozen," he answered, continuing what he was doing.

It had made me cold merely to wriggle my neck free of my collar. I could not bear to look on and see him do this. I sat stiff and upright, looking at the side horse which, drawing back its feet, began wearily, like a sick thing, twitching its tucked-up tail all covered with snow. The jolt which Ignat had given to the sledge, when he leaped upon the sledge-ledge, had awakened me.

“I say, where are we now?” I asked; “shall we ever get anywhere?”  
“Be easy, we shall manage it,” he answered; “the great thing is to keep the feet warm. That’s why I’ve changed my boots.”

And off he started. The little bell sounded, the sledge again began to swing along, and the wind whistled beneath the curved sides of the sledge. And once more we set off swimming in a limitless sea of snow.

X.

I slept soundly. When Alec, knocking me with his foot, awoke me, and I opened my eyes, it was already morning. It appeared to me to be colder than in the night. No snow was coming down from above; but a strong, dry wind continued to carry the snow-dust across the plain and especially beneath the hoofs of the horses and the sledge-curves. The sky, to the right, in the east, was heavy and of a dark bluish colour; but bright, orange-red, strips were becoming more and more plainly distinguishable in it. Above our heads, from behind the fugitive, white, faintly tinted clouds, a pale blue was revealing itself; to the left, the masses of cloud were bright, light, and mobile. All around, as far as the eye could reach, lay white, deep snow, distributed in heaps and layers.

In one direction could be seen a greyish heap, over which a fine, dry, snowy dust was doggedly flying. Not a single trace of a sledge, or a human being, or an animal was anywhere visible. The outlines and colours of the back of the driver and the horses showed out clearly, and even sharply, against the white background. The rim of Ignashka’s dark blue hat, his collar, his hair, and even his boots were white. The sledges were completely covered. The whole right Part of the head of the dark grey thill horse and his forelock were covered with snow; my side horse

was enwrapped in it up to the knees, and his sweating body was all plastered with snowy festoons on the right side.

The tassel was still bobbing up and down as before, beating time to some unimaginable motifs and the side horse was running along just as before, only she had sunk lower in the snow, from which she raised and disengaged her body from time to time. It was plain from her dejected ears what she must be suffering. Only a single new object riveted our attention, and this was a verst post, from which the snow was being strewn on the ground, around which the wind had piled a whole hillock of snow to the right, and was still tearing up and casting the scattering snow from one side to the other.

I was amazed that we had been driving along the whole night with single horses for twenty hours, not knowing whither, and without stopping, and yet had managed somehow to arrive. Our little bell was sounding more merrily than ever. Ignat wrapped himself up tighter, and kept shouting at the horses; behind us neighed the horses and jingled the bells of the troika of the little old man and the counsellor; but the sleeper must have parted from us in the steppe. After going along for another half verst we came upon the recent track of a sledge and troika, lightly powdered with snow, and, at rare intervals, pink patches of the blood of a horse which, as we could see, had been cruelly whipped.

“That is Philip. It is plain that he has got in before us!” said Ignashka. But there stood a little house with a signboard alone on the road, in the midst of the snow, which reached almost up to the roof and windows. Near the inn stood a troika of three grey horses, crisp with sweat, with disengaged feet and dejected heads. Around the door the snow had been cleared away, and there stood a shovel, but from the roof the howling wind was still sweeping and whirling the snow.

From out of the door, at the sound of our bells, emerged a big, good-looking, rod-faced driver with a glass of wine in his hand, shouting something. Ignashka turned to me and asked permission to stop. Then for the first time I saw his face.

XI.

His face was not darkish, dry, and straight-nosed, as I had expected, judging from his hair and physique. It was a round, merry, absolutely sun-burnt face, with a large mouth and brightly shining, round blue eyes. His cheeks and neck were as red as rubbed rags; his eyebrows, long eye-lashes, and the hair symmetrically covering the lower Part of his face, were clotted with snow and quite white. It was only half a verst to the station, and we stopped.

“Only be as quick as you can,” I said.

“In one moment,” answered Ignashka, and leaping from the box-seat, he ran to Philip.

“Give it here, my brother,” taking off his glove and pitching it in the snow along with his whip, and, throwing back his head, he swallowed the proffered dram of vodka at a single gulp.

The innkeeper, most probably a discharged Cossack, came out of the door with a demi-stoop in his hand.

“Who’s to have it?” said he.

Tall Vas-il-y, a leanish, red-bearded muzhik, with a goatee beard, and the counsellor, a stout, white eye-browed fellow, with a thick white beard framing his red face, both came up and had a glass or two. The little old man would also have liked to have joined the group of drinkers, but he was not invited to have a dram, and he went to his horses, which were tied up behind the troika, and began to stroke them on the back and buttocks. The little old man was just as I had imagined him, a thin, little fellow with a wrinkled, bluish face, a sparse beard, a sharp nose, and stumpy yellow teeth. He wore a driver’s hat, which was quite new, but his meagre little demi-pelisse, threadbare, stained with tar and torn at the shoulder and sides, did not cover his knees, and his hempen lower garment was stuffed into his huge felt boots. He was all bent and wrinkled, and his face and knees were quivering; he was busying himself about the sledge, with the obvious endeavour of getting warm.

“Hillo, Matvich! why don’t you have a half pint? fine thing for making you warm!” said the counsellor.

Matvich persisted in what he was doing. He put the harness of his horses to rights, put the low shaft right also and came to me.

“Look here, sir!” said he, taking his hat from off his grey hairs and bowing low, “all night long we’ve been wandering about with you, seeking the road; if only now you would stand a half pint. Yes, indeed, little father, your excellency! And there’s nothing like that for warming one,” he added with an obsequious smile.

I gave him a quarter-rouble. The innkeeper brought out a half-pint and handed it to the little old man. He drew off the whip-glove and extended a small, dark, crooked and slightly bluish hand towards the glass; but his thumb, which looked like ‘some one else’s, refused to obey him; he could not hold the glass, and, spilling the vodka, cast it upon the snow.

All the drivers began to laugh.

“Just look, Matvich is so frost-bitten that he cannot hold his wine.”

But Matvich was very angry that the wine was spilled. However, they filled him another glass and poured it into his mouth. Immediately he became very lively and merry, ran into the inn, lighted his pipe, began to simper, and show his worn, yellow teeth, and uttered an oath at every word. After drinking a final dram, the drivers dispersed to their various troikas and we proceeded. The snow was just as white and glaring as ever, so that it stung the eye that gazed at it.

The orange and reddish strips of cloud, mounting higher and higher, and growing ever brighter and brighter, spread over the sky; even the red sphere of the sun appeared on the horizon in the midst of dove-coloured clouds, the azure of the sky grew ever more dazzling and deeper. On the road, near the posting station, the track was clear, precise, and yellowish; here and there were holes; in the frozen, compressed air there was a sensation of pleasant lightness and freshness.



My troika ran very swiftly. The head of the thill horse and her neck, with the mane spread widely over the shaft-bow, bobbed rapidly up and down, almost in one place; beneath sounded the pleasant bells whose tongues no longer beat, but rubbed against their sides. The good side horses, tugging together at the congealed and crooked reins, energetically bounded forward; the tassels kept bumping away beneath their very bellies and hindmost harness.

Occasionally the side horse would stumble into one of the holes in the dilapidated road, and, with its eyes full of snow-dust, would struggle briskly out of it again. Ignashka now shouted to his horses in a merry tenor; the dry frost crackled beneath the sides of the sledges; from behind us came the solemnly sonorous sounds of two sledge-bells and the drunken shouting of the drivers. I glanced back, the grey, shaggy side horses, extending their necks, and breathing methodically, with curving bits, were bounding over the snow. Philip shaking his whip, was adjusting his hat; the little old man, with drawn up legs, was lying at full length, just as before, in the middle sledge.

In two minutes the sledge began to grate upon the well-swept boards of the approach to the posting-station, and Ignashka turned towards me his snowcovered, merry, weather-beaten face.

“We’ve arrived, you see, sir!” said he.

## Two Hussars

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1905

EARLY IN THE nineteenth century, when there were as yet no railways or macadamized roads, no gaslight, no stearine candles, no low couches with sprung cushions, no unvarnished furniture, no disillusioned youths with eye glasses, no liberalizing women philosophers, nor any charming dames aux camelias of whom there are so many in our times, in those naive days, when leaving Moscow for Petersburg in a coach or carriage provided with a kitchenful of home-

made provisions one traveled for eight days along a soft, dusty or muddy road and believed in chopped cutlets, sledge-bells, and plain rolls; when in the long autumn evenings the tallow candles, around which family groups of twenty or thirty people gathered, had to be snuffed; when ball-rooms were illuminated by candelabra with wax or spermaceti candles, when furniture was arranged symmetrically, when our fathers were still young and proved it not only by the absence of wrinkles and grey hair but by fighting duels for the sake of a woman and rushing from the opposite corner of a room to pick up a bit of handkerchief purposely or accidentally dropped; when our mothers wore short-waisted dresses and enormous sleeves and decided family affairs by drawing lots, when the charming dames aux camelias hid from the light of day-in those naïve days of Masonic lodges, Martinists, and Tugenbudns, the days of Miloradoviches and Davydovs and Pushkins-a meeting of landed proprietors was held in the Government town of K — , and the nobility elections were being concluded.

I

“Well, never mind, the saloon will do,” said a young officer in a fur cloak and hussar’s cap, who had just got out of a post-sledge and was entering the best hotel in the town of K — .

“The assembly, your Excellency, is enormous,” said the boots, who had already managed to learn from the orderly that the hussar’s name was Count Turbin, and therefore addressed him as “your Excellency.”

“The proprietress of Afremovo with her daughters has said she is leaving this evening, so No. 11 will be at your disposal as soon as they go,” continued the boots, stepping softly before the count along the passage and continually looking round.

In the general saloon at a little table under the dingy full-length portrait of the Emperor Alexander the First, several men, probably belonging to the local nobility, sat drinking champagne, while at another side of the room sat some travelers-tradesmen in blue, fur-lined cloaks.

Entering the room and calling in Blucher, a gigantic grey mastiff he had brought with him, the count threw off his cloak, the collar of which was

still covered with hoar-frost, called for vodka, sat down at the table in his blue-satin Cossack jacket, and entered into conversation with the gentlemen there.

The handsome open countenance of the newcomer immediately predisposed them in his favour and they offered him a glass of champagne. The count first drank a glass of vodka and then ordered another bottle of champagne to treat his new acquaintances. The sledge-driver came in to ask for a tip.

“Sashka!” shouted the count. “Give him something!”

The driver went out with Sashka but came back again with the money in his hand.

“Look here, y’r ‘xcelence, haven’t I done my very best for y’r honour? Didn’t you promise me half a ruble, and he’s only given me a quarter!”

“Give him a ruble, Sashka.”

Sashka cast down his eyes and looked at the driver’s feet.

“He’s had enough!” he said, in a bass voice. “And besides, I have no more money.”

The count drew from his pocket-book the two five-ruble notes which were all it contained and gave one of them to the driver, who kissed his hand and went off.

“I’ve run it pretty close!” said the count. “These are my last five rubles.”

“Real hussar fashion, Count,” said one of the nobles who from his moustache, voice, and a certain energetic freedom about his legs, was evidently a retired cavalryman. “Are you staying here some time, Count?”

“I must get some money. I shouldn’t have stayed here at all but for that. And there are no rooms to be had, devil take them, in this accursed pub.”

“Permit me, Count,” said the cavalryman. “Will you not join me? My room in No. 7 . . . If you do not mind just for the night. And then you’ll stay a couple of days with us? It happens that the \*Marechal de la

Noblesse\* is giving a ball tonight. You would make him very happy by going.”

“Yes, Count, do stay,” said another, a handsome young man. “You have surely no reason to hurry away! You know this only comes once in three years-the elections, I mean. You should at least have a look at our young ladies, Count!”

“Sashka, get my clean linen ready. I am going to the bath,” said the count, rising, “and from there perhaps I may look in at the Marshal’s.” Then, having called the waiter and whispered something to him to which the latter replied with a smile, “That can all be arranged,” he went out.

“So I’ll order my trunk to be taken to your room, old fellow,” shouted the count from the passage.

“Please do, I shall be most happy,” replied the cavalryman, running to the door. “No. 7-don’t forget.”

When the count’s footsteps could no longer be heard the cavalryman returned to his place and sitting close to one of the group-a government official-and looking him straight in the face with smiling eyes, said: “It is the very man, you know!”

“No!”

“I tell you it is! It is the very same duellist hussar-the famous Turbin. He knew me-I bet you anything he knew me. Why, he and I went on the spree for three weeks without a break when I was at Lebedyani for remounts. There was one thing he and I did together. . . . He’s a fine fellow, eh?”

“A splendid fellow. And so pleasant in his manner! Doesn’t show a grain of-what d’you call it?” answered the handsome young man. “How quickly we became intimate. . . . He’s not more than twenty-five, is he?”

“Oh no, that’s what he looks but he is more than that. One has to get to know him, you know. Who abducted Migunova? He. It was he who killed Sablin. It was he who dropped Matnev out of the window by his legs. It was he who won three hundred thousand rubles from Prince Nestorov. He is a regular dare-devil, you know: a gambler, a duellist, a seducer, but a jewel of an hussar-a real jewel. The rumors that are

afloat about us are nothing to the reality-if anyone knew what a true hussar is! Ah yes, those were times!”

And the cavalryman told his interlocutor of such a spree with the count in Lebedyani as not only never had, but never even could have, taken place.

It could not have done so, first because he had never seen the count till that day and had left the army two years before the count entered it; and secondly because the cavalryman had never really served in the cavalry at all but had for four years been the humblest of cadets in the Belevski regiment and retired as soon as ever he became ensign. But ten years ago he had inherited some money and had really been in Lebedyani where he squandered seven hundred rubles with some officers who were there buying remounts. He had even gone so far as to have an uhlan uniform made with orange facings, meaning to enter an uhlan regiment. This desire to enter the cavalry, and the three weeks spent with the remount officers at Lebedyani, remained the brightest and happiest memories of his life, so he transformed the desire first into a reality and then into a reminiscence and came to believe firmly in his past as a cavalry officer—all of which did not prevent his being, as to gentleness and honesty, a most worthy man.

“Yes, those who have never served in the cavalry will never understand us fellows.”

He sat astride a chair and thrusting out his lower jaw began to speak in a bass voice. “You ride at the head of your squadron, not a horse but the devil incarnate prancing about under you, and you just sit in devil-may-care style. The squadron commander rides up to review: ‘Lieutenant,’ he says. ‘We can’t get on without you—please lead the squadron to parade.’ ‘All right,’ you say, and there you are: you turn round, shout to your moustached fellows. . . . Ah, devil take it, those were times!”

The count returned from the bath-house very red and with wet hair, and went straight to No. 7, where the cavalryman was already sitting in his dressing-gown smoking a pipe and considering with pleasure, and not without some apprehension, the happiness that had befallen him of

sharing a room with the celebrated Turbin. "Now suppose," he thought, "that he suddenly takes me, strips me naked, drives me to the town gates, and sets me in the snow, or . . . tars me, or simply . . . . But no," he consoled himself, "He wouldn't do that to a comrade."  
"Sashka, feed Blucher!" shouted the count.

Sashka, who had taken a tumbler of vodka to refresh himself after the journey and was decidedly tipsy, came in.

"What, already! You've been drinking, you rascal! . . . Feed Blucher!"

"He won't starve anyway: see how sleek he is!" answered Sashka, stroking the dog.

"Silence! Be off and feed him!"

"You want the dog to be fed, but when a man drinks a glass you reproach him."

"Hey! I'll thrash you!" shouted the count in a voice that made the window-panes rattle and even frightened the cavalryman a bit.

"You should ask if Sashka has had a bite today! Yes, beat me if you think more of a dog than of a man," muttered Sashka.

But here he received such a terrible blow in the face from the count's fist that he fell, knocked his head against the Partition, and clutching his nose fled from the room and fell on a settee in the passage.

"He's knocked my teeth out," grunted Sashka, wiping his bleeding nose with one hand while with the other he scratched the back of Blucher, who was licking himself. "He's knocked my teeth out, Bluchy, but still he's my count and I'd go through fire for him-I would! Because he-is my count. Do you understand, Bluchy? Want your dinner, eh?"

After lying still for a while he rose, fed the dog and then, almost sobered, went in to wait on his count and to offer him some tea.

"I shall really feel hurt," the cavalryman was saying meekly, as he stood before the count who was lying on the other's bed with his legs up against the Partition. "You see I also am an old army man and, if I may say so, a comrade. Why should you borrow from anyone else when I shall be delighted to lend you a couple of hundred rubles? I haven't got them just now-only a hundred rubles-but I'll get the rest today. You would really hurt my feelings, Count."

“Thank you, old man,” said the count, instantly discerning what kind of relations had to be established between them, and slapping the cavalryman on the shoulder. “Thanks! Well then, we’ll go to the ball if it must be so. But what are we to do now? Tell me what you have in your town. What pretty girls? What men fit for a spree? What gaming?” The cavalryman explained that there would be an abundance of pretty creatures at the ball, that Kolkov, who had been re-elected captain of police, was the best hand at a spree, only he lacked the true hussar go-otherwise he was a good sort of chap, that the Ilyushin gipsy chorus had been singing in the town since the elections began, Streshka leading, and that everybody meant to go to hear them after leaving the marshal’s that evening.

“And there’s a devilish lot of card-playing too,” he went on. Lukhnov plays. He has money and is staying here to break his journey, and Ilyin, an uhlan cornet who has room No. 8, has lost a lot. They have already begun in his room. They play every evening. And what a fine fellow that Ilyin is! I tell you, Count, he’s not mean—he’ll let his last shirt go.”

“Well then, let us go to his room. Let’s see what sort of people they are,” said the count.

“Yes do-pray do. They’ll be devilish glad.”

II

The uhlan cornet, Ilyin, had not long been awake. The evening before he had sat down to cards at eight o’clock and had lost pretty steadily for fifteen hours on end-till eleven in the morning. He had lost a considerable sum but did not know exactly how much, because he had about three thousand rubles of his own, and fifteen thousand of Crown money which had long since got mixed up with his own, and he feared to count lest his fears that some of the Crown money was already gone should be confirmed. It was nearly noon when he fell asleep and he had slept that heavy dreamless sleep which only very young men sleep after a heavy loss. Waking at six o’clock (just when Count Turbin arrived at the hotel), and seeing the floor all around strewn with cards and bits of chalk, and the chalk-marked tables in the middle of the room, he

recalled with horror last night's play, and the last card—a knave on which he lost five hundred rubles; but not yet quite convinced of the reality of all this, he drew his money from under the pillow and began to count it. He recognized some notes which had passed from hand to hand several times with “corners” and “transports” and he recalled the whole course of the game. He had none of his own three thousand rubles left, and some two thousand five hundred of the government money was also gone.

Ilyin had been playing for four nights running.

He had come from Moscow where the crown money had been entrusted to him and at K — had been detained by the superintendent of the post-house on the pretext that there were no horses, but really because the superintendent had an agreement with the hotel-keeper to detain all travellers for a day. The uhlán, a bright young lad who had just received three thousand rubles from his parents in Moscow for his equipment on entering his regiment, was glad to spend a few days in the town of K — during the elections and hoped to enjoy himself thoroughly. He knew one of the landed gentry there who had a family, and he was thinking of looking them up and flirting with the daughters, when the cavalryman turned up to make his acquaintance. Without any evil intention the cavalryman introduced him that same evening, in the general saloon or common room of the hotel, to his acquaintances, Lukhnov and other gamblers. And ever since then the uhlán had been playing cards, not asking at the post-station for horses, much less going to visit his acquaintance the landed proprietor, and not even leaving his room for four days on end.

Having dressed and drunk tea he went to the window. He felt that he would like to go for a stroll to get rid of the recollections that haunted him, and he put on his cloak and went out into the street. The sun was already hidden behind the white houses with the red roofs and it was getting dusk. It was warm for winter. Large wet snowflakes were falling slowly into the muddy street. Suddenly at the thought that he had slept all through the day now ending, a feeling of intolerable sadness overcame him.

“This day, now past, can never be recovered,” he thought.



"I have ruined my youth!" he suddenly said to himself, not because he really thought he had ruined his youth-he did not even think about it-but because the phrase happened to occur to him.

"And what am I to do now?" thought he. "Borrow from someone and go away?" A lady passed him along the pavement. "There's a stupid woman," thought he for some reason. "There's no one to borrow from. . . I have ruined my youth!" He came to the bazaar. A tradesman in a fox-fur cloak stood at the door of his shop touting for customers. "If I had not withdrawn that eight I should have recovered my losses." An old beggar-woman followed him whimpering. "There's no one to borrow from." A man drove past in a bearskin cloak; a policeman was standing at his post. "What unusual thing could I do? Fire at them? No, it's dull . . . I have ruined my youth! . . . Ah, if only I could drive in a troyka: Gee-up, beauties! . . . I'll go back. Lukhnov will come soon, and we'll play."

He returned to the hotel and again counted his money. No, he had made no mistake the first time: there were still two thousand five hundred rubles of Crown money missing. I'll stake twenty-five rubles, than make a 'corner' . . . seven-fold it, fifteen-fold thirty, sixty . . . three thousand rubles. Then I'll buy the horse-collars and be off. He won't let me, the rascal! I have ruined my youth!"

That is what was going on in the uhlan's head when Lukhnov actually entered the room.

"Have you been up long, Michael Vasilich?" asked Lukhnov, slowly removing the gold spectacles from his skinny nose and carefully wiping them with a red silk handkerchief.

"No, I've only just got up-I slept uncommonly well."

"Some hussar or other has arrived. He has put up with Zavalshovski-had you heard?"

"No, I hadn't. But how is it no one else is here yet?"

"They must have gone to Pryakhin's. They'll be here directly."

And sure enough a little later there came into the room a garrison officer who always accompanied Lukhnov, a Greek merchant with an

enormous brown hooked nose and sunken black eyes, and a fat puffy landowner, the proprietor of a distillery, who played whole nights, always staking "simples" of half a ruble each. Everybody wished to begin playing as soon as possible, but the principal gamblers, especially Lukhnov who was telling about a robbery in Moscow in an exceedingly calm manner, did not refer to the subject.

"Just fancy," he said, "a city like Moscow, the historic capital, a metropolis, and men dressed up as devils go about there with crooks, frighten stupid people, and rob the passers-by-and that's the end of it! What are the police about? That's the question."

The uhlan listened attentively to the story about the robbers, but when a pause came he rose and quietly ordered cards to be brought. The fat landowner was the first to speak out.

"Well, gentlemen, why lose precious time? If we mean business let's begin."

"Yes, you walked off with a pile of half-rubles last night so you like it," said the Greek.

"I think we might start," said the garrison officer.

Ilyin looked at Lukhnov. Lukhnov looking him in the eye quietly continued his story about robbers dressed up like devils with claws.

"Will you keep the bank?" asked the uhlan.

"Isn't it too early?"

"Belov!" shouted the uhlan, blushing for some unknown reason, "bring me some dinner-I haven't had anything to eat yet, gentlemen-and a bottle of champagne and some cards."

At this moment the count and Zavalshovski entered the room. It turned out that Turbin and Ilyin belonged to the same division. They took to one another at once, clinked glasses, drank champagne together, and were on intimate terms in five minutes. The count seemed to like Ilyin very much; he looked smilingly at him and teased him about his youth.

"There's an uhlan of the right sort!" he said. "What moustaches! Dear me, what moustaches!"

Even what little down there was on Ilyin's lip was quite white.

"I suppose you are going to play?" said the count. "Well, I wish you luck, Ilyin! I should think you are a master at it," he added with a smile.

"Yes, they mean to start," said Lukhnov, tearing open a bundle of a dozen packs of cards, "and you'll joint in too, Count, won't you?"

"No, not today. I should clear you all out if I did. When I begin 'cornering' in earnest the bank begins to crack! But I have nothing to play with-I was cleaned out at a station near Volochok. I met some infantry fellow there with rings on his fingers-a sharper I should think-and he plucked me clean."

"Why, did you stay at that station long?" asked Ilyin.

"I sat there for twenty-two hours. I shan't forget that accursed station! And the superintendent won't forget me either . . . "

"How's that?"

"I drive up, you know; out rushes the superintendent looking a regular brigand. 'No horses!' says he. Now I must tell you that it's my rule, if there are no horses I don't take off my fur cloak but go into the superintendent's own room-not into the public room but into his private room-and I have all the doors and windows opened on the ground that it's smoky. Well, that's just what I did there. You remember what frosts we had last month? About twenty degrees! Footnote: Reaumur = thirteen below zero Fahrenheit. The superintendent began to argue; I punched his head. There was an old woman there, and girls and other women; they kicked up a row, snatched up their pots and pans, and were rushing off to the village. . . . I went to the door and said, 'Let me have horses and I'll be off. If not, no one shall go out: I'll freeze you all.'"

"That's an infernally good plan!" said the puffy squire, rolling with laughter. "It's the way they freeze out cockroaches . . . "

"But I didn't watch carefully enough and the superintendent got away with the women. Only one old woman remained in pawn on the top of the stove; she kept sneezing and saying prayers. Afterwards we began negotiating: the superintendent came and from a distance began persuading me to let the old woman go, but I set Blucher at him a bit. Blucher's splendid at tackling superintendents! But still the rascal didn't

let me have horses until the next morning. Meanwhile that infantry fellow came along. I joined him in another room, and we began to play. You have seen Blucher? . . . Blucher! . . . “ and he gave a whistle.

Blucher rushed in, and the players condescendingly paid some attention to him though it was evident that they wished to attend to quite other matters.

“But why don’t you play, gentlemen? Please don’t let me prevent you. I am a chatterbox, you see,” said Turbin. “Play is play whether one likes it or not.”

III

Lukhnov drew two candles nearer to him, took out a large brown pocket-book full of paper money, and slowly, as if performing some rite, opened it on the table, took out two one-hundred rubles notes and placed them under the cards.

“Two hundred for the bank, the same as yesterday,” said he, adjusting his spectacles and opening a pack of cards.

“Very well,” said Ilyin, continuing his conversation with Turbin without looking at Lukhnov.

The game started. Lukhnov dealt the cards with machine-like precision, stopping now and then and deliberately jotting something down, or looking sternly over his spectacles and saying in low tones, “Pass up!” The fat landowner spoke louder than anyone else, audibly deliberating with himself and wetting his plump fingers when he turned down the corner of a card. The garrison officer silently and neatly noted the amount of his stake on his card and bent down small corners under the table. The Greek sat beside the banker, watching the game attentively with his sunken black eyes, and seemed to be waiting for something.

Zavalshevski, standing by the table, would suddenly begin to fidget all over, take a red or blue bank-note Footnote: Five-ruble notes were blue and ten-ruble notes red. out of his trouser pocket, lay a card on it, slap it with his palm, and say, “Little seven, pull me through!” Then he would bite his moustache, shift from foot to foot, and keep fidgeting till

his card was dealt. Ilyin sat eating veal and pickled cucumbers, which were placed beside him on the horse hair sofa, and hastily wiping his hands on his coat laid down one card after another. Turbin, who at first was sitting on the sofa, quickly saw how matters stood. Lukhnov did not look at or speak to Ilyin, only now and then his spectacles would turn for a moment towards the latter's hand, but most of Ilyin's cards lost.

"There now, I'd like to beat that card," said Lukhnov of a card the fat landowner, who was staking half-rubles, had put down.

"You beat Ilyin's, never mind me!" remarked the squire.

And indeed Ilyin's cards lost more often than any of the others. He would tear up the losing card nervously under the table and choose another with trembling fingers. Turbin rose from the sofa and asked the Greek to let him sit by the banker. The Greek moved to another place; the count took his chair and began watching Lukhnov's hands attentively, not taking his eyes off them.

"Ilyin!" he suddenly said in his usual voice, which quiet unintentionally drowned all the others. "Why do you keep to a routine? You don't know how to play."

"It's all the same how one plays."

"But you're sure to lose that way. Let me play for you."

"No, please excuse me. I always do it myself. Play for yourself if you like."

"I said I should not play for myself, but I should like to play for you. I am vexed that you are losing."

"I suppose it's my fate."

The count was silent, but leaning on his elbows he again gazed intently at the banker's hands.

"Abominable!" he suddenly said in a loud, long-drawn tone.

Lukhnov glanced at him.

"Abominable, quite abominable!" he repeated still louder, looking straight into Lukhnov's eyes.

The game continued.

"It is not right!" Turbin remarked again, just as Lukhnov beat a heavily backed card of Ilyin's.

“What is it you don’t like, Count?” inquired the banker with polite indifference.

“This!-that you let Ilyin win his simples and beat his corners. That’s what’s bad.”

Lukhnov made a slight movement with his brows and shoulders, expressing the advisability of submitting to fate in everything, and continued to play.

“Blucher!” shouted the count, rising and whistling to the dog. “At him!” he added quickly.

Blucher, bumping his back against the sofa as he leapt from under it and nearly upsetting the garrison officer, ran to his master and growled, looking around at everyone and moving his tail as if asking, “Who is misbehaving here, eh?”

Lukhnov put down his cards and moved his chair to one side.

“One can’t play like that,” he said. “I hate dogs. What kind of a game is it when you bring a whole pack of hounds in here?”

“Especially a dog like that. I believe they are called ‘leeches,’” chimed in the garrison officer.

“Well, are we going to play or not, Michael Vasilich?” said Lukhnov to their host.

“Please don’t interfere with us, Count,” said Ilyin, turning to Turbin.

“Come here a minute,” said Turbin, taking Ilyin’s arm and going behind the Partition with him.

The count’s words, spoken in his usual tone, were distinctly audible from there. His voice always carried across three rooms.

“Are you daft, eh? Don’t you see that that gentleman in spectacles is a sharper of the first water?”

“Come now, enough! What are you saying?”

“No enough about it! Stop playing, I tell you. It’s nothing to me.

Another time I’d pluck you myself, but somehow I’m sorry to see you fleeced. And maybe you have Crown money too?”

“No . . . why do you imagine such things?”

“Ah, my lad, I’ve been that way myself so I know all those sharpers’ tricks. I tell you the one in spectacles is a sharper. Stop playing! I ask you as a comrade.”

“Well then, I’ll only finish this one deal.”

“I know what ‘one deal’ means. Well, we’ll see.”

They went back. In that one deal Ilyin put down so many cards and so many of them were beaten that he lost a large amount.

Turbin put his hands in the middle of the table “Now stop it! Come along.”

“No, I can’t. Leave me alone, do!” said Ilyin, irritably shuffling some bent cards without looking at Turbin.

“Well, go to the devil! Go on losing for certain, if that pleases you. It’s time for me to be off. Let’s go to the Marshal’s, Savalshevski.”

They went out. All remained silent and Lukhnov dealt no more cards until the sound of their steps and of Blucher’s claws on the passage floor had died away.

“What a devil of a fellow!” said the landowner, laughing.

“Well, he won’t interfere now,” remarked the garrison officer hastily, and still in a whisper.

And the play continued.

#### IV

The band, composed of some of the marshal’s serfs standing in the pantry-which had been cleared out for the occasion-with their coat-sleeves turned up already, had at a given signal struck up the old polonaise, “Alexander, ‘Lizabeth,” and under the bright soft light of the wax-candles a Governor-general of Catherine’s days, with a star on his breast, arm-in-arm with the marshal’s skinny wife, and the rest of the local grandes with their Partners, had begun slowly gliding over the parquet floor of the large dancing-room in various combinations and variations, when Zavalshevski entered, wearing stockings and pumps and a blue swallow-tail coat with an immense and padded collar, and exhaling a strong smell of the frangipane with which the facings of his coat, his handkerchief, and his moustaches, were abundantly sprinkled. The handsome hussar who came with him wore tight-fitting light-blue riding-breeches and a gold-embroidered scarlet on which a Vladimir cross and an 1812 medal were fastened. The count was not tall but remarkably well built. His clear blue and exceedingly brilliant eyes, and

thick, closely curling, dark-brown hair, gave a remarkable character to his beauty. His arrival at the ball was expected, for the handsome young man who had seen him at the hotel had already prepared the Marshal for it. Various impressions had been produced by the news, for the most Part not altogether pleasant.

“It’s not unlikely that this youngster will hold us up to ridicule,” was the opinion of the men and of the older women. “What if he should run away with me?” was more or less in the minds of the younger ladies, married or unmarried.

As soon as the polonaise was over and the couples after bowing to one another had separated-the women into one group and the men into another-Zavalshevski, proud and happy, introduced the count to their hostess.

The marshal’s wife, feeling an inner trepidation lest this hussar should treat her in some scandalous manner before everybody, turned away haughtily and contemptuously as she said, “Very pleased, I hope you will dance,” and then gave him a distrustful look that said, “Now, if you offend a woman it will show me that you are a perfect villain.” The count however soon conquered her prejudices by his amiability, attentive manner, and handsome gay appearance, so that five minutes later the expression on the face of the Marshal’s wife told the company: “I know how to manage such gentlemen. He immediately understood with whom he had to deal, and now he’ll be charming to me for the rest of the evening.” Moreover at that moment the governor of the town, who had known the count’s father, came up to him and very affably took him aside for a talk, which still further calmed the provincial public and raised the count in its estimation. After that Zavalshevski introduced the count to his sister, a plump young widow whose large black eyes had not left the count from the moment he entered. The count asked her to dance the waltz the band had just commenced, and the general prejudice was finally dispersed by the masterly way in which he danced.



“What a splendid dancer!” said a fat landed proprietress, watching his legs in their blue riding-breeches as they flitted across the room, and mentally counting “one, two, three-one, two, three-splendid!”

“There he goes-jig, jig, jig,” said another, a visitor in the town whom local society did not consider genteel. “How does he manage not to entangle his spurs? Wonderfully clever!”

The count’s artistic dancing eclipsed the three best dancers of the province: the tall fair-haired adjutant of the governor, noted for the rapidity with which he danced and for holding his Partner very close to him; the cavalryman, famous for the graceful swaying motion with which he waltzed and for the frequent but light tapping of his heels; and a civilian, of whom everybody said that though he was not very intellectual he was a first-rate dancer and the soul of every ball. In fact, from its very commencement this civilian would ask all the ladies in turn to dance, in the order in which they were sitting, and never stopped for a moment except occasionally to wipe the perspiration from his weary but cheerful face with a very wet cambric handkerchief.

The count eclipsed them all and danced with the three principal ladies: the tall one, rich, handsome, stupid; the one of middle height, thin and not very pretty but splendidly dressed; and the little one, who was plain but very clever. He danced with others too-with all the pretty ones, and there were many of these-but it was Zavalshovski’s sister, the little widow, who pleased him best. With her he danced a quadrille, and \*ecossaise\*, and a mazurka. When they were sitting down during the quadrille he began paying her many compliments; comparing her to Venus and Diana, to a rose, and to some other flower. But all these compliments only made the widow bend her white neck, lower her eyes and look at her white muslin dress, or pass her fan from hand to hand. But when she said “Don’t, you’re only joking, Count,” and other words to that effect, there was a note of such naïve simplicity and amusing silliness in her slightly guttural voice that looking at her it really seemed that this was not a woman but a flower, and not a rose, but some gorgeous scentless rosy-white wild flower that had grown all alone out of a snowdrift in some very remote land.

This combination of naivete and unconventionality with her fresh beauty created such a peculiar impression on the count that several times during the intervals of conversation, when gazing silently into her eyes or at the beautiful outline of her neck and arms, the desire to seize her in his arms and cover her with kisses assailed him with such force that he had to make a serious effort to resist it. The widow noticed with pleasure the effect she was producing, yet something in the count's behaviour began to frighten and excite her, though the young hussar, despite his insinuating amiability, was respectful to a degree that in our days would be considered cloying. He ran to fetch almond-milk for her, picked up her handkerchief, snatched a chair from the hands of a scrofulous young squire who danced attendance on her to hand it her more quickly, and so forth.

When he noticed that the society attentions of the day had little effect on the lady he tried to amuse her by telling her funny stories and assured her that he was ready to stand on his head, to crow like a cock, to jump out of the window or plunge into the water through a hole in the ice, if she ordered him to do so. This proved quite a success. The widow brightened up and burst into peals of laughter, showing her lovely white teeth, and was quite satisfied with her cavalier. The count liked her more and more every minute, so that by the end of the quadrille he was seriously in love with her.

When, after the quadrille, her eighteen-year-old adorer of long standing came up to the widow (he was the same scrofulous young man from whom Turbin had snatched the chair—a son of the richest local landed proprietor and not yet in government service) she received him with extreme coolness and did not show one-tenth of the confusion she had experienced with the count.

“Well, you are a fine fellow!” she said, looking all the time at Turbin's back and unconsciously considering how many yards of gold cord it had taken to embroider his whole jacket. “You are a good one! You promised to call and fetch me for a drive and bring me some comfits.”

“I did come, Anna Fedorovna, but you had already gone, and I left some of the very best comfits for you,” said the young man, who-despite his tallness-spoke in a very high-pitched voice.

“You always find excuses! . . . I don’t want your bon-bons. Please don’t imagine-”

“I see, Anna Fedorovna, that you have changed towards me and I know why. But it’s not right,” he added, evidently unable to finish his speech because a strong inward agitation caused his lips to quiver in a very strange and rapid manner.

Anna Fedorovna did not listen to him but continued to follow Turbin with her eyes.

The master of the house, the stout, toothless, stately old marshal, came up to the count, took him by the arm, and invited him into the study for a smoke and a drink. As soon as Turbin left the room Anna Fedorovna felt that there was absolutely nothing to do there and went out into the dressing-room arm-in-arm with a friend of hers, a bony, elderly, maiden lady.

“Well, is he nice?” asked the maiden lady.

“Only he bothers so!” Anna Fedorovna replied walking up to the mirror and looking at herself.

Her face brightened, her eyes laughed, she even blushed, and suddenly imitating the ballet-dancers she had seen during the elections, she twirled round on one foot, then laughed her guttural but pleasant laugh and even bent her knees and gave a jump.

“Just fancy, what a man! He actually asked me for a keepsake,” she said to her friend, “but he will get no-o-o-thing.” She sang the last word and held up one finger in her kid glove which reached to her elbow.

In the study, where the marshal had taken Turbin, stood bottles of different sorts of vodka, liqueurs, champagne, and \*zakuska\* snacks. The nobility, walking about or sitting in a cloud of tobacco smoke, were talking about the elections.

“When the whole worshipful society of our nobility has honoured him by their choice,” said the newly elected Captain of Police who had

already imbibed freely, “he should on no account transgress in the face of the whole society—he ought never . . . “

The count’s entrance interrupted the conversation. Everybody wished to be introduced to him, and the Captain of Police especially kept pressing the count’s hand between his own for a long time and repeatedly asked him not to refuse to accompany him to the new restaurant where he was going to treat the gentlemen after the ball, and where the gipsies were going to sing. The count promised to come without fail, and drank some glasses of champagne with him.

“But why are you not dancing, gentlemen?” said the count, as he was about to leave the room.

“We are not dancers,” replied the Captain of Police, laughing. “Wine is more in our line, Count. . . . And besides, I have seen all those young ladies grow up, Count! But I can walk through an \*ecossaise\* now and then, Count . . . I can do it, Count.”

“Then come and walk through one now,” said Turbin. “It will brighten us up before going to hear the gipsies.”

“Very well, gentlemen! Let’s come and gratify our host.”

And three or four of the noblemen who had been drinking in the study since the commencement of the ball, put on gloves of black kid or knitted silk and with red faces were just about to follow the count into the ball-room when they were stopped by the scrofulous young man who, pale and hardly able to restrain his tears, accosted Turbin.

“You think that because you are a count you can jostle people about as if you were in the market-place,” he said, breathing with difficulty, “but that is impolite . . . “

And again, do what he would, his quivering lips checked the flow of his words.

“What?” cried Turbin, suddenly frowning. “What? . . . You brat!” he cried, seizing him by the arms and squeezing them so that the blood rushed to the young man’s head not so much from vexation as from fear. “What? Do you want to fight? I am at your service!”

Hardly had Turbin released the arms he had been squeezing so hard than two nobles caught hold of them and dragged the young man towards the back door.

“What! Are you out of your mind? You must be tipsy! Suppose we were to tell your papa! What’s the matter with you?” they said to him.

“No, I’m not tipsy, but he jostles one and does not apologize. He’s a swine, that’s what he is!” squealed the young man, now quite in tears. But they did not listen to him and someone took him home.

On the other side the Captain of Police and Zavalshovski were exhorting Turbin: “Never mind him, Count, he’s only a child. He still gets whipped, he’s only sixteen. . . . What can have happened to him? What bee has stung him? And his father such a respectable man-and our candidate.”

“Well, let him go to the devil if he does not wish . . . “

And the count returned to the ball-room and danced the \*ecossaise\* with the pretty widow as gaily as before, laughed with all his heart as he watched the steps performed by the gentlemen who had come with him out of the study, and burst into peals of laughter than rang across the room when the Captain of Police slipped and measured his full length in the midst of the dancers.

V

While the count was in the study Anna Fedorovna had approached her brother, and supposing that she ought to pretend to be very little interested in the count, began by asking: “Who is that hussar who was dancing with me? Can you tell me, brother?”

The cavalryman explained to his sister as well as he could what a great man the hussar was and told her at the same time that the count was only stopping in the town because his money had been stolen on the way, and that he himself had lent him a hundred rubles, but that that was not enough, so that perhaps “sister” would lend another couple of hundred. Only Zavalshovski asked her on no account to mention the matter to anyone-especially not to the count. Anna Fedorovna promised to send her brother the money that very day and to keep the affair secret, but somehow during the \*ecossaise\* she felt a great

longing in herself to offer the count as much money as he wanted. She took a long time making up her mind, and blushed, but at last with a great effort broached the subject as follows.

“My brother tells me that a misfortune befell you on the road, Count, and that you have no money by you. If you need any, won’t you take it from me? I should be so glad.”

But having said this, Anna Fedorovna suddenly felt frightened of something and blushed. All gaiety instantly left the count’s face.

“Your brother is a fool!” he said abruptly. “You know when a man insults another man they fight; but when a woman insults a man, what does he do then-do you know?”

Poor Anna Fedorovna’s neck and ears grew red with confusion. She lowered her eyes and said nothing.

“He kisses the woman in public,” said the count in a low voice, leaning towards her ear. “Allow me at least to kiss your little hand,” he added in a whisper after a prolonged silence, taking pity on his Partner’s confusion.

“But not now!” said Anna Fedorovna, with a deep sigh.

“When then? I am leaving early tomorrow and you owe it me.”

“Well then it’s impossible,” said Anna Fedorovna with a smile.

“Only allow me a chance to meet you tonight to kiss your hand. I shall not fail to find an opportunity.”

“How can you find it?”

“That is not your business. In order to see you everything is possible. . . . It’s agreed?”

“Agreed.”

The \*ecossaise\* ended. After that they danced a mazurka and the count was quite wonderful: catching handkerchiefs, kneeling on one knee, striking his spurs together in a quite special Warsaw manner, so that all the old people left their game of boston and flocked into the ball-room to see, and the cavalryman, their best dancer, confessed himself eclipsed. Then they had supper after which they danced the “Grandfather,” and the ball began to break up. The count never took

his eyes off the little widow. It was not pretence when he said he was ready to jump through a hole in the ice for her sake. Whether it was whim, or love, or obstinacy, all his mental powers that evening were concentrated on the one desire-to meet and love her. As soon as he noticed that Anna Fedorovna was taking leave of her hostess he ran out to the footmen's room, and thence-without his fur cloak-into the courtyard to the place where the carriages stood.

"Anna Fedorovna Zaytseva's carriage!" he shouted.

A high four-seated closed carriage with lamps burning moved from its place and approached the porch.

"Stop!" he called to the coachman and plunging knee-deep into the snow ran to the carriage.

"What do you want?" said the coachman.

"I want to get into the carriage," replied the count, opening the door and trying to get in while the carriage was moving. "Stop, I tell you, you fool!"

"Stop, Vaska!" shouted the coachman to the postilion and pulled up the horses. "What are you getting into other people's carriages for? This carriage belongs to my mistress, to Anna Fedorovna, and not to your honour."

"Shut up, you blockhead! Here's a ruble for you; get down and close the door," said the count. But as the coachman did not stir he lifted the steps himself and, lowering the window, managed somehow to close the door. In the carriage, as in all old carriages, especially in those in which yellow galloon is used, there was a musty odour something like the smell of decayed and burnt bristles. The count's legs were wet with snow up to the knees and felt very cold in his thin boots and riding-breeches; in fact the winter cold penetrated his whole body. The coachman grumbled on the box and seemed to be preparing to get down. But the count neither heard nor felt anything. His face was aflame and his heart beat fast. In his nervous tension he seized the yellow window strap and leant out of the side window, and all his being merged into one feeling of expectation.

This expectancy did not last long. Someone called from the porch: "Zaytseva's carriage!" The coachman shook the reins, the body of the carriage swayed on its high springs, and the illuminated windows of the house ran one after another past the carriage windows.

"Mind, fellow," said the count to the coachman, putting his head out of the front window, "if you tell the footman I'm here, I'll thrash you, but hold your tongue and you shall have another ten rubles."

Hardly had he time to close the window before the body of the carriage shook more violently and then stopped. He pressed close into the corner, held his breath, and even shut his eyes, so terrified was he lest anything should balk his passionate expectation. The door opened, the carriage steps fell noisily one after the other, he heard the rustle of a woman's dress, a smell of frangipane perfume filled the musty carriage, quick little feet ran up the carriage steps, and Anna Fedorovna, brushing the count's leg with the skirt of her cloak which had come open, sank silently onto the seat behind him breathing heavily.

Whether she saw him or not no one could tell, not even Anna Fedorovna herself, but when he took her hand and said, "Well, now I will kiss your little hand," she showed very little fear, gave no reply, but yielded her arm to him, which he covered much higher than the top of her glove with kisses. The carriage started.

"Say something! Art thou angry?" he said.

She silently pressed into her corner, but suddenly something caused her to burst into tears and of her own accord she let her head fall on his breast.

## VI

The newly elected Captain of Police and his guests the cavalryman and other nobles had long been listening to the gipsies and drinking in the new restaurant when the count, wearing a blue cloth cloak lined with bearskin which had belonged to Anna Fedorovna's late husband, joined them.



“Sure, your excellency, we have been awaiting you impatiently!” said a dark cross-eyed gipsy, showing his white teeth, as he met the count at the very entrance and rushed to help him off with his cloak. “We have not seen you since the fair at Lebedyani . . . Steshka is quite pining away for you.”

Steshka, a young, graceful little gipsy with a brick-red glow on her brown face and deep, sparkling black eyes shaded by long lashes, also ran out to meet him.

“Ah, little Count! Dearest! Jewel! This is a joy!” she murmured between her teeth, smiling merrily.

Ilyushka himself ran out to greet him, pretending to be very glad to see him. The old women, matrons, and maids jumped from their places and surrounded the guest, some claiming him as a fellow godfather, some as brother by baptism.

Turbin kissed all the young gipsy girls on their lips; the old women and the men kissed him on his shoulder or hand. The noblemen were also glad of their visitor’s arrival, especially as the carousal, having reached its zenith, was beginning to flag, and everyone was beginning to feel satiated. The wine having lost its stimulating effect on the nerves merely weighed on the stomach. Each one had already let off his store of swagger, and they were getting tired of one another; the songs had all been sung and had got mixed in everyone’s head, leaving a noisy, dissolute impression behind. No matter what strange or dashing thing anyone did, it began to occur to everyone that there was nothing agreeable or funny in it. The Captain of Police who lay in a shocking state on the floor at the feet of an old woman, began wriggling his legs and shouting: “Champagne . . . The Count’s come! . . . Champagne! . . . He’s come . . . now then, champagne! . . . I’ll have a champagne bath and bathe in it! Noble gentlemen! . . . I love the society of our brave old nobility . . . Steshka, sing ‘The Pathway’.”

The cavalryman was also rather tipsy, but in another way. He sat on a sofa in the corner very close to a tall handsome gipsy girl, Lyubasha; and feeling his eyes misty with drink he kept blinking and shaking his head and, repeating the same words over and over again in a whisper, besought the gipsy to fly with him somewhere. Lyubasha, smiling and

listening as if what he said were very amusing and yet rather sad, glanced occasionally at her husband-the cross-eyed Sashka who was standing behind the chair opposite her-and in reply to the cavalryman's declarations of love, stooped and whispering in his ear asked him to buy her some scent and ribbons on the quiet so that the others should not notice.

"Hurrah!" cried the cavalryman when the count entered.

The handsome young man was pacing up and down the room with laboriously steady steps and a careworn expression on his face, warbling an air from *\*Il Seraglio\**.

An elderly paterfamilias, who had been tempted by the persistent entreaties of the nobles to come and hear the gipsies, as they said that without him the thing would be worthless and it would be better not to go at all, was lying on a sofa where he had sunk as soon as he arrived, and no one was taking any notice of him. Some official or other who was also there had taken off his swallow-tail coat and was sitting up on the table, feet and all, ruffling his hair, and thereby showing that he was very much on the spree. As soon as the count entered, this official unbuttoned the collar of his shirt and got still farther onto the table. In general, on Turbin's arrival the carousal revived.

The gipsy girls, who had been wandering about the room, again gathered and sat down in a circle. The count took Steshka, the leading singer, on his knee, and ordered more champagne.

Ilyushka came and stood in front of Steshka with his guitar, and the "dance" commenced-that is, the gipsy songs, "When you go along the Street," "O Hussars!," "Do you hear, do you know?," and so on in a definite order. Steshka sang admirably. The flexible sonorous contralto that flowed from her very chest, her smiles while singing, her laughing passionate eyes, and her foot that moved involuntarily in measure with the song, her wild shriek at the commencement of the chorus-all touched some powerful but rarely-reached chord. It was evident that she lived only in the song she was singing.

Ilyushka accompanied her on the guitar-his back, legs, smile, and whole being expressing sympathy with the song-and eagerly watching her,

raised and lowered his head as attentive and engrossed as though he heard the song for the first time. Then the last melodious note he suddenly drew himself up and, as if feeling himself superior to everyone in the world, proudly and resolutely threw up his guitar with his foot, twirled it about, stamped, tossed back his hair, and looked round at the choir with a frown. His whole body from neck to heels began dancing in every muscle-and twenty energetic, powerful voices each trying to chime in more strongly and more strangely than the rest, rang through the air. The old women bobbed up and down on their chairs waving their handkerchiefs, showing their teeth, can vying with one another in their harmonious and measured shouts. The basses with strained necks and heads bent to one side boomed while standing behind the chairs.

When Steska took a high note Ilyushka brought his guitar closer to her as if wishing to help her, and the handsome young man screamed with rapture, saying that now they were beginning the \*bemols\*.

When a dance was struck up and Dunyasha, advancing with quivering shoulders and bosom, twirled round in front of the count and glided onwards, Turbin leapt up, threw off his jacket, and in his red shirt stepped jauntily with her in precise and measured step, accomplishing such things with his legs that the gipsies smiled with approval and glanced at one another.

The Captain of Police sat down like a Turk, beat his breast with his fist and cried "Vivat!" and then, having caught hold of the count's leg, began to tell him that of two thousand rubles he now had only five hundred left, but that he could do anything he liked if only the count would allow it. The elderly paterfamilias awoke and wished to go away but was not allowed to do so. The handsome young man began persuading a gipsy to waltz with him. The cavalryman, wishing to show off his intimacy with the count, rose and embraced Turbin. "Ah, my dear fellow," he said, "why didst thou leave us, eh?" The count was silent, evidently thinking of something else. "Where did you go to? Ah, you rogue of a count, I know where you went to!"

For some reason this familiarity displeased Turbin. Without a smile he looked silently into the cavalryman's face and suddenly launched at him such a terrible and rude abuse that the cavalryman was pained and for a while could not make up his mind whether to take the offence as a joke or seriously.

At last he decided to take it as a joke, smiled, and went back to his gipsy, assuring her that he would certainly marry her after Easter. They sang another song and another, danced again, and "hailed the guests," and everyone continued to imagine that he was enjoying it. There was no end to the champagne. The count drank a great deal. His eyes seemed to grow moist, but he was not unsteady. He danced even better than before, spoke firmly, even joined in the chorus extremely well, and chimed in when Steshka sang "Friendship's Tender Emotions." In the midst of a dance the landlord came in to ask the guests to return to their homes as it was getting on for three in the morning.

The count seized the landlord by the scruff of his neck and ordered him to dance the Russian dance. The landlord refused. The count snatched up a bottle of champagne and having stood the landlord on his head and had him held in that position, amidst general laughter, slowly emptied the bottle over him.

It was beginning to dawn. Everyone looked pale and exhausted except the count.

"Well, I must be starting for Moscow," said he, suddenly rising. "Come along, all of you! Come and see me off . . . and we'll have some tea together."

All agreed except the paterfamilias (who was left behind asleep), and crowding into the three large sledges that stood at the door, they all drove off to the hotel.

## VII

"Get horses ready!" cried the count as he entered the saloon of his hotel, followed by the guests and gipsies. "Sashka!-not gipsy Sashka but my Sashka-tell the superintendent I'll thrash him if he gives me bad horses. And get us some tea. Zavalshovski, look after the tea: I'm going

to have a look at Ilyin and see how he's getting on . . . " added Turbin and went along the passage towards the uhlan's room.

Ilyin had just finished playing and having lost his last kopek was lying face downwards on the sofa, pulling one hair after another from its torn horsehair cover, putting them in his mouth, biting them in two and spitting them out again.

Two tallow candles, one of which had burnt down to the paper in the socket, stood on the card-strewn table and feebly wrestled with the morning light that crept in through the window. There were no ideas in Ilyin's head: a dense mist of gambling passion shrouded all his faculties; he did not even feel penitent. He made one attempt to think of what he should do now: how being penniless he could get away, how he could repay the fifteen thousand rubles of Crown money, what his regimental commander would say, what his mother and his comrades would say, and he felt such terror and disgust with himself that wishing to forget himself he rose and began pacing up and down the room trying to step only where the floor-boards joined, and began, once more, vividly to recall every slightest detail of the course of play.

He vividly imagined how he had begun to win back his money, how he withdrew a nine and placed the king of spades over two thousand rubles. A queen was dealt to the right, an ace to the left, then the king of diamonds to the right and all was lost; but if, say, a six had been dealt to the right and the king of diamonds to the left, he would have won everything back, would have played once more double or quits, would have won fifteen thousand rubles, and would then have bought himself an ambler from his regimental commander and another pair of horses besides, and a phaeton. Well, and what then? Well, it would have been a splendid, splendid thing!

And he lay down on the sofa again and began chewing the horse-hair. "Why are they singing in No. 7?" thought he. "There must be a spree on at Turbin's. Shall I go in and have a good drink?"

At this moment the count entered.

"Well, old fellow, cleaned out, are you? Eh?" cried he.

“I’ll pretend to be asleep,” thought Ilyin, “or else I shall have to speak to him, and I want to sleep.”

Turbin, however, came up and stroked his head.

“Well, my dear friend, cleaned out-lost everything? Tell me.”

Ilyin gave no answer.

The count pulled his arm.

“I have lost. But what is that to you?” muttered Ilyin in a sleepy, indifferent, discontented voice, without changing his position.

“Everything?”

“Well-yes. What of it? Everything. What is it to you?”

“Listen. Tell me the truth as to a comrade,” said the count, inclined to tenderness by the influence of the wine he had drunk and continuing to stroke Ilyin’s hair. “I have really taken a liking to you. Tell me the truth. If you have lost Crown money I’ll get you out of your scrape: it will soon be too late. . . . Had you Crown money?”

Ilyin jumped up from the sofa.

“Well then, if you wish me to tell you, don’t speak to me, because . . . please don’t speak to me. . . . To shoot myself is the only thing!” said Ilyin, with real despair, and his head fell on his hands and he burst into tears, though but a moment before he had been calmly thinking about amblers.

“What pretty girlishness! Where’s the man who has not done the like? It’s not such a calamity; perhaps we can mend it. Wait for me here.”

The count left the room.

“Where is Squire Lukhnov’s room?” he asked the boots.

The boots offered to show him the way. In spite of the valet’s remark that his master had only just returned and was undressing, the count went in. Lukhnov was sitting at a table in his dressing-gown counting several packets of paper money that lay before him. A bottle of Rhine wine, of which he was very fond, stood on the table. After winning he permitted himself that pleasure. Lukhnov looked coldly and sternly through his spectacles at the count as though not recognizing him.

“You don’t recognize me, I think?” said the count, resolutely stepping up to the table.

“Lukhnov made a gesture of recognition, and said, “What is it you want?”

“I should like to play with you,” said Turbin, sitting down on the sofa. “Now?”

“Yes.”

“Another time with pleasure, Count! But now I am tired and am going to bed. Won’t you have a glass of wine? It is famous wine.”

“But I want to play a little-now.”

“I don’t intend to play any more tonight. Perhaps some of the other gentlemen will, but I won’t. You must please excuse me, Count.”

“Then you won’t?”

“Lukhnov shrugged his shoulders to express his regret at his inability to comply with the count’s desire.

“Not on any account?”

The same shrug.

“But I Particularly request it. . . . Well, will you play?”

Silence.

“Will you play?” the count asked again. “Mind!”

The same silence and a rapid glance over the spectacles at the count’s face which was beginning to frown.

“Will you play?” shouted the count very loud, striking the table with his hand so that the bottle toppled over and the wine was spilt. “You know you did not win fairly. . . . Will you play? I ask you for the third time.”

“I said I would not. This is really strange, Count! And it is not at all proper to come and hold a knife to a man’s throat,” remarked Lukhnov, not raising his eyes. A momentary silence followed during which the count’s face grew paler and paler. Suddenly a terrible blow on the head stupefied Lukhnov. He fell on the sofa trying to seize the money and uttered such a piercingly despairing cry as no one could have expected from so calm and imposing a person. Turbin gathered up what money lay on the table, pushed aside the servant who ran in to his master’s assistance, and left the room with rapid strides.

“If you want satisfaction I am at your service! I shall be in my room for another half-hour,” said the count, returning to Lukhnov’s door.

“Thief! Robber! I’ll have the law on you . . . “ was all that was audible from the room.

Ilyin, who had paid no attention to the count’s promise to help him, still lay as before on the sofa in his room choking with tears of despair. Consciousness of what had really happened, which the count’s caresses and sympathy had evoked from behind the strange tangle of feelings, thoughts, and memories filling his soul, did not leave him. His youth, rich with hope, his honour, the respect of society, his dreams of love and friendship—all were utterly lost. The source of his tears began to run dry, a too passive feeling of hopelessness overcame him more and more, and thoughts of suicide, no longer arousing revulsion or horror, claimed his attention with increasing frequency. Just then the count’s firm footsteps were heard.

In Turbin’s face traces of anger could still be seen, his hands shook a little, but his eyes beamed with kindly merriment and self-satisfaction. “Here you are, it’s won back!” he said, throwing several bundles of paper money on the table. “See if it’s all there and then make haste and come into the saloon. I am just leaving,” he added, as though not noticing the joy and gratitude and extreme agitation on Ilyin’s face, and whistling a gipsy song he left the room.

## VIII

Sashka, with a sash tied round his waist, announced that the horses were ready but insisted that the count’s cloak, which, he said, with its fur collar was worth three hundred rubles, should be recovered, and the shabby blue one returned to the rascal who had changed it for the count’s at the Marshal’s; but Turbin told him there was no need to look for the cloak, and went to his room to change his clothes.

The cavalryman kept hiccupping as he sat silent beside his gipsy girl. The Captain of Police called for vodka and invited everyone to come at once and have breakfast with him, promising that his wife would certainly dance with the gipsies. The handsome young man was



profoundly explaining to Ilyushka that there is more soulfulness in pianoforte music and that it is not possible to play \*bemols\* on a guitar. The official sat in a corner sadly drinking his tea and in the daylight seemed ashamed of his debauchery. The gipsies were disputing among themselves in their own tongue as to "hailing the guests" again, which Steshka opposed, saying that the \*baroray\* (in gipsy language, count or prince or, more literally, "great gentleman") would be angry. In general the last embers of the debauch were dying down in everyone.

"Well, one farewell song, and then off home!" said the count, entering the parlour in travelling dress, fresh, merry, and handsomer than ever. The gipsies again formed their circle and were just ready to begin when Ilyin entered with a packet of paper money in his hand and took the count aside.

"I had only fifteen thousand rubles of Crown money and you have given me sixteen thousand three hundred," he said, "so this is yours."

"That's a good thing. Give it here!"

Ilyin gave him the money and, looking timidly at the count, opened his lips to say something, but only blushed till tears came into his eyes and seizing the count's hand began to press it.

"you be off! . . . Ilyushka! Here's some money for you, but you must accompany me out of the town with songs!" and he threw onto the guitar the thirteen hundred rubles Ilyin had brought him. But the count quite forgot to repay the hundred rubles he had borrowed of the cavalryman the day before.

It was already ten o'clock in the morning. The sun had risen above the roofs of the houses. People were moving about in the streets. The tradesmen had long since opened their shops. Noblemen and officials were driving through the streets and ladies were shopping in the bazaar, when the whole gipsy band, with the Captain of Police, the cavalryman, the handsome young man, Ilyin, and the count in the blue bearskin cloak came out into the hotel porch.

It was a sunny day and a thaw had set in. The large post-sledges, each drawn by three horses with their tails tied up tight, drove up to the porch splashing through the mud and the whole lively Party took their places. The count, Ilyin, Steshka, and Ilyushka, with Sashka the count's orderly, got into the first sledge. Blucher was beside himself and wagged his tail, barking at the shaft-horse. The other gentlemen got into the two other sledges with the rest of the gipsy men and women. The troykas got abreast as they left the hotel and the gipsies struck up in chorus. The troykas with their songs and bells-forcing every vehicle they met right onto the pavements-dashed through the whole town right to the town gates.

The tradesmen and passers-by who did not know them, and especially those who did, were not a little astonished when they saw the noblemen driving through the streets in broad daylight with gipsy girls and tipsy gipsy men, singing.

When they had passed the town gates the troykas stopped and everyone began bidding the count farewell.

Ilyin, who had drunk a good deal at the leave-taking and had himself been driving the sledge all the way, suddenly became very sad, begged the count to stay another day, and, when he found that this was not possible, rushed quite unexpectedly at his new friend, kissed him, and promised with tears to try to exchange into the hussar regiment the count was serving in as soon as he got back. The count was Particularly gay; he tumbled the cavalryman, who had become very familiar in the morning, into a snowdrift, set Blucher at the Captain of Police, took Steshka in his arms and wished to carry her off to Moscow, and finally jumped into his sledge and made Blucher, who wanted to stand up in the middle, sit down by his side. Sashka jumped on the box after having again asked the cavalryman to recover the count's cloak from \*them\* and to send it on. The count cried, "Go!" took off his cap, waved it over his head, and whistled to the horses like a post-boy. The troykas drove off in their different directions.

A monotonous snow-covered plain stretched far in front with a dirty yellowish road winding through it. The bright sunshine-playfully

sparkling on the thawing snow which was coated with a transparent crust of ice—was pleasantly warm to one's face and back. Steam rose thickly from the sweating horses. The bell tinkled merrily. A peasant, with a loaded sledge that kept gliding to the side of the road, got hurriedly out of the way, jerking his rope reins and plashing with his wet bast shoes as he ran along the thawing road. A fat red-faced peasant woman, with a baby wrapped in the bosom of her sheepskin cloak, sat in another laden sledge, urging on a thin-tailed, jaded white horse with the ends of the reins. The count suddenly thought of Anna Fedorovna.

“Turn back!” he shouted.

The driver did not at once understand.

“Turn back! Back to town! Be quick!”

The troyka passed the town gates once more, and drove briskly up to the wooden porch of Anna Fedorovna's house. The count ran quickly up the steps, passed through the vestibule and the drawing-room, and having found the widow still asleep, took her in his arms, lifted her out of bed, kissed her sleepy eyes, and ran quickly back. Anna Fedorovna, only half awake, licked her lips and asked, “What has happened?” The count jumped into his sledge, shouted to the driver, and with no further delay and without even a thought of Lukhnov, or the widow, or Steshka, but only of what awaited him in Moscow, left the town of K — forever.

## IX

More than twenty years had gone by. Much water had flowed away, many people had died, many been born, many had grown up or grown old; still more ideas had been born and had died, much that was old and beautiful and much that was old and bad had perished; much that was beautiful and new had grown up and still more that was immature, monstrous, and new, had come into God's world.

Count Fedor Turbin had been killed long ago in a duel by some foreigner he had horse-whipped in the street. His son, physically as like him as one drop of water to another, was a handsome young man

already twenty-three years old and serving in the Horse Guards. But morally the young Turbin did not in the least resemble his father. There was not a shade of the impetuous, passionate, and, to speak frankly, depraved propensities of the past age. Together with his intelligence, culture, and the gifted nature he had inherited a love of propriety and the comforts of life; a practical way of looking at men and affairs, reasonableness, and prudence were his distinguishing characteristics. The young count had got on well in the service and at twenty-three was already a lieutenant. At the commencement of the war he made up his mind that he would be more likely to secure promotion if he exchanged into the active army, and so he entered an hussar regiment as captain and was soon in command of a squadron.

In May 1848 Footnote: Tolstoy seems here to antedate Russians intervention in the Hungarian insurrection. The Russian army did not enter Hungary till May 1849 and the war lasted till the end of September of that year. the S — hussar regiment was marching to the campaign through the province of K — and the very squadron young Count Turbin commanded had to spend the night in the village of Morozovka, Anna Fedorovna's estate.

Ann Fedorovna was still living but was already so far from young that she did not even consider herself young, which means a good deal for a woman. She had grown very fat, which is said to make a woman look younger, but deep soft wrinkles were apparent on her white plumpness. She never went to town now, it was an effort for her even to get into her carriage, but she was still just as kind-hearted and as silly as ever (now that her beauty no longer biases one, the truth may be told). With her lived her twenty-three-year-old daughter Lisa, a Russian country belle, and her brother-our acquaintance the cavalryman-who had good-naturedly squandered the whole of his small fortune and had found a home for his old age with Anna Fedorovna. His hair was quite grey and his upper lip had fallen in, but the moustache above it was still carefully blackened. His back was bent, and not only his forehead and cheeks but even his nose and neck were wrinkled, yet in the movements of his feeble crooked legs the manner of a cavalryman was still perceptible.

The family and household sat in the small drawing-room of the old house, with an open door leading out onto the verandah, and open windows overlooking the ancient star-shaped garden with its lime trees. Grey-haired Anna Fedorovna, wearing a lilac jacket, sat on the sofa laying out cards on a round mahogany table. Her old brother in his clean white trousers and a blue coat had settled himself by the window and was plaiting a cord out of white cotton with the aid of a wooden fork—a pastime his niece had taught him and which he liked very much, as he could no longer do anything and his eyes were too weak for newspaper reading, his favourite occupation. Pimochka, Anna Fedorovna’s ward, sat by him learning a lesson—Lisa helping her and at the same time making a goat’s-wool stocking for her uncle with wooden knitting needles. The last rays of the setting sun, as usual at that hour, shone through the lime-tree avenue and threw slanting gleams on the farthest window and the what-not standing near it. It was so quiet in the garden and the room that one could hear the swift flutter of a swallow’s wings outside the window and Anna Fedorovna’s soft sigh or the old man’s slight groan as he crossed his legs.

“How do they go? Show me, Lisa! I always forget,” said Anna Fedorovna, at a standstill in laying out her cards for patience. Without stopping her work Lisa went to her mother and glanced at the cards.

“Ah, you’ve muddled them all, mamma dear!” she said, rearranging them. “That’s the way they should go. And what you are trying your fortune about will still come true,” she added, withdrawing a card so that it was not noticed.

“Ah yes, you always deceive me and say it has come out.”

“No, really, it means . . . you’ll succeed. It has come out.”

“All right, all right, you sly puss! But isn’t it time we had tea?”

“I have ordered the samovar to be lit. I’ll see to it at once. Do you want to have it here? . . . Be quick and finish your lesson Pimochka, and let’s have a run.”

And Lisa went to the door.

“Lisa, Lizzie!” said her uncle, looking intently at his fork. “I think I’ve dropped a stitch again-pick it up for me, there’s a dear.”

“Directly, directly. But I must give out a loaf of sugar to be broken up.” And really, three minutes later she ran back, went to her uncle and pinched his ear.

“That’s for dropping your stitches!” she said, laughing, and you haven’t done your task!”

“Well, well, never mind, never mind. Put it right-there’s a little knot or something.”

Lisa took the fork, drew a pin out of her tippet-which thereupon the breeze coming in at the door blew slightly open-and managing somehow to pick up the stitch with the pin pulled two loops through, and returned the fork to her uncle.

“Now give me a kiss for it,” she said, holding out her rosy cheek to him and pinning up her tippet. “You shall have rum with your tea today. It’s Friday, you know.”

And she again went into the tea-room.

“Come here and look, uncle, the hussars are coming!” she called from there in her clear voice.

Anna Fedorovna came with her brother into the tea-room, the windows of which overlooked the village, to see the hussars. Very little was visible from the windows-only a crowd moving in a cloud of dust.

“It’s a pity we have so little room, sister, and that the wing is not yet finished,” said the old man to Anna Fedorovna. “We might have invited the officers. Hussar officers are such splendid, gay young fellows, you know. It would have been good to see something of them.”

“Why of course, I should have been only too glad, brother; but you know yourself we have no room. There’s my bedroom, Lisa’s room, the drawing-room, and this room of yours, and that’s all. Really now, where could we put them? The village elder’s hut has been cleaned up for them: Michael Matveev says its quite clean now.”

“And we could have chosen a bridegroom for you from among them, Lizzie-a fine hussar!”

“I don’t want an hussar; I’d rather have an uhlan. Weren’t you in the uhlands, uncle? . . . I don’t want to have anything to do with these

hussars. They are all said to be desperate fellows.” And Lisa blushed a little but again laughed her musical laugh.

“Here comes Ustyushka running; we must ask her what she has seen,” she added.

Anna Fedorovna told her to call Ustyushka.

“It’s not in you to keep to your work, you must needs run off to see the soldiers,” said Anna Fedorovna. “Well, where have the officers put up?”

“In Eromkin’s house, mistress. There are two of them, such handsome ones. One’s a count, they say!”

“And what’s his name?”

“Dazarov or Turbinov. . . . I’m sorry-I’ve forgotten.”

“What a fool; can’t so much as tell us anything. You might at least have found out the name.”

“Well, I’ll run back.”

“Yes, I know you’re first-rate at that sort of thing. . . . No, let Daniel go. Tell him to go and ask whether the officers want anything, brother. One ought to show them some politeness after all. Say the mistress sent to inquire.”

The old people again sat down in the tea-room and Lisa went to the servants’ room to put into a box the sugar that had been broken up. Ustyushka was there telling about the hussars.

“Darling miss, what a handsome man that count is!” she said. “A regular cherubim with black eyebrows. There now, if you had a bridegroom like that you would be a couple of the right sort.”

The other maids smiled approvingly; the old nurse sighed as she sat knitting at a window and even whispered a prayer, drawing in her breath.

“So you liked the hussars very much?” said Lisa. “And you’re a good one at telling what you’ve seen. Go, please, and bring some of the cranberry juice, Ustyushka, to give the hussars something sour to drink.”

And Lisa, laughing, went out with the sugar basin in her hands.

“I should really like to have seen what that hussar is like,” she thought, “brown or fair? And he would have been glad to make our acquaintance I should think. . . . And if he goes away he’ll never know that I was here and thought about him. And how many such have already passed me by? Who sees me here except uncle and Ustyushka? Whichever way I do my hair, whatever sleeves I put on, no one looks at me with pleasure,” she thought with a sigh as she looked at her plump white arm. “I suppose he is tall, with large eyes, and certainly small black moustaches. . . . Here am I, more than twenty-two, and no one has fallen in love with me except pock-marked Ivan Ipatich, and four years ago I was even prettier. . . . And so my girlhood has passed without gladdening anyone. Oh, poor, poor country lass that I am!”

Her mother’s voice, calling her to pour out tea, roused the country lass from this momentary mation. She lifted her head with a start and went into the tea-room.

The best results are often obtained accidentally, and the more one tries the worse things turn out. In the country, people rarely try to educate their children and therefore unwittingly usually give them an excellent education. This was Particularly so in Lisa’s case. Anna Fedorovna, with her limited intellect and careless temperament, gave Lisa no education-did not teach her music or that very useful French language-but having accidentally borne a healthy pretty child by her deceased husband she gave her little daughter over to a wet-nurse and a dry-nurse, fed her, dressed her in cotton prints and goat-skin shoes, sent her out to walk and gather mushrooms and wild berries, engaged a student from the seminary to teach her reading, writing, and arithmetic, and when sixteen years had passed she casually found in Lisa a friend, an ever-kind-hearted, ever-cheerful soul, and an active housekeeper.

Anna Fedorovna, being kind-hearted, always had some children to bring up-either serf children or foundlings. Lisa began looking after them when she was ten years old: teaching them, dressing them, taking them to church, and checking them when they played too man pranks. Later on the decrepit kindly uncle, who had to be tended like a child, appeared on the scene. Then the servants and peasants came to the



young lady with various requests and with their ailments, which latter she treated with elderberry, peppermint, and camphorated spirits. Then there was the household management which all fell on her shoulders of itself. Then an unsatisfied longing for love awoke and found its outlet only in Nature and religion.

And Lisa accidentally grew into an active, good-natured, cheerful, self-reliant, pure, and deeply religious woman. It is true that she suffered a little from vanity when she saw neighbours standing by her in church wearing fashionable bonnets brought from K — , and sometimes she was vexed to tears by her old mother's whims and grumbling. She had dreams of love, too, in most absurd and sometimes crude forms, but these were dispersed by her useful activity which had grown into a necessity, and at the age of twenty-two there was not one spot or sting of remorse in the clear calm soul of the physically and morally beautifully developed maiden. Lisa was of medium height, plump rather than thin; her eyes were hazel, not large, and had slight shadows on the lower lids; and she had a long light-brown plait of hair.

She walked with big steps and with a slight sway—a “duck's waddle” as the saying is. Her face, when she was occupied and not agitated by anything in Particular, seemed to say to everyone who looked into it: “It is a joy to live in the world when one has someone to love and a clear conscience.” Even in moments of vexation, perplexity, alarm, or sorrow, in spite of herself there shone-through the tear in her eye, her frowning left eyebrow, and her compressed lips—a kind straightforward spirit unspoilt by the intellect; it shone in the dimples of her cheeks, in the corners of her mouth, and in her beaming eyes accustomed to smile and to rejoice in life.

X

The air was still hot though the sun was setting when the squadron entered Morozovka. In front of them along the dusty village street trotted a brindled cow separated from its herd, looking around and now and then stopping and lowing, but never suspecting that all she had to do was to turn aside. The peasants—old men, women, and

children-the servants from the manor-house, crowded on both sides of the street and eagerly watched the hussars as the latter rode through a thick cloud of dust, curbing their horses which occasionally stamped and snorted. On the right of the squadron were two officers who sat their fine black horses carelessly. One was Count Turbin, the commander, the other a very young man recently promoted from cadet, whose name was Polozov.

An hussar in a white linen jacket came out of the best of the huts, raised his cap, and went up to the officers.

“Where are the quarters assigned us?”

“For your Excellency?” answered the quartermaster-sergeant, with a start of his whole body. “The village elder’s hut has been cleaned out. I wanted to get quarters at the manor-house, but they say there is no room there. The proprietress is such a vixen.”

“All right!” said the count, dismounting and stretching his legs as he reached the village elder’s hut. “And has my phaeton arrived?”

“It has deigned to arrive, your Excellency!” answered the quartermaster-sergeant, pointing with his cap to the leather body of a carriage visible through the gateway and rushing forward to the entrance of the hut, which was thronged with members of the peasant family collected to look at the officer. He even pushed one old woman over as he briskly opened the door of the freshly cleaned hut and stepped aside to let the count pass.

The hut was fairly large and roomy but not very clean. The German valet, dressed like a gentleman, stood inside sorting the linen in a portmanteau after having set up an iron bedstead and made the bed.

“Faugh, what filthy lodgings!” said the count with vexation. “Couldn’t you have found anything better at some gentleman’s house, Dyadenko?”

“If your Excellency desires it I will try at the manor-house,” answered the quartermaster-sergeant, “but it isn’t up to much-doesn’t look much better than a hut.”

“Never mind now. Go away.”

And the count lay down on the bed and threw his arms behind his head.

“Johann!” he called to his valet. “You’ve made a lump in the middle again! How is it you can’t make a bed properly?”

Johann came up to put it right.

“No, never mind now. But where is my dressing-gown?” said the count in a dissatisfied tone.

The valet handed him the dressing-gown. Before putting it on the count examined the front.

“I thought so, that spot is not cleaned off. Could anyone be a worse servant than you?” he added, pulling the dressing-gown out of the valet’s hands and putting it on. “Tell me, do you do it on purpose? . . . Is the tea ready?”

“I have not had time,” said Johann.

“Fool!”

After that the count took up the French novel placed ready for him and read for some time in silence: Johann went out into the passage to prepare the samovar. The count was obviously in a bad temper, probably caused by fatigue, a dusty face, tight clothing, and an empty stomach.

“Johann!” he cried again, “bring me the account for those ten rubles. What did you buy in the town?”

He looked over the account handed him, and made some dissatisfied remarks about the dearness of the things purchased.

“Serve rum with my tea.”

“I didn’t buy any rum,” said Johann.

“That’s good! . . . How many times have I told you to have rum?”

“I hadn’t enough money.”

“Then why didn’t Polozov buy some? You should have got some from his man.”

“Cornet Polozov? I don’t know. He bought the tea and the sugar.”

“Idiot! . . . Get out! . . . You are the only man who knows how to make me lose my patience. . . . You know that on a march I always have rum with my tea.”

“Here are two letters for you from the staff,” said the valet.

The count opened his letters and began reading them without rising. The cornet, having quartered the squadron, came in with a merry face. "Well, how is it, Turbin? It seems very nice here. But I must confess I'm tired. It was hot."

"Very nice! . . . A filthy stinking hut, and thanks to your lordship no rum; your blockhead didn't buy any, nor did this one. You might at least have mentioned it."

And he continued to read his letter. When he had finished he rolled it into a ball and threw it on the floor.

In the passage the cornet was meanwhile saying to his orderly in a whisper: "Why didn't you buy any rum? You had money enough, you know."

"But why should we buy everything? As it is I pay for everything, while his German does nothing but smoke his pipe."

It was evident that the count's second letter was not unpleasant, for he smiled as he read it.

"Who is it from?" asked Polozov, returning to the room and beginning to arrange a sleeping-place for himself on some boards by the oven.

"From Mina," answered the count gaily, handing him the letter, "Do you want to see it? What a delightful woman she is! . . . Really she's much better than our young ladies. . . . Just see how much feeling and wit there is in that letter. Only one thing is bad-she's asking for money."

"Yes, that's bad," said the cornet.

"It's true I promised her some, but then this campaign came on, and besides. . . . However if I remain in command of the squadron another three months I'll send her some. It's worth it, really; such a charming creature, eh?" said he, watching the expression on Polozov's face as he read the letter.

"Dreadfully ungrammatical, but very nice, and it seems as if she really loves you," said the cornet.

"H'm . . . I should think so! It's only women of that kind who love sincerely when once they do love."

"And who was the other letter from?" asked the cornet, handing back the one he had read.

“Oh, that . . . there’s a man, a nasty beast who won from me at cards, and he’s reminding me of it for the third time. . . . I can’t let him have it at present. . . . A stupid letter!” said the count, evidently vexed at the recollection.

After this both officers were silent for a while. The cornet, who was evidently under the count’s influence, glanced now and then at the handsome though clouded countenance of Turbin—who was looking fixedly through the window—and drank his tea in silence, not venturing to start a conversation.

“But d’you know, it may turn out capitally,” said the count, suddenly turning to Polozov with a shake of his head. “Supposing we get promotions by seniority this year and take Part in an action besides, I may get ahead of my own captains in the Guards.”

The conversation was still on the same topic and they were drinking their second tumblers of tea when old Daniel entered and delivered Anna Fedorovna’s message.

“And I was also to inquire if you are not Count Fedor Ivanych Turbin’s son?” added Daniel on his own account, having learnt the count’s name and remembering the deceased count’s sojourn in the town of K — . “Our mistress, Anna Fedorovna, was very well acquainted with him.” “He was my father. And tell your mistress I am very much obliged to her. We want nothing but say we told you to ask whether we could not have a cleaner room somewhere—in the manor-house or anywhere.”

“Now, why did you do that?” asked Polozov when Daniel had gone. “What does it matter? Just for one night—what does it matter? And they will be inconveniencing themselves.”

“What an idea! I think we’ve had our share of smoky huts! . . . It’s easy to see you’re not a practical man. Why not seize the opportunity when we can, and live like human beings for at least one night? And on the contrary they will be very pleased to have us. . . . The worst of it is, if this lady really knew my father . . . ” continued the count with a smile which displayed his glistening white teeth. “I always have to feel ashamed of my deParted papa. There is always some scandalous story or other, or some debt he has left. That’s why I hate meeting these

acquaintances of my father's. However, that was the way in those days," he added, growing serious.

"Did I ever tell you," said Polozov, "I once met an uhlan brigade-commander, Ilyin? He was very anxious to meet you. He is awfully fond of your father."

"That Ilyin is an awful good-for-nothing, I believe. But the worst of it is that these good people, who assure me that they knew my father in order to make my acquaintance, while pretending to be very pleasant, relate such tales about my father as make me ashamed to listen. It is true-I don't deceive myself, but look at things dispassionately-that he had too ardent a nature and sometimes did things that were not nice. However, that was the way in those times. In our days he might have turned out a very successful man, for to do him justice he had extraordinary capacities."

A quarter of an hour later the servant came back with a request from the proprietress that they would be so good as to spend the night at her house.

## XI

Having heard that the hussar officer was the son of Count Fedor Turbin, Anna Fedorovna was all in a flutter.

"Oh, dear me! The darling boy! . . . Daniel, run quickly and say your mistress asks them to her house!" she began, jumping up and hurrying with quick steps to the servants' room. "Lizzie! Ustyushka! . . . Your room must be got ready, Lisa, you can move into your uncle's room. And you, brother, you won't mind sleeping in the drawing-room, will you? It's only for one night."

"I don't mind, sister. I can sleep on the floor."

"He must be handsome if he's like his father. Only to have a look at him, the darling. . . . You must have a good look at him, Lisa! The father *was* handsome. . . . Where are you taking that table to? Leave it here," said Anna Fedorovna, bustling about. "Bring two beds-take one from the foreman's-and get the crystal candlestick, the one my brother

gave me on my birthday-it's on the what-not-and put a stearine candle in it."

At last everything was ready. In spite of her mother's interference Lisa arranged the room for the two officers her own way. She took out clean bed-clothes scented with mignonette, made the beds, had candles and a bottle of water placed on a small table near by, fumigated the servants' room with scented paper, and moved her own little bed into her uncle's room. Anna Fedorovna quieted down a little, settled in her own place, and even took up the cards again, but instead of laying them out she leaned her plump elbow on the table and grew thoughtful. "Ah, time, time, how it flies!" she whispered to herself. "Is it so long ago? It is as if I could see him now. Ah, he was a madcap! . . ." and tears came into her eyes. "And now there's Lizzie . . . but still, she's not what I was at her age-she's a nice girl but she's not like that . . ." "Lisa, you should put on your *\*mousseline-de-laine\** dress for the evening."

"Why, mother, you are not going to ask them in to see us? Better not," said Lisa, unable to master her excitement at the thought of meeting the officers. "Better not, mamma!"

And really her desire to see them was less strong than her fear of the agitating joy she imagined awaited her.

"Maybe they themselves will wish to make our acquaintance, Lizzie!" said Anna Fedorovna, stroking her head and thinking, "No, her hair is not what mine was at her age. . . . Oh, Lizzie, how I should like you to . . ." And she really did very earnestly desire something for her daughter. But she could not imagine a marriage with the count, and she could not desire for her daughter relations such as she had had with the father; but still she did desire something very much. She may have longed to relive in the soul of her daughter what she had experienced with him who was dead.

The old cavalryman was also somewhat excited by the arrival of the count. He locked himself into his room and emerged a quarter of an hour later in a Hungarian jacket and pale-blue trousers, and entered

the room prepared for the visitors with the bashfully pleased expression of a girl who puts on a ball-dress for the first time in her life. "I'll have a look at the hussars of today, sister! The late count was indeed a true hussar. "I'll see, I'll see!"

The officers had already reached the room assigned to them through the back entrance.

"There, you see! Isn't this better than that hut with the cockroaches?" said the count, lying down as he was, in his dusty boots, on the bed that had been prepared for him.

"Of course it's better; but still, to be indebted to the proprietress ... "  
"Oh, what nonsense! One must be practical in all things. They're awfully pleased, I'm sure . . . Eh, you there!" he cried. "Ask for something to hang over this window, or it will be draughty in the night."

At this moment the old man came in to make the officers' acquaintance. Of course, though he did it with a slight blush, he did not omit to say that he and the old count had been comrades, that he had enjoyed the count's favour, and he even added that he had more than once been under obligations to the deceased. What obligations he referred to, whether it was the count's omission to repay the hundred rubles he had borrowed, or his throwing him into a snow-heap, or swearing at him, the old man quite omitted to explain. The young count was very polite to the old cavalryman and thanked him for the night's lodging.

"You must excuse us if it is not luxurious, Count," (he very nearly said "your Excellency," so unaccustomed had he become to conversing with important persons), "my sister's house is so small. But we'll hang something up there directly and it will be all right," added the old man, and on the plea of seeing about a curtain, but mainly because he was in a hurry to give an account of the officers, he bowed and left the room.

The pretty Ustyushka came in with her mistress's shawl to cover the window, and besides, the mistress had told her to ask if the gentlemen would not like some tea.



The pleasant surrounds seemed to have a good influence on the count's spirits. He smiled merrily, joked with Ustyushka in such a way that she even called him a scamp, asked whether her young lady was pretty, and in answer to her question whether they would have any tea he said she might bring them some tea, but the chief thing was that, their own supper not being ready yet, perhaps they might have some vodka and something to eat, and some sherry if there was any. The uncle was in raptures over the young count's politeness and praised the new generation of officers to the skies, saying that the present men were incomparable superior to the former generation.

Anna Fedorovna did not agree-no one could be superior to Count Fedor Ivanych Turbin-and at last she grew seriously angry and drily remarked, "The one who has last stroked you, brother, is always the best. . . . Of course people are cleverer nowadays, but Count Fedor Ivanych danced the \*ecossaise\* in such a way and was so amiable that everybody lost their heads about him, though he paid attention to no one but me. So you see, there were good people in the old days too."

Here came the news of the demand for vodka, light refreshments, and sherry.

"There now, brother, you never do the right thing; you should have ordered supper," began Anna Fedorovna. "Lisa, see to it, dear!"

Lisa ran to the larder to get some pickled mushrooms and fresh butter, and the cook was ordered to make rissoles.

"But how about sherry? Have you any left, brother?"

"No, sister, I never had any."

"How's that? Why, what is it you take with your tea?"

"That's rum, Anna Fedorovna."

"Isn't it all the same? Give me some of that-it's all the same. But wouldn't it after all be best to ask them in here, brother? You know all about it-I don't think they would take offence."

The cavalryman declared he would warrant that the count was too good-natured to refuse and that he would certainly fetch them. Anna Fedorovna went and put on a silk dress and a new cap for some reason, but Lisa was so busy that she had no time to change her pink gingham dress with the wide sleeves. Besides, she was terribly excited; she felt

as if something wonderful was awaiting her and as if a low black cloud hung over her soul. It seemed to her that this handsome hussar count must be a perfectly new, incomprehensible, but beautiful being. His character, his habits, his speech must all be so unusual, so different from anything she had ever met. All he thinks or says must be wise and right; all he does must be honourable; his whole appearance must be beautiful. She never doubted that. Had he asked not merely for refreshments and sherry but for a bath of sage-brandy and perfume, she would not have been surprised and would not have blamed him but would have been firmly convinced that it was right and necessary. The count at once agreed when the cavalryman informed them of his sister's wish. He brushed his hair, put on his uniform, and took his cigar-case.

"Come along," he said to Polozov.

"Really it would be better not to go," answered the cornet. "Ils feront des frais pour nous recevoir." Footnote: They will be putting themselves to expense on our account.

"Nonsense, they will be only too happy! Besides, I have made some inquiries: there is a pretty daughter. . . . Come along!" said the count, speaking in French.

"Je vous en prie, messieurs!" Footnote: If you please, gentlemen. said the cavalryman, merely to make the officers feel that he also knew French and had understood what they had said.

## XII

Lisa, afraid to look at the officers, blushed and cast down her eyes and pretended to be busy filling the teapot when they entered the room. Anna Fedorovna on the contrary jumped up hurriedly, bowed, and not taking her eyes off the count, began talking to him—now saying how unusually like his father he was, now introducing her daughter to him, now offering him tea, jam, or home-made sweetmeats. No one paid any attention to the cornet because of his modest appearance, and he was very glad of it, for he was, as far as propriety allowed, gazing at Lisa and minutely examining her beauty which evidently took him by surprise. The uncle, listening to his sister's conversation with the count,

awaited, with the words ready on his lips, an opportunity to narrate his cavalry reminiscences. During tea the count lit a cigar and Lisa found it difficult to prevent herself from coughing. He was very talkative and amiable, at first slipping his stories into the intervals of Anna Fedorovna's ever-flowing speech, but at last monopolizing the conversation. One thing struck his hearers as strange; in his stories he often used words not considered improper in the society he belonged to, but which here sounded rather too bold and somewhat frightened Anna Fedorovna and made Lisa blush to her ears, but the count did not notice it and remained calmly natural and amiable.

Lisa silently filled the tumblers, which she did not give into the visitors' hands but placed on the table near them, not having quite recovered from her excitement, and she listened eagerly to the count's remarks. His stories, which were not very deep, and the hesitation in his speech gradually calmed her. She did not hear from him the very clever things she had expected, nor did she see that elegance in everything which she had vaguely expected to find in him. At the third glass of tea, after her bashful eyes had once met his and he had not looked down but had continued to look at her too quietly and with a slight smile, she even felt rather inimically disposed towards him and soon found that not only was there nothing especial about him but that he was in no wise different from other people she had met, that there was no need to be afraid of him though his nails were long and clean, and there was not even any special beauty in him. Lisa suddenly relinquished her dream, not without some inward pain, and grew calmer, and only the gaze of the taciturn cornet which she felt fixed upon her, disquieted her. "Perhaps it's not this one, but that one!" she thought.

### XIII

After tea the old lady asked the visitors into the drawing-room and again sat down in her old place.

"But wouldn't you like to rest, Count?" she asked, and after receiving an answer in the negative continued, "What can I do to entertain our dear guests? Do you play cards, Count? There now, brother, you should arrange something; arrange a set--"

“But you yourself play \*preference\*,” answered the cavalryman. “Why not all play? Will you play, Count? And you too?”

The officers expressed their readiness to do whatever their kind hosts desired.

Lisa brought her old pack of cards which she used for divining when her mother’s swollen face would get well, whether her uncle would return the same day when he went to town, whether a neighbour would call today, and so on. These cards, though she had used them for a couple of months, were cleaner than those Anna Fedorovna used to tell fortunes.

“But perhaps you won’t play for small stakes?” inquired the uncle.

“Anna Fedorovna and I play for half-kopeks. . . . And even so she wins all our money.”

“Oh, any stakes you like-I shall be delighted,” replied the count.

“Well then, one-kopek ‘assignats’ just for once, in honour of our dear visitors! Let them beat me, an old woman!” said Anna Fedorovna, settling down in her armchair and arranging her mantilla. “And perhaps I’ll win a ruble or so from them,” thought she, having developed a slight passion for cards in her old age.

“If you like, I’ll teach you to play with ‘tables’ and \*misere\*,” said the count. “It is capital.”

Everyone liked the new Petersburg way. The uncle was even sure he knew it; it was just the same as “boston” used to be, only he had forgotten it a bit. But Anna Fedorovna could not understand it at all and failed to understand it for so long that at last, with a smile and nod of approval, she felt herself obliged to assert that now she understood it and that all was quite clear to her. There was not a little laughter during the game when Anna Fedorovna, holding ace and king blank, declared \*misere\* and was left with six tricks. She even became confused and began to smile shyly and hurriedly explain that she had not got quite used to the new way. But they scored against her all the same, especially as the count, being used to playing a careful game for high stakes, was cautious, skillfully played through his opponents’ hands, and refused to understand the shoves the cornet gave him under the

table with his foot or the mistakes the latter made when they were Partners.

Lisa brought more sweets, three kinds of jam, and some specially prepared apples that had been kept since last season and stood behind her mother's back watching the game and occasionally looking at the officers and especially at the count's white hands with their rosy well-kept nails which threw the cards and took up the tricks in so practised, assured, and elegant a manner.

Again Anna Fedorovna, rather irritably outbidding the others, declared seven tricks, made only four, and was fined accordingly, and having very clumsily noted down, on her brother's demand, the points she had lost, became quite confused and fluttered.

"Never mind, mamma, you'll win it back!" smilingly remarked Lisa, wishing to help her mother out of the ridiculous situation. "Let uncle make a forfeit, and then he'll be caught."

"If you would only help me, Lisa dear!" said Anna Fedorovna, with a frightened glance at her daughter. "I don't know how this is ... "

"But I don't know this way either," Lisa answered, mentally reckoning up her mother's losses. "You will lose a lot that way, mamma! There will be nothing left for Pimochka's new dress," she added in just.

"Yes, this way one may easily lose ten silver rubles," said the cornet looking at Lisa and anxious to enter into conversation with her.

"Aren't we playing for assignats?" said Anna Fedorovna, looking round at them all.

"I don't know how we are playing, but I can't reckon in assignats," said the count. "What is it? I mean, what are assignats?"

"Why nowadays nobody counts in assignats any longer," remarked the uncle, who had played very cautiously and had been winning.

The old lady ordered some sparkling home-made wine to be brought, drank two glasses, became very red, and seemed to resign herself to any fate. A lock of her grey hair escaped from under her cap and she did not even put it right. No doubt it seemed to her as if she had lost millions and it was all up with her. The cornet touched the count with

his foot more and more often. The count scored down the old lady's losses. At last the game ended, and in spite of Anna Fedorovna's attempts to add to her score by pretending to make mistakes in adding it up, in spite of her horror at the amount of her losses, it turned out at last that she had lost 920 points. "That's nine assignats?" she asked several times and did not comprehend the full extent of her loss until her brother told her, to her horror, that she had lost more than thirty-two assignats and that she must certainly pay.

The count did not even add up his winnings but rose immediately the game was over, went over to the window at which Lisa was arranging the

zakushka\* and turning pickled mushrooms out of a jar onto a plate for supper, and there quite quietly and simply did what the cornet had all that evening so longed, but failed, to do—entered into conversation with her about the weather.

Meanwhile the cornet was in a very unpleasant position. In the absence of the count, and more especially of Lisa, who had been keeping her in good humour, Anna Fedorovna became frankly angry.

"Really, it's too bad that we should win from you like this," said Polozov in order to say something. "It is a real shame!"

"Well, of course, if you go and invent some kind of 'tables' and '\*miseres\*' and I don't know how to play them. ... Well then, how much does it come to in assignats?" she asked.

"Thirty-two rubles, thirty-two and a quarter," repeated the cavalryman, who under the influence of his success was in a playful mood. "Hand over the money, sister; pay up!"

"I'll pay it all, but you won't catch me again. No! ... I shall not win this back as long as I live."

And Anna Fedorovna went off to her room, hurriedly swaying from side to side, and came back bringing nine assignats. It was only on the old man's insistent demand that she eventually paid the whole amount.

Polozov was seized with fear lest Anna Fedorovna should scold him if he spoke to her. He silently and quietly left her and joined the count and Lisa who were talking at the open window.

On the table spread for supper stood two tallow candles. Now and then the soft fresh breath of the May night caused the flames to flicker. Outside the window, which opened onto the garden, it was also light but it was a quite different light. The moon, which was almost full and already losing its golden tinge, floated above the tops of the tall lindens and more and more lit up the thin white clouds which veiled it at intervals. Frogs were croaking loudly by the pond, the surface of which, silvered in one place by the moon, was visible through the avenue. Some little birds fluttered slightly or lightly hopped from bough to bough in a sweet-scented lilac-bush whose dewy branches occasionally swayed gently close to the window.

“What wonderful weather!” the count said as he approached Lisa and sat down on the low window-sill. “I suppose you walk a good deal?”  
“Yes,” said Lisa, not feeling the least shyness in speaking with the count. “In the morning about seven o’clock I look after what has to be attended to on the estate and take my mother’s ward, Pimochka, with me for a walk.”

“It is pleasant to live in the country!” said the count, putting his eye-glass to his eye and looking now at the garden, now at Lisa. “And don’t you ever go out at night, by moonlight?”

“No. But two years ago uncle and I used to walk every moonlight night. He was troubled with a strange complaint-insomnia. When there was a full moon he could not fall asleep. His little room-that one-looks straight out into the garden, the window is low but the moon shines straight into it.”

“That’s strange: I thought that was your room,” said the count.

“No. I only sleep there tonight. You have my room.”

“Is it possible? Dear me, I shall never forgive myself for having disturbed you in such a way!” said the count, letting the monocle fall from his eye in proof of the sincerity of his feelings. “If I had known that I was troubling you ... “

“It’s no trouble! On the contrary I am very glad: uncle’s is such a charming room, so bright, and the window is so low. I shall sit there till I

fall asleep, or else I shall climb out into the garden and walk about a bit before going to bed.”

“What a splendid girl!” thought the count, replacing his eyeglass and looking at her and trying to touch her foot with his own while pretending to seat himself more comfortably on the window-sill. “And how cleverly she has let me know that I may see her in the garden at the window if I like!” Lisa even lost much of her charm in his eyes-the conquest seemed too easy.

“And how delightful it must be,” he said, looking thoughtfully at the dark avenue of trees, “to spend a night like this in the garden with a beloved one.”

Lisa was embarrassed by these words and by the repeated, seemingly accidental touch of his foot. Anxious to hide her confusion she said without thinking, “Yes, it is nice to walk in the moonlight.” She was beginning to feel rather uncomfortable. She had tied up the jar out of which she had taken the mushrooms and was going away from the window, when the cornet joined them and she felt a wish to see what kind of man he was.

“What a lovely night!” he said.

“Why, they talk of nothing but the weather,” thought Lisa.

“What a wonderful view!” continued the cornet. “But I suppose you are tired of it,” he added, having a curious propensity to say rather unpleasant things to people he liked very much.

“Why do you think so? The same kind of food or the same dress one may get tired of, but not of a beautiful garden if one is fond of walking-especially when the moon is still higher. From uncle’s window the whole pond can be seen. I shall look at it tonight.”

“But I don’t think you have any nightingales?” said the count, much dissatisfied that the cornet had come and prevented his ascertaining more definitely the terms of the rendezvous.

“No, but there always were until last year when some sportsman caught one, and this year one began to sing beautifully only last week but the police-officer came here and his carriage-bells frightened it



away. Two years ago uncle and I used to sit in the covered alley and listen to them for two hours or more at a time.”

“What is this chatterbox telling you?” said her uncle, coming up to them. “Won’t you come and have something to eat?”

After supper, during which the count by praising the food and by his appetite has somewhat dispelled the hostess’s ill humour, the officers said good-night and went into their room. The count shook hands with the uncle and to Anna Fedorovna’s surprise shook her hand also without kissing it, and even shook Lisa’s, looking straight into her eyes the while and slightly smiling his pleasant smile. This look again abashed the girl.

“He is very good-looking,” she thought, “but he thinks too much of himself.”

#### XIV

“I say, aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” said Polozov when they were in their room. “I purposely tried to lose and kept touching you under the table. Aren’t you ashamed? The old lady was quite upset, you know.”

The count laughed very heartily.

“She was awfully funny, that old lady. ... How offended she was! ... “ And he again began laughing so merrily that even Johann, who stood in front of him, cast down his eyes and turned away with a slight smile. “And with the son of a friend of the family! Ha-ha-ha! ... “ the count continued to laugh.

“No, really it was too bad. I was quite sorry for her,” said the cornet.

“What nonsense! How young you still are! Why, did you wish me to lose? Why should one lose? I used to lose before I knew how to play! Ten rubles may come in useful, my dear fellow. You must look at life practically or you’ll always be left in the lurch.”

Polozov was silenced; besides, he wished to be quiet and to think about Lisa, who seemed to him an unusually pure and beautiful creature. He undressed and lay down in the soft clean bed prepared for him.

“What nonsense all this military honour and glory is!” he thought, looking at the window curtained by the shawl through which the white moonbeams stole in. “It would be happiness to live in a quiet nook with a dear, wise, simple-hearted wife—yes, that is true and lasting happiness!”

But for some reason he did not communicate these reflections to his friend and did not even refer to the country lass, though he was convinced that the count too was thinking of her.

“Why don’t you undress?” he asked the count who was walking up and down the room.

“I don’t feel sleepy yet, somehow. You can put out the candle if you like. I shall lie down as I am.”

And he continued to pace up and down.

“Don’t feel sleepy yet somehow,” repeated Polozov, who after this last evening felt more dissatisfied than ever with the count’s influence over him and was inclined to rebel against it. “I can imagine,” he thought, addressing himself mentally to Turbin, “what is now passing through that well-brushed head of yours! I saw how you admired her. But you are not capable of understanding such a simple honest creature: you want a Mina and a colonel’s epaulettes. ... I really must ask him how he liked her.”

And Polozov turned towards him—but changed his mind. He felt he would not be able to hold his own with the count, if the latter’s opinion of Lisa were what he supposed it to be, and that he would even be unable to avoid agreeing with him, so accustomed was he to bow to the count’s influence, which he felt more and more every day to be oppressive and unjust.

“Where are you going?” he asked, when the count put on his cap and went to the door.

“I’m going to see if things are all right in the stables.”

“Strange!” thought the cornet, but put out the candle and turned over on his other side, trying to drive away the absurdly jealous and hostile thoughts that crowded into his head concerning his former friend.

Anna Fedorovna meanwhile, having as usual kissed her brother, daughter, and ward and made the sign of the cross over each of them, had also retired to her room. It was long since the old lady had experienced so many strong impressions in one day and she could not even pray quietly: she could not rid herself of the sad and vivid memories of the deceased count and of the young dandy who had plundered her so unmercifully. However, she undressed as usual, drank half a tumbler of \*kvas\* that stood ready for her on a little table by her bed, and lay down. Her favourite cat crept softly into the room. Anna Fedorovna called her up and began to stroke her and listen to her purring but could not fall asleep.

“It’s the cat that keeps me awake,” she thought and drove her away. The cat fell softly on the floor and gently moving her bushy tail leapt onto the stove. And now the maid, who always slept in Anna Fedorovna’s room, came and spread the piece of felt that served her for a mattress, put out the candle, and lit the lamp before the icon. At last the maid began to snore, but still sleep would not come to soothe Anna Fedorovna’s excited imagination. When she closed her eyes the hussar’s face appeared to her, and she seemed to see it in the room in various guises when she opened her eyes and by the dim light of the lamp looked at the chest of drawers, the table, or a white dress that was hanging up. Now she felt very hot on the feather bed, now her watch ticked unbearably on the little table, and the maid snored unendurably through her nose. She woke her up and told her not to snore. Again thoughts of her daughter, of the old count and the young one, and of the preference\*, became curiously mixed in her head. Now she saw herself waltzing with the old count, saw her own round white shoulders, felt someone’s kisses on them, and then saw her daughter in the arms of the young count. Ustyushka again began to snore.

“No, people are not the same nowadays. The other one was ready to leap into the fire for me-and not without cause. But this one is sleeping like a fool, no fear, glad to have won-no love-making about him. ... How the other one said on his knees, ‘What do you wish me to do? I’ll kill myself on the spot, or do anything you like!’ And he would have killed himself had I told him to.”

Suddenly she heard a patter of bare feet in the passage and Lisa, with a shawl thrown over, ran in pale and trembling and almost fell onto her mother's bed.

After saying good-night to her mother that evening Lisa had gone alone to the room her uncle generally slept in. She put on a white dressing-jacket and covered her long thick plait with a kerchief, extinguished the candle, opened the window, and sat down on a chair, drawing her feet up and fixing her pensive eyes on the pond now all glittering in the silvery light.

All her accustomed occupations and interests suddenly appeared to her in a new light: her capricious old mother, uncritical love for whom had become Part of her soul; her decrepit but amiable old uncle; the domestic and village serfs who worshipped their young mistress; the milch cows and the calves, and all this Nature which had died and been renewed so many times and amid which she had grown up loving and beloved-all this that had given such light and pleasant tranquillity to her soul suddenly seemed unsatisfactory; it seemed dull and unnecessary.

It was as if someone had said to her: "Little fool, little fool, for twenty years you have been trifling, serving someone without knowing why, and without knowing what life and happiness are!" As she gazed into the depths of the moonlit, motionless garden she thought this more intensely, far more intensely, than ever before. And what caused these thoughts? Not any sudden love for the count as one might have supposed. On the contrary, she did not like him. She could have been interested in the cornet more easily, but he was plain, poor fellow, and silent. She kept involuntarily forgetting him and recalling the image of the count with anger and annoyance. "No, that's not it," she said to herself. Her ideal had been so beautiful. It was an ideal that could have been loved on such a night amid this nature without impairing its beauty-an ideal never abridged to fit it to some coarse reality.

Formerly, solitude and the absence of anyone who might have attracted her attention had caused the power of love, which Providence has given imPartially to each of us, to rest intact and tranquil in her bosom, and now she had lived too long in the

melancholy happiness of feeling within her the presence of this something, and of now and again opening the secret chalice of her heart to contemplate its riches, to be able to lavish its Contents thoughtlessly on anyone. God grant she may enjoy to her grave this chary bliss! Who knows whether it be not the best and strongest, and whether it is not the only true and possible happiness?

“O Lord my God,” she thought, “can it be that I have lost my youth and happiness in vain and that it will never be ... never be? Can that be true?” And she looked into the depths of the sky lit up by the moon and covered by light fleecy clouds that, veiling the stars, crept nearer to the moon. “If that highest white cloudlet touches the moon it will be a sign that it is true,” thought she. The mist-like smoky strip ran across the bottom half of the bright disk and little by little the light on the grass, on the tops of the limes, and on the pond, grew dimmer and the black shadows of the trees grew less distinct. As if to harmonize with the gloomy shadows that spread over the world outside, a light wind ran through the leaves and brought to the window the odour of dewy leaves, of moist earth, and of blooming lilacs.

“But it is not true,” she consoled herself. “There now, if the nightingale sings tonight it will be a sign that what I’m thinking is all nonsense, and that I need not despair,” thought she. And she sat a long while in silence waiting for something, while again all became bright and full of life and again and again the cloudlets ran across the moon making everything dim. She was beginning to fall asleep as she sat by the window, when the quivering trills of a nightingale came ringing from below across the pond and awoke her. The country maiden opened her eyes. And once more her soul was renewed with fresh joy by its mysterious union with Nature which spread out so calmly and brightly before her. She leant on both arms. A sweet, languid sensation of sadness oppressed her heart, and tears of pure wide-spreading love, thirsting to be satisfied-good comforting tears-filled her eyes. She folded her arms on the window-sill and laid her head on them. Her favourite prayer rose to her mind and she fell asleep with her eyes still moist.

The touch of someone's hand aroused her. She awoke. But the touch was light and pleasant. The hand pressed hers more closely. Suddenly she became alive to reality, screamed, jumped up, and trying to persuade herself that she had not recognized the count who was standing under the window bathed in the moonlight, she ran out of the room. ...

XV

And it really was the count. When he heard the girl's cry and a husky sound from the watchman behind the fence, who had been roused by that cry, he rushed headlong across the wet dewy grass into the depths of the garden feeling like a detected thief. "Fool that I am!" he repeated unconsciously, "I frightened her. I ought to have aroused her gently by speaking to her. Awkward brute that I am!" He stopped and listened: the watchman came into the garden through the gateway, dragging his stick along the sandy path. It was necessary to hide and the count went down by the pond. The frogs made him start as they plumped from beneath his feet into the water.

Though his boots were wet through, he squatted down and began to recall all that he had done: how he had climbed the fence, looked for her window, and at last espied a white shadow; how, listening to the faintest rustle, he had several times approached the window and gone back again; how at one moment he felt sure she was waiting, vexed at his tardiness, and the next, that it was impossible she should so readily agreed to a rendezvous; how at last, persuading himself that it was only the bashfulness of a country-bred girl that made her pretend to be asleep, he went up resolutely and distinctly saw how she sat but then for some reason ran away again and only after severely taunting himself for cowardice boldly drew near to her and touched her hand.

The watchman again made a husky sound and the gate creaked as he left the garden. The girl's window was slammed to and a shutter fastened from inside. This was very provoking. The count would have given a good deal for a chance to begin all over again; he would not have acted so stupidly now. ... "And she is a wonderful girl-so fresh-

quite charming! And I have let her slip through my fingers. ... Awkward fool that I am!" He did not want to sleep now and went at random, with the firm tread of one who has been crossed, along the covered lime-tree avenue.

And here the night brought to him all its peaceful gifts of soothing sadness and the need of love.

The straight pale beams of the moon threw spots of light through the thick foliage of the limes onto the clay path, where a few blades of grass grew or a dead branch lay here and there. The light falling on one side of a bent bough made it seem as if covered with white moss. The silvered leaves whispered now and then. There were no lights in the house and all was silent; the voice of the nightingale alone seemed to fill the bright, still, limitless space. "O God, what a night! What a wonderful night!" thought the count, inhaling the fragrant freshness of the garden. "Yet I feel a kind of regret-as if I were discontented with myself and with others, discontented with life generally. A splendid, sweet girl! Perhaps she was really hurt. ... " Here his dreams became mixed: he imagined himself in this garden with the country-bred girl in various extraordinary situations. Then the role of the girl was taken by his beloved Mina. "Eh, what a fool I was! I ought simply to have caught her round the waist and kissed her." And regretting that he had not done so, the count returned to his room.

The cornet was still awake. He at once turned in his bed and faced the count.

"Not asleep yet?" asked the count.

"No."

"Shall I tell you what has happened?"

"Well?"

"No, I'd better not, or ... all right, I'll tell you-draw in your legs."

And the count, having mentally abandoned the intrigue that had miscarried, sat down on his comrade's bed with an animated smile.

"Would you believe it, that young lady gave me a rendezvous!"

"What are you saying?" cried Polozov, jumping out of bed.

"No, but listen."

“But how? When? It’s impossible!”

“Why, while you were adding up after we had played \*preference\*, she told me she would be at the window in the night and that one could get in at the window. There, you see what it is to be practical! While you were calculating with the old woman, I arranged that little matter. Why, you heard her say in your presence that she would sit by the window tonight and look at the pond.”

“Yes, but she didn’t mean anything of the kind.”

“Well, that’s just what I can’t make out: did she say it intentionally or not? Maybe she didn’t really wish to agree so suddenly, but it looked very like it. It turned out horribly. I quiet played the fool,” he added, smiling contemptuously at himself.

“What do you mean? Where have you been?”

The count, omitting his manifold irresolute approaches, related everything as it had happened.

“I spoilt it myself: I ought to have been bolder. She screamed and ran from the window.”

“So she screamed and ran away,” said the cornet, smiling uneasily in answer to the count’s smile, which for such a long time had had so strong an influence over him.

“Yes, but it’s time to go to sleep.”

The cornet again turned his back to the door and lay silent for about ten minutes. Heaven knows what went on in his soul, but when he turned again, his face bore an expression of suffering and resolve.

“Count Turbin!” he said abruptly.

“Are you delirious?” quietly replied the count. “What is it, Cornet Polozov?”

“Count Turbin, you are a scoundrel!” cried Polozov and again jumped out of bed.

XVI

The squadron left next day. The two officers did not see their hosts again and did not bid them farewell. Neither did they speak to one another. They intended to fight a duel at the first halting-place. But



Captain Schulz, a good comrade and splendid horseman, beloved by everyone in the regiment and chosen by the count to act as his second, managed to settle the affair so well that not only did they not fight but no one in the regiment knew anything about the matter, and Turbin and Polozov, though no longer on the old friendly footing, still continued to speak in familiar terms to one another and to meet at dinners and card-Parties.

Lucerne

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1905

FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS OF PRINCE NEKHLIUDOF

July 20, 1857.

Yesterday evening I arrived at Lucerne, and put up at the best inn there, the Schweizerhof. "Lucerne, the chief city of the canton, situated on the shore of the Vierwaldstatter See," says Murray, "is one of the most romantic places of Switzerland: here cross three important highways, and it is only an hour's distance by steamboat to Mount Righi, from which is obtained one of the most magnificent views in the world."

Whether that be true or no, other guides say the same thing, and consequently at Lucerne there are throngs of travelers of all nationalities, especially the English.

The magnificent five-storied building of the Hotel Schweizerhof is situated on the quay, at the very edge of the lake, where in olden times there used to be the crooked covered wooden bridge with chapels on the corners and pictures on the roof. Now, thanks to the tremendous inroad of Englishmen, with their necessities, their tastes, and their money, they have torn down the old bridge, and in its place erected a granite quay, straight as a stick. On the quay they have built straight,

quadrangular five-storied houses; in front of the houses they have set out two rows of lindens and provided them with supports, and between the lindens is the usual supply of green benches.

This is the promenade; and here back and forth stroll the Englishwomen in their Swiss straw hats, and the Englishmen in simple and comfortable attire, and rejoice in their work. Possibly these quays and houses and lindens and Englishmen would be excellent in their way anywhere else, but here they seem discordant amid this strangely magnificent, and at the same time indescribably harmonious and smiling nature.

As soon as I went up to my room, and opened the window facing the lake, the beauty of the sheet of water, of the mountains, and of the sky, at the first moment literally dazzled and overwhelmed me. I experienced an inward unrest, and the necessity of expressing in some manner the feelings that suddenly filled my soul to overflowing. I felt a desire to embrace, powerfully to embrace, some one, to tickle him, or to pinch him; in short to do to him and to myself something extraordinary.

It was seven o'clock in the evening. The rain had been falling all day, but now it had cleared.

The lake, iridescent as melted sulphur, and dotted with boats, which left behind them vanishing trails, spread out before my windows smooth, motionless as it were, between the variegated green shores. Farther away it was contracted between two monstrous headlands, and, darkling, set itself against and disappeared behind a confused pile of mountains, clouds, and glaciers. In the foreground stretched a panorama of moist, fresh green shores, with reeds, meadows, gardens, and villas. Farther away, the dark green wooded heights, crowned with the ruins of feudal castles; in the background, the rolling, pale lilac-colored vista of mountains, with fantastic peaks built up of crags and pallid snow-capped summits. And everything was bathed in a fresh, transparent azure atmosphere, and kindled by the warm rays of the setting sun, bursting forth through the riven skies.

Not on the lake or on the mountains or in the skies was there a single completed line, a single unmixed color, a single moment of repose; everywhere motion, irregularity, fantasy, endless conglomeration and variety of shades and lines; and above all, a calm, a softness, a unity, and the inevitability of beauty.

And here amid this indeterminate, kaleidoscopic, unfettered loveliness, before my very window, stretched stupidly, compelling the gaze, the white line of the quay, the lindens with their supports, and the green seats, — miserable, tasteless creations of human ingenuity, not subordinated, like the distant villas and ruins, to the general harmony of the beautiful scene, but on the contrary brutally opposed to it...

Constantly, though against my will, my eyes were attracted to that horribly straight line of the quay; and mentally I should have liked to get rid of it, to demolish it like a black spot which should disfigure the nose beneath one's eye.

But the quay with the sauntering Englishmen remained where it was, and I involuntarily tried to find a point of view where it would be out of my sight. I succeeded in finding such a view; and till dinner was ready I took delight, alone by myself in this incomplete and therefore the more enjoyable feeling of oppression that one experiences in the solitary contemplation of natural beauty.

About half-past seven I was called to dinner. Two long tables, accommodating at least a hundred persons, were spread in the great, magnificently decorated dining-room on the first floor. The silent gathering of the guests lasted three minutes, — the rustle of women's gowns, the soft steps, the softly spoken words addressed to the courtly and elegant waiters. And all the places were occupied by ladies and gentlemen dressed elegantly, even richly, and for the most part in perfect taste.

As is apt to be the case in Switzerland, the majority of the guests were English, and this gave the ruling characteristics of the common table: that is, a strict decorum regarded as an obligation, a reserve founded

not in pride but in the absence of any necessity for social relationship, and finally a uniform sense of satisfaction felt by each in the comfortable and agreeable gratification of his wants.

On all sides gleamed the whitest laces, the whitest collars, the whitest teeth, — natural and artificial, — the whitest complexions and hands. But the faces, many of which were very handsome, bore the expression merely of individual prosperity, and absolute absence of interest in all that surrounded them unless it bore directly on their own individual selves; and the white hands, glittering with rings or protected by mitts, moved only for the purpose of straightening collars, cutting meat, or filling wine-glasses; no soul-felt emotion was betrayed in these actions.

Occasionally members of some one family would exchange remarks in subdued voices, about the excellence of such and such a dish or wine, or about the beauty of the view from Mount Righi.

Individual tourists, whether men or women, sat beside one another in silence, and did not even seem to see one another. If it happened occasionally that, out of this five-score human beings, two spoke to each other, the topic of their conversation was certain to be the weather, or the ascent of the Righi.

Knives and forks scarcely rattled on the plates, so perfect was the observance of propriety; and no one dared to convey peas and vegetables to the mouth otherwise than on the fork. The waiters, involuntarily subdued by the universal silence, asked in a whisper what wine you would be pleased to order.

Such dinners always depress me: I dislike them, and before they are over I become blue. It always seems to me as if I had done something wrong; just as when I was a boy I was set upon a chair in consequence of some naughtiness and bidden ironically, "Now rest a little while, my dear young fellow." And all the time my young blood was pulsing through my veins, and in the other room I could hear the merry shouts of my brothers.

I used to try to rebel against this feeling of being choked down, which I experienced at such dinners, but in vain. All these dead-and-alive faces

have an irresistible influence over me, and I myself become also as one dead. I have no desires, I have no thoughts; I do not even observe.

At first I attempted to enter into conversation with my neighbors; but I got no response beyond the phrases which had probably been repeated in that place a hundred thousand times, a hundred thousand times by the same persons.

And yet these people were by no means all stupid and feelingless; but evidently many of them, though they seemed so dead, led self-centered lives, just as I did, and in many cases far more complicated and interesting ones than my own. Why, then, should they deprive themselves of one of the greatest enjoyments of life, — the enjoyment that comes from the intercourse of man with man?

How different it used to be in our pension at Paris, where twenty of us, belonging to as many different nationalities, professions, and individualities, met together at a common table, and, under the influence of the Gallic sociability, found the keenest zest!

There, immediately, from one end of the table to the other, the conversation, sandwiched with witticisms and puns, though often in a broken speech, became general. There every one, without being solicitous for the proprieties, said whatever came into his head. There we had our own philosopher, our own disputant, our own *bel esprit*, our own butt, — all common property.

There, immediately after dinner, we would move the table to one side, and, without paying too much attention to rhythm, take to dancing the polka on the dusty carpet, and often keep it up till evening. There, though we were rather flirtatious, and not otherwise or dignified, still we were human beings.

And the Spanish countess with romantic proclivities, and the Italian abbate, who insisted on declaiming from the “Divine Comedy” after dinner, and the American doctor who had the entrée into the Tuileries, and the young dramatic author with his long hair, and the pianist who, according to her own account, had composed the best polka in existence, and the unhappy widow who was a beauty, and wore three

rings on every finger, — all of us enjoyed this society, which, though somewhat superficial, was human and pleasant. And we each carried away from it hearty recollections of the others, superficial or serious, as the case might be.

But at these English table-d'hôte dinners, as I look at all these laces, ribbons, jewels, pomaded locks, and silken gowns, I often think how many living women would be happy, and would make others happy, with these adornments.

Strange to think how many friends and lovers — most fortunate friends and lovers — are, perhaps, sitting side by side without knowing it! And God knows why they never come to this knowledge, and never give each other this happiness, which they might so easily give, and which they so long for.

I began to feel depressed, as usual, after such a dinner; and, without waiting for dessert, I sallied out in the most gloomy frame of mind for a constitutional through the city. My melancholy frame of mind was not relieved, but was rather confirmed, by the narrow, muddy streets without lanterns, the shuttered shops, the encounters with drunken workmen, and with women hastening after water, or in bonnets, glancing around them as they glided down the alleys or along the walls.

It was perfectly dark in the streets when I returned to the hotel without casting a glance about me, or having an idea in my head. I hoped that sleep would put an end to my melancholy. I experienced that horrible spiritual chill, loneliness, and heaviness, which sometimes, without any reason, beset those who are just arrived in any new place.

Looking down at my feet, I walked along the quay to the Schweitzerhof, when suddenly my ear was struck by the strains of a peculiar but thoroughly agreeable and sweet music.

These strains had an immediately enlivening effect on me. It was as if a bright, cheerful light had poured into my soul. I felt contented, gay. My slumbering attention was awakened again to all surrounding objects; and the beauty of the night and the lake, to which, till then, I had been

indifferent, suddenly came over me with quickening force like something new.

I involuntarily took in at a glance the dark sky with gray clouds flecking its deep blue, now lighted by the rising moon, the glassy, dark green lake, with its surface reflecting the lighted windows, and far away the snowy mountains; and I heard the croaking of the frogs over on the Froschenburg shore, and the dewy fresh call of the quail.

Directly in front of me, in the spot whence the sounds of music had first come, and which still especially attracted my attention, I saw, amid the semi-darkness on the street, a throng of people standing in a semicircle, and in front of the crowd, at a little distance, a small man in dark clothes.

Behind the throng and the man, there stood out harmouniously against the blue, ragged sky, gray and blue, the black tops of a few Lombardy poplars in some garden, and, rising majestically on high, the two stern spires that stand on the towers of the ancient cathedral.

I drew nearer, and the strains became more distinct. At some distance I could clearly distinguish the full accords of a guitar, sweetly swelling in the evening air, and several voices, which, while taking turns with one another, did not sing any definite theme, but gave suggestions of one in places wherever the melody was most pronounced.

The theme was in somewhat the nature of a mazurka, sweet and graceful. The voices sounded now near at hand, now far distant; now a bass was heard, now a tenor, now a falsetto such as the Tyrolese warblers are wont to sing.

It was not a song, but the graceful, masterly sketch of a song. I could not comprehend what it was, but it was beautiful.

Those voluptuous, soft chords of the guitar, that sweet, gentle melody, that solitary figure of the man in black, amid the fantastic environment of the dark lake, the gleaming moon, and the twin spires of the cathedral rising in majestic silence, and the black tops of the poplars, — all was strange and perfectly beautiful, or at least seemed so to me.

All the confused, arbitrary impressions of life suddenly became full of meaning and beauty. It seemed to me as if a fresh fragrant flower had sprung up in my soul. In place of the weariness, dullness, and indifference toward everything in the world, which I had been feeling the moment before, I experienced a necessity for love, a fullness of hope, and an unbounded enjoyment of life.

“What does thou desire, what doest thou long for?” an inner voice seemed to say. “Here it is. Thou art surrounded on all sides by beauty and poetry. Breathe it in, in full, deep draughts, as long as thou hast strength. Enjoy it to the full extent of thy capacity ‘T is all thine, all blessed!” ....

I drew nearer. The little man was, as it seemed, a traveling Tyrolese. He stood before the windows of the hotel, one leg advanced, his head thrown back; and, as he thrummed on the guitar, he sang his graceful song in all those different voices.

I immediately felt an affection for this man, and a gratefulness for the change which he had brought about in me.

The singer, as far as I was able to judge, was dressed in an old black coat. He had short black hair, and he wore a civilian’s hat which was no longer new. There was nothing artistic in his attire, but his clever and youthfully gay motions and pose, together with his diminutive stature, formed a pleasing and at the same time pathetic spectacle.

On the steps, in the windows, and on the balconies of the brilliantly lighted hotel, stood ladies handsomely decorated and attired, gentlemen with polished collars, porters and lackeys in gold-embroidered liveries; in the street, in the semicircle of the crowd, and farther along on the sidewalk, among the lindens, were gathered groups of well-dressed waiters, cooks in white caps and aprons, and young girls wandering about with arms about each others’ waists.

All, it seemed, were under the influence of the same feeling as I myself experienced. All stood in silence around the singer, and listened attentively. Silence reigned, except in the pauses of the song, when there came from far away across the waters the regular click of a



hammer, and from the Froschenburg shore rang in fascinating, monotone the voices of the frogs, interrupted by the mellow, monotonous call of the quail.

The little man in the darkness, in the midst of the street, poured out his heart like a nightingale, in couplet after couplet, song after song. Though I had come close to him, his singing continued to give me greater and greater gratification.

His voice, which was of great power, was extremely pleasant and tender; the taste and feeling for rhythm which he displayed in the control of it were extraordinary, and proved that he had great natural gifts.

After he sung each couplet, he invariably repeated the theme in variation, and it was evident that all his graceful variations came to him at the instant, spontaneously.

Among the crowd, and above on the Schweitzerhof, and near by on the boulevard, were heard frequent murmurs of approval, though generally the most respectful silence reigned.

The balconies and the windows kept filling more and more with handsomely dressed men and women leaning on their elbows, and picturesquely illuminated by the lights in the house.

Promenaders came to a halt, and in the darkness on the quay stood men and women in little groups. Near me, at some distance from the common crowd, stood an aristocratic cook and lackey, smoking their cigars. The cook was forcibly impressed by the music, and at every high falsetto note enthusiastically nodded his head to the lackey, and nudged him with his elbow with an expression of astonishment which seemed to say, "How he sings! hey?"

The lackey, by whose undissimulated smile I could mark the depth of feeling he experienced, replied to the cook's nudges by shrugging his shoulders, as if to show that it was hard enough for him to be made enthusiastic, and that he had heard much better music.

In one of the pauses of his song, while the minstrel was clearing his throat, I asked the lackey who he was, and if he often came there. "Twice in the summer he comes here," replied the lackey. "He is from Aargau; he gets his livelihood by begging." "Tell me, do many like him come round here?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," replied the lackey, not comprehending the full force of what I asked; but immediately after, recollecting himself, he added, "Oh, no. This one is the only one I ever heard here. No one else."

At this moment the little man had finished his first song, was briskly twanging his guitar, and said something in his German patois, which I could not understand, but which brought forth a hearty round of laughter from the surrounding throng.

"What was that he said?" I asked.

"He said his throat is dried up, he would like some wine," replied the lackey, who was standing near me.

"What? is he rather fond of the glass?"

"Yes, all that sort of people are," replied the lackey, smiling and pointing at the minstrel.

The minstrel took off his cap, and swinging his guitar went toward the hotel. Raising his head, he addressed the ladies and gentlemen standing by the windows and on the balconies, saying in a half-Italian, half-German accent, and with the same intonation as jugglers use in speaking to their audiences: —

"Messieurs et mesdames, si vous croyez que je gagne quelque chose, vous vous trompez: je ne suis qu'un pauvre tiaple."

He stood in silence a moment, but as no one gave him anything, he once more took up his guitar, and said: —

"A présent, messieurs et mesdames, je vous chanterai l'air du Righi."

His hotel audience made no response, but stood in expectation of the coming song. Below on the street a laugh went round, probably in Part because he had expressed himself so strangely, and in Part because no one had given him anything.

I gave him a few centimes, which he deftly changed from one hand to the other, and bestowed them in his vest-pocket; and then, replacing

his cap, began once more to sing; it was the graceful, sweet Tyrolese melody which he had called \*l'air du Righi.

This song, which formed the last on his programme, was even better than the preceding, and from all sides in the wondering throng were heard sounds of approbation.

He finished. Again he swung his guitar, took off his cap, held it out in front of him, went two or three steps nearer to the windows, and again repeated his stock phrase: "Messieurs et mesdames, si vous croyez que je gagne quelque chose," which he evidently considered to be very shrewd and witty; but in his voice and motions I perceived now a certain irresolution and childish timidity which were especially touching in a person of such diminutive stature.

This elegant public, still picturesquely grouped in the lighted windows and on the balconies, were shining in their rich attire; a few conversed in soberly discreet tones, apparently about the singer who was standing there below them with outstretched hand; others gazed down with attentive curiosity on the little black figure; on one balcony could be heard a young girl's merry, ringing laughter.

In the crowd below the talk and laughter kept growing louder and louder.

The singer for the third time repeated his phrase, but in a still weaker voice, and did not even end the sentence; and again he stretched his hand with his cap, but instantly drew it back. Again, not one of those brilliantly dressed scores of people standing to listen to him threw him a penny.

The crowd laughed heartlessly.

The little singer, so it seemed to me, shrunk more into himself, took his guitar into his other hand, lifted his cap, and said: —

"Messieurs et mesdames, je vous remercie, et je vous souhais une bonne nuit."

Then he put on his hat.

The crowd cackled with laughter and satisfaction. The handsome ladies and gentlemen, clamly exchanging remarks, withdrew gradually from

the balconies. On the boulevard the promenading began once more. The street, which had been still during the singing, assumed its wonted liveliness; a few men, however, stood at some distance, and, without approaching the singer, looked at him and laughed.

I heard the little man muttering something between his teeth, as he turned away; and I saw him, apparently growing more and more diminutive, start toward the city with brisk steps. The promenaders, who had been looking at him, followed him at some distance, still making merry at his expense. ....

My mind was in a whirl; I could not comprehend what it all meant; and still standing in the same place, I gazed abstractedly into the darkness after the little man, who was fast disappearing, as he went with ever increasing swiftness with long strides into the city, followed by the merrymaking promenaders.

I was overmastered by a feeling of pain, of bitterness, and, above all, of shame for the little man, for the crowd, for myself, as if it were I who had asked for money and received none; as if it were I who had been turned to ridicule.

Without looking any longer, feeling my heart oppressed, I also hurried with long strides toward the entrance of the Schweitzerhof. I could not explain the feeling that overmastered me; only there was something like a stone, from which I could not free myself, weighing down my soul and oppressing me.

At the stately, well-lighted entrance I met the Swiss, who politely made way for me. An English family was also at the door. A portly, handsome, tall gentleman, with black side-whiskers, in a black hat, and with a plaid on one arm, while in his hand he carried a costly cane, came out slowly, and full of importance. Leaning on his arm was a lady, who wore a raw silk gown and a bonnet with bright ribbons and the most charming laces. With them was a pretty, fresh-looking young lady, in a graceful Swiss hat, with a feather, à la mousquetaire; from under it escaped long, light yellow curls, softly encircling her fair face. In front of them skipped a buxom girl of ten, with round, white knees which showed

from under her thin embroideries. "What a lovely night!" the lady was saying in a sweet, happy voice, as I passed them.

"Oh, yes," growled the Englishman, lazily; and it was evident that he found it so enjoyable to be alive in the world, that it was too much trouble even to speak.

And it seemed as if all of them alike found it so comfortable and easy, so light and free, to be alive in the world, their faces and motions expressed such perfect indifference to the lives of every one else, and such absolute confidence, that it was to them that the Swiss made way, and bowed so profoundly, and that when they returned they would find clean, comfortable beds and rooms, and that all this was bound to be, and was their indefeasible right, that I could not help contrasting them with the wandering minstrel, who, weary, perhaps hungry, full of shame, was retreating before the laughing crowd. And then, suddenly, I comprehended what it was that oppressed my heart with such a load of heaviness, and I felt an indescribable anger against these people.

Twice I walked up and down past the Englishman, and each time, without turning out for him, my elbow punched him, which gave me a feeling of indescribable satisfaction; and then, darting down the steps, I hastened through the darkness in the direction taken by the little man on his way to the city.

Overtaking three men, walking together, I asked them where the singer was; they laughed, and pointed straight ahead. There he was, walking alone with brisk steps; no one was with him; all the time, as it seemed to me, he was indulging in bitter monologue.

I caught up with him, and proposed to him to go somewhere with me and drink a bottle of wine. He kept on with his rapid walk, and looked at me indignantly; but when it dawned on him what I meant, he halted.

"Well, I will not refuse, if you are so kind," said he; "here is a little café, we can go in there. It's very ordinary," he added, pointing to a drinking-salon that was still open.

His expression “very ordinary” involuntarily suggested to my mind the idea of not going to a very ordinary café, but to go to the Schweitzerhof, where those who had been listening to him were. Notwithstanding the fact that several times he showed a sort of timid disquietude at the idea of going to the Schweitzerhof, declaring that it was too fashionable for him there, still I insisted on carrying out my purpose; and he, already pretending that he was not in the least abashed, and gayly swinging his guitar, went back with me across the quay.

A few loiterers who had happened along as I was talking with the minstrel, and had stopped to hear what I had to say, now, after arguing among themselves, followed us to the very entrance of the hotel, evidently expecting from the Tyrolese some further demonstration.

I ordered a bottle of wine of a waiter whom I met in the hall. The waiter smiled and looked at us, and went by without answering. The head waiter, to whom I addressed myself with the same order, listened to me and, measuring the minstrel’s modest little figure from head to foot, sternly ordered the waiter to take us to the room at the left.

The room at the left was a bar-room for simple people. In the corner of this room a hunchbacked maid was washing dishes. The whole furniture consisted of bare wooden tables and benches.

The waiter who came to serve us looked at us with a supercilious smile, thrust his hands in his pockets, and exchanged some remarks with the humpbacked dishwasher. He evidently tried to give us to understand that he felt himself immeasurably higher than the minstrel, both in dignity and social position, so that he considered it not only an indignity, but actually ridiculous, that he was called on to serve us.

“Do you wish vin ordinaire?” he asked, with a knowing look, winking toward my companion and switching his napkin from one hand to the other.

“Champagne, and your very best,” said I, endeavoring to assume my haughtiest and most imposing appearance.

But neither my champagne, nor my endeavor to look haughty and imposing, had the least effect on the servant; he smiled incredulously, loitered a moment or two gazing at us, took time enough to glance at his gold watch, and with leisurely steps, as if going out for a walk, left the room.

Soon he returned with the wine, bringing two other waiters with him. These two sat down near the dishwasher, and gazed at us with amused attention and a bland smile, just as parents gaze at their children when they are gently playing. Only the humpbacked dishwasher, it seemed to me, did not look at us scornfully but sympathetically.

Though it was trying and awkward to lunch with the minstrel, and to play the entertainer, under the fire of all these waiters' eyes, I tried to do my duty with as little constraint as possible. In the lighted room I could see him better. He was a small but symmetrically built and muscular man, though almost a dwarf in stature; he had bristly black hair, teary big black eyes, bushy eyebrows, and a thoroughly pleasant, attractively shaped mouth. He had little side-whiskers, his hair was short, his attire was very simple and mean. He was not over-clean, was ragged and sunburnt, and in general had the look of a laboring-man. He was far more like a poor tradesman than an artist.

Only in his ever humid and brilliant eyes, and in his firm mouth, was there any sign of originality or genius. By his face it might be conjectured that his age was between twenty-five and forty; in reality, he was thirty-seven.

Here is what he related to me, with good-natured readiness and evident sincerity, of his life. He was a native of Aargau. In early childhood he had lost father and mother; other relatives he had none. He had never owned any property. He had been apprenticed to a carpenter; but twenty-two years previously one of his arms had been attacked by caries, which had prevented him from ever working again.

From childhood he had been fond of singing, and he began to be a singer. Occasionally strangers had given him money. With this he had

learned his profession, bought his guitar, and now for eighteen years he had been wandering about through Switzerland and Italy, singing before hotels. His whole luggage consisted of his guitar, and a little purse in which, at the present time, there was only a franc and a half. That would have to suffice for supper and lodgings this night.

Every year now for eighteen years he had made the round of the best and most popular resorts of Switzerland, — Zurich, Lucerne, Interlaken, Chamounix, etc.; by the way of the St. Bernard he would go down into Italy, and return over the St. Gotthard, or through Savoy. Just at present it was rather hard for him to walk, as he had caught a cold, causing him to suffer from some trouble in his legs, — he called it Gliederzucht, or rheumatism, — which grew more severe from year to year; and, moreover, his voice and eyes had grown weaker. Nevertheless, he was on his way to Interlaken, Aix-les-Bains, and thence over the little St. Bernard to Italy, which he was very fond of. It was evident that on the whole he was well content with his life. When I asked him why he returned home, if he had any relatives there, or a house and land, his mouth parted in a gay smile, and he replied, “Oui, le sucre est bon, il est doux pour les enfants!” and he winked at the servants.

I did not catch his meaning, but the group of servants burst out laughing.

“No, I have nothing of the sort, but still I should always want to go back,” he explained to me. “I go home because there is always a something that draws one to one’s native place.”

And once more he repeated with a shrewd, self-satisfied smile, his phrase, “Oui, le sucre est bon,” and then laughed good-naturedly.

The servants were very much amused, and laughed heartily; only the hunchbacked dish-washer looked earnestly from her big kindly eyes at the little man, and picked up his cap for him, when, as we talked, he once knocked it off the bench. I have noticed that wandering minstrels, acrobats, even jugglers, delight in calling themselves artists, and several times I hinted to my comrade that he was an artist; but he did not at all



accept this designation, but with perfect simplicity looked on his work as a means of existence.

When I asked him if he had not himself written the songs which he sang, he showed great surprise at such a strange question, and replied that the words of whatever he sang were all of old Tyrolese origin.

“But how about that song of the Righi? I think that cannot be very ancient,” I suggested.

“Oh, that was composed about fifteen years ago. There was a German in Basle; he was a clever man; it was he who composed it. A splendid song. You see he composed it especially for travelers.”

And he began to repeat the words of the Righi song, which he liked so well, translated them into French as he went along.

“If you wish to go to Righi, You will not need shoes to Wegis (For you go that far by steamboat), But from Wegis take a stout staff, Also on your arm a maiden; Drink a glass of wine on starting, Only do not drink too freely, For if you desire to drink here, You must earn the right to, first.”

“Oh! a splendid song!” he exclaimed, as he finished. The servants, evidently, also found the song much to their mind, because they came up closer to us.

“Yes, but who was it composed the music?” I asked.

“Oh, no one at all; you know you must have something new when you are going to sing for strangers.”

When the ice was brought, and I had given my comrade a glass of champagne, he seemed somewhat ill at ease, and, glancing at the servants, he turned and twisted on the bench.

We touched our glasses to the health of all artists; he drank half a glass, then he seemed to be collecting his ideas, and knit his brows in deep thought.

“It is long since I have tasted such wine, je ne vous dis que ça. In Italy the vino d’Asti is excellent, but this is still better. Ah! Italy; it is splendid to be there!” he added.

“Yes, there they know how to appreciate music and artists,” said I, trying to bring him round to the evening’s mischance before the Schweitzerhof.

“No,” he replied. “There, as far as music is concerned, I cannot give anybody satisfaction. The Italians are themselves musicians, — none like them in the world; but I know only Tyrolese songs. They are something of a novelty to them, though.”

“Well, you find rather more generous gentlemen there, don’t you?” I went on to say, anxious to make him share in my resentment against the guests of the Schweitzerhof. “There it would not be possible to find a big hotel frequented by rich people, where, out of a hundred listening to an artist’s singing, not one would give him anything.”

My question utterly failed of the effect that I expected. It did not enter his head to be indignant with them; on the contrary, he saw in my remark an implied slur on his talent which had failed of its reward, and he hastened to set himself right before me. “It is not every time that you get anything,” he remarked; “sometimes one isn’t in good voice, or you are tired; now today I have been walking ten hours, and singing almost all the time. That is hard. And these important aristocrats do not always care to listen to Tyrolese songs.”

“But still, how can they help giving?” I insisted. He did not comprehend my remark.

“That’s nothing,” he said; “but here the principal thing is, on est tres serré pour la police that’s what’s the trouble. Here, according to these republican laws, you are not allowed to sing; but in Italy you can go wherever you please, no one says a word. Here, if they want to let you, they let you; but if they don’t want to, then they can throw you into jail.”

“What? That’s incredible!”

“Yes, it is true. If you have been wanted once, and are found singing again, they may put you in jail. I was kept there three months once,” he said, smiling as if that were one of his pleasantest recollections.

“Oh! that is terrible!” I exclaimed. “What was the reason?”

“That was in consequence of one of the new laws of the republic,” he went on to explain, growing animated. “They cannot comprehend here that a poor fellow must earn his living somehow. If I were not a cripple, I would work. But what harm do I do to any one in the world by my singing? What does it mean? The rich can live as they wish, but un pauvre tiaple like myself can’t live at all. What does it mean by laws of the republic? If that is the way they run, then we don’t want a republic. Isn’t that so, my dear sir? We don’t want a republic, but we want ... we simply want ... we want” ... he hesitated a little, ... “we want natural laws.”

I filled up his glass.

“You are not drinking,” I said.

He took the glass in his hand, and bowed to me.

“I know what you wish,” he said, blinking his eyes at me, and threatening me with his finger. “You wish to make me drunk, so as to see what you can get out of me; but no, you shan’t have that gratification.”

“Why should I make you drunk?” I inquired. “All I wished was to give you a pleasure.”

He seemed really sorry that he had offended me by interpreting my insistence so harshly. He grew confused, stood up, and touched my elbow.

“No, no,” said he, looking at me with a beseeching expression in his moist eyes. “I was only joking.”

And immediately after he made use of some horribly uncultivated slang expression, intended to signify that I was, nevertheless, a fine young man.

“Je ne vous dis que ça,” he said in conclusion.

In this fashion the minstrel and I continued to drink and converse; and the waiters continued to stare at us unceremoniously, and, as it seemed, to ridicule us.

In spite of the interest which our conversation aroused in me, I could not avoid taking notice of their behavior; and I confess I began to grow more and more angry.

One of the waiters arose, came up to the little man, and, looking at the top of his head, began to smile. I was already full of wrath against the inmates of the hotel, and had not yet had a chance to pour it out on any one; and now I confess I was in the highest degree irritated by this audience of waiters.

The Swiss, not removing his hat, came into the room, and sat down near me, leaning his elbows on the table. This last circumstance, which was so insulting to my dignity or my vainglory, completely enraged me, and gave an outlet for all the wrath which the whole evening long had been boiling within me. Why had he so humbly bowed when he had met me before, and now, because I was sitting with the traveling minstrel, did he come and take his place near me so rudely? I was entirely overmastered by that boiling, angry indignation which I enjoy in myself, which I sometimes endeavor to stimulate when it comes over me, because it has an exhilarating effect on me, and gives me, if only for a short time, a certain extraordinary flexibility, energy, and strength in all my physical and moral faculties.

I leaped to my feet.

“Whom are you laughing at?” I screamed at the waiter; and I felt my face turn pale, and my lips involuntarily set together.

“I am not laughing, I only ... “ replied the waiter, moving away from me.

“Yes, you are; you are laughing at this gentleman. And what right have you to come, and to take a seat here, when there are guests? Don’t you dare to sit down!” The Swiss, muttering something, got up and turned to the door.

“What right have you to make sport of this gentleman, and to sit down by him, when he is a guest, and you are a waiter? Why didn’t you laugh at me this evening at dinner, and come and sit down beside me?

Because he is meanly dressed, and sings in the streets? Is that the reason? and because I have better clothes? He is poor, but he is a thousand times better than you are; that I am sure of, because he has never insulted any one, but you have insulted him.”

“I didn’t mean anything,” replied my enemy, the waiter. “Did I disturb him by sitting doen?”

The waiter did not understand me, and my German was wasted on him. The rude Swiss was about to take the waiter's Part; but I fell upon him so impetuously that the Swiss pretended not to understand me, and waved his hand.

The hunchbacked dish-washer, either because she perceived my wrathful state, and feared a scandal, or possibly because she shared my views, took my Part, and, trying to force her way between me and the porter, told him to hold his tongue, saying that I was right, but at the same time urging me to calm myself.

"Der Herr hat Recht; Sie haben Recht," she said over and over again. The minstrel's face presented a most pitiable, terrified expression; and evidently he did not understand why I was angry, and what I wanted; and he urged me to let him go away as soon as possible.

But the eloquence of wrath burned within me more and more. I understood it all, — the throng that had made merry at his expense, and his auditors who had not given him anything; and not for all the world would I have held my peace.

I believe that, if the waiters and the Swiss had not been so submissive, I should have taken delight in having a brush with them, or striking the defenseless English girl on the head with a stick. If at that moment I had been at Sevastopol, I should have taken delight in devoting myself to slaughtering and killing in the English trench.

"And why did you take this gentleman and me into this room, and not into the other? What?" I thundered at the swiss, seizing him by the arm so that he could not escape from me. "What right had you to judge by his appearance that this gentleman must be served in this room, and not in that? Have not all guests who pay equal rights in hotels? Not only in a republic, but in all the world! Your scurvy republic! ... Equality, indeed! You would not dare to take an Englishman into this room, not even those Englishmen who have heard this gentleman free of cost; that is, who have stolen from him, each one of them, the few centimes which ought to have been given to him. How did you dare to take us to this room?"

“That room is closed,” said the porter.

“No,” I cried, “that isn’t true; it isn’t closed.”

“Then you know best.”

“I know ... I know that you are lying.”

The Swiss turned his back on me.

“Eh! What is to be said?” he muttered.

“What is to be said?” I cried. “Now conduct us instantly into that room!”

In spite of the dish-washer’s warning, and the entreaties of the minstrel, who would have preferred to go home, I insisted on seeing the head waiter, and went with my guest into the big dining-room. The head waiter, hearing my angry voice, and seeing my menacing face, avoided a quarrel, and, with contemptuous servility, said that I might go wherever I pleased. I could not prove to the Swiss that he had lied, because he had hastened out of sight before I went into the hall.

The dining-room was, in fact, open and lighted; and at one of the tables sat an Englishman and a lady, eating their supper. Although we were shown to a special table, I took the dirty minstrel to the very one where the Englishman was, and bade the waiter bring to us there the unfinished bottle.

The two guests at first looked with surprised, then with angry, eyes at the little man, who, more dead than alive, was sitting near me. They talked together in a low tone; then the lady pushed back her plate, her silk dress rustled, and both of them left the room. Through the glass doors I saw the Englishman saying something in an angry voice to the waiter, and pointing with his hand in our direction. The waiter put his head through the door, and looked at us. I waited with pleasurable anticipation for some one to come and order us out, for then I could have found a full outlet for all my indignation. But fortunately, thought at the time I felt injured, we were left in peace. The minstrel, who before had fought shy of the wine, now eagerly drank all that was left in the bottle, so that he might make his escape as quickly as possible.

He, however, expressed his gratitude with deep feeling, as it seemed to me, for his entertainment. His teary eyes grew still more humid and brilliant, and he made use of a most strange and complicated phrase of gratitude. But still very pleasant to me was the sentence in which he said that if everybody treated artists as I had been doing, it would be very good, and ended by wishing me all manner of happiness. We went out into the hall together. There stood the servants, and my enemy the Swiss apparently airing his grievances against me before them. All of them, I thought, looked at me as if I were a man who had lost his wits. I treated the little man exactly like an equal, before all that audience of servants; and then, with all the respect that I was able to express in my behavior, I took off my hat, and pressed his hand with its dry and hardened fingers.

The servants pretended not to pay the slightest attention to me. Only one of them indulged in a sarcastic laugh. As soon as the minstrel had bowed himself out, and disappeared in the darkness, I went up-stairs to my room, intending to sleep off all these impressions and the foolish, childish anger which had come upon me so unexpectedly. But, finding that I was too much excited to sleep, I once more went down into the street with the intention of walking until I should have recovered my equanimity, and, I must confess, with the secret hope that I might accidentally come across the porter or the waiter or the Englishman, and show them all their rudeness, and, most of all, their unfairness. But beyond the Swiss, who when he saw me turned his back, I met no one; and I began to promenade in absolute solitude back and forth along the quay.

“This is an example of the strange fate of poetry,” said I to myself, having grown a little calmer. “All love it, all are in search of it; it is the only thing in life that men love and seek, and yet no one recognizes its power, no one prizes this best treasure of the world, and those who give it to men are not rewarded. Ask any one you please, ask all these guests of the schweitzerhof, what is the most precious treasure in the world, and all, or ninety-nine out of a hundred, putting on a sardonic expression, will say that the best thing in the world is money.

“‘Maybe, though, this does not please you, or coincide with your elevated ideas,’ it will be urged; ‘but what is to be done if human life is so constituted that money alone is capable of giving a man happiness? I cannot force my mind not to see the world as it is,’ it will be added, ‘that is, to see the truth.’

“Pitiable is your intellect, pitiable the happiness which you desire! And you yourselves, unhappy creatures, not knowing what you desire, ... why have you all left your fatherland, your relatives, your money-making trades and occupations, and come to this little Swiss city of Lucerne? Why did you all this evening gather on the balconies, and in respectful silence listen to the little beggar’s song? And if he had been willing to sing longer, you would have been silent and listened longer. What! could money, even millions of it, have driven you all from your country, and brought you all together in this little nook of Lucerne? Could money have gathered you all on the balconies to stand for half an hour silent and motionless? No! One thing compels you to do it, and will forever have a stronger influence than all the other impulses of life: the longing for poetry which you know, which you do not realize, but feel, always will feel as long as you have any human sensibilities. The word ‘poetry’ is a mockery to you; you make use of it as a sort of ridiculous reproach; you regard the love for poetry as something meant for children and silly girls, and you make sport of them for it. For yourselves you must have something more definite.

“But children look upon life in a healthy way; they recognize and love what man ought to love, and what gives happiness. But life has so deceived and perverted you, that you ridicule the only thing that you really love, and you seek for what you hate and for what gives you unhappiness.

“You are so perverted that you did not perceive what obligations you were under to the poor Tyrolese who rendered you a pure delight; but at the same time you feel needlessly obliged to humiliate yourselves before some lord, which gives you neither pleasure nor profit, but rather causes you to sacrifice your comfort and convenience. What absurdity! what incomprehensible lack of reason!



“But it was not this that made the most powerful impression on me this evening. This blindness to all that gives happiness, this unconsciousness of poetic enjoyment, I can almost comprehend, or at least I have become wonted to it, since I have almost everywhere met with it in the course of my life; the harsh, unconscious churlishness of the crowd was no novelty to me; whatever those who argue in favor of popular sentiment may say, the throng is a conglomeration of very possibly good people, but of people who touch each other only on their coarse animal sides, and express only the weakness and harshness of human nature. But how was it that you, children of a free, humane people, you christians, you simply as human beings, repaid with coldness and ridicule the poor beggar who gave you a pure enjoyment? But no, in your country there are asylums for beggars. There are no beggars, there must be none; and there must be no feelings of sympathy, since that would be a confession that beggary existed.

“But he labored, he gave you enjoyment, he besought you to give him something of your superfluity in payment for his labor of which you took advantage. But you looked on him with a cool smile as on one of the curiosities in your lofty brilliant palaces; and though there were a hundred of you, favored with happiness and wealth, not one man or one woman among you gave him a sou. Abashed he went away from you, and the thoughtless throng, laughing, followed and ridiculed not you, but him, because you were cold, harsh, and dishonorable; because you robbed him in receiving the entertainment which he gave you; for this you jeered him.

“On the 19th of July, 1857, in Lucerne, before the Schweitzerhof Hotel, in which were lodging very opulent people, a wandering beggar minstrel sang for half an hour his songs, and played his guitar. About a hundred people listened to him. The minstrel thrice asked all to give him something. No one person gave him a thing, and many made sport of him.

“This is not an invention, but an actual fact, as those who desire can find out for themselves by consulting the papers for the list of those who were at the schweitzerhof on the 19th of July.

“This is an event which the historians of our time ought to describe in letters of inextinguishable flame. This even is more significant and more serious, and fraught with far deeper meaning, than the facts that are printed in newspapers and histories. That the English have killed several thousand Chinese because the Chinese would not sell them anything for money while their land is overflowing with ringing coins; that the French have killed several thousand Kabyles because the wheat grows well in Africa, and because constant war is essential for the drill of an army; that the Turkish ambassador in Naples must not be a Jew; and that the Emperor Napoleon walks about in Plombières, and gives his people the express assurance that he rules only in direct accordance with the will of the people, — all these are words which darken or reveal something long known. But the episode that took place in Lucerne on the 19th of July seems to me something entirely novel and strange, and it is connected not with the everlastingly ugly side of human nature, but with a well-known epoch in the development of society. This fact is not for the history of human activities, but for the history of progress and civilization.

“Why is it that this inhuman fact, impossible in any German, French, or Italian country, is quite possible here where civilization, freedom, and equality are carried to the highest degree of development, where there are gathered together the most civilized travelers from the most civilized nations? Why is it that these people who, in their palaces, their meetings, and their societies, labor warmly for the condition of the celibate Chinese in India, about the spread of Christianity and culture in Africa, about the formation of societies for attaining all perfection, — why is it that they should not find in their souls the simple, primitive feeling of human sympathy?

Has such a feeling entirely disappeared, and has its place been taken by vainglory, ambition, and cupidity, governing these men in their palaces, meetings, and societies? Has the spreading of that reasonable, egotistical association of people, which we call civilization, destroyed and rendered nugatory the desire for instinctive and loving association? And is this that boasted equality for which so much innocent blood has

been shed, and so many crimes have been perpetrated? Is it possible that nations, like children, can be made happy by the mere sound of the word 'equality'?

"Equality before the law? Does the whole life of a people revolve within the sphere of law? Only the thousandth Part of it is subject to the law; the rest lies outside of it, in the sphere of the customs and intuitions of society.

"But in society the lackey is better dressed than the minstrel, and insults him with impunity. I am better dressed than the lackey, and insult him with impunity. The Swiss considers me higher, but the minstrel lower, than himself; when I made the minstrel my companion, he felt that he was on an equality with us both, and behaved rudely. I was impudent to the Swiss, and the Swiss acknowledged that he was inferior to me. The waiter was impudent to the minstrel, and the minstrel accepted the fact that he was inferior to the waiter.

"And is that government free, even though men seriously call it free, where a single citizen can be thrown into prison, because, without harming any one, without interfering with any one, he does the only thing he can to prevent himself from dying of starvation?

"A wretched, pitiable creature is man with his craving for positive solutions, thrown into this everlastingly tossing, limitless ocean of good and evil, of facts, of combinations and contradictions. For centuries men have been struggling and laboring to put the good on one side, the evil on the other. Centuries will pass, and no matter how much the unprejudiced mind may strive to decide where the balance lies between the good and the evil, the scales will refuse to tip the beam, and there will always be equal quantities of the good and the evil on each scale.

"If only man would learn to form judgments, and not indulge in rash and arbitrary thoughts, and not to make reply to questions that are propounded merely to remain forever unanswered! If only he would learn that; every thought is both a lie and a truth!-a lie from the one-

sidedness and inability of man to recognize all truth; and true because it expresses one side of mortal endeavor. There are divisions in this everlastingly tumultuous, endless, endlessly confused chaos of the good and the evil. They have drawn imaginary lines over this ocean, and they contend that the ocean is really thus divided.

“But are there not millions of other possible subdivisions from absolutely different standpoints, in other planes? Certainly these novel subdivisions will be made in centuries to come, just as millions of different ones have been made in centuries past.

“Civilization is good, barbarism is evil; freedom, good, slavery, evil. Now this imaginary knowledge annihilates the instinctive, beatific, primitive craving for the good which is in human nature. And who will explain to me what is freedom, what is despotism, what is civilization, what is barbarism?

“Where are the boundaries that separate them? And whose soul possesses so absolute a standard of good and evil as to measure these fleeting, complicated facts? Whose intellect is so great as to comprehend and weigh all the facts in the irretrievable past? And who can find any circumstance in which good and evil do not exist together? And because I know that I see more of one than of the other, is it not because my standpoint is wrong? And who has the ability to separate himself so absolutely from life, even for a moment, as to look upon it independently from above?

“One, only one infallible Guide we have, — the universal Spirit which penetrates all collectively and as units, which has endowed each of us with the craving for the right; the Spirit which commands the tree to grow toward the sun, which commands the flower in autumn-tide to scatter its seed, and which commands each one of us unconsciously to draw closer together. And this one unerring, inspiring voice rings out louder than the noisy, hasty development of civilization.

“Who is the greater man, and who the greater barbarian, — that lord, who, seeing the minstrel’s well-worn clothes, angrily left the table, who

gave him not the millionth Part of his possessions in payment of his labor, and now lazily sitting in his brilliant, comfortable room, calmly expresses his opinion about the events that are happening in China, and justifies the massacres that have been done there; or the little minstrel, who, risking imprisonment, with a franc in his pocket, and doing no harm to any one, has been going about for a score of years, up hill and down dale, rejoicing men's hearts with his songs, though they have jeered at him, and almost cast him out of the pale of humanity; and who, in weariness and cold and shame, has gone off to sleep, no one knows where, on his filthy straw?"

At this moment, from the city, through the dead silence of the night, far, far away, I caught the sound of the little man's guitar and his voice. "No," something involuntarily said to me, "you have no right to commiserate the little man, or to blame the lord for his well-being. Who can weigh the inner happiness which is found in the soul of each of these men? There he stands somewhere in the muddy road, and gazes at the brilliant moonlit sky, and gayly sings amid the smiling, fragrant night; in his soul there is no reproach, no anger, no regret. And who knows what is transpiring now in the hearts of all these men within those opulent, brilliant rooms? Who knows if they all have as much unencumbered, sweet delight in life, and as much satisfaction with the world, as dwells in the soul of that little man?"

"Endless are the mercy and wisdom of Him who has permitted and formed all these contradictions. Only to thee, miserable little worm of the dust, audaciously, lawlessly attempting to fathom His laws, His designs, — only to thee do they seem like contradictions.

"Full of love He looks down from His bright, immeasurable height, and rejoices in the endless harmony in which you all move in endless contradictions. In thy pride thou hast thought thyself able to separate thyself from the laws of the universe. No, thou also, with thy petty, ridiculous anger against the waiters, — thou also hast disturbed the harmonious craving for the eternal and the infinite." ....

Albert

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

## Chapter I

Five wealthy young men had come, after two in the morning, to amuse themselves at a small Petersburg Party.

Much champagne had been drunk, most of the men were very young, the girls were pretty, the piano and violin indefatigably played one polka after another, and dancing and noise went on unceasingly: yet for some reason it was dull and awkward, and, as often happens, everybody felt that it was all unnecessary and was not the thing.

Several times they tried to get things going, but forced merriment was worse even than boredom.

One of the five young men, more dissatisfied than the others with himself, with the others, and with the whole evening, rose with a feeling of disgust, found his hat, and went out quietly, intending to go home.

There was no one in the ante-room, but in the adjoining room he heard two voices disputing. The young man stopped to listen.

“You can’t, there are guests there,” said a woman’s voice.

“Let me in, please. I’m all right!” a man’s weak voice entreated.

“No, I won’t let you in without Madame’s permission,” said the woman.

“Where are you going? Ah! What a man you are!”

The door burst open and a strange figure of a man appeared on the threshold. The servant on seeing a visitor no longer protested, and the strange figure, bowing timidly, entered the room, swaying on his bent legs. He was of medium height, with a narrow, stooping back, and long tangled hair. He wore a short overcoat, and narrow torn trousers over a pair of rough uncleaned boots. A necktie, twisted into a cord, was

fastened round his long white neck. A dirty shirt showed from under his coat and hung over his thin hands.

Yet despite the extreme emaciation of his body, his face was white and delicate, and freshness and colour played on his cheeks above his scanty black beard and whiskers. His unkempt hair, thrown back, revealed a rather low and extremely clear forehead. His dark languid eyes looked softly, imploringly, and yet with dignity, before him. Their expression corresponded alluringly with that of the fresh lips, curved at the corners, which showed from under his thin moustache.

Having advanced a few steps he stopped, turned to the young man, and smiled. He seemed to smile with difficulty, but when the smile lit up his face the young man-without knowing why-smiled too.

“Who is that?” he whispered to the servant, when the strange figure had passed into the room from which came the sounds of a dance.

“A crazy musician from the theatre,” replied the maid. “He comes sometimes to see the mistress.”

“Where have you been, Delesov?” someone just then called out, and the young man, who was named Delesov, returned to the ballroom. The musician was standing at the door and, looking at the dancers, showed by his smile, his look, and the tapping of his foot, the satisfaction the spectacle afforded him.

“Come in and dance yourself,” said one of the visitors to him. The musician bowed and looked inquiringly at the hostess.

“Go, go ... Why not, when the gentlemen ask you to?” she said.

The thin, weak limbs of the musician suddenly came into active motion, and winking, smiling, and twitching, he began to prance awkwardly and heavily about the room. In the middle of the quadrille a merry officer, who danced very vivaciously and well, accidentally bumped into the musician with his back. The latter's weak and weary legs did not maintain their balance and after a few stumbling steps aside, he fell full length on the floor. Notwithstanding the dull thud produced by his fall, at first nearly everyone burst out laughing. But the musician did not get up. The visitors grew silent and even the piano ceased. Delesov and the

hostess were the first to run up to the fallen man. He was lying on his elbow, staring with dull eyes at the floor. When they lifted him and seated him on a chair, he brushed the hair back from his forehead with a quick movement of his bony hand and began to smile without answering their questions.

“Mr. Albert! Mr. Albert!” said the hostess. “Have you hurt yourself? Where? There now, I said you ought not to dance. He is so weak,” she continued, addressing her guests, “-he can hardly walk. How could he dance?”

“Who is he?” they asked her.

“A poor man-an artist. A very good fellow, but pitiable, as you see.”

She said this unembarrassed by the presence of the musician. He suddenly came to himself and, as if afraid of something, shrank into a heap and pushed those around him away.

“It’s all nothing!” he suddenly said, rising from his chair with an obvious effort.

And to show that he was not at all hurt he went into the middle of the room and tried to jump about, but staggered and would have fallen down again had someone not supported him.

Everyone felt awkward, and looking at him they all became silent.

The musician’s eyes again grew dim, and evidently oblivious of everyone he began rubbing his knee with his hand. Suddenly he raised his head, advanced a trembling leg, threw back his hair with the same heedless movement as before, and going up to the violinist took his violin from him.

“It’s nothing!” he said once more, flourishing the violin. “Gentlemen, let’s have some music!”

“What a strange person!” the visitors remarked to one another.

“Perhaps a fine talent is perishing in this unfortunate creature,” said one of the guests.

“Yes, he’s pitiable, pitiable!” said a third.



“What a beautiful face! ... There is something extraordinary about him,” said Delesov. “Let us see ... “

## Chapter II

Albert meanwhile, paying no attention to anyone, pressed the violin to his shoulder and paced slowly up and down by the piano tuning it. His lips took on an impassive expression, his eyes could not be seen, but his narrow bony back, his long white neck, his crooked legs and shaggy black head, presented a queer-but for some reason not at all ridiculous-spectacle. Having tuned the violin he briskly struck a chord, and throwing back his head turned to the pianist who was preparing to accompany him.

“Melancolie G-dur!” he said, addressing the pianist with a gesture of command. Then, as if begging forgiveness for that gesture, he smiled meekly, and glanced around at the audience with that same smile. Having pushed back his hair with the hand in which he held the bow, he stopped at the corner of the piano, and with a smooth and easy movement drew the bow across the strings. A clear melodious sound was borne through the room and complete silence ensued.

After that first note the theme flowed freely and elegantly, suddenly illumining the inner world of every listener with an unexpectedly clear and tranquilizing light. Not one false or exaggerated sound impaired the acquiescence of the listeners: the notes were all clear, elegant, and significant. Everyone silently followed their development with tremulous expectation. From the state of dullness, noisy distraction and mental torpor in which they had been, these people were suddenly and imperceptibly carried into another quite different world that they had forgotten.

Now a calm contemplation of the past arose in their souls, now an impassioned memory of some past happiness, now a boundless desire for power and splendour, now a feeling of resignation, of unsatisfied love and sadness. Sounds now tenderly sad, now vehemently despairing, mingled freely, flowing and flowing one after the other so

elegantly, so strongly, and so unconsciously, that the sounds themselves were not noticed, but there flowed of itself into the soul a beautiful torrent of poetry, long familiar but only now expressed. At each note Albert grew taller and taller.

He was far from appearing misshapen or strange. Pressing the violin with his chin and listening to his notes with an expression of passionate attention, he convulsively moved his feet. Now he straightened himself to his full height, now he strenuously bent his back. His left arm seemed to have become set in the bent position to which he had strained it and only the bony fingers moved convulsively: the right arm moved smoothly, elegantly, and almost imperceptibly. His face shone with uninterrupted, ecstatic joy; his eyes burnt with a bright, dry brilliance, his nostrils expanded, his red lips opened with delight.

Sometimes his head bent closer to the violin, his eyes closed, and his face, half covered by his hair, lit up with a smile of mild rapture. Sometimes he drew himself up rapidly, advancing one foot, and his clear brow and the beaming look he cast round the room gleamed with pride, dignity, and a consciousness of power. Once the pianist blundered and struck a wrong chord. Physical suffering was apparent in the whole face and figure of the musician. He paused for an instant and stamping his foot with an expression of childish anger, cried: "Moll, ce moll!" The Pianist recovered himself. Albert closed his eyes, smiled, and again forgetting himself, the others, and the whole world, gave himself up rapturously to his task.

All who were in the room preserved a submissive silence while Albert was playing, and seemed to live and breathe only in his music. The merry officer sat motionless on a chair by a window, directing a lifeless gaze upon the floor and breathing slowly and heavily. The girls sat in complete silence along the walls, and only occasionally threw approving and bewildered glances at one another. The hostess's fat smiling face expanded with pleasure. The pianist riveted his eyes on Albert's face and, with a fear of blundering which expressed itself in his whole taut figure, tried to keep up with him.

One of the visitors who had drunk more than the others lay prone on the sofa, trying not to move for fear of betraying his agitation. Delesov experienced an unaccustomed sensation. It was as if a cold circle, now expanding, now contracting, held his head in a vice. The roots of his hair became sensitive, cold shivers ran up his spine, something rising higher and higher in his throat pricked his nose and palate as if with fine needles, and tears involuntarily wetted his cheeks. He shook himself, tried to restrain them and wipe them unperceived, but others rose and ran down his cheeks. By some strange concatenation of impressions the first sounds of Albert's violin carried Delesov back to his early youth. Now no longer very young, tired of life and exhausted, he suddenly felt himself a self-satisfied, good-looking, blissfully foolish and unconsciously happy lad of seventeen.

He remembered his first love—for his cousin in a little pink dress;; remembered his first declaration of love made in a linden avenue; remembered the warmth and incomprehensible delight of a spontaneous kiss, and the magic and undivined mystery of the Nature that then surrounded him. In the memories that returned to him she shone out amid a mist of vague hopes, uncomprehended desires, and questioning faith in the possibility of impossible happiness. All the unappreciated moments of that time arose before him one after another, not as insignificant moments of a fleeting present, but as arrested, growing, reproachful images of the past. He contemplated them with joy, and wept—wept not because the time was past that he might have spent better (if he had it again he would not have undertaken to employ it better), but merely because it was past and would never return. Memories rose up of themselves, and Albert's violin repeated again and again: "For you that time of vigour, love, and happiness has passed for ever, and will not return. Weep for it, shed all your tears, die weeping for that time—that is the best happiness left for you."

Towards the end of the last variation Albert's face grew red, his eyes burnt and glowed, and large drops of perspiration ran down his cheeks. The veins of his forehead swelled up, his whole body came more and

more into motion, his pale lips no longer closed, and his whole figure expressed ecstatic eagerness for enjoyment.

Passionately swaying his whole body and tossing back his hair he lowered the violin, and with a smile of proud dignity and happiness surveyed the audience. Then his back sagged, his head hung down, his lips closed, his eyes grew dim, and he timidly glanced round as if ashamed of himself, and made his way stumblingly into the other room.

### Chapter III

Something strange occurred with everyone present and something strange was felt in the dead silence that followed Albert's playing. It was as if each would have liked to express what all this meant, but was unable to do so. What did it mean-this bright hot room, brilliant women, the dawn in the windows, excitement in the blood, and the pure impression left by sounds that had flowed past? But no one even tried to say what it all meant: on the contrary everyone, unable to dwell in those regions which the new impression had revealed to them, rebelled against it.

"He really plays well, you know!" said the officer.

"Wonderfully!" replied Delesov, stealthily wiping his cheek with his sleeve.

"However, it's time for us to be going," said the man who was lying on the sofa, having somewhat recovered. "We must give him something. Let's make a collection."

Meanwhile Albert sat alone on a sofa in the next room. Leaning his elbows on his bony knees he stroked his face and ruffled his hair with his moist and dirty hands, smiling happily to himself.

They made a good collection, which Delesov offered to hand to Albert. Moreover it had occurred to Delesov, on whom the music had made an unusual and powerful impression, to be of use to this man. It occurred to him to take him home, dress him, get him a place somewhere, and in general rescue him for his sordid condition.

"Well, are you tired?" he asked, coming up to him.

Albert smiled.

“You have real talent. You ought to study music seriously and give public performances.”

“I’d like to have something to drink,” said Albert, as if just awake. Delesov brought some wine, and the musician eagerly drank two glasses.

“What excellent wine!” he said.

“What a delightful thing that Melancolie is!” said Delesov.

“Oh, yes, yes!” replied Albert with a smile-“but excuse me: I don’t know with whom I have the honour of speaking, maybe you are a count, or a prince: could you, perhaps, lend me a little money?” He paused a little “I have nothing ... I am a poor man. I couldn’t pay it back.”

Delesov flushed: he felt awkward, and hastily handed the musician the money that had been collected.

“Thank you very much!” said Albert, seizing the money. “Now let’s have some music. I’ll play for you as much as you like-only let me have a drink of something, a drink...” he added rising.

Delesov brought him some more wine and asked him to sit beside him.

“Excuse me if I am frank with you,” he said, “your talent interests me so much. It seems to me you are not in good circumstances.”

Albert looked now at Delesov and now at his hostess who had entered the room.

“Allow me to offer you my services,” continued Delesov. “If you are in need of anything I should be glad if you would stay with me for a time. I am living alone and could perhaps be of use to you.”

Albert smiled and made no reply.

“Why don’t you thank him?” said the hostess. “Of course it is a godsend for you. Only I should not advise you to,” she continued, turning to Delesov and shaking her head disapprovingly.

“I am very grateful to you!” said Albert, pressing Delesov’s hand with his own moist ones-“Only let us have some music now, please.”

But the other visitors were preparing to leave, and despite Albert’s endeavours to persuade them to stay they went out into the hall.

Albert took leave of the hostess, put on his shabby broad-brimmed hat and old summer cloak, which was his only winter clothing, and went out into the porch with Delesov.

When Delesov had seated himself with his new acquaintance in his carriage, and became aware of the unpleasant odour of drunkenness and uncleanness which emanated so strongly from the musician, he began to repent of his action and blamed himself for childish softheartedness and imprudence. Besides, everything Albert said was so stupid and trivial, and the fresh air suddenly made him so disgustingly drunk that Delesov was repelled. "What am I to do with him?" he thought.

When they had driven for a quarter of an hour Albert grew silent, his hat fell down at his feet, and he himself tumbled into a corner of the carriage and began to snore. The wheels continued to creak monotonously over the frozen snow; the feeble light of dawn hardly penetrated the frozen windows.

Delesov turned and looked at his companion. The long body covered by the cloak lay lifelessly beside him. The long head with its big black nose seemed to sway on that body, but looking closer Delesov saw that what he had taken for nose and face was hair, and that the real face hung lower. He stooped and was able to distinguish Albert's features. Then the beauty of the forehead and calmly closed lips struck him again.

Under the influence of tired nerves, restlessness from lack of sleep at that hour of the morning, and of the music he had heard, Delesov, looking at that face, let himself again be carried back to the blissful world into which he had glanced that night; he again recalled the happy and magnanimous days of his youth and no longer repented of what he had done. At that moment he was sincerely and warmly attached to Albert, and firmly resolved to be of use to him.

#### Chapter IV

Next morning when he was awakened to go to his office, Delesov with a feeling of unpleasant surprise saw around him his old screen, his old valet, and his watch lying on the small side-table. "But what did I expect

to see if not what is always around me?" he asked himself. Then he remembered the musician's black eyes and happy smile, the motif of Melancolie, and all the strange experiences of the previous night passed through his mind.

He had no time however to consider whether he had acted well or badly by taking the musician into his house. While dressing he mapped out the day, took his papers, gave the necessary household orders, and hurriedly put on his overcoat and overshoes.

Passing the dining-room door he looked in. Albert, after tossing about, had sunk his face in the pillow, and lay in his dirty ragged shirt, dead asleep on the leather sofa where he had been deposited unconscious the night before. "There's something wrong!" thought Delesov involuntarily.

"Please go to Boryuzovski and ask him to lend me a violin for a couple of days," he said to his manservant. "When he wakes up, give him coffee and let him have some underclothing and old clothes of mine. In general, make him comfortable-please!"

On returning late in the evening Delesov was surprised not to find Albert.

"Where is he?" he asked his man.

"He went away immediately after dinner," replied the servant. "He took the violin and went away. He promised to be back in an hour, but he's not here yet."

"Tut, tut! How provoking!" muttered Delesov. "Why did you let him go, Zakhar?"

Zakhar was a Petersburg valet who had been in Delesov's service for eight years. Delesov, being a lonely bachelor, could not help confiding his intentions to him, and liked to know his opinions about all his undertakings.

"How could I dare not to let him?" Zakhar replied, toying with the fob of his watch. "If you had told me to keep him in I might have amused him at home. But you only spoke to me about clothes."

“Pshaw! How provoking! Well, and what was he doing here without me?”

Zakhar smiled.

“One can well call him an ‘artist’, sir. Note: In addition to its proper meaning, the word “artist” was used in Russian to denote a thief, or a man dextrous at anything, good or bad. As soon as he woke he asked for Madeira, and then he amused himself with the cook and with the neighbours manservant. He is so funny. However, he is good-natured. I gave him tea and brought him dinner. He would not eat anything himself, but kept inviting me to do so. But when it comes to playing the violin, even Izler has few artists like him. One may well befriend such a man. When he played Down the Little Mother Volga to us it was as if a man were weeping. It was too beautiful. Even the servants from all the flats came to our back entrance to hear him.”

“Well, and did you get him dressed?” his master interrupted him.

“Of course. I gave him a night-shirt of yours and put my own paletot on him. A man like that is worth helping—he really is a dear fellow!” Zakhar smiled.

“He kept asking me what your rank is, whether you have influential acquaintances, and how many serfs you own.”

“Well, all right, but now he must be found, and in future don’t let him have anything to drink, or it’ll be worse for him.”

“That’s true,” Zakhar interjected. “He is evidently feeble; our old master had a clerk like that...”

But Delesov who had long known the story of the clerk who took hopelessly to drink, did not let Zakhar finish, and telling him to get everything ready for the night, sent him out to find Albert and bring him back.

He then went to bed and put out the light, but could not fall asleep for a long time, thinking about Albert. “Though it may seem strange to many of my acquaintances,” he thought, “yet one so seldom does anything for others that one ought to thank God when such an opportunity presents itself, and I will not miss it. I will do anything-



positively anything in my power-to help him. He may not be mad at all, but only under the influence of drink. It won't cost me very much. Where there's enough for one there's enough for two. Let him live with me awhile, then we'll find him a place or arrange a concert for him and pull him out of the shallows, and then see what happens."

He experienced a pleasant feeling of self-satisfaction after this reflection. "Really I'm not altogether a bed fellow," he thought. "Not at all bad even-when I compare myself with others."

He was already falling asleep when the sound of opening doors and of footsteps in the hall roused him.

"Well, I'll be stricter with him," he thought, "that will be best; and I must do it."

He rang.

"Have you brought him back?" he asked when Zakhar entered.

"A pitiable man, sir," said Zakhar, shaking his head significantly and closing his eyes.

"Is he drunk?"

"He is very weak."

"And has he the violin?"

"I've brought it back. The lady gave it me."

"Well, please don't let him in here now. Put him to bed, and tomorrow be sure not to let him leave the house on any account."

But before Zakhar was out of the room Albert entered it

## Chapter V

"Do you want to sleep already?" asked Albert with a smile. "And I have been at Anna Ivanovna's and had a very pleasant evening. We had music, and laughed, and there was delightful company. Let me have a glass of something," he added, taking hold of a water-bottle that stood on a little table, "-but not water."

Albert was just the same as he had been the previous evening: the same beautiful smile in his eyes and on his lips, the same bright inspired forehead, and the same feeble limbs. Zakhar's paletot fitted him well, and the clean wide unstarched collar of the nightshirt encircled his thin

white neck picturesquely, giving him a Particularly childlike and innocent look. He sat down on Delesov's bed and looked at him silently with a happy and grateful smile. Delesov looked into his eyes, and again suddenly felt himself captivated by that smile. He no longer wanted to sleep, he forgot that it was his duty to be stern: on the contrary he wished to make merry, to hear music, and to chat amicably with Albert till morning. He told Zakhar to bring a bottle of wine, some cigarettes, and the violin.

"There, that's splendid!" said Albert. "It's still early, and we'll have some music. I'll play for you as much as you like."

Zakhar, with evident pleasure, brought a bottle of Lafitte, two tumblers, some mild cigarettes such as Albert smoked, and the violin. But instead of going to bed as his master told him to, he himself lit a cigar and sat down in the adjoining room.

"Let us have a talk," said Delesov to the musician, who was about to take up the violin.

Albert submissively sat down on the bed and again smiled joyfully.

"Oh yes!" said he, suddenly striking his forehead with his hand and assuming an anxiously inquisitive expression. (A change of expression always preceded anything he was about to say.) "Allow me to ask-" he made a slight pause-"that gentleman who was there with you last night-you called him N-, isn't he the son of the celebrated N-?"

"His own son," Delesov answered, not at all understanding how that could interest Albert.

"Exactly!" said Albert with a self-satisfied smile. "I noticed at once something Particularly aristocratic in his manner. I love aristocrats: there is something Particularly beautiful and elegant in an aristocrat. And that officer who dances so well?" he asked. "I liked him very much too: he is so merry and so fine. Isn't he Adjutant N.N.?"

"Which one?" asked Delesov.

"The one who bumped against me when we were dancing. He must be an excellent fellow."

"No, he's a shallow fellow," Delesov replied.

“Oh, no!” Albert warmly defended him. “There is something very, very pleasant about him. He is a capital musician,” he added. “He played something there out of an opera. It’s a long time since I took such a liking to anyone.”

“Yes, he plays well, but I don’t like his playing,” said Delesov, wishing to get his companion to talk about music. “He does not understand classical music-Donizetti and Bellini, you know, are not music. You think so too, no doubt?”

“Oh, no, no, excuse me!” began Albert with a gentle, pleading look. “The old music is music, and the new music is music. There are extraordinary beauties in the new music too. Sonnambula, and the finale of Lucia, and Chopin, and Robert! Note: Sonnambula, opera by Bellini, produced in 1831. Lucia di Lammermoor, opera by Donizetti, produced in 1835. Robert the Devil, opera by Meyerbeer, produced in 1831; or possibly the allusion may be to Roberto Devereux, by Donizetti. I often think-” he paused, evidently collecting his thoughts-”that if Beethoven were alive he would weep with joy listening to Sonnambula for the first time when Viardot and Rubini were here. Note: Pauline Viardot-Garcia, the celebrated operatic singer with whom Turgenev had a close friendship for many years. Rubini, an Italian tenor who had great success in Russia in the ‘forties of the last century. It was like this ... “ he said, and his eyes glistened as he made a gesture with both arms as though tearing something out of his breast. “A little more and it would have been impossible to bear it.”

“And what do you think of the opera at the present time?” asked Delesov.

“Bosio is good, very good,” Note: Angidina Bosio, an Italian singer, who was in Petersburg in 1856-9. he said, “extraordinarily exquisite, but she does not touch one here,” pointing to his sunken chest. “A singer needs passion, and she has none. She gives pleasure but does not torment.” “How about Lablache?” Note: Luigi Lablache. He was regarded as the chief basso of modern times.

“I heard him in Paris in the Barbier de Seville. He was unique then, but now he is old: he cannot be an artist, he is old.”

“Well, what if he is old? He is still good in morceaux d’ensemble,” said Delesov, who was in the habit of saying that of Lablache.

“How ‘what if he is old?’” rejoined Albert severely. “He should not be old. An artist should not be old. Much is needed for art, but above all, fire!” said he with glittering eyes and stretching both arms upwards.

And a terrible inner fire really seemed to burn in his whole body.

“O my God!” he suddenly exclaimed. “Don’t you know Petrov, the artist?”

“No, I don’t,” Delesov replied, smiling.

“How I should like you to make his acquaintance! You would enjoy talks with him. How well he understands art, too! I used often to meet him at Anna Ivanovna’s, but now she is angry with him for some reason. I should very much like you to know him. He has great talent, great talent!”

“Does he paint now?” Delesov asked.

“I don’t know, I think not, but he was an Academy artist. What ideas he has! It’s wonderful when he talks sometimes. Oh, Petrov has great talent, only he leads a very gay life ... that’s a pity,” Albert added with a smile. After that he got off the bed, took the violin, and began tuning it.

“Is it long since you were at the opera?” Delesov asked.

Albert looked round and sighed.

“Ah, I can’t go there any more!” he said. “I will tell you!” And clutching his head he again sat down beside Delesov and muttered almost in a whisper: “I can’t go there. I can’t play there-I have nothing-nothing! No clothes, no home, no violin. It is a miserable life! A miserable life!” he repeated several times. And why should I go there? What for? No need!” he said, smiling. “Ah! Don Juan ... “

He struck his head with his hand.

“Then let us go there together sometime,” said Delesov.

Without answering, Albert jumped up, seized the violin, and began playing the finale of the first act of Don Juan, telling the story of the opera in his own words.

Delesov felt the hair stir on his head as Albert played the voice of the dying commandant.

“No!” said Albert, putting down the violin. “I cannot play today. I have had too much to drink.”

But after that he went up to the table, filled a tumbler with wine, drank it at a gulp, and again sat down on Delesov’s bed.

Delesov looked at Albert, not taking his eyes off him. Occasionally Albert smiled, and so did Delesov. They were both silent; but their looks and smiles created more and more affectionate relations between them. Delesov felt himself growing fonder of the man, and experienced an incomprehensible joy.

“Have you ever been in love?” he suddenly asked.

Albert thought for a few seconds, and then a sad smile lit up his face. He leaned over to Delesov and looked attentively in his eyes.

“Why have you asked me that?” he whispered. “I will tell you everything, because I like you,” he continued, after looking at him for a while and then glancing round. “I won’t deceive you, but will tell you everything from the beginning, just as it happened.” He stopped, his eyes wild and strangely fixed. “You know that my mind is weak,” he suddenly said. “Yes, yes,” he went on. “Anna Ivanovna is sure to have told you. She tells everybody that I am mad! That is not true; she says it as a joke, she is a kindly woman, and I have really not been quite well for some time.”

He stopped again and gazed with fixed wide-open eyes at the dark doorway. “You asked whether I have been in love? ... Yes, I have been in love,” he whispered, lifting his brows. “It happened long ago, when I still had my job in the theatre. I used to play second violin at the Opera, and she used to have the lower-tier box next the stage, on the left.”

He got up and leaned over to Delesov’s ear.

“No, why should I name her?” he said. “You no doubt know her—everybody knows her. I kept silent and only looked at her; I knew I was a poor artist, and she an aristocratic lady. I knew that very well. I only looked at her and planned nothing...”

Albert reflected, trying to remember.

How it happened I don't remember; but I was once called in to accompany her on the violin. ... but what was I, a poor artist?" he said, shaking his head and smiling. "But no, I can't tell it..." he added, clutching head. "How happy I was!"

"Yes? And did you often go to her house?" Delesov asked.

"Once! Once only...but it was my own fault. I was mad! I was a poor artist, and she an aristocratic lady. I ought not to have said anything to her. But I went mad and acted like a fool. Since then all has been over for me. Petrov told the truth, that it would have been better for me to have seen her only at the theatre..."

"What was it you did?" asked Delesov.

"Ah, wait! Wait! I can't speak of that!"

With his face hidden in his hands he remained silent for some time.

"I came late to the orchestra. Petrov and I had been drinking that evening, and I was distracted. She was sitting in her box talking to a general. I don't know who that general was. She sat at the very edge of the box, with her arm on the ledge; she had on a white dress and pearls round her neck. She talked to him and looked at me. She looked at me twice. Her hair was done like this. I was not playing, but stood near the basses and looked at her. Then for the first time I felt strange. She smiled at the general and looked at me. I felt she was speaking about me, and I suddenly saw that I was not in the orchestra, but in the box beside her and holding her arm, just there.... How was that?" Albert asked after a short silence.

"That was vivid imagination," said Delesov.

"No, no! ... but I don't know how to tell it," Albert replied, frowning.

"Even then I was poor and had no lodging, and when I went to the theatre I sometimes stayed the night there."

"What, at the theatre? In that dark, empty place?"

"Oh, I am not afraid of such nonsense. Wait a bit.... When they had all gone away I would go to the box where she had been sitting and sleep there. That was my one delight. What nights I spent there! But once it

began again. Many things appeared to me in the night, but I can't tell you much." Albert glanced at Delesov with downcast eyes. "What was it?" he asked.

"It is strange!" said Delesov.

"No, wait, wait!" he continued, whispering in Delesov's ear. "I kissed her hand, wept there beside her, and talked much with her. I inhaled the scent of her perfume and heard her voice. She told me much in one night. Then I took my violin and played softly; and I played splendidly. But I felt frightened. I am not afraid of those foolish things and don't believe in them, but I was afraid for my head," he said, touching his forehead with an amiable smile. "I was frightened for my poor wits. It seemed to me that something had happened to my head. Perhaps it's nothing. What do you think?"

Both were silent for some minutes.

"Und wenn die Wolken sie verhullen Die Sonne bleibt doch ewig klar."

"And even if the clouds do hide it, The sun remains for ever clear."

Albert said with a soft smile. "Is not that so?" he added.

"Ich auch habe gelebt und genossen..." "I, too, have lived and enjoyed."

"Ah, how well old Petrov would have explained it all to you!"

Delesov looked silently and in terror at the pale and agitated face of his companion. "Do you know the "Juristen-Waltzer?" Albert suddenly exclaimed, and without awaiting an answer he jumped up, seized the violin, and began to play the merry waltz tune, forgetting himself completely, and evidently imagining that a whole orchestra was playing with him. He smiled, swayed, shifted his feet, and played superbly.

"Eh! Enough of merrymaking!" he said when he had finished, and flourished the violin.

"I am going," he said, after sitting silently for a while-"won't you come with me?"

"Where to?" Delesov asked in surprise.

"Let's go to Anna Ivanovna's again. It's gay there-noise, people, music!"

At first Delesov almost consented, but bethinking himself he tried to persuade Albert not to go that night.

"Only for a moment."

“No, really, you’d better not!”

Albert sighed and put down the violin.

“So, I must stay here?”

And looking again at the table (there was no wine left) he said goodnight and left the room.

Delesov rang.

“See that you don’t let Mr. Albert go anywhere without my permission,” he said to Zakhar.

## Chapter VI

The next day was a holiday.

Delesov was already awake and sitting in his drawing-room drinking coffee and reading a book. Albert had not yet stirred in the next room. Zakhar cautiously opened the door and looked into the dining-room.

“Would you believe it, sir? He is asleep on the bare sofa! He wouldn’t have anything spread on it, really. Like a little child. Truly an artist.” Towards noon groaning and coughing were heard through the door. Zakhar again went into the dining-room, and Delesov could hear his kindly voice and Albert’s weak, entreating one.

“Well?” he asked, when Zakhar returned.

“He’s fretting, sir, won’t wash, and seems gloomy. He keeps asking for a drink.”

“No. Having taken this matter up I must show character,” said Delesov to himself.

He ordered that no wine should be given to Albert and resumed his book, but involuntarily listened to what was going on in the dining-room. There was no sound of movement there and an occasional deep cough and spitting was all that could be heard. Two hours passed. Having dressed, Delesov decided to look in at his visitor before going out. Albert was sitting motionless at the window, his head resting on his hand. He looked round. His face was yellow, wrinkled, and not merely sad but profoundly miserable. He tried to smile by way of greeting, but his face took on a still more sorrowful expression. He seemed ready to cry. He rose with difficulty and bowed.



“If I might just have a glass of simple vodka!” he said with a look of entreaty. “I am so weak-please!”

“Coffee will do you more good. Have some of that instead.”

Albert’s face suddenly lost its childlike expression; he looked coldly, dim-eyed, out of the window, and sank feebly onto his chair.

“Or would you like some lunch?”

“No thank you, I have no appetite.”

“If you wish to play the violin you will not disturb me,” said Delesov, laying the violin on the table.

Albert looked at the violin with a contemptuous smile.

“No,” he said. “I am too weak, I can’t play,” and he pushed the instrument away from him.

After that, whatever Delesov might say, offering to go for a walk with him, and to the theatre in the evening, he only bowed humbly and remained stubbornly silent. Delesov went out, paid several calls, dined with friends, and before going to the theatre returned home to change and to see what the musician was doing. Albert was sitting in the dark hall, leaning his head in his hands and looking at the heated stove. He was neatly dressed, washed, and his hair was brushed; but his eyes were dim and lifeless, and his whole figure expressed weakness and exhaustion even more than in the morning.

“Have you dined, Mr. Albert?” asked Delesov.

Albert made an affirmative gesture with his head and, after a frightened look at Delesov, lowered his eyes. Delesov felt uncomfortable.

“I spoke to the director of the theatre about you today,” he said, also lowering his eyes. “He will be very glad to receive you if you will let him hear you.” “Thank you, I cannot play!” muttered Albert under his breath, and went into his room, shutting the door behind him very softly.

A few minutes later the door-knob was turned just as gently, and he came out of the room with the violin. With a rapid and hostile glance at Delesov he placed the violin on a chair and disappeared again.

Delesov shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

“What more am I to do? In what am I to blame?” he thought.

“Well, how is the musician?” was his first question when he returned home late that evening.

“Bad!” said Zakhar, briefly and clearly. “He has been sighing and coughing and says nothing, except that he started begging for vodka four or five times. At last I gave him one glass-or else we might finish him off, sir. Just like the clerk ... “

“Has he not played the violin?”

“Didn’t even touch it. I took it to him a couple of times, but he just took it up gently and brought it out again,” Zakhar answered with a smile.

“So your orders are not to give him any drink?”

“No, we’ll wait another day and see what happens. And what’s he doing now?” “He has locked himself up in the drawing-room.”

Delesov went into his study and chose several French books and a German Bible. “Put these books in his room tomorrow, and see that you don’t let him out,” he said to Zakhar.

Next morning Zakhar informed his master that the musician had not slept all night: he had paced up and down the rooms, and had been into the pantry, trying to open the cupboard and the door, but he (Zakhar) had taken care to lock everything up. He said that while he pretended to be asleep he had heard Albert in the dark muttering something to himself and waving his arms about.

Albert grew gloomier and more taciturn every day. He seemed to be afraid of Delesov, and when their eyes met his face expressed sickly fear. He did not touch the books or the violin, and did not reply to questions put to him. On the third day of the musician’s stay Delesov returned home late, tired and upset. He had been driving about all day attending to a matter that had promised to be very simple and easy

but, as often happens, in spite of strenuous efforts he had been quite unable to advance a single step with it. Besides that he had called in at his club and had lost at whist. He was in bad spirits.

“Well, let him go his way!” he said to Zakhar, who told him of Albert’s sad plight. “Tomorrow I’ll get a definite answer out of him, whether he wants to stay here and follow my advice, or not. If not, he needn’t! It seems to me that I have done all I could.”

“There now, try doing good to people!” he thought to himself. “I put myself out for him, I keep that dirty creature in my house, so that I can’t receive a visitor in the morning. I bustle and run about, and he looks on me as if I were a villain who for his own pleasure has locked him up in a cage. And above all, he won’t take a single step to help himself. They are all like that.” (The “they” referred to people in general, and especially to those with whom he had had business that day.) “And what is the matter with him now? What is he thinking about and pining for? Pining for the debauchery from which I have dragged him? For the humiliation in which he was? For the destitution from which I have saved him? Evidently he has fallen so low that it hurts him to see a decent life ...”

“No, it was a childish act,” Delesov concluded. “How can I improve others, when God knows whether I can manage myself?” He thought of letting Albert go at once, but after a little reflection put it off till the next day.

During the night he was roused by the sound of a table falling in the hall, and the sound of voices and footsteps. He lit a candle and listened in surprise.

“Wait a bit. I’ll tell my master,” Zakhar was saying; Albert’s voice muttered something incoherently and heatedly.

Delesov jumped up and ran into the hall with the candle.

Zakhar stood against the front door in his night attire, and Albert, with his hat and cloak on, was pushing him aside and shouting in a tearful voice:

“You can’t keep me here! I have a passport Note: To be free to go from place to place it was necessary to have a properly stamped passport from the police., and have taken nothing of yours. You may search me. I shall go to the chief of police!...”

“Excuse me, sir!” Zakhar said, addressing his master while continuing to guard the door with his back. “He got up during the night, found the key in my overcoat pocket, and drank a whole decanter of liqueur vodka. Is that right? And now he wants to go away. You ordered me not to let him out, so I dare not let him go.”

On seeing Delesov Albert made for Zakhar still more excitedly.

“No one dare hold me! No one has a right to!” he shouted, raising his voice more and more.

“Step aside, Zakhar!” said Delesov. I can’t and don’t want to keep you, but I advise you to stay till the morning,” he said to Albert.

“No one can keep me! I’ll go to the chief of police!” Albert cried louder and louder, addressing himself to Zakhar alone and not looking at Delesov.

“Help!” he suddenly screamed in a furious voice.

“What are you screaming like that for? Nobody is keeping you!” said Zakhar, opening the door.

Albert stopped shouting. “You didn’t succeed, did you? Wanted to do for me-did you!” he muttered to himself, putting on his galoshes. Without taking leave, and continuing to mutter incoherently, he went out. Zakhar held a light for him as far as the gate, and then came back.

“Well, God be thanked, sir!” he said to his master. “Who knows what might happen? As it is I must count the silver plate...”

Delesov merely shook his head and did not reply. He vividly recalled the first two evenings he had spent with the musician, and recalled the last sad days which by his fault Albert had spent there, and above all he recalled that sweet, mixed feeling of surprise, affection and pity, which that strange man had aroused in him at first sight, and he felt sorry for him. “And what will become of him now?” he thought. Without money, without warm clothing, alone in the middle of the night...” He was about to send Zakhar after him, but it was too late.

“Is it cold outside?” he inquired.

“A hard frost, sir,” replied Zakhar. “I forgot to inform you, but we shall have to buy more wood for fuel before the spring.”

“How is that? You said that we should have some left over.”

## Chapter VII

It was indeed cold outside, but Albert, heated by the liquor he had drunk and by the dispute, did not feel it. On reaching the street he looked round and rubbed his hands joyfully.

The street was empty, but the long row of lamps still burned with ruddy light; the sky was clear and starry. “There now!” he said, addressing the lighted window of Delesov’s lodging, thrusting his hands into his trouser pockets under his cape, and stooping forward. He went with heavy, uncertain steps down the street to the right. He felt an unusual weight in his legs and stomach, something made a noise in his head, and some invisible force was throwing him from side to side, but he still went on in the direction of Anna Ivanovna’s house.

Strange, incoherent thoughts passed through his mind. Now he remembered his last altercation with Zakhar, then for some reason the sea and his first arrival in Russia by steamboat, then a happy night he had passed with a friend in a small shop he was passing, then suddenly a familiar motif began singing itself in his imagination, and he remembered the object of his passion and the dreadful night in the theatre.

Despite their incoherence all these memories presented themselves so clearly to his mind that, closing his eyes, he did not know which was the more real: what he was doing, or what he was thinking. He did not realize or feel how his legs were moving, how he swayed and bumped against the wall, how he looked around him, or passed from street to street. He realized and felt only the things that, intermingling and fantastically following one another, rose in his imagination.

Passing along the Little Morskaya Street, Albert stumbled and fell. Coming to his senses for a moment he saw an immense and splendid

building before him and went on. In the sky no stars, nor moon, nor dawn, were visible, nor were there any street lamps, but everything was clearly outlined. In the windows of the building that towered at the end of the street lights were shining, but those lights quivered like reflections. The building stood out nearer and nearer and clearer and clearer before him. But the lights disappeared directly he entered the wide portals. All was dark within. Solitary footsteps resounded under the vaulted ceiling, and some shadows slit rapidly away as he approached.

“Why have I come here?” thought he; but some irresistible force drew him on into the depths of the immense hall. There was some kind of platform, around which some small people stood silently.

“Who is going to speak?” asked Albert. No one replied, except that someone pointed to the platform. A tall thin man with bristly hair and wearing a Parti-coloured dressing-gown was already standing there, and Albert immediately recognized his friend Petrov.

“How strange that he should be here!” thought he.

“No, brothers!” Petrov was saying, pointing to someone. “You did not understand a man living among you; you have not understood him! He is not a mercenary artist, not a mechanical performer, not a lunatic or a lost man. He is a genius—a great musical genius who has perished among you unnoticed and unappreciated!”

Albert at once understood of whom his friend was speaking, but not wishing to embarrass him he modestly lowered his head.

“The holy fire that we all serve has consumed him like a blade of straw!” the voice went on, “but he has fulfilled all that God implanted in him and should therefore be called a great man. You could despise, torment, humiliate him,” the voice continued, growing louder and louder—“but he was, is, and will be, immeasurably higher than you all. He is happy, he is kind. He loves or despises all alike, but serves only that which was implanted in him from above. He loves but one thing—beauty, the one indubitable blessing in the world. Yes, such is the man! Fall prostrate before him, all of you! On your knees!” he cried aloud.

But another voice came mildly from the opposite corner of the hall: "I do not wish to bow my knees before him," said the voice, which Albert immediately recognized as Delesov's. "Wherein is he great? Why should we bow before him? Did he behave honourably and justly? Has he been of any use to society? Don't we know how he borrowed money and did not return it, and how he carried away his fellow-artist's violin and pawned it? ..."

("Oh God, how does he know all that?" thought Albert, hanging his head still lower.)

"Do we not know how he flattered the most insignificant people, flattered them for the sake of money?" Delesov continued—"Don't we know how he was expelled from the theatre? And how Anna Ivanovna wanted to send him to the police?"

("O God! That is all true, but defend me, Thou who alone knowest why I did it!" muttered Albert.)

"Cease, for shame!" Petrov's voice began again. "What right have you to accuse him? Have you lived his life? Have you experienced his rapture? ("True, true!" whispered Albert.)

"Art is the highest manifestation of power in man. It is given to a few of the elect, and raises the chosen one to such a height as turns the head and makes it difficult for him to remain sane. In Art, as in every struggle, there are heroes who have devoted themselves entirely to its service and have perished without having reached the goal."

Petrov stopped, and Albert raised his head and cried out: "True, true!" but his voice died away without a sound.

"It does not concern you," said the artist Petrov, turning to him severely. "Yes, humiliate and despise him," he continued, "but yet he is the best and happiest of you all."

Albert, who had listened to these words with rapture in his soul, could not restrain himself, and went up to his friend wishing to kiss him.

"Go away! I do not know you!" Petrov said, "Go your way, or you won't get there."

"Just see how the drink's got hold of you! You won't get there," shouted a policeman at the crossroad.

Albert stopped, collected his strength and, trying not to stagger, turned into the side street.

Only a few more steps were left to Anna Ivanovna's door. From the hall of her house the light fell on the snow in the courtyard, and sledges and carriages stood at the gate.

Holding onto the banister with his numbed hands, he ran up the steps and rang. The sleepy face of a maid appeared in the opening of the doorway, and she looked angrily at Albert.

"You can't!" she cried. "The orders are not to let you in," and she slammed the door to.

The sound of music and of women's voices reached the steps. Albert sat down, leaned his head against the wall, and closed his eyes.

Immediately a throng of disconnected but kindred visions beset him with renewed force, engulfed him in their waves, and bore him away into the free and beautiful realm of dreams.

"Yes, he was the best and happiest!" ran involuntarily through his imagination.

The sounds of a polka came through the door. These sounds also told him that he was the best and happiest. The bells in the nearest church rang out for early service, and these bells also said:

"Yes, he is the best and happiest!" ...

"I will go back to the hall," thought Albert. "Petrov must tell me much more."

But there was no one in the hall now, and instead of the artist Petrov, Albert himself stood on the platform and played on the violin all that the voice had said before. But the violin was of strange construction; it was made of glass and it had to be held in both hands and slowly pressed to the breast to make it produce sounds. The sounds were the most delicate and delightful Albert had ever heard. The closer he pressed the violin to his breast the more joyful and tender he felt. The louder the sounds grew the faster the shadows dispersed and the brighter the walls of the hall were lit up by transparent light. But it was necessary to play the violin very warily so as not to break it. He played



the glass instrument very carefully and well. He played such things as he felt no one would ever hear again.

He was beginning to grow tired when another distant, muffled sound distracted his attention. It was the sound of a bell, but it spoke words: "Yes," said the bell, droning somewhere high up and far away, "he seems to you pitiful, you despise him, yet he is the best and happiest of men! No one will ever again play that instrument."

These familiar words suddenly seemed so wise, so new, and so true to Albert that he stopped playing and, trying not to move, raised his arms and eyes to heaven. He felt that he was beautiful and happy. Although there was no one else in the hall he expanded his chest and stood on the platform with head proudly erect so that all might see him.

Suddenly someone's hand lightly touched his shoulder; he turned and saw a woman in the faint light. She looked at him sadly and shook her head deprecatingly. He immediately realized that what he was doing was bad, and felt ashamed of himself.

"Whither?" he asked her.

She again gave him a long fixed look and sadly inclined her head. It was she—none other than she whom he loved, and her garments were the same; on her full white neck a string of pearls, and her superb arms bare to above the elbow. She took his hand and led him out of the hall. "The exit is on the other side," said Albert, but without replying she smiled and led him out.

At the threshold of the hall Albert saw the moon and some water. But the water was not below as it usually is, nor was the moon a white circle in one place up above as it usually is. Moon and water were together and everywhere—above, below, at the sides, and all around them both. Albert threw himself with her into the moon and the water, and realized that he could now embrace her, whom he loved more than anything in the world. He embraced her and felt unutterable happiness.

"Is this not a dream?" he asked himself. But no! It was more than reality: it was reality and recollection combined. Then he felt that the

unutterable bliss he had at that moment enjoyed had passed and would never return.

“What am I weeping for?” he asked her.

She looked at him silently and sadly. Albert understood what she meant by that.

“But how can it be, since I am alive?” he muttered.

Without replying or moving she looked straight before her.

“This is terrible! How can I explain to her that I am alive?” he thought with horror. “O Lord! I am alive, do understand me!” he whispered.

“He is the best and happiest!” a voice was saying.

But something was pressing more and more heavily on Albert. Whether it was the moon and the water, her embraces, or his tears, he did not know, but he felt he would not be able to say all that was necessary, and that soon all would be over.

Two visitors, leaving Anna Ivanovna’s house, stumbled over Albert, who lay stretched out on the threshold. One of them went back and called the hostess.

“Why, this is inhuman!” he said. “You might let a man freeze like that!”

“Ah, that is Albert! I’m sick to death of him!” replied the hostess.

“Annushka, lay him down somewhere in a room,” she said to the maid.

“But I am alive-why bury me?” muttered Albert, as they carried him insensible into the room.

## Three Deaths

Translated by E. R. DuMont 1899

## Chapter I

It was autumn.

Along the highway came two equipages at a brisk pace. In the first carriage sat two women. One was a lady, thin and pale; the other, her maid, with a brilliant red complexion, and plump. Her short, dry locks

escaped from under a faded cap; her red hand, in a torn glove, put them back with a jerk. Her full bosom, incased in a tapestry shawl, breathed of health; her keen black eyes now gazed through the window at the fields hurrying by them, now rested on her mistress, now peered solicitously into the corners of the coach. Before the maid's face swung the lady's bonnet on the rack; on her knees lay a puppy; her feet were raised by packages lying on the floor, and could almost be heard drumming upon them above the noise of the creaking of the springs and the rattling of the windows. The lady, with her hands resting in her lap and her eyes shut, feebly swayed on the cushions which supported her back, and, slightly frowning, tried to suppress her cough. She wore a white nightcap, and a blue neckerchief twisted around her delicate pale neck.

A straight line, disappearing under the cap, parted her perfectly smooth blond hair, which was pomaded; and there was a dry deathly appearance about the whiteness of the skin, in this wide parting. The withered and rather sallow skin was loosely drawn over her delicate and pretty features, and there was a hectic flush on the cheeks and cheekbones. Her lips were dry and restless, her thin eyelashes had lost their curve, and a cloth traveling capote made straight folds over her sunken chest. Although her eyes were closed, her face gave the impression of weariness, irascibility, and habitual suffering.

The lackey, leaning back, was napping on the coachbox. The yamshchik, or hired driver, shouting in a clear voice, urged on his four powerful and sweaty horses, occasionally looking back at the other driver, who was shouting just behind them in an open barouche. The tires of the wheels, in their even and rapid course, left wide parallel tracks on the limy mud of the highway. The sky was gray and cold, a moist mist was falling over the fields and the road. It was suffocating in the carriage, and smelt of eau-de-Cologne and dust.

The invalid leaned back her head, and slowly opened her eyes. Her great eyes were brilliant, and of a beautiful dark color. "Again!" said she, nervously, pushing away with her beautiful attenuated hand the end of her maid's cloak, which occasionally hit against her leg. Her

mouth contracted painfully. Matriosha raised her cloak in both hands, lifting herself up on her strong legs, and then sat down again, farther away. Her fresh face was suffused with a brilliant scarlet. The invalid's beautiful dark eyes eagerly followed the maid's motions; and then with both hands she took hold of the seat, and did her best to raise herself a little higher, but her strength was not sufficient. Again her mouth became contracted, and her whole face took on an expression of unavailing, angry irony. "If you would only help me ... ah! It's not necessary. I can do it myself.

Only have the goodness not to put those pillows behind me. ... On the whole, you had better not touch them, if you don't understand!" The lady closed her eyes, and then again, quickly raising the lids, gazed at her maid. Matriosha looked at her, and gnawed her red lower lip. A heavy sigh escaped from the sick woman's breast; but the sigh was not ended, but was merged in a fit of coughing. She scowled, and turned her face away, clutching her chest with both hands. When the coughing fit was over, she once more shut her eyes, and continued to sit motionless. The coach and the barouche rolled into a village. Matriosha drew her fat hand from under her shawl, and made the sign of the cross. "What is this?" demanded the lady. "A post-station, madame." "Why did you cross yourself, I should like to know?" "The church, madame." The invalid lady looked out of the window, and began slowly to cross herself, gazing with all her eyes at the great village church, in front of which her carriage was now passing.

The two vehicles came to a stop together at the post-house. The sick woman's husband and the doctor dismounted from the barouche, and came to the coach. "How are you feeling?" asked the doctor, taking her pulse. "Well, my dear, aren't you fatigued?" asked the husband in French. "Wouldn't you like to get out?" Matriosha, gathering up the bundles, squeezed herself into the corner, so as not to interfere with the conversation. "No matter, it's all the same thing," replied the invalid. "I will not get out." The husband, after standing there a little, went into the post-house. Matriosha, jumping from the coach, tiptoed across the muddy road into the enclosure. "If I am miserable, there is no reason why the rest of you should not have breakfast," said the sick

woman, smiling faintly to the doctor, who was standing by her window. "It makes no difference to them how I am," she remarked to herself as the doctor, turning from her with slow step, started to run up the steps of the station-house.

"They are well, and it's all the same to them. O my God!" How now, Eduard Ivanovitch?" said the husband, as he met the doctor, and rubbing his hands with a gay smile. "I have ordered my traveling-case brought; what do you say to that?" "That's worth while," replied the doctor. "Well, now, how about her?" asked the husband, with a sigh, lowering his voice and raising his brows. "I have told you that she cannot reach Moscow, much less Italy, especially in such weather." "What is to be done, then?"

Oh! My God! My God!"The husband covered his eyes with his hand. ... "Give it here," he added, addressing his man, who came bringing the traveling-case."You'll have to stop somewhere on the route," replied the doctor, shrugging his shoulders."But tell me, what can I do?" rejoined the husband. "I have employed every argument to keep her from going; I have spoken to her of our means, and of our children whom we should have to leave behind, and of my business. She would not hear a word. She has made her plans for living abroad, as if she were well.

But if I should tell her what her real condition is, it would kill her." "Well, she is a dead woman now; you may as well know it, Vasili Dmitritch. A person cannot live without lungs, and there is no way of making lungs grow again. It is melancholy, it is hard, but what is to be done about it? It is my business and yours to make her last days as easy as possible. The confessor is the person needed here." "Oh, my God!

Now just perceive how I am situated, in speaking to her of her last will. Let come whatever may, yet I cannot speak of that. And yet you know how good she is." "Try at least to persuade her to wait until the roads are frozen," said the doctor, shaking his head significantly; "something might happen during the journey." ... "Aksiusha, oh, Aksiusha!" cried the superintendent's daughter, throwing a cloak over her head, and

tiptoeing down the muddy back steps. "Come along. Let us have a look at the Shirkinskaya lady; they say she's got lung trouble, and they're taking her abroad. I never saw how any one looked in consumption." Aksiusha jumped down from the door-sill; and the two girls, hand in hand, hurried out of the gates. Shortening their steps, they walked by the coach, and stared in at the lowered window.

The invalid bent her head toward them; but, when she saw their inquisitiveness, she frowned and turned away. "Oh, de-e-ar!" said the superintendent's daughter, vigorously shaking her head. .... "How wonderfully pretty she used to be, and how she has changed! It is terrible! Did you see? Did you see, Aksiusha?" "Yes, and how thin she is!" assented Aksiusha. "Let us go by and look again; we'll make believe we are going to the well. Did you see, she turned away from us; still I got a good view of her. Isn't it too bad, Masha?" "Yes, but what terrible mud!" replied Masha, and both of them started to run back within the gates. "It's evident that I have become a fright," thought the sick woman. ....

"But we must hurry, hurry, and get abroad, and there I shall soon get well." "Well, and how are you, my dear?" inquired the husband, coming to the coach with still a morsel of something in his mouth. "Always one and the same question," thought the sick woman, "and he's even eating!" "It's no consequence," she murmured, between her teeth. "Do you know, my dear, I am afraid that this journey in such weather will only make you worse. Edouard Ivanovitch says the same thing. Hadn't we better turn back?"

She maintained an angry silence. "Maybe the weather will improve, the roads will become good, and that would be better for you; then at least we could start all together." "Pardon me. If I had not listened to you so long, I should at this moment be at Berlin and have entirely recovered." "What's to be done, my angel? It was impossible, as you know. But now if you would wait a month, you would be ever so much better; I could finish up my business, and we could take the children with us." .... "The children are well, and I am not." "But just see here, my

love, if in this weather you should grow worse on the road .... At least we should be at home.”“What is the use of being at home? ...

Die at home?” replied the invalid, peevishly. But the word die evidently startled her, and she turned on her husband a supplicating and inquiring look. He dropped his eyes, and said nothing. The sick woman’s mouth suddenly contracted in a childish fashion, and the tears sprang to her eyes. Her husband covered his face with his handkerchief, and silently turned from the coach. “No, I will go,” cried the invalid; and, lifting her eyes to the sky, she clasped her hands, and began to whisper incoherent words.

“My God! Why must it be?” she said, and the tears flowed more violently. She prayed long and fervently, but still there was just the same sense of constriction and pain in her chest, just the same gray melancholy in the sky and the fields and the road; just the same autumnal mist, neither thicker nor more tenuous, but ever the same in its monotony, falling on the muddy highway, on the roofs, on the carriage, and on the sheepskin coats of the drivers, who were talking in strong, gay voices, as they were oiling and adjusting the carriage.

## Chapter II

The coach was ready, but the driver loitered. He had gone into the drivers’ room izba. In the izba it was warm, close, dark, and suffocating, smelling of human occupation, of cooking bread, of cabbage, and of sheepskin garments. Several drivers were in the room; the cook was engaged near the oven, on top of which lay a sick man wrapped up in his sheepskins. “Uncle Khveodor! Hey! Uncle Khveodor,” called a young man, the driver, in a tulup, and with his knout in his belt, coming into the room, and addressing the sick man. “What do you want, rattlepate? What are you calling to Fyedka for?” asked one of the drivers. “There’s your carriage waiting for you.”

“I want to borrow his boots. Mine are worn out,” replied the young fellow, tossing back his curls and straightening his mittens in his belt. “Why? Is he asleep? Say, Uncle Khvodor!” he insisted, going to the

oven."What is it?" a weak voice was heard saying, and an emaciated face was lifted up from the oven. A broad, gaunt hand, bloodless and covered with hairs, pulled up his overcoat over the dirty shirt that covered his bony shoulder. "Give me something to drink, brother; what is it you want?"The young fellow handed him a small dish of water."I say, Fyedya," said he, hesitating, "I reckon you won't want your new boots now; let me have them?"

Probably you won't need them any more." The sick man, dropping his weary head down to the lacquered bowl, and dipping his thin, hanging mustache into the brown water, drank feebly and eagerly.His tangled beard was unclean; his sunken, clouded eyes were with difficulty raised to the young man's face. When he had finished drinking, he tried to raise his hand to wipe his wet lips, but his strength failed him, and he wiped them on the sleeve of his overcoat.

Silently, and breathing with difficulty through his nose, he looked straight into the young man's eyes, and tried to collect his strength. "Maybe you have promised them to some one else?" said the young driver. "If that's so, all right. The worst of it is, it is wet outside, and I have to go out to my work, and so I said to myself, 'I reckon I'll ask Fyedka for his boots; I reckon he won't be needing them.' But may you will need them, — just say." .... Something began to bubble up and rumble in the sick man's chest; he bent over, and began to strangle, with a cough that rattled in his throat."Now I should like to know where he would need them?" unexpectedly snapped out the cook, angrily addressing the whole hovel. "This is the second month that he has not crept down from the oven.

Just see how he is all broken up! And you can hear how it must hurt him inside. Where would he need boots? They would not think of burying him in new ones! And it was time long ago, God pardon me the sin of saying so. Just see how he chokes! He ought to be taken from this room to another, or somewhere. They say there's hospitals in the city; but what's you going to do? He takes up the whole room, and that's too much. There isn't any room at all. And yet you are expected to keep



neat." "Hey! Seryoha, come along, take your place, the people are waiting," cried the head man of the station, coming to the door.

Seryoha started to go without waiting for his reply, but the sick man during his cough intimated by his eyes that he was going to speak. "You take the boots, Seryoha," said he, conquering the cough, and getting his breath a little. "Only, do you hear, buy me a stone when I am dead," he added hoarsely. "Thank you, uncle; then I will take them, and as for the stone, — yei-yei! — I will buy you one." "There, children, you are witnesses," the sick man was able to articulate, and then once more he bent over and began to choke. "All right, we have heard," said one of the drivers. "But run, Seryoha, or else the starosta will be after you again. You know Lady Shirkinskaya is sick." Seryoha quickly pulled off his ragged, unwieldy boots, and flung them under the bench. Uncle Feodor's new ones fitted his feet exactly, and the young driver could not keep his eyes off them as he went to the carriage. "Ek! What splendid boots! Here's some grease," called another driver with the grease-pot in his hand, as Seryoha mounted to his box and gathered up the reins. "Get them for nothing?"

"So you're jealous, are you?" cried Seryoha, lifting up and tucking around his legs the tails of his overcoat. "Of with you, my darlings," he cried to the horses, cracking his knout; and the coach and barouche, with their occupants, trunks, and other belongings, were hidden in the thick autumnal mist, and rapidly whirled away over the wet road. The sick driver remained on the oven in the stifling hovel, and, not being able to throw off the phlegm, by a supreme effort turned over on the other side, and stopped coughing. Till evening there was a continual coming and going, and eating of meals in the room, and the sick man was not noticed. Before night came on, the cook climbed up on the oven, and got the sheepskin coat from the farther side of his legs. "Don't be angry with me, Nastasya," exclaimed the sick man.

"I shall soon leave your room." "All right, all right, it's of no consequence," muttered the woman. "But what is the matter with you, uncle? Tell me." "All my inwards are gnawed out. God knows what it is!" "And I don't doubt your gullet hurts you when you cough so!" "It

hurts me all over. My death is at hand, that's what it is. Okh! Okh! Okh!" groaned the sick man. "Now cover up your legs this way," said Nastasya, comfortably arranging the overcoat so that it would cover him, and then getting down from the oven. During the night the room was faintly lighted by a single taper. Nastasya and a dozen drivers were sleeping, snoring loudly, on the floor and the benches.

Only the sick man feebly hawked and coughed, and tossed on the oven. In the morning no sound was heard from him. "I saw something wonderful in my sleep," said the cook, as she stretched herself in the early twilight the next morning. "I seemed to see Uncle Khveodor get down from the oven and go out to cut wood. 'Look here,' says he, 'I'm going to help you, Nastya;' and I says to him, 'How can you split wood?' but he seizes the hatchet, and begins to cut so fast, so fast that nothing but chips fly. 'Why,' says I, 'haven't you been sick?' - 'No,' says he, 'I am well,' and he kind of lifted up the ax, and I was scared; and I screamed and woke up. He can't be dead, can he? — Uncle Khveodor!

Hey, uncle!" Feodor did not move. "Now he can't be dead, can he? Go and see," said one of the drivers, who had just waked up. The emaciated hand, covered with reddish hair, that hung down from the oven, was cold and pale. "Go tell the superintendent; it seems he is dead," said the driver. Feodor had no relatives. He was a stranger. On the next day they buried him in the new burying-ground behind the grove; and Nastasya for many days had to tell everybody of the vision which she had seen, and how she had been the first to discover that Uncle Feodor was dead.

### Chapter III

Spring had come. Along the wet streets of the city swift streamlets ran purling between heaps of dung-covered ice; bright were the colors of people's dresses and the tones of their voices, as they hurried along. In the walled gardens, the buds on the trees were burgeoning, and the fresh breeze swayed their branches with a soft gentle murmur. Everywhere transparent drops were forming and falling. .... The sparrows chattered incoherently, and fluttered about on their little

wings. On the sunny side, on the walls, houses, and trees, all was full of life and brilliancy. The sky, and the earth, and the heart of man overflowed with youth and joy.

In front of a great seigniorial mansion, in one of the principal streets, fresh straw had been laid down; in the house lay that same moribund invalid whom we saw hastening abroad. Near the closed doors of her room stood the sick lady's husband, and a lady well along in years. On a divan sat the confessor, with cast-down eyes, holding something wrapped up under his stole. In one corner, in a Voltaire easy-chair, reclined an old lady, the sick woman's mother, weeping violently. Near her stood the maid, holding a clean handkerchief, ready for the old lady's use when she should ask for it. Another maid was rubbing the old lady's temples, and blowing on her gray head underneath her cap. "Well, Christ be with you, my dear," said the husband to the elderly lady who was standing with him near the door: "she has such confidence in you; you know how to talk with her; go and speak with her a little while, my darling, please go!"

He was about to open the door for her; but his cousin held him back, putting her handkerchief several times to her eyes, and shaking her head. "There, now she will not see that I have been weeping," said she, and, opening the door herself, went to the invalid. The husband was in the greatest excitement, and seemed quite beside himself. He started to go over to the old mother, but, after taking a few steps, he turned around, walked the length of the room, and approached the priest. The priest looked at him, raised his brows toward heaven, and sighed. The thick gray beard also was lifted and fell again.

"My God! My God!" said the husband. "What can you do?" exclaimed the confessor, sighing and again lifting up his brows and beard, and letting them drop. "And the old mother there!" exclaimed the husband almost in despair. "She will not be able to endure it. You see, she loved her so, she loved her so, that she .... I don't know. You might try, father, to calm her a little, and persuade her to go away." The confessor arose and went over to the old lady. "It is true, no one can appreciate a mother's heart," said he, "but God is compassionate."

The old lady's face was suddenly convulsed, and a hysterical sob shook her frame. "God is compassionate," repeated the priest, when she had grown a little calmer. "I will tell you, in my parish there was a sick man, and much worse than Marya Dmitrievna, and he, though he was only a shopkeeper, was cured in a very short time, by means of herbs.

And this very same shopkeeper is now in Moscow. I have told Vasili Dmitrievitch about him; it might be tried, you know. At all events, it would satisfy the invalid. With God, all things are possible." "No, she won't get well," persisted the old lady. "Why should God have taken her, and not me?" And again the hysterical sobbing overcame her, so violently that she fainted away.

The invalid's husband hid his face in his hands, and rushed from the room. In the corridor the first person whom he met was a six-year-old boy, who was chasing his little sister with all his might and main. "Do you bid me take the children to their mamasha?" inquired the nurse. "No, she does not like to see them. They distract her." The lad stopped for a moment, and, after looking eagerly into his father's face, he cut a dido with his leg, and with merry shouts ran on. "I'm playing whe's a horse, papasha," cried the little fellow, pointing to his sister.

Meantime, in the next room, the cousin had taken her seat near the sick woman, and was skilfully bringing the conversation by degrees round so as to prepare her for the thought of death. The doctor stood by the window, mixing some draught. The invalid, in a white capote, all surrounded by cushions, was sitting up in bed, and gazed silently at her cousin. "Ah, my dear!" she exclaimed, unexpectedly interrupting her, "don't try to prepare me; don't treat me like a little child! I am a Christian woman. I know all about it. I know that I have not long to live; I know that if my husband had heeded me sooner, I should have been in Italy, and possibly, yes probably, should have been well by this time. They all told him so. But what is to be done? It's as God saw fit.

We all of us have sinned, I know that; but I hope in the mercy of God, that all will be pardoned, ought to be pardoned. I am trying to sound

my own heart. I also have committed many sins, my love. But how much I have suffered in atonement! I have tried to bear my sufferings patiently." .... "Then shall I have the confessor come in, my love? It will be all the easier for you, after you have been absolved," said the cousin. The sick woman dropped her head in token of assent. "O God! Pardon me, a sinner," she whispered. The cousin went out, and beckoned to the confessor. "She is an angel," she said to the husband, with tears in her eyes. The husband wept.

The priest went into the sick room; the old lady still remained unconscious, and in the room beyond all was perfectly quiet. At the end of five minutes the confessor came out, and, taking off his stole, arranged his hair. "Thanks be to the Lord, she is calmer now," said he. "She wishes to see you." The cousin and the husband went to the sick room. The invalid, gently weeping, was gazing at the images. "I congratulate you, my love," said the husband. "Thank you. How well I feel now! What ineffable joy I experience!" said the sick woman, and a faint smile played over her thin lips. "How merciful God is! Is He not? He is merciful and omnipotent!" And again with an eager prayer she turned her tearful eyes toward the holy images. Then suddenly something seemed to occur to her mind.

She beckoned to her husband. "You are never willing to do what I desire," said she, in a weak and querulous voice. The husband, stretching his neck, listened to her submissively. "What is it, my love?" "How many times I have told you that these doctors don't know anything! There are simple women doctors; they make cures. That's what the good father said. ... A shopkeeper .... Send for him." ... "For whom, my love?" "Good heavens! You can never understand me."

And the dying woman frowned, and closed her eyes. The doctor came to her, and took her hand. Her pulse was evidently growing feebler and feebler. He made a sign to the husband. The sick woman remarked this gesture, and looked around in fright. The cousin turned away to hide her tears. "Don't weep, don't torment yourselves on my account," said the invalid. "That takes away from me my last comfort." "You are an

angel!” exclaimed the cousin, kissing her hand.”No, kiss me here. They only kiss the hands of those who are dead. My God! My God!”

That same evening the sick woman was a corpse, and the corpse in the coffin lay in the parlor of the great mansion. In the immense room, the doors of which were closed, sat the clerk, and with a monstrous voice read the Psalms of David through his nose. The bright glare from the wax candles in the lofty silver candelabra fell on the white brow of the dead, on the heavy waxen hands, on the stiff folds of the cerement which brought out into awful relief the knees and the feet.

The clerk, not varying his tones, continued to read on steadily, and in the silence of the chamber of death his words rang out and died away. Occasionally from distant rooms came the voice of children and their romping. “Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust.”Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the fact of the earth. “The glor of the Lord shall endure forever.” ... The face of the dead was stern and majestic. But there was no motion either on the pure cold brow, or the firmly closed lips. She was all attention! But did she perhaps now understand these majestic words?

#### Chapter IV

At the end of a month, over the grave of the dead a stone chapel was erected. Over the driver’s there was as yet no stone, and only the fresh green grass sprouted over the mound which served as the sole record of the past existence of a man.

“It will be a sin and a shame, Seryoha,” said the cook at the station-house one day, “if you don’t buy a gravestone for Khveodor. You kept saying, ‘it’s winter, winter,’ but now why don’t you keep your word? I heard it all. He has already come back once to ask why you don’t do it; if you don’t buy him one, he will come again, he will choke you.” “Well, now, have I denied it?” urged Seryoha. “I am going to buy him a stone, as I said I would. I can get one for a ruble and a half. I have not forgotten about it; I’ll have to get it. As soon as I happen to be in town,

then I'll buy him one." "You ought at least to put up a cross, that's what you ought to do," said an old driver. It isn't right at all. You're wearing those boots now." "Yes. But where could I get him a cross?"

You wouldn't want to make one out of an old piece of stick, would you?" "What is that you say? Make one out of an old piece of stick? No; take your ax, go out to the wood a little earlier than usual, and you can hew him out one. Take a little ash tree, and you can make one. You can have a covered cross. If you go then, you won't have to give the watchman a little drink of vodka. One doesn't want to give vodka for every trifle. Now, yesterday I broke my axletree, and I go and hew out a new one of green wood. No one said a word." Early the next morning, almost before dawn, Seryoha took his ax, and went to the wood. Over all things hung a cold, dead veil of falling mist, as yet untouched by the rays of the sun. The east gradually grew brighter, reflecting its pale light over the vault of heaven still covered by light clouds. Not a single grass-blade below, now a single leaf on the topmost branches of the tree-top, waved.

Only from time to time could be heard the sound of fluttering wings in the thicket, or a rustling on the ground broke in on the silence of the forest. Suddenly a strange sound, foreign to this nature, resounded and died away at the edge of the forest. Again the noise sounded, and was monotonously repeated again and again, at the foot of one of the ancient, immovable trees. A tree-top began to shake in an extraordinary manner; the juicy leaves whispered something; and the warbler, sitting on one of the branches, flew off a couple of times with a shrill cry, and wagging its tail, finally perched on another tree.

The ax rang more and more frequently; the white chips, full of sap, were scattered upon the dewy grass, and a slight cracking was heard beneath the blows. The tree trembled with all its body, leaned over, and quickly straightened itself, shuddering with fear on its base. For an instant all was still, then once more the tree bent over; a crash was heard in its trunk; and, tearing the thicket, and dragging down the branches, it plunged toward the damp earth. The noise of the ax and of footsteps ceased. The warbler uttered a cry, and flew higher. The

branch which she grazed with her wings shook for an instant, and then came to rest like all the others their foliage. The trees, more joyously than ever, extended their motionless branches over the new space that had been made in their midst.

The first sunbeams, breaking through the cloud, gleamed in the sky, and shone along the earth and heavens. The mist, in billows, began to float along the hollows; the dew, gleaming, played on the green foliage; translucent white clouds hurried along their azure path. The birds hopped about in the thicket, and, as if beside themselves, voiced their happiness; the juicy leaves joyfully and contentedly whispered on the tree-tops; and the branches of the living trees slowly and majestically waved over the dead and fallen tree.

## Polikushka Or The Lot of a Wicked Court Servant

Translated by Benjamin R Tucker 1890

### Chapter I.

Polikey was a court man — one of the staff of servants belonging to the court household of a boyarina (lady of the nobility).

He held a very insignificant position on the estate, and lived in a rather poor, small house with his wife and children.

The house was built by the deceased nobleman whose widow he still continued to serve, and may be described as follows: The four walls surrounding the one izba (room) were built of stone, and the interior was ten yards square. A Russian stove stood in the centre, around which was a free passage. Each corner was fenced off as a separate inclosure to the extent of several feet, and the one nearest to the door (the smallest of all) was known as “Polikey’s corner.” Elsewhere in the room stood the bed (with quilt, sheet, and cotton pillows), the cradle



(with a baby lying therein), and the three-legged table, on which the meals were prepared and the family washing was done.

At the latter also Polikey was at work on the preparation of some materials for use in his profession — that of an amateur veterinary surgeon. A calf, some hens, the family clothes and household utensils, together with seven persons, filled the little home to the utmost of its capacity. It would indeed have been almost impossible for them to move around had it not been for the convenience of the stove, on which some of them slept at night, and which served as a table in the day-time.

It seemed hard to realize how so many persons managed to live in such close quarters.

Polikey's wife, Akulina, did the washing, spun and wove, bleached her linen, cooked and baked, and found time also to quarrel and gossip with her neighbors.

The monthly allowance of food which they received from the noblewoman's house was amply sufficient for the whole family, and there was always enough meal left to make mash for the cow. Their fuel they got free, and likewise the food for the cattle. In addition they were given a small piece of land on which to raise vegetables. They had a cow, a calf, and a number of chickens to care for.

Polikey was employed in the stables to take care of two stallions, and, when necessary, to bleed the horses and cattle and clean their hoofs. In his treatment of the animals he used syringes, plasters, and various other remedies and appliances of his own invention. For these services he received whatever provisions were required by his family, and a certain sum of money — all of which would have been sufficient to enable them to live comfortably and even happily, if their hearts had not been filled with the shadow of a great sorrow. This shadow darkened the lives of the entire family.

Polikey, while young, was employed in a horse-breeding establishment in a neighboring village. The head stableman was a notorious horse-

thief, known far and wide as a great rogue, who, for his many misdeeds, was finally exiled to Siberia. Under his instruction Polikey underwent a course of training, and, being but a boy, was easily induced to perform many evil deeds. He became so expert in the various kinds of wickedness practiced by his teacher that, though he many times would gladly have abandoned his evil ways, he could not, owing to the great hold these early-formed habits had upon him. His father and mother died when he was but a child, and he had no one to point out to him the paths of virtue.

In addition to his other numerous shortcomings, Polikey was fond of strong drink. He also had a habit of appropriating other people's property, when the opportunity offered of his doing so without being seen. Collar-straps, padlocks, perch-bolts, and things even of greater value belonging to others found their way with remarkable rapidity and in great quantities to Polikey's home. He did not, however, keep such things for his own use, but sold them whenever he could find a purchaser. His payment consisted chiefly of whiskey, though sometimes he received cash.

This sort of employment, as his neighbors said, was both light and profitable; it required neither education nor labor. It had one drawback, however, which was calculated to reconcile his victims to their losses: Though he could for a time have all his needs supplied without expending either labor or money, there was always the possibility of his methods being discovered; and this result was sure to be followed by a long term of imprisonment. This impending danger made life a burden for Polikey and his family.

Such a setback indeed very nearly happened to Polikey early in his career. He married while still young, and God gave him much happiness. His wife, who was a shepherd's daughter, was a strong, intelligent, hard-working woman. She bore him many children, each of whom was said to be better than the preceding one.

Polikey still continued to steal, but once was caught with some small articles belonging to others in his possession. Among them was a pair of

leather reins, the property of another peasant, who beat him severely and reported him to his mistress.

From that time on Polikey was an object of suspicion, and he was twice again detected in similar escapades. By this time the people began to abuse him, and the clerk of the court threatened to recruit him into the army as a soldier (which is regarded by the peasants as a great punishment and disgrace). His noble mistress severely reprimanded him; his wife wept from grief for his downfall, and everything went from bad to worse.

Polikey, notwithstanding his weakness, was a good-natured sort of man, but his love of strong drink had so overcome every moral instinct that at times he was scarcely responsible for his actions. This habit he vainly endeavored to overcome. It often happened that when he returned home intoxicated, his wife, losing all patience, roundly cursed him and cruelly beat him. At times he would cry like a child, and bemoan his fate, saying: "Unfortunate man that I am, what shall I do? LET MY EYES BURST INTO PIECES if I do not forever give up the vile habit! I will not again touch vodki."

In spite of all his promises of reform, but a short period (perhaps a month) would elapse when Polikey would again mysteriously disappear from his home and be lost for several days on a spree.

"From what source does he get the money he spends so freely?" the neighbors inquired of each other, as they sadly shook their heads. One of his most unfortunate exploits in the matter of stealing was in connection with a clock which belonged to the estate of his mistress. The clock stood in the private office of the noblewoman, and was so old as to have outlived its usefulness, and was simply kept as an heirloom. It so happened that Polikey went into the office one day when no one was present but himself, and, seeing the old clock, it seemed to possess a peculiar fascination for him, and he speedily transferred it to his person. He carried it to a town not far from the village, where he very readily found a purchaser.

As if purposely to secure his punishment, it happened that the storekeeper to whom he sold it proved to be a relative of one of the court servants, and who, when he visited his friend on the next holiday, related all about his purchase of the clock.

An investigation was immediately instituted, and all the details of Polikey's transaction were brought to light and reported to his noble mistress. He was called into her presence, and, when confronted with the story of the theft, broke down and confessed all. He fell on his knees before the noblewoman and plead with her for mercy. The kind-hearted lady lectured him about God, the salvation of his soul, and his future life. She talked to him also about the misery and disgrace he brought upon his family, and altogether so worked upon his feelings that he cried like a child. In conclusion his kind mistress said: "I will forgive you this time on the condition that you promise faithfully to reform, and never again to take what does not belong to you."

Polikey, still weeping, replied: "I will never steal again in all my life, and if I break my promise may the earth open and swallow me up, and let my body be burned with red-hot irons!"

Polikey returned to his home, and throwing himself on the oven spent the entire day weeping and repeating the promise made to his mistress.

From that time on he was not again caught stealing, but his life became extremely sad, for he was regarded with suspicion by every one and pointed to as a thief.

When the time came round for securing recruits for the army, all the peasants singled out Polikey as the first to be taken. The superintendent was especially anxious to get rid of him, and went to his mistress to induce her to have him sent away. The kind-hearted and merciful woman, remembering the peasant's repentance, refused to grant the superintendent's request, and told him he must take some other man in his stead.

Chapter II.

One evening Polikey was sitting on his bed beside the table, preparing some medicine for the cattle, when suddenly the door was thrown wide open, and Aksiutka, a young girl from the court, rushed in. Almost out of breath, she said: "My mistress has ordered you, Polikey Illitch son of Ilia, to come up to the court at once!"

The girl was standing and still breathing heavily from her late exertion as she continued: "Egor Mikhailovitch, the superintendent, has been to see our lady about having you drafted into the army, and, Polikey Illitch, your name was mentioned among others. Our lady has sent me to tell you to come up to the court immediately."

As soon as Aksiutka had delivered her message she left the room in the same abrupt manner in which she had entered.

Akulina, without saying a word, got up and brought her husband's boots to him. They were poor, worn-out things which some soldier had given him, and his wife did not glance at him as she handed them to him.

"Are you going to change your shirt, Illitch?" she asked, at last.

"No," replied Polikey.

Akulina did not once look at him all the time he was putting on his boots and preparing to go to the court. Perhaps, after all, it was better that she did not do so. His face was very pale and his lips trembled. He slowly combed his hair and was about to dePart without saying a word, when his wife stopped him to arrange the ribbon on his shirt, and, after toying a little with his coat, she put his hat on for him and he left the little home.

Polikey's next-door neighbors were a joiner and his wife. A thin Partition only separated the two families, and each could hear what the other said and did. Soon after Polikey's deParture a woman was heard to say: "Well, Polikey Illitch, so your mistress has sent for you!"

The voice was that of the joiner's wife on the other side of the Partition. Akulina and the woman had quarrelled that morning about some trifling thing done by one of Polikey's children, and it afforded her

the greatest pleasure to learn that her neighbor had been summoned into the presence of his noble mistress. She looked upon such a circumstance as a bad omen. She continued talking to herself and said: "Perhaps she wants to send him to the town to make some purchases for her household. I did not suppose she would select such a faithful man as you are to perform such a service for her. If it should prove that she DOES want to send you to the next town, just buy me a quarter-pound of tea. Will you, Polikey Illitch?"

Poor Akulina, on hearing the joiner's wife talking so unkindly of her husband, could hardly suppress the tears, and, the tirade continuing, she at last became angry, and wished she could in some way punish her.

Forgetting her neighbor's unkindness, her thoughts soon turned in another direction, and glancing at her sleeping children she said to herself that they might soon be orphans and she herself a soldier's widow. This thought greatly distressed her, and burying her face in her hands she seated herself on the bed, where several of her progeny were fast asleep. Presently a little voice interrupted her meditations by crying out, "Mamushka little mother, you are crushing me," and the child pulled her nightdress from under her mother's arms.

Akulina, with her head still resting on her hands, said: "Perhaps it would be better if we all should die. I only seem to have brought you into the world to suffer sorrow and misery."

Unable longer to control her grief, she burst into violent weeping, which served to increase the amusement of the joiner's wife, who had not forgotten the morning's squabble, and she laughed loudly at her neighbor's woe.

### Chapter III.

About half an hour had passed when the youngest child began to cry and Akulina arose to feed it. She had by this time ceased to weep, and after feeding the infant she again fell into her old position, with her face buried in her hands. She was very pale, but this only increased her

beauty. After a time she raised her head, and staring at the burning candle she began to question herself as to why she had married, and as to the reason that the Czar required so many soldiers.

Presently she heard steps outside, and knew that her husband was returning. She hurriedly wiped away the last traces of her tears as she arose to let him pass into the centre of the room.

Polikey made his appearance with a look of triumph on his face, threw his hat on the bed, and hastily removed his coat; but not a word did he utter.

Akulina, unable to restrain her impatience, asked, "Well, what did she want with you?"

"Pshaw!" he replied, "it is very well known that Polikushka is considered the worst man in the village; but when it comes to business of importance, who is selected then? Why, Polikushka, of course."

"What kind of business?" Akulina timidly inquired.

But Polikey was in no hurry to answer her question. He lighted his pipe with a very imposing air, and spit several times on the floor before he replied.

Still retaining his pompous manner, he said, "She has ordered me to go to a certain merchant in the town and collect a considerable sum of money."

"You to collect money?" questioned Akulina.

Polikey only shook his head and smiled significantly, saying:

"'You,' the mistress said to me, 'are a man resting under a grave suspicion — a man who is considered unsafe to trust in any capacity; but I have faith in you, and will intrust you with this important business of mine in preference to any one else.'"

Polikey related all this in a loud voice, so that his neighbor might hear what he had to say.

"'You promised me to reform,' my noble mistress said to me, 'and I will be the first to show you how much faith I have in your promise. I want you to ride into town, and, going to the principal merchant there, collect a sum of money from him and bring it to me.' I said to my

mistress: 'Everything you order shall be done. I will only too gladly obey your slightest wish.'

"Then my mistress said: 'Do you understand, Polikey, that your future lot depends upon the faithful performance of this duty I impose upon you?'

I replied: 'Yes, I understand everything, and feel that I will succeed in performing acceptably any task which you may impose upon me. I have been accused of every kind of evil deed that it is possible to charge a man with, but I have never done anything seriously wrong against you, your honor.' In this way I talked to our mistress until I succeeded in convincing her that my repentance was sincere, and she became greatly softened toward me, saying, 'If you are successful I will give you the first place at the court.'"

"And how much money are you to collect?" inquired Akulina.

"Fifteen hundred rubles," carelessly answered Polikey.

Akulina sadly shook her head as she asked, "When are you to start?"

"She ordered me to leave here to-morrow," Polikey replied. "'Take any horse you please,' she said. 'Come to the office, and I will see you there and wish you God-speed on your journey.'"

"Glory to Thee, O Lord!" said Akulina, as she arose and made the sign of the cross. "God, I am sure, will bless you, Illitch," she added, in a whisper, so that the people on the other side of the Partition could not hear what she said, all the while holding on to his sleeve. "Illitch," she cried at last, excitedly, "for God's sake promise me that you will not touch a drop of vodki. Take an oath before God, and kiss the cross, so that I may be sure that you will not break your promise!"

Polikey replied in most contemptuous tones: "Do you think I will dare to touch vodki when I shall have such a large sum of money in my care?"

"Akulina, have a clean shirt ready for the morning," were his Parting words for the night.

So Polikey and his wife went to sleep in a happy frame of mind and full of bright dreams for the future.



## Chapter IV.

Very early the next morning, almost before the stars had hidden themselves from view, there was seen standing before Polikey's home a low wagon, the same in which the superintendent himself used to ride; and harnessed to it was a large-boned, dark-brown mare, called for some unknown reason by the name of Baraban (drum). Aniotka, Polikey's eldest daughter, in spite of the heavy rain and the cold wind which was blowing, stood outside barefooted and held (not without some fear) the reins in one hand, while with the other she endeavored to keep her green and yellow overcoat wound around her body, and also to hold Polikey's sheepskin coat.

In the house there were the greatest noise and confusion. The morning was still so dark that the little daylight there was failed to penetrate through the broken panes of glass, the window being stuffed in many places with rags and paper to exclude the cold air.

Akulina ceased from her cooking for a while and helped to get Polikey ready for the journey. Most of the children were still in bed, very likely as a protection against the cold, for Akulina had taken away the big overcoat which usually covered them and had substituted a shawl of her own. Polikey's shirt was all ready, nice and clean, but his shoes badly needed repairing, and this fact caused his devoted wife much anxiety. She took from her own feet the thick woollen stockings she was wearing, and gave them to Polikey. She then began to repair his shoes, patching up the holes so as to protect his feet from dampness.

While this was going on he was sitting on the side of the bed with his feet dangling over the edge, and trying to turn the sash which confined his coat at the waist. He was anxious to look as clean as possible, and he declared his sash looked like a dirty rope.

One of his daughters, enveloped in a sheepskin coat, was sent to a neighbor's house to borrow a hat.

Within Polikey's home the greatest confusion reigned, for the court servants were constantly arriving with innumerable small orders which they wished Polikey to execute for them in town. One wanted needles, another tea, another tobacco, and last came the joiner's wife, who by this time had prepared her samovar, and, anxious to make up the quarrel of the previous day, brought the traveller a cup of tea.

Neighbor Nikita refused the loan of the hat, so the old one had to be patched up for the occasion. This occupied some time, as there were many holes in it.

Finally Polikey was all ready, and jumping on the wagon started on his journey, after first making the sign of the cross.

At the last moment his little boy, Mishka, ran to the door, begging to be given a short ride; and then his little daughter, Mashka, appeared on the scene and pleaded that she, too, might have a ride, declaring that she would be quite warm enough without furs.

Polikey stopped the horse on hearing the children, and Akulina placed them in the wagon, together with two others belonging to a neighbor — all anxious to have a short ride.

As Akulina helped the little ones into the wagon she took occasion to remind Polikey of the solemn promise he had made her not to touch a drop of vodki during the journey.

Polikey drove the children as far as the blacksmith's place, where he let them out of the wagon, telling them they must return home. He then arranged his clothing, and, setting his hat firmly on his head, started his horse on a trot.

The two children, Mishka and Mashka, both barefooted, started running at such a rapid pace that a strange dog from another village, seeing them flying over the road, dropped his tail between his legs and ran home squealing.

The weather was very cold, a sharp cutting wind blowing continuously; but this did not disturb Polikey, whose mind was engrossed with pleasant thoughts. As he rode through the wintry blasts he kept repeating to himself: "So I am the man they wanted to send to Siberia,

and whom they threatened to enroll as a soldier — the same man whom every one abused, and said he was lazy, and who was pointed out as a thief and given the meanest work on the estate to do! Now I am going to receive a large sum of money, for which my mistress is sending me because she trusts me. I am also riding in the same wagon that the superintendent himself uses when he is riding as a representative of the court. I have the same harness, leather horse-collar, reins, and all the other gear.”

Polikey, filled with pride at thought of the mission with which he had been intrusted, drew himself up with an air of pride, and, fixing his old hat more firmly on his head, buttoned his coat tightly about him and urged his horse to greater speed.

“Just to think,” he continued; “I shall have in my possession three thousand half-rubles the peasant manner of speaking of money so as to make it appear a larger sum than it really is, and will carry them in my bosom. If I wished to I might run away to Odessa instead of taking the money to my mistress. But no; I will not do that. I will surely carry the money straight to the one who has been kind enough to trust me.”

When Polikey reached the first kabak (tavern) he found that from long habit the mare was naturally turning her head toward it; but he would not allow her to stop, though money had been given him to purchase both food and drink. Striking the animal a sharp blow with the whip, he passed by the tavern. The performance was repeated when he reached the next kabak, which looked very inviting; but he resolutely set his face against entering, and passed on.

About noon he arrived at his destination, and getting down from the wagon approached the gate of the merchant’s house where the servants of the court always stopped. Opening it he led the mare through, and (after unharnessing her) fed her. This done, he next entered the house and had dinner with the merchant’s workingman, and to them he related what an important mission he had been sent on, making himself very amusing by the pompous air which he

assumed. Dinner over, he carried a letter to the merchant which the noblewoman had given him to deliver.

The merchant, knowing thoroughly the reputation which Polikey bore, felt doubtful of trusting him with so much money, and somewhat anxiously inquired if he really had received orders to carry so many rubles.

Polikey tried to appear offended at this question, but did not succeed, and he only smiled.

The merchant, after reading the letter a second time and being convinced that all was right, gave Polikey the money, which he put in his bosom for safe-keeping.

On his way to the house he did not once stop at any of the shops he passed. The clothing establishments possessed no attractions for him, and after he had safely passed them all he stood for a moment, feeling very pleased that he had been able to withstand temptation, and then went on his way.

“I have money enough to buy up everything,” he said; “but I will not do so.”

The numerous commissions which he had received compelled him to go to the bazaar. There he bought only what had been ordered, but he could not resist the temptation to ask the price of a very handsome sheep-skin coat which attracted his attention. The merchant to whom he spoke looked at Polikey and smiled, not believing that he had sufficient money to purchase such an expensive coat. But Polikey, pointing to his breast, said that he could buy out the whole shop if he wished to. He thereupon ordered the shop-keeper to take his measure. He tried the coat on and looked himself over carefully, testing the quality and blowing upon the hair to see that none of it came out. Finally, heaving a deep sigh, he took it off.

“The price is too high,” he said. “If you could let me have it for fifteen rubles— “

But the merchant cut him short by snatching the coat from him and throwing it angrily to one side.

Polikey left the bazaar and returned to the merchant's house in high spirits.

After supper he went out and fed the mare, and prepared everything for the night. Returning to the house he got up on the stove to rest, and while there he took out the envelope which contained the money and looked long and earnestly at it. He could not read, but asked one of those present to tell him what the writing on the envelope meant. It was simply the address and the announcement that it contained fifteen hundred rubles.

The envelope was made of common paper and was sealed with dark-brown sealing wax. There was one large seal in the centre and four smaller ones at the corners. Polikey continued to examine it carefully, even inserting his finger till he touched the crisp notes. He appeared to take a childish delight in having so much money in his possession.

Having finished his examination, he put the envelope inside the lining of his old battered hat, and placing both under his head he went to sleep; but during the night he frequently awoke and always felt to know if the money was safe. Each time that he found that it was safe he rejoiced at the thought that he, Polikey, abused and regarded by every one as a thief, was intrusted with the care of such a large sum of money, and also that he was about to return with it quite as safely as the superintendent himself could have done.

## Chapter V.

Before dawn the next morning Polikey was up, and after harnessing the mare and looking in his hat to see that the money was all right, he started on his return journey.

Many times on the way Polikey took off his hat to see that the money was safe. Once he said to himself, "I think that perhaps it would be better if I should put it in my bosom." This would necessitate the untying of his sash, so he decided to keep it still in his hat, or until he should have made half the journey, when he would be compelled to stop to feed his horse and to rest.

He said to himself: "The lining is not sewn in very strongly and the envelope might fall out, so I think I had better not take off my hat until I reach home."

The money was safe — at least, so it seemed to him — and he began to think how grateful his mistress would be to him, and in his excited imagination he saw the five rubles he was so sure of receiving.

Once more he examined the hat to see that the money was safe, and finding everything all right he put on his hat and pulled it well down over his ears, smiling all the while at his own thoughts.

Akulina had carefully sewed all the holes in the hat, but it burst out in other places owing to Polikey's removing it so often.

In the darkness he did not notice the new rents, and tried to push the envelope further under the lining, and in doing so pushed one corner of it through the plush.

The sun was getting high in the heavens, and Polikey having slept but little the previous night and feeling its warm rays fell fast asleep, after first pressing his hat more firmly on his head. By this action he forced the envelope still further through the plush, and as he rode along his head bobbed up and down.

Polikey did not awake till he arrived near his own house, and his first act was to put his hand to his head to learn if his hat was all right. Finding that it was in its place, he did not think it necessary to examine it and see that the money was safe. Touching the mare gently with the whip she started into a trot, and as he rode along he arranged in his own mind how much he was to receive. With the air of a man already holding a high position at the court, he looked around him with an expression of lofty scorn on his face.

As he neared his house he could see before him the one room which constituted their humble home, and the joiner's wife next door carrying her rolls of linen. He saw also the office of the court and his mistress's house, where he hoped he would be able presently to prove that he was an honest, trustworthy man.

He reasoned with himself that any person can be abused by lying tongues, but when his mistress would see him she would say: "Well done, Polikey; you have shown that you can be honest. Here are three — it may be five — perhaps ten — rubles for you;" and also she would order tea for him, and might treat him to vodka — who knows? The latter thought gave him great pleasure, as he was feeling very cold.

Speaking aloud he said: "What a happy holy-day we can have with ten rubles! Having so much money, I could pay Nikita the four rubles fifty kopecks which I owe him, and yet have some left to buy shoes for the children."

When near the house Polikey began to arrange his clothes, smoothing down his fur collar, re-tying his sash, and stroking his hair. To do the latter he had to take off his hat, and when doing so felt in the lining for the envelope. Quicker and quicker he ran his hand around the lining, and not finding the money used both hands, first one and then the other. But the envelope was not to be found.

Polikey was by this time greatly distressed, and his face was white with fear as he passed his hand through the crown of his old hat. Polikey stopped the mare and began a diligent search through the wagon and its Contents. Not finding the precious envelope, he felt in all his pockets — BUT THE MONEY COULD NOT BE FOUND!

Wildly clutching at his hair, he exclaimed: "Batiushka! What will I do now? What will become of me?" At the same time he realized that he was near his neighbors' house and could be seen by them; so he turned the mare around, and, pulling his hat down securely upon his head, he rode quickly back in search of his lost treasure.

## Chapter VI.

The whole day passed without any one in the village of Pokrovski having seen anything of Polikey. During the afternoon his mistress inquired many times as to his whereabouts, and sent Aksiutka frequently to Akulina, who each time sent back word that Polikey had

not yet returned, saying also that perhaps the merchant had kept him, or that something had happened to the mare.

His poor wife felt a heavy load upon her heart, and was scarcely able to do her housework and put everything in order for the next day (which was to be a holy-day). The children also anxiously awaited their father's appearance, and, though for different reasons, could hardly restrain their impatience. The noblewoman and Akulina were concerned only in regard to Polikey himself, while the children were interested most in what he would bring them from the town.

The only news received by the villagers during the day concerning Polikey was to the effect that neighboring peasants had seen him running up and down the road and asking every one he met if he or she had found an envelope.

One of them had seen him also walking by the side of his tired-out horse. "I thought," said he, "that the man was drunk, and had not fed his horse for two days — the animal looked so exhausted."

Unable to sleep, and with her heart palpitating at every sound, Akulina lay awake all night vainly awaiting Polikey's return. When the cock crowed the third time she was obliged to get up to attend to the fire. Day was just dawning and the church-bells had begun to ring. Soon all the children were also up, but there was still no tidings of the missing husband and father.

In the morning the chill blasts of winter entered their humble home, and on looking out they saw that the houses, fields, and roads were thickly covered with snow. The day was clear and cold, as if befitting the holy-day they were about to celebrate. They were able to see a long distance from the house, but no one was in sight.

Akulina was busy baking cakes, and had it not been for the joyous shouts of the children she would not have known that Polikey was coming up the road, for a few minutes later he came in with a bundle in his hand and walked quietly to his corner. Akulina noticed that he was very pale and that his face bore an expression of suffering — as if he



would like to have cried but could not do so. But she did not stop to study it, but excitedly inquired: "What! Illitch, is everything all right with you?"

He slowly muttered something, but his wife could not understand what he said.

"What!" she cried out, "have you been to see our mistress?"

Polikey still sat on the bed in his corner, glaring wildly about him, and smiling bitterly. He did not reply for a long time, and Akulina again cried:

"Eh? Illitch! Why don't you answer me? Why don't you speak?"

Finally he said: "Akulina, I delivered the money to our mistress; and oh, how she thanked me!" Then he suddenly looked about him, with an anxious, startled air, and with a sad smile on his lips. Two things in the room seemed to engross the most of his attention: the baby in the cradle, and the rope which was attached to the ladder. Approaching the cradle, he began with his thin fingers quickly to untie the knot in the rope by which the two were connected. After untying it he stood for a few moments looking silently at the baby.

Akulina did not notice this proceeding, and with her cakes on the board went to place them in a corner.

Polikey quickly hid the rope beneath his coat, and again seated himself on the bed.

"What is it that troubles you, Illitch?" inquired Akulina. "You are not yourself."

"I have not slept," he answered.

Suddenly a dark shadow crossed the window, and a minute later the girl Aksiutka quickly entered the room, exclaiming:

"The boyarinia commands you, Polikey Illitch, to come to her this moment!"

Polikey looked first at Akulina and then at the girl.

"This moment!" he cried. "What more is wanted?"

He spoke the last sentence so softly that Akulina became quieted in her mind, thinking that perhaps their mistress intended to reward her husband.

“Say that I will come immediately,” he said.

But Polikey failed to follow the girl, and went instead to another place. From the porch of his house there was a ladder reaching to the attic. Arriving at the foot of the ladder Polikey looked around him, and seeing no one about, he quickly ascended to the garret.

Meanwhile the girl had reached her mistress’s house.

“What does it mean that Polikey does not come?” said the noblewoman impatiently. “Where can he be? Why does he not come at once?”

Aksiutka flew again to his house and demanded to see Polikey.

“He went a long time ago,” answered Akulina, and looking around with an expression of fear on her face, she added, “He may have fallen asleep somewhere on the way.”

About this time the joiner’s wife, with hair unkempt and clothes bedraggled, went up to the loft to gather the linen which she had previously put there to dry. Suddenly a cry of horror was heard, and the woman, with her eyes closed, and crazed by fear, ran down the ladder like a cat.

“Illitch,” she cried, “has hanged himself!”

Poor Akulina ran up the ladder before any of the people, who had gathered from the surrounding houses, could prevent her. With a loud shriek she fell back as if dead, and would surely have been killed had not one of the spectators succeeded in catching her in his arms.

Before dark the same day a peasant of the village, while returning from the town, found the envelope containing Polikey’s money on the roadside, and soon after delivered it to the boyarina.

God Sees The Truth, But Waits

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1925

IN THE TOWN of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitritch Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much, but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksionov was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-bye to his family, his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitritch, do not start to-day; I have had a bad dream about you."

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

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

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

So he said good-bye to his family, and drove away.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aksionov looked, and seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

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

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

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

Aksionov swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand rubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice

was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he were guilty.

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

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in jail. At first she was not allowed to see him; but after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken to him. When she saw her husband in prison-dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down, and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her, and sat down near him. She told him of things at home, and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked, "What can we do now?"

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

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

Aksionov did not reply, but only looked downcast.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Where are you from?” asked some one.

“From Vladimir. My family are of that town. My name is Makar, and they also call me Semyonich.”

Aksionov raised his head and said: “Tell me, Semyonich, do you know anything of the merchants Aksionov of Vladimir? Are they still alive?”

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

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

“What sins?” asked Makar Semyonich.

But Aksionov only said, “Well, well — I must have deserved it!” He would have said no more, but his companions told the newcomers how Aksionov came to be in Siberia; how some one had killed a merchant, and had put the knife among Aksionov’s things, and Aksionov had been unjustly condemned.

When Makar Semyonich heard this, he looked at Aksionov, slapped his own knee, and exclaimed, “Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you’ve grown, Gran’dad!”

The others asked him why he was so surprised, and where he had seen Aksionov before; but Makar Semyonich did not reply. He only said: "It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Well, old man,” repeated the Governor, “tell me the truth: who has been digging under the wall?”

Aksionov glanced at Makar Semyonich, and said, “I cannot say, your honour. It is not God’s will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am in your hands.”

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

That night, when Aksionov was lying on his bed and just beginning to doze, some one came quietly and sat down on his bed. He peered through the darkness and recognized Makar.

“What more do you want of me?” asked Aksionov. “Why have you come here?”

Makar Semyonich was silent. So Aksionov sat up and said, “What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!”

Makar Semyonich bent close over Aksionov, and whispered, “Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!”

“What for?” asked Aksionov.

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

Aksionov was silent, and did not know what to say. Makar Semyonich slid off the bed-shelf and knelt upon the ground. “Ivan Dmitritch,” said he, “forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home.”

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

Makar Semyonich did not rise, but beat his head on the floor. “Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!” he cried. “When they flogged me with the knot it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now . . . yet you had pity on

me, and did not tell. For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch that I am!"  
And he began to sob.  
When Aksionov heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep.

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

In spite of what Aksionov had said, Makar Semyonich confessed his guilt. But when the order for his release came, Aksionov was already dead.

## The Prisoner Of The Caucasus

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

AN OFFICER NAMED Zhílin was serving in the army in the Caucasus.

I

One day he received a letter from home. It was from his mother, who wrote: 'I am getting old, and should like to see my dear son once more before I die. Come and say good-bye to me and bury me, and then, if God pleases, return to service again with my blessing. But I have found a girl for you, who is sensible and good and has some property. If you can love her, you might marry her and remain at home.'

Zhílin thought it over. It was quite true, the old lady was failing fast and he might not have another chance to see her alive. He had better go, and, if the girl was nice, why not marry her?

So he went to his Colonel, obtained leave of absence, said good-bye to his comrades, stood the soldiers four pailfuls of vódka as a farewell treat, and got ready to go.

It was a time of war in the Caucasus. The roads were not safe by night or day. If ever a Russian ventured to ride or walk any distance away from his fort, the Tartars killed him or carried him off to the hills. So it had been arranged that twice every week a body of soldiers should march from one fortress to the next to convoy travellers from point to point.

It was summer. At daybreak the baggage-train got ready under shelter of the fortress; the soldiers marched out; and all started along the road. Zhílin was on horseback, and a cart with his things went with the baggage-train. They had sixteen miles to go. The baggage-train moved slowly; sometimes the soldiers stopped, or perhaps a wheel would come off one of the carts, or a horse refuse to go on, and then everybody had to wait.

When by the sun it was already past noon, they had not gone half the way. It was dusty and hot, the sun was scorching and there was no shelter anywhere: a bare plain all round — not a tree, not a bush, by the road.

Zhílin rode on in front, and stopped, waiting for the baggage to overtake him. Then he heard the signal-horn sounded behind him: the company had again stopped. So he began to think: 'Hadn't I better ride on by myself? My horse is a good one: if the Tartars do attack me, I can gallop away. Perhaps, however, it would be wiser to wait.'

As he sat considering, Kostílin, an officer carrying a gun, rode up to him and said:

'Come along, Zhílin, let's go on by ourselves. It's dreadful; I am famished, and the heat is terrible. My shirt is wringing wet.'

Kostílin was a stout, heavy man, and the perspiration was running down his red face. Zhílin thought awhile, and then asked: 'Is your gun loaded?'

'Yes it is.'

'Well, then, let's go, but on condition that we keep together.'

So they rode forward along the road across the plain, talking, but keeping a look-out on both sides. They could see afar all round. But

after crossing the plain the road ran through a valley between two hills, and Zhílin said: 'We had better climb that hill and have a look round, or the Tartars may be on us before we know it.'

But Kostílin answered: 'What's the use? Let us go on.'

Zhílin, however, would not agree.

'No,' he said; 'you can wait here if you like, but I'll go and look round.' And he turned his horse to the left, up the hill. Zhílin's horse was a hunter, and carried him up the hillside as if it had wings. (He had bought it for a hundred roubles as a colt out of a herd, and had broken it in himself.) Hardly had he reached the top of the hill, when he saw some thirty Tartars not much more than a hundred yards ahead of him. As soon as he caught sight of them he turned round but the Tartars had also seen him, and rushed after him at full gallop, getting their guns out as they went. Down galloped Zhílin as fast as the horse's legs could go, shouting to Kostílin: 'Get your gun ready!'

And, in thought, he said to his horse: 'Get me well out of this, my pet; don't stumble, for if you do it's all up. Once I reach the gun, they shan't take me prisoner.'

But, instead of waiting, Kostílin, as soon as he caught sight of the Tartars, turned back towards the fortress at full speed, whipping his horse now on one side now on the other, and its switching tail was all that could be seen of him in the dust.

Zhílin saw it was a bad look-out; the gun was gone, and what could he do with nothing but his sword? He turned his horse towards the escort, thinking to escape, but there were six Tartars rushing to cut him off. His horse was a good one, but theirs were still better; and besides, they were across his path. He tried to rein in his horse and to turn another way, but it was going so fast it could not stop, and dashed on straight towards the Tartars. He saw a red-bearded Tartar on a grey horse, with his gun raised, come at him, yelling and showing his teeth.

'Ah,' thought Zhílin, 'I know you, devils that you are. If you take me alive, you'll put me in a pit and flog me. I will not be taken alive!'

Zhílin, though not a big fellow, was brave. He drew his sword and dashed at the red-bearded Tartar thinking: 'Either I'll ride him down, or disable him with my sword.'

He was still a horse's length away from him, when he was fired at from behind, and his horse was hit. It fell to the ground with all its weight, pinning Zhílin to the earth.

He tried to rise, but two ill-savoured Tartars were already sitting on him and binding his hands behind his back. He made an effort and flung them off, but three others jumped from their horses and began beating his head with the butts of their guns. His eyes grew dim, and he fell back. The Tartars seized him, and, taking spare girths from their saddles, twisted his hands behind him and tied them with a Tartar knot. They knocked his cap off, pulled off his boots, searched him all over, tore his clothes, and took his money and his watch.

Zhílin looked round at his horse. There it lay on its side, poor thing, just as it had fallen; struggling, its legs in the air, unable to touch the ground. There was a hole in its head, and black blood was pouring out, turning the dust to mud for a couple of feet around.

One of the Tartars went up to the horse and began taking the saddle off, it still kicked, so he drew a dagger and cut its windpipe. A whistling sound came from its throat, the horse gave one plunge, and all was over.

The Tartars took the saddle and trappings. The red-bearded Tartar mounted his horse, and the others lifted Zhílin into the saddle behind him. To prevent his falling off, they strapped him to the Tartar's girdle; and then they all rode away to the hills.

So there sat Zhílin, swaying from side to side, his head striking against the Tartar's stinking back. He could see nothing but that muscular back and sinewy neck, with its closely shaven, bluish nape. Zhílin's head was wounded: the blood had dried over his eyes, and he could neither shift his position on the saddle nor wipe the blood off. His arms were bound so tightly that his collar-bones ached.

They rode up and down hills for a long way. Then they reached a river which they forded, and came to a hard road leading across a valley. Zhílin tried to see where they were going, but his eyelids were stuck together with blood, and he could not turn.

Twilight began to fall; they crossed another river and rode up a stony hillside. There was a smell of smoke here, and dogs were barking. They had reached an Aoul (a Tartar village). The Tartars got off their horses; Tartar children came and stood round Zhílin, shrieking with pleasure and throwing stones at him.

The Tartar drove the children away, took Zhílin off the horse, and called his man. A Nogáy with high cheek-bones, and nothing on but a shirt (and that so torn that his breast was all bare), answered the call. The Tartar gave him an order. He went and fetched shackles: two blocks of oak with iron rings attached, and a clasp and lock fixed to one of the rings.

They untied Zhílin's arms, fastened the shackles on his leg, and dragged him to a barn, where they pushed him in and locked the door.

Zhílin fell on a heap of manure. He lay still awhile then groped about to find a soft place, and settled down.

II

That night Zhílin hardly slept at all. It was the time of year when the nights are short, and daylight soon showed itself through a chink in the wall. He rose, scratched to make the chink bigger, and peeped out.

Through the hole he saw a road leading down-hill; to the right was a Tartar hut with two trees near it, a black dog lay on the threshold, and a goat and kids were moving about wagging their tails. Then he saw a young Tartar woman in a long, loose, bright-coloured gown, with trousers and high boots showing from under it. She had a coat thrown over her head, on which she carried a large metal jug filled with water. She was leading by the hand a small, closely-shaven Tartar boy, who wore nothing but a shirt; and as she went along balancing herself, the muscles of her back quivered. This woman carried the water into the hut, and, soon after, the red-bearded Tartar of yesterday came out

dressed in a silk tunic, with a silver-hilted dagger hanging by his side, shoes on his bare feet, and a tall black sheepskin cap set far back on his head. He came out, stretched himself, and stroked his red beard. He stood awhile, gave an order to his servant, and went away.

Then two lads rode past from watering their horses. The horses' noses were wet. Some other closely-shaven boys ran out, without any trousers, and wearing nothing but their shirts. They crowded together, came to the barn, picked up a twig, and began pushing it in at the chink. Zhílin gave a shout, and the boys shrieked and scampered off, their little bare knees gleaming as they ran.

Zhílin was very thirsty: his throat was parched, and he thought: 'If only they would come and so much as look at me!'

Then he heard some one unlocking the barn. The red-bearded Tartar entered, and with him was another a smaller man, dark, with bright black eyes, red cheeks and a short beard. He had a merry face, and was always laughing. This man was even more richly dressed than the other. He wore a blue silk tunic trimmed with gold, a large silver dagger in his belt, red morocco slippers worked with silver, and over these a pair of thick shoes, and he had a white sheepskin cap on his head.

The red-bearded Tartar entered, muttered something as if he were annoyed, and stood leaning against the doorpost, playing with his dagger, and glaring askance at Zhílin, like a wolf. The dark one, quick and lively and moving as if on springs, came straight up to Zhílin, squatted down in front of him, slapped him on the shoulder, and began to talk very fast in his own language. His teeth showed, and he kept winking, clicking his tongue, and repeating, 'Good Russ, good Russ.'

Zhílin could not understand a word, but said, 'Drink! give me water to drink!'

The dark man only laughed. 'Good Russ,' he said, and went on talking in his own tongue.

Zhílin made signs with lips and hands that he wanted something to drink.



The dark man understood, and laughed. Then he looked out of the door, and called to some one: 'Dina!'

A little girl came running in: she was about thirteen, slight, thin, and like the dark Tartar in face. Evidently she was his daughter. She, too, had clear black eyes, and her face was good-looking. She had on a long blue gown with wide sleeves, and no girdle. The hem of her gown, the front, and the sleeves, were trimmed with red. She wore trousers and slippers, and over the slippers stouter shoes with high heels. Round her neck she had a necklace made of Russian silver coins. She was bareheaded, and her black hair was plaited with a ribbon and ornamented with gilt braid and silver coins.

Her father gave an order, and she ran away and returned with a metal jug. She handed the water to Zhílin and sat down, crouching so that her knees were as high as her head, and there she sat with wide open eyes watching Zhílin drink, as though he were a wild animal.

When Zhílin handed the empty jug back to her, she gave such a sudden jump back, like a wild goat, that it made her father laugh. He sent her away for something else. She took the jug, ran out, and brought back some unleavened bread on a round board, and once more sat down, crouching, and looking on with staring eyes.

Then the Tartars went away and again locked the door.

After a while the Nógay came and said: 'Ayda, the master, Ayda!'

He, too, knew no Russian. All Zhílin could make out was that he was told to go somewhere.

Zhílin followed the Nógay, but limped, for the shackles dragged his feet so that he could hardly step at all. On getting out of the barn he saw a Tartar village of about ten houses, and a Tartar church with a small tower. Three horses stood saddled before one of the houses; little boys were holding them by the reins. The dark Tartar came out of this house, beckoning with his hand for Zhílin to follow him. Then he laughed, said something in his own language, and returned into the house.

Zhílin entered. The room was a good one: the walls smoothly plastered with clay. Near the front wall lay a pile of bright-coloured feather beds; the side walls were covered with rich carpets used as hangings, and on these were fastened guns, pistols and swords, all inlaid with silver. Close to one of the walls was a small stove on a level with the earthen floor. The floor itself was as clean as a thrashing-ground. A large space in one corner was spread over with felt, on which were rugs, and on these rugs were cushions stuffed with down. And on these cushions sat five Tartars, the dark one, the red-haired one, and three guests. They were wearing their indoor slippers, and each had a cushion behind his back. Before them were standing millet cakes on a round board, melted butter in a bowl and a jug of buza, or Tartar beer. They ate both cakes and butter with their hands.

The dark man jumped up and ordered Zhílin to be placed on one side, not on the carpet but on the bare ground, then he sat down on the carpet again, and offered millet cakes and buza to his guests. The servant made Zhílin sit down, after which he took off his own overshoes, put them by the door where the other shoes were standing, and sat down nearer to his masters on the felt, watching them as they ate, and licking his lips.

The Tartars ate as much as they wanted, and a woman dressed in the same way as the girl — in a long gown and trousers, with a kerchief on her head — came and took away what was left, and brought a handsome basin, and an ewer with a narrow spout. The Tartars washed their hands, folded them, went down on their knees, blew to the four quarters, and said their prayers. After they had talked for a while, one of the guests turned to Zhílin and began to speak in Russian.

‘You were captured by Kazi-Mohammed,’ he said, and pointed at the red-bearded Tartar. ‘And Kazi-Mohammed has given you to Abdul Murat,’ pointing at the dark one. ‘Abdul Murat is now your master.’

Zhílin was silent. Then Abdul Murat began to talk, laughing, pointing to Zhílin, and repeating, ‘Soldier Russ, good Russ.’

The interpreter said, 'He orders you to write home and tell them to send a ransom, and as soon as the money comes he will set you free.' Zhílin thought for a moment, and said, 'How much ransom does he want?'

The Tartars talked awhile, and then the interpreter said, 'Three thousand roubles.'

'No,' said Zhílin, 'I can't pay so much.'

Abdul jumped up and, waving his arms, talked to Zhílin' thinking, as before, that he would understand. The interpreter translated: 'How much will you give?'

Zhílin considered, and said, 'Five hundred roubles.' At this the Tartars began speaking very quickly, all together. Abdul began to shout at the red-bearded one, and jabbered so fast that the spittle spurted out of his mouth. The red-bearded one only screwed up his eyes and clicked his tongue.

They quietened down after a while, and the interpreter said, 'Five hundred roubles is not enough for the master. He paid two hundred for you himself. Kazi-Mohammed was in debt to him, and he took you in payment. Three thousand roubles! Less than that won't do. If you refuse to write, you will be put into a pit and flogged with a whip!' 'Eh!' thought Zhílin, 'the more one fears them the worse it will be.'

So he sprang to his feet, and said, 'You tell that dog that if he tries to frighten me I will not write at all, and he will get nothing. I never was afraid of you dogs, and never will be!'

The interpreter translated, and again they all began to talk at once.

They jabbered for a long time, and then the dark man jumped up, came to Zhílin, and said: 'Dzhigit Russ, dzhigit Russ!' (Dzhigit in their language means 'brave.')

And he laughed, and said something to the interpreter, who translated: 'One thousand roubles will satisfy him.'

Zhílin stuck to it: 'I will not give more than five hundred. And if you kill me you'll get nothing at all.'

The Tartars talked awhile, then sent the servant out to fetch something, and kept looking, now at Zhílin, now at the door. The servant returned, followed by a stout, bare-footed, tattered man, who also had his leg shackled.

Zhílin gasped with surprise: it was Kostílin. He, too, had been taken. They were put side by side, and began to tell each other what had occurred. While they talked, the Tartars looked on in silence. Zhílin related what had happened to him; and Kostílin told how his horse had stopped, his gun missed fire, and this same Abdul had overtaken and captured him.

Abdul jumped up, pointed to Kostílin, and said something. The interpreter translated that they both now belonged to one master, and the one who first paid the ransom would be set free first.

‘There now,’ he said to Zhílin, ‘you get angry, but your comrade here is gentle; he has written home, and they will send five thousand roubles. So he will be well fed and well treated.’

Zhílin replied: ‘My comrade can do as he likes; maybe he is rich, I am not. It must be as I said. Kill me, if you like — you will gain nothing by it; but I will not write for more than five hundred roubles.’

They were silent. Suddenly up sprang Abdul, brought a little box, took out a pen, ink, and a bit of paper, gave them to Zhílin, slapped him on the shoulder, and made a sign that he should write. He had agreed to take five hundred roubles.

‘Wait a bit!’ said Zhílin to the interpreter; ‘tell him that he must feed us properly, give us proper clothes and boots, and let us be together. It will be more cheerful for us. And he must have these shackles taken off our feet,’ and Zhílin looked at his master and laughed.

The master also laughed, heard the interpreter, and said: ‘I will give them the best of clothes: a cloak and boots fit to be married in. I will feed them like princes; and if they like they can live together in the barn. But I can’t take off the shackles, or they will run away. They shall

be taken off, however, at night.' And he jumped up and slapped Zhílin on the shoulder, exclaiming: 'You good, I good!'

Zhílin wrote the letter, but addressed it wrongly, so that it should not reach its destination, thinking to himself: 'I'll run away!'

Zhílin and Kostílin were taken back to the barn and given some maize straw, a jug of water, some bread, two old cloaks, and some worn-out military boots — evidently taken from the corpses of Russian soldiers, At night their shackles were taken off their feet, and they were locked up in the barn.

### III

Zhílin and his friend lived in this way for a whole month. The master always laughed and said: 'You, Iván, good! I, Abdul, good!' But he fed them badly giving them nothing but unleavened bread of millet-flour baked into flat cakes, or sometimes only unbaked dough.

Kostílin wrote home a second time, and did nothing but mope and wait for the money to arrive. He would sit for days together in the barn sleeping, or counting the days till a letter could come.

Zhílin knew his letter would reach no one, and he did not write another. He thought: 'Where could my mother get enough money to ransom me? As it is she lived chiefly on what I sent her. If she had to raise five hundred roubles, she would be quite ruined. With God's help I'll manage to escape!'

So he kept on the look-out, planning how to run away.

He would walk about the Aoul whistling; or would sit working, modelling dolls of clay, or weaving baskets out of twigs: for Zhílin was clever with his hands.

Once he modelled a doll with a nose and hands and feet and with a Tartar gown on, and put it up on the roof. When the Tartar women came out to fetch water, the master's daughter, Dina, saw the doll and called the women, who put down their jugs and stood looking and laughing. Zhílin took down the doll and held it out to them. They

laughed, but dared not take it. He put down the doll and went into the barn, waiting to see what would happen.

Dina ran up to the doll, looked round, seized it, and ran away.

In the morning, at daybreak, he looked out. Dina came out of the house and sat down on the threshold with the doll, which she had dressed up in bits of red stuff, and she rocked it like a baby, singing a Tartar lullaby. An old woman came out and scolded her, and snatching the doll away she broke it to bits, and sent Dina about her business.

But Zhílin made another doll, better than the first, and gave it to Dina. Once Dina brought a little jug, put it on the ground, sat down gazing at him, and laughed, pointing to the jug.

‘What pleases her so?’ wondered Zhílin. He took the jug thinking it was water, but it turned out to be milk. He drank the milk and said: ‘That’s good!’

How pleased Dina was! ‘Good, Iván, good!’ said she, and she jumped up and clapped her hands. Then, seizing the jug, she ran away. After that, she stealthily brought him some milk every day.

The Tartars make a kind of cheese out of goat’s milk, which they dry on the roofs of their houses; and sometimes, on the sly, she brought him some of this cheese. And once, when Abdul had killed a sheep she brought Zhílin a bit of mutton in her sleeve. She would just throw the things down and run away.

One day there was a heavy storm, and the rain fell in torrents for a whole hour. All the streams became turbid. At the ford, the water rose till it was seven feet high, and the current was so strong that it rolled the stones about. Rivulets flowed everywhere, and the rumbling in the hills never ceased. When the storm was over, the water ran in streams down the village street. Zhílin got his master to lend him a knife, and with it he shaped a small cylinder, and cutting some little boards, he made a wheel to which he fixed two dolls, one on each side. The little girls brought him some bits of stuff, and he dressed the dolls, one as a peasant, the other as a peasant woman. Then he fastened them in their

places, and set the wheel so that the stream should work it. The wheel began to turn and the dolls danced.

The whole village collected round. Little boys and girls, Tartar men and women, all came and clicked their tongues.

‘Ah, Russ! Ah, Iván!’

Abdul had a Russian clock, which was broken. He called Zhílin and showed it to him, clicking his tongue.

‘Give it me, I’ll mend it for you,’ said Zhílin.

He took it to pieces with the knife, sorted the pieces, and put them together again, so that the clock went all right.

The master was delighted, and made him a present of one of his old tunics which was all in holes. Zhílin had to accept it. He could, at any rate, use it as a coverlet at night.

After that Zhílin’s fame spread; and Tartars came from distant villages, bringing him now the lock of a gun or of a pistol, now a watch, to mend. His master gave him some tools — pincers, gimlets, and a file.

One day a Tartar fell ill, and they came to Zhílin saying, ‘Come and heal him!’ Zhílin knew nothing about doctoring, but he went to look, and thought to himself, ‘Perhaps he will get well anyway.’

He returned to the barn, mixed some water with sand, and then in the presence of the Tartars whispered some words over it and gave it to the sick man to drink. Luckily for him, the Tartar recovered.

Zhílin began to pick up their language a little, and some of the Tartars grew familiar with him. When they wanted him, they would call: ‘Iván! Iván!’ Others, however, still looked at him askance, as at a wild beast.

The red-bearded Tartar disliked Zhílin. Whenever he saw him he frowned and turned away, or swore at him. There was also an old man there who did not live in the Aoul, but used to come up from the foot of the hill. Zhílin only saw him when he passed on his way to the Mosque. He was short, and had a white cloth wound round his hat. His beard and moustaches were clipped, and white as snow; and his face

was wrinkled and brick-red. His nose was hooked like a hawk's, his grey eyes looked cruel, and he had no teeth except two tusks. He would pass, with his turban on his head, leaning on his staff, and glaring round him like a wolf. If he saw Zhílin he would snort with anger and turn away.

Once Zhílin descended the hill to see where the old man lived. He went down along the pathway and came to a little garden surrounded by a stone wall; and behind the wall he saw cherry and apricot trees, and a hut with a flat roof. He came closer, and saw hives made of plaited straw, and bees flying about and humming. The old man was kneeling, busy doing something with a hive. Zhílin stretched to look, and his shackles rattled. The old man turned round, and, giving a yell, snatched a pistol from his belt and shot at Zhílin, who just managed to shelter himself behind the stone wall.

The old man went to Zhílin's master to complain. The master called Zhílin, and said with a laugh, 'Why did you go to the old man's house?' 'I did him no harm,' replied Zhílin. 'I only wanted to see how he lived.' The master repeated what Zhílin said.

But the old man was in a rage; he hissed and jabbered, showing his tusks, and shaking his fists at Zhílin.

Zhílin could not understand all, but he gathered that the old man was telling Abdul he ought not to keep Russians in the Aoul, but ought to kill them. At last the old man went away.

Zhílin asked the master who the old man was.

'He is a great man!' said the master. 'He was the bravest of our fellows; he killed many Russians and was at one time very rich. He had three wives and eight sons, and they all lived in one village. Then the Russians came and destroyed the village, and killed seven of his sons. Only one son was left, and he gave himself up to the Russians. The old man also went and gave himself up, and lived among the Russians for three months. At the end of that time he found his son, killed him with his own hands, and then escaped. After that he left off fighting, and went to Mecca to pray to God; that is why he wears a turban. One who has



been to Mecca is called “Hadji,” and wears a turban. He does not like you fellows. He tells me to kill you. But I can’t kill you. I have paid money for you and, besides, I have grown fond of you, Iván. Far from killing you, I would not even let you go if I had not promised.’ And he laughed, saying in Russian, ‘You, Iván, good; I, Abdul, good!’

#### IV

Zhílin lived in this way for a month. During the day he sauntered about the Aoul or busied himself with some handicraft, but at night, when all was silent in the Aoul, he dug at the floor of the barn. It was no easy task digging, because of the stones; but he worked away at them with his file, and at last had made a hole under the wall large enough to get through.

‘If only I could get to know the lay of the land,’ thought he, ‘and which way to go! But none of the Tartars will tell me.’

So he chose a day when the master was away from home, and set off after dinner to climb the hill beyond the village, and to look around. But before leaving home the master always gave orders to his son to watch Zhílin, and not to lose sight of him. So the lad ran after Zhílin, shouting: ‘Don’t go! Father does not allow it. I’ll call the neighbours if you won’t come back.’

Zhílin tried to persuade him, and said: ‘I’m not going far; I only want to climb that hill. I want to find a herb — to cure sick people with. You come with me if you like. How can I run away with these shackles on? To-morrow I’ll make a bow and arrows for you.’

So he persuaded the lad, and they went. To look at the hill, it did not seem far to the top; but it was hard walking with shackles on his leg. Zhílin went on and on, but it was all he could do to reach the top. There he sat down and noted how the land lay. To the south, beyond the barn, was a valley in which a herd of horses was pasturing and at the bottom of the valley one could see another Aoul.

Beyond that was a still steeper hill, and another hill beyond that. Between the hills, in the blue distance, were forests, and still further off were mountains, rising higher and higher. The highest of them were covered with snow, white as sugar; and one snowy peak towered above all the rest. To the east and to the west were other such hills, and here and there smoke rose from Aouls in the ravines. 'Ah,' thought he, 'all that is Tartar country.' And he turned towards the Russian side. At his feet he saw a river, and the Aoul he lived in, surrounded by little gardens. He could see women, like tiny dolls, sitting by the river rinsing clothes.

Beyond the Aoul was a hill, lower than the one to the south, and beyond it two other hills well wooded; and between these, a smooth bluish plain, and far, far across the plain something that looked like a cloud of smoke. Zhílin tried to remember where the sun used to rise and set when he was living in the fort, and he saw that there was no mistake: the Russian fort must be in that plain. Between those two hills he would have to make his way when he escaped.

The sun was beginning to set. The white, snowy mountains turned red, and the dark hills turned darker; mists rose from the ravine, and the valley, where he supposed the Russian fort to be, seemed on fire with the sunset glow. Zhílin looked carefully. Something seemed to be quivering in the valley like smoke from a chimney, and he felt sure the Russian fortress was there.

It had grown late. The Mullah's cry was heard. The herds were being driven home, the cows were lowing, and the lad kept saying, 'Come home!' But Zhílin did not feel inclined to go away.

At last, however, they went back. 'Well,' thought Zhílin, 'now that I know the way, it is time to escape.' He thought of running away that night. The nights were dark — the moon had waned. But as ill-luck would have it, the Tartars returned home that evening. They generally came back driving cattle before them and in good spirits. But this time they had no cattle. All they brought home was the dead body of a Tartar — the red one's brother — who had been killed. They came back looking sullen, and they all gathered together for the burial. Zhílin also came out to see it.

They wrapped the body in a piece of linen, without any coffin, and carried it out of the village, and laid it on the grass under some plane-trees. The Mullah and the old men came. They wound clothes round their caps, took off their shoes, and squatted on their heels, side by side, near the corpse.

The Mullah was in front: behind him in a row were three old men in turbans, and behind them again the other Tartars. All cast down their eyes and sat in silence. This continued a long time, until the Mullah raised his head and said: 'Allah!' (which means God). He said that one word, and they all cast down their eyes again, and were again silent for a long time. They sat quite still, not moving or making any sound. Again the Mullah lifted his head and said, 'Allah!' and they all repeated: 'Allah! Allah!' and were again silent.

The dead body lay immovable on the grass, and they sat as still as if they too were dead. Not one of them moved. There was no sound but that of the leaves of the plane-trees stirring in the breeze. Then the Mullah repeated a prayer, and they all rose. They lifted the body and carried it in their arms to a hole in the ground. It was not an ordinary hole, but was hollowed out under the ground like a vault. They took the body under the arms and by the legs, bent it, and let it gently down, pushing it under the earth in a sitting posture, with the hands folded in front.

The Nogáy brought some green rushes, which they stuffed into the hole, and, quickly covering it with earth, they smoothed the ground, and set an upright stone at the head of the grave. Then they trod the earth down, and again sat in a row before the grave, keeping silence for a long time.

At last they rose, said 'Allah! Allah! Allah!' and sighed.

The red-bearded Tartar gave money to the old men; then he too rose, took a whip, struck himself with it three times on the forehead, and went home.

The next morning Zhílin saw the red Tartar, followed by three others, leading a mare out of the village. When they were beyond the village, the red-bearded Tartar took off his tunic and turned up his sleeves, showing his stout arms. Then he drew a dagger and sharpened it on a whetstone. The other Tartars raised the mare's head, and he cut her throat, threw her down and began skinning her, loosening the hide with his big hands. Women and girls came and began to wash the entrails and the inwards. The mare was cut up, the pieces taken into the hut, and the whole village collected at the red Tartar's hut for a funeral feast.

For three days they went on eating the flesh of the mare, drinking buza, and praying for the dead man. All the Tartars were at home. On the fourth day at dinner-time Zhílin saw them preparing to go away. Horses were brought out, they got ready, and some ten of them (the red one among them) rode away; but Abdul stayed at home. It was new moon, and the nights were still dark.

'Ah!' thought Zhílin, 'to-night is the time to escape.' And he told Kostílin; but Kostílin's heart failed him.

'How can we escape?' he said. 'We don't even know the way.'

'I know the way,' said Zhílin.

'Even if you do' said Kostílin, 'we can't reach the fort in one night.'

'If we can't,' said Zhílin, 'we'll sleep in the forest. See here, I have saved some cheeses. What's the good of sitting and moping here? If they send your ransom — well and good; but suppose they don't manage to collect it? The Tartars are angry now, because the Russians have killed one of their men. They are talking of killing us.'

Kostílin thought it over.

'Well, let's go,' said he.

Zhílin crept into the hole, widened it so that Kostílin might also get through, and then they both sat waiting till all should be quiet in the Aoul.

As soon as all was quiet, Zhílin crept under the wall, got out, and whispered to Kostílin, 'Come!' Kostílin crept out, but in so doing he caught a stone with his foot and made a noise. The master had a very

vicious watch-dog, a spotted one called Oulyashin. Zhílin had been careful to feed him for some time before. Oulyashin heard the noise and began to bark and jump, and the other dogs did the same. Zhílin gave a slight whistle, and threw him a bit of cheese. Oulyashin knew Zhílin, wagged his tail, and stopped barking.

But the master had heard the dog, and shouted to him from his hut, 'Hayt, hayt, Oulyashin!'

Zhílin, however, scratched Oulyashin behind the ears, and the dog was quiet, and rubbed against his legs, wagging his tail

They sat hidden behind a corner for awhile. All became silent again, only a sheep coughed inside a shed, and the water rippled over the stones in the hollow. It was dark, the stars were high overhead, and the new moon showed red as it set, horns upward, behind the hill. In the valleys the fog was white as milk.

Zhílin rose and said to his companion, 'Well, friend, come along!'

They started; but they had only gone a few steps when they heard the Mullah crying from the roof, 'Allah, Beshmillah! Ilrahman!' That meant that the people would be going to the Mosque. So they sat down again, hiding behind a wall, and waited a long time till the people had passed. At last all was quiet again.

'Now then! May God be with us!' They crossed themselves, and started once more. They passed through a yard and went down the hillside to the river, crossed the river, and went along the valley.

The mist was thick, but only near the ground; overhead the stars shone quite brightly. Zhílin directed their course by the stars. It was cool in the mist, and easy walking, only their boots were uncomfortable, being worn out and trodden down. Zhílin took his off, threw them away, and went barefoot, jumping from stone to stone, and guiding his course by the stars. Kostílin began to lag behind.

'Walk slower,' he said, 'these confounded boots have quite blistered my feet.'

'Take them off!' said Zhílin. 'It will be easier walking without them.'

Kostílin went barefoot, but got on still worse. The stones cut his feet and he kept lagging behind. Zhílin said: 'If your feet get cut, they'll heal again; but if the Tartars catch us and kill us, it will be worse!'

Kostílin did not reply, but went on, groaning all the time.

Their way lay through the valley for a long time. Then, to the right, they heard dogs barking. Zhílin stopped, looked about, and began climbing the hill feeling with his hands.

'Ah!' said he, 'we have gone wrong, and have come too far to the right. Here is another Aoul, one I saw from the hill. We must turn back and go up that hill to the left. There must be a wood there.'

But Kostílin said: 'Wait a minute! Let me get breath. My feet are all cut and bleeding.'

'Never mind, friend! They'll heal again. You should spring more lightly. Like this!'

And Zhílin ran back and turned to the left up the hill towards the wood. Kostílin still lagged behind, and groaned. Zhílin only said 'Hush!' and went on and on.

They went up the hill and found a wood as Zhílin had said. They entered the wood and forced their way through the brambles, which tore their clothes. At last they came to a path and followed it.

'Stop!' They heard the tramp of hoofs on the path, and waited, listening. It sounded like the tramping of a horse's feet, but then ceased. They moved on, and again they heard the tramping. When they paused, it also stopped. Zhílin crept nearer to it, and saw something standing on the path where it was not quite so dark. It looked like a horse, and yet not quite like one, and on it was something queer, not like a man. He heard it snorting. 'What can it be?' Zhílin gave a low whistle, and off it dashed from the path into the thicket, and the woods were filled with the noise of crackling, as if a hurricane were sweeping through, breaking the branches.

Kostílin was so frightened that he sank to the ground. But Zhílin laughed and said: 'It's a stag. Don't you hear him breaking the branches with his antlers? We were afraid of him, and he is afraid of us.'

They went on. The Great Bear was already setting. It was near morning, and they did not know whether they were going the right way or not. Zhílin thought it was the way he had been brought by the Tartars, and that they were still some seven miles from the Russian fort; but he had nothing certain to go by, and at night one easily mistakes the way. After a time they came to a clearing. Kostílin sat down and said: 'Do as you like, I can go no farther! My feet won't carry me.'

Zhílin tried to persuade him.

'No I shall never get there, I can't!'

Zhílin grew angry, and spoke roughly to him.

'Well, then, I shall go on alone. Good-bye!'

Kostílin jumped up and followed. They went another three miles. The mist in the wood had settled down still more densely; they could not see a yard before them, and the stars had grown dim.

Suddenly they heard the sound of a horse's hoofs in front of them.

They heard its shoes strike the stones. Zhílin lay down flat, and listened with his ear to the ground.

'Yes, so it is! A horseman is coming towards us.'

They ran off the path, crouched among the bushes and waited. Zhílin crept to the road, looked, and saw a Tartar on horseback driving a cow and humming to himself. The Tartar rode past. Zhílin returned to Kostílin.

'God has led him past us; get up and let's go on!'

Kostílin tried to rise, but fell back again.

'I can't; on my word I can't! I have no strength left.'

He was heavy and stout, and had been perspiring freely. Chilled by the mist, and with his feet all bleeding, he had grown quite limp.

Zhílin tried to lift him, when suddenly Kostílin screamed out: 'Oh, how it hurts!'

Zhílin's heart sank.

'What are you shouting for? The Tartar is still near; he'll have heard you!' And he thought to himself, 'He is really quite done up. What am I to do with him? It won't do to desert a comrade.'

‘Well, then, get up, and climb up on my back. I’ll carry you if you really can’t walk.’

He helped Kostílin up, and put his arms under his thighs. Then he went out on to the path, carrying him.

‘Only, for the love of heaven,’ said Zhílin, ‘don’t throttle me with your hands! Hold on to my shoulders.’

Zhílin found his load heavy; his feet, too, were bleeding, and he was tired out. Now and then he stooped to balance Kostílin better, jerking him up so that he should sit higher, and then went on again.

The Tartar must, however, really have heard Kostílin scream. Zhílin suddenly heard some one galloping behind and shouting in the Tartar tongue. He darted in among the bushes. The Tartar seized his gun and fired, but did not hit them, shouted in his own language, and galloped off along the road.

‘Well, now we are lost, friend!’ said Zhílin. ‘That dog will gather the Tartars together to hunt us down. Unless we can get a couple of miles away from here we are lost!’ And he thought to himself, ‘Why the devil did I saddle myself with this block? I should have got away long ago had I been alone.’

‘Go on alone,’ said Kostílin. ‘Why should you perish because of me?’

‘No I won’t go. It won’t do to desert a comrade.’

Again he took Kostílin on his shoulders and staggered on. They went on in that way for another half-mile or more. They were still in the forest, and could not see the end of it. But the mist was already dispersing, and clouds seemed to be gathering, the stars were no longer to be seen. Zhílin was quite done up. They came to a spring walled in with stones by the side of the path. Zhílin stopped and set Kostílin down.

‘Let me have a rest and a drink,’ said he, ‘and let us eat some of the cheese. It can’t be much farther now.’

But hardly had he lain down to get a drink, when he heard the sound of horses’ feet behind him. Again they darted to the right among the bushes, and lay down under a steep slope.

They heard Tartar voices. The Tartars stopped at the very spot where they had turned off the path. The Tartars talked a bit, and then seemed



to be setting a dog on the scent. There was a sound of crackling twigs, and a strange dog appeared from behind the bushes. It stopped, and began to bark.

Then the Tartars, also strangers, came climbing down, seized Zhílin and Kostílin, bound them, put them on horses, and rode away with them. When they had ridden about two miles, they met Abdul, their owner, with two other Tartars following him. After talking with the strangers, he put Zhílin and Kostílin on two of his own horses and took them back to the Aoul.

Abdul did not laugh now, and did not say a word to them.

They were back at the Aoul by daybreak, and were set down in the street. The children came crowding round, throwing stones, shrieking, and beating them with whips.

The Tartars gathered together in a circle, and the old man from the foot of the hill was also there. They began discussing, and Zhílin heard them considering what should be done with him and Kostílin. Some said they ought to be sent farther into the mountains; but the old man said:

‘They must be killed!’

Abdul disputed with him, saying: ‘I gave money for them, and I must get ransom for them.’ But the old man said: ‘They will pay you nothing, but will only bring misfortune. It is a sin to feed Russians. Kill them, and have done with it!’

They dispersed. When they had gone, the master came up to Zhílin and said: ‘If the money for your ransom is not sent within a fortnight, I will flog you; and if you try to run away again, I’ll kill you like a dog! Write a letter, and write properly!’

Paper was brought to them, and they wrote the letters. Shackles were put on their feet, and they were taken behind the Mosque to a deep pit about twelve feet square, into which they were let down.

Life was now very hard for them. Their shackles were never taken off, and they were not let out into the fresh air. Unbaked dough was thrown to them as if they were dogs, and water was let down in a can. It was wet and close in the pit, and there was a horrible stench. Kostílin grew quite ill, his body became swollen and he ached all over, and moaned or slept all the time. Zhílin, too, grew downcast; he saw it was a bad look-out, and could think of no way of escape.

He tried to make a tunnel, but there was nowhere to put the earth. His master noticed it, and threatened to kill him.

He was sitting on the floor of the pit one day, thinking of freedom and feeling very downhearted, when suddenly a cake fell into his lap, then another, and then a shower of cherries. He looked up, and there was Dina. She looked at him, laughed, and ran away. And Zhílin thought: 'Might not Dina help me?'

He cleared out a little place in the pit, scraped up some clay, and began modelling toys. He made men, horses, and dogs, thinking, 'When Dina comes I'll throw them up to her.'

But Dina did not come next day. Zhílin heard the tramp of horses; some men rode past, and the Tartars gathered in council near the Mosque. They shouted and argued; the word 'Russians' was repeated several times. He could hear the voice of the old man. Though he could not distinguish what was said, he guessed that Russian troops were somewhere near, and that the Tartars, afraid they might come into the Aoul, did not know what to do with their prisoners.

After talking awhile, they went away. Suddenly he heard a rustling overhead, and saw Dina crouching at the edge of the pit, her knees higher than her head, and bending over so that the coils of her plait dangled above the pit. Her eyes gleamed like stars. She drew two cheeses out of her sleeve and threw them to him. Zhílin took them and said, 'Why did you not come before? I have made some toys for you. Here, catch!' And he began throwing the toys up, one by one.

But she shook her head and would not look at them.

'I don't want any,' she said. She sat silent for awhile, and then went on, 'Iván, they want to kill you!' And she pointed to her own throat.

'Who wants to kill me?'

'Father; the old men say he must. But I am sorry for you!'

Zhílin answered: 'Well, if you are sorry for me, bring me a long pole.'

She shook her head, as much as to say, 'I can't!'

He clasped his hands and prayed her: 'Dina, please do! Dear Dina, I beg of you!'

'I can't!' she said, 'they would see me bringing it. They're all at home.' And she went away.

So when evening came Zhílin still sat looking up now and then, and wondering what would happen. The stars were there, but the moon had not yet risen. The Mullah's voice was heard; then all was silent. Zhílin was beginning to doze, thinking: 'The girl will be afraid to do it!'

Suddenly he felt clay falling on his head. He looked up, and saw a long pole poking into the opposite wall of the pit. It kept poking about for a time, and then it came down, sliding into the pit. Zhílin was glad indeed. He took hold of it and lowered it. It was a strong pole, one that he had seen before on the roof of his master's hut.

He looked up. The stars were shining high in the sky, and just above the pit Dina's eyes gleamed in the dark like a cat's. She stooped with her face close to the edge of the pit, and whispered, 'Iván! Iván!' waving her hand in front of her face to show that he should speak low.

'What?' said Zhílin.

'All but two have gone away.'

Then Zhílin said, 'Well, Kostílin, come; let us have one last try; I'll help you up.'

But Kostílin would not hear of it.

'No,' said he, 'It's clear I can't get away from here. How can I go, when I

have hardly strength to turn round?'

'Well, good-bye, then! Don't think ill of me!' and they kissed each other. Zhílin seized the pole, told Dina to hold on, and began to climb. He slipped once or twice; the shackles hindered him. Kostílin helped him, and he managed to get to the top. Dina with her little hands, pulled with all her might at his shirt, laughing.

Zhílin drew out the pole and said, 'Put it back in its place, Dina, or they'll notice, and you will be beaten.'

She dragged the pole away, and Zhílin went down the hill. When he had gone down the steep incline, he took a sharp stone and tried to wrench the lock off the shackles. But it was a strong lock and he could not manage to break it, and besides, it was difficult to get at. Then he heard some one running down the hill, springing lightly. He thought: 'Surely, that's Dina again.'

Dina came, took a stone and said, 'Let me try.'

She knelt down and tried to wrench the lock off, but her little hands were as slender as little twigs, and she had not the strength. She threw the stone away and began to cry. Then Zhílin set to work again at the lock, and Dina squatted beside him with her hand on his shoulder. Zhílin looked round and saw a red light to the left behind the hill. The moon was just rising. 'Ah!' he thought, 'before the moon has risen I must have passed the valley and be in the forest.' So he rose and threw away the stone. Shackles or no, he must go on.

'Good-bye, Dina dear!' he said. 'I shall never forget you!'

Dina seized hold of him and felt about with her hands for a place to put some cheeses she had brought. He took them from her.

'Thank you, my little one. Who will make dolls for you when I am gone?' And he stroked her head.

Dina burst into tears hiding her face in her hands. Then she ran up the hill like a young goat, the coins in her plait clinking against her back.

Zhílin crossed himself took the lock of his shackles in his hand to prevent its clattering, and went along the road, dragging his shackled leg, and looking towards the place where the moon was about to rise. He now knew the way. If he went straight he would have to walk nearly six miles. If only he could reach the wood before the moon had quite risen! He crossed the river; the light behind the hill was growing whiter. Still looking at it, he went along the valley. The moon was not yet visible. The light became brighter, and one side of the valley was

growing lighter and lighter, and shadows were drawing in towards the foot of the hill, creeping nearer and nearer to him.

Zhílin went on, keeping in the shade. He was hurrying, but the moon was moving still faster; the tops of the hills on the right were already lit up. As he got near the wood the white moon appeared from behind the hills, and it became light as day. One could see all the leaves on the trees. It was light on the hill, but silent, as if nothing were alive; no sound could be heard but the gurgling of the river below.

Zhílin reached the wood without meeting any one, chose a dark spot, and sat down to rest.

He rested and ate one of the cheeses. Then he found a stone and set to work again to knock off the shackles. He knocked his hands sore, but could not break the lock. He rose and went along the road. After walking the greater Part of a mile he was quite done up, and his feet were aching. He had to stop every ten steps. 'There is nothing else for it,' thought he. 'I must drag on as long as I have any strength left. If I sit down, I shan't be able to rise again. I can't reach the fortress; but when day breaks I'll lie down in the forest, remain there all day, and go on again at night.'

He went on all night. Two Tartars on horseback passed him; but he heard them a long way off, and hid behind a tree.

The moon began to grow paler, the dew to fall. It was getting near dawn, and Zhílin had not reached the end of the forest. 'Well,' thought he, 'I'll walk another thirty steps, and then turn in among the trees and sit down.'

He walked another thirty steps, and saw that he was at the end of the forest. He went to the edge; it was now quite light, and straight before him was the plain and the fortress. To the left, quite close at the foot of the slope, a fire was dying out, and the smoke from it spread round. There were men gathered about the fire.

He looked intently, and saw guns glistening. They were soldiers — Cossacks!

Zhílin was filled with joy. He collected his remaining strength and set off down the hill, saying to himself: 'God forbid that any mounted Tartar should see me now, in the open field! Near as I am, I could not get there in time.'

Hardly had he said this when, a couple of hundred yards off, on a hillock to the left, he saw three Tartars.

They saw him also and made a rush. His heart sank. He waved his hands, and shouted with all his might, 'Brothers, brothers! Help!' The Cossacks heard him, and a Party of them on horseback darted to cut across the Tartars' path. The Cossacks were far and the Tartars were near; but Zhílin, too, made a last effort. Lifting the shackles with his hand, he ran towards the Cossacks, hardly knowing what he was doing, crossing himself and shouting, 'Brothers! Brothers! Brothers!' There were some fifteen Cossacks. The Tartars were frightened, and stopped before reaching him. Zhilin staggered up to the Cossacks. They surrounded him and began questioning him. 'Who are you? What are you? Where from?

But Zhílin was quite beside himself, and could only weep and repeat, 'Brothers! Brothers!'

Then the soldiers came running up and crowded round Zhílin — one giving him bread, another buckwheat, a third vódka: one wrapping a cloak round him, another breaking his shackles.

The officers recognized him, and rode with him to the fortress. The soldiers were glad to see him back, and his comrades all gathered round him.

Zhílin told them all that had happened to him.

'That's the way I went home and got married!' said he. 'No. It seems plain that fate was against it!'

So he went on serving in the Caucasus. A month passed before Kostílin was released, after paying five thousand roubles ransom. He was almost dead when they brought him back.

## What Men Live By

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

### Chapter I

A shoemaker named Simon, who had neither house nor land of his own, lived with his wife and children in a peasant's hut, and earned his living by his work. Work was cheap, but bread was dear, and what he earned he spent for food. The man and his wife had but one sheepskin coat between them for winter wear, and even that was torn to tatters, and this was the second year he had been wanting to buy sheep-skins for a new coat. Before winter Simon saved up a little money: a three-rouble note lay hidden in his wife's box, and five roubles and twenty kopeks were owed him by customers in the village.

So one morning he prepared to go to the village to buy the sheep-skins. He put on over his shirt his wife's wadded nankeen jacket, and over that he put his own cloth coat. He took the three-rouble note in his pocket, cut himself a stick to serve as a staff, and started off after breakfast. "I'll collect the five roubles that are due to me," thought he, "add the three I have got, and that will be enough to buy sheep-skins for the winter coat."

He came to the village and called at a peasant's hut, but the man was not at home. The peasant's wife promised that the money should be paid next week, but she would not pay it herself. Then Simon called on another peasant, but this one swore he had no money, and would only pay twenty kopeks which he owed for a pair of boots Simon had mended. Simon then tried to buy the sheep-skins on credit, but the dealer would not trust him.

"Bring your money," said he, "then you may have your pick of the skins. We know what debt-collecting is like." So all the business the shoemaker did was to get the twenty kopeks for boots he had mended, and to take a pair of felt boots a peasant gave him to sole with leather.

Simon felt downhearted. He spent the twenty kopeks on vodka, and started homewards without having bought any skins. In the morning he had felt the frost; but now, after drinking the vodka, he felt warm, even without a sheep-skin coat. He trudged along, striking his stick on the frozen earth with one hand, swinging the felt boots with the other, and talking to himself.

"I'm quite warm," said he, "though I have no sheep-skin coat. I've had a drop, and it runs through all my veins. I need no sheep-skins. I go along and don't worry about anything.

That's the sort of man I am! What do I care? I can live without sheep-skins. I don't need them. My wife will fret, to be sure. And, true enough, it is a shame; one works all day long, and then does not get paid. Stop a bit! If you don't bring that money along, sure enough I'll skin you, blessed if I don't. How's that? He pays twenty kopeks at a time! What can I do with twenty kopeks? Drink it—that's all one can do! Hard up, he says he is! So he may be — but what about me? You have a house, and cattle, and everything; I've only what I stand up in! You have corn of your own growing; I have to buy every grain. Do what I will, I must spend three roubles every week for bread alone. I come home and find the bread all used up, and I have to fork out another rouble and a half. So just pay up what you owe, and no nonsense about it!"

By this time he had nearly reached the shrine at the bend of the road. Looking up, he saw something whitish behind the shrine. The daylight was fading, and the shoemaker peered at the thing without being able to make out what it was. "There was no white stone here before. Can it be an ox? It's not like an ox. It has a head like a man, but it's too white; and what could a man be doing there?"

He came closer, so that it was clearly visible. To his surprise it really was a man, alive or dead, sitting naked, leaning motionless against the shrine. Terror seized the shoemaker, and he thought, "Some one has killed him, stripped him, and left him there. If I meddle I shall surely get into trouble."



So the shoemaker went on. He passed in front of the shrine so that he could not see the man. When he had gone some way, he looked back, and saw that the man was no longer leaning against the shrine, but was moving as if looking towards him. The shoemaker felt more frightened than before, and thought, "Shall I go back to him, or shall I go on? If I go near him something dreadful may happen. Who knows who the fellow is? He has not come here for any good. If I go near him he may jump up and throttle me, and there will be no getting away. Or if not, he'd still be a burden on one's hands. What could I do with a naked man? I couldn't give him my last clothes. Heaven only help me to get away!"

So the shoemaker hurried on, leaving the shrine behind him-when suddenly his conscience smote him, and he stopped in the road. "What are you doing, Simon?" said he to himself. "The man may be dying of want, and you slip past afraid. Have you grown so rich as to be afraid of robbers? Ah, Simon, shame on you!" So he turned back and went up to the man.

## Chapter II

Simon approached the stranger, looked at him, and saw that he was a young man, fit, with no bruises on his body, only evidently freezing and frightened, and he sat there leaning back without looking up at Simon, as if too faint to lift his eyes. Simon went close to him, and then the man seemed to wake up. Turning his head, he opened his eyes and looked into Simon's face. That one look was enough to make Simon fond of the man. He threw the felt boots on the ground, undid his sash, laid it on the boots, and took off his cloth coat.

"It's not a time for talking," said he. "Come, put this coat on at once!" And Simon took the man by the elbows and helped him to rise. As he stood there, Simon saw that his body was clean and in good condition, his hands and feet shapely, and his face good and kind. He threw his coat over the man's shoulders, but the latter could not find the sleeves. Simon guided his arms into them, and drawing the coat well on, wrapped it closely about him, tying the sash round the man's waist.

Simon even took off his torn cap to put it on the man's head, but then his own head felt cold, and he thought: "I'm quite bald, while he has long curly hair." So he put his cap on his own head again. "It will be better to give him something for his feet," thought he; and he made the man sit down, and helped him to put on the felt boots, saying, "There, friend, now move about and warm yourself. Other matters can be settled later on. Can you walk?"

The man stood up and looked kindly at Simon, but could not say a word.

"Why don't you speak?" said Simon. "It's too cold to stay here, we must be getting home. There now, take my stick, and if you're feeling weak, lean on that. Now step out!"

The man started walking, and moved easily, not lagging behind.

As they went along, Simon asked him, "And where do you belong to?"

"I'm not from these Parts."

"I thought as much. I know the folks hereabouts. But, how did you come to be there by the shrine?"

"I cannot tell."

"Has some one been ill-treating you?"

"No one has ill-treated me. God has punished me."

"Of course God rules all. Still, you'll have to find food and shelter somewhere. Where do you want to go to?"

"It is all the same to me."

Simon was amazed. The man did not look like a rogue, and he spoke gently, but yet he gave no account of himself. Still Simon thought, "Who knows what may have happened?" And he said to the stranger: "Well then, come home with me, and at least warm yourself awhile."

So Simon walked towards his home, and the stranger kept up with him, walking at his side. The wind had risen and Simon felt it cold under his shirt. He was getting over his tipsiness by now, and began to feel the frost. He went along sniffing and wrapping his wife's coat round him, and he thought to himself: "There now — talk about sheep-skins! I went out for sheep-skins and come home without even a coat to my

back, and what is more, I'm bringing a naked man along with me. Matryona won't be pleased!" And when he thought of his wife he felt sad; but when he looked at the stranger and remembered how he had looked up at him at the shrine, his heart was glad.

### Chapter III

Simon's wife had everything ready early that day. She had cut wood, brought water, fed the children, eaten her own meal, and now she sat thinking. She wondered when she ought to make bread: now or tomorrow? There was still a large piece left.

"If Simon has had some dinner in town," thought she, "and does not eat much for supper, the bread will last out another day."

She weighed the piece of bread in her hand again and again, and thought: "I won't make any more today. We have only enough flour left to bake one batch; We can manage to make this last out till Friday."

So Matryona put away the bread, and sat down at the table to patch her husband's shirt. While she worked she thought how her husband was buying skins for a winter coat.

"If only the dealer does not cheat him. My good man is much too simple; he cheats nobody, but any child can take him in. Eight roubles is a lot of money — he should get a good coat at that price. Not tanned skins, but still a proper winter coat. How difficult it was last winter to get on without a warm coat. I could neither get down to the river, nor go out anywhere. When he went out he put on all we had, and there was nothing left for me. He did not start very early today, but still it's time he was back. I only hope he has not gone on the spree!"

Hardly had Matryona thought this, when steps were heard on the threshold, and some one entered. Matryona stuck her needle into her work and went out into the passage. There she saw two men: Simon, and with him a man without a hat, and wearing felt boots.

Matryona noticed at once that her husband smelt of spirits. "There now, he has been drinking," thought she. And when she saw that he was coatless, had only her jacket on, brought no parcel, stood there silent, and seemed ashamed, her heart was ready to break with

disappointment. "He has drunk the money," thought she, "and has been on the spree with some good-for-nothing fellow whom he has brought home with him."

Matryona let them pass into the hut, followed them in, and saw that the stranger was a young, slight man, wearing her husband's coat. There was no shirt to be seen under it, and he had no hat. Having entered, he stood, neither moving, nor raising his eyes, and Matryona thought: "He must be a bad man — he's afraid."

Matryona frowned, and stood beside the oven looking to see what they would do.

Simon took off his cap and sat down on the bench as if things were all right.

"Come, Matryona; if supper is ready, let us have some."

Matryona muttered something to herself and did not move, but stayed where she was, by the oven. She looked first at the one and then at the other of them, and only shook her head. Simon saw that his wife was annoyed, but tried to pass it off. Pretending not to notice anything, he took the stranger by the arm.

"Sit down, friend," said he, "and let us have some supper."

The stranger sat down on the bench.

"Haven't you cooked anything for us?" said Simon.

Matryona's anger boiled over. "I've cooked, but not for you. It seems to me you have drunk your wits away. You went to buy a sheep-skin coat, but come home without so much as the coat you had on, and bring a naked vagabond home with you. I have no supper for drunkards like you."

"That's enough, Matryona. Don't wag your tongue without reason. You had better ask what sort of man— "

"And you tell me what you've done with the money?"

Simon found the pocket of the jacket, drew out the three-rouble note, and unfolded it.

"Here is the money. Trifonof did not pay, but promises to pay soon."

Matryona got still more angry; he had bought no sheep-skins, but had put his only coat on some naked fellow and had even brought him to their house.

She snatched up the note from the table, took it to put away in safety, and said: "I have no supper for you. We can't feed all the naked drunkards in the world."

"There now, Matryona, hold your tongue a bit. First hear what a man has to say—"

"Much wisdom I shall hear from a drunken fool. I was right in not wanting to marry you—a drunkard. The linen my mother gave me you drank; and now you've been to buy a coat—and have drunk it, too!" Simon tried to explain to his wife that he had only spent twenty kopeks; tried to tell how he had found the man — but Matryona would not let him get a word in. She talked nineteen to the dozen, and dragged in things that had happened ten years before.

Matryona talked and talked, and at last she flew at Simon and seized him by the sleeve.

"Give me my jacket. It is the only one I have, and you must needs take it from me and wear it yourself. Give it here, you mangy dog, and may the devil take you."

Simon began to pull off the jacket, and turned a sleeve of it inside out; Matryona seized the jacket and it burst its seams, She snatched it up, threw it over her head and went to the door. She meant to go out, but stopped undecided — she wanted to work off her anger, but she also wanted to learn what sort of a man the stranger was.

## Chapter IV

Matryona stopped and said: "If he were a good man he would not be naked. Why, he hasn't even a shirt on him. If he were all right, you would say where you came across the fellow."

"That's just what I am trying to tell you," said Simon. "As I came to the shrine I saw him sitting all naked and frozen. It isn't quite the weather to sit about naked! God sent me to him, or he would have perished. What was I to do? How do we know what may have happened to him?"

So I took him, clothed him, and brought him along. Don't be so angry, Matryona. It is a sin. Remember, we all must die one day."

Angry words rose to Matryona's lips, but she looked at the stranger and was silent. He sat on the edge of the bench, motionless, his hands folded on his knees, his head drooping on his breast, his eyes closed, and his brows knit as if in pain. Matryona was silent: and Simon said: "Matryona, have you no love of God?"

Matryona heard these words, and as she looked at the stranger, suddenly her heart softened towards him. She came back from the door, and going to the oven she got out the supper. Setting a cup on the table, she poured out some kvas. Then she brought out the last piece of bread, and set out a knife and spoons.

"Eat, if you want to," said she.

Simon drew the stranger to the table.

"Take your place, young man," said he.

Simon cut the bread, crumbled it into the broth, and they began to eat. Matryona sat at the corner of the table resting her head on her hand and looking at the stranger.

And Matryona was touched with pity for the stranger, and began to feel fond of him. And at once the stranger's face lit up; his brows were no longer bent, he raised his eyes and smiled at Matryona.

When they had finished supper, the woman cleared away the things and began questioning the stranger. "Where are you from?" said she.

"I am not from these Parts."

"But how did you come to be on the road?"

"I may not tell."

"Did some one rob you?"

"God punished me."

"And you were lying there naked?"

“Yes, naked and freezing. Simon saw me and had pity on me. He took off his coat, put it on me and brought me here. And you have fed me, given me drink, and shown pity on me. God will reward you!”

Matryona rose, took from the window Simon’s old shirt she had been patching, and gave it to the stranger. She also brought out a pair of trousers for him.

“There,” said she, “I see you have no shirt. Put this on, and lie down where you please, in the loft or on the oven .”

The stranger took off the coat, put on the shirt, and lay down in the loft. Matryona put out the candle, took the coat, and climbed to where her husband lay.

Matryona drew the skirts of the coat over her and lay down, but could not sleep; she could not get the stranger out of her mind.

When she remembered that he had eaten their last piece of bread and that there was none for tomorrow, and thought of the shirt and trousers she had given away, she felt grieved; but when she remembered how he had smiled, her heart was glad.

Long did Matryona lie awake, and she noticed that Simon also was awake — he drew the coat towards him.

“Simon!”

“Well?”

“You have had the last of the bread, and I have not put any to rise. I don’t know what we shall do tomorrow. Perhaps I can borrow some of neighbor Martha.”

“If we’re alive we shall find something to eat.”

The woman lay still awhile, and then said, “He seems a good man, but why does he not tell us who he is?”

“I suppose he has his reasons.”

“Simon!”

“Well?”

“We give; but why does nobody give us anything?”

Simon did not know what to say; so he only said, “Let us stop talking,” and turned over and went to sleep.

## Chapter V

In the morning Simon awoke. The children were still asleep; his wife had gone to the neighbor's to borrow some bread. The stranger alone was sitting on the bench, dressed in the old shirt and trousers, and looking upwards. His face was brighter than it had been the day before. Simon said to him, "Well, friend; the belly wants bread, and the naked body clothes. One has to work for a living What work do you know?"

"I do not know any."

This surprised Simon, but he said, "Men who want to learn can learn anything."

"Men work, and I will work also."

"What is your name?"

"Michael."

"Well, Michael, if you don't wish to talk about yourself, that is your own affair; but you'll have to earn a living for yourself. If you will work as I tell you, I will give you food and shelter."

"May God reward you! I will learn. Show me what to do."

Simon took yarn, put it round his thumb and began to twist it.

"It is easy enough — see!"

Michael watched him, put some yarn round his own thumb in the same way, caught the knack, and twisted the yarn also.

Then Simon showed him how to wax the thread. This also Michael mastered. Next Simon showed him how to twist the bristle in, and how to sew, and this, too, Michael learned at once.

Whatever Simon showed him he understood at once, and after three days he worked as if he had sewn boots all his life. He worked without stopping, and ate little. When work was over he sat silently, looking upwards. He hardly went into the street, spoke only when necessary, and neither joked nor laughed. They never saw him smile, except that first evening when Matryona gave them supper.

## Chapter VI



Day by day and week by week the year went round. Michael lived and worked with Simon. His fame spread till people said that no one sewed boots so neatly and strongly as Simon's workman, Michael; and from all the district round people came to Simon for their boots, and he began to be well off.

One winter day, as Simon and Michael sat working, a carriage on sledge-runners, with three horses and with bells, drove up to the hut. They looked out of the window; the carriage stopped at their door, a fine servant jumped down from the box and opened the door. A gentleman in a fur coat got out and walked up to Simon's hut. Up jumped Matryona and opened the door wide. The gentleman stooped to enter the hut, and when he drew himself up again his head nearly reached the ceiling, and he seemed quite to fill his end of the room.

Simon rose, bowed, and looked at the gentleman with astonishment. He had never seen any one like him. Simon himself was lean, Michael was thin, and Matryona was dry as a bone, but this man was like some one from another world: red-faced, burly, with a neck like a bull's, and looking altogether as if he were cast in iron. The gentleman puffed, threw off his fur coat, sat down on the bench, and said, "Which of you is the master bootmaker?"

"I am, your Excellency," said Simon, coming forward. Then the gentleman shouted to his lad, "Hey, Fedka, bring the leather!" The servant ran in, bringing a parcel. The gentleman took the parcel and put it on the table. "Untie it," said he. The lad untied it. The gentleman pointed to the leather. "Look here, shoemaker," said he, "do you see this leather?"

"Yes, your honor."

"But do you know what sort of leather it is?"

Simon felt the leather and said, "It is good leather."

"Good, indeed! Why, you fool, you never saw such leather before in your life. It's German, and cost twenty roubles."

Simon was frightened, and said, "Where should I ever see leather like that?"

"Just so! Now, can you make it into boots for me?"

"Yes, your Excellency, I can."

Then the gentleman shouted at him: "You can, can you? Well, remember whom you are to make them for, and what the leather is. You must make me boots that will wear for a year, neither losing shape nor coming unsewn. If you can do it, take the leather and cut it up; but if you can't, say so. I warn you now if your boots become unsewn or lose shape within a year, I will have you put in prison. If they don't burst or lose shape for a year I will pay you ten roubles for your work."

Simon was frightened, and did not know what to say. He glanced at Michael and nudging him with his elbow, whispered: "Shall I take the work?"

Michael nodded his head as if to say, "Yes, take it."

Simon did as Michael advised, and undertook to make boots that would not lose shape or split for a whole year.

Calling his servant, the gentleman told him to pull the boot off his left leg, which he stretched out.

"Take my measure!" said he.

Simon stitched a paper measure seventeen inches long, smoothed it out, knelt down, wiped his hand well on his apron so as not to soil the gentleman's sock, and began to measure. He measured the sole, and round the instep, and began to measure the calf of the leg, but the paper was too short. The calf of the leg was as thick as a beam.

"Mind you don't make it too tight in the leg."

Simon stitched on another strip of paper. The gentleman twitched his toes about in his sock, looking round at those in the hut, and as he did so he noticed Michael.

"Whom have you there?" asked he.

"That is my workman. He will sew the boots."

"Mind," said the gentleman to Michael, "remember to make them so that they will last me a year."

Simon also looked at Michael, and saw that Michael was not looking at the gentleman, but was gazing into the corner behind the gentleman, as if he saw some one there. Michael looked and looked, and suddenly he smiled, and his face became brighter.

“What are you grinning at, you fool?” thundered the gentleman. “You had better look to it that the boots are ready in time.”

“They shall be ready in good time,” said Michael.

“Mind it is so,” said the gentleman, and he put on his boots and his fur coat, wrapped the latter round him, and went to the door. But he forgot to stoop, and struck his head against the lintel.

He swore and rubbed his head. Then he took his seat in the carriage and drove away.

When he had gone, Simon said: “There’s a figure of a man for you! You could not kill him with a mallet. He almost knocked out the lintel, but little harm it did him.”

And Matryona said: “Living as he does, how should he not grow strong? Death itself can’t touch such a rock as that.”

## Chapter VII

Then Simon said to Michael: “Well, we have taken the work, but we must see we don’t get into trouble over it. The leather is dear, and the gentleman hot-tempered. We must make no mistakes. Come, your eye is truer and your hands have become nimbler than mine, so you take this measure and cut out the boots. I will finish off the sewing of the vamps.”

Michael did as he was told. He took the leather, spread it out on the table, folded it in two, took a knife and began to cut out.

Matryona came and watched him cutting, and was surprised to see how he was doing it. Matryona was accustomed to seeing boots made, and she looked and saw that Michael was not cutting the leather for boots, but was cutting it round.

She wished to say something, but she thought to herself: "Perhaps I do not understand how gentleman's boots should be made. I suppose Michael knows more about it — and I won't interfere."

When Michael had cut up the leather, he took a thread and began to sew not with two ends, as boots are sewn, but with a single end, as for soft slippers.

Again Matryona wondered, but again she did not interfere. Michael sewed on steadily till noon. Then Simon rose for dinner, looked around, and saw that Michael had made slippers out of the gentleman's leather.

"Ah," groaned Simon, and he thought, "How is it that Michael, who has been with me a whole year and never made a mistake before, should do such a dreadful thing? The gentleman ordered high boots, welted, with whole fronts, and Michael has made soft slippers with single soles, and has wasted the leather. What am I to say to the gentleman? I can never replace leather such as this."

And he said to Michael, "What are you doing, friend? You have ruined me! You know the gentleman ordered high boots, but see what you have made!"

Hardly had he begun to rebuke Michael, when "rat-tat" went the iron ring that hung at the door. Some one was knocking. They looked out of the window; a man had come on horseback, and was fastening his horse. They opened the door, and the servant who had been with the gentleman came in.

"Good day," said he.

Good day," replied Simon. "What can we do for you?"

"My mistress has sent me about the boots."

"What about the boots?"

"Why, my master no longer needs them. He is dead."

"Is it possible?"

"He did not live to get home after leaving you, but died in the carriage. When we reached home and the servants came to help him alight, he rolled over like a sack. He was dead already, and so stiff that he could hardly be got out of the carriage. My mistress sent me here, saying:

‘Tell the bootmaker that the gentleman who ordered boots of him and left the leather for them no longer needs the boots, but that he must quickly make soft slippers for the corpse. Wait till they are ready, and bring them back with you.’ That is why I have come.”

Michael gathered up the remnants of the leather; rolled them up, took the soft slippers he had made, slapped them together, wiped them down with his apron, and handed them and the roll of leather to the servant, who took them and said: “Good-bye, masters, and good day to you!”

## Chapter VIII

Another year passed, and another, and Michael was now living his sixth year with Simon. He lived as before. He went nowhere, only spoke when necessary, and had only smiled twice in all those years — once when Matryona gave him food, and a second time when the gentleman was in their hut. Simon was more than pleased with his workman. He never now asked him where he came from, and only feared lest Michael should go away.

They were all at home one day. Matryona was putting iron pots in the oven; the children were running along the benches and looking out of the window; Simon was sewing at one window, and Michael was fastening on a heel at the other.

One of the boys ran along the bench to Michael, leant on his shoulder, and looked out of the window.

“Look, Uncle Michael! There is a lady with little girls! She seems to be coming here. And one of the girls is lame.”

When the boy said that, Michael dropped his work, turned to the window, and looked out into the street.

Simon was surprised. Michael never used to look out into the street, but now he pressed against the window, staring at something. Simon also looked out, and saw that a well-dressed woman was really coming to his hut, leading by the hand two little girls in fur coats and woolen

shawls. The girls could hardly be told one from the other, except that one of them was crippled in her left leg and walked with a limp.

The woman stepped into the porch and entered the passage. Feeling about for the entrance she found the latch, which she lifted, and opened the door. She let the two girls go in first, and followed them into the hut.

“Good day, good folk!”

“Pray come in,” said Simon. “What can we do for you?”

The woman sat down by the table. The two little girls pressed close to her knees, afraid of the people in the hut.

“I want leather shoes made for these two little girls for spring.”

“We can do that. We never have made such small shoes, but we can make them; either welted or turnover shoes, linen lined. My man, Michael, is a master at the work.”

Simon glanced at Michael and saw that he had left his work and was sitting with his eyes fixed on the little girls. Simon was surprised. It was true the girls were pretty, with black eyes, plump, and rosy-cheeked, and they wore nice kerchiefs and fur coats, but still Simon could not understand why Michael should look at them like that — just as if he had known them before. He was puzzled, but went on talking with the woman, and arranging the price. Having fixed it, he prepared the measure. The woman lifted the lame girl on to her lap and said: “Take two measures from this little girl. Make one shoe for the lame foot and three for the sound one. They both have the same size feet. They are twins.”

Simon took the measure and, speaking of the lame girl, said: “How did it happen to her? She is such a pretty girl. Was she born so?”

“No, her mother crushed her leg.”

Then Matryona joined in. She wondered who this woman was, and whose the children were, so she said: “Are not you their mother then?”

“No, my good woman; I am neither their mother nor any relation to them. They were quite strangers to me, but I adopted them.”

“They are not your children and yet you are so fond of them?”

“How can I help being fond of them? I fed them both at my own breasts. I had a child of my own, but God took him. I was not so fond of him as I now am of them.”

“Then whose children are they?”

## Chapter IX

The woman, having begun talking, told them the whole story.

“It is about six years since their parents died, both in one week: their father was buried on the Tuesday, and their mother died on the Friday. These orphans were born three days after their father’s death, and their mother did not live another day. My husband and I were then living as peasants in the village. We were neighbors of theirs, our yard being next to theirs. Their father was a lonely man; a wood-cutter in the forest. When felling trees one day, they let one fall on him. It fell across his body and crushed his bowels out. They hardly got him home before his soul went to God; and that same week his wife gave birth to twins — these little girls. She was poor and alone; she had no one, young or old, with her. Alone she gave them birth, and alone she met her death.”

“The next morning I went to see her, but when I entered the hut, she, poor thing, was already stark and cold. In dying she had rolled on to this child and crushed her leg. The village folk came to the hut, washed the body, laid her out, made a coffin, and buried her. They were good folk. The babies were left alone. What was to be done with them? I was the only woman there who had a baby at the time.

I was nursing my first-born — eight weeks old. So I took them for a time. The peasants came together, and thought and thought what to do with them; and at last they said to me: “For the present, Mary, you had better keep the girls, and later on we will arrange what to do for them.” So I nursed the sound one at my breast, but at first I did not feed this crippled one. I did not suppose she would live. But then I thought to myself, why should the poor innocent suffer? I pitied her,

and began to feed her. And so I fed my own boy and these two — the three of them — at my own breast.

I was young and strong, and had good food, and God gave me so much milk that at times it even overflowed. I used sometimes to feed two at a time, while the third was waiting. When one had enough I nursed the third. And God so ordered it that these grew up, while my own was buried before he was two years old. And I had no more children, though we prospered. Now my husband is working for the corn merchant at the mill. The pay is good, and we are well off. But I have no children of my own, and how lonely I should be without these little girls! How can I help loving them! They are the joy of my life!”

She pressed the lame little girl to her with one hand, while with the other she wiped the tears from her cheeks.

And Matryona sighed, and said: “The proverb is true that says, ‘One may live without father or mother, but one cannot live without God.’” So they talked together, when suddenly the whole hut was lighted up as though by summer lightning from the corner where Michael sat. They all looked towards him and saw him sitting, his hands folded on his knees, gazing upwards and smiling.

## Chapter X

The woman went away with the girls. Michael rose from the bench, put down his work, and took off his apron. Then, bowing low to Simon and his wife, he said: “Farewell, masters. God has forgiven me. I ask your forgiveness, too, for anything done amiss.”

And they saw that a light shone from Michael. And Simon rose, bowed down to Michael, and said: “I see, Michael, that you are no common man, and I can neither keep you nor question you. Only tell me this: how is it that when I found you and brought you home, you were gloomy, and when my wife gave you food you smiled at her and became brighter? Then when the gentleman came to order the boots, you smiled again and became brighter still? And now, when this woman brought the little girls, you smiled a third time, and have become as



bright as day? Tell me, Michael, why does your face shine so, and why did you smile those three times?"

And Michael answered: "Light shines from me because I have been punished, but now God has pardoned me. And I smiled three times, because God sent me to learn three truths, and I have learnt them. One I learnt when your wife pitied me, and that is why I smiled the first time. The second I learnt when the rich man ordered the boots, and then I smiled again. And now, when I saw those little girls, I learn the third and last truth, and I smiled the third time."

And Simon said, "Tell me, Michael, what did God punish you for? and what were the three truths? that I, too, may know them."

And Michael answered: "God punished me for disobeying Him. I was an angel in heaven and disobeyed God. God sent me to fetch a woman's soul. I flew to earth, and saw a sick woman lying alone, who had just given birth to twin girls. They moved feebly at their mother's side, but she could not lift them to her breast. When she saw me, she understood that God had sent me for her soul, and she wept and said: 'Angel of God! My husband has just been buried, killed by a falling tree.

I have neither sister, nor aunt, nor mother: no one to care for my orphans. Do not take my soul! Let me nurse my babes, feed them, and set them on their feet before I die. Children cannot live without father or mother.' And I hearkened to her. I placed one child at her breast and gave the other into her arms, and returned to the Lord in heaven. I flew to the Lord, and said: 'I could not take the soul of the mother. Her husband was killed by a tree; the woman has twins, and prays that her soul may not be taken. She says: "Let me nurse and feed my children, and set them on their feet. Children cannot live without father or mother."

I have not taken her soul.' And God said: 'Go-take the mother's soul, and learn three truths: Learn What dwells in man, What is not given to man, and What men live by. When thou has learnt these things, thou shalt return to heaven.' So I flew again to earth and took the mother's soul. The babes dropped from her breasts. Her body rolled over on the

bed and crushed one babe, twisting its leg. I rose above the village, wishing to take her soul to God; but a wind seized me, and my wings drooped and dropped off. Her soul rose alone to God, while I fell to earth by the roadside.”

## Chapter XI

And Simon and Matryona understood who it was that had lived with them, and whom they had clothed and fed. And they wept with awe and with joy. And the angel said: “I was alone in the field, naked. I had never known human needs, cold and hunger, till I became a man. I was famished, frozen, and did not know what to do.

I saw, near the field I was in, a shrine built for God, and I went to it hoping to find shelter. But the shrine was locked, and I could not enter. So I sat down behind the shrine to shelter myself at least from the wind. Evening drew on. I was hungry, frozen, and in pain. Suddenly I heard a man coming along the road. He carried a pair of boots, and was talking to himself. For the first time since I became a man I saw the mortal face of a man, and his face seemed terrible to me and I turned from it.

And I heard the man talking to himself of how to cover his body from the cold in winter, and how to feed wife and children. And I thought: “I am perishing of cold and hunger, and here is a man thinking only of how to clothe himself and his wife, and how to get bread for themselves. He cannot help me. When the man saw me he frowned and became still more terrible, and passed me by on the other side. I despaired; but suddenly I heard him coming back.

I looked up, and did not recognize the same man; before, I had seen death in his face; but now he was alive, and I recognized in him the presence of God. He came up to me, clothed me, took me with him, and brought me to his home. I entered the house; a woman came to meet us and began to speak. The woman was still more terrible than the man had been; the spirit of death came from her mouth; I could not breathe for the stench of death that spread around her. She wished to

drive me out into the cold, and I knew that if she did so she would die. Suddenly her husband spoke to her of God, and the woman changed at once. And when she brought me food and looked at me, I glanced at her and saw that death no longer dwelt in her; she had become alive, and in her, too, I saw God.

“Then I remembered the first lesson God had set me: ‘Learn what dwells in man.’ And I understood that in man dwells Love! I was glad that God had already begun to show me what He had promised, and I smiled for the first time. But I had not yet learnt all. I did not yet know What is not given to man, and What men live by.

“I lived with you, and a year passed. A man came to order boots that should wear for a year without losing shape or cracking. I looked at him, and suddenly, behind his shoulder, I saw my comrade — the angel of death. None but me saw that angel; but I knew him, and knew that before the sun set he would take that rich man’s soul. And I thought to myself, ‘The man is making preparations for a year, and does not know that he will die before evening.’ And I remembered God’s second saying, ‘Learn what is not given to man.’

“What dwells in man I already knew. Now I learnt what is not given him. It is not given to man to know his own needs. And I smiled for the second time. I was glad to have seen my comrade angel — glad also that God had revealed to me the second saying.

“But I still did not know all. I did not know What men live by. And I lived on, waiting till God should reveal to me the last lesson. In the sixth year came the girl-twins with the woman; and I recognized the girls, and heard how they had been kept alive. Having heard the story, I thought, ‘Their mother besought me for the children’s sake, and I believed her when she said that children cannot live without father or mother; but a stranger has nursed them, and has brought them up.’ And when the woman showed her love for the children that were not her own, and wept over them, I saw in her the living God and understood What men live by. And I knew that God had revealed to me the last lesson, and had forgiven my sin. And then I smiled for the third time.”

## Chapter XII

And the angel's body was bared, and he was clothed in light so that eye could not look on him; and his voice grew louder, as though it came not from him but from heaven above. And the angel said:

"I have learnt that all men live not by care for themselves but by love.

"It was not given to the mother to know what her children needed for their life. Nor was it given to the rich man to know what he himself needed. Nor is it given to any man to know whether, when evening comes, he will need boots for his body or slippers for his corpse.

"I remained alive when I was a man, not by care of myself, but because love was present in a passer-by, and because he and his wife pitied and loved me. The orphans remained alive not because of their mother's care, but because there was love in the heart of a woman, a stranger to them, who pitied and loved them. And all men live not by the thought they spend on their own welfare, but because love exists in man.

"I knew before that God gave life to men and desires that they should live; now I understood more than that.

"I understood that God does not wish men to live apart, and therefore he does not reveal to them what each one needs for himself; but he wishes them to live united, and therefore reveals to each of them what is necessary for all.

"I have now understood that though it seems to men that they live by care for themselves, in truth it is love alone by which they live. He who has love, is in God, and God is in him, for God is love."

And the angel sang praise to God, so that the hut trembled at his voice.

The roof opened, and a column of fire rose from earth to heaven.

Simon and his wife and children fell to the ground. Wings appeared upon the angel's shoulders, and he rose into the heavens.

And when Simon came to himself the hut stood as before, and there was no one in it but his own family.

## Quench The Spark Or A Spark Neglected Burn The House

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' -Matthew. xviii. 21-35.

THERE once lived in a village a peasant named Iván Stcherbakóf. He was comfortably off, in the prime of life, the best worker in the village, and

had three sons all able to work. The eldest was married, the second about to marry, and the third was a big lad who could mind the horses and was already beginning to plough. Iván's wife was an able and thrifty woman, and they were fortunate in having a quiet, hard-working daughter-in-law.

There was nothing to prevent Iván and his family from living happily. They had only one idle mouth to feed; that was Iván's old father, who suffered from asthma and had been lying ill on the top of the brick oven for seven years. Iván had all he needed: three horses and a colt, a cow with a calf, and fifteen sheep. The women made all the clothing for the family, besides helping in the fields, and the men tilled the land. They always had grain enough of their own to last over beyond the next harvest and sold enough oats to pay the taxes and meet their other needs. So Iván and his children might have lived quite comfortably had it not been for a feud between him and his next-door neighbour, Limping Gabriel, the son of Gordéy Ivánof.

As long as old Gordéy was alive and Iván's father was still able to manage the household, the peasants lived as neighbours should. If the women of either house happened to want a sieve or a tub, or the men required a sack, or if a cart-wheel got broken and could not be mended at once, they used to send to the other house, and helped each other in neighbourly fashion. When a calf strayed into the neighbour's thrashing-ground they would just drive it out, and only say, 'Don't let it get in again; our grain is lying there.' And such things as locking up the barns and outhouses, hiding things from one another, or backbiting were never thought of in those days.

That was in the fathers' time. When the sons came to be at the head of the families, everything changed.

It all began about a trifle.

Iván's daughter-in-law had a hen that began laying rather early in the season, and she started collecting its eggs for Easter. Every day she went to the cart-shed, and found an egg in the cart; but one day the hen, probably frightened by the children, flew across the fence into the

neighbour's yard and laid its egg there. The woman heard the cackling, but said to herself: 'I have no time now; I must tidy up for Sunday. I'll fetch the egg later on.' In the evening she went to the cart, but found no egg there. She went and asked her mother-in-law and brother-in-law whether they had taken the egg. 'No,' they had not; but her youngest brother-in-law, Tarás, said: 'Your Biddy laid its egg in the neighbour's yard. It was there she was cackling, and she flew back across the fence from there.'

The woman went and looked at the hen. There she was on the perch with the other birds, her eyes just closing ready to go to sleep. The woman wished she could have asked the hen and got an answer from her.

Then she went to the neighbour's, and Gabriel's mother came out to meet her.

'What do you want, young woman?'

'Why, Granny, you see, my hen flew across this morning. Did she not lay an egg here?'

'We never saw anything of it. The Lord be thanked, our own hens started laying long ago. We collect our own eggs and have no need of other people's! And we don't go looking for eggs in other people's yards, lass!'

The young woman was offended, and said more than she should have done. Her neighbour answered back with interest, and the women began abusing each other. Ivan's wife, who had been to fetch water, happening to pass just then, joined in too. Gabriel's wife rushed out, and began reproaching the young woman with things that had really happened and with other things that never had happened at all. Then a general uproar commenced, all shouting at once, trying to get out two words at a time, and not choice words either.

'You're this!' and 'You're that!' 'You're a thief!' and 'You're a slut!' and 'You're starving your old father-in-law to death!' and 'You're a good-for-nothing!' and so on.

'And you've made a hole in the sieve I lent you, you jade! And it's our yoke you're carrying your pails on — you just give back our yoke!'

Then they caught hold of the yoke, and spilt the water, snatched off one another's shawls, and began fighting. Gabriel, returning from the fields, stopped to take his wife's Part. Out rushed Iván and his son and joined in with the rest. Iván was a strong fellow, he scattered the whole lot of them, and pulled a handful of hair out of Gabriel's beard. People came to see what was the matter, and the fighters were separated with difficulty.

That was how it all began.

Gabriel wrapped the hair torn from his beard in a paper, and went to the District Court to have the law of Iván. 'I didn't grow my beard,' said he, 'for pockmarked Iván to pull it out!' And his wife went bragging to the neighbours, saying they'd have Iván condemned and sent to Siberia. And so the feud grew.

The old man, from where he lay on the top of the oven, tried from the very first to persuade them to make peace, but they would not listen. He told them, 'It's a stupid thing you are after, children, picking quarrels about such a paltry matter. Just think! The whole thing began about an egg. The children may have taken it — well, what matter? What's the value of one egg? God sends enough for all! And suppose your neighbour did say an unkind word — put it right; show her how to say a better one! If there has been a fight — well, such things will happen; we're all sinners, but make it up, and let there be an end of it! If you nurse your anger it will be worse for you yourselves.'

But the younger folk would not listen to the old man. They thought his words were mere senseless dotage. Iván would not humble himself before his neighbour.

'I never pulled his beard,' he said, 'he pulled the hair out himself. But his son has burst all the fastenings on my shirt, and torn it. . . . Look at it!'

And Iván also went to law. They were tried by the Justice of the Peace and by the District Court. While all this was going on, the coupling-pin of Gabriel's cart disappeared. Gabriel's womenfolk accused Ivan's son



of having taken it. They said: 'We saw him in the night go past our window, towards the cart; and a neighbour says he saw him at the pub, offering the pin to the landlord.'

So they went to law about that. And at home not a day passed without a quarrel or even a fight. The children, too, abused one another, having learnt to do so from their elders; and when the women happened to meet by the river-side, where they went to rinse the clothes, their arms did not do as much wringing as their tongues did nagging, and every word was a bad one.

At first the peasants only slandered one another; but afterwards they began in real earnest to snatch anything that lay handy, and the children followed their example. Life became harder and harder for them.

Iván Stcherbakóf and Limping Gabriel kept suing one another at the Village Assembly, and at the District Court, and before the Justice of the Peace until all the judges were tired of them. Now Gabriel got Iván fined or imprisoned; then Iván did as much to Gabriel; and the more they spited each other the angrier they grew — like dogs that attack one another and get more and more furious the longer they fight. You strike one dog from behind, and it thinks it's the other dog biting him, and gets still fiercer. So these peasants: they went to law, and one or other of them was fined or locked up, but that only made them more and more angry with each other. 'Wait a bit,' they said, 'and I'll make you pay for it.' And so it went on for six years. Only the old man lying on the top of the oven kept telling them again and again: 'Children, what are you doing? Stop all this paying back; keep to your work, and don't bear malice — it will be better for you. The more you bear malice, the worse it will be.'

But they would not listen to him.

In the seventh year, at a wedding, Ivan's daughter-in-law held Gabriel up to shame, accusing him of having been caught horse-stealing. Gabriel was tipsy, and unable to contain his anger, gave the woman such a blow that she was laid up for a week; and she was pregnant at the time. Iván was delighted. He went to the magistrate to lodge a

complaint. 'Now I'll get rid of my neighbour! He won't escape imprisonment, or exile to Siberia.' But Ivan's wish was not fulfilled. The magistrate dismissed the case. The woman was examined, but she was up and about and showed no sign of any injury. Then Ivan went to the Justice of the Peace, but he referred the business to the District Court. Ivan bestirred himself: treated the clerk and the Elder of the District Court to a gallon of liquor and got Gabriel condemned to be flogged. The sentence was read out to Gabriel by the clerk: 'The Court decrees that the peasant Gabriel Gordéyef shall receive twenty lashes with a birch rod at the District Court.'

Ivan too heard the sentence read, and looked at Gabriel to see how he would take it. Gabriel grew as pale as a sheet, and turned round and went out into the passage. Ivan followed him, meaning to see to the horse, and he overheard Gabriel say, 'Very well! He will have my back flogged: that will make it burn; but something of his may burn worse than that!'

Hearing these words, Ivan at once went back into the Court, and said: 'Upright judges! He threatens to set my house on fire! Listen: he said it in the presence of witnesses!'

Gabriel was recalled. 'Is it true that you said this?'

'I haven't said anything. Flog me, since you have the power. It seems that I alone am to suffer, and all for being in the right, while he is allowed to do as he likes.'

Gabriel wished to say something more, but his lips and his cheeks quivered, and he turned towards the wall. Even the officials were frightened by his looks. 'He may do some mischief to himself or to his neighbour,' thought they.

Then the old Judge said: 'Look here, my men; you'd better be reasonable and make it up. Was it right of you, friend Gabriel, to strike a pregnant woman? It was lucky it passed off so well, but think what might have happened! Was it right? You had better confess and beg his pardon, and he will forgive you, and we will alter the sentence.'

The clerk heard these words, and remarked: 'That's impossible under Statute 117. An agreement between the Parties not having been

arrived at, a decision of the Court has been pronounced and must be executed.'

But the Judge would not listen to the clerk.

'Keep your tongue still, my friend,' said he. 'The first of all laws is to obey God, Who loves peace.' And the Judge began again to persuade the peasants, but could not succeed. Gabriel would not listen to him.

'I shall be fifty next year,' said he, 'and have a married son, and have never been flogged in my life, and now that pockmarked Ivan has had me condemned to be flogged, and am I to go and ask his forgiveness? No; I've borne enough. . . . Ivan shall have cause to remember me!' Again Gabriel's voice quivered, and he could say no more, but turned round and went out.

It was seven miles from the Court to the village, and it was getting late when Ivan reached home. He unharnessed his horse, put it up for the night, and entered the cottage. No one was there. The women had already gone to drive the cattle in, and the young fellows were not yet back from the fields. Iván went in, and sat down, thinking. He remembered how Gabriel had listened to the sentence, and how pale he had become, and how he had turned to the wall; and Ivan's heart grew heavy. He thought how he himself would feel if he were sentenced, and he pitied Gabriel. Then he heard his old father up on the oven cough, and saw him sit up, lower his legs, and scramble down. The old man dragged himself slowly to a seat, and sat down. He was quite tired out with the exertion, and coughed a long time till he had cleared his throat. Then, leaning against the table, he said: 'Well, has he been condemned?'

'Yes, to twenty strokes with the rods,' answered Iván.

The old man shook his head.

'A bad business,' said he. 'You are doing wrong, Iván! Ah! it's very bad — not for him so much as for yourself! . . . Well, they'll flog him: but will that do you any good?'

'He'll not do it again,' said Iván.

'What is it he'll not do again? What has he done worse than you?'

‘Why, think of the harm he has done me!’ said Iván. ‘He nearly killed my wife, and now he’s threatening to burn us up. Am I to thank him for it?’

The old man sighed, and said: ‘You go about the wide world, Iván, while I am lying on the oven all these years, so you think you see everything, and that I see nothing. . . . Ah, lad! It’s you that don’t see; malice blinds you. Others’ sins are before your eyes, but your own are behind your back. “He’s acted badly!” What a thing to say! If he were the only one to act badly, how could strife exist? Is strife among men ever bred by one alone? Strife is always between two. His badness you see, but your own you don’t. If he were bad, but you were good, there would be no strife. Who pulled the hair out of his beard? Who spoilt his haystack? Who dragged him to the law court? Yet you put it all on him! You live a bad life yourself, that’s what is wrong! It’s not the way I used to live, lad, and it’s not the way I taught you. Is that the way his old father and I used to live?’

How did we live? Why, as neighbours should! If he happened to run out of flour, one of the women would come across: “Uncle Trol, we want some flour.” “Go to the barn, dear,” I’d say: “take what you need.” If he’d no one to take his horses to pasture, “Go, Iván,” I’d say, “and look after his horses.” And if I was short of anything, I’d go to him. “Uncle Gordéy,” I’d say, “I want so-and-so!” “Take it Uncle Trol!” That’s how it was between us, and we had an easy time of it. But now? . . . That soldier the other day was telling us about the fight at Plevna (A town in Bulgaria, the scene of fierce and prolonged fighting between the Turks and the Russians in the war of 1877). .

Why, there’s war between you worse than at Plevna! Is that living? . . . What a sin it is! You are a man and master of the house; it’s you who will have to answer. What are you teaching the women and the children? To snarl and snap? Why, the other day your Taráska — that greenhorn — was swearing at neighbour Irena, calling her names; and his mother listened and laughed. Is that right? It is you will have to answer. Think of your soul. Is this all as it should be?

You throw a word at me, and I give you two in return; you give me a blow, and I give you two. No, lad! Christ, when He walked on earth, taught us fools something very different. . . . If you get a hard word from any one, keep silent, and his own conscience will accuse him. That is what our Lord taught. If you get a slap, turn the other cheek. “Here, beat me, if that’s what I deserve!” And his own conscience will rebuke him. He will soften, and will listen to you. That’s the way He taught us, not to be proud! . . . Why don’t you speak? Isn’t it as I say?’

Iván sat silent and listened.

The old man coughed, and having with difficulty cleared his throat, began again: ‘You think Christ taught us wrong? Why, it’s all for our own good. Just think of your earthly life; are you better off, or worse, since this Plevna began among you? Just reckon up what you’ve spent on all this law business — what the driving backwards and forwards and your food on the way have cost you! What fine fellows your sons have grown; you might live and get on well; but now your means are lessening. And why?’

All because of this folly; because of your pride. You ought to be ploughing with your lads, and do the sowing yourself; but the fiend carries you off to the judge, or to some pettifogger or other. The ploughing is not done in time, nor the sowing, and mother earth can’t bear properly. Why did the oats fail this year? When did you sow them? When you came back from town! And what did you gain? A burden for your own shoulders. . . . Eh, lad, think of your own business! Work with your boys in the field and at home, and if some one offends you, forgive him, as God wished you to. Then life will be easy, and your heart will always be light.’

Iván remained silent.

‘Iván, my boy, hear your old father! Go and harness the roan, and go at once to the Government office; put an end to all this affair there; and in the morning go and make it up with Gabriel in God’s name, and invite him to your house for to-morrow’s holiday’ (it was the eve of the Virgin’s Nativity). ‘Have tea ready, and get a bottle of vódka and put an

end to this wicked business, so that there should not be any more of it in future, and tell the women and children to do the same.'

Iván sighed, and thought, 'What he says is true,' and his heart grew lighter. Only he did not know how, now, to begin to put matters right. But again the old man began, as if he had guessed what was in Ivan's mind.

'Go, Iván, don't put it off! Put out the fire before it spreads, or it will be too late.'

The old man was going to say more, but before he could do so the women came in, chattering like magpies. The news that Gabriel was sentenced to be flogged, and of his threat to set fire to the house, had already reached them. They had heard all about it and added to it something of their own, and had again had a row, in the pasture, with the women of Gabriel's household. They began telling how Gabriel's daughter-in-law threatened a fresh action: Gabriel had got the right side of the examining magistrate, who would now turn the whole affair upside down; and the schoolmaster was writing out another petition, to the Tsar himself this time, about Iván; and everything was in the petition — all about the coupling-pin and the kitchen-garden — so that half of Ivan's homestead would be theirs soon. Iván heard what they were saying, and his heart grew cold again, and he gave up the thought of making peace with Gabriel.

In a farmstead there is always plenty for the master to do. Iván did not stop to talk to the women, but went out to the threshing-floor and to the barn. By the time he had tidied up there, the sun had set and the young fellows had returned from the field. They had been ploughing the field for the winter crops with two horses. Iván met them, questioned them about their work, helped to put everything in its place, set a torn horse-collar aside to be mended, and was going to put away some stakes under the barn, but it had grown quite dusk, so he decided to leave them where they were till next day.

Then he gave the cattle their food, opened the gate, let out the horses. Tarás was to take to pasture for the night, and again closed the gate and barred it. 'Now,' thought he, 'I'll have my supper, and then to bed.'

He took the horse-collar and entered the hut. By this time he had forgotten about Gabriel and about what his old father had been saying to him. But, just as he took hold of the door-handle to enter the passage, he heard his neighbour on the other side of the fence cursing somebody in a hoarse voice: 'What the devil is he good for?' Gabriel was saying. 'He's only fit to be killed!' At these words all Iván's former bitterness towards his neighbour re-awoke. He stood listening while Gabriel scolded, and, when he stopped, Iván went into the hut.

There was a light inside; his daughter-in-law sat spinning, his wife was getting supper ready, his eldest son was making straps for bark shoes, his second sat near the table with a book, and Tarás was getting ready to go out to pasture the horses for the night. Everything in the hut would have been pleasant and bright, but for that plague — a bad neighbour!

Iván entered, sullen and cross; threw the cat down from the bench, and scolded the women for putting the slop-pail in the wrong place. He felt despondent, and sat down, frowning, to mend the horse-collar.

Gabriel's words kept ringing in his ears: his threat at the law court, and what he had just been shouting in a hoarse voice about some one who was 'only fit to be killed.'

His wife gave Tarás his supper, and, having eaten it, Tarás put on an old sheepskin and another coat, tied a sash round his waist, took some bread with him, and went out to the horses. His eldest brother was going to see him off, but Iván himself rose instead, and went out into the porch. It had grown quite dark outside, clouds had gathered, and the wind had risen. Iván went down the steps, helped his boy to mount, started the foal after him, and stood listening while Tarás rode down the village and was there joined by other lads with their horses. Iván waited until they were all out of hearing. As he stood there by the gate he could not get Gabriel's words out of his head: 'Mind that something of yours does not burn worse!'

'He is desperate,' thought Iván. 'Everything is dry, and it's windy weather besides. He'll come up at the back somewhere, set fire to something, and be off. He'll burn the place and escape scot free, the

villain! . . . There now, if one could but catch him in the act, he'd not get off then!' And the thought fixed itself so firmly in his mind that he did not go up the steps but went out into the street and round the corner. 'I'll just walk round the buildings; who can tell what he's after?' And Iván, stepping softly, passed out of the gate. As soon as he reached the corner, he looked round along the fence, and seemed to see something suddenly move at the opposite corner, as if some one had come out and disappeared again. Iván stopped, and stood quietly, listening and looking. Everything was still; only the leaves of the willows fluttered in the wind, and the straws of the thatch rustled. At first it seemed pitch dark, but, when his eyes had grown used to the darkness, he could see the far corner, and a plough that lay there, and the eaves. He looked a while, but saw no one.

'I suppose it was a mistake,' thought Iván; 'but still I will go round,' and Iván went stealthily along by the shed. Iván stepped so softly in his bark shoes that he did not hear his own footsteps. As he reached the far corner, something seemed to flare up for a moment near the plough and to vanish again. Iván felt as if struck to the heart; and he stopped. Hardly had he stopped, when something flared up more brightly in the same place, and he clearly saw a man with a cap on his head, crouching down, with his back towards him, lighting a bunch of straw he held in his hand. Iván's heart fluttered within him like a bird. Straining every nerve, he approached with great strides, hardly feeling his legs under him. 'Ah,' thought Iván, 'now he won't escape! I'll catch him in the act!'

Iván was still some distance off, when suddenly he saw a bright light, but not in the same place as before, and not a small flame. The thatch had flared up at the eaves, the flames were reaching up to the roof, and, standing beneath it, Gabriel's whole figure was clearly visible.

Like a hawk swooping down on a lark, Iván rushed at Limping Gabriel. 'Now I'll have him; he shan't escape me!' thought Iván. But Gabriel must have heard his steps, and (however he managed it) glancing round, he scuttled away past the barn like a hare.

'You shan't escape!' shouted Iván, darting after him.



Just as he was going to seize Gabriel, the latter dodged him; but Iván managed to catch the skirt of Gabriel's coat. It tore right off, and Iván fell down. He recovered his feet, and shouting, 'Help! Seize him! Thieves! Murder!' ran on again. But meanwhile Gabriel had reached his own gate. There Iván overtook him and was about to seize him, when something struck Iván a stunning blow, as though a stone had hit his temple, quite deafening him. It was Gabriel who, seizing an oak wedge that lay near the gate, had struck out with all his might.

Iván was stunned; sparks flew before his eyes, then all grew dark and he staggered. When he came to his senses Gabriel was no longer there: it was as light as day, and from the side where his homestead was something roared and crackled like an engine at work. Iván turned round and saw that his back shed was all ablaze, and the side shed had also caught fire, and flames and smoke and bits of burning straw mixed with the smoke, were being driven towards his hut.

'What is this, friends? . . .' cried Iván, lifting his arms and striking his thighs.' Why, all I had to do was just to snatch it out from under the eaves and trample on it! What is this, friends? . . .' he kept repeating. He wished to shout, but his breath failed him; his voice was gone. He wanted to run, but his legs would not obey him, and got in each other's way. He moved slowly, but again staggered and again his breath failed. He stood still till he had regained breath, and then went on. Before he had got round the back shed to reach the fire, the side shed was also all ablaze; and the corner of the hut and the covered gateway had caught fire as well. The flames were leaping out of the hut, and it was impossible to get into the yard. A large crowd had collected, but nothing could be done. The neighbours were carrying their belongings out of their own houses, and driving the cattle out of their own sheds. After Ivan's house, Gabriel's also caught fire, then, the wind rising, the flames spread to the other side of the street and half the village was burnt down.

At Ivan's house they barely managed to save his old father; and the family escaped in what they had on; everything else, except the horses that had been driven out to pasture for the night, was lost; all the

cattle, the fowls on their perches, the carts, ploughs, and harrows, the women's trunks with their clothes, and the grain in the granaries — all were burnt up!

At Gabriel's, the cattle were driven out, and a few things saved from his house.

The fire lasted all night. Iván stood in front of his homestead and kept repeating, 'What is this? . . . Friends! . . . One need only have pulled it out and trampled on it!' But when the roof fell in, Iván rushed into the burning place, and seizing a charred beam, tried to drag it out. The women saw him, and called him back; but he pulled out the beam, and was going in again for another when he lost his footing and fell among the flames. Then his son made his way in after him and dragged him out. Iván had singed his hair and beard and burnt his clothes and scorched his hands, but he felt nothing. 'His grief has stupefied him,' said the people. The fire was burning itself out, but Iván still stood repeating: 'Friends! . . . What is this? . . . One need only have pulled it out!'

In the morning the village Elder's son came to fetch Iván.

'Daddy Iván, your father is dying! He has sent for you to say good-bye.' Iván had forgotten about his father, and did not understand what was being said to him.

'What father?' he said. 'Whom has he sent for?'

'He sent for you, to say good-bye; he is dying in our cottage! Come along, daddy Iván,' said the Elder's son, pulling him by the arm; and Iván followed the lad.

When he was being carried out of the hut, some burning straw had fallen on to the old man and burnt him, and he had been taken to the village Elder's in the farther Part of the village, which the fire did not reach.

When Iván came to his father, there was only the Elder's wife in the hut, besides some little children on the top of the oven. All the rest were still at the fire. The old man, who was lying on a bench holding a wax candle (Wax candles are much used in the services of the Russian

Church, and it is usual to place one in the hand of a dying man, especially when he receives unction) in his hand, kept turning his eyes towards the door. When his son entered, he moved a little. The old woman went up to him and told him that his son had come. He asked to have him brought nearer. Iván came closer.

‘What did I tell you, Iván?’ began the old man ‘Who has burnt down the village?’

‘It was he, father!’ Iván answered. ‘I caught him in the act. I saw him shove the firebrand into the thatch. I might have pulled away the burning straw and stamped it out, and then nothing would have happened.’

‘Iván,’ said the old man, ‘I am dying, and you in your turn will have to face death. Whose is the sin?’

Iván gazed at his father in silence, unable to utter a word.

‘Now, before God, say whose is the sin? What did I tell you?’

Only then Iván came to his senses and understood it all. He sniffed and said, ‘Mine, father!’ And he fell on his knees before his father, saying, ‘Forgive me, father; I am guilty before you and before God.’

The old man moved his hands, changed the candle from his right hand to his left, and tried to lift his right hand to his forehead to cross himself, but could not do it, and stopped.

‘Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!’ said he, and again he turned his eyes towards his son.

‘Iván! I say, Iván!’

‘What, father?’

‘What must you do now?’

Iván was weeping.

‘I don’t know how we are to live now, father!’ he said.

The old man closed his eyes, moved his lips as if to gather strength, and opening his eyes again, said: ‘You’ll manage. If you obey God’s will, you’ll manage!’ He paused, then smiled, and said: ‘Mind, Iván! Don’t tell who started the fire! Hide another man’s sin, and God will forgive

two of yours!' And the old man took the candle in both hands and, folding them on his breast, sighed, stretched out, and died.

Iván did not say anything against Gabriel, and no one knew what had caused the fire.

And Iván's anger against Gabriel passed away, and Gabriel wondered that Iván did not tell anybody. At first Gabriel felt afraid, but after awhile he got used to it. The men left off quarrelling, and then their families left off also. While rebuilding their huts, both families lived in one house; and when the village was rebuilt and they might have moved farther apart, Iván and Gabriel built next to each other, and remained neighbours as before.

They lived as good neighbours should. Iván Stcherbakóf remembered his old father's command to obey God's law, and quench a fire at the first spark; and if any one does him an injury he now tries not to revenge himself, but rather to set matters right again; and if any one gives him a bad word, instead of giving a worse in return, he tries to teach the other not to use evil words; and so he teaches his womenfolk and children. And Iván Stcherbakóf has got on his feet again, and now lives better even than he did before.

Where Love Is, God Is Also

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole

IN THE CITY lived Martuin, a shoemaker. He lived in a basement, in a little room with one window. The window looked out on the street. Through the window he used to watch the people passing by: although only their feet could be seen, yet by the boots Martuin recognized their owners. Martuin had lived long in one place, and had many acquaintances. Few pairs of boots in his district had not been in his hands once and again. Some he would half-sole, some he would patch, some he would stitch around, and occasionally he would also put on new uppers. And through the window he quite often recognized his

work. Martuin had plenty to do, because he was a faithful workman, used good material, did not make exorbitant charges, and kept his word. If he can finish and order by a certain time, he accepts it: if not, he will not deceive you-he tells you so beforehand. And all knew Martuin, and he was never out of work.

Martuin had always been a good man; but as he grew old, he began to think more about his soul, and get nearer to God. Martuin's wife had died when he was still living with his master. His wife left him a boy three years old. None of their other children had lived. All the eldest had died in childhood. Martuin at first intended to send his little son to his sister in the village, but afterwards he felt sorry for him: he thought to himself, "It will be hard for my Kapitoshka to live in a strange family. I shall keep him with me."

And Martuin left his master, and went into lodgings with his little son. But, through God's will, Martuin had no luck with children. As Kapitoshka grew older, he began to help his father, and would have been a delight to him, but fell sick, went to bed, suffered a week, and died. Martuin buried his son, and fell into despair. So deep was this despair, that he began to complain of God. Martuin fell into such a melancholy state, that more than once he prayed to God for death, and reproached God because he did not take away him who was an old man, instead of his beloved only son. Martuin also ceased to go to church.

And once a little old man, a fellow-countryman, came from Trinity to see Martuin: for seven years he had been absent. Martuin talked with him, and began to complain about his sorrows.

"I have no more desire to live," he said: "I only wish I was dead. That is all I pray God for. I am a man without any thing to hope for now."

And the little old man said to him-"You don't talk right, Martuin: we must not judge God's doings. The world moves, not by your skill, but by God's will. God decreed for your son to die-for you-to live. Consequently, it is for the best. And you are in despair, because you wish to live for your own happiness."

“But what shall one live for?” asked Martuin.

And the little old man said, “We must live for God, Martuin. He gives you life, and for his sake you must live. When you begin to live for him, you will not grieve over any thing, and all will seem easy to you.”

Martuin kept silent for a moment, and then says, “But how can one live for the sake of God?”

And the little old man said, “Christ has taught us how to live for God. Every thing is explained there.”

And these words kindled a fire in Martuin’s heart. And he went that very same day, bought a New Testament in large print, and began to read. At first Martuin intended to read only on holidays; but as he began to read, it so cheered his soul that he used to read every day. At times he would become so absorbed in reading, that all the kerosene in the lamp would burn out, and still he could not tear himself away. And so Martuin used to read every evening. And the more he read, the clearer he understood what God wanted of him, and how one should live for God; and his heart constantly grew easier and easier. Formerly, when he lay down to sleep, he used to sigh and groan, and always think of his Kapitoshka; and now he only exclaimed, “Glory to thee! glory to thee, Lord! Thy will be done.”

And from that time Martuin’s whole life was changed. In other days he, too, used to drop into a saloon, as a holiday amusement, to drink a cup of tea; and he was not averse to a little brandy either. He would take a drink with some acquaintance, and leave the saloon, not intoxicated exactly, yet in a happy frame of mind, and inclined to talk nonsense, and shout, and use abusive language at a person. Now he left off this sort of thing. His life became quiet and joyful. In the morning he sits down to work, finishes his allotted task, then takes the little lamp from the hook, puts it on the table, gets his book from the shelf, opens it, and sits down to read. And the more he reads, the more he understands, and the brighter and happier it is in his heart.

Once it happened that Martuin read till late into the night. He was reading the Gospel of Luke. He was reading over the sixth Chapter; and

he was reading the verses, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." He read further also those verses, where God speaks: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation of a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

Martuin read these words, and joy filled his soul. He took off his spectacles, put them down on the book, leaned his elbows upon the table, and became lost in thought. And he began to measure his life by these words. And he thought to himself-"Is my house built upon the rock, or upon the sand! 'Tis well if on the rock. It is so easy when you are alone by yourself; it seems as if you had done every thing as God commands: but when you forget yourself, you sin again. Yet I shall still struggle on. It is very good. Help me, Lord!"

Thus ran his thoughts: he wanted to go to bed, but he felt loath to tear himself away from the book. And he began to read further in the seventh Chapter. He read about the centurion, he read about the widow's son, he read about the answer given to John's disciples, and finally he came to that place where the rich Pharisee desired the Lord to sit at meat with him; and he read how the woman that was a sinner anointed his feet, and washed them with her tears, and how he forgave her. He reached the forty-fourth verse, and began to read: "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this woman?

I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.” He finished reading these verses, and thought to himself, “Thou gavest me no water for my feet, thou gavest me no kiss. My head with oil thou didst not anoint.”

And again Martuin took off his spectacles, put them down upon the book, and again he became lost in thought.

“It seems that Pharisee must have been such a man as I am. I, too, apparently have thought only of myself-how I might have my tea, be warm and comfortable, but never to think about my guest. He thought about himself, but there was not the least care taken of the guest. And who was his guest? The Lord himself. If he had come to me, should I have done the same way?”

Martuin rested his head upon both his arms, and did not notice how he fell asleep.

“Martuin!” suddenly seemed to sound in his ears.

Martuin started from his sleep: “Who is here?”

He turned around, glanced toward the door-no one.

Again he fell into a doze. Suddenly he plainly hears-“Martuin! Ah, Martuin! look tomorrow on the street. I am coming.”

Martuin awoke, rose from the chair, began to rub his eyes. He himself does not know whether he heard those words in his dream, or in reality. He turned down his lamp, and went to bed.

At daybreak next morning, Martuin rose, made his prayer to God, lighted the stove, put on the cabbage soup and the gruel, put the water in the samovar, put on his apron, and sat down by the window to work.

Martuin is working, and at the same time thinking about all that had happened yesterday. He thinks both ways: now he thinks it was a dream, and now he thinks he really heard a voice. “Well,” he thinks, “such things have been.”



Martuin is sitting by the window, and does not work as much as he looks through the window: when any one passes by in boots that he does not know, he bends down, looks out of the window, in order to see, not only the feet, but also the face. The house porter passed by; the water-carrier passed by; then came alongside of the window an old soldier of Nicholas' time, in an old pair of laced felt boots, with a shovel in his hands. Martuin recognized him by his felt boots. The old man's name was Stepanuitch; and a neighboring merchant, out of charity, gave him a home with him. He was required to assist the house porte.

Stepanuitch began to shovel away the snow from in front of Martuin's window. Martuin glanced at him, and took up his work again.

"Pshaw! I must be getting crazy in my old age," said Martuin, and laughed at himself. "Stepanuitch is clearing away the snow, and I imagine that Christ is coming to see me. I was entirely out of my mind, old dotard that I am!" Martuin sewed about a dozen stitches, and then felt impelled to look through the window again. He looked out again through the window, and sees Stepanuitch has leaned his shovel against the wall, and is either warming himself, or resting.

He is an old, broken-down man: evidently he has not strength enough, even to shovel the snow. Martuin said to himself, "I will give him some tea: by the way, the samovar must be boiling by this time." Martuin laid down his awl, rose from his seat, put the samovar on the table, made the tea, and tapped with his finger at the glass. Stepanuitch turned around, and came to the window. Martuin beckoned to him, and went to open the door.

"Come in, warm yourself a little," he said. "You must be cold."

"May Christ reward you for this! my bones ache," said Stepanuitch. Stepanuitch came in and shook off the snow, tried to wipe his feet, so as not to soil the floor, but staggered.

"Don't trouble to wipe your feet. I will clean it up myself: we are used to such things. Come in and sit down," said Martuin. "Drink a cup of tea."

And Martuin filled two glasses, and handed one to his guest; while he himself poured tea into a saucer, and began to blow it. Stepanuitch finished drinking his glass of tea, turned the glass upside down, put upon it the half-eaten lump of sugar, and began to express his thanks. But it was evident he wanted some more.

“Have some more,” said Martuin, filling both his own glass and his guest’s. Martuin drinks his tea, but from time to time keeps glancing out into the street.

“Are you expecting any one?” asked his guest.

“Am I expecting any one? I am ashamed even to tell whom I expect. I am, and I am not, expecting some one, but one word has impressed itself upon my heart. Whether it is a dream, or something else, I do not know. Don’t you see, brother, I was reading yesterday the gospel about Christ, the Little Father; how he suffered, how he walked on the earth. I suppose you have heard about it?”

“Indeed I have,” replied Stepanuitch: “but we are people in darkness; we can’t read.”

“Well, now, I was reading about that very thing-how he walked upon the earth: I read, you know, how he comes to the Pharisee, and the Pharisee did not treat him hospitably. Well, and so, my brother, I was reading, yesterday, about this very thing, and was thinking to myself how he did not receive Christ with honor. If, for example, he should come to me, or any one else, I think to myself, I should not even know how to receive him. And he gave him no reception at all. Well! while I was thus thinking, I fell asleep, brother, and I hear some one call me by name. I got up: the voice, just as though some one whispered, says, ‘Be on the watch: I shall come tomorrow.’ And this happened twice. Well! would you believe it, it got into my head? I scold myself-and yet I am expecting him.”

Stepanuitch shook his head, and said nothing: he finished drinking his glass of tea, and put it on the side; but Martuin picked up the glass again, and filled it once more. “Drink some more for your good health. You see, I have an idea, that, when the Savior went about on this earth, he disdained no one, and had more to do with the simple people. He

always went to see the simple people. He picked out his disciples more from among our brethren, sinners like ourselves from the working-class. He, says he, who exalts himself, shall be humbled, and he who is humbled shall become exalted. You, says he, call me Lord, and I, says he, wash your feet. Whoever wishes, says he, to be the first, the same shall be a servant to all. Because, says he blessed are the poor, the humble, the kind, the generous." And Stepanuitch forgot about his tea: he was an old man, and easily moved to tears. He is sitting listening, and the tears are rolling down his face.

"Come, now, have some more tea," said Martuin; but Stepanuitch made the sign of the cross, thanked him, turned up his glass, and arose. "Thanks to you," he says, "Martuin, for treating me kindly, and satisfying me, soul and body."

"You are welcome; come in again: always glad to see a friend," said Martuin.

Stepanuitch deParted; and Martuin poured out the rest of the tea, drank it up, put away the dishes, and sat down again by the window to work, to stitch on a patch. He is stitching, and at the same time looking through the window. He is expecting Christ, and is all the while thinking of him and his deeds, and his head is filled with the different speeches of Christ.

Two soldiers passed by: one wore boots furnished by the Crown, and the other one, boots that he had made; then the master of the next house, passed by in shining galoshes; then a baker with a basket passed by. All passed by; and now there came also by the window a woman in woolen stockings and wooden shoes. She passed by the window, and stood still near the window-case.

Martuin looked up at her from the window, sees it is a strange woman poorly clad, and with a child: she was standing by the wall with her back to the wind, trying to wrap up the child, and she has nothing to wrap it up in. The woman was dressed in shabby summer clothes: and from behind the frame, Martuin hears the child crying, and the woman trying to pacify it; but she is not able to pacify it. Martuin got up, went to the

door, ascended the steps, and cried, "Hey! my good woman!" The woman heard him and turned around.

"Why are you standing in the cold with the child? Come into my room, where it is warm: you can manage it better. Right in this way!"

The woman was astonished. She sees an old, old man in an apron, with spectacles on his nose, calling her to him. She followed him. They descended the steps, entered the room: the old man led the woman to his bed.

"There," says he, "sit down, my good woman, nearer to the stove: you can get warm, and nurse the child."

"I have no milk for him. I myself have not eaten anything since morning," said the woman; but, nevertheless, she took the child to her breast.

Martuin shook his head, went to the table, brought out the bread and a dish, opened the oven-door, poured into the dish some cabbage-soup, took out the pot with the gruel, but it was not done yet; so he filled the dish with broth only, and put it on the table. He got the bread, took the towel down from the hook, and put it upon the table.

"Sit down," he says, "and eat, my good woman; and I will mind the little one. You see, I once had children of my own: I know how to handle them."

The woman crossed herself, sat down at the table, and began to eat; while Martuin took a seat on the bed near the infant. Martuin kept smacking and smacking to it with his lips; but it was a poor kind of smacking, for he had no teeth. The little one still cries. And it occurred to Martuin to threaten the little one with his finger: he waves, waves his finger right before the child's mouth, and hastily withdraws it. He does not put it to its mouth, because his finger is black, and soiled with wax. And the little one looked at his finger, and became quiet: then it began to smile, and Martuin also was glad. While the woman is eating, she tells who she is, and whither she was going. "I," says she, "am a soldier's wife.

It is now seven months since they sent my husband away off, and no tidings. I lived out as cook; the baby was born; no one cared to keep me with a child. This is the third month that I have been struggling along without a place. I ate up all I had. I wanted to engage as a wet-nurse-no one would take me-I am too thin, they say. I have just been to the merchant's wife, where lives our little grandmother, and so they promised to take us in. I thought this was the end of it. But she told me to come next week. And she lives a long way off. I got tired out; and it tired him, too, my heart's darling. Fortunately, our landlady takes pity on us for the sake of Christ, and gives us a room, else I don't know how I should manage to get along."

Martuin signed, and said, "Haven't you any warm clothes?"

"Now is the time, friend, to wear warm clothes; but yesterday I pawned my last shawl for a twenty-kopek piece." The woman came to the bed, and took the child; and Martuin rose, went to the little wall, and succeeded in finding an old coat.

"Na!" says he: "it is a poor thing, yet you may turn it to some use."

The woman looked at the coat, looked at the old man; she took the coat, and burst into tears: and Martuin turned away his head; crawling under the bed, he pushed out a little trunk, rummaged in it, and sat down opposite the woman.

And the woman said, "May Christ bless you, little grandfather! He must have sent me himself to your window. My little child would have frozen to death. When I started out, it was warm, but now it is terribly cold. And he, the Savior, led you to look through the window, and take pity on me, an unfortunate."

Martuin smiled, and said, "Indeed, he did that! I have been looking through the window, my good woman, not without cause." And Martuin told the soldier's wife his dream, and how he heard the voice-how the Lord promised to come and see him that day.

"All things are possible," said the woman. She rose, put on the coat, wrapped up her little child in it; and as she started to take leave, she thanked Martuin again.

“Take this, for Christ’s sake,” said Martuin, giving her a twenty-kopek piece: “redeem your shawl.” She made the sign of the cross. Martuin made the sign of the cross, and went with her to the door.

The woman left. Martuin ate some shchi, washed some dishes, and sat down again to work. While he works he still remembers the window: when the window grew darker, he immediately looked out to see who was passing by. Both acquaintances and strangers passed by, and there was nothing out of the ordinary.

But here Martuin sees that an old apple-woman has stopped right in front of his window. She carries a basket with apples. Only a few were left, as she had nearly sold them all out; and over her shoulder she had a bag full of chips. She must have gathered them up in some new building, and was on her way home. One could see that the bag was heavy on her shoulder: she wanted to shift it to the other shoulder.

So she lowered the bag upon the sidewalk, stood the basket with the apples on a little post, and began to shake down the splinters in the bag. And while she was shaking her bag, a little boy in a torn cap came along, picked up an apple from the basket, and was about to make his escape; but the old woman noticed it, turned around, and caught the youngster by his sleeve. The little boy began to struggle, tried to tear himself away; but the old woman grasped him with both hands, knocked off his cap, and caught him by the hair.

The little boy is screaming, the old woman is scolding. Martuin lost no time in putting away his awl; he threw it upon the floor, sprang to the door—he even stumbled on the stairs, and dropped his eyeglasses—and rushed out into the street.

The woman is pulling the youngster by his hair, and is scolding, and threatening to take him to the policeman: the youngster defends himself, and denies the charge. “I did not take it,” he says: “what are you licking me for? let me go!” Martuin tried to separate them. He took the boy by his arm, and says—“Let him go, little one; forgive him, for Christ’s sake.”

“I will forgive him so that he won’t forget till the new broom grows. I am going to take the little villain to the police.”

Martuin began to entreat the old woman: “Let him go, babushka,” he said, “he will never do it again. Let him go, for Christ’s sake.”

The old woman let him loose: the boy tried to run, but Martuin kept him back.

“Ask the old woman’s forgiveness,” he said, “and don’t you ever do it again: I saw you taking the apple.”

With tears in his eyes, the boy began to ask forgiveness.

“Nu! that’s right; and now, here’s an apple for you.” Martuin got an apple from the basket, and gave it to the boy.

“I will pay you for it,” he said to the old woman.

“You ruin them that way, the good-for-nothings,” said the old woman.

“He ought to be treated so that he would remember it for a whole week.”

“Eh,” said Martuin, “that is right according to our judgment, but not according to God’s. If he is to be whipped for an apple, the what do we deserve for our sins?”

The old woman was silent.

Martuin told her the parable of the chosen who forgave a debtor all that he owed him, and how the debtor went and began to choke one who owed him.

The old woman listened, and the boy stood listening.

“God has commanded us to forgive,” said Martuin, “else we, too, may not be forgiven. All should be forgiven, and the thoughtless especially.”

The old woman shook her head, and sighed.

“That’s so,” said she; “but the trouble is, that they are very much spoiled.”

“Then, we, who are older, must teach them,” said Martuin.

“That’s just what I say,” remarked the old woman. “I myself had seven of them-only one daughter is left.” And the old woman began to relate where and how she lived with her daughter, and how many grandchildren she had. “Here,” she says, “my strength is only so-so, and

yet I have to work. I pity the youngsters-my grandchildren-how nice they are! No one gives me such a welcome as they do. My daughter won't go to any one but me" and the old woman grew quite sentimental.

"Of course, it is a childish trick. God be with him," said she, pointing to the boy. The woman was just about to lift the bag upon her shoulder, when the boy ran up, and says, "Let me carry it, babushka: it is on my way."

The old woman nodded her head, and put the bag on the boy's back. Side by side they both passed along the street. And the old woman even forgot to ask Martuin to pay for the apple.

Martuin stood motionless, and kept gazing after them; and he heard them talking all the time as they walked away. After Martuin saw them disappear, he returned to his room; he found his eyeglasses on the stairs-they were not broken; he picked up his awl, and sat down to work again.

After working a little while, it grew darker, so that he could not see to sew: he saw the lamplighter passing by to light the street-lamps.

"It must be time to make a light," he thought to himself; so he fixed his little lamp, hung it up, and betook himself again to work. He had one boot already finished; he turned it around, looked at it: "Well done." He put away his tools, swept off the cuttings, cleared off the bristles and ends, took the lamp, put it on the table, and took down the Gospels from the shelf.

He intended to open the book at the very place where he had yesterday put a piece of leather as a mark, but it happened to open at another place; and the moment Martuin opened the Testament, he recollected his last night's dream. And as soon as he remembered it, it seemed as though he heard some one stepping about behind him. Martuin looked around, and sees-there, in the dark corner, it seemed as though people were standing: he was at a loss to know who they were. And a voice whispered in his ear-"Martuin-ah, Martuin! did you not recognize me?"



“Who?” uttered Martuin.

“Me,” repeated the voice. “It’s I;” and Stepanuitch stepped forth from the dark corner; he smiled, and like a little cloud faded away, and soon vanished.

“And this is I,” said the voice. From the dark corner stepped forth the woman with her child: the woman smiled, the child laughed, and they also vanished.

“And this is I,” continued the voice; both the old woman and the boy with the apple stepped forward; both smiled and vanished.

Martuin’s soul rejoiced: he crossed himself, put on his eyeglasses, and began to read the Evangelists where it happened to open. On the upper Part of the page he read-”For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in...”

And on the lower Part of the page he read this: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25).

And Martuin understood that his dream did not deceive him; that the Savior really called upon him that day, and that he really received him.

## Wisdom Of Children Or Little Girls Wiser Than Old Men

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1885

IT WAS AN EARLY EASTER. Sledging was only just over; snow still lay in the yards; and water ran in streams down the village street.

Two little girls from different houses happened to meet in a lane between two homesteads, where the dirty water after running through the farm-yards had formed a large puddle. One girl was very small, the other a little bigger. Their mothers had dressed them both in new frocks. The little one wore a blue frock the other a yellow print, and both had red kerchiefs on their heads. They had just come from church

when they met, and first they showed each other their finery, and then they began to play. Soon the fancy took them to splash about in the water, and the smaller one was going to step into the puddle, shoes and all, when the elder checked her:

‘Don’t go in so, Malásha,’ said she, ‘your mother will scold you. I will take off my shoes and stockings, and you take off yours.’

They did so, and then, picking up their skirts, began walking towards each other through the puddle. The water came up to Malásha’s ankles, and she said:

‘It is deep, Akoúlya, I’m afraid!’

‘Come on,’ replied the other. ‘Don’t be frightened. It won’t get any deeper.’

When they got near one another, Akoúlya said:

‘Mind, Malásha, don’t splash. Walk carefully!’

She had hardly said this, when Malásha plumped down her foot so that the water splashed right on to Akoúlya’s frock. The frock was splashed, and so were Akoúlya’s eyes and nose. When she saw the stains on her frock, she was angry and ran after Malásha to strike her. Malásha was frightened, and seeing that she had got herself into trouble, she scrambled out of the puddle, and prepared to run home. Just then Akoúlya’s mother happened to be passing, and seeing that her daughter’s skirt was splashed, and her sleeves dirty, she said:

‘You naughty, dirty girl, what have you been doing?’

‘Malásha did it on purpose,’ replied the girl.

At this Akoúlya’s mother seized Malásha, and struck her on the back of her neck. Malásha began to howl so that she could be heard all down the street. Her mother came out.

‘What are you beating my girl for?’ said she; and began scolding her neighbour. One word led to another and they had an angry quarrel. The men came out and a crowd collected in the street, every one shouting and no one listening. They all went on quarrelling, till one gave another a push, and the affair had very nearly come to blows, when Akoúlya’s old grandmother, stepping in among them, tried to calm them.

‘What are you thinking of, friends? Is it right to behave so? On a day like this, too! It is a time for rejoicing, and not for such folly as this.’ They would not listen to the old woman and nearly knocked her off her feet. And she would not have been able to quiet the crowd, if it had not been for Akoúlya and Malásha themselves. While the women were abusing each other, Akoúlya had wiped the mud off her frock, and gone back to the puddle. She took a stone and began scraping away the earth in front of the puddle to make a channel through which the water could run out into the street. Presently Malásha joined her, and with a chip of wood helped her dig the channel. Just as the men were beginning to fight, the water from the little girls’ channel ran streaming into the street towards the very place where the old woman was trying to pacify the men. The girls followed it; one running each side of the little stream.

‘Catch it, Malásha! Catch it!’ shouted Akoúlya; while Malásha could not speak for laughing.

Highly delighted, and watching the chip float along on their stream, the little girls ran straight into the group of men; and the old woman, seeing them, said to the men:

‘Are you not ashamed of yourselves? To go fighting on account of these lassies, when they themselves have forgotten all about it, and are playing happily together. Dear little souls! They are wiser than you!’

The men looked at the little girls, and were ashamed, and, laughing at themselves, went back each to his own home.

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

How Much Land Does A Man Need?

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

Chapter I

An elder sister came to visit her younger sister in the country. The elder was married to a tradesman in town, the younger to a peasant in the village. As the sisters sat over their tea talking, the elder began to boast of the advantages of town life: saying how comfortably they lived there, how well they dressed, what fine clothes her children wore, what good things they ate and drank, and how she went to the theatre, promenades, and entertainments.

The younger sister was piqued, and in turn disparaged the life of a tradesman, and stood up for that of a peasant.

“I would not change my way of life for yours,” said she. “We may live roughly, but at least we are free from anxiety. You live in better style than we do, but though you often earn more than you need, you are very likely to lose all you have. You know the proverb, ‘Loss and gain are brothers twain.’ It often happens that people who are wealthy one day are begging their bread the next. Our way is safer. Though a peasant’s life is not a fat one, it is a long one. We shall never grow rich, but we shall always have enough to eat.”

The elder sister said sneeringly:

“Enough? Yes, if you like to share with the pigs and the calves! What do you know of elegance or manners! However much your good man may slave, you will die as you are living-on a dung heap-and your children the same.”

“Well, what of that?” replied the younger. “Of course our work is rough and coarse. But, on the other hand, it is sure; and we need not bow to any one. But you, in your towns, are surrounded by temptations; today all may be right, but tomorrow the Evil One may tempt your husband with cards, wine, or women, and all will go to ruin. Don’t such things happen often enough?”

Pahom, the master of the house, was lying on the top of the oven, and he listened to the women’s chatter.

“It is perfectly true,” thought he. “Busy as we are from childhood tilling Mother Earth, we peasants have no time to let any nonsense settle in our heads. Our only trouble is that we haven’t land enough. If I had plenty of land, I shouldn’t fear the Devil himself!”

The women finished their tea, chatted a while about dress, and then cleared away the tea-things and lay down to sleep.

But the Devil had been sitting behind the oven, and had heard all that was said. He was pleased that the peasant's wife had led her husband into boasting, and that he had said that if he had plenty of land he would not fear the Devil himself.

"All right," thought the Devil. "We will have a tussle. I'll give you land enough; and by means of that land I will get you into my power."

## Chapter II

Close to the village there lived a lady, a small landowner, who had an estate of about 120 desyatins. She had always lived on good terms with the peasants, until she engaged as her steward an old soldier, who took to burdening the people with fines. However careful Pahom tried to be, it happened again and again that now a horse of his got among the lady's oats, now a cow strayed into her garden, now his calves found their way into her meadows-and he always had to pay a fine.

Pahom paid, but grumbled, and, going home in a temper, was rough with his family. All through that summer Pahom had much trouble because of this steward; and he was even glad when winter came and the cattle had to be stabled. Though he grudged the fodder when they could no longer graze on the pasture-land, at least he was free from anxiety about them.

In the winter the news got about that the lady was going to sell her land, and that the keeper of the inn on the high road was bargaining for it. When the peasants heard this they were very much alarmed.

"Well," thought they, "if the innkeeper gets the land he will worry us with fines worse than the lady's steward. We all depend on that estate."

So the peasants went on behalf of their Commune, and asked the lady not to sell the land to the innkeeper; offering her a better price for it themselves. The lady agreed to let them have it. Then the peasants tried to arrange for the Commune to buy the whole estate, so that it

might be held by all in common. They met twice to discuss it, but could not settle the matter; the Evil One sowed discord among them, and they could not agree. So they decided to buy the land individually, each according to his means; and the lady agreed to this plan as she had to the other.

Presently Pahom heard that a neighbor of his was buying fifty acres, and that the lady had consented to accept one half in cash and to wait a year for the other half. Pahom felt envious.

“Look at that,” thought he, “the land is all being sold, and I shall get none of it.” So he spoke to his wife.

“Other people are buying,” said he, “and we must also buy twenty acres or so. Life is becoming impossible. That steward is simply crushing us with his fines.”

So they put their heads together and considered how they could manage to buy it. They had one hundred roubles laid by. They sold a colt, and one half of their bees; hired out one of their sons as a laborer, and took his wages in advance; borrowed the rest from a brother-in-law, and so scraped together half the purchase money.

Having done this, Pahom chose out a farm of forty acres, some of it wooded, and went to the lady to bargain for it. They came to an agreement, and he shook hands with her upon it, and paid her a deposit in advance. Then they went to town and signed the deeds; he paying half the price down, and undertaking to pay the remainder within two years.

So now Pahom had land of his own. He borrowed seed, and sowed it on the land he had bought. The harvest was a good one, and within a year he had managed to pay off his debts both to the lady and to his brother-in-law. So he became a landowner, ploughing and sowing his own land, making hay on his own land, cutting his own trees, and feeding his cattle on his own pasture. When he went out to plough his fields, or to look at his growing corn, or at his grass meadows, his heart would fill with joy. The grass that grew and the flowers that bloomed there, seemed to him unlike any that grew elsewhere. Formerly, when

he had passed by that land, it had appeared the same as any other land, but now it seemed quite different.

### Chapter III

So Pahom was well contented, and everything would have been right if the neighboring peasants would only not have trespassed on his corn-fields and meadows. He appealed to them most civilly, but they still went on: now the Communal herdsmen would let the village cows stray into his meadows; then horses from the night pasture would get among his corn. Pahom turned them out again and again, and forgave their owners, and for a long time he forbore from prosecuting any one. But at last he lost patience and complained to the District Court. He knew it was the peasants' want of land, and no evil intent on their Part, that caused the trouble; but he thought:

"I cannot go on overlooking it, or they will destroy all I have. They must be taught a lesson."

So he had them up, gave them one lesson, and then another, and two or three of the peasants were fined. After a time Pahom's neighbours began to bear him a grudge for this, and would now and then let their cattle on his land on purpose. One peasant even got into Pahom's wood at night and cut down five young lime trees for their bark. Pahom passing through the wood one day noticed something white. He came nearer, and saw the stripped trunks lying on the ground, and close by stood the stumps, where the tree had been. Pahom was furious.

"If he had only cut one here and there it would have been bad enough," thought Pahom, "but the rascal has actually cut down a whole clump. If I could only find out who did this, I would pay him out."

He racked his brains as to who it could be. Finally he decided: "It must be Simon-no one else could have done it." So he went to Simon's homestead to have a look around, but he found nothing, and only had an angry scene. However' he now felt more certain than ever that Simon had done it, and he lodged a complaint. Simon was summoned. The case was tried, and re-tried, and at the end of it all Simon was

acquitted, there being no evidence against him. Pahom felt still more aggrieved, and let his anger loose upon the Elder and the Judges.

“You let thieves grease your palms,” said he. “If you were honest folk yourselves, you would not let a thief go free.”

So Pahom quarrelled with the Judges and with his neighbors. Threats to burn his building began to be uttered. So though Pahom had more land, his place in the Commune was much worse than before.

About this time a rumor got about that many people were moving to new Parts.

“There’s no need for me to leave my land,” thought Pahom. “But some of the others might leave our village, and then there would be more room for us. I would take over their land myself, and make my estate a bit bigger. I could then live more at ease. As it is, I am still too cramped to be comfortable.”

One day Pahom was sitting at home, when a peasant passing through the village, happened to call in. He was allowed to stay the night, and supper was given him. Pahom had a talk with this peasant and asked him where he came from. The stranger answered that he came from beyond the Volga, where he had been working. One word led to another, and the man went on to say that many people were settling in those Parts. He told how some people from his village had settled there. They had joined the Commune, and had had twenty-five acres per man granted them. The land was so good, he said, that the rye sown on it grew as high as a horse, and so thick that five cuts of a sickle made a sheaf. One peasant, he said, had brought nothing with him but his bare hands, and now he had six horses and two cows of his own.

Pahom’s heart kindled with desire. He thought:

“Why should I suffer in this narrow hole, if one can live so well elsewhere? I will sell my land and my homestead here, and with the money I will start afresh over there and get everything new. In this crowded place one is always having trouble. But I must first go and find out all about it myself.”



Towards summer he got ready and started. He went down the Volga on a steamer to Samara, then walked another three hundred miles on foot, and at last reached the place. It was just as the stranger had said. The peasants had plenty of land: every man had twenty-five acres of Communal land given him for his use, and any one who had money could buy, besides, at fifty-cents an acre as much good freehold land as he wanted.

Having found out all he wished to know, Pahom returned home as autumn came on, and began selling off his belongings. He sold his land at a profit, sold his homestead and all his cattle, and withdrew from membership of the Commune. He only waited till the spring, and then started with his family for the new settlement.

#### Chapter IV

As soon as Pahom and his family arrived at their new abode, he applied for admission into the Commune of a large village. He stood treat to the Elders, and obtained the necessary documents. Five shares of Communal land were given him for his own and his sons' use: that is to say — 125 acres (not altogether, but in different fields) besides the use of the Communal pasture. Pahom put up the buildings he needed, and bought cattle. Of the Communal land alone he had three times as much as at his former home, and the land was good corn-land. He was ten times better off than he had been. He had plenty of arable land and pasturage, and could keep as many head of cattle as he liked.

At first, in the bustle of building and settling down, Pahom was pleased with it all, but when he got used to it he began to think that even here he had not enough land. The first year, he sowed wheat on his share of the Communal land, and had a good crop. He wanted to go on sowing wheat, but had not enough Communal land for the purpose, and what he had already used was not available; for in those Parts wheat is only sown on virgin soil or on fallow land. It is sown for one or two years, and then the land lies fallow till it is again overgrown with prairie grass. There were many who wanted such land, and there was not enough for all; so that people quarrelled about it.

Those who were better off, wanted it for growing wheat, and those who were poor, wanted it to let to dealers, so that they might raise money to pay their taxes. Pahom wanted to sow more wheat; so he rented land from a dealer for a year. He sowed much wheat and had a fine crop, but the land was too far from the village — the wheat had to be carted more than ten miles. After a time Pahom noticed that some peasant-dealers were living on separate farms, and were growing wealthy; and he thought:

“If I were to buy some freehold land, and have a homestead on it, it would be a different thing, altogether. Then it would all be nice and compact.”

The question of buying freehold land recurred to him again and again. He went on in the same way for three years; renting land and sowing wheat. The seasons turned out well and the crops were good, so that he began to lay money by. He might have gone on living contentedly, but he grew tired of having to rent other people’s land every year, and having to scramble for it. Wherever there was good land to be had, the peasants would rush for it and it was taken up at once, so that unless you were sharp about it you got none. It happened in the third year that he and a dealer together rented a piece of pasture land from some peasants; and they had already ploughed it up, when there was some dispute, and the peasants went to law about it, and things fell out so that the labor was all lost. “If it were my own land,” thought Pahom, “I should be independent, and there would not be all this unpleasantness.”

So Pahom began looking out for land which he could buy; and he came across a peasant who had bought thirteen hundred acres, but having got into difficulties was willing to sell again cheap. Pahom bargained and haggled with him, and at last they settled the price at 1,500 roubles, Part in cash and Part to be paid later. They had all but clinched the matter, when a passing dealer happened to stop at Pahom’s one day to get a feed for his horse. He drank tea with Pahom, and they had a talk. The dealer said that he was just returning from the land of the Bashkirs, far away, where he had bought thirteen thousand acres of

land all for 1,000 roubles. Pahom questioned him further, and the tradesman said:

“All one need do is to make friends with the chiefs. I gave away about one hundred roubles’ worth of dressing-gowns and carpets, besides a case of tea, and I gave wine to those who would drink it; and I got the land for less than five kopeks for a desyatina. And he showed Pahom the title-deeds, saying:

“The land lies near a river, and the whole prairie is virgin soil.”

Pahom plied him with questions, and the tradesman said:

“There is more land there than you could cover if you walked a year, and it all belongs to the Bashkirs. They are as simple as sheep, and land can be got almost for nothing.”

“There now,” thought Pahom, “with my one thousand roubles, why should I get only thirteen hundred acres, and saddle myself with a debt besides? If I take it out there, I can get more than ten times as much for the money.”

## Chapter V

Pahom inquired how to get to the place, and as soon as the tradesman had left him, he prepared to go there himself. He left his wife to look after the homestead, and started on his journey taking his man with him. They stopped at a town on their way, and bought a case of tea, some wine, and other presents, as the tradesman had advised. On and on they went until they had gone more than three hundred miles, and on the seventh day they came to a place where the Bashkirs had pitched their tents. It was all just as the tradesman had said. The people lived on the steppes, by a river, in kibitkas. They neither tilled the ground, nor ate bread. Their cattle and horses grazed in herds on the steppe. The colts were tethered behind the tents, and the mares were driven to them twice a day. The mares were milked, and from the milk kumiss was made. It was the women who prepared kumiss, and they also made cheese. As far as the men were concerned, drinking kumiss and tea, eating mutton, and playing on their pipes, was all they cared about. They were all stout and merry, and all the summer long they never thought of doing any work. They were quite ignorant, and knew no Russian, but were good-natured enough.

As soon as they saw Pahom, they came out of their tents and gathered round their visitor. An interpreter was found, and Pahom told them he had come about some land. The Bashkirs seemed very glad; they took Pahom and led him into one of the best tents, where they made him sit on some down cushions placed on a carpet, while they sat round him. They gave him tea and kumiss, and had a sheep killed, and gave him mutton to eat. Pahom took presents out of his cart and distributed them among the Bashkirs, and divided amongst them the tea. The Bashkirs were delighted. They talked a great deal among themselves, and then told the interpreter to translate.

“They wish to tell you,” said the interpreter, “that they like you, and that it is our custom to do all we can to please a guest and to repay him for his gifts. You have given us presents, now tell us which of the things we possess please you best, that we may present them to you.”

“What pleases me best here,” answered Pahom, “is your land. Our land is crowded, and the soil is exhausted; but you have plenty of land and it is good land. I never saw the like of it.”

The interpreter translated. The Bashkirs talked among themselves for a while. Pahom could not understand what they were saying, but saw that they were much amused, and that they shouted and laughed. Then they were silent and looked at Pahom while the interpreter said:

“They wish me to tell you that in return for your presents they will gladly give you as much land as you want. You have only to point it out with your hand and it is yours.”

The Bashkirs talked again for a while and began to dispute. Pahom asked what they were disputing about, and the interpreter told him that some of them thought they ought to ask their Chief about the land and not act in his absence, while others thought there was no need to wait for his return.

## Chapter VI

While the Bashkirs were disputing, a man in a large fox-fur cap appeared on the scene. They all became silent and rose to their feet. The interpreter said, "This is our Chief himself."

Pahom immediately fetched the best dressing-gown and five pounds of tea, and offered these to the Chief. The Chief accepted them, and seated himself in the place of honour. The Bashkirs at once began telling him something. The Chief listened for a while, then made a sign with his head for them to be silent, and addressing himself to Pahom, said in Russian:

"Well, let it be so. Choose whatever piece of land you like; we have plenty of it."

"How can I take as much as I like?" thought Pahom. "I must get a deed to make it secure, or else they may say, 'It is yours,' and afterwards may take it away again."

"Thank you for your kind words," he said aloud. "You have much land, and I only want a little. But I should like to be sure which bit is mine. Could it not be measured and made over to me? Life and death are in God's hands. You good people give it to me, but your children might wish to take it away again."

"You are quite right," said the Chief. "We will make it over to you."

"I heard that a dealer had been here," continued Pahom, "and that you gave him a little land, too, and signed title-deeds to that effect. I should like to have it done in the same way."

The Chief understood.

"Yes," replied he, "that can be done quite easily. We have a scribe, and we will go to town with you and have the deed properly sealed."

"And what will be the price?" asked Pahom.

"Our price is always the same: one thousand roubles a day."

Pahom did not understand.

"A day? What measure is that? How many acres would that be?"

"We do not know how to reckon it out," said the Chief. "We sell it by the day. As much as you can go round on your feet in a day is yours, and the price is one thousand roubles a day."

Pahom was surprised.

“But in a day you can get round a large tract of land,” he said.  
The Chief laughed.

“It will all be yours!” said he. “But there is one condition: If you don’t return on the same day to the spot whence you started, your money is lost.”

“But how am I to mark the way that I have gone?”

“Why, we shall go to any spot you like, and stay there. You must start from that spot and make your round, taking a spade with you. Wherever you think necessary, make a mark. At every turning, dig a hole and pile up the turf; then afterwards we will go round with a plough from hole to hole. You may make as large a circuit as you please, but before the sun sets you must return to the place you started from. All the land you cover will be yours.”

Pahom was delighted. It was decided to start early next morning. They talked a while, and after drinking some more kumiss and eating some more mutton, they had tea again, and then the night came on. They gave Pahom a feather-bed to sleep on, and the Bashkirs dispersed for the night, promising to assemble the next morning at daybreak and ride out before sunrise to the appointed spot.

## Chapter VII

Pahom lay on the feather-bed, but could not sleep. He kept thinking about the land.

“What a large tract I will mark off!” thought he. “I can easily go thirty-five miles in a day. The days are long now, and within a circuit of thirty-five miles what a lot of land there will be! I will sell the poorer land, or let it to peasants, but I’ll pick out the best and farm it. I will buy two ox-teams, and hire two more laborers. About a hundred and fifty acres shall be plough-land, and I will pasture cattle on the rest.”

Pahom lay awake all night, and dozed off only just before dawn. Hardly were his eyes closed when he had a dream. He thought he was lying in that same tent, and heard somebody chuckling outside. He wondered

who it could be, and rose and went out, and he saw the Bashkir Chief sitting in front of the tent holding his side and rolling about with laughter. Going nearer to the Chief, Pahom asked: "What are you laughing at?" But he saw that it was no longer the Chief, but the dealer who had recently stopped at his house and had told him about the land. Just as Pahom was going to ask, "Have you been here long?" he saw that it was not the dealer, but the peasant who had come up from the Volga, long ago, to Pahom's old home. Then he saw that it was not the peasant either, but the Devil himself with hoofs and horns, sitting there and chuckling, and before him lay a man barefoot, prostrate on the ground, with only trousers and a shirt on. And Pahom dreamt that he looked more attentively to see what sort of a man it was lying there, and he saw that the man was dead, and that it was himself! He awoke horror-struck.

"What things one does dream," thought he.

Looking round he saw through the open door that the dawn was breaking.

"It's time to wake them up," thought he. "We ought to be starting." He got up, roused his man (who was sleeping in his cart), bade him harness; and went to call the Bashkirs.

"It's time to go to the steppe to measure the land," he said.

The Bashkirs rose and assembled, and the Chief came, too. Then they began drinking kumiss again, and offered Pahom some tea, but he would not wait.

"If we are to go, let us go. It is high time," said he.

## Chapter VIII

The Bashkirs got ready and they all started: some mounted on horses, and some in carts. Pahom drove in his own small cart with his servant, and took a spade with him. When they reached the steppe, the morning red was beginning to kindle. They ascended a hillock (called by the Bashkirs a shikhan) and dismounting from their carts and their horses, gathered in one spot. The Chief came up to Pahom and stretched out his arm towards the plain:

“See,” said he, “all this, as far as your eye can reach, is ours. You may have any Part of it you like.”

Pahom’s eyes glistened: it was all virgin soil, as flat as the palm of your hand, as black as the seed of a poppy, and in the hollows different kinds of grasses grew breast high.

The Chief took off his fox-fur cap, placed it on the ground and said: “This will be the mark. Start from here, and return here again. All the land you go round shall be yours.”

Pahom took out his money and put it on the cap. Then he took off his outer coat, remaining in his sleeveless under coat. He unfastened his girdle and tied it tight below his stomach, put a little bag of bread into the breast of his coat, and tying a flask of water to his girdle, he drew up the tops of his boots, took the spade from his man, and stood ready to start. He considered for some moments which way he had better go — it was tempting everywhere.

“No matter,” he concluded, “I will go towards the rising sun.”

He turned his face to the east, stretched himself, and waited for the sun to appear above the rim.

“I must lose no time,” he thought, “and it is easier walking while it is still cool.”

The sun’s rays had hardly flashed above the horizon, before Pahom, carrying the spade over his shoulder, went down into the steppe.

Pahom started walking neither slowly nor quickly. After having gone a thousand yards he stopped, dug a hole and placed pieces of turf one on another to make it more visible. Then he went on; and now that he had walked off his stiffness he quickened his pace. After a while he dug another hole.

Pahom looked back. The hillock could be distinctly seen in the sunlight, with the people on it, and the glittering tires of the cartwheels. At a rough guess Pahom concluded that he had walked three miles. It was growing warmer; he took off his under-coat, flung it across his shoulder, and went on again. It had grown quite warm now; he looked at the sun, it was time to think of breakfast.



“The first shift is done, but there are four in a day, and it is too soon yet to turn. But I will just take off my boots,” said he to himself.

He sat down, took off his boots, stuck them into his girdle, and went on. It was easy walking now.

“I will go on for another three miles,” thought he, “and then turn to the left. The spot is so fine, that it would be a pity to lose it. The further one goes, the better the land seems.”

He went straight on a for a while, and when he looked round, the hillock was scarcely visible and the people on it looked like black ants, and he could just see something glistening there in the sun.

“Ah,” thought Pahom, “I have gone far enough in this direction, it is time to turn. Besides I am in a regular sweat, and very thirsty.”

He stopped, dug a large hole, and heaped up pieces of turf. Next he untied his flask, had a drink, and then turned sharply to the left. He went on and on; the grass was high, and it was very hot.

Pahom began to grow tired: he looked at the sun and saw that it was noon.

“Well,” he thought, “I must have a rest.”

He sat down, and ate some bread and drank some water; but he did not lie down, thinking that if he did he might fall asleep. After sitting a little while, he went on again. At first he walked easily: the food had strengthened him; but it had become terribly hot, and he felt sleepy; still he went on, thinking: “An hour to suffer, a life-time to live.”

He went a long way in this direction also, and was about to turn to the left again, when he perceived a damp hollow: “It would be a pity to leave that out,” he thought. “Flax would do well there.” So he went on past the hollow, and dug a hole on the other side of it before he turned the corner. Pahom looked towards the hillock. The heat made the air hazy: it seemed to be quivering, and through the haze the people on the hillock could scarcely be seen.

“Ah!” thought Pahom, “I have made the sides too long; I must make this one shorter.” And he went along the third side, stepping faster. He looked at the sun: it was nearly half way to the horizon, and he had not

yet done two miles of the third side of the square. He was still ten miles from the goal.

“No,” he thought, “though it will make my land lopsided, I must hurry back in a straight line now. I might go too far, and as it is I have a great deal of land.”

So Pahom hurriedly dug a hole, and turned straight towards the hillock.

## Chapter IX

Pahom went straight towards the hillock, but he now walked with difficulty. He was done up with the heat, his bare feet were cut and bruised, and his legs began to fail. He longed to rest, but it was impossible if he meant to get back before sunset. The sun waits for no man, and it was sinking lower and lower.

“Oh dear,” he thought, “if only I have not blundered trying for too much! What if I am too late?”

He looked towards the hillock and at the sun. He was still far from his goal, and the sun was already near the rim. Pahom walked on and on; it was very hard walking, but he went quicker and quicker. He pressed on, but was still far from the place. He began running, threw away his coat, his boots, his flask, and his cap, and kept only the spade which he used as a support.

“What shall I do,” he thought again, “I have grasped too much, and ruined the whole affair. I can’t get there before the sun sets.”

And this fear made him still more breathless. Pahom went on running, his soaking shirt and trousers stuck to him, and his mouth was parched. His breast was working like a blacksmith’s bellows, his heart was beating like a hammer, and his legs were giving way as if they did not belong to him. Pahom was seized with terror lest he should die of the strain.

Though afraid of death, he could not stop. “After having run all that way they will call me a fool if I stop now,” thought he. And he ran on and on, and drew near and heard the Bashkirs yelling and shouting to

him, and their cries inflamed his heart still more. He gathered his last strength and ran on.

The sun was close to the rim, and cloaked in mist looked large, and red as blood. Now, yes now, it was about to set! The sun was quite low, but he was also quite near his aim. Pahom could already see the people on the hillock waving their arms to hurry him up. He could see the fox-fur cap on the ground, and the money on it, and the Chief sitting on the ground holding his sides. And Pahom remembered his dream.

“There is plenty of land,” thought he, “but will God let me live on it? I have lost my life, I have lost my life! I shall never reach that spot!”

Pahom looked at the sun, which had reached the earth: one side of it had already disappeared. With all his remaining strength he rushed on, bending his body forward so that his legs could hardly follow fast enough to keep him from falling. Just as he reached the hillock it suddenly grew dark. He looked up — the sun had already set. He gave a cry: “All my labor has been in vain,” thought he, and was about to stop, but he heard the Bashkirs still shouting, and remembered that though to him, from below, the sun seemed to have set, they on the hillock could still see it. He took a long breath and ran up the hillock. It was still light there. He reached the top and saw the cap. Before it sat the Chief laughing and holding his sides. Again Pahom remembered his dream, and he uttered a cry: his legs gave way beneath him, he fell forward and reached the cap with his hands.

“Ah, what a fine fellow!” exclaimed the Chief. “He has gained much land!”

Pahom’s servant came running up and tried to raise him, but he saw that blood was flowing from his mouth. Pahom was dead!

The Bashkirs clicked their tongues to show their pity.

His servant picked up the spade and dug a grave long enough for Pahom to lie in, and buried him in it. Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed.

## Ivan The Fool

### Chapter I

ONCE UPON A time, in a certain province of a certain country, there lived a rich peasant, who had three sons: Simon the Soldier, Taras the Stout, and Ivan the Fool, besides an unmarried daughter, Martha, who was deaf and dumb. Simon the Soldier went to the wars to serve the king; Taras the Stout went to a merchant's in town to trade, and Ivan the Fool stayed at home with the lass, to till the ground till his back bent.

For his valiant service in the army, Simeon received an estate with high rank, and married a noble's daughter. Besides his large pay, he was in receipt of a handsome income from his estate; yet he was unable to make ends meet. What the husband saved, the wife wasted in extravagance. One day Simeon went to the estate to collect his income, when the steward informed him that there was no income, saying: "We have neither horses, cows, fishing-nets, nor implements; it is necessary first to buy everything, and then to look for income."

Simeon thereupon went to his father and said:

"You are rich, batiushka little father, but you have given nothing to me. Give me one-third of what you possess as my share, and I will transfer it to my estate."

The old man replied: "You did not help to bring prosperity to our household. For what reason, then, should you now demand the third Part of everything? It would be unjust to Ivan and his sister."

"Yes," said Simeon; "but he is a fool, and she was born dumb. What need have they of anything?"

"See what Ivan will say."

Ivan's reply was: "Well, let him take his share."

Simeon took the portion allotted to him, and went again to serve in the army.

Tarras also met with success. He became rich and married a merchant's daughter, but even this failed to satisfy his desires, and he also went to his father and said, "Give me my share."

The old man, however, refused to comply with his request, saying: "You had no hand in the accumulation of our property, and what our household contains is the result of Ivan's hard work. It would be unjust," he repeated, "to Ivan and his sister."

Tarras replied: "But he does not need it. He is a fool, and cannot marry, for no one will have him; and sister does not require anything, for she was born dumb." Turning then to Ivan he continued: "Give me half the grain you have, and I will not touch the implements or fishing-nets; and from the cattle I will take only the dark mare, as she is not fit to plow."

Ivan laughed and said: "Well, I will go and arrange matters so that Tarras may have his share," whereupon Tarras took the brown mare with the grain to town, leaving Ivan with one old horse to work on as before and support his father, mother, and sister.

## Chapter II

It was disappointing to the Stary Tchert (Old Devil) that the brothers did not quarrel over the division of the property, and that they separated peacefully; and he cried out, calling his three small devils (Tchertionki).

"See here," said he, "there are living three brothers — Simeon the soldier, Tarras-Briukhan, and Ivan the Fool. It is necessary that they should quarrel. Now they live peacefully, and enjoy each other's hospitality. The Fool spoiled all my plans. Now you three go and work with them in such a manner that they will be ready to tear each other's eyes out. Can you do this?"

"We can," they replied.

"How will you accomplish it?"

"In this way: We will first ruin them to such an extent that they will have nothing to eat, and we will then gather them together in one place where we are sure that they will fight."

“Very well; I see you understand your business. Go, and do not return to me until you have created a feud between the three brothers — or I will skin you alive.”

The three small devils went to a swamp to consult as to the best means of accomplishing their mission. They disputed for a long time — each one wanting the easiest Part of the work — and not being able to agree, concluded to draw lots; by which it was decided that the one who was first finished had to come and help the others. This agreement being entered into, they appointed a time when they were again to meet in the swamp — to find out who was through and who needed assistance.

The time having arrived, the young devils met in the swamp as agreed, when each related his experience. The first, who went to Simeon, said: “I have succeeded in my undertaking, and to-morrow Simeon returns to his father.”

His comrades, eager for Particulars, inquired how he had done it.

“Well,” he began, “the first thing I did was to blow some courage into his veins, and, on the strength of it, Simeon went to the Czar and offered to conquer the whole world for him. The Emperor made him commander-in-chief of the forces, and sent him with an army to fight the Viceroy of India. Having started on their mission of conquest, they were unaware that I, following in their wake, had wet all their powder. I also went to the Indian ruler and showed him how I could create numberless soldiers from straw.

Simeon’s army, seeing that they were surrounded by such a vast number of Indian warriors of my creation, became frightened, and Simeon commanded to fire from cannons and rifles, which of course they were unable to do. The soldiers, discouraged, retreated in great disorder. Thus Simeon brought upon himself the terrible disgrace of defeat. His estate was confiscated, and to-morrow he is to be executed. All that remains for me to do, therefore,” concluded the young devil, “is to release him to-morrow morning. Now, then, who wants my assistance?”

The second small devil (from Tarras) then related his story.

“I do not need any help,” he began. “My business is also all right. My work with Tarras will be finished in one week. In the first place I made him grow thin. He afterward became so covetous that he wanted to possess everything he saw, and he spent all the money he had in the purchase of immense quantities of goods. When his capital was gone he still continued to buy with borrowed money, and has become involved in such difficulties that he cannot free himself. At the end of one week the date for the payment of his notes will have expired, and, his goods being seized upon, he will become a bankrupt; and he also will return to his father.”

At the conclusion of this narrative they inquired of the third devil how things had fared between him and Ivan.

“Well,” said he, “my report is not so encouraging. The first thing I did was to spit into his jug of quass a sour drink made from rye, which made him sick at his stomach. He afterward went to plow his summer-fallow, but I made the soil so hard that the plow could scarcely penetrate it. I thought the Fool would not succeed, but he started to work nevertheless. Moaning with pain, he still continued to labor. I broke one plow, but he replaced it with another, fixing it securely, and resumed work. Going beneath the surface of the ground I took hold of the plowshares, but did not succeed in stopping Ivan. He pressed so hard, and the colter was so sharp, that my hands were cut; and despite my utmost efforts, he went over all but a small portion of the field.”

He concluded with: “Come, brothers, and help me, for if we do not conquer him our whole enterprise will be a failure. If the Fool is permitted successfully to conduct his farming, they will have no need, for he will support his brothers.”

### Chapter III

Ivan having succeeded in plowing all but a small portion of his land, he returned the next day to finish it. The pain in his stomach continued, but he felt that he must go on with his work. He tried to start his plow, but it would not move; it seemed to have struck a hard root. It was the

small devil in the ground who had wound his feet around the plowshares and held them.

“This is strange,” thought Ivan. “There were never any roots here before, and this is surely one.”

Ivan put his hand in the ground, and, feeling something soft, grasped and pulled it out. It was like a root in appearance, but seemed to possess life. Holding it up he saw that it was a little devil. Disgusted, he exclaimed, “See the nasty thing,” and he proceeded to strike it a blow, intending to kill it, when the young devil cried out:

“Do not kill me, and I will grant your every wish.”

“What can you do for me?”

“Tell me what it is you most wish for,” the little devil replied.

Ivan, peasant-fashion, scratched the back of his head as he thought, and finally he said:

“I am dreadfully sick at my stomach. Can you cure me?”

“I can,” the little devil said.

“Then do so.”

The little devil bent toward the earth and began searching for roots, and when he found them he gave them to Ivan, saying: “If you will swallow some of these you will be immediately cured of whatsoever disease you are afflicted with.”

Ivan did as directed, and obtained instant relief.

“I beg of you to let me go now,” the little devil pleaded; “I will pass into the earth, never to return.”

“Very well; you may go, and God bless you;” and as Ivan pronounced the name of God, the small devil disappeared into the earth like a flash, and only a slight opening in the ground remained.

Ivan placed in his hat what roots he had left, and proceeded to plow. Soon finishing his work, he turned his plow over and returned home. When he reached the house he found his brother Simeon and his wife seated at the supper-table. His estate had been confiscated, and he himself had barely escaped execution by making his way out of prison,



and having nothing to live upon had come back to his father for support.

Turning to Ivan he said: "I came to ask you to care for us until I can find something to do."

"Very well," Ivan replied; "you may remain with us."

Just as Ivan was about to sit down to the table Simeon's wife made a wry face, indicating that she did not like the smell of Ivan's sheep-skin coat; and turning to her husband she said, "I shall not sit at the table with a moujik peasant who smells like that."

Simeon the soldier turned to his brother and said: "My lady objects to the smell of your clothes. You may eat in the porch."

Ivan said: "Very well, it is all the same to me. I will soon have to go and feed my horse any way."

Ivan took some bread in one hand, and his kaftan (coat) in the other, and left the room.

#### Chapter IV

The small devil finished with Simeon that night, and according to agreement went to the assistance of his comrade who had charge of Ivan, that he might help to conquer the Fool. He went to the field and searched everywhere, but could find nothing but the hole through which the small devil had disappeared.

"Well, this is strange," he said; "something must have happened to my companion, and I will have to take his place and continue the work he began. The Fool is through with his plowing, so I must look about me for some other means of compassing his destruction. I must overflow his meadow and prevent him from cutting the grass."

The little devil accordingly overflowed the meadow with muddy water, and, when Ivan went at dawn next morning with his scythe set and sharpened and tried to mow the grass, he found that it resisted all his efforts and would not yield to the implement as usual.

Many times Ivan tried to cut the grass, but always without success. At last, becoming weary of the effort, he decided to return home and have

his scythe again sharpened, and also to procure a quantity of bread, saying: "I will come back here and will not leave until I have mown all the meadow, even if it should take a whole week."

Hearing this, the little devil became thoughtful, saying: "That Ivan is a koolak hard case, and I must think of some other way of conquering him."

Ivan soon returned with his sharpened scythe and started to mow.

The small devil hid himself in the grass, and as the point of the scythe came down he buried it in the earth and made it almost impossible for Ivan to move the implement. He, however, succeeded in mowing all but one small spot in the swamp, where again the small devil hid himself, saying: "Even if he should cut my hands I will prevent him from accomplishing his work."

When Ivan came to the swamp he found that the grass was not very thick. Still, the scythe would not work, which made him so angry that he worked with all his might, and one blow more powerful than the others cut off a portion of the small devil's tail, who had hidden himself there.

Despite the little devil's efforts he succeeded in finishing his work, when he returned home and ordered his sister to gather up the grass while he went to another field to cut rye. But the devil preceded him there, and fixed the rye in such a manner that it was almost impossible for Ivan to cut it; however, after continuous hard labor he succeeded, and when he was through with the rye he said to himself: "Now I will start to mow oats."

On hearing this, the little devil thought to himself: "I could not prevent him from mowing the rye, but I will surely stop him from mowing the oats when the morning comes."

Early next day, when the devil came to the field, he found that the oats had been already mowed. Ivan did it during the night, so as to avoid the loss that might have resulted from the grain being too ripe and dry.

Seeing that Ivan again had escaped him, the little devil became greatly enraged, saying:

“He cut me all over and made me tired, that fool. I did not meet such misfortune even on the battle-field. He does not even sleep;” and the devil began to swear. “I cannot follow him,” he continued. “I will go now to the heaps and make everything rotten.”

Accordingly he went to a heap of the new-mown grain and began his fiendish work. After wetting it he built a fire and warmed himself, and soon was fast asleep.

Ivan harnessed his horse, and, with his sister, went to bring the rye home from the field.

After lifting a couple of sheaves from the first heap his pitchfork came into contact with the little devil’s back, which caused the latter to howl with pain and to jump around in every direction. Ivan exclaimed:

“See here! What nastiness! You again here?”

“I am another one!” said the little devil. “That was my brother. I am the one who was sent to your brother Simeon.”

“Well,” said Ivan, “it matters not who you are. I will fix you all the same.”

As Ivan was about to strike the first blow the devil pleaded: “Let me go and I will do you no more harm. I will do whatever you wish.”

“What can you do for me?” asked Ivan.

“I can make soldiers from almost anything.”

“And what will they be good for?”

“Oh, they will do everything for you!”

“Can they sing?”

“They can.”

“Well, make them.”

“Take a bunch of straw and scatter it on the ground, and see if each straw will not turn into a soldier.”

Ivan shook the straws on the ground, and, as he expected, each straw turned into a soldier, and they began marching with a band at their head.

“Ishty look you, that was well done! How it will delight the village maidens!” he exclaimed.

The small devil now said: "Let me go; you do not need me any longer." But Ivan said: "No, I will not let you go just yet. You have converted the straw into soldiers, and now I want you to turn them again into straw, as I cannot afford to lose it, but I want it with the grain on."

The devil replied: "Say: 'So many soldiers, so much straw.'"

Ivan did as directed, and got back his rye with the straw.

The small devil again begged for his release.

Ivan, taking him from the pitchfork, said: "With God's blessing you may dePart"; and, as before at the mention of God's name, the little devil was hurled into the earth like a flash, and nothing was left but the hole to show where he had gone.

Soon afterward Ivan returned home, to find his brother Tarras and his wife there. Tarras-Briukhan could not pay his debts, and was forced to flee from his creditors and seek refuge under his father's roof. Seeing Ivan, he said: "Well, Ivan, may we remain here until I start in some new business?"

Ivan replied as he had before to Simeon: "Yes, you are perfectly welcome to remain here as long as it suits you."

With that announcement he removed his coat and seated himself at the supper-table with the others. But Tarras-Briukhan's wife objected to the smell of his clothes, saying: "I cannot eat with a fool; neither can I stand the smell."

Then Tarras-Briukhan said: "Ivan, from your clothes there comes a bad smell; go and eat by yourself in the porch."

"Very well," said Ivan; and he took some bread and went out as ordered, saying, "It is time for me to feed my mare."

## Chapter V

The small devil who had charge of Tarras finished with him that night, and according to agreement proceeded to the assistance of the other two to help them conquer Ivan. Arriving at the plowed field he looked around for his comrades, but found only the hole through which one

had disappeared; and on going to the meadow he discovered the severed tail of the other, and in the rye-field he found yet another hole.

“Well,” he thought, “it is quite clear that my comrades have met with some great misfortune, and that I will have to take their places and arrange the feud between the brothers.”

The small devil then went in search of Ivan. But he, having finished with the field, was nowhere to be found. He had gone to the forest to cut logs to build homes for his brothers, as they found it inconvenient for so many to live under the same roof.

The small devil at last discovered his whereabouts, and going to the forest climbed into the branches of the trees and began to interfere with Ivan’s work. Ivan cut down a tree, which failed, however, to fall to the ground, becoming entangled in the branches of other trees; yet he succeeded in getting it down after a hard struggle. In chopping down the next tree he met with the same difficulties, and also with the third. Ivan had supposed he could cut down fifty trees in a day, but he succeeded in chopping but ten before darkness put an end to his labors for a time. He was now exhausted, and, perspiring profusely, he sat down alone in the woods to rest. He soon after resumed his work, cutting down one more tree; but the effort gave him a pain in his back, and he was obliged to rest again. Seeing this, the small devil was full of joy.

“Well,” he thought, “now he is exhausted and will stop work, and I will rest also.” He then seated himself on some branches and rejoiced. Ivan again arose, however, and, taking his axe, gave the tree a terrific blow from the opposite side, which felled it instantly to the ground, carrying the little devil with it; and Ivan, proceeding to cut the branches, found the devil alive. Very much astonished, Ivan exclaimed: “Look you! Such nastiness! Are you again here?”

“I am another one,” replied the devil. “I was with your brother Tarras.” “Well,” said Ivan, “that makes no difference; I will fix you.” And he was about to strike him a blow with the axe when the devil pleaded: “Do not kill me, and whatever you wish you shall have.”

Ivan asked, "What can you do?"

"I can make for you all the money you wish."

Ivan then told the devil he might proceed, whereupon the latter began to explain to him how he might become rich.

"Take," said he to Ivan, "the leaves of this oak tree and rub them in your hands, and the gold will fall to the ground."

Ivan did as he was directed, and immediately the gold began to drop about his feet; and he remarked:

"This will be a fine trick to amuse the village boys with."

"Can I now take my deParture?" asked the devil, to which Ivan replied, "With God's blessing you may go."

At the mention of the name of God, the devil disappeared into the earth.

## Chapter VI

The brothers, having finished their houses, moved into them and lived aPart from their father and brother. Ivan, when he had completed his plowing, made a great feast, to which he invited his brothers, telling them that he had plenty of beer for them to drink. The brothers, however, declined Ivan's hospitality, saying, "We have seen the beer moujiks drink, and want none of it."

Ivan then gathered around him all the peasants in the village and with them drank beer until he became intoxicated, when he joined the Khorovody (a street gathering of the village boys and girls, who sing songs), and told them they must sing his praises, saying that in return he would show them such sights as they had never before seen in their lives. The little girls laughed and began to sing songs praising Ivan, and when they had finished they said: "Very well; now give us what you said you would."

Ivan replied, "I will soon show you," and, taking an empty bag in his hand, he started for the woods. The little girls laughed as they said, "What a fool he is!" and resuming their play they forgot all about him.

Some time after Ivan suddenly appeared among them carrying in his hand the bag, which was now filled.

“Shall I divide this with you?” he said.

“Yes; divide!” they sang in chorus.

So Ivan put his hand into the bag and drew it out full of gold coins, which he scattered among them.

“Batiushka,” they cried as they ran to gather up the precious pieces.

The moujiks then appeared on the scene and began to fight among themselves for the possession of the yellow objects. In the melee one old woman was nearly crushed to death.

Ivan laughed and was greatly amused at the sight of so many persons quarrelling over a few pieces of gold.

“Oh! you duratchki” (little fools), he said, “why did you almost crush the life out of the old grandmother? Be more gentle. I have plenty more, and I will give them to you;” whereupon he began throwing about more of the coins.

The people gathered around him, and Ivan continued throwing until he emptied his bag. They clamored for more, but Ivan replied: “The gold is all gone. Another time I will give you more. Now we will resume our singing and dancing.”

The little children sang, but Ivan said to them, “Your songs are no good.”

The children said, “Then show us how to sing better.”

To this Ivan replied, “I will show you people who can sing better than you.” With that remark Ivan went to the barn and, securing a bundle of straw, did as the little devil had directed him; and presently a regiment of soldiers appeared in the village street, and he ordered them to sing and dance.

The people were astonished and could not understand how Ivan had produced the strangers.

The soldiers sang for some time, to the great delight of the villagers; and when Ivan commanded them to stop they instantly ceased.

Ivan then ordered them off to the barn, telling the astonished and mystified moujiks that they must not follow him. Reaching the barn, he turned the soldiers again into straw and went home to sleep off the effects of his debauch.

## Chapter VII

The next morning Ivan's exploits were the talk of the village, and news of the wonderful things he had done reached the ears of his brother Simeon, who immediately went to Ivan to learn all about it.

"Explain to me," he said; "from whence did you bring the soldiers, and where did you take them?"

"And what do you wish to know for?" asked Ivan.

"Why, with soldiers we can do almost anything we wish — whole kingdoms can be conquered," replied Simeon.

This information greatly surprised Ivan, who said: "Well, why did you not tell me about this before? I can make as many as you want."

Ivan then took his brother to the barn, but he said: "While I am willing to create the soldiers, you must take them away from here; for if it should become necessary to feed them, all the food in the village would last them only one day."

Simeon promised to do as Ivan wished, whereupon Ivan proceeded to convert the straw into soldiers. Out of one bundle of straw he made an entire regiment; in fact, so many soldiers appeared as if by magic that there was not a vacant spot in the field.

Turning to Simeon Ivan said, "Well, is there a sufficient number?"

Beaming with joy, Simeon replied: "Enough! enough! Thank you, Ivan!"

"Glad you are satisfied," said Ivan, "and if you wish more I will make them for you. I have plenty of straw now."

Simeon divided his soldiers into battalions and regiments, and after having drilled them he went forth to fight and to conquer.

Simeon had just gotten safely out of the village with his soldiers when Tarras, the other brother, appeared before Ivan — he also having heard



of the previous day's performance and wanting to learn the secret of his power. He sought Ivan, saying: "Tell me the secret of your supply of gold, for if I had plenty of money I could with its assistance gather in all the wealth in the world."

Ivan was greatly surprised on hearing this statement, and said: "You might have told me this before, for I can obtain for you as much money as you wish."

Tarras was delighted, and he said, "You might get me about three bushels."

"Well," said Ivan, "we will go to the woods, or, better still, we will harness the horse, as we could not possibly carry so much money ourselves."

The brothers went to the woods and Ivan proceeded to gather the oak leaves, which he rubbed between his hands, the dust falling to the ground and turning into gold pieces as quickly as it fell.

When quite a pile had accumulated Ivan turned to Tarras and asked if he had rubbed enough leaves into money, whereupon Tarras replied: "Thank you, Ivan; that will be sufficient for this time."

Ivan then said: "If you wish more, come to me and I will rub as much as you want, for there are plenty of leaves."

Tarras, with his tarantas (wagon) filled with gold, rode away to the city to engage in trade and increase his wealth; and thus both brothers went their way, Simeon to fight and Tarras to trade.

Simeon's soldiers conquered a kingdom for him and Tarras-Briukhan made plenty of money.

Some time afterward the two brothers met and confessed to each other the source from whence sprang their prosperity, but they were not yet satisfied.

Simeon said: "I have conquered a kingdom and enjoy a very pleasant life, but I have not sufficient money to procure food for my soldiers;" while Tarras confessed that he was the possessor of enormous wealth, but the care of it caused him much uneasiness.

“Let us go again to our brother,” said Simeon; “I will order him to make more soldiers and will give them to you, and you may then tell him that he must make more money so that we can buy food for them.”

They went again to Ivan, and Simeon said: “I have not sufficient soldiers; I want you to make me at least two divisions more.” But Ivan shook his head as he said: “I will not create soldiers for nothing; you must pay me for doing it.”

“Well, but you promised,” said Simeon.

“I know I did,” replied Ivan; “but I have changed my mind since that time.”

“But, fool, why will you not do as you promised?”

“For the reason that your soldiers kill men, and I will not make any more for such a cruel purpose.” With this reply Ivan remained stubborn and would not create any more soldiers.

Tarras-Briukhan next approached Ivan and ordered him to make more money; but, as in the case of Tarras, Ivan only shook his head, as he said: “I will not make you any money unless you pay me for doing it. I cannot work without pay.”

Tarras then reminded him of his promise.

“I know I promised,” replied Ivan; “but still I must refuse to do as you wish.”

“But why, fool, will you not fulfill your promise?” asked Tarras.

“For the reason that your gold was the means of depriving Mikhailovna of her cow.”

“But how did that happen?” inquired Tarras.

“It happened in this way,” said Ivan. “Mikhailovna always kept a cow, and her children had plenty of milk to drink; but some time ago one of her boys came to me to beg for some milk, and I asked, ‘Where is your cow?’ when he replied, ‘A clerk of Tarras-Briukhan came to our home and offered three gold pieces for her. Our mother could not resist the temptation, and now we have no milk to drink. I gave you the gold pieces for your pleasure, and you put them to such poor use that I will not give you any more.’”

The brothers, on hearing this, took their departure to discuss as to the best plan to pursue in regard to a settlement of their troubles.

Simeon said: "Let us arrange it in this way: I will give you the half of my kingdom, and soldiers to keep guard over your wealth; and you give me money to feed the soldiers in my half of the kingdom."

To this arrangement Tarras agreed, and both the brothers became rulers and very happy.

## Chapter VIII

Ivan remained on the farm and worked to support his father, mother, and dumb sister. Once it happened that the old dog, which had grown up on the farm, was taken sick, when Ivan thought he was dying, and, taking pity on the animal, placed some bread in his hat and carried it to him. It happened that when he turned out the bread the root which the little devil had given him fell out also. The old dog swallowed it with the bread and was almost instantly cured, when he jumped up and began to wag his tail as an expression of joy. Ivan's father and mother, seeing the dog cured so quickly, asked by what means he had performed such a miracle.

Ivan replied: "I had some roots which would cure any disease, and the dog swallowed one of them."

It happened about that time that the Czar's daughter became ill, and her father had it announced in every city, town, and village that whosoever would cure her would be richly rewarded; and if the lucky person should prove to be a single man he would give her in marriage to him.

This announcement, of course, appeared in Ivan's village.

Ivan's father and mother called him and said: "If you have any of those wonderful roots, go and cure the Czar's daughter. You will be much happier for having performed such a kind act — indeed, you will be made happy for all your after life."

"Very well," said Ivan; and he immediately made ready for the journey. As he reached the porch on his way out he saw a poor woman standing

directly in his path and holding a broken arm. The woman accosted him, saying:

“I was told that you could cure me, and will you not please do so, as I am powerless to do anything for myself?”

Ivan replied: “Very well, my poor woman; I will relieve you if I can.”

He produced a root which he handed to the poor woman and told her to swallow it.

She did as Ivan told her and was instantly cured, and went away rejoicing that she had recovered the use of her arm.

Ivan’s father and mother came out to wish him good luck on his journey, and to them he told the story of the poor woman, saying that he had given her his last root. On hearing this his parents were much distressed, as they now believed him to be without the means of curing the Czar’s daughter, and began to scold him.

“You had pity for a beggar and gave no thought to the Czar’s daughter,” they said.

“I have pity for the Czar’s daughter also,” replied Ivan, after which he harnessed his horse to his wagon and took his seat ready for his departure; whereupon his parents said: “Where are you going, you fool — to cure the Czar’s daughter, and without anything to do it with?”

“Very well,” replied Ivan, as he drove away.

In due time he arrived at the palace, and the moment he appeared on the balcony the Czar’s daughter was cured. The Czar was overjoyed and ordered Ivan to be brought into his presence. He dressed him in the richest robes and addressed him as his son-in-law. Ivan was married to the Czarevna, and, the Czar dying soon after, Ivan became ruler. Thus the three brothers became rulers in different kingdoms.

## Chapter IX

The brothers lived and reigned. Simeon, the eldest brother, with his straw soldiers took captive the genuine soldiers and trained all alike. He was feared by every one.

Tarras-Briukhan, the other brother, did not squander the gold he obtained from Ivan, but instead greatly increased his wealth, and at the same time lived well. He kept his money in large trunks, and, while having more than he knew what to do with, still continued to collect money from his subjects. The people had to work for the money to pay the taxes which Tarras levied on them, and life was made burdensome to them.

Ivan the Fool did not enjoy his wealth and power to the same extent as did his brothers. As soon as his father-in-law, the late Czar, was buried, he discarded the Imperial robes which had fallen to him and told his wife to put them away, as he had no further use for them. Having cast aside the insignia of his rank, he once more donned his peasant garb and started to work as of old.

“I felt lonesome,” he said, “and began to grow enormously stout, and yet I had no appetite, and neither could I sleep.”

Ivan sent for his father, mother, and dumb sister, and brought them to live with him, and they worked with him at whatever he chose to do.

The people soon learned that Ivan was a fool. His wife one day said to him, “The people say you are a fool, Ivan.”

“Well, let them think so if they wish,” he replied.

His wife pondered this reply for some time, and at last decided that if Ivan was a fool she also was one, and that it would be useless to go contrary to her husband, thinking affectionately of the old proverb that “where the needle goes there goes the thread also.” She therefore cast aside her magnificent robes, and, putting them into the trunk with Ivan’s, dressed herself in cheap clothing and joined her dumb sister-in-law, with the intention of learning to work. She succeeded so well that she soon became a great help to Ivan.

Seeing that Ivan was a fool, all the wise men left the kingdom and only the fools remained. They had no money, their wealth consisting only of the products of their labor. But they lived peacefully together, supported themselves in comfort, and had plenty to spare for the needy and afflicted.

## Chapter X

The old devil grew tired of waiting for the good news which he expected the little devils to bring him. He waited in vain to hear of the ruin of the brothers, so he went in search of the emissaries which he had sent to perform that work for him. After looking around for some time, and seeing nothing but the three holes in the ground, he decided that they had not succeeded in their work and that he would have to do it himself.

The old devil next went in search of the brothers, but he could learn nothing of their whereabouts. After some time he found them in their different kingdoms, contented and happy. This greatly incensed the old devil, and he said, "I will now have to accomplish their mission myself." He first visited Simeon the soldier, and appeared before him as a voyevoda (general), saying: "You, Simeon, are a great warrior, and I also have had considerable experience in warfare, and am desirous of serving you."

Simeon questioned the disguised devil, and seeing that he was an intelligent man took him into his service.

The new General taught Simeon how to strengthen his army until it became very powerful. New implements of warfare were introduced. Cannons capable of throwing one hundred balls a minute were also constructed, and these, it was expected, would be of deadly effect in battle.

Simeon, on the advice of his new General, ordered all young men above a certain age to report for drill. On the same advice Simeon established gun-shops, where immense numbers of cannons and rifles were made.

The next move of the new General was to have Simeon declare war against the neighboring kingdom. This he did, and with his immense army marched into the adjoining territory, which he pillaged and burned, destroying more than half the enemy's soldiers. This so frightened the ruler of that country that he willingly gave up half of his kingdom to save the other half.

Simeon, overjoyed at his success, declared his intention of marching into Indian territory and subduing the Viceroy of that country.

But Simeon's intentions reached the ears of the Indian ruler, who prepared to do battle with him. In addition to having secured all the latest implements of warfare, he added still others of his own invention. He ordered all boys over fourteen and all single women to be drafted into the army, until its proportions became much larger than Simeon's. His cannons and rifles were of the same pattern as Simeon's, and he invented a flying-machine from which bombs could be thrown into the enemy's camp.

Simeon went forth to conquer the Viceroy with full confidence in his own powers to succeed. This time luck forsook him, and instead of being the conqueror he was himself conquered.

The Indian ruler had so arranged his army that Simeon could not even get within shooting distance, while the bombs from the flying-machine carried destruction and terror in their path, completely routing his army, so that Simeon was left alone.

The Viceroy took possession of his kingdom and Simeon had to fly for his life.

Having finished with Simeon, the old devil next approached Tarras. He appeared before him disguised as one of the merchants of his kingdom, and established factories and began to make money. The "merchant" paid the highest price for everything he purchased, and the people ran after him to sell their goods. Through this "merchant" they were enabled to make plenty of money, paying up all their arrears of taxes as well as the others when they came due.

Tarras was overjoyed at this condition of affairs and said: "Thanks to this merchant, now I will have more money than before, and life will be much pleasanter for me."

He wished to erect new buildings, and advertised for workmen, offering the highest prices for all kinds of labor. Tarras thought the people would be as anxious to work as formerly, but instead he was much surprised to learn that they were working for the "merchant." Thinking

to induce them to leave the “merchant,” he increased his offers, but the former, equal to the emergency, also raised the wages of his workmen. Tarras, having plenty of money, increased the offers still more; but the “merchant” raised them still higher and got the better of him. Thus, defeated at every point, Tarras was compelled to abandon the idea of building.

Tarras next announced that he intended laying out gardens and erecting fountains, and the work was to be commenced in the fall, but no one came to offer his services, and again he was obliged to forego his intentions. Winter set in, and Tarras wanted some sable fur with which to line his great-coat, and he sent his man to procure it for him; but the servant returned without it, saying: “There are no sables to be had. The ‘merchant’ has bought them all, paying a very high price for them.”

Tarras needed horses and sent a messenger to purchase them, but he returned with the same story as on former occasions — that none were to be found, the “merchant” having bought them all to carry water for an artificial pond he was constructing. Tarras was at last compelled to suspend business, as he could not find any one willing to work for him. They had all gone over to the “merchant’s” side.

The only dealings the people had with Tarras were when they went to pay their taxes. His money accumulated so fast that he could not find a place to put it, and his life became miserable. He abandoned all idea of entering upon the new venture, and only thought of how to exist peaceably. This he found it difficult to do, for, turn which way he would, fresh obstacles confronted him. Even his cooks, coachmen, and all his other servants forsook him and joined the “merchant.” With all his wealth he had nothing to eat, and when he went to market he found the “merchant” had been there before him and had bought up all the provisions. Still, the people continued to bring him money.

Tarras at last became so indignant that he ordered the “merchant” out of his kingdom. He left, but settled just outside the boundary line, and continued his business with the same result as before, and Tarras was



frequently forced to go without food for days. It was rumored that the “merchant” wanted to buy even Tarras himself. On hearing this the latter became very much alarmed and could not decide as to the best course to pursue.

About this time his brother Simeon arrived in the kingdom, and said: “Help me, for I have been defeated and ruined by the Indian Viceroy.” Tarras replied: “How can I help you, when I have had no food myself for two days?”

## Chapter XI

The old devil, having finished with the second brother, went to Ivan the Fool. This time he disguised himself as a General, the same as in the case of Simeon, and, appearing before Ivan, said: “Get an army together. It is disgraceful for the ruler of a kingdom to be without an army. You call your people to assemble, and I will form them into a fine large army.”

Ivan took the supposed General’s advice, and said: “Well, you may form my people into an army, but you must also teach them to sing the songs I like.”

The old devil then went through Ivan’s kingdom to secure recruits for the army, saying: “Come, shave your heads the heads of recruits are always shaved in Russia and I will give each of you a red hat and plenty of vodki” (whiskey).

At this the fools only laughed, and said: “We can have all the vodki we want, for we distill it ourselves; and of hats, our little girls make all we want, of any color we please, and with handsome fringes.”

Thus was the devil foiled in securing recruits for his army; so he returned to Ivan and said: “Your fools will not volunteer to be soldiers. It will therefore be necessary to force them.”

“Very well,” replied Ivan, “you may use force if you want to.”

The old devil then announced that all the fools must become soldiers, and those who refused, Ivan would punish with death.

The fools went to the General; and said: "You tell us that Ivan will punish with death all those who refuse to become soldiers, but you have omitted to state what will be done with us soldiers.

We have been told that we are only to be killed."

"Yes, that is true," was the reply.

The fools on hearing this became stubborn and refused to go.

"Better kill us now if we cannot avoid death, but we will not become soldiers," they declared.

"Oh! you fools," said the old devil, "soldiers may and may not be killed; but if you disobey Ivan's orders you will find certain death at his hands."

The fools remained absorbed in thought for some time and finally went to Ivan to question him in regard to the matter.

On arriving at his house they said: "A General came to us with an order from you that we were all to become soldiers, and if we refused you were to punish us with death. Is it true?"

Ivan began to laugh heartily on hearing this, and said: "Well, how I alone can punish you with death is something I cannot understand. If I was not a fool myself I would be able to explain it to you, but as it is I cannot."

"Well, then, we will not go," they said.

"Very well," replied Ivan, "you need not become soldiers unless you wish to."

The old devil, seeing his schemes about to prove failures, went to the ruler of Tarakania and became his friend, saying: "Let us go and conquer Ivan's kingdom. He has no money, but he has plenty of cattle, provisions, and various other things that would be useful to us."

The Tarakanian ruler gathered his large army together, and equipping it with cannons and rifles, crossed the boundary line into Ivan's kingdom. The people went to Ivan and said: "The ruler of Tarakania is here with a large army to fight us."

“Let them come,” replied Ivan.

The Tarakanian ruler, after crossing the line into Ivan’s kingdom, looked in vain for soldiers to fight against; and waiting some time and none appearing, he sent his own warriors to attack the villages.

They soon reached the first village, which they began to plunder.

The fools of both sexes looked calmly on, offering not the least resistance when their cattle and provisions were being taken from them. On the contrary, they invited the soldiers to come and live with them, saying: “If you, dear friends, find it is difficult to earn a living in your own land, come and live with us, where everything is plentiful.” The soldiers decided to remain, finding the people happy and prosperous, with enough surplus food to supply many of their neighbors. They were surprised at the cordial greetings which they everywhere received, and, returning to the ruler of Tarakania, they said: “We cannot fight with these people — take us to another place. We would much prefer the dangers of actual warfare to this unsoldierly method of subduing the village.”

The Tarakanian ruler, becoming enraged, ordered the soldiers to destroy the whole kingdom, plunder the villages, burn the houses and provisions, and slaughter the cattle.

“Should you disobey my orders,” said he, “I will have every one of you executed.”

The soldiers, becoming frightened, started to do as they were ordered, but the fools wept bitterly, offering no resistance, men, women, and children all joining in the general lamentation.

“Why do you treat us so cruelly?” they cried to the invading soldiers.

“Why do you wish to destroy everything we have? If you have more need of these things than we have, why not take them with you and leave us in peace?”

The soldiers, becoming saddened with remorse, refused further to pursue their path of destruction — the entire army scattering in many directions.

## Chapter XII

The old devil, failing to ruin Ivan's kingdom with soldiers, transformed himself into a nobleman, dressed exquisitely, and became one of Ivan's subjects, with the intention of compassing the downfall of his kingdom — as he had done with that of Tarras.

The "nobleman" said to Ivan: "I desire to teach you wisdom and to render you other service. I will build you a palace and factories."

"Very well," said Ivan; "you may live with us."

The next day the "nobleman" appeared on the Square with a sack of gold in his hand and a plan for building a house, saying to the people: "You are living like pigs, and I am going to teach you how to live decently. You are to build a house for me according to this plan. I will superintend the work myself, and will pay you for your services in gold," showing them at the same time the Contents of his sack.

The fools were amused. They had never before seen any money. Their business was conducted entirely by exchange of farm products or by hiring themselves out to work by the day in return for whatever they most needed. They therefore glanced at the gold pieces with amazement, and said, "What nice toys they would be to play with!" In return for the gold they gave their services and brought the "nobleman" the produce of their farms.

The old devil was overjoyed as he thought, "Now my enterprise is on a fair road and I will be able to ruin the Fool — as I did his brothers."

The fools obtained sufficient gold to distribute among the entire community, the women and young girls of the village wearing much of it as ornaments, while to the children they gave some pieces to play with on the streets.

When they had secured all they wanted they stopped working and the "noblemen" did not get his house more than half finished. He had neither provisions nor cattle for the year, and ordered the people to bring him both. He directed them also to go on with the building of the

palace and factories. He promised to pay them liberally in gold for everything they did. No one responded to his call — only once in awhile a little boy or girl would call to exchange eggs for his gold.

Thus was the “nobleman” deserted, and, having nothing to eat, he went to the village to procure some provisions for his dinner. He went to one house and offered gold in return for a chicken, but was refused, the owner saying: “We have enough of that already and do not want any more.”

He next went to a fish-woman to buy some herring, when she, too, refused to accept his gold in return for fish, saying: “I do not wish it, my dear man; I have no children to whom I can give it to play with. I have three pieces which I keep as curiosities only.”

He then went to a peasant to buy bread, but he also refused to accept the gold. “I have no use for it,” said he, “unless you wish to give it for Christ’s sake; then it will be a different matter, and I will tell my baba old woman to cut a piece of bread for you.”

The old devil was so angry that he ran away from the peasant, spitting and cursing as he went.

Not only did the offer to accept in the name of Christ anger him, but the very mention of the name was like the thrust of a knife in his throat.

The old devil did not succeed in getting any bread, and in his efforts to secure other articles of food he met with the same failure. The people had all the gold they wanted and what pieces they had they regarded as curiosities. They said to the old devil: “If you bring us something else in exchange for food, or come to ask for Christ’s sake, we will give you all you want.”

But the old devil had nothing but gold, and was too lazy to work; and being unable to accept anything for Christ’s sake, he was greatly enraged.

“What else do you want?” he said. “I will give you gold with which you can buy everything you want, and you need labor no longer.”

But the fools would not accept his gold, nor listen to him. Thus the old devil was obliged to go to sleep hungry.

Tidings of this condition of affairs soon reached the ears of Ivan. The people went to him and said: "What shall we do? This nobleman appeared among us; he is well dressed; he wishes to eat and drink of the best, but is unwilling to work, and does not beg for food for Christ's sake. He only offers every one gold pieces. At first we gave him everything he wanted, taking the gold pieces in exchange just as curiosities; but now we have enough of them and refuse to accept any more from him. What shall we do with him? He may die of hunger!" Ivan heard all they had to say, and told them to employ him as a shepherd, taking turns in doing so.

The old devil saw no other way out of the difficulty and was obliged to submit.

It soon came the old devil's turn to go to Ivan's house. He went there to dinner and found Ivan's dumb sister preparing the meal. She was often cheated by the lazy people, who while they did not work, yet ate up all the gruel. But she learned to know the lazy people from the condition of their hands. Those with great welts on their hands she invited first to the table, and those having smooth white hands had to take what was left.

The old devil took a seat at the table, but the dumb girl, taking his hands, looked at them, and seeing them white and clean, and with long nails, swore at him and put him from the table.

Ivan's wife said to the old devil: "You must excuse my sister-in-law; she will not allow any one to sit at the table whose hands have not been hardened by toil, so you will have to wait until the dinner is over and then you can have what is left.

With it you must be satisfied."

The old devil was very much offended that he was made to eat with "pigs," as he expressed it, and complained to Ivan, saying: "The foolish law you have in your kingdom, that all persons must work, is surely the

invention of fools. People who work for a living are not always forced to labor with their hands. Do you think wise men labor so?"

Ivan replied: "Well, what do fools know about it? We all work with our hands."

"And for that reason you are fools," replied the devil. "I can teach you how to use your brains, and you will find such labor more beneficial."

Ivan was surprised at hearing this, and said:

"Well, it is perhaps not without good reason that we are called fools."

"It is not so easy to work with the brain," the old devil said. "You will not give me anything to eat because my hands have not the appearance of being toil-hardened, but you must understand that it is much harder to do brain-work, and sometimes the head feels like bursting with the effort it is forced to make."

"Then why do you not select some light work that you can perform with your hands?" Ivan asked.

The devil said: "I torment myself with brain-work because I have pity for you fools, for, if I did not torture myself, people like you would remain fools for all eternity. I have exercised my brain a great deal during my life, and now I am able to teach you."

Ivan was greatly surprised and said: "Very well; teach us, so that when our hands are tired we can use our heads to replace them."

The devil promised to instruct the people, and Ivan announced the fact throughout his kingdom.

The devil was willing to teach all those who came to him how to use the head instead of the hands, so as to produce more with the former than with the latter.

In Ivan's kingdom there was a high tower, which was reached by a long, narrow ladder leading up to the balcony, and Ivan told the old devil that from the top of the tower every one could see him.

So the old devil went up to the balcony and addressed the people.

The fools came in great crowds to hear what the old devil had to say, thinking that he really meant to tell them how to work with the head.

But the old devil only told them in words what to do, and did not give them any practical instruction. He said that men working only with their

hands could not make a living. The fools did not understand what he said to them and looked at him in amazement, and then departed for their daily work.

The old devil addressed them for two days from the balcony, and at the end of that time, feeling hungry, he asked the people to bring him some bread. But they only laughed at him and told him if he could work better with his head than with his hands he could also find bread for himself. He addressed the people for yet another day, and they went to hear him from curiosity, but soon left him to return to their work. Ivan asked, "Well, did the nobleman work with his head?" "Not yet," they said; "so far he has only talked."

One day, while the old devil was standing on the balcony, he became weak, and, falling down, hurt his head against a pole. Seeing this, one of the fools ran to Ivan's wife and said, "The gentleman has at last commenced to work with his head." She ran to the field to tell Ivan, who was much surprised, and said, "Let us go and see him."

He turned his horses' heads in the direction of the tower, where the old devil remained weak from hunger and was still suspended from the pole, with his body swaying back and forth and his head striking the lower part of the pole each time it came in contact with it. While Ivan was looking, the old devil started down the steps head-first — as they supposed, to count them. "Well," said Ivan, "he told the truth after all — that sometimes from this kind of work the head bursts. This is far worse than welts on the hands."

The old devil fell to the ground head-foremost. Ivan approached him, but at that instant the ground opened and the devil disappeared, leaving only a hole to show where he had gone. Ivan scratched his head and said: "See here; such nastiness! This is yet another devil. He looks like the father of the little ones." Ivan still lives, and people flock to his kingdom. His brothers come to him and he feeds them.



To every one who comes to him and says, "Give us food," he replies: "Very well; you are welcome. We have plenty of everything."

There is only one unchangeable custom observed in Ivan's kingdom: The man with toil-hardened hands is always given a seat at the table, while the possessor of soft white hands must be contented with what is left.

How The Little Devil Earned The Crust Of Bread Or Promoting The Devil

How The Little Devil Earned The Crust Of Bread

Translated by N. and A. C. Fifield 1910

A poor peasant went out to plough his field one morning, before breakfast, taking with him a crust of bread. He tipped the plough over took out the bar, and laid it under a bush with the crust, and spread his coat over all. Presently the peasant got hungry, and the horse was tired. So he stuck the plough into the ground, unharnessed the horse and let her loose to graze, and went to the bush to have a bite and rest awhile. He lifted the coat: the crust had gone! He looked and looked, rummaged in the coat, shook it still no crust ! The peasant wondered. " That's strange," he said; " I saw no one, yet someone must have taken the bread."

It was a little Devil who had taken the crust while the peasant was ploughing, and he now sat behind the bush to listen how the peasant would swear and call on his the devil's name.

The peasant was sorry.

" Oh, well," he said; " I shan't die of hunger ! I suppose whoever took it was in need of it. Let him eat it, and may it give him health!"

And the peasant went to the well, drank some water, rested, caught the horse, harnessed her, and set to work again.

The little devil was disappointed that he had not led the peasant into sin, and he went to tell it to the big devil.

He came to the big devil and told how he had stolen the bread, and how the peasant instead of swearing, had wished him good health. The big devil was very angry.

If the peasant has had the best of you in this matter," he said, "it's your own fault : you were a fool about it. If the peasants and then their women get into that sort of habit, we shall have nothing left to live by. The matter can't be left like this ! Go to that peasant again, and earn your crust. If in three years you haven't got the better of the peasant, I'll throw you into holy water ! "

The little devil was frightened, and ran out on to the earth thinking how to redeem his error. He thought and thought, and at last found it.

He turned himself into a workman and hired himself out to the poor peasant. The following year was a dry summer, and the little devil told the peasant to sow his corn en marshy ground. All the other peasants' corn was burned up by the sun; but the poor peasant's corn grew tall and thick and full-eared. The peasant lived on it till the next harvest and still had a lot left. Next summer the little devil told the peasant to sow his corn on the moun-tain. The summer was a rainy one : all the corn was beaten down, and rotted, and the grains died, but the peasant's crops on the mountain side were splendid.

He had still more extra corn now, and didn't know what to do with it. And the little devil taught the peasant how to crush the grain and to make whisky out of it. And the peasant began to make whisky, to drink it himself, and to give it to others.

The little devil went to the big devil and began to boast that he had earned the crust. The big devil went to see.

He came to the peasant's house and saw that the peasant had some guests and was treating them with whisky. His wife poured it out, but just as she was about to carry it round she tripped against the table and let a glass fall.

The peasant was furious and shouted at her. “ You devil’s fool 1 “ he said; “ can’t you take care, you idiot, and not pour the spirit on the floor as if it were dirty water ! “

The little devil nudged the big one with his elbow, and said : “ What do you think he would do now if someone stole his crust? “

When the peasant had finished swearing, he began to carry the spirit round himself. Soon a poor peasant re-turning from his day’s work came in uninvited, and sat down. He saw the people drinking, and being very weary, he thought he would also like to have a drink. So he sat and sat, licking his lips, but the master didn’t offer him any, and only muttered under his breath : “ I don’t make whisky for all the vagrants that happen to want it.”

This pleased the big devil; but the little devil only boasted the more and said : “ You wait; you’ll see some more ! “

The rich peasants drank and the master drank also. Then they all began to toady to each other, and to flatter and speak oily and lying words to one another.

The big devil listened and listened, and praised the little devil. “ If,” said he, “ this drink can make them as full of lies and cunning as I have seen, then they are in our hands.

“Wait a bit,” said the little devil, “this is only the beginning; wait till they drink a little more. Now, like foxes, they are wagging their tails and trying to trick each other, but soon they’ll be as cruel as wolves.”

The peasants drank another glass each, and their talk grew louder and rougher. Instead of oily words, there was wrangling and curses, and soon they worked themselves into a fury and flew at each other and smashed each others noses in. The master also fought and got beaten. The big devil looked on and was very pleased. “This is good,” he said.

But the little devil said : “ Wait a bit, there’s more to follow. Let them drink a little more. Now they rage like wolves, but soon they will wallow like swine.”

The peasants drank again, and soon were maudlin drunk. They shouted, and muttered they knew not what, unable to understand each other.

Presently they began to disperse and went slouching through the streets, alone or in twos and threes. The master went to see his guests off, but he fell into the pit and lay covered with filth and grunting like a pig.

This pleased the big devil immensely. "You have made a good drink," he said, "and you deserve your crust. Only tell me, what did you make it of? You must have mixed in it first the blood of the fox that was why they grew as cunning as foxes; then the blood of the wolf that was why they grew as cruel as wolves; then the blood of the swine that was why they grovelled like pigs."

"No," said the little devil, "I did none of those things. The only thing I did was to give him more bread than he needed. The blood of the beast is always in man but when he earns his bread with labour it hasn't free scope. At first the man was willing to part with his last crust, but when he began to have more bread than he needed, he began also to think how to provide for his pleasures. And I taught him a pleasure to drink whisky. And as soon as he began to turn God's gift into spirit for his own pleasure, the blood of the fox and of the wolf and of the swine rose up within him. And as long as he continues to drink he will always remain a beast."

The big devil praised the little devil and forgave him for losing the crust and appointed him chief among his servants.

## The Repentant Sinner

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

AND HE SAID unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.' - Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

THERE was once a man who lived for seventy years in the world, and lived in sin all that time. He fell ill but even then did not repent. Only at the last moment, as he was dying, he wept and said:

'Lord! forgive me, as Thou forgavest the thief upon the cross.'

And as he said these words, his soul left his body. And the soul of the sinner, feeling love towards God and faith in His mercy, went to the gates of heaven and knocked, praying to be let into the heavenly kingdom.

Then a voice spoke from within the gate:

'What man is it that knocks at the gates of Paradise and what deeds did he do during his life?'

And the voice of the Accuser replied, recounting all the man's evil deeds, and not a single good one.

And the voice from within the gates answered:

'Sinners cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Go hence!'

Then the man said:

'Lord, I hear thy voice, but cannot see thy face, nor do I know thy name.'

The voice answered:

'I am Peter, the Apostle.'

And the sinner replied:

'Have pity on me, Apostle Peter! Remember man's weakness, and God's mercy. Wert not thou a disciple of Christ? Didst not thou hear his teaching from his own lips, and hadst thou not his example before thee? Remember then how, when he sorrowed and was grieved in spirit, and three times asked thee to keep awake and pray, thou didst sleep, because thine eyes were heavy, and three times he found thee sleeping. So it was with me. Remember, also, how thou didst promise to be faithful unto death, and yet didst thrice deny him, when he was taken before Caiaphas. So it was with me. And remember, too, how when the cock crowed thou didst go out and didst weep bitterly. So it is with me. Thou canst not refuse to let me in.'

And the voice behind the gates was silent.

Then the sinner stood a little while, and again began to knock, and to ask to be let into the kingdom of heaven.

And he heard another voice behind the gates, which said:

'Who is this man, and how did he live on earth?'

And the voice of the Accuser again repeated all the sinner's evil deeds, and not a single good one.

And the voice from behind the gates replied:

'Go hence! Such sinners cannot live with us in Paradise.' Then the sinner said:

'Lord, I hear thy voice, but I see thee not, nor do I know thy name.'

And the voice answered:

'I am David; king and prophet.'

The sinner did not despair, nor did he leave the gates of Paradise, but said:

Have pity on me, King David! Remember man's weakness, and God's mercy. God loved thee and exalted thee among men. Thou hadst all: a kingdom, and honour, and riches, and wives, and children; but thou sawest from thy house-top the wife of a poor man, and sin entered into thee, and thou tookest the wife of Uriah, and didst slay him with the sword of the Ammonites. Thou, a rich man, didst take from the poor man his one ewe lamb, and didst kill him. I have done likewise.

Remember, then, how thou didst repent, and how thou saidst, "I acknowledge my transgressions: my sin is ever before me?" I have done the same. Thou canst not refuse to let me in.'

And the voice from within the gates was silent.

The sinner having stood a little while, began knocking again, and asking to be let into the kingdom of heaven. And a third voice was heard within the gates, saying:

'Who is this man, and how has he spent his life on earth?'

And the voice of the Accuser replied for the third time, recounting the sinner's evil deeds, and not mentioning one good deed.

And the voice within the gates said:

'DePart hence! Sinners cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

And the sinner said:

'Thy voice I hear, but thy face I see not, neither do I know thy name.'

Then the voice replied:

'I am John the Divine, the beloved disciple of Christ.'

And the sinner rejoiced and said:

'Now surely I shall be allowed to enter. Peter and David must let me in, because they know man's weakness and God's mercy; and thou wilt let me in, because thou lovest much. Was it not thou, John the Divine who wrote that God is Love, and that he who loves not, knows not God? And in thine old age didst thou not say unto men: "Brethren, love one another." How, then, canst thou look on me with hatred, and drive me away? Either thou must renounce what thou hast said, or loving me, must let me enter the kingdom of heaven.'

And the gates of Paradise opened, and John embraced the repentant sinner and took him into the kingdom of heaven.

A Grain As Big As A Hen's Egg Or Grain

A Grain As Big As A Hen's Egg

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

ONE DAY SOME children found, in a ravine, a thing shaped like a grain of corn, with a groove down the middle, but as large as a hen's egg. A traveller passing by saw the thing, bought it from the children for a penny, and taking it to town sold it to the King as a curiosity.

The King called together his wise men, and told them to find out what the thing was. The wise men pondered and pondered and could not make head or tail of it, till one day, when the thing was lying on a window-sill, a hen flew in and pecked at it till she made a hole in it, and then every one saw that it was a grain of corn. The wise men went to the King and said:

'It is a grain of corn.'

At this the King was much surprised; and he ordered the learned men to find out when and where such corn had grown. The learned men pondered again, and searched in their books, but could find nothing about it. So they returned to the King and said:

'We can give you no answer. There is nothing about it in our books. You will have to ask the peasants; perhaps some of them may have heard from their fathers when and where grain grew to such a size.'

So the King gave orders that some very old peasant should be brought before him; and his servants found such a man and brought him to the King. Old and bent, ashy pale and toothless, he just managed with the help of two crutches to totter into the King's presence.

The King showed him the grain, but the old man could hardly see it; he took it, however, and felt it with his hands. The King questioned him, saying:

'Can you tell us, old man, where such grain as this grew? Have you ever bought such corn, or sown such in your fields?'

The old man was so deaf that he could hardly hear what the King said, and only understood with great difficulty.

'No!' he answered at last, 'I never sowed nor reaped any like it in my fields, nor did I ever buy any such. When we bought corn, the grains were always as small as they are now. But you might ask my father. He may have heard where such grain grew.'

So the King sent for the old man's father, and he was found and brought before the King. He came walking with one crutch. The King showed him the grain, and the old peasant, who was still able to see, took a good look at it. And the King asked him:

'Can you not tell us, old man, where corn like this used to grow? Have you ever bought any like it, or sown any in your fields?'

Though the old man was rather hard of hearing, he still heard better than his son had done.



‘No,’ he said, ‘I never sowed nor reaped any grain like this in my field. As to buying, I never bought any, for in my time money was not yet in use. Every one grew his own corn, and when there was any need we shared with one another. I do not know where corn like this grew. Ours was larger and yielded more flour than present-day grain, but I never saw any like this. I have, however, heard my father say that in his time the grain grew larger and yielded more flour than ours. You had better ask him.’

So the King sent for this old man’s father, and they found him too, and brought him before the King. He entered walking easily and without crutches: his eye was clear, his hearing good, and he spoke distinctly. The King showed him the grain, and the old grandfather looked at it, and turned it about in his hand.

‘It is long since I saw such a fine grain,’ said he, and he bit a piece off and tasted it.

‘It’s the very same kind,’ he added.

‘Tell me, grandfather,’ said the King, ‘when and where was such corn grown? Have you ever bought any like it, or sown any in your fields?’ And the old man replied:

‘Corn like this used to grow everywhere in my time. I lived on corn like this in my young days, and fed others on it. It was grain like this that we used to sow and reap and thrash.’

And the King asked:

‘Tell me, grandfather, did you buy it anywhere, or did you grow it all yourself?’

The old man smiled.

‘In my time,’ he answered, ‘no one ever thought of such a sin as buying or selling bread; and we knew nothing of money. Each man had corn enough of his own.’

‘Then tell me, grandfather,’ asked the King, ‘where was your field, where did you grow corn like this?’

And the grandfather answered:

'My field was God's earth. Wherever I ploughed, there was my field. Land was free. It was a thing no man called his own. Labour was the only thing men called their own.'

'Answer me two more questions,' said the King. 'The first is, Why did the earth bear such grain then and has ceased to do so now? And the second is, Why your grandson walks with two crutches, your son with one, and you yourself with none? Your eyes are bright, your teeth sound, and your speech clear and pleasant to the ear. How have these things come about?'

And the old man answered:

'These things are so, because men have ceased to live by their own labour, and have taken to depending on the labour of others. In the old time, men lived according to God's law. They had what was their own, and coveted not what others had produced.'

## The Three Hermits

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'AND IN PRAYING use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.' — Matt. vi. 7, 8.

A BISHOP was sailing from Archangel to the Solovétsk Monastery; and on the same vessel were a number of pilgrims on their way to visit the shrines at that place. The voyage was a smooth one. The wind favourable, and the weather fair. The pilgrims lay on deck, eating, or sat in groups talking to one another. The Bishop, too, came on deck, and as he was pacing up and down, he noticed a group of men standing near the prow and listening to a fisherman who was pointing to the sea and telling them something. The Bishop stopped, and looked in the direction in which the man was pointing. He could see nothing

however, but the sea glistening in the sunshine. He drew nearer to listen, but when the man saw him, he took off his cap and was silent. The rest of the people also took off their caps, and bowed.

‘Do not let me disturb you, friends,’ said the Bishop. ‘I came to hear what this good man was saying.’

‘The fisherman was telling us about the hermits,’ replied one, a tradesman, rather bolder than the rest.

‘What hermits?’ asked the Bishop, going to the side of the vessel and seating himself on a box. ‘Tell me about them. I should like to hear. What were you pointing at?’

‘Why, that little island you can just see over there,’ answered the man, pointing to a spot ahead and a little to the right. ‘That is the island where the hermits live for the salvation of their souls.’

‘Where is the island?’ asked the Bishop. ‘I see nothing.’

‘There, in the distance, if you will please look along my hand. Do you see that little cloud? Below it and a bit to the left, there is just a faint streak. That is the island.’

The Bishop looked carefully, but his unaccustomed eyes could make out nothing but the water shimmering in the sun.

‘I cannot see it,’ he said. ‘But who are the hermits that live there?’

‘They are holy men,’ answered the fisherman. ‘I had long heard tell of them, but never chanced to see them myself till the year before last.’

And the fisherman related how once, when he was out fishing, he had been stranded at night upon that island, not knowing where he was. In the morning, as he wandered about the island, he came across an earth hut, and met an old man standing near it. Presently two others came out, and after having fed him, and dried his things, they helped him mend his boat.

‘And what are they like?’ asked the Bishop.

‘One is a small man and his back is bent. He wears a priest’s cassock and is very old; he must be more than a hundred, I should say. He is so old that the white of his beard is taking a greenish tinge, but he is always smiling, and his face is as bright as an angel’s from heaven. The

second is taller, but he also is very old. He wears tattered, peasant coat. His beard is broad, and of a yellowish grey colour. He is a strong man. Before I had time to help him, he turned my boat over as if it were only a pail. He too, is kindly and cheerful. The third is tall, and has a beard as white as snow and reaching to his knees. He is stern, with over-hanging eyebrows; and he wears nothing but a mat tied round his waist.'

'And did they speak to you?' asked the Bishop.

'For the most Part they did everything in silence and spoke but little even to one another. One of them would just give a glance, and the others would understand him. I asked the tallest whether they had lived there long. He frowned, and muttered something as if he were angry; but the oldest one took his hand and smiled, and then the tall one was quiet. The oldest one only said: "Have mercy upon us," and smiled.'

While the fisherman was talking, the ship had drawn nearer to the island.

'There, now you can see it plainly, if your Grace will please to look,' said the tradesman, pointing with his hand.

The Bishop looked, and now he really saw a dark streak — which was the island. Having looked at it a while, he left the prow of the vessel, and going to the stern, asked the helmsman:

'What island is that?'

'That one,' replied the man, 'has no name. There are many such in this sea.'

'Is it true that there are hermits who live there for the salvation of their souls?'

'So it is said, your Grace, but I don't know if it's true. Fishermen say they have seen them; but of course they may only be spinning yarns.'

'I should like to land on the island and see these men,' said the Bishop.

'How could I manage it?'

'The ship cannot get close to the island,' replied the helmsman, 'but you might be rowed there in a boat. You had better speak to the captain.'

The captain was sent for and came.

'I should like to see these hermits,' said the Bishop. 'Could I not be rowed ashore?'

The captain tried to dissuade him.

'Of course it could be done,' said he, 'but we should lose much time. And if I might venture to say so to your Grace, the old men are not worth your pains. I have heard say that they are foolish old fellows, who understand nothing, and never speak a word, any more than the fish in the sea.'

'I wish to see them,' said the Bishop, 'and I will pay you for your trouble and loss of time. Please let me have a boat.'

There was no help for it; so the order was given. The sailors trimmed the sails, the steersman put up the helm, and the ship's course was set for the island. A chair was placed at the prow for the Bishop, and he sat there, looking ahead. The passengers all collected at the prow, and gazed at the island. Those who had the sharpest eyes could presently make out the rocks on it, and then a mud hut was seen. At last one man saw the hermits themselves. The captain brought a telescope and, after looking through it, handed it to the Bishop.

'It's right enough. There are three men standing on the shore. There, a little to the right of that big rock.'

The Bishop took the telescope, got it into position, and he saw the three men: a tall one, a shorter one, and one very small and bent, standing on the shore and holding each other by the hand.

The captain turned to the Bishop.

'The vessel can get no nearer in than this, your Grace. If you wish to go ashore, we must ask you to go in the boat, while we anchor here.'

The cable was quickly let out, the anchor cast, and the sails furled. There was a jerk, and the vessel shook. Then a boat having been lowered, the oarsmen jumped in, and the Bishop descended the ladder and took his seat. The men pulled at their oars, and the boat moved rapidly towards the island. When they came within a stone's throw they saw three old men: a tall one with only a mat tied round his waist:

a shorter one in a tattered peasant coat, and a very old one bent with age and wearing an old cassock — all three standing hand in hand. The oarsmen pulled in to the shore, and held on with the boathook while the Bishop got out.

The old men bowed to him, and he gave them his benediction, at which they bowed still lower. Then the Bishop began to speak to them.

‘I have heard,’ he said, ‘that you, godly men, live here saving your own souls, and praying to our Lord Christ for your fellow men. I, an unworthy servant of Christ, am called, by God’s mercy, to keep and teach His flock. I wished to see you, servants of God, and to do what I can to teach you, also.’

The old men looked at each other smiling, but remained silent.

‘Tell me,’ said the Bishop, ‘what you are doing to save your souls, and how you serve God on this island.’

The second hermit sighed, and looked at the oldest, the very ancient one. The latter smiled, and said:

‘We do not know how to serve God. We only serve and support ourselves, servant of God.’

‘But how do you pray to God?’ asked the Bishop.

‘We pray in this way,’ replied the hermit. ‘Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us.’

And when the old man said this, all three raised their eyes to heaven, and repeated:

‘Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us!’

The Bishop smiled.

‘You have evidently heard something about the Holy Trinity,’ said he.

‘But you do not pray aright. You have won my affection, godly men. I see you wish to please the Lord, but you do not know how to serve Him. That is not the way to pray; but listen to me, and I will teach you. I will teach you, not a way of my own, but the way in which God in the Holy Scriptures has commanded all men to pray to Him.’

And the Bishop began explaining to the hermits how God had revealed Himself to men; telling them of God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

‘God the Son came down on earth,’ said he, ‘to save men, and this is how He taught us all to pray. Listen and repeat after me: “Our Father.”’ And the first old man repeated after him, ‘Our Father,’ and the second said, ‘Our Father,’ and the third said, ‘Our Father.’

‘Which art in heaven,’ continued the Bishop.

The first hermit repeated, ‘Which art in heaven,’ but the second blundered over the words, and the tall hermit could not say them properly. His hair had grown over his mouth so that he could not speak plainly. The very old hermit, having no teeth, also mumbled indistinctly.

The Bishop repeated the words again, and the old men repeated them after him. The Bishop sat down on a stone, and the old men stood before him, watching his mouth, and repeating the words as he uttered them. And all day long the Bishop laboured, saying a word twenty, thirty, a hundred times over, and the old men repeated it after him. They blundered, and he corrected them, and made them begin again.

The Bishop did not leave off till he had taught them the whole of the Lord’s prayer so that they could not only repeat it after him, but could say it by themselves. The middle one was the first to know it, and to repeat the whole of it alone. The Bishop made him say it again and again, and at last the others could say it too.

It was getting dark, and the moon was appearing over the water, before the Bishop rose to return to the vessel. When he took leave of the old men, they all bowed down to the ground before him. He raised them, and kissed each of them, telling them to pray as he had taught them. Then he got into the boat and returned to the ship.

And as he sat in the boat and was rowed to the ship he could hear the three voices of the hermits loudly repeating the Lord’s prayer. As the boat drew near the vessel their voices could no longer be heard, but they could still be seen in the moonlight, standing as he had left them

on the shore, the shortest in the middle, the tallest on the right, the middle one on the left. As soon as the Bishop had reached the vessel and got on board, the anchor was weighed and the sails unfurled. The wind filled them, and the ship sailed away, and the Bishop took a seat in the stern and watched the island they had left. For a time he could still see the hermits, but presently they disappeared from sight, though the island was still visible. At last it too vanished, and only the sea was to be seen, rippling in the moonlight.

The pilgrims lay down to sleep, and all was quiet on deck. The Bishop did not wish to sleep, but sat alone at the stern, gazing at the sea where the island was no longer visible, and thinking of the good old men. He thought how pleased they had been to learn the Lord's prayer; and he thanked God for having sent him to teach and help such godly men.

So the Bishop sat, thinking, and gazing at the sea where the island had disappeared. And the moonlight flickered before his eyes, sparkling, now here, now there, upon the waves. Suddenly he saw something white and shining, on the bright path which the moon cast across the sea. Was it a seagull, or the little gleaming sail of some small boat? The Bishop fixed his eyes on it, wondering.

'It must be a boat sailing after us,' thought he 'but it is overtaking us very rapidly. It was far, far away a minute ago, but now it is much nearer. It cannot be a boat, for I can see no sail; but whatever it may be, it is following us, and catching us up.'

And he could not make out what it was. Not a boat, nor a bird, nor a fish! It was too large for a man, and besides a man could not be out there in the midst of the sea. The Bishop rose, and said to the helmsman:

'Look there, what is that, my friend? What is it?' the Bishop repeated, though he could now see plainly what it was — the three hermits running upon the water, all gleaming white, their grey beards shining, and approaching the ship as quickly as though it were not morning.

The steersman looked and let go the helm in terror.



'Oh Lord! The hermits are running after us on the water as though it were dry land!'

The passengers hearing him, jumped up, and crowded to the stern. They saw the hermits coming along hand in hand, and the two outer ones beckoning the ship to stop. All three were gliding along upon the water without moving their feet. Before the ship could be stopped, the hermits had reached it, and raising their heads, all three as with one voice, began to say:

'We have forgotten your teaching, servant of God. As long as we kept repeating it we remembered, but when we stopped saying it for a time, a word dropped out, and now it has all gone to pieces. We can remember nothing of it. Teach us again.'

The Bishop crossed himself, and leaning over the ship's side, said: 'Your own prayer will reach the Lord, men of God. It is not for me to teach you. Pray for us sinners.'

And the Bishop bowed low before the old men; and they turned and went back across the sea. And a light shone until daybreak on the spot where they were lost to sight.

Kholstomer Or Strider: The Story Of A Horse

Kholstomer

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1887

Chapter I

Higher and higher receded the sky, wider and wider spread the streak of dawn, whiter grew the pallid silver of the dew, more lifeless the sickle of the moon, and more vocal the forest. People began to get up, and in the owner's stable-yard the sounds of snorting, the rustling of

litter, and even the shrill angry neighing of horses crowded together and at variance about something, grew more and more frequent.

“Hold on! Plenty of time! Hungry?” said the old huntsman, quickly opening the creaking gate. “Where are you going?” he shouted, threateningly raising his arm at a mare that was pushing through the gate.

The keeper, Nester, wore a short Cossack coat with an ornamental leather girdle, had a whip slung over his shoulder, and a hunk of bread wrapped in a cloth stuck in his girdle. He carried a saddle and bridle in his arms.

The horses were not at all frightened or offended at the horseman’s sarcastic tone: they pretended that it was all the same to them and moved leisurely away from the gate; only one old brown mare, with a thick mane, laid back an ear and quickly turned her back on him. A small filly standing behind her and not at all concerned in the matter took this opportunity to whinny and kick out at a horse that happened to be near.

“Now then!” shouted the keeper still louder and more sternly, and he went to the opposite corner of the yard.

Of all the horses in the enclosure (there were about a hundred of them), a piebald gelding, standing by himself in a corner under the penthouse and licking an oak post with half-closed eyes, displayed least impatience.

It is impossible to say what flavour the piebald gelding found in the post, but his expression was serious and thoughtful while he licked. “Stop that!” shouted the groom, drawing nearer to him and putting the saddle and a glossy saddle-cloth on the manure heap beside him. The piebald gelding stopped licking and without moving gave Nester a long look. The gelding did not laugh, nor grow angry, nor frown, but his whole belly heaved with a profound sigh and he turned away. The

horseman put his arm round the gelding's neck and placed the bridle on him.

"What are you sighing for?" said Nester.

The gelding switched his tail as if to say, "Nothing in Particular, Nester!" Nester put the saddle-cloth and saddle on him, and this caused the gelding to lay back his ears, probably to express dissatisfaction, but he was only called a "good-for-nothing" for it and his saddle-girths were tightened.

At this the gelding blew himself out, but a finger was thrust into his mouth and a knee hit him in the stomach, so that he had to let out his breath. In spite of this, when the saddle-cloth was being buckled on he again laid back his ears and even looked round. Though he knew it would do no good he considered it necessary to show that it was disagreeable to him and that he would always express his dissatisfaction with it. When he was saddled he thrust forward his swollen off foot and began champing his bit, this too for some reason of his own, for he ought to have known by that time that a bit cannot have any flavour at all.

Nester mounted the gelding by the short stirrup, unwound his long whip, straightened his coat out from under his knee, seated himself in the manner peculiar to coachmen, huntsmen, and horsemen, and jerked the reins. The gelding lifted his head to show his readiness to go where ordered but did not move. He knew that before starting there would be much shouting and that Nester, from the seat on his back, would give many orders to Vaska, the other groom, and to the horses. And Nester did shout: "Vaska! Hullo, Vaska. Have you let out the brood mares? Where are you going, you devil? Now then! Are you asleep? ... Open the gate! Let the brood mares get out first!" and so on.

The gate creaked. Vaska, cross and sleepy, stood at the gate-post holding his horse by the bridle and letting the other horses pass out. The horses followed one another and stepped carefully over the straw, smelling at it: fillies, yearling colts with their manes and tails cut, suckling foals, and mares in foal carrying their burden heedfully passed

one by one through the gateway. The fillies sometimes crowded together in twos and threes, throwing their heads across one another's backs and hitting their hoofs against the gate, for which they received a rebuke from the grooms every time. The foals sometimes darted under the legs of the wrong mares and neighed loudly in response to the short whinny of their own mothers.

A playful filly, directly she had got out at the gate, bent her head sideways, kicked up her hind legs, and squealed, but all the same she did not dare to run ahead of old dappled Zhuldyba who at a slow and heavy pace, swinging her belly from side to side, marched as usual ahead of all the other horses.

In a few minutes the enclosure that had been so animated became deserted, the posts stood gloomily under the empty penthouse, and only trampled straw mixed with manure was to be seen. Used as he was to that desolate sight it probably depressed the piebald gelding. As if making a bow he slowly lowered his head and raised it again, sighed as deeply as the tightly drawn girth would allow, and hobbling along on his stiff and crooked legs shambled after the herd, bearing old Nester on his bony back.

"I know that as soon as we get out on the road he will begin to strike a light and smoke his wooden pipe with its brass mountings and little chain," thought the gelding. "I am glad of it because early in the morning when it is dewy I like that smell, it reminds me of much that was pleasant; but it's annoying that when his pipe is between his teeth the old man always begins to swagger and thinks himself somebody and sits sideways, always sideways-and that side hurts. However, it can't be helped! Suffering for the pleasure of others is nothing new to me. I have even begun to find a certain equine pleasure in it. Let him swagger, poor fellow! Of course he can only do that when he is alone and no one sees him-let him sit sideways!" thought the gelding, and stepping carefully on his crooked legs he went along the middle of the road.

Chapter II

Having driven the horses to the riverside where they were to graze, Nester dismounted and unsaddled. Meanwhile the herd had begun gradually to spread over the untrampled meadow, covered with dew and by the mist that rose from it and the encircling river.

When he had taken the bridle off the piebald gelding, Nester scratched him under the neck, in response to which the gelding expressed his gratitude and satisfaction by closing his eyes. "He likes it, the old dog!" muttered Nester. The gelding however did not really care for the scratching at all and pretended that it was agreeable merely out of courtesy. He nodded his head in assent to Nester's words, but suddenly Nester, quite unexpectedly and without any reason, perhaps imagining that too much familiarity might give the gelding a wrong idea of his importance, pushed the gelding's head away from himself without any warning and, swinging the bridle, struck him painfully with the buckle on his lean leg, and then without saying a word went up the hillock to a tree-stump beside which he generally seated himself.

Though this action grieved the piebald gelding he gave no indication of it, but leisurely switching his scanty tail sniffed at something and, biting off some wisps of grass merely to divert his mind, walked to the river. He took no notice whatever of the antics of the young mares, colts, and foals around him, who were filled with the joy of the morning; and knowing that, especially at his age, it is healthier to have a good drink on an empty stomach and to eat afterwards, he chose a spot where the bank was widest and least steep, and wetting his hoofs and fetlocks, dipped his muzzle in the water and began to suck it up through his torn lips, to expand his filling sides, and from pleasure to switch his scanty tail with its half bald stump.

An aggressive chestnut filly, who always teased the old fellow and did all kinds of unpleasant things to him, now came up to him in the water as if attending to some business of her own but in reality merely to foul the water before his nose. But the piebald gelding, who had already had his fill, as though not noticing the filly's intention quietly drew one foot after the other out of the mud in which they had sunk, jerked his head, and stepping aside from the youthful crowd started grazing.

Sprawling his feet aPart in different ways and not trampling the grass needlessly, he went on eating without unbending himself for exactly three hours. Having eaten till his belly hung down from his steep skinny ribs like a sack, he balanced himself equally on his four sore legs so as to have as little pain as possible, especially in his off foreleg which was the weakest, and fell asleep.

Old age is sometimes majestic, sometimes ugly, and sometimes pathetic.

But old age can be both ugly and majestic, and the gelding's old age was just of that kind.

He was tall, rather over fifteen hands high. His spots were black, or rather they had been black, but had now turned a dirty brown. He had three spots, one on his head, starting from a crooked bald patch on the side of his nose and reaching half-way down his neck. His long mane, filled with burrs, was white in some places and brownish in others. Another spot extended down his off side to the middle of his belly; the third, on his croup, touched Part of his tail and went half-way down his quarters.

The rest of the tail was whitish and speckled. The big bony head, with deep hollows over the eyes and a black hanging lip that had been torn at some time, hung low and heavily on his neck, which was so lean that it looked as though it were carved of wood. The pendant lip revealed a blackish bitten tongue and the yellow stumps of the worn lower teeth. The ears, one of which was slip, hung low on either side, and only occasionally moved lazily to drive away the pestering flies. Of the forelock, one tuft which was still long hung back behind an ear; the uncovered forehead was dented and rough, and the skin hung down like bags on his broad jaw-bones. The veins of his neck had grown knotty and twitched and shuddered at every touch of a fly. The expression of his face was one of stern patience, thoughtfulness, and suffering.

His forelegs were crooked to a bow at the knees, there were swellings over both hoofs, and on one leg, on which the piebald spot reached

half-way down, there was a swelling at the knee as big as a fist. The hind legs were in better condition, but apparently long ago his haunches had been so rubbed that in places the hair would not grow again. The leanness of his body made all four legs look disproportionately long. The ribs, though straight, were so exposed and the skin so tightly drawn over them, that it seemed to have dried fast to the spaces between. His back and withers were covered with marks of old lashings, and there was a fresh sore behind, still swollen and festering; the black dock of his tail, which showed the vertebrae, hung down long and almost bare.

On his dark-brown croup-near the tail-was a scar, as though of a bite, the size of a man's hand and covered with white hair. Another scarred sore was visible on one of his shoulders. His tail and hocks were dirty because of chronic bowel troubles. The hair on the whole body, though short, stood out straight. Yet in spite of the hideous old age of this horse one involuntarily paused to reflect when one saw him, and an expert would have said at once that he had been a remarkably fine horse in his day.

The expert would even have said that there was only one breed in Russia that could furnish such breadth of bone, such immense knees, such hoofs, such slender cannons, such a well-shaped neck, and above all such a skull, such eyes-large, black, and clear-and such a thoroughbred network of veins on head and neck, and such delicate skin and hair.

There was really something majestic in that horse's figure and in the terrible union in him of repulsive indications of decrepitude, emphasized by the motley colour of his hair, and his manner which expressed the self-confidence and calm assurance that go with beauty and strength. Like a living ruin he stood alone in the midst of the dewy meadow, while not far from him could be heard the tramping, snorting and youthful neighing and whinnying of the scattered herd.

Chapter III

The sun had risen above the forest and now shone brightly on the grass and the winding river. The dew was drying up and condensing into drops, the last of the morning mist was dispersing like tiny smoke-clouds. The cloudlets were becoming curly but there was as yet no wind. Beyond the river the verdant rye stood bristling, its ears curling into little horns, and there was an odour of fresh verdure and blossom.

A cuckoo called rather hoarsely from the forest, and Nester, lying on his back in the grass, was counting the calls to ascertain how many years he still had to live. The larks were rising over the rye and the meadow. A belated hare, finding himself among the horses, leaped into the open, sat down by a bush, and pricked his ears to listen. Vaska fell asleep with his head in the grass; the fillies, making a still wider circle about him, scattered over the field below.

The old mares went about snorting and made a shiny track across the dewy grass, always choosing a place where no one would disturb them. They no longer grazed but only nibbled at choice tufts of grass. The whole herd was moving imperceptibly in one direction.

And again it was old Zhuldyba who, stepping sedately in front of the others, showed the possibility of going farther. Black Mushka, a young mare who had foaled for the first time, with uplifted tail kept whinnying and snorting at her bluish foal; the young filly Satin, sleek and brilliant, bending her head till her black silky forelock hid her forehead and eyes, played with the grass, nipping off a little and tossing it and stamping her leg with its shaggy fetlock all wet with dew.

One of the older foals, probably imagining he was playing some kind of game, with his curly tail raised like a plume, ran for the twenty-sixth time round his mother, who quietly went on grazing, having grown accustomed to her son's ways, and only occasionally glanced askance at him with one of her large black eyes.

One of the very youngest foals, black, with a big head, a tuft sticking up in astonishment between his ears, and a little tail still twisted to one side as it had been in his mother's womb, stood motionless, his ears



pricked and his dull eyes fixed, gazing at the frisking and prancing foal-whether admiring or condemning him it is hard to say.

Some of the foals were sucking and butting with their noses, some-heaven knows why-despite their mother's call were running at an awkward little trot in quite the opposite direction as if searching for something and then, for no apparent reason, stopping and neighing with desperate shrillness. Some lay on their sides in a row, some were learning to eat grass, some again were scratching themselves behind their ears with their hind legs.

Two mares still in foal were walking aPart from the rest and while slowly moving their legs continued to graze. The others evidently respected their condition, and none of the young ones ventured to come near to disturb them. If any saucy youngsters thought of approaching them, the mere movement of an ear or tail sufficed to show them all how improper such behaviour was.

The colts and yearling fillies, pretending to be grownup and sedate, rarely jumped or joined the merry company. They grazed in a dignified manner, curving their close-cropped swan-like necks, and flourished their little broom-like tails as if they also had long ones. Just like the grown-ups they lay down, rolled over, or rubbed one another. The merriest group was composed of the two-and three-year-old fillies and mares not yet in foal.

They almost always walked about together like a separate merry virgin crowd. Among them you could hear sounds of tramping, whinnying, neighing, and snorting. They drew close together, put their heads over one another's necks, sniffed at one another, jumped, and sometimes at a semi-trot, semi-amble, with tails lifted like an oriflamme, raced proudly and coquettishly past their companions. The most beautiful and spirited of them was the mischievous chestnut filly.

What she devised the others did; wherever she went the whole crowd of beauties followed. That morning the naughty one was in a specially playful mood. She was seized with a joyous fit, just as human beings

sometimes are. Already at the riverside she had played a trick on the old gelding, and after that she ran along through the water pretending to be frightened by something, gave a hoarse squeal, and raced full speed into the field so that Vaska had to gallop after her and the others who followed her. Then after grazing a little she began rolling, then teasing the old mares by dashing in front of them, then she drove away a small foal from the dam and chased it as if meaning to bite it.

Its mother was frightened and stopped grazing, while the little foal cried in a piteous tone, but the mischievous one did not touch him at all, she only wanted to frighten him and give a performance for the benefit of her companions, who watched her escapade approvingly. Then she set out to turn the head of a little roan horse with which a peasant was ploughing in a rye-field far beyond the river. She stopped, proudly lifted her head somewhat to one side, shook herself, and neighed in a sweet, tender, long-drawn voice. Mischief, feeling, and a certain sadness were expressed in that call. There was in it the desire for and the promise of love, and a pining for it.

“There in the thick reeds is a corn-crake running backwards and forwards and calling passionately to his mate; there is the cuckoo, and the quails are singing of love, and the flowers are sending their fragrant dust to each other by the wind. And I too am young and beautiful and strong.” The mischievous one’s voice said, “but it has not yet been allowed me to know the sweetness of that feeling, and not only to experience it, but no lover-not a single one-has ever seen me!”

And this neighing, sad and youthful and fraught with feeling, was borne over the lowland and the field to the roan horse far away. He pricked up his ears and stopped. The peasant kicked him with his bast shoe, but the little horse was so enchanted by the silvery sound of the distant neighing that he neighed too. The peasant grew angry, pulled at the reins, and kicked the little roan so painfully in the stomach with his bast shoes that he could not finish his neigh and walked on. But the little roan felt a sense of sweetness and sadness, and for a long time the sounds of unfinished and passionate neighing, and of the peasant’s angry voice, were carried from the distant rye-field over to the herd.

If the sound of her voice alone so overpowered the little roan that he forgot his duty, what would have happened had he seen the naughty beauty as she stood pricking her ears, breathing in the air with dilated nostrils, ready to run, trembling with her whole beautiful body, and calling to him?

But the mischievous one did not brood long over her impressions. When the neighing of the roan died away she gave another scornful neigh, lowered her head, and began pawing the ground, and then she went to wake and to tease the piebald gelding. The piebald gelding was the constant martyr and butt of those happy youngsters. He suffered more from them than at the hands of men. He did no harm to either. People needed him, but why should these young horses torment him?

#### Chapter IV

He was old, they were young; he was lean, they were sleek; he was miserable, they were gay; and so he was quite alien to them, an outsider, an utterly different creature whom it was impossible for them to pity. Horses only have pity on themselves and very occasionally on those in whose skins they can easily imagine themselves to be. But was it the old gelding's fault that he was old, poor, and ugly?

One might think not, but in equine ethics it was, and only those were right who were strong, young, and happy—those who had life still before them, whose every muscle quivered with superfluous energy, and whose tails stood erect. Maybe the piebald gelding himself understood this and in his quiet moments was ready to agree that it was his fault that he had already lived his life, and that he had to pay for that life, but after all he was a horse and often could not suppress a sense of resentment, sadness, and indignation when he looked at those youngsters who tormented him for what would befall them all at the end of their lives. Another cause of the horses' lack of pity was their aristocratic pride. Every one of them traced back its pedigree, through father or mother, to the famous Creamy, while the piebald was of

unknown parentage. He was a chance comer, purchased three years before at a fair for eighty assignat rubles.

The chestnut filly, as if taking a stroll, passed close by the piebald gelding's nose and pushed him. He knew at once what it was, and without opening his eyes laid back his ears and showed his teeth. The filly wheeled round as if to kick him. The gelding opened his eyes and stepped aside. He did not want to sleep any more and began to graze. The mischief-maker, followed by her companions, again approached the gelding. A very stupid two-year-old white-spotted filly who always imitated the chestnut in everything went up with her and, as imitators always do, went to greater lengths than the instigator. The chestnut always went up as if intent on business of her own and passed by the gelding's nose without looking at him, so that he really did not know whether to be angry or not, and that was really funny.

She did the same now, but the white-spotted one, who followed her and had grown particularly lively, bumped right against the gelding with her chest. He again showed his teeth, whinnied, and with an agility one could not have expected of him, rushed after her and bit her flank. The white-spotted one kicked out with all her strength and dealt the old horse a heavy blow on his thin bare ribs. He snorted heavily and was going to rush at her again but bethought himself and drawing a deep sigh stepped aside. The whole crowd of young ones must have taken as a personal affront the impertinence the piebald gelding had permitted himself to offer to the white-spotted one and for the rest of the day did not let him graze in peace for a moment, so that the keeper had to quieten them several times and could not understand what had come over them.

The gelding felt so offended that he went up himself to Nester when the old man was getting ready to drive the horses home and felt happier and quieter when he was saddled and the old man had mounted him.

God knows what the gelding was thinking as he carried old Nester on his back: whether he thought bitterly of the pertinacious and merciless

youngsters or forgave his tormenters with the contemptuous and silent pride suited old age. At all events he did not betray his thoughts till he reached home.

That evening as Nester drove the horses past the huts of the domestic serfs, he noticed a peasant horse and cart tethered to his porch: some friends had come to see him. When driving the horses in he was in such a hurry that he let the gelding in without unsaddling him and, shouting to Vaska to do it, shut the gate and went to his friends. Whether because of the affront to the white-spotted filly-Creamy's great-granddaughter-by that "mangy trash" bought at the horse fair, who did not know his father or mother, and the consequent outrage to the aristocratic sentiment of the whole herd, or because the gelding with his high saddle and without a rider presented a strangely fantastic spectacle to the horses, at any rate something quite unusual occurred that night in the paddock.

All the horses, young and old, ran after the gelding, showing their teeth and driving him all round the yard; one heard the sound of hoofs striking against his bare ribs, and his deep moaning. He could no longer endure this, nor could he avoid the blows. He stopped in the middle of the paddock, his face expressing first the repulsive weak malevolence of helpless old age, and then despair: he dropped his ears, and then something happened that caused all the horses to quiet down. The oldest of the mares, Vyazapurikha, went up to the gelding, sniffed at him, and sighed. The gelding sighed too. . . .

## Chapter V

In the middle of the moonlit paddock stood the tall gaunt figure of the gelding, still wearing the high saddle with its prominent peak at the bow. The horses stood motionless and in deep silence around him as if they were learning something new and unexpected. This is what they learnt from him . . .

## First Night

Yes, I am the son of Affable I and of Baba. My pedigree name is Muzhik, and I was nicknamed Strider by the crowd because of my long and sweeping strides, the like of which was nowhere to be found in all Russia. There is no more thoroughbred horse in the world. I should never have told you this. What good would it have done? You would never have recognized me: even Vyazapurikha, who was with me in Khrenovo, did not recognize me till now. You would not have believed me if Vyazapurikha were not here to be my witness, and I should never have told you this. I don't need equine sympathy. But you wished it. Yes, I am that Strider whom connoisseurs are looking for and cannot find-that Strider whom the count himself knew and got rid of from his stud because I outran Swan, his favourite.

When I was born I did not know what \*piebald\* meant-I thought I was just a horse. I remember that the first remark we heard about my colour struck my mother and me deeply.

I suppose I was born in the night; by the morning, having been licked over by my mother, I already stood on my feet. I remember I kept wanting something and that everything seemed very surprising and yet very simple. Our stalls opened into a long war passage and had latticed doors through which everything could be seen.

My mother offered me her teats but I was still so innocent that I poked my nose now between her forelegs and now under her udder. Suddenly she glanced at the latticed door and lifting her leg over me stepped aside. The groom on duty was looking into our stall through the lattice. "Why, Baba has foaled!" he said, and began to draw the bolt. He came in over the fresh bedding and put his arms round me. "Just look, Taras!" he shouted, "what a piebald he is-a regular magpie!"

I darted away from him and fell on my knees.

"Look at him-the little devil!"

My mother became disquieted but did not take my Part; she only stepped a little to one side with a very deep sigh. Other grooms came to look at me, and one of them ran to tell the stud groom. Everybody laughed when they looked at my spots, and they gave me all kinds of strange names, but neither I nor my mother understood those

words. Till then there had been no piebalds among all my relatives. We did not think there was anything bad in it. Everybody even praised my strength and my form.

“See what a frisky fellow!” said the groom. “There’s no holding him.” Before long the stud groom came and began to express astonishment at my colour; he even seemed aggrieved.

“And who does the little monster take after?” he said. “The general won’t keep him in the stud. Oh, Baba, you have played me a trick!” he addressed my mother. “You might at least have dropped one with just a star-but this one is all piebald!”

My mother did not reply but as usual on such occasions drew a sigh. “And what devil does he take after-he’s just like a peasant-horse!” he continued. “He can’t be left in the stud-he’d shame us. But he’s well built-very well!” said he, and so did everyone who saw me.

A few days later the general himself came and looked at me, and again everyone seemed horrified at something, and abused me and my mother for the colour of my hair. “But he’s a fine colt-very fine!” said all who saw me.

Until spring we all lived separately in the brood mares’ stable, each with our mother, and only occasionally when the snow on the stable roofs began to melt in the sun were we let out with our mothers into the large paddock strewn with fresh straw. There I first came to know all my near and my distant relations. Here I saw all the famous mares of the day coming out from different doors with their little foals.

There was the old mare Dutch, Fly (Creamy’s daughter), Ruddy the riding-horse, Wellwisher-all celebrities at that time. They all gathered together with their foals, walking about in the sunshine, rolling on the fresh straw and sniffing at one another like ordinary horses. I have never forgotten the sight of that paddock full of the beauties of that day. It seems strange to you to think, and hard to believe, that I was ever young and frisky, but it was so. This same Vyazapurikha was then a yearling filly whose mane had just been cut; a dear, merry, lively little thing, but-and I do not say it to offend her-although among you she is

now considered a remarkable thoroughbred she was then among the poorest horses in the stud. She will herself confirm this.

My mottled appearance, which men so disliked, was very attractive to all the horses; they all came round me, admired me, and frisked about with me. I began to forget what men said about my mottled appearance and felt happy. But I soon experienced the first sorrow of my life and the cause of it was my mother. When the thaw had set in, the sparrows twittered under the eaves, spring was felt more strongly in the air, and my mother's treatment of me changed.

Her whole disposition changed: she would frisk about without any reason and run round the yard, which did not at all accord with her dignified age; then she would consider and begin to neigh, and would bite and kick her sister mares, and then begin to sniff at me and snort discontentedly; then on going out into the sun she would lay her head across the shoulder of her cousin, Lady Merchant, dreamily rub her back, and push me away from her teats.

One day the stud groom came and had a halter put on her and she was led out of the stall. She neighed and I answered and rushed after her, but she did not even look back at me. The strapper, Taras, seized me in his arms while they were closing the door after my mother had been led out.

I bolted and upset the strapper on the straw, but the door was shut and I could only hear the receding sound of my mother's neighing; and that neigh did not sound like a call to me but had another expression. Her voice was answered from afar by a powerful voice-that of Dobry I, as I learned later, who was being led by two grooms, one on each side, to meet my mother.

I don't remember how Taras got out of my stall: I felt too sad, for I knew that I had lost my mother's love for ever. "And it's all because I am piebald!" I thought, remembering what people said about my colour, and such passionate anger overcame me that I began to beat my head and knees against the walls of the stall and continued till I was sweating all over and quite exhausted.



After a while my mother came back to me. I heard her run up the passage at a trot and with an unusual gait. They opened the door for her and I hardly knew her-she had grown so much younger and more beautiful. She sniffed at me, snorted, and began to whinny. Her whole demeanour showed that she no longer loved me.

She told me of Dobry's beauty and her love of him. Those meetings continued and the relations between my mother and me grew colder and colder.

Soon after that we were let out to pasture. I now discovered new joys which made up to me for the loss of my mother's love. I had friends and companions. Together we learnt to eat grass, to neigh like the grown-ups, and to gallop round our mothers with lifted tails. That was a happy time. Everything was forgiven me, everybody loved me, admired me, and looked indulgently at anything I did. But that did not last long. Soon afterwards something dreadful happened to me. . . .

The gelding heaved a deep sigh and walked away from the other horses.

The dawn had broken long before. The gates creaked. Nester came in, and the horses separated. The keeper straightened the saddle on the gelding's back and drove the horses out.

## Chapter VI

### Second Night

As soon as the horses had been driven in they again gathered round the piebald, who continued:

In August they separated me from my mother and I did not feel particularly grieved. I saw that she was again heavy (with my brother, the famous Usan) and that I could no longer be to her what I had been. I was not jealous but felt that I had become indifferent to her. Besides, I knew that having left my mother I should be put in the general division of foals, where we were kept two or three together and were every day let out in a crowd into the open. I was in the same stall with Darling.

Darling was a saddle-horse, who was subsequently ridden by the Emperor and portrayed in pictures and sculpture.

At that time he was a mere foal, with a soft glossy coat, a swanlike neck, and straight slender legs taut as the strings of an instrument. He was always lively, good-tempered, and amiable, always ready to gambol, exchange licks, and lay tricks on horse or man. Living together as we did we involuntarily made friends, and our friendship lasted the whole of our youth. He was merry and giddy. Even then he began to make love, courted the fillies, and laughed at my guilelessness. To my misfortune vanity led me to imitate him, and I was soon carried away and fell in love. And this early tendency of mine was the cause of the greatest change in my fate. It happened that I was carried away...

Vyazapurikha was a year older than I, and we were special friends, but towards the autumn I noticed that she began to be shy with me... But I will not speak of that unfortunate period of my first love; she herself remembers my mad passion, which ended for me in the most important change of my life.

The strappers rushed to drive her away and to beat me. That evening I was shut up in a special stall where I neighed all night as if foreseeing what was to happen next.

In the morning the General, the stud groom, the stablemen and the strappers came into the passage where my stall was, and there was a terrible hubbub. The General said that he would have everybody flogged, and that it would not do to keep young stallions. The stud groom promised that he would have everything attended to. They grew quiet and went away. I did not understand anything, but could see that they were planning something concerning me.

The day after that I ceased neighing for ever. I became what I am now. The whole world was changed in my eyes. Nothing mattered any more; I became self-absorbed and began to brood. At first everything seemed repulsive to me. I even ceased to eat, drink, or walk, and there was no idea of playing. Now and then it occurred to me to give a kick, to gallop,

or to start neighing, but immediately came the question: Why? What for? and all my energy died away.

One evening I was being exercised just when the horses were driven back from pasture. I saw in the distance a cloud of dust enveloping the indistinct but familiar outlines of all our brood mares. I heard their cheerful snorting and the trampling of their feet. I stopped, though the cord of the halter by which the groom was leading me cut the nape of my neck, and I gazed at the approaching drove as one gazes at happiness that is lost for ever and cannot return. They approached, and I could distinguish one after another all the familiar, beautiful, stately, healthy, sleek figures. Some of them also turned to look at me.

I was unconscious of the pain the groom's jerking at my halter inflicted. I forgot myself and from old habit involuntarily neighed and began to trot, but my neighing sounded sad, ridiculous, and meaningless. No one in the drove made sport of me, but I noticed that out of decorum many of them turned away from me. They evidently felt it repugnant, pitiable, indelicate, and above all ridiculous, to look at my thin expressionless neck, my large head (I had grown lean in the meantime), my long, awkward legs, and the silly awkward gait with which by force of habit I trotted round the groom. No one answered my neighing—they all looked away. Suddenly I understood it all, understood how far I was for ever removed from them, and I do not remember how I got home with the groom.

Already before that I had shown a tendency towards gravity and thoughtfulness, but now a decided change came over me. My being piebald, which aroused such curious contempt in men, my terrible and unexpected misfortune, and also my peculiar position in the stud farm which I felt but was unable to explain made me retire into myself. I pondered over the injustice of men, who blamed me for being piebald; I pondered on the inconstancy of mother-love and feminine love in general and on its dependence on physical conditions; and above all I pondered on the characteristics of that strange race of animals with whom we are so closely connected, and whom we call men—those

characteristics which were the source of my own peculiar position in the stud farm, which I felt but could not understand.

The meaning of this peculiarity in people and the characteristic on which it is based was shown me by the following occurrence.

It was in winter at holiday time. I had not been fed or watered all day. As I learnt later this happened because the lad who fed us was drunk. That day the stud groom came in, saw that I had no food, began to use bad language about the missing lad, and then went away.

Next day the lad came into our stable with another groom to give us hay. I noticed that he was Particularly pale and sad and that in the expression of his long back especially there was something significant which evoked compassion.

He threw the hay angrily over the grating. I made a move to put my head over his shoulder, but he struck me such a painful blow on the nose with his fist that I started back. Then he kicked me in the belly with his boot.

"If it hadn't been for this scurvy beast," he said, "nothing would have happened!"

"How's that?" inquired the other groom.

"You see, he doesn't go to look after the count's horses but visits his own twice a day."

"What, have they given him the piebald?" asked the other.

"Given it, or sold it-the devil only knows! The count's horses might all starve-he wouldn't care-but just dare to leave \*his\* colt without food! 'Lie down!' he says, and they begin walloping me! No Christianity in it. He has more pity on a beast than on a man. He must be an infidel-he counted the strokes himself, the barbarian! The general never flogged like that! My whole back is covered with wales. There's no Christian soul in him!"

What they said about flogging and Christianity I understood well enough, but I was quite in the dark as to what they meant by the words "his cold," from which I perceived that people considered that there

was some connexion between me and the head groom. What the connexion was I could not at all understand then. Only much later when they separated me from the other horses did I learn what it meant. At that time I could not at all understand what they meant by speaking of \*me\* as being a man's property. The words "my horse" applied to me, a live horse, seemed to me as strange as to say "my land," "my air," or "my water."

But those words had an enormous effect on me. I thought of them constantly and only after long and varied relations with men did I at last understand the meaning they attach to these strange words, which indicate that men are guided in life not by deeds but by words. They like not so much to do or abstain from doing anything, as to be able to apply conventional words to different objects. Such words, considered very important among them, are my and mine, which they apply to various things, creatures or objects: even to land, people, and horses. They have agreed that of any given thing only one person may use the word \*mine\*, and he who in this game of theirs may use that conventional word about the greatest number of things is considered the happiest. Why this is so I do not know, but it is so. For a long time I tried to explain it by some direct advantage they derive from it, but this proved wrong.

For instance, many of those who called me their horse did not ride me, quite other people rode me; nor did they feed me- quite other people did that. Again it was not those who called me \*their\* horse who treated me kindly, but coachmen, veterinaries, and in general quite other people. Later on, having widened my field of observation, I became convinced that not only as applied to us horses, but in regard to other things, the idea of mine has no other basis than a low, mercenary instinct in men, which they call the feeling or right of property. A man who never lives in it says "my house" but only concerns himself with its building and maintenance; and a tradesman talks of "my cloth business" but has none of his clothes made of the best cloth that is in his shop.

There are people who call land theirs, though they have never seen that land and never walked on it. There are people who call other people theirs but have never seen those others, and the whole relationship of the owners to the owned is that they do them harm.

There are men who call women their women or their wives; yet these women live with other men. And men strive in life not to do what they think right but to call as many things as possible \*their own\*.

I am now convinced that in this lies the essential difference between men and us. Therefore, not to speak of other things in which we are superior to men, on this ground alone we may boldly say that in the scale of living creatures we stand higher than man. The activity of men, at any rate of those I have had to do with, is guided by words, while ours is guided by deeds.

It was this right to speak of me as my horse that the stud groom had obtained, and that was why he had the stable lad flogged. This discovery much astonished me and, together with the thoughts and opinions aroused in men by my piebald colour, and the thoughtfulness produced in me by my mother's betrayal, caused me to become the serious and thoughtful gelding that I am.

I was thrice unfortunate: I was piebald, I was a gelding, and people considered that I did not belong to God and to myself, as is natural to all living creatures, but that I belonged to the stud groom.

Their thinking this about me had many consequences. The first was that I was kept apart from the other horses, was better fed, oftener taken out on the line, and was broken in at an earlier age. I was first harnessed in my third year. I remember how the stud groom, who imagined I was his, himself began to harness me with a crowd of other grooms, expecting me to prove unruly or to resist. They put ropes round me to lead me into the shafts, put a cross of broad straps on my back and fastened it to the shafts so that I could not kick, while I was only awaiting an opportunity to show my readiness and love of work.

They were surprised that I started like an old horse. They began to brake me and I began to practise trotting. Every day I made greater and greater progress, so that after three months the general himself and many others approved of my pace. But strange to say, just because they considered me not as their own, but as belonging to the head groom, they regarded my paces quite differently.

The stallions who were my brothers were raced, their records were kept, people went to look at them, drove them in gilt sulkies, and expensive horse-cloths were thrown over them. I was driven in a common sulky to Chesmenka and other farms on the head groom's business. All this was the result of my being piebald, and especially of my being in their opinion, not the count's, but the head groom's property.

Tomorrow, if we are alive, I will tell you the chief consequence for me of this right of property the head groom considered himself to have.

All that day the horses treated Strider respectfully, but Nester's treatment of him was as rough as ever. The peasant's little roan horse neighed again on coming up to the herd, and the chestnut filly again coquettishly replied to him.

## Chapter VII

### Third Night

The new moon had risen and its narrow crescent lit up Strider's figure as he once again stood in the middle of the stable yard. The other horses crowded round him:

The gelding continued:

For me the most surprising consequence of my not being the count's, nor God's, but the head groom's, was that the very thing that constitutes our chief merit—a fast pace—was the cause of my banishment. They were driving Swan round the track, and the head groom, returning from Chemenka, drove me up and stopped there. Swan went past. He went well, but all the same he was showing off and

had not the exactitude I had developed in myself-so that directly one foot touched the ground another instantaneously lifted and not the lightest effort was lost but every atom of exertion carried me forward. Swan went by us. I pulled towards the ring and the head groom did not check me.

“Here, shall I try my piebald?” he shouted, and when next Swan came abreast of us he let me go. Swan was already going fast, and so I was left behind during the first round, but in the second I began to gain on him, drew near to his sulky, drew level-and passed him. They tried us again-it was the same thing. I was the faster. And this dismayed everybody. The general asked that I should be sold at once to some distant place, so that nothing more should be heard of me: “Or else the count will get to know of it and there will be trouble!” So they sold me to a horse-dealer as a shaft-horse. I did not remain with him long. An hussar who came to buy remounts bought me.

All this was so unfair, so cruel, that I was glad when they took me away from Khrenovo and parted me for ever from all that had been familiar and dear to me. It was too painful for me among them. They had love, honour, freedom, before them! I had labour, humiliation; humiliation, labour, to the end of my life. And why? Because I was piebald, and because of that had to become somebody’s horse. . . .

Strider could not continue that evening. An event occurred in the enclosure that upset all the horses. Kupchikha, a mare big with foal, who had stood listening to the story, suddenly turned away and walked slowly into the shed, and there began to groan so that it drew the attention of all the horses. Then she lay down, then got up again, and again lay down. The old mares understood what was happening to her, but the young ones became excited and, leaving the gelding, surrounded the invalid. Towards morning there was a new foal standing unsteadily on its little legs. Nester shouted to the groom, and the mare and foal were taken into a stall and the other horses driven to the pasture without them.

## Chapter VIII



## Fourth Night

In the evening when the gate was closed and all had quieted down, the piebald continued:

I have had the opportunity to make many observations both of men and horses during the time I passed from hand to hand.

I stayed longest of all with two masters: a prince (an officer of hussars), and later with an old lady who lived near the church of St. Nicholas the Wonder Worker.

The happiest years of my life I spent with the officer of hussars.

Though he was the cause of my ruin, and though he never loved anything or anyone, I loved and still love him for that very reason.

What I liked about him was that he was handsome, happy, rich, and therefore never loved anybody.

You understand that lofty equine feeling of ours. His coldness and my dependence on him gave special strength to my love for him. "Kill me, drive me till my wind is broken!" I used to think in our good days, "and I shall be all the happier."

He bought me from an agent to whom the head groom had sold me for eight hundred rubles, and he did so just because no one else had piebald horses. That was my best time. He had a mistress. I knew this because I took him to her every day and sometimes took them both out.

His mistress was a handsome woman, and he was handsome, and his coachman was handsome, and I loved them all because they were. Life was worth living then. This was how our time was spent: in the morning the groom came to rub me down-not the coachman himself but the groom. The groom was a lad from among the peasants. He would open the door, let out the steam from the horses, throw out the droppings, take off our rugs, and begin to fidget over our bodies with a brush, and lay whitish streaks of dandruff from a curry-comb on the boards of the floor that was dented by our rough horseshoes. I would playfully nip his

sleeve and paw the ground. Then we were led out one after another to the trough filled with cold water, and the lad would admire the smoothness of my spotted coat which he had polished, my foot with its broad hoof, my legs straight as an arrow, my glossy quarters, and my back wide enough to sleep on. Hay was piled onto the high racks, and the oak cribs were filled with oats. Then Feofan, the head coachman, would come in.

Master and coachman resembled one another. Neither of them was afraid of anything or cared for anyone but himself, and for that reason everybody liked them. Feofan wore a red shirt, black velveteen knickerbockers, and a sleeveless coat. I liked it on a holiday when he would come into the stable, his hair pomaded, and wearing his sleeveless coat, and would shout, "Now then, beastie, have you forgotten?" and push me with the handle of the stable fork, never so as to hurt me but just as a joke. I immediately knew that it was a joke and laid back an ear, making my teeth click.

We had a black stallion, who drove in a pair. At night they used to put me in harness with him. That Polkan, as he was called, did not understand a joke but was simply vicious as the devil. I was in the stall next to his and sometimes we bit one another seriously. Feofan was not afraid of him. He would come up and give a shout: it looked as if Polkan would kill him, but no, he'd miss, and Feofan would put the harness on him.

Once he and I bolted down Smiths Bridge Street. Neither my master nor the coachman was frightened; they laughed, shouted at the people, checked us, and turned so that no one was run over.

In their service I lost my best qualities and half my life. They ruined me by watering me wrongly, and they foundered me. . . . Still, for all that, it was the best time of my life. At twelve o'clock they would come to harness me, black my hoofs, moisten my forelock and mane, and put me in the shafts.

The sledge was of plaited cane upholstered with velvet; the reins were of silk, the harness had silver buckles, sometimes there was a cover of

silken fly-net, and altogether it was such that when all the traces and straps were fastened it was difficult to say where the harness ended and the horse began. We were harnessed at ease in the stable. Feofan would come, broader at his hips than at the shoulders, his red belt up under his arms: he would examine the harness, take his seat, wrap his coat round him, put his foot into the sledge stirrup, let off some joke, and for appearance sake always hang a whip over his arm though he hardly ever hit me, and would say, "Let go!" and playfully stepping from foot to foot I would move out of the gate, and the cook who had come out to empty the slops would stop on the threshold and the peasant who had brought wood into the yard would open his eyes wide. We would come out, go a little way, and stop. Footmen would come out and other coachmen, and a chatter would begin. Everybody would wait: sometimes we had to stand for three hours at the entrance, moving a little way, turning back, and standing again.

At last there would be a stir in the hall: old Tikhon with his paunch would rush out in his dress coat and cry, "Drive up!" (In those days there was not that stupid way of saying, "Forward!" as if one did not know that we moved forward and not back.) Feofan would cluck, drive up, and the prince would hurry out carelessly, as though there were nothing remarkable about the sledge, or the horse, or Feofan-who bent his back and stretched out his arms so that it seemed it would be impossible for him to keep them long in that position. The prince would have a shako on his head and wear a fur coat with a grey beaver collar hiding his rosy, black-browed, handsome face, that should never have been concealed. He would come out clattering his sabre, his spurs, and the brass backs of the heels of his overshoes, stepping over the carpet as if in a hurry and taking no notice of me or Feofan whom everybody but he looked at and admired. Feofan would cluck, I would tug at the reins, and respectably, at a foot pace, we would draw up to the entrance and stop. I would turn my eyes on the prince and jerk my thoroughbred head with its delicate forelock. . . .

The prince would be in good spirits and would sometimes jest with Feofan. Feofan would reply, half turning his handsome head, and without lowering his arms would make a scarcely perceptible

movement with the reins which I understand: and then one, two, three . . . with ever wider and wider strides, every muscle quivering, and sending the muddy snow against the front of the sledge, I would go. In those days, too, there was none of the present-day stupid habit of crying "Oh!" as if the coachman were in pain, instead of the sensible "Be off! Take care!" Feofan would shout, "Be off! Look out there!" and the people would step aside and stand craning their necks to see the handsome gelding, the handsome coachman, and the handsome gentleman. . . .

I was Particularly fond of passing a trotter. When Feofan and I saw at a distance a turn-out worthy of the effort, we would fly like a whirlwind and gradually gain on it. Now, throwing the dirt right to the back of the sledge, I would draw level with the occupant of the vehicle and snort above his head: then I would reach the horse's harness and the arch of his troyka, and then would no longer see it but only hear its sounds in the distance behind. And the prince, Feofan, and I, would all be silent, and pretend to be merely going on our own business and not even to notice those with slow horses whom we happened to meet on our way. I liked to pass another horse but also liked to meet a good trotter. An instant, a sound, a glance, and we had passed each other and were flying in opposite directions.

The gate creaked and the voices of Nester and Vaska were heard.

### Fifth Night

The weather began to break up. It had been dull since morning and there was no dew, but it was warm and the mosquitoes were troublesome. As soon as the horses were driven in they collected round the piebald, and he finished his story as follows:

The happy period of my life was soon over. I lived in that way only two years. Towards the end of the second winter the happiest event of my life occurred, and following it came my greatest misfortune. It was during carnival week. I took the prince to the races. Glossy and Bull were running. I don't know what people were doing in the pavilion, but I know the prince came out and ordered Feofan to drive onto the track.

I remember how they took me in and placed me beside Glossy. He was harnessed to a racing sulky and I, just as I was, to a town sledge. I outstripped him at the turn. Roars of laughter and howls of delight greeted me.

When I was led in, a crowd followed me and five or six people offered the prince thousands for me. He only laughed, showing his white teeth. "No," he said, "this isn't a horse, but a friend. I wouldn't sell him for mountains of gold. \*Au revoir\*, gentlemen!"

He unfastened the sledge apron and got in.

"To Ostozenka Street!"

That was where his mistress lived, and off we flew. . . .

That was our last happy day. We reached her home. He spoke of her as his, but she loved someone else and had run away with him. The prince learnt this at her lodgings. It was five o'clock, and without unharnessing me he started in pursuit of her. They did what had never been done to me before-struck me with the whip and made me gallop. For the first time I fell out of step and felt ashamed and wished to correct it, but suddenly I heard the prince shout in an unnatural voice: "Get on!" The whip whistled through the air and cut me, and I galloped, striking my foot against the iron front of the sledge. We overtook her after going sixteen miles.

I got him there but trembled all night long and could not eat anything. In the morning they gave me water. I drank it and after that was never again the horse that I had been. I was ill, and they tormented me and maimed me-doctoring me, as people call it. My hoofs came off, I had swellings and my legs grew bent; my chest sank in and I became altogether limp and weak. I was sold to a horse-dealer who fed me on carrots and something else and made something of me quite unlike myself, though good enough to deceive one who did not know. My strength and my pace were gone.

When purchasers came the dealer also tormented me by coming into my stall and beating me with a heavy whip to frighten and madden me. Then he would rub down the stripes on my coat and lead me out.

An old woman bought me of him. She always drove to the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonder Worker, and she used to have her coachman flogged. He used to weep in my stall and I learnt that tears have a pleasant, salty taste. Then the old woman died. Her steward took me to the country and sold me to a hawker. Then I overate myself with wheat and grew still worse. They sold me to a peasant. There I ploughed, and had hardly anything to eat, my foot got cut by a ploughshare, and I again became ill. Then a gipsy took me in exchange for something. He tormented me terribly and finally sold me to the steward here. And here I am.

All were silent. A sprinkling of rain began to fall.

## Chapter IX

### The Evening After

As the herd returned home the following evening they encountered their master with a visitor. Zhuldyba when nearing the house looked askance at the two male figures: one was the young master in his straw hat, the other a tall, stout, bloated military man. The old mare gave the man a side-glance and, swerving, went near him; the others, the young ones, were flustered and hesitated, especially when the master and his visitor purposely stepped among them, pointing something out to one another and talking.

“That one, the dapple grey, I bought of Voekov,” said the master.

“And where did you get that young black mare with the white legs?

She’s a fine one!” said the visitor. They looked over many of the horses going forward and stopping them. They noticed the chestnut filly too.

“That is one I kept of Khrenov’s saddle-horse breed,” said the master.

They could not see all the horses as they walked past, and the master called to Nester, and the old man, tapping the sides of the piebald with his heels, trotted forward. The piebald limped on one leg but moved in a way that showed that as long as his strength lasted he would not murmur on any account, even if they wanted him to run in that way to

the end of the world. He was even ready to gallop and tried to do so with his right leg.

“There, I can say for certain there is no better horse in Russia than this one,” said the master, pointing to one of the mares. The visitor admired it. The master walked about excitedly, ran forward, and showed his visitor all the horses, mentioning the origin and pedigree of each. The visitor evidently found the master’s talk dull but devised some questions to show interest.

“Yes, yes,” he said absent-mindedly.

“Just look,” said the master, not answering a question. “Look at her legs. . . . She cost me a lot but has a third foal already in harness.”

“And trots well?” asked the guest.

So they went past all the horses till there were no more to show. Then they were silent.

“Well, shall we go now?”

“Yes, let’s go.”

They went through the gate. The visitor was glad the exhibition was over and that he could now go to the house where they could eat and drink and smoke, and he grew perceptibly brighter. As he went past Nester, who sat on the piebald waiting for orders, the visitor slapped the piebald’s crupper with his big fat hand.

“What an ornamented one!” he said. “I once had a piebald like him; do you remember my telling you of him?”

The master, finding that it was not his horse that was being spoken about, paid no attention but kept looking round at his own herd. Suddenly above his ear he heard a dull, weak, senile neigh. It was the piebald that had begun to neigh and had broken off as if ashamed. Neither the visitor nor the master paid any attention to this neighing, but went into the house.

In the flabby old man Strider had recognized his beloved master, the once brilliant, handsome, and wealthy Serpukhovskoy.

## Chapter X

It kept on drizzling. In the stable yard it was gloomy, but in the master's house it was very different. The table was laid in a luxurious drawing-room for a luxurious evening tea, and at it sat the host, the hostess, and their guest.

The hostess, her pregnancy made very noticeable by her figure, her strained convex pose, her plumpness, and especially by her large eyes with their mild inward look, sat by the samovar.

The host held in his hand a box of special, ten-year-old cigars, such as he said no one else had, and he was preparing to boast about them to his guest. The host was a handsome man of about twenty-five, fresh-looking, well cared for, and well groomed. In the house he was wearing a new loose thick suit made in London. Large expensive pendants hung from his watch-chain. His gold-mounted turquoise shirt studs were also large and massive. He had a beard a la Napoleon III, and the tips of his moustache stuck out in a way that could only have been learned in Paris.

The hostess wore a dress of silk gauze with a large floral pattern of many colours, and large gold hair-pins of a peculiar pattern held up her thick, light-brown hair-beautiful though not all her own. On her arms and hands she wore many bracelets and rings, all of them expensive.

The tea-service was of delicate china and the samovar of silver. A footman, resplendent in dress-coat, white waistcoat and necktie, stood like a statue by the door awaiting orders. The furniture was elegantly carved and upholstered in bright colours, the wall-paper dark with a large flowered pattern. Beside the table, tinkling the silver bells on its collar, was a Particularly fine whippet, whose difficult English name its owners, who neither of them knew English, pronounced.

In the corner, surrounded by plants, stood an inlaid piano. Everything gave an impression of newness, luxury, and rarity. Everything was good, but it all bore an imprint of superfluity, wealth, and the absence of intellectual interests.



The host, a lover of trotting races, was sturdy and full-blooded-one of that never-dying race which drives about in sable coats, throws expensive bouquets to actresses, drinks the most expensive wines with the most fashionable labels at the most expensive restaurants, offers prizes engraved with the donor's name, and keeps the most expensive mistresses.

Nikita Serpukhovskoy, their guest, was a man of over forty, tall, stout, bald-headed, with heavy moustaches and whiskers. He must once have been very handsome but had now evidently sunk physically, morally, and financially.

He had such debts that he had been obliged to enter the government service to avoid imprisonment for debt and was now on his way to a provincial town to become the head of a stud farm, a post some important relatives had obtained for him.

He wore a military coat and blue trousers of a kind only a rich man would have had made for himself. His shirt was of similar quality and so was his English watch. His boots had wonderful soles as thick as a man's finger.

Nikita Serpukhovskoy had during his life run through a fortune of two million rubles, and was now a hundred and twenty thousand in debt. In cases of that kind there always remains a certain momentum of life enabling a man to obtain credit and continue living almost luxuriously for another ten years.

These ten years were however coming to an end, the momentum was exhausted, and life was growing hard for Nikita. He was already beginning to drink-that is, to get fuddled with wine, a thing that used not to happen, though strictly speaking he had never begun or left off drinking. His decline was most noticeable in the restlessness of his glance (his eyes had grown shifty) and in the uncertainty of his voice and movements. This restlessness struck one the more as it had evidently got hold of him only recently, for one could see that he had all his life been accustomed not to be afraid of anything or anybody and

had only recently, through heavy suffering, reached this state of fear so unnatural to him.

His host and hostess noticed this and exchanged glances which showed that they understood one another and were only postponing till bedtime a detailed discussion of the subject, putting up meanwhile with poor Nikita and even showing him attentions.

The sight of his young host's good fortune humiliated Serpukhovskoy, awakening a painful envy in him as he recalled his own irrecoverable past.

"Do you mind my smoking a cigar, Marie?" he asked, addressing the lady in the peculiar tone acquired only by experience—the tone, polite and friendly but not quite respectful, in which men who know the world speak to kept women in contradistinction to wives. Not that he wished to offend her: on the contrary he now wished rather to curry favour with her and with her keeper, though he would on no account have acknowledged the fact to himself. But he was accustomed to speak in that way to such women. He knew she would herself be surprised and even offended were he to treat her as a lady. Besides he had to retain a certain shade of a respectful tone for his friend's real wife. He always treated his friend's mistresses with respect, not because he shared the so-called convictions promulgated in periodicals (he never read trash of that kind) about the respect due to the personality of every man, about the meaninglessness of marriage, and so forth, but because all decent men do so and he was a decent, though fallen, man.

He took a cigar. But his host awkwardly picked up a whole handful and offered them to him.

"Just see how good these are. Take them!"

Serpukhovskoy pushed aside the hand with the cigars, and a gleam of offence and shame showed itself in his eyes.

"Thank you!" He took out his cigar-case. "Try mine!"

The hostess was sensitive. She noticed his embarrassment and hastened to talk to him.

"I am very fond of cigars. I should smoke myself if everyone about me did not smoke."

And she smiled her pretty, kindly smile. He smiled in return, but irresolutely. Two of his teeth were missing.

"No, take this!" the tactless host continued. "The others are weaker. Fritz, \*bringen Sie noch einen Kasten\*," he said; "\*dort zwei\*."

Footnote: "Bring another box. There are two there."

The German footman brought another box.

"Do you prefer big ones? Strong ones? These are very good. Take them all!" he continued, forcing them on his guest.

He was evidently glad to have someone to boast to of the rare things he possessed, and he noticed nothing amiss. Serpukhovskoy lit his cigar and hastened to resume the conversation they had begun.

"So, how much did you pay for Atlasny?" he asked.

"He cost me a great deal, not less than five thousand, but at any rate I am already safe on him. What colts he gets, I tell you!"

"Do they trot?" asked Serpukhovskoy.

"They trot well! His colt took three prizes this year: in Tula, in Moscow, and in Petersburg; he raced Voekov's Raven. That rascal, the driver, let him make four false steps or he'd have left the other behind the flag."

"He's a bit green. Too much Dutch blood in him, that's what I say," remarked Serpukhovskoy.

"Well, but what about the mares? I'll show Goody to you tomorrow. I gave three thousand for her. For Amiable I gave two thousand."

And the host again began to enumerate his possessions. The hostess saw that this hurt Serpukhovskoy and that he was only pretending to listen.

"Will you have some more tea?" she asked.

"I won't," replied the host and went on talking. She rose, the host stopped her, embraced her, and kissed her.

As he looked at them Serpukhovskoy for their sakes tried to force a smile, but after the host had got up, embraced her, and led her to the portiere, Serpukhovskoy's face suddenly changed. He sighed heavily,

and a look of despair showed itself on his flabby face. Even malevolence appeared on it.

The host returned and smilingly sat down opposite him. They were silent awhile.

## Chapter XI

“Yes, you were saying you bought him of Voekov,” remarked Serpukhovskoy with assumed carelessness.

“Oh yes, that was of Atlasny, you know. I always meant to buy some mares of Dubovitzki, but he had nothing but rubbish left.”

“He has failed . . . ” said Serpukhovskoy, and suddenly stopped and glanced round. He remembered that he owed that bankrupt twenty thousand rubles, and if it came to talking of being bankrupt it was certainly said that he was one. He laughed.

Both again sat silent for a long time. The host considered what he could brag about to his guest. Serpukhovskoy was thinking what he could say to show that he did not consider himself bankrupt. But the minds of both worked with difficulty, in spite of efforts to brace themselves up with cigars. “When are we going to have a drink?” thought Serpukhovskoy. I must certainly have a drink or I shall die of ennui with this fellow,” thought the host.

“Will you be remaining here long?” Serpukhovskoy asked.

“Another month. Well, shall we have supper, eh? Fritz, is it ready?”

They went into the dining-room. There under a hanging lamp stood a table on which were candles and all sorts of extraordinary things: syphons, and little dolls fastened to corks, rare wine in decanters, unusual hors-d’oeuvres, and vodka. They had a drink, ate a little, drank again, ate again, and their conversation got into swing. Serpukhovskoy was flushed and began to speak without timidity.

They spoke of women and of who kept this one or that, a gipsy, a ballet-girl, or a Frenchwoman.

“And have you given up Mathieu?” asked the host. (That was the woman who had ruined Serpukhovskoy.)

“No, she left me. Ah, my dear fellow, when I recall what I have got through in my life! Now I am really glad when I have a thousand rubles, and am glad to get away from everybody. I can’t stand it in Moscow. But what’s the good of talking!”

The host found it tiresome to listen to Serpukhovskoy. He wanted to speak about himself-to brag. But Serpukhovskoy also wished to talk about himself, about his brilliant past. His host filled his glass for him and waited for him to stop, so that he might tell him about himself and how his stud was now arranged as no one had ever had a stud arranged before. And that his Marie loved him with her heart and not merely for his wealth.

“I wanted to tell you that in my stud . . . ” he began, but Serpukhovskoy interrupted him.

“I may say that there was a time,” Serpukhovskoy began, “when I liked to live well and knew how to do it. Now you talk about trotting-tell me which is your fastest horse.”

The host, glad of an opportunity to tell more about his stud, was beginning, when Serpukhovskoy again interrupted him.

“Yes, yes,” he said, “but you breeders do it just out of vanity and not for pleasure, not for the joy of life. It was different with me. You know I told you I had a driving-horse, a piebald with just the same kind of spots as the one your keeper was riding. Oh, what a horse that was! You can’t possibly know: it was in 1842, when I had just come to Moscow; I went to a horse-dealer and there I saw a well-bred piebald gelding. I liked him. The price? One thousand rubles. I liked him, so I took him and began to drive with him. I never had, and you have not and never will have, such a horse. I never knew one like him for speed and for strength. You were a boy then and couldn’t have known, but you may have heard of him. All Moscow was talking about him.”

“Yes, I heard of him,” the host unwillingly replied. “But what I wished to say about mine . . . ”

“Ah, then you did hear! I bought him just as he was, without pedigree and without a certificate; it was only afterwards that I got to know

Voekov and found out. He was a colt by Affable I. Strider-because of his long strides. On account of his piebald spots he was removed from the Khrenov stud and given to the head keeper, who had him castrated and sold him to a horse-dealer. There are no such horses now, my dear chap. Ah, those were the days! Ah, vanished youth!"-and he sang the words of the gipsy song. He was getting tipsy. "Ah, those were good times. I was twenty-five and had eighty thousand rubles a year, not a single grey hair, and all my teeth like pearls. . . . Whatever I touched succeeded, and now it is all ended. . . . "

"But there was not the same mettlesomeness then," said the host, availing himself of the pause. "Let me tell you that my first horses began to trot without. . . . "

"Your horses! But they used to be more mettlesome . . . . "

"How-more mettlesome?"

"Yes, more mettlesome! I remember as if it were today how I drove him once to the trotting races in Moscow. No horse of mine was running. I did not care for trotters, mine were thoroughbreds: General Chaulet, Mahomet. I drove up with my piebald. My driver was a fine fellow, I was fond of him, but he also took to drink. . . . Well, so I got there.

"'Serpukhovskoy,' I was asked, 'When are you going to keep trotters?' 'The devil take your lubbers!' I replied. 'I have a piebald hack that can outpace all your trotters!' 'Oh no, he won't!' 'I'll bet a thousand rubles!' Agreed, and they started. He came in five seconds ahead and I won the thousand rubles. But what of it? I did a hundred versts Footnote: A little over sixty-six miles. in three hours with a troyka of thoroughbreds. All Moscow knows it."

And Serpukhovskoy began to brag so glibly and continuously that his host could not get a single word in and sat opposite him with a dejected countenance, filling up his own and his guest's glass every now and then by way of distraction.

The dawn was breaking and still they sat there. It became intolerably dull for the host. He got up.

"If we are to go to bed, let's go!" said Serpukhovskoy rising, and reeling and puffing he went to the room prepared for him.

The host was lying beside his mistress.

“No, he is unendurable,” he said. “He gets drunk and swaggers incessantly.”

“And makes up to me.”

“I’m afraid he’ll be asking for money.”

Serpukhovskoy was lying on the bed in his clothes, breathing heavily.

“I must have been lying a lot,” he thought. Well, no matter! The wine was good, but he is an awful swine. There’s something cheap about him. And I’m an awful swine,” he said to himself and laughed aloud.

“First I used to keep women, and now I’m kept. Yes, the Winkler girl will support me. I take money of her. Serves him right. Still, I must undress. Can’t get my boots off. Hullo! Hullo!” he called out, but the man who had been told off to wait on him had long since gone to bed.

He sat down, took off his coat and waistcoat and somehow managed to kick off his trousers, but for a long time could not get his boots off-his soft stomach being in the way. Hee got one off at last, and struggled for a long time with the other, panting and becoming exhausted. And so with his foot in the boot-top he rolled over and began to snore, filling the room with a smell of tobacco, wine, and disagreeable old age.

## Chapter XII

If Strider recalled anything that night, he was distracted by Vaska, who threw a rug over him, galloped off on him, and kept him standing till morning at the door of a tavern, near a peasant horse. They licked one another. In the morning when Strider returned to the herd he kept rubbing himself.

Five days passed. They called in a veterinary, who said cheerfully: “It’s the itch; let me sell him to the gipsies.”

“What’s the use? Cut his throat, and get it done today.”

The morning was calm and clear. The herd went to pasture, but Strider was left behind. A strange man came-thin, dark, and dirty, in a coat splashed with something black. It was the knacker. Without looking at Strider he took him by the halter they had put on him and led him

away. Strider went quietly without looking round, dragging along as usual and catching his hind feet in the straw.

When they were out of the gate he strained towards the well, but the knacker jerked his halter, saying: "Not worth while."

The knacker and Vaska, who followed behind, went to a hollow behind the brick barn and stopped as if there were something peculiar about this very ordinary place. The knacker, handing the halter to Vaska, took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and produced a knife and a whetstone from his boot-leg. The gelding stretched towards the halter meaning to chew it a little from dullness, but he could not reach it. He sighed and closed his eyes. His nether lip hung down, disclosing his worn yellow teeth, and he began to drowse to the sound of the sharpening of the knife. Only his swollen, aching, outstretched leg kept jerking. Suddenly he felt himself being taken by the lower jaw and his head lifted. He opened his eyes. There were two dogs in front of him; one was sniffing at the knacker, the other was sitting and watching the gelding as if expecting something from him. The gelding looked at them and began to rub his jaw against the arm that was holding him.

"Want to doctor me probably-well, let them!" he thought.

And in fact he felt that something had been done to his throat. It hurt, and he shuddered and gave a kick with one foot, but restrained himself and waited for what would follow. . . . Then he felt something liquid streaming down his neck and chest. He heaved a profound sigh and felt much better.

The whole burden of his life was eased.

He closed his eyes and began to droop his head. No one was holding it. Then his legs quivered and his whole body swayed. He was not so much frightened as surprised.

Everything was so new to him. He was surprised and started forward and upward, but instead of this, in moving from the spot his legs got entangled, he began to fall sideways, and trying to take a step fell forward and down on his left side.



The knacker waited till the convulsions had ceased, drove away the dogs that had crept nearer, took the gelding by the legs, turned him on his back, told Vaska to hold a leg, and began to skin the horse.

“It was a horse, too,” remarked Vaska.

“If he had been better fed the skin would have been fine,” said the knacker.

The herd returned down hill in the evening, and those on the left saw down below something red, round which dogs were busy and above which hawks and crows were flying. One of the dogs, pressing its paws against the carcass and swinging his head, with a crackling sound tore off what it had seized hold of. The chestnut filly stopped, stretched out her head and neck, and sniffed the air for a long time. They could hardly drive her away.

At dawn, in a ravine of the old forest, down in an overgrown glade, big-headed wolf cubs were howling joyfully. There were five of them: four almost alike and one with a head bigger than his body. A lean old wolf who was shedding her coat, dragging her full belly with its hanging dugs along the ground, came out of the bushes and sat down in front of the cubs. The cubs came and stood round her in a semi-circle. She went up to the smallest, and bending her knee and holding her muzzle down, made some convulsive movements, and opening her large sharp-toothed jaws disgorged a large piece of horseflesh. The bigger cubs rushed towards her, but she moved threateningly at them and let the little one have it all. The little one, growling as if in anger, pulled the horseflesh under him and began to gorge. In the same way the mother wolf coughed up a piece for the second, the third, and all five of them, and then lay down in front of them to rest.

A week later only a large skull and two shoulder-blades lay behind the barn; the rest had all been taken away. In summer a peasant, collecting bones, carried away these shoulder-blades and skull and put them to use.

The dead body of Serpukhovskoy, which had walked about the earth eating and drinking, was put under ground much later. Neither his skin, nor his flesh, nor his bones, were of any use.

Just as for the last twenty years his body that had walked the earth had been a great burden to everybody, so the putting away of that body was again an additional trouble to people. He had not been wanted by anybody for a long time and had only been a burden, yet the dead who bury their dead found it necessary to clothe that swollen body, which at once began to decompose, in a good uniform and good boots and put it into a new and expensive coffin with new tassels at its four corners, and then to place that coffin in another coffin of led, to take it to Moscow and there dig up some long buried human bones, and to hide in that Particular spot this decomposing maggotty body in its new uniform and polished boots, and cover it all up with earth.

## Master And Man

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1895

I

It happened in the 'seventies in winter, on the day after St. Nicholas's Day. There was a fete in the parish and the innkeeper, Vasili Andreevich Brekhunov, a Second Guild merchant, being a church elder had to go to church, and had also to entertain his relatives and friends at home.

But when the last of them had gone he at once began to prepare to drive over to see a neighbouring proprietor about a grove which he had been bargaining over for a long time. He was now in a hurry to start, lest buyers from the town might forestall him in making a profitable purchase.

The youthful landowner was asking ten thousand rubles for the grove simply because Vasili Andreevich was offering seven thousand. Seven

thousand was, however, only a third of its real value. Vasili Andreevich might perhaps have got it down to his own price, for the woods were in his district and he had a long-standing agreement with the other village dealers that no one should run up the price in another's district, but he had now learnt that some timber-dealers from town meant to bid for the Goryachkin grove, and he resolved to go at once and get the matter settled. So as soon as the feast was over, he took seven hundred rubles from his strong box, added to them two thousand three hundred rubles of church money he had in his keeping, so as to make up the sum to three thousand; carefully counted the notes, and having put them into his pocket-book made haste to start.

Nikita, the only one of Vasili Andreevich's labourers who was not drunk that day, ran to harness the horse. Nikita, though an habitual drunkard, was not drunk that day because since the last day before the fast, when he had drunk his coat and leather boots, he had sworn off drink and had kept his vow for two months, and was still keeping it despite the temptation of the vodka that had been drunk everywhere during the first two days of the feast.

Nikita was a peasant of about fifty from a neighbouring village, 'not a manager' as the peasants said of him, meaning that he was not the thrifty head of a household but lived most of his time away from home as a labourer. He was valued everywhere for his industry, dexterity, and strength at work, and still more for his kindly and pleasant temper. But he never settled down anywhere for long because about twice a year, or even oftener, he had a drinking bout, and then besides spending all his clothes on drink he became turbulent and quarrelsome. Vasili Andreevich himself had turned him away several times, but had afterwards taken him back again — valuing his honesty, his kindness to animals, and especially his cheapness. Vasili Andreevich did not pay Nikita the eighty rubles a year such a man was worth, but only about forty, which he gave him haphazard, in small sums, and even that mostly not in cash but in goods from his own shop and at high prices.

Nikita's wife Martha, who had once been a handsome vigorous woman, managed the homestead with the help of her son and two daughters,

and did not urge Nikita to live at home: first because she had been living for some twenty years already with a cooper, a peasant from another village who lodged in their house; and secondly because though she managed her husband as she pleased when he was sober, she feared him like fire when he was drunk. Once when he had got drunk at home, Nikita, probably to make up for his submissiveness when sober, broke open her box, took out her best clothes, snatched up an axe, and chopped all her undergarments and dresses to bits. All the wages Nikita earned went to his wife, and he raised no objection to that. So now, two days before the holiday, Martha had been twice to see Vasili Andreevich and had got from him wheat flour, tea, sugar, and a quart of vodka, the lot costing three rubles, and also five rubles in cash, for which she thanked him as for a special favour, though he owed Nikita at least twenty rubles.

‘What agreement did we ever draw up with you?’ said Vasili Andreevich to Nikita. ‘If you need anything, take it; you will work it off. I’m not like others to keep you waiting, and making up accounts and reckoning fines. We deal straight-forwardly. You serve me and I don’t neglect you.’

And when saying this Vasili Andreevich was honestly convinced that he was Nikita’s benefactor, and he knew how to put it so plausibly that all those who depended on him for their money, beginning with Nikita, confirmed him in the conviction that he was their benefactor and did not overreach them.

‘Yes, I understand, Vasili Andreevich. You know that I serve you and take as much pains as I would for my own father. I understand very well!’ Nikita would reply. He was quite aware that Vasili Andreevich was cheating him, but at the same time he felt that it was useless to try to clear up his accounts with him or explain his side of the matter, and that as long as he had nowhere to go he must accept what he could get.

Now, having heard his master’s order to harness, he went as usual cheerfully and willingly to the shed, stepping briskly and easily on his rather turned-in feet; took down from a nail the heavy tasselled leather

bridle, and jingling the rings of the bit went to the closed stable where the horse he was to harness was standing by himself.

‘What, feeling lonely, feeling lonely, little silly?’ said Nikita in answer to the low whinny with which he was greeted by the good-tempered, medium-sized bay stallion, with a rather slanting crupper, who stood alone in the shed. ‘Now then, now then, there’s time enough. Let me water you first,’ he went on, speaking to the horse just as to someone who understood the words he was using, and having whisked the dusty, grooved back of the well-fed young stallion with the skirt of his coat, he put a bridle on his handsome head, straightened his ears and forelock, and having taken off his halter led him out to water.

Picking his way out of the dung-strewn stable, Mukhorty frisked, and making play with his hind leg pretended that he meant to kick Nikita, who was running at a trot beside him to the pump.

‘Now then, now then, you rascal!’ Nikita called out, well knowing how carefully Mukhorty threw out his hind leg just to touch his greasy sheepskin coat but not to strike him — a trick Nikita much appreciated.

After a drink of the cold water the horse sighed, moving his strong wet lips, from the hairs of which transparent drops fell into the trough; then standing still as if in thought, he suddenly gave a loud snort.

‘If you don’t want any more, you needn’t. But don’t go asking for any later,’ said Nikita quite seriously and fully explaining his conduct to Mukhorty. Then he ran back to the shed pulling the playful young horse, who wanted to gambol all over the yard, by the rein.

There was no one else in the yard except a stranger, the cook’s husband, who had come for the holiday.

‘Go and ask which sledge is to be harnessed — the wide one or the small one — there’s a good fellow!’

The cook’s husband went into the house, which stood on an iron foundation and was iron-roofed, and soon returned saying that the little one was to be harnessed. By that time Nikita had put the collar and brass-studded belly-band on Mukhorty and, carrying a light,

painted shaft-bow in one hand, was leading the horse with the other up to two sledges that stood in the shed.

'All right, let it be the little one!' he said, backing the intelligent horse, which all the time kept pretending to bite him, into the shafts, and with the aid of the cook's husband he proceeded to harness. When everything was nearly ready and only the reins had to be adjusted, Nikita sent the other man to the shed for some straw and to the barn for a drugget.

'There, that's all right! Now, now, don't bristle up!' said Nikita, pressing down into the sledge the freshly threshed oat straw the cook's husband had brought. 'And now let's spread the sacking like this, and the drugget over it. There, like that it will be comfortable sitting,' he went on, suiting the action to the words and tucking the drugget all round over the straw to make a seat.

'Thank you, dear man. Things always go quicker with two working at it!' he added. And gathering up the leather reins fastened together by a brass ring, Nikita took the driver's seat and started the impatient horse over the frozen manure which lay in the yard, towards the gate.

'Uncle Nikita! I say, Uncle, Uncle!' a high-pitched voice shouted, and a seven-year-old boy in a black sheepskin coat, new white felt boots, and a warm cap, ran hurriedly out of the house into the yard. 'Take me with you!' he cried, fastening up his coat as he ran.

'All right, come along, darling!' said Nikita, and stopping the sledge he picked up the master's pale thin little son, radiant with joy, and drove out into the road.

It was past two o'clock and the day was windy, dull, and cold, with more than twenty degrees Fahrenheit of frost. Half the sky was hidden by a lowering dark cloud. In the yard it was quiet, but in the street the wind was felt more keenly. The snow swept down from a neighbouring shed and whirled about in the corner near the bath-house.

Hardly had Nikita driven out of the yard and turned the horse's head to the house, before Vasili Andreevich emerged from the high porch in front of the house with a cigarette in his mouth and wearing a cloth-

covered sheep-skin coat tightly girdled low at his waist, and stepped onto the hard-trodden snow which squeaked under the leather soles of his felt boots, and stopped. Taking a last whiff of his cigarette he threw it down, stepped on it, and letting the smoke escape through his moustache and looking askance at the horse that was coming up, began to tuck in his sheepskin collar on both sides of his ruddy face, clean-shaven except for the moustache, so that his breath should not moisten the collar.

‘See now! The young scamp is there already!’ he exclaimed when he saw his little son in the sledge. Vasili Andreevich was excited by the vodka he had drunk with his visitors, and so he was even more pleased than usual with everything that was his and all that he did. The sight of his son, whom he always thought of as his heir, now gave him great satisfaction. He looked at him, screwing up his eyes and showing his long teeth.

His wife — pregnant, thin and pale, with her head and shoulders wrapped in a shawl so that nothing of her face could be seen but her eyes — stood behind him in the vestibule to see him off.

‘Now really, you ought to take Nikita with you,’ she said timidly, stepping out from the doorway.

Vasili Andreevich did not answer. Her words evidently annoyed him and he frowned angrily and spat.

‘You have money on you,’ she continued in the same plaintive voice.

‘What if the weather gets worse! Do take him, for goodness’ sake!’

‘Why? Don’t I know the road that I must needs take a guide?’ exclaimed Vasili Andreevich, uttering every word very distinctly and compressing his lips unnaturally, as he usually did when speaking to buyers and sellers.

‘Really you ought to take him. I beg you in God’s name!’ his wife repeated, wrapping her shawl more closely round her head.

‘There, she sticks to it like a leech!... Where am I to take him?’

'I'm quite ready to go with you, Vasili Andreevich,' said Nikita cheerfully. 'But they must feed the horses while I am away,' he added, turning to his master's wife.

'I'll look after them, Nikita dear. I'll tell Simon,' replied the mistress. 'Well, Vasili Andreevich, am I to come with you?' said Nikita, awaiting a decision.

'It seems I must humour my old woman. But if you're coming you'd better put on a warmer cloak,' said Vasili Andreevich, smiling again as he winked at Nikita's short sheepskin coat, which was torn under the arms and at the back, was greasy and out of shape, frayed to a fringe round the skirt, and had endured many things in its lifetime.

'Hey, dear man, come and hold the horse!' shouted Nikita to the cook's husband, who was still in the yard.

'No, I will myself, I will myself!' shrieked the little boy, pulling his hands, red with cold, out of his pockets, and seizing the cold leather reins.

'Only don't be too long dressing yourself up. Look alive!' shouted Vasili Andreevich, grinning at Nikita.

'Only a moment, Father, Vasili Andreevich!' replied Nikita, and running quickly with his inturned toes in his felt boots with their soles patched with felt, he hurried across the yard and into the workmen's hut.

'Arinushka! Get my coat down from the stove. I'm going with the master,' he said, as he ran into the hut and took down his girdle from the nail on which it hung.

The workmen's cook, who had had a sleep after dinner and was now getting the samovar ready for her husband, turned cheerfully to Nikita, and infected by his hurry began to move as quickly as he did, got down his miserable worn-out cloth coat from the stove where it was drying, and began hurriedly shaking it out and smoothing it down.

'There now, you'll have a chance of a holiday with your good man,' said Nikita, who from kindhearted politeness always said something to anyone he was alone with.



Then, drawing his worn narrow girdle round him, he drew in his breath, pulling in his lean stomach still more, and girdled himself as tightly as he could over his sheepskin.

'There now,' he said addressing himself no longer to the cook but the girdle, as he tucked the ends in at the waist, 'now you won't come undone!' And working his shoulders up and down to free his arms, he put the coat over his sheepskin, arched his back more strongly to ease his arms, poked himself under the armpits, and took down his leather-covered mittens from the shelf. 'Now we're all right!'

'You ought to wrap your feet up, Nikita. Your boots are very bad.'

Nikita stopped as if he had suddenly realized this.

'Yes, I ought to.... But they'll do like this. It isn't far!' and he ran out into the yard.

'Won't you be cold, Nikita?' said the mistress as he came up to the sledge.

'Cold? No, I'm quite warm,' answered Nikita as he pushed some straw up to the forePart of the sledge so that it should cover his feet, and stowed away the whip, which the good horse would not need, at the bottom of the sledge.

Vasili Andreevich, who was wearing two fur-lined coats one over the other, was already in the sledge, his broad back filling nearly its whole rounded width, and taking the reins he immediately touched the horse. Nikita jumped in just as the sledge started, and seated himself in front on the left side, with one leg hanging over the edge.

II

The good stallion took the sledge along at a brisk pace over the smooth-frozen road through the village, the runners squeaking slightly as they went.

'Look at him hanging on there! Hand me the whip, Nikita!' shouted Vasili Andreevich, evidently enjoying the sight of his 'heir,' who

standing on the runners was hanging on at the back of the sledge. 'I'll give it you! Be off to mamma, you dog!'

The boy jumped down. The horse increased his amble and, suddenly changing foot, broke into a fast trot.

The Crosses, the village where Vasili Andreevich lived, consisted of six houses. As soon as they had passed the blacksmith's hut, the last in the village, they realized that the wind was much stronger than they had thought. The road could hardly be seen. The tracks left by the sledge-runners were immediately covered by snow and the road was only distinguished by the fact that it was higher than the rest of the ground. There was a swirl of snow over the fields and the line where sky and earth met could not be seen. The Telyatin forest, usually clearly visible, now only loomed up occasionally and dimly through the driving snowy dust. The wind came from the left, insistently blowing over to one side the mane on Mukhorty's sleek neck and carrying aside even his fluffy tail, which was tied in a simple knot. Nikita's wide coat-collar, as he sat on the windy side, pressed close to his cheek and nose.

'This road doesn't give him a chance — it's too snowy,' said Vasili Andreevich, who prided himself on his good horse. 'I once drove to Pashutino with him in half an hour.'

'What?' asked Nikita, who could not hear on account of his collar. 'I say I once went to Pashutino in half an hour,' shouted Vasili Andreevich.

'It goes without saying that he's a good horse,' replied Nikita. They were silent for a while. But Vasili Andreevich wished to talk.

'Well, did you tell your wife not to give the cooper any vodka?' he began in the same loud tone, quite convinced that Nikita must feel flattered to be talking with so clever and important a person as himself, and he was so pleased with his jest that it did not enter his head that the remark might be unpleasant to Nikita.

The wind again prevented Nikita's hearing his master's words. Vasili Andreevich repeated the jest about the cooper in his loud, clear voice.

‘That’s their business, Vasili Andreevich. I don’t pry into their affairs. As long as she doesn’t ill-treat our boy — God be with them.’

‘That’s so,’ said Vasili Andreevich. ‘Well, and will you be buying a horse in spring?’ he went on, changing the subject.

‘Yes, I can’t avoid it,’ answered Nikita, turning down his collar and leaning back towards his master.

The conversation now became interesting to him and he did not wish to lose a word.

‘The lad’s growing up. He must begin to plough for himself, but till now we’ve always had to hire someone,’ he said.

‘Well, why not have the lean-cruppered one. I won’t charge much for it,’ shouted Vasili Andreevich, feeling animated, and consequently starting on his favourite occupation — that of horse-dealing — which absorbed all his mental powers.

‘Or you might let me have fifteen rubles and I’ll buy one at the horse-market,’ said Nikita, who knew that the horse Vasili Andreevich wanted to sell him would be dear at seven rubles, but that if he took it from him it would be charged at twenty-five, and then he would be unable to draw any money for half a year.

‘It’s a good horse. I think of your interest as of my own — according to conscience. Brekhunov isn’t a man to wrong anyone. Let the loss be mine. I’m not like others. Honestly!’ he shouted in the voice in which he hypnotized his customers and dealers. ‘It’s a real good horse.’

‘Quite so!’ said Nikita with a sigh, and convinced that there was nothing more to listen to, he again released his collar, which immediately covered his ear and face.

They drove on in silence for about half an hour. The wind blew sharply onto Nikita’s side and arm where his sheepskin was torn.

He huddled up and breathed into the collar which covered his mouth, and was not wholly cold.

‘What do you think — shall we go through Karamyshevo or by the straight road?’ asked Vasili Andreevich.

The road through Karamyshevo was more frequented and was well marked with a double row of high stakes. The straight road was nearer but little used and had no stakes, or only poor ones covered with snow. Nikita thought awhile.

‘Though Karamyshevo is farther, it is better going,’ he said.

‘But by the straight road, when once we get through the hollow by the forest, it’s good going — sheltered,’ said Vasili Andreevich, who wished to go the nearest way.

‘Just as you please,’ said Nikita, and again let go of his collar.

Vasili Andreevich did as he had said, and having gone about half a verst came to a tall oak stake which had a few dry leaves still dangling on it, and there he turned to the left.

On turning they faced directly against the wind, and snow was beginning to fall. Vasili Andreevich, who was driving, inflated his cheeks, blowing the breath out through his moustache. Nikita dozed.

So they went on in silence for about ten minutes. Suddenly Vasili Andreevich began saying something.

‘Eh, what?’ asked Nikita, opening his eyes.

Vasili Andreevich did not answer, but bent over, looking behind them and then ahead of the horse. The sweat had curled Mukhorty’s coat between his legs and on his neck. He went at a walk.

‘What is it?’ Nikita asked again.

‘What is it? What is it?’ Vasili Andreevich mimicked him angrily. ‘There are no stakes to be seen! We must have got off the road!’

‘Well, pull up then, and I’ll look for it,’ said Nikita, and jumping down lightly from the sledge and taking the whip from under the straw, he went off to the left from his own side of the sledge.

The snow was not deep that year, so that it was possible to walk anywhere, but still in places it was knee-deep and got into Nikita’s boots. He went about feeling the ground with his feet and the whip, but could not find the road anywhere.

'Well, how is it?' asked Vasili Andreevich when Nikita came back to the sledge.

'There is no road this side. I must go to the other side and try there,' said Nikita.

'There's something there in front. Go and have a look.'

Nikita went to what had appeared dark, but found that it was earth which the wind had blown from the bare fields of winter oats and had strewn over the snow, colouring it. Having searched to the right also, he returned to the sledge, brushed the snow from his coat, shook it out of his boots, and seated himself once more.

'We must go to the right,' he said decidedly. 'The wind was blowing on our left before, but now it is straight in my face. Drive to the right,' he repeated with decision.

Vasili Andreevich took his advice and turned to the right, but still there was no road. They went on in that direction for some time. The wind was as fierce as ever and it was snowing lightly.

'It seems, Vasili Andreevich, that we have gone quite astray,' Nikita suddenly remarked, as if it were a pleasant thing. 'What is that?' he added, pointing to some potato vines that showed up from under the snow.

Vasili Andreevich stopped the perspiring horse, whose deep sides were heaving heavily.

'What is it?'

'Why, we are on the Zakharov lands. See where we've got to!'

'Nonsense!' retorted Vasili Andreevich.

'It's not nonsense, Vasili Andreevich. It's the truth,' replied Nikita. 'You can feel that the sledge is going over a potato-field, and there are the heaps of vines which have been carted here. It's the Zakharov factory land.'

'Dear me, how we have gone astray!' said Vasili Andreevich. 'What are we to do now?'

‘We must go straight on, that’s all. We shall come out somewhere — if not at Zakharova, then at the proprietor’s farm,’ said Nikita. Vasili Andreevich agreed, and drove as Nikita had indicated. So they went on for a considerable time. At times they came onto bare fields and the sledge-runners rattled over frozen lumps of earth. Sometimes they got onto a winter-rye field, or a fallow field on which they could see stalks of wormwood, and straws sticking up through the snow and swaying in the wind; sometimes they came onto deep and even white snow, above which nothing was to be seen.

The snow was falling from above and sometimes rose from below. The horse was evidently exhausted, his hair had all curled up from sweat and was covered with hoar-frost, and he went at a walk. Suddenly he stumbled and sat down in a ditch or water-course. Vasili Andreevich wanted to stop, but Nikita cried to him:

‘Why stop? We’ve got in and must get out. Hey, pet! Hey, darling! Gee up, old fellow!’ he shouted in a cheerful tone to the horse, jumping out of the sledge and himself getting stuck in the ditch.

The horse gave a start and quickly climbed out onto the frozen bank. It was evidently a ditch that had been dug there.

‘Where are we now?’ asked Vasili Andreevich.

‘We’ll soon find out!’ Nikita replied. ‘Go on, we’ll get somewhere.’

‘Why, this must be the Goryachkin forest!’ said Vasili Andreevich, pointing to something dark that appeared amid the snow in front of them.

‘We’ll see what forest it is when we get there,’ said Nikita.

He saw that beside the black thing they had noticed, dry, oblong willow-leaves were fluttering, and so he knew it was not a forest but a settlement, but he did not wish to say so. And in fact they had not gone twenty-five yards beyond the ditch before something in front of them, evidently trees, showed up black, and they heard a new and melancholy sound. Nikita had guessed right: it was not a wood, but a row of tall willows with a few leaves still fluttering on them here and there. They had evidently been planted along the ditch round a threshing-floor. Coming up to the willows, which moaned sadly in the

wind, the horse suddenly planted his forelegs above the height of the sledge, drew up his hind legs also, pulling the sledge onto higher ground, and turned to the left, no longer sinking up to his knees in snow. They were back on a road.

‘Well, here we are, but heaven only knows where!’ said Nikita. The horse kept straight along the road through the drifted snow, and before they had gone another hundred yards the straight line of the dark wattle wall of a barn showed up black before them, its roof heavily covered with snow which poured down from it. After passing the barn the road turned to the wind and they drove into a snow-drift. But ahead of them was a lane with houses on either side, so evidently the snow had been blown across the road and they had to drive through the drift. And so in fact it was. Having driven through the snow they came out into a street. At the end house of the village some frozen clothes hanging on a line — shirts, one red and one white, trousers, leg-bands, and a petticoat — fluttered wildly in the wind. The white shirt in Particular struggled desperately, waving its sleeves about.

‘There now, either a lazy woman or a dead one has not taken her clothes down before the holiday,’ remarked Nikita, looking at the fluttering shirts.

III

At the entrance to the street the wind still raged and the road was thickly covered with snow, but well within the village it was calm, warm, and cheerful. At one house a dog was barking, at another a woman, covering her head with her coat, came running from somewhere and entered the door of a hut, stopping on the threshold to have a look at the passing sledge. In the middle of the village girls could be heard singing.

Here in the village there seemed to be less wind and snow, and the frost was less keen.

‘Why, this is Grishkino,’ said Vasili Andreevich.

'So it is,' responded Nikita.

It really was Grishkino, which meant that they had gone too far to the left and had travelled some six miles, not quite in the direction they aimed at, but towards their destination for all that.

From Grishkino to Goryachkin was about another four miles.

In the middle of the village they almost ran into a tall man walking down the middle of the street.

'Who are you?' shouted the man, stopping the horse, and recognizing Vasili Anereevich he immediately took hold of the shaft, went along it hand over hand till he reached the sledge, and placed himself on the driver's seat.

He was Isay, a peasant of Vasili Andreevich's acquaintance, and well known as the principal horse-thief in the district.

'Ah, Vasili Andreevich! Where are you off to?' said Isay, enveloping Nikita in the odour of the vodka he had drunk.

'We were going to Goryachkin.'

'And look where you've got to! You should have gone through Molchanovka.'

'Should have, but didn't manage it,' said Vasili Andreevich, holding in the horse.

'That's a good horse,' said Isay, with a shrewd glance at Mukhorty, and with a practised hand he tightened the loosened knot high in the horse's bushy tail.

'Are you going to stay the night?'

'No, friend. I must get on.'

'Your business must be pressing. And who is this? Ah, Nikita Stepanych!'

'Who else?' replied Nikita. 'But I say, good friend, how are we to avoid going astray again?'

'Where can you go astray here? Turn back straight down the street and then when you come out keep straight on. Don't take to the left. You will come out onto the high road, and then turn to the right.'



'And where do we turn off the high road? As in summer, or the winter way?' asked Nikita.

'The winter way. As soon as you turn off you'll see some bushes, and opposite them there is a way-mark — a large oak, one with branches — and that's the way.'

Vasili Andreevich turned the horse back and drove through the outskirts of the village.

'Why not stay the night?' Isay shouted after them.

But Vasili Andreevich did not answer and touched up the horse. Four miles of good road, two of which lay through the forest, seemed easy to manage, especially as the wind was apparently quieter and the snow had stopped.

Having driven along the trodden village street, darkened here and there by fresh manure, past the yard where the clothes hung out and where the white shirt had broken loose and was now attached only by one frozen sleeve, they again came within sound of the weird moan of the willows, and again emerged on the open fields. The storm, far from ceasing, seemed to have grown yet stronger. The road was completely covered with drifting snow, and only the stakes showed that they had not lost their way. But even the stakes ahead of them were not easy to see, since the wind blew in their faces.

Vasili Andreevich screwed up his eyes, bent down his head, and looked out for the way-marks, but trusted mainly to the horse's sagacity, letting it take its own way. And the horse really did not lose the road but followed its windings, turning now to the right and now to the left and sensing it under his feet, so that though the snow fell thicker and the wind strengthened they still continued to see way-marks now to the left and now to the right of them.

So they travelled on for about ten minutes, when suddenly, through the slanting screen of wind-driven snow, something black showed up which moved in front of the horse.

This was another sledge with fellow-travellers. Mukhorty overtook them, and struck his hoofs against the back of the sledge in front of them.

'Pass on... hey there... get in front!' cried voices from the sledge. Vasili Andreevich swerved aside to pass the other sledge.

In it sat three men and a woman, evidently visitors returning from a feast. One peasant was whacking the snow-covered croup of their little horse with a long switch, and the other two sitting in front waved their arms and shouted something. The woman, completely wrapped up and covered with snow, sat drowsing and bumping at the back.

'Who are you?' shouted Vasili Andreevich.

'From A-a-a...' was all that could be heard.

'I say, where are you from?'

'From A-a-a-a!' one of the peasants shouted with all his might, but still it was impossible to make out who they were.

'Get along! Keep up!' shouted another, ceaselessly beating his horse with the switch.

'So you're from a feast, it seems?'

'Go on, go on! Faster, Simon! Get in front! Faster!'

The wings of the sledges bumped against one another, almost got jammed but managed to separate, and the peasants' sledge began to fall behind.

Their shaggy, big-bellied horse, all covered with snow, breathed heavily under the low shaft-bow and, evidently using the last of its strength, vainly endeavoured to escape from the switch, hobbling with its short legs through the deep snow which it threw up under itself.

Its muzzle, young-looking, with the nether lip drawn up like that of a fish, nostrils distended and ears pressed back from fear, kept up for a few seconds near Nikita's shoulder and then began to fall behind.

'Just see what liquor does!' said Nikita. 'They've tired that little horse to death. What pagans!'

For a few minutes they heard the panting of the tired little horse and the drunken shouting of the peasants. Then the panting and the shouts died away, and around them nothing could be heard but the whistling

of the wind in their ears and now and then the squeak of their sledge-runners over a windswept Part of the road.

This encounter cheered and enlivened Vasili Andreevich, and he drove on more boldly without examining the way-marks, urging on the horse and trusting to him.

Nikita had nothing to do, and as usual in such circumstances he drowsed, making up for much sleepless time. Suddenly the horse stopped and Nikita nearly fell forward onto his nose.

‘You know we’re off the track again!’ said Vasili Andreevich.

‘How’s that?’

‘Why, there are no way-marks to be seen. We must have got off the road again.’

‘Well, if we’ve lost the road we must find it,’ said Nikita curtly, and getting out and stepping lightly on his pigeon-toed feet he started once more going about on the snow.

He walked about for a long time, now disappearing and now reappearing, and finally he came back.

‘There is no road here. There may be farther on,’ he said, getting into the sledge.

It was already growing dark. The snow-storm had not increased but had also not subsided.

‘If we could only hear those peasants!’ said Vasili Andreevich.

‘Well they haven’t caught us up. We must have gone far astray. Or maybe they have lost their way too.’

‘Where are we to go then?’ asked Vasili Andreevich.

‘Why, we must let the horse take its own way,’ said Nikita. ‘He will take us right. Let me have the reins.’

Vasili Andreevich gave him the reins, the more willingly because his hands were beginning to feel frozen in his thick gloves.

Nikita took the reins, but only held them, trying not to shake them and rejoicing at his favourite’s sagacity. And indeed the clever horse, turning first one ear and then the other now to one side and then to the other, began to wheel round.

‘The one thing he can’t do is to talk,’ Nikita kept saying. ‘See what he is doing! Go on, go on! You know best. That’s it, that’s it!’  
The wind was now blowing from behind and it felt warmer.

‘Yes, he’s clever,’ Nikita continued, admiring the horse. ‘A Kirgiz horse is strong but stupid. But this one — just see what he’s doing with his ears! He doesn’t need any telegraph. He can scent a mile off.’

Before another half-hour had passed they saw something dark ahead of them — a wood or a village — and stakes again appeared to the right. They had evidently come out onto the road.

‘Why, that’s Grishkino again!’ Nikita suddenly exclaimed.

And indeed, there on their left was that same barn with the snow flying from it, and farther on the same line with the frozen washing, shirts and trousers, which still fluttered desperately in the wind.

Again they drove into the street and again it grew quiet, warm, and cheerful, and again they could see the manure-stained street and hear voices and songs and the barking of a dog. It was already so dark that there were lights in some of the windows.

Half-way through the village Vasili Andreevich turned the horse towards a large double-fronted brick house and stopped at the porch. Nikita went to the lighted snow-covered window, in the rays of which flying snow-flakes glittered, and knocked at it with his whip.

‘Who is there?’ a voice replied to his knock.

‘From Kresty, the Brekhunovs, dear fellow,’ answered Nikita. ‘Just come out for a minute.’

Someone moved from the window, and a minute or two later there was the sound of the passage door as it came unstuck, then the latch of the outside door clicked and a tall white-bearded peasant, with a sheepskin coat thrown over his white holiday shirt, pushed his way out holding the door firmly against the wind, followed by a lad in a red shirt and high leather boots.

'Is that you, Andreevich?' asked the old man.

'Yes, friend, we've gone astray,' said Vasili Andreevich. 'We wanted to get to Goryachkin but found ourselves here. We went a second time but lost our way again.'

'Just see how you have gone astray!' said the old man. 'Petrushka, go and open the gate!' he added, turning to the lad in the red shirt.

'All right,' said the lad in a cheerful voice, and ran back into the passage.

'But we're not staying the night,' said Vasili Andreevich.

'Where will you go in the night? You'd better stay!'

'I'd be glad to, but I must go on. It's business, and it can't be helped.'

'Well, warm yourself at least. The samovar is just ready.'

'Warm myself? Yes, I'll do that,' said Vasili Andreevich. 'It won't get darker. The moon will rise and it will be lighter. Let's go in and warm ourselves, Nikita.'

'Well, why not? Let us warm ourselves,' replied Nikita, who was stiff with cold and anxious to warm his frozen limbs.

Vasili Andreevich went into the room with the old man, and Nikita drove through the gate opened for him by Petrushka, by whose advice he backed the horse under the penthouse. The ground was covered with manure and the tall bow over the horse's head caught against the beam. The hens and the cock had already settled to roost there, and clucked peevishly, clinging to the beam with their claws. The disturbed sheep shied and rushed aside trampling the frozen manure with their hooves. The dog yelped desperately with fright and anger and then burst out barking like a puppy at the stranger.

Nikita talked to them all, excused himself to the fowls and assured them that he would not disturb them again, rebuked the sheep for being frightened without knowing why, and kept soothing the dog, while he tied up the horse.

'Now that will be all right,' he said, knocking the snow off his clothes. 'Just hear how he barks!' he added, turning to the dog. 'Be quiet, stupid! Be quiet. You are only troubling yourself for nothing. We're not thieves, we're friends....'

'And these are, it's said, the three domestic counsellors,' remarked the lad, and with his strong arms he pushed under the pent-roof the sledge that had remained outside.

'Why counsellors?' asked Nikita.

'That's what is printed in Paulson. A thief creeps to a house — the dog barks, that means "Be on your guard!" The cock crows, that means, "Get up!" The cat licks herself — that means, "A welcome guest is coming. Get ready to receive him!"' said the lad with a smile.

Petrushka could read and write and knew Paulson's primer, his only book, almost by heart, and he was fond of quoting sayings from it that he thought suited the occasion, especially when he had had something to drink, as to-day.

'That's so,' said Nikita.

'You must be chilled through and through,' said Petrushka.

'Yes, I am rather,' said Nikita, and they went across the yard and the passage into the house.

#### IV

The household to which Vasili Andreevich had come was one of the richest in the village. The family had five allotments, besides renting other land. They had six horses, three cows, two calves, and some twenty sheep. There were twenty-two members belonging to the homestead: four married sons, six grandchildren (one of whom, Petrushka, was married), two great-grandchildren, three orphans, and four daughters-in-law with their babies.

It was one of the few homesteads that remained still undivided, but even here the dull internal work of disintegration which would

inevitably lead to separation had already begun, starting as usual among the women. Two sons were living in Moscow as water-carriers, and one was in the army. At home now were the old man and his wife, their second son who managed the homestead, the eldest who had come from Moscow for the holiday, and all the women and children. Besides these members of the family there was a visitor, a neighbour who was godfather to one of the children.

Over the table in the room hung a lamp with a shade, which brightly lit up the tea-things, a bottle of vodka, and some refreshments, besides illuminating the brick walls, which in the far corner were hung with icons on both sides of which were pictures. At the head of the table sat Vasili Andreevich in a black sheepskin coat, sucking his frozen moustache and observing the room and the people around him with his prominent hawk-like eyes. With him sat the old, bald, white-bearded master of the house in a white homespun shirt, and next him the son home from Moscow for the holiday — a man with a sturdy back and powerful shoulders and clad in a thin print shirt — then the second son, also broad-shouldered, who acted as head of the house, and then a lean red-haired peasant — the neighbour.

Having had a drink of vodka and something to eat, they were about to take tea, and the samovar standing on the floor beside the brick oven was already humming. The children could be seen in the top bunks and on the top of the oven. A woman sat on a lower bunk with a cradle beside her. The old housewife, her face covered with wrinkles which wrinkled even her lips, was waiting on Vasili Andreevich.

As Nikita entered the house she was offering her guest a small tumbler of thick glass which she had just filled with vodka.

‘Don’t refuse, Vasili Andreevich, you mustn’t! Wish us a merry feast. Drink it, dear!’ she said.

The sight and smell of vodka, especially now when he was chilled through and tired out, much disturbed Nikita’s mind. He frowned, and having shaken the snow off his cap and coat, stopped in front of the icons as if not seeing anyone, crossed himself three times, and bowed

to the icons. Then, turning to the old master of the house and bowing first to him, then to all those at table, then to the women who stood by the oven, and muttering: 'A merry holiday!' he began taking off his outer things without looking at the table.

'Why, you're all covered with hoar-frost, old fellow!' said the eldest brother, looking at Nikita's snow-covered face, eyes, and beard.

Nikita took off his coat, shook it again, hung it up beside the oven, and came up to the table. He too was offered vodka. He went through a moment of painful hesitation and nearly took up the glass and emptied the clear fragrant liquid down his throat, but he glanced at Vasili Andreevich, remembered his oath and the boots that he had sold for drink, recalled the cooper, remembered his son for whom he had promised to buy a horse by spring, sighed, and declined it.

'I don't drink, thank you kindly,' he said frowning, and sat down on a bench near the second window.

'How's that?' asked the eldest brother.

'I just don't drink,' replied Nikita without lifting his eyes but looking askance at his scanty beard and moustache and getting the icicles out of them.

'It's not good for him,' said Vasili Andreevich, munching a cracknel after emptying his glass.

'Well, then, have some tea,' said the kindly old hostess. 'You must be chilled through, good soul. Why are you women dawdling so with the samovar?'

'It is ready,' said one of the young women, and after flicking with her apron the top of the samovar which was now boiling over, she carried it with an effort to the table, raised it, and set it down with a thud.

Meanwhile Vasili Andreevich was telling how he had lost his way, how they had come back twice to this same village, and how they had gone astray and had met some drunken peasants. Their hosts were surprised, explained where and why they had missed their way, said



who the tipsy people they had met were, and told them how they ought to go.

'A little child could find the way to Molchanovka from here. All you have to do is to take the right turning from the high road. There's a bush you can see just there. But you didn't even get that far!' said the neighbour.

'You'd better stay the night. The women will make up beds for you,' said the old woman persuasively.

'You could go on in the morning and it would be pleasanter,' said the old man, confirming what his wife had said.

'I can't, friend. Business!' said Vasili Andreevich. 'Lose an hour and you can't catch it up in a year,' he added, remembering the grove and the dealers who might snatch that deal from him. 'We shall get there, shan't we?' he said, turning to Nikita.

Nikita did not answer for some time, apparently still intent on thawing out his beard and moustache.

'If only we don't go astray again,' he replied gloomily. He was gloomy because he passionately longed for some vodka, and the only thing that could assuage that longing was tea and he had not yet been offered any.

'But we have only to reach the turning and then we shan't go wrong. The road will be through the forest the whole way,' said Vasili Andreevich.

'It's just as you please, Vasili Andreevich. If we're to go, let us go,' said Nikita, taking the glass of tea he was offered.

'We'll drink our tea and be off.'

Nikita said nothing but only shook his head, and carefully pouring some tea into his saucer began warming his hands, the fingers of which were always swollen with hard work, over the steam. Then, biting off a tiny bit of sugar, he bowed to his hosts, said, 'Your health!' and drew in the steaming liquid.

'If somebody would see us as far as the turning,' said Vasili Andreevich.

‘Well, we can do that,’ said the eldest son. ‘Petrushka will harness and go that far with you.’

‘Well, then, put in the horse, lad, and I shall be thankful to you for it.’

‘Oh, what for, dear man?’ said the kindly old woman. ‘We are heartily glad to do it.’

‘Petrushka, go and put in the mare,’ said the eldest brother.

‘All right,’ replied Petrushka with a smile, and promptly snatching his cap down from a nail he ran away to harness.

While the horse was being harnessed the talk returned to the point at which it had stopped when Vasili Andreevich drove up to the window. The old man had been complaining to his neighbour, the village elder, about his third son who had not sent him anything for the holiday though he had sent a French shawl to his wife.

‘The young people are getting out of hand,’ said the old man.

‘And how they do!’ said the neighbour. ‘There’s no managing them! They know too much. There’s Demochkin now, who broke his father’s arm. It’s all from being too clever, it seems.’

Nikita listened, watched their faces, and evidently would have liked to share in the conversation, but he was too busy drinking his tea and only nodded his head approvingly. He emptied one tumbler after another and grew warmer and warmer and more and more comfortable. The talk continued on the same subject for a long time — the harmfulness of a household dividing up — and it was clearly not an abstract discussion but concerned the question of a separation in that house; a separation demanded by the second son who sat there morosely silent.

It was evidently a sore subject and absorbed them all, but out of propriety they did not discuss their private affairs before strangers. At last, however, the old man could not restrain himself, and with tears in his eyes declared that he would not consent to a break-up of the family during his lifetime, that his house was prospering, thank God, but that if they separated they would all have to go begging.

‘Just like the Matveevs,’ said the neighbour. ‘They used to have a proper house, but now they’ve split up none of them has anything.’

‘And that is what you want to happen to us,’ said the old man, turning to his son.

The son made no reply and there was an awkward pause. The silence was broken by Petrushka, who having harnessed the horse had returned to the hut a few minutes before this and had been listening all the time with a smile.

‘There’s a fable about that in Paulson,’ he said. ‘A father gave his sons a broom to break. At first they could not break it, but when they took it twig by twig they broke it easily. And it’s the same here,’ and he gave a broad smile. ‘I’m ready!’ he added.

‘If you’re ready, let’s go,’ said Vasili Andreevich. ‘And as to separating, don’t you allow it, Grandfather. You got everything together and you’re the master. Go to the Justice of the Peace. He’ll say how things should be done.’

‘He carries on so, carries on so,’ the old man continued in a whining tone. ‘There’s no doing anything with him. It’s as if the devil possessed him.’

Nikita having meanwhile finished his fifth tumbler of tea laid it on its side instead of turning it upside down, hoping to be offered a sixth glass. But there was no more water in the samovar, so the hostess did not fill it up for him. Besides, Vasili Andreevich was putting his things on, so there was nothing for it but for Nikita to get up too, put back into the sugar-basin the lump of sugar he had nibbled all round, wipe his perspiring face with the skirt of his sheepskin, and go to put on his overcoat.

Having put it on he sighed deeply, thanked his hosts, said good-bye, and went out of the warm bright room into the cold dark passage, through which the wind was howling and where snow was blowing through the cracks of the shaking door, and from there into the yard.

Petrushka stood in his sheepskin in the middle of the yard by his horse, repeating some lines from Paulson’s primer. He said with a smile:  
‘Storms with mist the sky conceal,  
Snowy circles wheeling wild.

Now like savage beast 'twill howl,  
And now 'tis wailing like a child.'

Nikita nodded approvingly as he arranged the reins.

The old man, seeing Vasili Andreevich off, brought a lantern into the passage to show him a light, but it was blown out at once. And even in the yard it was evident that the snowstorm had become more violent.

'Well, this is weather!' thought Vasili Andreevich. 'Perhaps we may not get there after all. But there is nothing to be done. Business! Besides, we have got ready, our host's horse has been harnessed, and we'll get there with God's help!'

Their aged host also thought they ought not to go, but he had already tried to persuade them to stay and had not been listened to.

'It's no use asking them again. Maybe my age makes me timid. They'll get there all right, and at least we shall get to bed in good time and without any fuss,' he thought.

Petrushka did not think of danger. He knew the road and the whole district so well, and the lines about 'snowy circles wheeling wild' described what was happening outside so aptly that it cheered him up. Nikita did not wish to go at all, but he had been accustomed not to have his own way and to serve others for so long that there was no one to hinder the departing travellers.

V

Vasili Andreevich went over to his sledge, found it with difficulty in the darkness, climbed in and took the reins.

'Go on in front!' he cried.

Petrushka kneeling in his low sledge started his horse. Mukhorty, who had been neighing for some time past, now scenting a mare ahead of him started after her, and they drove out into the street. They drove again through the outskirts of the village and along the same road, past the yard where the frozen linen had hung (which, however, was no

longer to be seen), past the same barn, which was now snowed up almost to the roof and from which the snow was still endlessly pouring past the same dismally moaning, whistling, and swaying willows, and again entered into the sea of blustering snow raging from above and below. The wind was so strong that when it blew from the side and the travellers steered against it, it tilted the sledges and turned the horses to one side. Petrushka drove his good mare in front at a brisk trot and kept shouting lustily. Mukhorty pressed after her.

After travelling so for about ten minutes, Petrushka turned round and shouted something. Neither Vasili Andreevich nor Nikita could hear anything because of the wind, but they guessed that they had arrived at the turning. In fact Petrushka had turned to the right, and now the wind that had blown from the side blew straight in their faces, and through the snow they saw something dark on their right. It was the bush at the turning.

‘Well now, God speed you!’

‘Thank you, Petrushka!’

‘Storms with mist the sky conceal!’ shouted Petrushka as he disappeared.

‘There’s a poet for you!’ muttered Vasili Andreevich, pulling at the reins.

‘Yes, a fine lad — a true peasant,’ said Nikita.

They drove on.

Nikita, wrapping his coat closely about him and pressing his head down so close to his shoulders that his short beard covered his throat, sat silently, trying not to lose the warmth he had obtained while drinking tea in the house. Before him he saw the straight lines of the shafts which constantly deceived him into thinking they were on a well-travelled road, and the horse’s swaying crupper with his knotted tail blown to one side, and farther ahead the high shaft-bow and the swaying head and neck of the horse with its waving mane. Now and then he caught sight of a way-sign, so that he knew they were still on a road and that there was nothing for him to be concerned about.

Vasili Andreevich drove on, leaving it to the horse to keep to the road. But Mukhorty, though he had had a breathing-space in the village, ran reluctantly, and seemed now and then to get off the road, so that Vasili Andreevich had repeatedly to correct him.

‘Here’s a stake to the right, and another, and here’s a third,’ Vasili Andreevich counted, ‘and here in front is the forest,’ thought he, as he looked at something dark in front of him. But what had seemed to him a forest was only a bush. They passed the bush and drove on for another hundred yards but there was no fourth way-mark nor any forest.

‘We must reach the forest soon,’ thought Vasili Andreevich, and animated by the vodka and the tea he did not stop but shook the reins, and the good obedient horse responded, now ambling, now slowly trotting in the direction in which he was sent, though he knew that he was not going the right way. Ten minutes went by, but there was still no forest.

‘There now, we must be astray again,’ said Vasili Andreevich, pulling up.

Nikita silently got out of the sledge and holding his coat, which the wind now wrapped closely about him and now almost tore off, started to feel about in the snow, going first to one side and then to the other. Three or four times he was completely lost to sight. At last he returned and took the reins from Vasili Andreevich’s hand.

‘We must go to the right,’ he said sternly and peremptorily, as he turned the horse.

‘Well, if it’s to the right, go to the right,’ said Vasili Andreevich, yielding up the reins to Nikita and thrusting his freezing hands into his sleeves. Nikita did not reply.

‘Now then, friend, stir yourself!’ he shouted to the horse, but in spite of the shake of the reins Mukhorty moved only at a walk. The snow in places was up to his knees, and the sledge moved by fits and starts with his every movement.

Nikita took the whip that hung over the front of the sledge and struck him once. The good horse, unused to the whip, sprang forward and moved at a trot, but immediately fell back into an amble and then to a walk. So they went on for five minutes. It was dark and the snow whirled from above and rose from below, so that sometimes the shaft-bow could not be seen. At times the sledge seemed to stand still and the field to run backwards. Suddenly the horse stopped abruptly, evidently aware of something close in front of him. Nikita again sprang lightly out, throwing down the reins, and went ahead to see what had brought him to a standstill, but hardly had he made a step in front of the horse before his feet slipped and he went rolling down an incline.

‘Whoa, whoa, whoa!’ he said to himself as he fell, and he tried to stop his fall but could not, and only stopped when his feet plunged into a thick layer of snow that had drifted to the bottom of the hollow.

The fringe of a drift of snow that hung on the edge of the hollow, disturbed by Nikita’s fall, showered down on him and got inside his collar.

‘What a thing to do!’ said Nikita reproachfully, addressing the drift and the hollow and shaking the snow from under his collar.

‘Nikita! Hey, Nikita!’ shouted Vasili Andreevich from above.

But Nikita did not reply. He was too occupied in shaking out the snow and searching for the whip he had dropped when rolling down the incline. Having found the whip he tried to climb straight up the bank where he had rolled down, but it was impossible to do so: he kept rolling down again, and so he had to go along at the foot of the hollow to find a way up. About seven yards farther on he managed with difficulty to crawl up the incline on all fours, then he followed the edge of the hollow back to the place where the horse should have been. He could not see either horse or sledge, but as he walked against the wind he heard Vasili Andreevich’s shouts and Mukhorty’s neighing, calling him.

‘I’m coming! I’m coming! What are you cackling for?’ he muttered.

Only when he had come up to the sledge could he make out the horse, and Vasili Andreevich standing beside it and looking gigantic.

‘Where the devil did you vanish to? We must go back, if only to Grishkino,’ he began reproaching Nikita.

‘I’d be glad to get back, Vasili Andreevich, but which way are we to go? There is such a ravine here that if we once get in it we shan’t get out again. I got stuck so fast there myself that I could hardly get out.’

‘What shall we do, then? We can’t stay here! We must go somewhere!’ said Vasili Andreevich.

Nikita said nothing. He seated himself in the sledge with his back to the wind, took off his boots, shook out the snow that had got into them, and taking some straw from the bottom of the sledge, carefully plugged with it a hole in his left boot.

Vasili Andreevich remained silent, as though now leaving everything to Nikita. Having put his boots on again, Nikita drew his feet into the sledge, put on his mittens and took up the reins, and directed the horse along the side of the ravine. But they had not gone a hundred yards before the horse again stopped short. The ravine was in front of him again.

Nikita again climbed out and again trudged about in the snow. He did this for a considerable time and at last appeared from the opposite side to that from which he had started.

‘Vasili Andreevich, are you alive?’ he called out.

‘Here!’ replied Vasili Andreevich. ‘Well, what now?’

‘I can’t make anything out. It’s too dark. There’s nothing but ravines. We must drive against the wind again.’

They set off once more. Again Nikita went stumbling through the snow, again he fell in, again climbed out and trudged about, and at last quite out of breath he sat down beside the sledge.

‘Well, how now?’ asked Vasili Andreevich.

‘Why, I am quite worn out and the horse won’t go.’

‘Then what’s to be done?’

‘Why, wait a minute.’

Nikita went away again but soon returned.



‘Follow me!’ he said, going in front of the horse.

Vasili Andreevich no longer gave orders but implicitly did what Nikita told him.

‘Here, follow me!’ Nikita shouted, stepping quickly to the right, and seizing the rein he led Mukhorty down towards a snow-drift.

At first the horse held back, then he jerked forward, hoping to leap the drift, but he had not the strength and sank into it up to his collar.

‘Get out!’ Nikita called to Vasili Andreevich who still sat in the sledge, and taking hold of one shaft he moved the sledge closer to the horse.

‘It’s hard, brother!’ he said to Mukhorty, ‘but it can’t be helped. Make an effort! Now, now, just a little one!’ he shouted.

The horse gave a tug, then another, but failed to clear himself and settled down again as if considering something.

‘Now, brother, this won’t do!’ Nikita admonished him. ‘Now once more!’

Again Nikita tugged at the shaft on his side, and Vasili Andreevich did the same on the other.

Mukhorty lifted his head and then gave a sudden jerk.

‘That’s it! That’s it!’ cried Nikita. ‘Don’t be afraid — you won’t sink!’

One plunge, another, and a third, and at last Mukhorty was out of the snow-drift, and stood still, breathing heavily and shaking the snow off himself. Nikita wished to lead him farther, but Vasili Andreevich, in his two fur coats, was so out of breath that he could not walk farther and dropped into the sledge.

‘Let me get my breath!’ he said, unfastening the kerchief with which he had tied the collar of his fur coat at the village.

‘It’s all right here. You lie there,’ said Nikita. ‘I will lead him along.’ And with Vasili Andreevich in the sledge he led the horse by the bridle about ten paces down and then up a slight rise, and stopped.

The place where Nikita had stopped was not completely in the hollow where the snow sweeping down from the hillocks might have buried them altogether, but still it was Partly sheltered from the wind by the

side of the ravine. There were moments when the wind seemed to abate a little, but that did not last long and as if to make up for that respite the storm swept down with tenfold vigour and tore and whirled the more fiercely. Such a gust struck them at the moment when Vasili Andreevich, having recovered his breath, got out of the sledge and went up to Nikita to consult him as to what they should do. They both bent down involuntarily and waited till the violence of the squall should have passed. Mukhorty too laid back his ears and shook his head discontentedly. As soon as the violence of the blast had abated a little, Nikita took off his mittens, stuck them into his belt, breathed onto his hands, and began to undo the straps of the shaft-bow.

‘What’s that you are doing there?’ asked Vasili Andreevich.

‘Unharnessing. What else is there to do? I have no strength left,’ said Nikita as though excusing himself.

‘Can’t we drive somewhere?’

‘No, we can’t. We shall only kill the horse. Why, the poor beast is not himself now,’ said Nikita, pointing to the horse, which was standing submissively waiting for what might come, with his steep wet sides heaving heavily. ‘We shall have to stay the night here,’ he said, as if preparing to spend the night at an inn, and he proceeded to unfasten the collar-straps. The buckles came undone.

‘But shan’t we be frozen?’ remarked Vasili Andreevich.

‘Well, if we are we can’t help it,’ said Nikita.

## VI

Although Vasili Andreevich felt quite warm in his two fur coats, especially after struggling in the snow-drift, a cold shiver ran down his back on realizing that he must really spend the night where they were. To calm himself he sat down in the sledge and got out his cigarettes and matches.

Nikita meanwhile unharnessed Mukhorty. He unstrapped the belly-band and the back-band, took away the reins, loosened the collar-strap,

and removed the shaft-bow, talking to him all the time to encourage him.

‘Now come out! come out!’ he said, leading him clear of the shafts. ‘Now we’ll tie you up here and I’ll put down some straw and take off your bridle. When you’ve had a bite you’ll feel more cheerful.’

But Mukhorty was restless and evidently not comforted by Nikita’s remarks. He stepped now on one foot and now on another, and pressed close against the sledge, turning his back to the wind and rubbing his head on Nikita’s sleeve. Then, as if not to pain Nikita by refusing his offer of the straw he put before him, he hurriedly snatched a wisp out of the sledge, but immediately decided that it was now no time to think of straw and threw it down, and the wind instantly scattered it, carried it away, and covered it with snow.

‘Now we will set up a signal,’ said Nikita, and turning the front of the sledge to the wind he tied the shafts together with a strap and set them up on end in front of the sledge. ‘There now, when the snow covers us up, good folk will see the shafts and dig us out,’ he said, slapping his mittens together and putting them on. ‘That’s what the old folk taught us!’

Vasili Andreevich meanwhile had unfastened his coat, and holding its skirts up for shelter, struck one sulphur match after another on the steel box.

But his hands trembled, and one match after another either did not kindle or was blown out by the wind just as he was lifting it to the cigarette. At last a match did burn up, and its flame lit up for a moment the fur of his coat, his hand with the gold ring on the bent forefinger, and the snow-sprinkled oat-straw that stuck out from under the drugget. The cigarette lighted, he eagerly took a whiff or two, inhaled the smoke, let it out through his moustache, and would have inhaled again, but the wind tore off the burning tobacco and whirled it away as it had done the straw.

But even these few puffs had cheered him.

‘If we must spend the night here, we must!’ he said with decision. ‘Wait a bit, I’ll arrange a flag as well,’ he added, picking up the kerchief which he had thrown down in the sledge after taking it from round his collar, and drawing off his gloves and standing up on the front of the sledge and stretching himself to reach the strap, he tied the handkerchief to it with a tight knot.

The kerchief immediately began to flutter wildly, now clinging round the shaft, now suddenly streaming out, stretching and flapping.

‘Just see what a fine flag!’ said Vasili Andreevich, admiring his handiwork and letting himself down into the sledge. ‘We should be warmer together, but there’s not room enough for two,’ he added.

‘I’ll find a place,’ said Nikita. ‘But I must cover up the horse first — he sweated so, poor thing. Let go!’ he added, drawing the drugget from under Vasili Andreevich.

Having got the drugget he folded it in two, and after taking off the breechband and pad, covered Mukhorty with it.

‘Anyhow it will be warmer, silly!’ he said, putting back the breechband and the pad on the horse over the drugget. Then having finished that business he returned to the sledge, and addressing Vasili Andreevich, said: ‘You won’t need the sackcloth, will you? And let me have some straw.’

And having taken these things from under Vasili Andreevich, Nikita went behind the sledge, dug out a hole for himself in the snow, put straw into it, wrapped his coat well round him, covered himself with the sackcloth, and pulling his cap well down seated himself on the straw he had spread, and leant against the wooden back of the sledge to shelter himself from the wind and the snow.

Vasili Andreevich shook his head disapprovingly at what Nikita was doing, as in general he disapproved of the peasant’s stupidity and lack of education, and he began to settle himself down for the night.

He smoothed the remaining straw over the bottom of the sledge, putting more of it under his side. Then he thrust his hands into his sleeves and settled down, sheltering his head in the corner of the sledge from the wind in front.

He did not wish to sleep. He lay and thought: thought ever of the one thing that constituted the sole aim, meaning, pleasure, and pride of his life — of how much money he had made and might still make, of how much other people he knew had made and possessed, and of how those others had made and were making it, and how he, like them, might still make much more. The purchase of the Goryachkin grove was a matter of immense importance to him. By that one deal he hoped to make perhaps ten thousand rubles. He began mentally to reckon the value of the wood he had inspected in autumn, and on five acres of which he had counted all the trees.

‘The oaks will go for sledge-runners. The undergrowth will take care of itself, and there’ll still be some thirty sazheens of fire-wood left on each desyatin,’ said he to himself. ‘That means there will be at least two hundred and twenty-five rubles’ worth left on each desyatin. Fifty-six desyatiins means fifty-six hundreds, and fifty-six hundreds, and fifty-six tens, and another fifty-six tens, and then fifty-six fives....’

He saw that it came out to more than twelve thousand rubles, but could not reckon it up exactly without a counting-frame. ‘But I won’t give ten thousand, anyhow. I’ll give about eight thousand with a deduction on account of the glades. I’ll grease the surveyor’s palm — give him a hundred rubles, or a hundred and fifty, and he’ll reckon that there are some five desyatins of glade to be deducted. And he’ll let it go for eight thousand. Three thousand cash down. That’ll move him, no fear!’ he thought, and he pressed his pocket-book with his forearm.

‘God only knows how we missed the turning. The forest ought to be there, and a watchman’s hut, and dogs barking. But the damned things don’t bark when they’re wanted.’ He turned his collar down from his ear and listened, but as before only the whistling of the wind could be heard, the flapping and fluttering of the kerchief tied to the shafts, and

the pelting of the snow against the woodwork of the sledge. He again covered up his ear.

‘If I had known I would have stayed the night. Well, no matter, we’ll get there to-morrow. It’s only one day lost. And the others won’t travel in such weather.’ Then he remembered that on the 9th he had to receive payment from the butcher for his oxen. ‘He meant to come himself, but he won’t find me, and my wife won’t know how to receive the money. She doesn’t know the right way of doing things,’ he thought, recalling how at their Party the day before she had not known how to treat the police-officer who was their guest. ‘Of course she’s only a woman! Where could she have seen anything?’

In my father’s time what was our house like? Just a rich peasant’s house: just an oatmill and an inn — that was the whole property. But what have I done in these fifteen years? A shop, two taverns, a flour-mill, a grain-store, two farms leased out, and a house with an iron-roofed barn,’ he thought proudly. ‘Not as it was in Father’s time! Who is talked of in the whole district now? Brekhunov! And why? Because I stick to business. I take trouble, not like others who lie abed or waste their time on foolishness while I don’t sleep of nights. Blizzard or no blizzard I start out. So business gets done. They think money-making is a joke. No, take pains and rack your brains! You get overtaken out of doors at night, like this, or keep awake night after night till the thoughts whirling in your head make the pillow turn,’ he meditated with pride. ‘They think people get on through luck. After all, the Mironovs are now millionaires. And why? Take pains and God gives. If only He grants me health!’

The thought that he might himself be a millionaire like Mironov, who began with nothing, so excited Vasili Andreevich that he felt the need of talking to somebody. But there was no one to talk to.... If only he could have reached Goryachkin he would have talked to the landlord and shown him a thing or two.

‘Just see how it blows! It will snow us up so deep that we shan’t be able to get out in the morning!’ he thought, listening to a gust of wind that

blew against the front of the sledge, bending it and lashing the snow against it. He raised himself and looked round. All he could see through the whirling darkness was Mukhorty's dark head, his back covered by the fluttering drugget, and his thick knotted tail; while all round, in front and behind, was the same fluctuating whity darkness, sometimes seeming to get a little lighter and sometimes growing denser still.

'A pity I listened to Nikita,' he thought. 'We ought to have driven on. We should have come out somewhere, if only back to Grishkino and stayed the night at Taras's. As it is we must sit here all night. But what was I thinking about? Yes, that God gives to those who take trouble, but not to loafers, lie-abeds, or fools. I must have a smoke!'

He sat down again, got out his cigarette-case, and stretched himself flat on his stomach, screening the matches with the skirt of his coat. But the wind found its way in and put out match after match. At last he got one to burn and lit a cigarette. He was very glad that he had managed to do what he wanted, and though the wind smoked more of the cigarette than he did, he still got two or three puffs and felt more cheerful. He again leant back, wrapped himself up, started reflecting and remembering, and suddenly and quite unexpectedly lost consciousness and fell asleep.

Suddenly something seemed to give him a push and awoke him. Whether it was Mukhorty who had pulled some straw from under him, or whether something within him had startled him, at all events it woke him, and his heart began to beat faster and faster so that the sledge seemed to tremble under him. He opened his eyes. Everything around him was just as before. 'It looks lighter,' he thought. 'I expect it won't be long before dawn.' But he at once remembered that it was lighter because the moon had risen. He sat up and looked first at the horse. Mukhorty still stood with his back to the wind, shivering all over. One side of the drugget, which was completely covered with snow, had been blown back, the breeching had slipped down and the snow-covered head with its waving forelock and mane were now more visible. Vasili Andreevich leant over the back of the sledge and looked behind. Nikita still sat in the same position in which he had settled

himself. The sacking with which he was covered, and his legs, were thickly covered with snow.

‘If only that peasant doesn’t freeze to death! His clothes are so wretched. I may be held responsible for him. What shiftless people they are — such a want of education,’ thought Vasili Andreevich, and he felt like taking the drugget off the horse and putting it over Nikita, but it would be very cold to get out and move about and, moreover, the horse might freeze to death. ‘Why did I bring him with me? It was all her stupidity!’ he thought, recalling his unloved wife, and he rolled over into his old place at the front Part of the sledge. ‘My uncle once spent a whole night like this,’ he reflected, ‘and was all right.’ But another case came at once to his mind. ‘But when they dug Sebastian out he was dead — stiff like a frozen carcass. If I’d only stopped the night in Grishkino all this would not have happened!’

And wrapping his coat carefully round him so that none of the warmth of the fur should be wasted but should warm him all over, neck, knees, and feet, he shut his eyes and tried to sleep again. But try as he would he could not get drowsy, on the contrary he felt wide awake and animated. Again he began counting his gains and the debts due to him, again he began bragging to himself and feeling pleased with himself and his position, but all this was continually disturbed by a stealthily approaching fear and by the unpleasant regret that he had not remained in Grishkino.

‘How different it would be to be lying warm on a bench!’

He turned over several times in his attempts to get into a more comfortable position more sheltered from the wind, he wrapped up his legs closer, shut his eyes, and lay still. But either his legs in their strong felt boots began to ache from being bent in one position, or the wind blew in somewhere, and after lying still for a short time he again began to recall the disturbing fact that he might now have been lying quietly in the warm hut at Grishkino. He again sat up, turned about, muffled himself up, and settled down once more.



Once he fancied that he heard a distant cock-crow. He felt glad, turned down his coat-collar and listened with strained attention, but in spite of all his efforts nothing could be heard but the wind whistling between the shafts, the flapping of the kerchief, and the snow pelting against the frame of the sledge.

Nikita sat just as he had done all the time, not moving and not even answering Vasili Andreevich who had addressed him a couple of times. 'He doesn't care a bit — he's probably asleep!' thought Vasili Andreevich with vexation, looking behind the sledge at Nikita who was covered with a thick layer of snow.

Vasili Andreevich got up and lay down again some twenty times. It seemed to him that the night would never end. 'It must be getting near morning,' he thought, getting up and looking around. 'Let's have a look at my watch. It will be cold to unbutton, but if I only know that it's getting near morning I shall at any rate feel more cheerful. We could begin harnessing.'

In the depth of his heart Vasili Andreevich knew that it could not yet be near morning, but he was growing more and more afraid, and wished both to get to know and yet to deceive himself. He carefully undid the fastening of his sheepskin, pushed in his hand, and felt about for a long time before he got to his waistcoat.

With great difficulty he managed to draw out his silver watch with its enamelled flower design, and tried to make out the time. He could not see anything without a light. Again he went down on his knees and elbows as he had done when he lighted a cigarette, got out his matches, and proceeded to strike one. This time he went to work more carefully, and feeling with his fingers for a match with the largest head and the greatest amount of phosphorus, lit it at the first try. Bringing the face of the watch under the light he could hardly believe his eyes.... It was only ten minutes past twelve. Almost the whole night was still before him.

'Oh, how long the night is!' he thought, feeling a cold shudder run down his back, and having fastened his fur coats again and wrapped

himself up, he snuggled into a corner of the sledge intending to wait patiently. Suddenly, above the monotonous roar of the wind, he clearly distinguished another new and living sound. It steadily strengthened, and having become quite clear diminished just as gradually. Beyond all doubt it was a wolf, and he was so near that the movement of his jaws as he changed his cry was brought down the wind. Vasili Andreevich turned back the collar of his coat and listened attentively. Mukhorty too strained to listen, moving his ears, and when the wolf had ceased its howling he shifted from foot to foot and gave a warning snort. After this Vasili Andreevich could not fall asleep again or even calm himself. The more he tried to think of his accounts, his business, his reputation, his worth and his wealth, the more and more was he mastered by fear, and regrets that he had not stayed the night at Grishkino dominated and mingled in all his thoughts.

‘Devil take the forest! Things were all right without it, thank God. Ah, if we had only put up for the night!’ he said to himself. ‘They say it’s drunkards that freeze,’ he thought, ‘and I have had some drink.’ And observing his sensations he noticed that he was beginning to shiver, without knowing whether it was from cold or from fear. He tried to wrap himself up and lie down as before, but could no longer do so. He could not stay in one position.

He wanted to get up, to do something to master the gathering fear that was rising in him and against which he felt himself powerless. He again got out his cigarettes and matches, but only three matches were left and they were bad ones. The phosphorus rubbed off them all without lighting.

‘The devil take you! Damned thing! Curse you!’ he muttered, not knowing whom or what he was cursing, and he flung away the crushed cigarette. He was about to throw away the matchbox too, but checked the movement of his hand and put the box in his pocket instead. He was seized with such unrest that he could no longer remain in one spot. He climbed out of the sledge and standing with his back to the wind began to shift his belt again, fastening it lower down in the waist and tightening it.

‘What’s the use of lying and waiting for death? Better mount the horse and get away!’ The thought suddenly occurred to him. ‘The horse will move when he has someone on his back. As for him,’ he thought of Nikita— ‘it’s all the same to him whether he lives or dies. What is his life worth? He won’t grudge his life, but I have something to live for, thank God.’

He untied the horse, threw the reins over his neck and tried to mount, but his coats and boots were so heavy that he failed. Then he clambered up in the sledge and tried to mount from there, but the sledge tilted under his weight, and he failed again. At last he drew Mukhorty nearer to the sledge, cautiously balanced on one side of it, and managed to lie on his stomach across the horse’s back. After lying like that for a while he shifted forward once and again, threw a leg over, and finally seated himself, supporting his feet on the loose breeching-straps. The shaking of the sledge awoke Nikita. He raised himself, and it seemed to Vasili Andreevich that he said something.

‘Listen to such fools as you! Am I to die like this for nothing?’ exclaimed Vasili Andreevich. And tucking the loose skirts of his fur coat in under his knees, he turned the horse and rode away from the sledge in the direction in which he thought the forest and the forester’s hut must be.

## VII

From the time he had covered himself with the sackcloth and seated himself behind the sledge, Nikita had not stirred. Like all those who live in touch with nature and have known want, he was patient and could wait for hours, even days, without growing restless or irritable. He heard his master call him, but did not answer because he did not want to move or talk. Though he still felt some warmth from the tea he had drunk and from his energetic struggle when clambering about in the snowdrift, he knew that this warmth would not last long and that he had no strength left to warm himself again by moving about, for he felt as tired as a horse when it stops and refuses to go further in spite of the whip, and its master sees that it must be fed before it can work again.

The foot in the boot with a hole in it had already grown numb, and he could no longer feel his big toe. Besides that, his whole body began to feel colder and colder.

The thought that he might, and very probably would, die that night occurred to him, but did not seem particularly unpleasant or dreadful. It did not seem particularly unpleasant, because his whole life had been not a continual holiday, but on the contrary an unceasing round of toil of which he was beginning to feel weary. And it did not seem particularly dreadful, because besides the masters he had served here, like Vasili Andreevich, he always felt himself dependent on the Chief Master, who had sent him into this life, and he knew that when dying he would still be in that Master's power and would not be ill-used by Him. 'It seems a pity to give up what one is used to and accustomed to. But there's nothing to be done, I shall get used to the new things.'

'Sins?' he thought, and remembered his drunkenness, the money that had gone on drink, how he had offended his wife, his cursing, his neglect of church and of the fasts, and all the things the priest blamed him for at confession. 'Of course they are sins. But then, did I take them on of myself? That's evidently how God made me. Well, and the sins? Where am I to escape to?'

So at first he thought of what might happen to him that night, and then did not return to such thoughts but gave himself up to whatever recollections came into his head of themselves. Now he thought of Martha's arrival, of the drunkenness among the workers and his own renunciation of drink, then of their present journey and of Taras's house and the talk about the breaking-up of the family, then of his own lad, and of Mukhorty now sheltered under the drugget, and then of his master who made the sledge creak as he tossed about in it. 'I expect you're sorry yourself that you started out, dear man,' he thought. 'It would seem hard to leave a life such as his! It's not like the likes of us.'

Then all these recollections began to grow confused and got mixed in his head, and he fell asleep.

But when Vasili Andreevich, getting on the horse, jerked the sledge, against the back of which Nikita was leaning, and it shifted away and hit

him in the back with one of its runners, he awoke and had to change his position whether he liked it or not. Straightening his legs with difficulty and shaking the snow off them he got up, and an agonizing cold immediately penetrated his whole body. On making out what was happening he called to Vasili Andreevich to leave him the drugget which the horse no longer needed, so that he might wrap himself in it. But Vasili Andreevich did not stop, but disappeared amid the powdery snow.

Left alone Nikita considered for a moment what he should do. He felt that he had not the strength to go off in search of a house. It was no longer possible to sit down in his old place — it was by now all filled with snow. He felt that he could not get warmer in the sledge either, for there was nothing to cover himself with, and his coat and sheepskin no longer warmed him at all. He felt as cold as though he had nothing on but a shirt. He became frightened. 'Lord, heavenly Father!' he muttered, and was comforted by the consciousness that he was not alone but that there was One who heard him and would not abandon him. He gave a deep sigh, and keeping the sackcloth over his head he got inside the sledge and lay down in the place where his master had been.

But he could not get warm in the sledge either. At first he shivered all over, then the shivering ceased and little by little he began to lose consciousness. He did not know whether he was dying or falling asleep, but felt equally prepared for the one as for the other.

## VIII

Meanwhile Vasili Andreevich, with his feet and the ends of the reins, urged the horse on in the direction in which for some reason he expected the forest and forester's hut to be. The snow covered his eyes and the wind seemed intent on stopping him, but bending forward and constantly lapping his coat over and pushing it between himself and the cold harness pad which prevented him from sitting properly, he kept

urging the horse on. Mukhorty ambled on obediently though with difficulty, in the direction in which he was driven.

Vasili Andreevich rode for about five minutes straight ahead, as he thought, seeing nothing but the horse's head and the white waste, and hearing only the whistle of the wind about the horse's ears and his coat collar.

Suddenly a dark patch showed up in front of him. His heart beat with joy, and he rode towards the object, already seeing in imagination the walls of village houses. But the dark patch was not stationary, it kept moving; and it was not a village but some tall stalks of wormwood sticking up through the snow on the boundary between two fields, and desperately tossing about under the pressure of the wind which beat it all to one side and whistled through it. The sight of that wormwood tormented by the pitiless wind made Vasili Andreevich shudder, he knew not why, and he hurriedly began urging the horse on, not noticing that when riding up to the wormwood he had quite changed his direction and was now heading the opposite way, though still imagining that he was riding towards where the hut should be. But the horse kept making towards the right, and Vasili Andreevich kept guiding it to the left.

Again something dark appeared in front of him. Again he rejoiced, convinced that now it was certainly a village. But once more it was the same boundary line overgrown with wormwood, once more the same wormwood desperately tossed by the wind and carrying unreasoning terror to his heart. But its being the same wormwood was not all, for beside it there was a horse's track Partly snowed over. Vasili Andreevich stopped, stooped down and looked carefully.

It was a horse-track only Partially covered with snow, and could be none but his own horse's hoofprints. He had evidently gone round in a small circle. 'I shall perish like that!' he thought, and not to give way to his terror he urged on the horse still more, peering into the snowy darkness in which he saw only flitting and fitful points of light. Once he thought he heard the barking of dogs or the howling of wolves, but the

sounds were so faint and indistinct that he did not know whether he heard them or merely imagined them, and he stopped and began to listen intently.

Suddenly some terrible, deafening cry resounded near his ears, and everything shivered and shook under him. He seized Mukhorty's neck, but that too was shaking all over and the terrible cry grew still more frightful. For some seconds Vasili Andreevich could not collect himself or understand what was happening. It was only that Mukhorty, whether to encourage himself or to call for help, had neighed loudly and resonantly. 'Ugh, you wretch! How you frightened me, damn you!' thought Vasili Andreevich. But even when he understood the cause of his terror he could not shake it off.

'I must calm myself and think things over,' he said to himself, but yet he could not stop, and continued to urge the horse on, without noticing that he was now going with the wind instead of against it. His body, especially between his legs where it touched the pad of the harness and was not covered by his overcoats, was getting painfully cold, especially when the horse walked slowly. His legs and arms trembled and his breathing came fast. He saw himself perishing amid this dreadful snowy waste, and could see no means of escape.

Suddenly the horse under him tumbled into something and, sinking into a snow-drift, began to plunge and fell on his side. Vasili Andreevich jumped off, and in so doing dragged to one side the breechband on which his foot was resting, and twisted round the pad to which he held as he dismounted. As soon as he had jumped off, the horse struggled to his feet, plunged forward, gave one leap and another, neighed again, and dragging the drugget and the breechband after him, disappeared, leaving Vasili Andreevich alone on the snow-drift.

The latter pressed on after the horse, but the snow lay so deep and his coats were so heavy that, sinking above his knees at each step, he stopped breathless after taking not more than twenty steps. 'The copse, the oxen, the lease-hold, the shop, the tavern, the house with the iron-roofed barn, and my heir,' thought he. 'How can I leave all

that? What does this mean? It cannot be!' These thoughts flashed through his mind. Then he thought of the wormwood tossed by the wind, which he had twice ridden past, and he was seized with such terror that he did not believe in the reality of what was happening to him. 'Can this be a dream?' he thought, and tried to wake up but could not. It was real snow that lashed his face and covered him and chilled his right hand from which he had lost the glove, and this was a real desert in which he was now left alone like that wormwood, awaiting an inevitable, speedy, and meaningless death.

'Queen of Heaven! Holy Father Nicholas, teacher of temperance!' he thought, recalling the service of the day before and the holy icon with its black face and gilt frame, and the tapers which he sold to be set before that icon and which were almost immediately brought back to him scarcely burnt at all, and which he put away in the store-chest. He began to pray to that same Nicholas the Wonder-Worker to save him, promising him a thanksgiving service and some candles. But he clearly and indubitably realized that the icon, its frame, the candles, the priest, and the thanksgiving service, though very important and necessary in church, could do nothing for him here, and that there was and could be no connexion between those candles and services and his present disastrous plight. 'I must not despair,' he thought. 'I must follow the horse's track before it is snowed under. He will lead me out, or I may even catch him. Only I must not hurry, or I shall stick fast and be more lost than ever.'

But in spite of his resolution to go quietly, he rushed forward and even ran, continually falling, getting up and falling again. The horse's track was already hardly visible in places where the snow did not lie deep. 'I am lost!' thought Vasili Andreevich. 'I shall lose the track and not catch the horse.' But at that moment he saw something black. It was Mukhorty, and not only Mukhorty, but the sledge with the shafts and the kerchief. Mukhorty, with the sacking and the breechband twisted round to one side, was standing not in his former place but nearer to the shafts, shaking his head which the reins he was stepping on drew downwards. It turned out that Vasili Andreevich had sunk in the same ravine Nikita had previously fallen into, and that Mukhorty had been



bringing him back to the sledge and he had got off his back no more than fifty paces from where the sledge was.

## IX

Having stumbled back to the sledge Vasili Andreevich caught hold of it and for a long time stood motionless, trying to calm himself and recover his breath. Nikita was not in his former place, but something, already covered with snow, was lying in the sledge and Vasili Andreevich concluded that this was Nikita. His terror had now quite left him, and if he felt any fear it was lest the dreadful terror should return that he had experienced when on the horse and especially when he was left alone in the snow-drift.

At any cost he had to avoid that terror, and to keep it away he must do something — occupy himself with something. And the first thing he did was to turn his back to the wind and open his fur coat. Then, as soon as he recovered his breath a little, he shook the snow out of his boots and out of his left-hand glove (the right-hand glove was hopelessly lost and by this time probably lying somewhere under a dozen inches of snow); then as was his custom when going out of his shop to buy grain from the peasants, he pulled his girdle low down and tightened it and prepared for action.

The first thing that occurred to him was to free Mukhorty's leg from the rein. Having done that, and tethered him to the iron cramp at the front of the sledge where he had been before, he was going round the horse's quarters to put the breechband and pad straight and cover him with the cloth, but at that moment he noticed that something was moving in the sledge and Nikita's head rose up out of the snow that covered it. Nikita, who was half frozen, rose with great difficulty and sat up, moving his hand before his nose in a strange manner just as if he were driving away flies. He waved his hand and said something, and seemed to Vasili Andreevich to be calling him. Vasili Andreevich left the cloth unadjusted and went up to the sledge.

'What is it?' he asked. 'What are you saying?'

'I'm dy... ing, that's what,' said Nikita brokenly and with difficulty. 'Give what is owing to me to my lad, or to my wife, no matter.'

'Why, are you really frozen?' asked Vasili Andreevich.

'I feel it's my death. Forgive me for Christ's sake... ' said Nikita in a tearful voice, continuing to wave his hand before his face as if driving away flies.

Vasili Andreevich stood silent and motionless for half a minute. Then suddenly, with the same resolution with which he used to strike hands when making a good purchase, he took a step back and turning up his sleeves began raking the snow off Nikita and out of the sledge. Having done this he hurriedly undid his girdle, opened out his fur coat, and having pushed Nikita down, lay down on top of him, covering him not only with his fur coat but with the whole of his body, which glowed with warmth.

After pushing the skirts of his coat between Nikita and the sides of the sledge, and holding down its hem with his knees, Vasili Andreevich lay like that face down, with his head pressed against the front of the sledge. Here he no longer heard the horse's movements or the whistling of the wind, but only Nikita's breathing. At first and for a long time Nikita lay motionless, then he sighed deeply and moved.

'There, and you say you are dying! Lie still and get warm, that's our way...' began Vasili Andreevich.

But to his great surprise he could say no more, for tears came to his eyes and his lower jaw began to quiver rapidly. He stopped speaking and only gulped down the risings in his throat. 'Seems I was badly frightened and have gone quite weak,' he thought. But this weakness was not only unpleasant, but gave him a peculiar joy such as he had never felt before.

'That's our way!' he said to himself, experiencing a strange and solemn tenderness. He lay like that for a long time, wiping his eyes on the fur of his coat and tucking under his knee the right skirt, which the wind kept turning up.

But he longed so passionately to tell somebody of his joyful condition that he said: 'Nikita!'

'It's comfortable, warm!' came a voice from beneath.

'There, you see, friend, I was going to perish. And you would have been frozen, and I should have...'

But again his jaws began to quiver and his eyes to fill with tears, and he could say no more.

'Well, never mind,' he thought. 'I know about myself what I know.'

He remained silent and lay like that for a long time.

Nikita kept him warm from below and his fur coats from above. Only his hands, with which he kept his coat-skirts down round Nikita's sides, and his legs which the wind kept uncovering, began to freeze, especially his right hand which had no glove. But he did not think of his legs or of his hands but only of how to warm the peasant who was lying under him. He looked out several times at Mukhorty and could see that his back was uncovered and the drugget and breeching lying on the snow, and that he ought to get up and cover him, but he could not bring himself to leave Nikita and disturb even for a moment the joyous condition he was in. He no longer felt any kind of terror.

'No fear, we shan't lose him this time!' he said to himself, referring to his getting the peasant warm with the same boastfulness with which he spoke of his buying and selling.

Vasili Andreevich lay in that way for one hour, another, and a third, but he was unconscious of the passage of time. At first impressions of the snow-storm, the sledge-shafts, and the horse with the shaft-bow shaking before his eyes, kept passing through his mind, then he remembered Nikita lying under him, then recollections of the festival, his wife, the police-officer, and the box of candles, began to mingle with these; then again Nikita, this time lying under that box, then the peasants, customers and traders, and the white walls of his house with its iron roof with Nikita lying underneath, presented themselves to his imagination. Afterwards all these impressions blended into one nothingness. As the colours of the rainbow unite into one white light, so all these different impressions mingled into one, and he fell asleep.

For a long time he slept without dreaming, but just before dawn the visions recommenced. It seemed to him that he was standing by the box of tapers and that Tikhon's wife was asking for a five kopek taper for the Church fete. He wished to take one out and give it to her, but his hands would not life, being held tight in his pockets. He wanted to walk round the box but his feet would not move and his new clean goloshes had grown to the stone floor, and he could neither lift them nor get his feet out of the goloshes. Then the taper-box was no longer a box but a bed, and suddenly Vasili Andreevich saw himself lying in his bed at home. He was lying in his bed and could not get up. Yet it was necessary for him to get up because Ivan Matveich, the police-officer, would soon call for him and he had to go with him — either to bargain for the forest or to put Mukhorty's breeching straight.

He asked his wife: 'Nikolaevna, hasn't he come yet?' 'No, he hasn't,' she replied. He heard someone drive up to the front steps. 'It must be him.' 'No, he's gone past.' 'Nikolaevna! I say, Nikolaevna, isn't he here yet?' 'No.' He was still lying on his bed and could not get up, but was always waiting. And this waiting was uncanny and yet joyful. Then suddenly his joy was completed. He whom he was expecting came; not Ivan Matveich the police-officer, but someone else — yet it was he whom he had been waiting for. He came and called him; and it was he who had called him and told him to lie down on Nikita. And Vasili Andreevich was glad that that one had come for him.

'I'm coming!' he cried joyfully, and that cry awoke him, but woke him up not at all the same person he had been when he fell asleep. He tried to get up but could not, tried to move his arm and could not, to move his leg and also could not, to turn his head and could not. He was surprised but not at all disturbed by this. He understood that this was death, and was not at all disturbed by that either.

He remembered that Nikita was lying under him and that he had got warm and was alive, and it seemed to him that he was Nikita and Nikita was he, and that his life was not in himself but in Nikita. He strained his

ears and heard Nikita breathing and even slightly snoring. 'Nikita is alive, so I too am alive!' he said to himself triumphantly.

And he remembered his money, his shop, his house, the buying and selling, and Mironov's millions, and it was hard for him to understand why that man, called Vasili Brekhunov, had troubled himself with all those things with which he had been troubled.

'Well, it was because he did not know what the real thing was,' he thought, concerning that Vasili Brekhunov. 'He did not know, but now I know and know for sure. Now I know!' And again he heard the voice of the one who had called him before. 'I'm coming! Coming!' he responded gladly, and his whole being was filled with joyful emotion. He felt himself free and that nothing could hold him back any longer.

After that Vasili Andreevich neither saw, heard, nor felt anything more in this world.

All around the snow still eddied. The same whirlwinds of snow circled about, covering the dead Vasili Andreevich's fur coat, the shivering Mukhorty, the sledge, now scarcely to be seen, and Nikita lying at the bottom of it, kept warm beneath his dead master.

X

Nikita awoke before daybreak. He was aroused by the cold that had begun to creep down his back. He had dreamt that he was coming from the mill with a load of his master's flour and when crossing the stream had missed the bridge and let the cart get stuck. And he saw that he had crawled under the cart and was trying to lift it by arching his back. But strange to say the cart did not move, it stuck to his back and he could neither lift it nor get out from under it. It was crushing the whole of his loins.

And how cold it felt! Evidently he must crawl out. 'Have done!' he exclaimed to whoever was pressing the cart down on him. 'Take out the sacks!' But the cart pressed down colder and colder, and then he heard a strange knocking, awoke completely, and remembered everything.

The cold cart was his dead and frozen master lying upon him. And the knock was produced by Mukhorty, who had twice struck the sledge with his hoof.

'Andreevich! Eh, Andreevich!' Nikita called cautiously, beginning to realize the truth, and straightening his back. But Vasili Andreevich did not answer and his stomach and legs were stiff and cold and heavy like iron weights.

'He must have died! May the Kingdom of Heaven be his!' thought Nikita.

He turned his head, dug with his hand through the snow about him and opened his eyes. It was daylight; the wind was whistling as before between the shafts, and the snow was falling in the same way, except that it was no longer driving against the frame of the sledge but silently covered both sledge and horse deeper and deeper, and neither the horse's movements nor his breathing were any longer to be heard.

'He must have frozen too,' thought Nikita of Mukhorty, and indeed those hoof knocks against the sledge, which had awakened Nikita, were the last efforts the already numbed Mukhorty had made to keep on his feet before dying.

'O Lord God, it seems Thou art calling me too!' said Nikita. 'Thy Holy Will be done. But it's uncanny.... Still, a man can't die twice and must die once. If only it would come soon!'

And he again drew in his head, closed his eyes, and became unconscious, fully convinced that now he was certainly and finally dying.

It was not till noon that day that peasants dug Vasili Andreevich and Nikita out of the snow with their shovels, not more than seventy yards from the road and less than half a mile from the village.

The snow had hidden the sledge, but the shafts and the kerchief tied to them were still visible. Mukhorty, buried up to his belly in snow, with the breeching and drugget hanging down, stood all white, his dead head pressed against his frozen throat: icicles hung from his nostrils, his eyes were covered with hoar-frost as though filled with tears, and he

had grown so thin in that one night that he was nothing but skin and bone.

Vasili Andreevich was stiff as a frozen carcass, and when they rolled him off Nikita his legs remained apart and his arms stretched out as they had been. His bulging hawk eyes were frozen, and his open mouth under his clipped moustache was full of snow. But Nikita though chilled through was still alive. When he had been brought to, he felt sure that he was already dead and that what was taking place with him was no longer happening in this world but in the next. When he heard the peasants shouting as they dug him out and rolled the frozen body of Vasili Andreevich from off him, he was at first surprised that in the other world peasants should be shouting in the same old way and had the same kind of body, and then when he realized that he was still in this world he was sorry rather than glad, especially when he found that the toes on both his feet were frozen.

Nikita lay in hospital for two months. They cut off three of his toes, but the others recovered so that he was still able to work and went on living for another twenty years, first as a farm-labourer, then in his old age as a watchman. He died at home as he had wished, only this year, under the icons with a lighted taper in his hands. Before he died he asked his wife's forgiveness and forgave her for the cooper. He also took leave of his son and grandchildren, and died sincerely glad that he was relieving his son and daughter-in-law of the burden of having to feed him, and that he was now really passing from this life of which he was weary into that other life which every year and every hour grew clearer and more desirable to him. Whether he is better or worse off there where he awoke after his death, whether he was disappointed or found there what he expected, we shall all soon learn.

Too Dear!

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

Tolstoy's adaptation of a story originally told by Guy de Maupassant NEAR the borders of France and Italy, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, lies a tiny little kingdom called Monaco. Many a small country town can boast more inhabitants than this kingdom, for there are only about seven thousand of them all told, and if all the land in the kingdom were divided there would not be an acre for each inhabitant. But in this toy kingdom there is a real kinglet; and he has a palace, and courtiers, and ministers, and a bishop, and generals, and an army.

It is not a large army, only sixty men in all, but still it is an army. There were also taxes in this kingdom as elsewhere: a tax on tobacco, and on wine and spirits and a poll-tax. But though the people there drink and smoke as people do in other countries, there are so few of them that the King would have been hard put to it to feed his courtiers and officials and to keep himself, if he had not found a new and special source of revenue.

This special revenue comes from a gaming house, where people play roulette. People play, and whether they win or lose the keeper always gets a percentage on the turnover; and out of his profits he pays a large sum to the King. The reason he pays so much is that it is the only such gambling establishment left in Europe. Some of the little German Sovereigns used to keep gaming houses of the same kind, but some years ago they were forbidden to do so. The reason they were stopped was because these gaming houses did so much harm. A man would come and try his luck, then he would risk all he had and lose it, then he would even risk money that did not belong to him and lose that too, and then, in despair, he would drown or shoot himself. So the Germans forbade their rulers to make money in this way; but there was no one to stop the King of Monaco, and he remained with a monopoly of the business.

So now every one who wants to gamble goes to Monaco. Whether they win or lose, the King gains by it. 'You can't earn stone palaces by honest labour,' as the proverb says; and the Kinglet of Monaco knows it is a dirty business, but what is he to do? He has to live; and to draw a



revenue from drink and from tobacco is also not a nice thing. So he lives and reigns, and rakes in the money, and holds his court with all the ceremony of a real king.

He has his coronation, his levees; he rewards, sentences, and pardons, and he also has his reviews, councils, laws, and courts of justice: just like other kings, only all on a smaller scale.

Now it happened a few years ago that a murder was committed in this toy King's domains. The people of that kingdom are peaceable, and such a thing had not happened before. The judges assembled with much ceremony and tried the case in the most judicial manner. There were judges, and prosecutors, and jurymen, and barristers. They argued and judged, and at last they condemned the criminal to have his head cut off as the law directs. So far so good. Next they submitted the sentence to the King. The King read the sentence and confirmed it. 'If the fellow must be executed, execute him.'

There was only one hitch in the matter; and that was that they had neither a guillotine for cutting heads off, nor an executioner. The Ministers considered the matter, and decided to address an inquiry to the French Government, asking whether the French could not lend them a machine and an expert to cut off the criminal's head; and if so, would the French kindly inform them what the cost would be. The letter was sent. A week later the reply came: a machine and an expert could be supplied, and the cost would be 16,000 francs. This was laid before the King. He thought it over. Sixteen thousand francs! 'The wretch is not worth the money,' said he. 'Can't it be done, somehow, cheaper? Why 16,000 francs is more than two francs a head on the whole population. The people won't stand it, and it may cause a riot!'

So a Council was called to consider what could be done; and it was decided to send a similar inquiry to the King of Italy. The French Government is republican, and has no proper respect for kings; but the King of Italy was a brother monarch, and might be induced to do the thing cheaper. So the letter was written, and a prompt reply was received.

The Italian Government wrote that they would have pleasure in supplying both a machine and an expert; and the whole cost would be 12,000 francs, including travelling expenses. This was cheaper, but still it seemed too much. The rascal was really not worth the money. It would still mean nearly two francs more per head on the taxes. Another Council was called. They discussed and considered how it could be done with less expense. Could not one of the soldiers perhaps be got to do it in a rough and homely fashion? The General was called and was asked: 'Can't you find us a soldier who would cut the man's head off?'

In war they don't mind killing people. In fact, that is what they are trained for.' So the General talked it over with the soldiers to see whether one of them would not undertake the job. But none of the soldiers would do it. 'No,' they said, 'we don't know how to do it; it is not a thing we have been taught.'

What was to be done? Again the Ministers considered and reconsidered. They assembled a Commission, and a Committee, and a Sub-Committee, and at last they decided that the best thing would be to alter the death sentence to one of imprisonment for life. This would enable the King to show his mercy, and it would come cheaper.

The King agreed to this, and so the matter was arranged. The only hitch now was that there was no suitable prison for a man sentenced for life. There was a small lock-up where people were sometimes kept temporarily, but there was no strong prison fit for permanent use. However, they managed to find a place that would do, and they put the young fellow there and placed a guard over him. The guard had to watch the criminal, and had also to fetch his food from the palace kitchen.

The prisoner remained there month after month till a year had passed. But when a year had passed, the Kinglet, looking over the account of his income and expenditure one day, noticed a new item of expenditure. This was for the keep of the criminal; nor was it a small item either. There was a special guard, and there was also the man's food. It came

to more than 600 francs a year. And the worst of it was that the fellow was still young and healthy, and might live for fifty years. When one came to reckon it up, the matter was serious. It would never do. So the King summoned his Ministers and said to them:

'You must find some cheaper way of dealing with this rascal. The present plan is too expensive.' And the Ministers met and considered and reconsidered, till one of them said: 'Gentlemen, in my opinion we must dismiss the guard.' 'But then,' rejoined another Minister, 'the fellow will run away.' 'Well,' said the first speaker, 'let him run away, and be hanged to him!' So they reported the result of their deliberations to the Kinglet, and he agreed with them. The guard was dismissed, and they waited to see what would happen. All that happened was that at dinner-time the criminal came out, and, not finding his guard, he went to the King's kitchen to fetch his own dinner. He took what was given him, returned to the prison, shut the door on himself, and stayed inside. Next day the same thing occurred. He went for his food at the proper time; but as for running away, he did not show the least sign of it! What was to be done? They considered the matter again.

'We shall have to tell him straight out,' said they 'that we do not want to keep him.' So the Minister of Justice had him brought before him. 'Why do you not run away?' said the Minister. 'There is no guard to keep you. You can go where you like, and the King will not mind.'

'I daresay the King would not mind,' replied the man, 'but I have nowhere to go. What can I do? You have ruined my character by your sentence, and people will turn their backs on me. Besides, I have got out of the way of working. You have treated me badly. It is not fair. In the first place, when once you sentenced me to death you ought to have executed me; but you did not do it. That is one thing. I did not complain about that. Then you sentenced me to imprisonment for life and put a guard to bring me my food; but after a time you took him away again and I had to fetch my own food. Again I did not complain. But now you actually want me to go away! I can't agree to that. You may do as you like, but I won't go away!'

What was to be done? Once more the Council was summoned. What course could they adopt? The man would not go. They reflected and considered. The only way to get rid of him was to offer him a pension. And so they reported to the King. 'There is nothing else for it,' said they; 'we must get rid of him somehow.' The sum fixed was 600 francs, and this was announced to the prisoner.

'Well,' said he, 'I don't mind, so long as you undertake to pay it regularly. On that condition I am willing to go.'

So the matter was settled. He received one-third of his annuity in advance, and left the King's dominions. It was only a quarter of an hour by rail; and he emigrated, and settled just across the frontier, where he bought a bit of land, started market-gardening, and now lives comfortably. He always goes at the proper time to draw his pension. Having received it, he goes to the gaming tables, stakes two or three francs, sometimes wins and sometimes loses, and then returns home. He lives peaceably and well.

It is a good thing that he did not commit his crime in a country where they do not grudge expense to cut a man's head off, or to keeping him in prison for life.

Esarhaddon, King Of Assyria

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

ASSYRIAN KING, ESARHADDON, had conquered the kingdom of King Lailie, had destroyed and burnt the towns, taken all the inhabitants captive to his own country, slaughtered the warriors, beheaded some chieftains and impaled or flayed others, and had confined King Lailie himself in a cage.

As he lay on his bed one night, King Esarhaddon was thinking how he should execute Lailie, when suddenly he heard a rustling near his bed,

and opening his eyes saw an old man with a long gray beard and mild eyes.

'You wish to execute Lailie?' asked the old man.

'Yes,' answered the King. 'But I cannot make up my mind how to do it.'

'But you are Lailie,' said the old man.

'That's not true,' replied the King. 'Lailie is Lailie, and I am I.'

'You and Lailie are one,' said the old man. 'You only imagine you are not Lailie, and that Lailie is not you.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the King. 'Here am I, lying on a soft bed; around me are obedient men-slaves and women-slaves, and to-morrow I shall feast with my friends as I did to-day; whereas Lailie is sitting like a bird in a cage, and to-morrow he will be impaled, and with his tongue hanging out will struggle till he dies, and his body will be torn in pieces by dogs.'

'You cannot destroy his life,' said the old man.

'And how about the fourteen thousand warriors I killed, with whose bodies I built a mound?' said the King. 'I am alive, but they no longer exist. Does not that prove that I can destroy life?'

'How do you know they no longer exist?'

'Because I no longer see them. And, above all, they were tormented, but I was not. It was ill for them, but well for me.'

'That, also, only seems so to you. You tortured yourself, but not them.'

'I do not understand,' said the King.

'Do you wish to understand?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Then come here,' said the old man, pointing to a large font full of water.

The King rose and approached the font.

'Strip, and enter the font.'

Esarhaddon did as the old man bade him.

'As soon as I begin to pour this water over you,' said the old man, filling a pitcher with the water, 'dip down your head.'

The old man tilted the pitcher over the King's head and the King bent his head till it was under water.

And as soon as King Esarhaddon was under the water he felt that he was no longer Esarhaddon, but some one else. And, feeling himself to be that other man, he saw himself lying on a rich bed, beside a beautiful woman. He had never seen her before, but he knew she was his wife. The woman raised herself and said to him:

'Dear husband, Lailie! You were wearied by yesterday's work and have slept longer than usual, and I have guarded your rest, and have not roused you. But now the Princes await you in the Great Hall. Dress and go out to them.'

And Esarhaddon — understanding from these words that he was Lailie, and not feeling at all surprised at this, but only wondering that he did not know it before — rose, dressed, and went into the Great Hall where the Princes awaited him.

The Princes greeted Lailie, their King, bowing to the ground, and then they rose, and at his word sat down before him; and the eldest of the Princes began to speak, saying that it was impossible longer to endure the insults of the wicked King Esarhaddon, and that they must make war on him. But Lailie disagreed, and gave orders that envoys shall be sent to remonstrate with King Esarhaddon; and he dismissed the Princes from the audience. Afterwards he appointed men of note to act as ambassadors, and impressed on them what they were to say to King Esarhaddon. Having finished this business, Esarhaddon-feeling himself to be Lailie-rose out to hunt wild asses. The hunt was successful. He killed two wild asses himself, and having returned home, feasted with his friends, and witnessed a dance of slave girls.

The next day he went to the Court, where he was awaited by petitioners, suitors, and prisoners brought for trial; and there as usual he decided the cases submitted to him. Having finished this business, he again rode out to his favourite amusement: the hunt. And again he was successful: this time killing with his own hand an old lioness, and capturing her two cubs. After the hunt he again feasted with his

friends, and was entertained with music and dances, and the night he spent with the wife whom he loved.

So, dividing his time between kingly duties and pleasures, he lived for days and weeks, awaiting the return of the ambassadors he had sent to that King Esarhaddon who used to be himself. Not till a month had passed did the ambassadors return, and they returned with their noses and ears cut off.

King Esarhaddon had ordered them to tell Lailie that what had been done to them — the ambassadors — would be done to King Lailie himself also, unless he sent immediately a tribute of silver, gold, and cypress-wood, and came himself to pay homage to King Esarhaddon.

Lailie, formerly Esarhaddon, again assembled the Princes, and took counsel with them as to what he should do. They all with one accord said that war must be made against Esarhaddon, without waiting for him to attack them. The King agreed; and taking his place at the head of the army, started on the campaign. The campaign lasts seven days. Each day the King rode round the army to rouse the courage of his warriors.

On the eighth day his army met that of Esarhaddon in a broad valley through which a river flowed. Lailie's army fought bravely, but Lailie, formerly Esarhaddon, saw the enemy swarming down from the mountains like ants, over-running the valley and overwhelming his army; and, in his chariot, he flung himself into the midst of the battle, hewing and felling the enemy. But the warriors of Lailie were but as hundreds, while those of Esarhaddon were as thousands; and Lailie felt himself wounded and taken prisoner. Nine days he journeyed with other captives, bound, and guarded by the warriors of Esarhaddon.

On the tenth day he reached Nineveh, and was placed in a cage. Lailie suffered not so much from hunger and from his wound as from shame and impotent rage. He felt how powerless he was to avenge himself on his enemy for all he was suffering. All he could do was to deprive his enemies of the pleasure of seeing his sufferings; and he firmly resolved

to endure courageously without a murmur, all they could do to him. For twenty days he sat in his cage, awaiting execution.

He saw his relatives and friends led out to death; he heard the groans of those who were executed: some had their hands and feet cut off, others were flayed alive, but he showed neither disquietude, nor pity, nor fear. He saw the wife he loved, bound, and led by two black eunuchs. He knew she was being taken as a slave to Esarhaddon. That, too, he bore without a murmur. But one of the guards placed to watch him said, 'I pity you, Lailie; you were a king, but what are you now?' And hearing these words, Lailie remembered all he had lost. He clutched the bars of his cage, and, wishing to kill himself, beat his head against them. But he had not the strength to do so and, groaning in despair, he fell upon the floor of his cage.

At last two executioners opened his cage door, and having strapped his arms tight behind him, led him to the place of execution, which was soaked with blood. Lailie saw a sharp stake dripping with blood, from which the corpse of one of his friends had just been torn, and he understood that this had been done that the stake might serve for his own execution. They stripped Lailie of his clothes. He was startled at the leanness of his once strong, handsome body. The two executioners seized that body by its lean thighs; they lifted him up and were about to let him fall upon the stake.

'This is death, destruction!' thought Lailie, and, forgetful of his resolve to remain bravely calm to the end, he sobbed and prayed for mercy. But no one listened to him.

'But this cannot be,' thought he. 'Surely I am asleep. It is a dream.' And he made an effort to rouse himself, and did indeed awake, to find himself neither Esarhaddon nor Lailie — but some kind of an animal. He was astonished that he was an animal, and astonished, also, at not having known this before.

He was grazing in a valley, tearing the tender grass with his teeth, and brushing away flies with his long tail. Around him was frolicking a long-legged, dark-gray ass-colt, striped down its back. Kicking up its hind



legs, the colt galloped full speed to Esarhaddon, and poking him under the stomach with its smooth little muzzle, searched for the teat, and, finding it, quieted down, swallowing regularly. Esarhaddon understood that he was a she-ass, the colt's mother, and this neither surprised nor grieved him, but rather gave him pleasure. He experienced a glad feeling of simultaneous life in himself and in his offspring.

But suddenly something flew near with a whistling sound and hit him in the side, and with its sharp point entered his skin and flesh. Feeling a burning pain, Esarhaddon — who was at the same time the ass — tore the udder from the colt's teeth, and laying back his ears galloped to the herd from which he had strayed. The colt kept up with him, galloping by his side. They had already nearly reached the herd, which had started off, when another arrow in full flight struck the colt's neck. It pierced the skin and quivered in its flesh. The colt sobbed piteously and fell upon its knees. Esarhaddon could not abandon it, and remained standing over it. The colt rose, tottered on its long, thin legs, and again fell. A fearful two-legged being—a man—ran up and cut its throat.

'This cannot be; it is still a dream! thought Esarhaddon, and made a last effort to awake. 'Surely I am not Lailie, nor the ass, but Esarhaddon!' He cried out, and at the same instant lifted his head out of the font...The old man was standing by him, pouring over his head the last drops from the pitcher.

'Oh, how terribly I have suffered! And for how long!' said Esarhaddon.

'Long?' replied the old man, 'you have only dipped your head under water and lifted it again; see, the water is not yet all out of the pitcher. Do you now understand?'

Esarhaddon did not reply, but only looked at the old man with terror.

'Do you now understand,' continued the old man, 'that Lailie is you, and the warriors you put to death were you also? And not the warriors only, but the animals which you slew when hunting and ate at your feasts were also you. You thought life dwelt in you alone but I have drawn aside the veil of delusion, and have let you see that by doing evil to others you have done it to yourself also. Life is one in them all, and

yours is but a portion of this same common life. And only in that one Part of life that is yours, can you make life better or worse-increasing or decreasing it.

‘You can only improve life in yourself by destroying the barriers that divide your life from that of others, and by considering others as yourself, and loving them. By so doing you increase your share of life. You injure your life when you think of it as the only life, and try to add to its welfare at the expense of other lives. By so doing you only lessen it. To destroy the life that dwells in others is beyond your power.

The life of those you have slain has vanished from your eyes, but is not destroyed. You thought to lengthen your own life and to shorten theirs, but you cannot do this. Life knows neither time nor space. The life of a moment, and the life of a thousand years: your life and the life of all the visible and invisible beings in the world, are equal. To destroy life, or to alter it, is impossible; for life is the one thing that exists. All else, but seems to us to be.’

Having said this the old man vanished.

Next morning King Esarhaddon gave orders that Lailie and all the prisoners should be set at liberty and that the executions should cease. On the third day he called his son Assur-bani-pal, and gave the kingdom over into his hands; and he himself went into the desert to think over all he had learnt. Afterwards he went about as a wanderer through the towns and villages, preaching to the people that all life is one, and that when men wish to harm others, they really do evil to themselves.

Work, Death, And Sickness

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

THIS IS A legend current among the South American Indians.

God, say they, at first made men so that they had no need to work: they needed neither houses, nor clothes, nor food, and they all lived till they were a hundred, and did not know what illness was.

When, after some time, God looked to see how people were living, he saw that instead of being happy in their life, they had quarrelled with one another, and, each caring for himself, had brought matters to such a pass that far from enjoying life, they cursed it.

Then God said to himself: 'This comes of their living separately, each for himself.' And to change this state of things, God so arranged matters that it became impossible for people to live without working. To avoid suffering from cold and hunger, they were now obliged to build dwellings, and to dig the ground, and to grow and gather fruits and grain.

'Work will bring them together,' thought God.

'They cannot make their tools, prepare and transport their timber, build their houses, sow and gather their harvests, spin and weave, and make their clothes, each one alone by himself.'

'It will make them understand that the more heartily they work together, the more they will have and the better they will live; and this will unite them.'

Time passed on, and again God came to see how men were living, and whether they were now happy.

But he found them living worse than before. They worked together (that they could not help doing), but not all together, being broken up into little groups. And each group tried to snatch work from other groups, and they hindered one another, wasting time and strength in their struggles, so that things went ill with them all.

Having seen that this, too, was not well, God decided so as to arrange things that man should not know the time of his death, but might die at any moment; and he announced this to them.

'Knowing that each of them may die at any moment,' thought God, 'they will not, by grasping at gains that may last so short a time, spoil the hours of life allotted to them.'

But it turned out otherwise. When God returned to see how people were living, he saw that their life was as bad as ever.

Those who were strongest, availing themselves of the fact that men might die at any time, subdued those who were weaker, killing some and threatening others with death. And it came about that the strongest and their descendants did no work, and suffered from the weariness of idleness, while those who were weaker had to work beyond their strength, and suffered from lack of rest. Each set of men feared and hated the other. And the life of man became yet more unhappy.

Having seen all this, God, to mend matters, decided to make use of one last means; he sent all kinds of sickness among men. God thought that when all men were exposed to sickness they would understand that those who are well should have pity on those who are sick, and should help them, that when they themselves fall ill those who are well might in turn help them.

And again God went away, but when He came back to see how men lived now that they were subject to sicknesses, he saw that their life was worse even than before. The very sickness that in God's purpose should have united men, had divided them more than ever.

Those men who were strong enough to make others work, forced them also to wait on them in times of sickness; but they did not, in their turn, look after others who were ill. And those who were forced to work for others and to look after them when sick, were so worn with work that they had no time to look after their own sick, but left them without attendance. That the sight of sick folk might not disturb the pleasures of the wealthy, houses were arranged in which these poor people suffered and died, far from those whose sympathy might have cheered them, and in the arms of hired people who nursed them without compassion, or even with disgust.

Moreover, people considered many of the illnesses infectious, and, fearing to catch them, not only avoided the sick, but even separated themselves from those who attended the sick.

Then God said to Himself: 'If even this means will not bring men to understand wherein their happiness lies, let them be taught by suffering.' And God left men to themselves.

And, left to themselves, men lived long before they understood that they all ought to, and might be, happy. Only in the very latest times have a few of them begun to understand that work ought not to be a bugbear to some and like galley-slavery for others, but should be a common and happy occupation, uniting all men. They have begun to understand that with death constantly threatening each of us, the only reasonable business of every man is to spend the years, months, hours, and minutes, allotted him — in unity and love. They have begun to understand that sickness, far from dividing men, should, on the contrary, give opportunity for loving union with one another.

### Three Questions

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

IT ONCE OCCURRED to a certain king, that if he always knew the right time to begin everything; if he knew who were the right people to listen to, and whom to avoid; and, above all, if he always knew what was the most important thing to do, he would never fail in anything he might undertake.

And this thought having occurred to him, he had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to any one who would teach him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people, and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

And learned men came to the King, but they all answered his questions differently.

In reply to the first question, some said that to know the right time for every action, one must draw up in advance, a table of days, months and years, and must live strictly according to it. Only thus, said they, could everything be done at its proper time. Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action; but that, not letting oneself be absorbed in idle pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on, and then do what was most needful. Others, again, said that however attentive the King might be to what was going on, it was impossible for one man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a Council of wise men, who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

But then again others said there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a Council, but about which one had at once to decide whether to undertake them or not. But in order to decide that, one must know beforehand what was going to happen. It is only magicians who know that; and, therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

Equally various were the answers to the second question. Some said, the people the King most needed were his councillors; others, the priests; others, the doctors; while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

To the third question, as to what was the most important occupation: some replied that the most important thing in the world was science. Others said it was skill in warfare; and others, again, that it was religious worship.

All the answers being different, the King agreed with none of them, and gave the reward to none. But still wishing to find the right answers to his questions, he decided to consult a hermit, widely renowned for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he never quitted, and he received none but common folk. So the King put on simple clothes, and before

reaching the hermit's cell dismounted from his horse, and, leaving his body-guard behind, went on alone.

When the King approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the King, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

The King went up to him and said: "I have come to you, wise hermit, to ask you to answer three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the people I most need, and to whom should I, therefore, pay more attention than to the rest? And, what affairs are the most important, and need my first attention?"

The hermit listened to the King, but answered nothing. He just spat on his hand and recommenced digging.

"You are tired," said the King, "let me take the spade and work awhile for you."

"Thanks!" said the hermit, and, giving the spade to the King, he sat down on the ground.

When he had dug two beds, the King stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit again gave no answer, but rose, stretched out his hand for the spade, and said:

"Now rest awhile-and let me work a bit."

But the King did not give him the spade, and continued to dig. One hour passed, and another. The sun began to sink behind the trees, and the King at last stuck the spade into the ground, and said:

"I came to you, wise man, for an answer to my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so, and I will return home."

"Here comes some one running," said the hermit, "let us see who it is."

The King turned round, and saw a bearded man come running out of the wood. The man held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the King, he fell fainting on the ground moaning feebly. The King and the hermit

unfastened the man's clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The King washed it as best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had.

But the blood would not stop flowing, and the King again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and rebandaged the wound. When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The King brought fresh water and gave it to him. Meanwhile the sun had set, and it had become cool. So the King, with the hermit's help, carried the wounded man into the hut and laid him on the bed.

Lying on the bed the man closed his eyes and was quiet; but the King was so tired with his walk and with the work he had done, that he crouched down on the threshold, and also fell asleep — so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night. When he awoke in the morning, it was long before he could remember where he was, or who was the strange bearded man lying on the bed and gazing intently at him with shining eyes.

"Forgive me!" said the bearded man in a weak voice, when he saw that the King was awake and was looking at him.

"I do not know you, and have nothing to forgive you for," said the King. "You do not know me, but I know you. I am that enemy of yours who swore to revenge himself on you, because you executed his brother and seized his property. I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out from my ambush to find you, and I came upon your bodyguard, and they recognized me, and wounded me. I escaped from them, but should have bled to death had you not dressed my wound. I wished to kill you, and you have saved my life. Now, if I live, and if you wish it, I will serve you as your most faithful slave, and will bid my sons do the same. Forgive me!"

The King was very glad to have made peace with his enemy so easily, and to have gained him for a friend, and he not only forgave him, but



said he would send his servants and his own physician to attend him, and promised to restore his property.

Having taken leave of the wounded man, the King went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the questions he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

The King approached him, and said:

“For the last time, I pray you to answer my questions, wise man.”

“You have already been answered!” said the hermit, still crouching on his thin legs, and looking up at the King, who stood before him.

“How answered? What do you mean?” asked the King.

“Do you not see,” replied the hermit. “If you had not pitied my weakness yesterday, and had not dug those beds for me, but had gone your way, that man would have attacked you, and you would have repented of not having stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging the beds; and I was the most important man; and to do me good was your most important business. Afterwards when that man ran to us, the most important time was when you were attending to him, for if you had not bound up his wounds he would have died without having made peace with you.

So he was the most important man, and what you did for him was your most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important — Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. The most necessary man is he with whom you are, for no man knows whether he will ever have dealings with any one else: and the most important affair is, to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!”

After The Ball Or After The Dance

Translated by C. Hagberg Wright 1912

“ — AND you say that a man cannot, of himself, understand what is good and evil; that it is all environment, that the environment swamps the man. But I believe it is all chance. Take my own case . . . ”

Thus spoke our excellent friend, Ivan Vasilievich, after a conversation between us on the impossibility of improving individual character without a change of the conditions under which men live. Nobody had actually said that one could not of oneself understand good and evil; but it was a habit of Ivan Vasilievich to answer in this way the thoughts aroused in his own mind by conversation, and to illustrate those thoughts by relating incidents in his own life. He often quite forgot the reason for his story in telling it; but he always told it with great sincerity and feeling.

He did so now.

“Take my own case. My whole life was moulded, not by environment, but by something quite different.”

“By what, then?” we asked.

“Oh, that is a long story. I should have to tell you about a great many things to make you understand.”

“Well, tell us then.”

Ivan Vasilievich thought a little, and shook his head.

“My whole life,” he said, “was changed in one night, or, rather, morning.”

“Why, what happened?” one of us asked.

“What happened was that I was very much in love. I have been in love many times, but this was the most serious of all. It is a thing of the past; she has married daughters now. It was Varinka B — — .” Ivan Vasilievich mentioned her surname. “Even at fifty she is remarkably handsome; but in her youth, at eighteen, she was exquisite — tall, slender, graceful, and stately. Yes, stately is the word; she held herself very erect, by instinct as it were; and carried her head high, and that together with her beauty and height gave her a queenly air in spite of being thin, even bony one might say. It might indeed have been deterring had it not been for her smile, which was always gay and

cordial, and for the charming light in her eyes and for her youthful sweetness.”

“What an entrancing description you give, Ivan Vasilievich!”

“Description, indeed! I could not possibly describe her so that you could appreciate her. But that does not matter; what I am going to tell you happened in the forties. I was at that time a student in a provincial university. I don’t know whether it was a good thing or no, but we had no political clubs, no theories in our universities then. We were simply young and spent our time as young men do, studying and amusing ourselves. I was a very gay, lively, careless fellow, and had plenty of money too. I had a fine horse, and used to go tobogganing with the young ladies. Skating had not yet come into fashion. I went to drinking Parties with my comrades — in those days we drank nothing but champagne — if we had no champagne we drank nothing at all. We never drank vodka, as they do now. Evening Parties and balls were my favourite amusements. I danced well, and was not an ugly fellow.”

“Come, there is no need to be modest,” interrupted a lady near him.

“We have seen your photograph. Not ugly, indeed! You were a handsome fellow.”

“Handsome, if you like. That does not matter. When my love for her was at its strongest, on the last day of the carnival, I was at a ball at the provincial marshal’s, a good-natured old man, rich and hospitable, and a court chamberlain. The guests were welcomed by his wife, who was as good-natured as himself. She was dressed in puce-coloured velvet, and had a diamond diadem on her forehead, and her plump, old white shoulders and bosom were bare like the portraits of Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great.

“It was a delightful ball. It was a splendid room, with a gallery for the orchestra, which was famous at the time, and consisted of serfs belonging to a musical landowner. The refreshments were magnificent, and the champagne flowed in rivers. Though I was fond of champagne I did not drink that night, because without it I was drunk with love. But I made up for it by dancing waltzes and polkas till I was ready to drop — of course, whenever possible, with Varinka. She wore a white dress

with a pink sash, white shoes, and white kid gloves, which did not quite reach to her thin pointed elbows.

A disgusting engineer named Anisimov robbed me of the mazurka with her — to this day I cannot forgive him. He asked her for the dance the minute she arrived, while I had driven to the hair-dresser's to get a pair of gloves, and was late. So I did not dance the mazurka with her, but with a German girl to whom I had previously paid a little attention; but I am afraid I did not behave very politely to her that evening. I hardly spoke or looked at her, and saw nothing but the tall, slender figure in a white dress, with a pink sash, a flushed, beaming, dimpled face, and sweet, kind eyes. I was not alone; they were all looking at her with admiration, the men and women alike, although she outshone all of them. They could not help admiring her.

“Although I was not nominally her Partner for the mazurka, I did as a matter of fact dance nearly the whole time with her. She always came forward boldly the whole length of the room to pick me out. I flew to meet her without waiting to be chosen, and she thanked me with a smile for my intuition. When I was brought up to her with somebody else, and she guessed wrongly, she took the other man's hand with a shrug of her slim shoulders, and smiled at me regretfully.

“Whenever there was a waltz figure in the mazurka, I waltzed with her for a long time, and breathing fast and smiling, she would say, ‘Encore’; and I went on waltzing and waltzing, as though unconscious of any bodily existence.”

“Come now, how could you be unconscious of it with your arm round her waist? You must have been conscious, not only of your own existence, but of hers,” said one of the Party.

Ivan Vasilievich cried out, almost shouting in anger: “There you are, moderns all over! Nowadays you think of nothing but the body. It was different in our day. The more I was in love the less corporeal was she in my eyes. Nowadays you think of nothing but the body. It was different in our day. The more I was in love the less corporeal was she in my eyes. Nowadays you set legs, ankles, and I don't know what. You

undress the women you are in love with. In my eyes, as Alphonse Karr said — and he was a good writer— ‘ the one I loved was always draped in robes of bronze.’ We never thought of doing so; we tried to veil her nakedness, like Noah’s good-natured son. Oh, well, you can’t understand.”

“Don’t pay any attention to him. Go on,” said one of them.

“Well, I danced for the most Part with her, and did not notice how time was passing. The musicians kept playing the same mazurka tunes over and over again in desperate exhaustion — you know what it is towards the end of a ball. Papas and mammas were already getting up from the card-tables in the drawing-room in expectation of supper, the men-servants were running to and fro bringing in things. It was nearly three o’clock. I had to make the most of the last minutes. I chose her again for the mazurka, and for the hundredth time we danced across the room.

““The quadrille after supper is mine,’ I said, taking her to her place.

““Of course, if I am not carried off home,’ she said, with a smile.

““I won’t give you up,’ I said.

““Give me my fan, anyhow,’ she answered.

““I am so sorry to Part with it,’ I said, handing her a cheap white fan.

““Well, here’s something to console you,’ she said, plucking a feather out of the fan, and giving it to me.

“I took the feather, and could only express my rapture and gratitude with my eyes. I was not only pleased and gay, I was happy, delighted; I was good, I was not myself but some being not of this earth, knowing nothing of evil. I hid the feather in my glove, and stood there unable to tear myself away from her.

““Look, they are urging father to dance,’ she said to me, pointing to the tall, stately figure of her father, a colonel with silver epaulettes, who was standing in the doorway with some ladies.

““Varinka, come here!’ exclaimed our hostess, the lady with the diamond ferronniere and with shoulders like Elizabeth, in a loud voice.

“Varinka went to the door, and I followed her.

“Persuade your father to dance the mazurka with you, ma chere. — Do, please, Peter Valdislavovich,’ she said, turning to the colonel.

“Varinka’s father was a very handsome, well-preserved old man. He had a good colour, moustaches curled in the style of Nicolas I., and white whiskers which met the moustaches. His hair was combed on to his forehead, and a bright smile, like his daughter’s, was on his lips and in his eyes. He was splendidly set up, with a broad military chest, on which he wore some decorations, and he had powerful shoulders and long slim legs. He was that ultra-military type produced by the discipline of Emperor Nicolas I.

“When we approached the door the colonel was just refusing to dance, saying that he had quite forgotten how; but at that instant he smiled, swung his arm gracefully around to the left, drew his sword from its sheath, handed it to an obliging young man who stood near, and smoothed his suede glove on his right hand.

“‘Everything must be done according to rule,’ he said with a smile. He took the hand of his daughter, and stood one-quarter turned, waiting for the music.

“At the first sound of the mazurka, he stamped one foot smartly, threw the other forward, and, at first slowly and smoothly, then buoyantly and impetuously, with stamping of feet and clicking of boots, his tall, imposing figure moved the length of the room. Varinka swayed gracefully beside him, rhythmically and easily, making her steps short or long, with her little feet in their white satin slippers.

“All the people in the room followed every movement of the couple. As for me I not only admired, I regarded them with enraptured sympathy. I was particularly impressed with the old gentleman’s boots. They were not the modern pointed affairs, but were made of cheap leather, squared-toed, and evidently built by the regimental cobbler. In order that his daughter might dress and go out in society, he did not buy fashionable boots, but wore home-made ones, I thought, and his square toes seemed to me most touching. It was obvious that in his

time he had been a good dancer; but now he was too heavy, and his legs had not spring enough for all the beautiful steps he tried to take. Still, he contrived to go twice round the room. When at the end, standing with legs aPart, he suddenly clicked his feet together and fell on one knee, a bit heavily, and she danced gracefully around him, smiling and adjusting her skirt, the whole room applauded.

“Rising with an effort, he tenderly took his daughter’s face between his hands. He kissed her on the forehead, and brought her to me, under the impression that I was her Partner for the mazurka. I said I was not. ‘Well, never mind, just go around the room once with her,’ he said, smiling kindly, as he replaced his sword in the sheath.

“As the Contents of a bottle flow readily when the first drop has been poured, so my love for Varinka seemed to set free the whole force of loving within me. In surrounding her it embraced the world. I loved the hostess with her diadem and her shoulders like Elizabeth, and her husband and her guests and her footmen, and even the engineer Anisimov who felt peevish towards me. As for Varinka’s father, with his home-made boots and his kind smile, so like her own, I felt a sort of tenderness for him that was almost rapture.

“After supper I danced the promised quadrille with her, and though I had been infinitely happy before, I grew still happier every moment. “We did not speak of love. I neither asked myself nor her whether she loved me. It was quite enough to know that I loved her. And I had only one fear — that something might come to interfere with my great joy.

“When I went home, and began to undress for the night, I found it quite out of the question. I held the little feather out of her fan in my hand, and one of her gloves which she gave me when I helped her into the carriage after her mother. Looking at these things, and without closing my eyes I could see her before me as she was for an instant when she had to choose between two Partners. She tried to guess what kind of person was represented in me, and I could hear her sweet voice as she said, ‘Pride — am I right?’ and merrily gave me her hand. At supper she took the first sip from my glass of champagne, looking at me

over the rim with her caressing glance. But, plainest of all, I could see her as she danced with her father, gliding along beside him, and looking at the admiring observers with pride and happiness.

“He and she were united in my mind in one rush of pathetic tenderness.

“I was living then with my brother, who has since died. He disliked going out, and never went to dances; and besides, he was busy preparing for his last university examinations, and was leading a very regular life. He was asleep. I looked at him, his head buried in the pillow and half covered with the quilt; and I affectionately pitied him, pitied him for his ignorance of the bliss I was experiencing.

Our serf Petrusha had met me with a candle, ready to undress me, but I sent him away. His sleepy face and tousled hair seemed to me so touching. Trying not to make a noise, I went to my room on tiptoe and sat down on my bed. No, I was too happy; I could not sleep. Besides, it was too hot in the rooms. Without taking off my uniform, I went quietly into the hall, put on my overcoat, opened the front door and stepped out into the street.

“It was after four when I had left the ball; going home and stopping there a while had occupied two hours, so by the time I went out it was dawn. It was regular carnival weather — foggy, and the road full of water-soaked snow just melting, and water dripping from the eaves. Varinka’s family lived on the edge of town near a large field, one end of which was a parade ground: at the other end was a boarding-school for young ladies. I passed through our empty little street and came to the main thoroughfare, where I met pedestrians and sledges laden with wood, the runners grating the road. The horses swung with regular paces beneath their shining yokes, their backs covered with straw mats and their heads wet with rain; while the drivers, in enormous boots, splashed through the mud beside the sledges. All this, the very horses themselves, seemed to me stimulating and fascinating, full of suggestion.



“When I approached the field near their house, I saw at one end of it, in the direction of the parade ground, something very huge and black, and I heard sounds of fife and drum proceeding from it. My heart had been full of song, and I had heard in imagination the tune of the mazurka, but this was very harsh music. It was not pleasant.

“‘What can that be?’ I thought, and went towards the sound by a slippery path through the centre of the field. Walking about a hundred paces, I began to distinguish many black objects through the mist. They were evidently soldiers. ‘It is probably a drill,’ I thought.

“So I went along in that direction in company with a blacksmith, who wore a dirty coat and an apron, and was carrying something. He walked ahead of me as we approached the place. The soldiers in black uniforms stood in two rows, facing each other motionless, their guns at rest. Behind them stood the fifes and drums, incessantly repeating the same unpleasant tune.

“‘What are they doing?’ I asked the blacksmith, who halted at my side.

“‘A Tartar is being beaten through the ranks for his attempt to desert,’ said the blacksmith in an angry tone, as he looked intently at the far end of the line.

“I looked in the same direction, and saw between the files something horrid approaching me. The thing that approached was a man, stripped to the waist, fastened with cords to the guns of two soldiers who were leading him. At his side an officer in overcoat and cap was walking, whose figure had a familiar look. The victim advanced under the blows that rained upon him from both sides, his whole body plunging, his feet dragging through the snow. Now he threw himself backward, and the subalterns who led him thrust him forward. Now he fell forward, and they pulled him up short; while ever at his side marched the tall officer, with firm and nervous pace. It was Varinka’s father, with his rosy face and white moustache.

“At each stroke the man, as if amazed, turned his face, grimacing with pain, towards the side whence the blow came, and showing his white teeth repeated the same words over and over. But I could only hear

what the words were when he came quite near. He did not speak them, he sobbed them out,— “‘Brothers, have mercy on me! Brothers, have mercy on me!’ But the brothers had, no mercy, and when the procession came close to me, I saw how a soldier who stood opposite me took a firm step forward and lifting his stick with a whirr, brought it down upon the man’s back. The man plunged forward, but the subalterns pulled him back, and another blow came down from the other side, then from this side and then from the other. The colonel marched beside him, and looking now at his feet and now at the man, inhaled the air, puffed out his cheeks, and breathed it out between his protruded lips. When they passed the place where I stood, I caught a glimpse between the two files of the back of the man that was being punished. It was something so many-coloured, wet, red, unnatural, that I could hardly believe it was a human body.

“‘My God!’” muttered the blacksmith.

The procession moved farther away. The blows continued to rain upon the writhing, falling creature; the fifes shrilled and the drums beat, and the tall imposing figure of the colonel moved along-side the man, just as before. Then, suddenly, the colonel stopped, and rapidly approached a man in the ranks.

“‘I’ll teach you to hit him gently,’ I heard his furious voice say. ‘Will you pat him like that? Will you?’ and I saw how his strong hand in the suede glove struck the weak, bloodless, terrified soldier for not bringing down his stick with sufficient strength on the red neck of the Tartar.

“‘Bring new sticks!’ he cried, and looking round, he saw me. Assuming an air of not knowing me, and with a ferocious, angry frown, he hastily turned away. I felt so utterly ashamed that I didn’t know where to look. It was as if I had been detected in a disgraceful act. I dropped my eyes, and quickly hurried home. All the way I had the drums beating and the fifes whistling in my ears. And I heard the words, ‘Brothers, have mercy on me!’ or ‘Will you pat him? Will you?’ My heart was full of physical disgust that was almost sickness. So much so that I halted several times on my way, for I had the feeling that I was going to be really sick from all the horrors that possessed me at that sight. I do not remember how

I got home and got to bed. But the moment I was about to fall asleep I heard and saw again all that had happened, and I sprang up.

“‘Evidently he knows something I do not know,’ I thought about the colonel. ‘If I knew what he knows I should certainly grasp — understand — what I have just seen, and it would not cause me such suffering.’

“But however much I thought about it, I could not understand the thing that the colonel knew. It was evening before I could get to sleep, and then only after calling on a friend and drinking till I; was quite drunk.

“Do you think I had come to the conclusion that the deed I had witnessed was wicked? Oh, no. Since it was done with such assurance, and was recognised by every one as indispensable, they doubtless knew something which I did not know. So I thought, and tried to understand. But no matter, I could never understand it, then or afterwards. And not being able to grasp it, I could not enter the service as I had intended. I don’t mean only the military service: I did not enter the Civil Service either. And so I have been of no use whatever, as you can see.”

“Yes, we know how useless you’ve been,” said one of us. “Tell us, rather, how many people would be of any use at all if it hadn’t been for you.”

“Oh, that’s utter nonsense,” said Ivan Vasilievich, with genuine annoyance.

“Well; and what about the love affair?”

“My love? It decreased from that day. When, as often happened, she looked dreamy and meditative, I instantly recollected the colonel on the parade ground, and I felt so awkward and uncomfortable that I began to see her less frequently. So my love came to naught. Yes; such chances arise, and they alter and direct a man’s whole life,” he said in summing up. “And you say . . .”

Translated by C. Hagberg Wright 1912

ALYOSHA WAS THE younger brother. He was called the Pot, because his mother had once sent him with a pot of milk to the deacon's wife, and he had stumbled against something and broken it. His mother had beaten him, and the children had teased him. Since then he was nicknamed the Pot. Alyosha was a tiny, thin little fellow, with ears like wings, and a huge nose. "Alyosha has a nose that looks like a dog on a hill!" the children used to call after him. Alyosha went to the village school, but was not good at lessons; besides, there was so little time to learn. His elder brother was in town, working for a merchant, so Alyosha had to help his father from a very early age.

When he was no more than six he used to go out with the girls to watch the cows and sheep in the pasture, and a little later he looked after the horses by day and by night. And at twelve years of age he had already begun to plough and to drive the cart. The skill was there though the strength was not. He was always cheerful. Whenever the children made fun of him, he would either laugh or be silent.

When his father scolded him he would stand mute and listen attentively, and as soon as the scolding was over would smile and go on with his work. Alyosha was nineteen when his brother was taken as a soldier. So his father placed him with the merchant as a yard-porter. He was given his brother's old boots, his father's old coat and cap, and was taken to town. Alyosha was delighted with his clothes, but the merchant was not impressed by his appearance.

"I thought you would bring me a man in Simeon's place," he said, scanning Alyosha; "and you've brought me THIS! What's the good of him?"

"He can do everything; look after horses and drive. He's a good one to work. He looks rather thin, but he's tough enough. And he's very willing."

"He looks it. All right; we'll see what we can do with him."

So Alyosha remained at the merchant's.

The family was not a large one. It consisted of the merchant's wife: her old mother: a married son poorly educated who was in his father's business: another son, a learned one who had finished school and entered the University, but having been expelled, was living at home: and a daughter who still went to school.

They did not take to Alyosha at first. He was uncouth, badly dressed, and had no manner, but they soon got used to him. Alyosha worked even better than his brother had done; he was really very willing. They sent him on all sorts of errands, but he did everything quickly and readily, going from one task to another without stopping. And so here, just as at home, all the work was put upon his shoulders. The more he did, the more he was given to do. His mistress, her old mother, the son, the daughter, the clerk, and the cook — all ordered him about, and sent him from one place to another.

"Alyosha, do this! Alyosha, do that! What! have you forgotten, Alyosha? Mind you don't forget, Alyosha!" was heard from morning till night. And Alyosha ran here, looked after this and that, forgot nothing, found time for everything, and was always cheerful.

His brother's old boots were soon worn out, and his master scolded him for going about in tatters with his toes sticking out. He ordered another pair to be bought for him in the market. Alyosha was delighted with his new boots, but was angry with his feet when they ached at the end of the day after so much running about. And then he was afraid that his father would be annoyed when he came to town for his wages, to find that his master had deducted the cost of the boots.

In the winter Alyosha used to get up before daybreak. He would chop the wood, sweep the yard, feed the cows and horses, light the stoves, clean the boots, prepare the samovars and polish them afterwards; or the clerk would get him to bring up the goods; or the cook would set him to knead the bread and clean the saucepans. Then he was sent to town on various errands, to bring the daughter home from school, or to get some olive oil for the old mother.

“Why the devil have you been so long?” first one, then another, would say to him. Why should they go? Alyosha can go. “Alyosha! Alyosha!” And Alyosha ran here and there. He breakfasted in snatches while he was working, and rarely managed to get his dinner at the proper hour. The cook used to scold him for being late, but she was sorry for him all the same, and would keep something hot for his dinner and supper.

At holiday times there was more work than ever, but Alyosha liked holidays because everybody gave him a tip. Not much certainly, but it would amount up to about sixty kopeks 1s 2d — his very own money. For Alyosha never set eyes on his wages. His father used to come and take them from the merchant, and only scold Alyosha for wearing out his boots.

When he had saved up two roubles 4s, by the advice of the cook he bought himself a red knitted jacket, and was so happy when he put it on, that he couldn't close his mouth for joy. Alyosha was not talkative; when he spoke at all, he spoke abruptly, with his head turned away. When told to do anything, or asked if he could do it, he would say yes without the smallest hesitation, and set to work at once.

Alyosha did not know any prayer; and had forgotten what his mother had taught him. But he prayed just the same, every morning and every evening, prayed with his hands, crossing himself.

He lived like this for about a year and a half, and towards the end of the second year a most startling thing happened to him. He discovered one day, to his great surprise, that, in addition to the relation of usefulness existing between people, there was also another, a peculiar relation of quite a different character. Instead of a man being wanted to clean boots, and go on errands and harness horses, he is not wanted to be of any service at all, but another human being wants to serve him and pet him. Suddenly Alyosha felt he was such a man.

He made this discovery through the cook Ustinia.

She was young, had no parents, and worked as hard as Alyosha. He felt for the first time in his life that he — not his services, but he himself —

was necessary to another human being. When his mother used to be sorry for him, he had taken no notice of her. It had seemed to him quite natural, as though he were feeling sorry for himself. But here was Ustinia, a perfect stranger, and sorry for him. She would save him some hot porridge, and sit watching him, her chin propped on her bare arm, with the sleeve rolled up, while he was eating it. When he looked at her she would begin to laugh, and he would laugh too.

This was such a new, strange thing to him that it frightened Alyosha. He feared that it might interfere with his work. But he was pleased, nevertheless, and when he glanced at the trousers that Ustinia had mended for him, he would shake his head and smile. He would often think of her while at work, or when running on errands. "A fine girl, Ustinia!" he sometimes exclaimed.

Ustinia used to help him whenever she could, and he helped her.

She told him all about her life; how she had lost her parents; how her aunt had taken her in and found a place for her in the town; how the merchant's son had tried to take liberties with her, and how she had rebuffed him. She liked to talk, and Alyosha liked to listen to her. He had heard that peasants who came up to work in the towns frequently got married to servant girls. On one occasion she asked him if his parents intended marrying him soon. He said that he did not know; that he did not want to marry any of the village girls.

"Have you taken a fancy to some one, then?"

"I would marry you, if you'd be willing."

"Get along with you, Alyosha the Pot; but you've found your tongue, haven't you?" she exclaimed, slapping him on the back with a towel she held in her hand. "Why shouldn't I?"

At Shrovetide Alyosha's father came to town for his wages. It had come to the ears of the merchant's wife that Alyosha wanted to marry Ustinia, and she disapproved of it. "What will be the use of her with a baby?" she thought, and informed her husband.

The merchant gave the old man Alyosha's wages.

"How is my lad getting on?" he asked. "I told you he was willing."

“That’s all right, as far as it goes, but he’s taken some sort of nonsense into his head. He wants to marry our cook. Now I don’t approve of married servants. We won’t have them in the house.”

“Well, now, who would have thought the fool would think of such a thing?” the old man exclaimed. “But don’t you worry. I’ll soon settle that.”

He went into the kitchen, and sat down at the table waiting for his son. Alyosha was out on an errand, and came back breathless.

“I thought you had some sense in you; but what’s this you’ve taken into your head?” his father began.

“I? Nothing.”

“How, nothing? They tell me you want to get married. You shall get married when the time comes. I’ll find you a decent wife, not some town hussy.”

His father talked and talked, while Alyosha stood still and sighed. When his father had quite finished, Alyosha smiled.

“All right. I’ll drop it.”

“Now that’s what I call sense.”

When he was left alone with Ustinia he told her what his father had said. (She had listened at the door.)

“It’s no good; it can’t come off. Did you hear? He was angry — won’t have it at any price.”

Ustinia cried into her apron.

Alyosha shook his head.

“What’s to be done? We must do as we’re told.”

“Well, are you going to give up that nonsense, as your father told you?” his mistress asked, as he was putting up the shutters in the evening.

“To be sure we are,” Alyosha replied with a smile, and then burst into tears.

From that day Alyosha went about his work as usual, and no longer talked to Ustinia about their getting married. One day in Lent the clerk told him to clear the snow from the roof. Alyosha climbed on to the



roof and swept away all the snow; and, while he was still raking out some frozen lumps from the gutter, his foot slipped and he fell over. Unfortunately he did not fall on the snow, but on a piece of iron over the door. Ustinia came running up, together with the merchant's daughter.

"Have you hurt yourself, Alyosha?"

"Ah! no, it's nothing."

But he could not raise himself when he tried to, and began to smile. He was taken into the lodge. The doctor arrived, examined him, and asked where he felt the pain.

"I feel it all over," he said. "But it doesn't matter. I'm only afraid master will be annoyed. Father ought to be told."

Alyosha lay in bed for two days, and on the third day they sent for the priest.

"Are you really going to die?" Ustinia asked.

"Of course I am. You can't go on living for ever. You must go when the time comes." Alyosha spoke rapidly as usual. "Thank you, Ustinia.

You've been very good to me. What a lucky thing they didn't let us marry! Where should we have been now? It's much better as it is."

When the priest came, he prayed with his hands and with his heart. "As it is good here when you obey and do no harm to others, so it will be there," was the thought within it.

He spoke very little; he only said he was thirsty, and he seemed full of wonder at something.

He lay in wonderment, then stretched himself, and died.

The Devil

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1911

BUT I SAY unto you , that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.

And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thymembers should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell. Matthew v. 28, 29, 30

I

A brilliant career lay before Eugene Iretnev. He had everything necessary to attain it: an admirable education at home, high honours when he graduated in law at Petersburg University, and connexions in the highest society through his recently deceased father; he had also already begun service in one of the Ministries under the protection of the minister. Moreover he had a fortune; even a large one, though insecure. His father had lived abroad and in Petersburg, allowing his sons, Eugene and Andrew (who was older than Eugene and in the Horse Guards), six thousand rubles a year each, while he himself and his wife spent a great deal. He only used to visit his estate for a couple of months in summer and did not concern himself with its direction, entrusting it all to an unscrupulous manager who also failed to attend to it, but in whom he had complete confidence.

After the father's death, when the brothers began to divide the property, so many debts were discovered that their lawyer even advised them to refuse the inheritance and retain only an estate left them by their grandmother, which was valued at a hundred thousand rubles. But a neighbouring landed-proprietor who had done business with old Irtenev, that is to say, who had promissory notes from him and had come to Petersburg on that account, said that in spite of the debts they could straighten out affairs so as to retain a large fortune (it would only be necessary to sell the forest and some outlying land, retaining the rich Semenov estate with four thousand desyatins of black earth, the sugar factory, and two hundred desyatins of water-meadows) if one

devoted oneself to the management of the estate, settled there, and farmed it wisely and economically.

And so, having visited the estate in spring (his father had died in Lent), Eugene looked into everything, resolved to retire from the Civil Service, settle in the country with his mother, and undertake the management with the object of preserving the main estate. He arranged with his brother, with whom he was very friendly, that he would pay him either four thousand rubles a year, or a lump sum of eighty thousand, for which Andrew would hand over to him his share of his inheritance. So he arranged matters and, having settled down with his mother in the big house, began managing the estate eagerly, yet cautiously.

It is generally supposed the Conservatives are usually old people, and that those in favour of change are the young. That is not quite correct. Usually Conservatives are young people: those who want to live but who do not think about how to live, and have not time to think, and therefore take as a model for themselves a way of life that they have seen.

Thus it was with Eugene. Having settled in the village, his aim and ideal was to restore the form of life that had existed, not in his father's time — his father had been a bad manager — but in his grandfather's.

And now he tried to resurrect the general spirit of his grandfather's life — in the house, the garden, and in the estate management — of course with changes suited to the times — everything on a large scale — good order, method, and everybody satisfied. But to do this entailed much work. It was necessary to meet the demands of the creditors and the banks, and for that purpose to sell some land and arrange renewals of credit. It was also necessary to get money to carry on (Partly by farming out land, and Partly by hiring labour) the immense operations on the Semenov estate, with its four hundred desyatins of ploughland and its sugar factory, and to deal with the garden so that it should not seem to be neglected or in decay.

There was much work to do, but Eugene had plenty of strength-physical and mental. He was twenty-six, of medium height, strongly built, with muscles developed by gymnastics. He was fullblooded and his whole neck was very red, his teeth and lips were bright, and his hair soft and curly though not thick. His only physical defect was short-sightedness, which he had himself developed by using spectacles, so that he could not now do without a pince-nez, which had already formed a line on the bridge of his nose.

Such was his physically. For his spiritual portrait it might be said that the better people knew him the better they liked him. His mother had always loved him more than anyone else, and now after her husband's death she concentrated on him not only her whole affection but her whole life. Nor was it only his mother who so loved him. All his comrades at the high school and the university not merely liked him very much, but respected him. He had this effect on all who met him. It was impossible not to believe what he said, impossible to suspect any deception or falseness in one who had such an open, honest face and in Particular such eyes.

In general his personality helped him much in his affairs. A creditor who would have refused another trusted him. The clerk, the village Elder, or a peasant, who would have played a dirty trick and cheated someone else, forgot to deceive under the pleasant impression of intercourse with this kindly, agreeable, and above all candid man. It was the end of May. Eugene had somehow managed in town to get the vacant land freed from the mortgage, so as to sell it to a merchant, and had borrowed money from that same merchant to replenish his stock, that is to say, to procure horses, bulls, and carts, and in Particular to begin to build a necessary farm-house. the matter had been arranged. The timber was being carted, the carpenters were already at work, and manure for the estate was being brought on eighty carts, but everything still hung by a thread.

Amid these cares something came about which though unimportant tormented Eugene at the time. As a young man he had lived as all healthy young men live, that is, he had had relations with women of various kinds. He was not a libertine but neither, as he himself said, was he a monk. He only turned to this, however, in so far as was necessary for physical health and to have his mind free, as he used to say. This had begun when he was sixteen and had gone on satisfactorily — in the sense that he had never given himself up to debauchery, never once been infatuated, and had never contracted a disease. At first he had a seamstress in Petersburg, then she got spoilt and he made other arrangements, and that side of his affairs was so well secured that it did not trouble him.

But now he was living in the country for the second month and did not at all know what he was to do. Compulsory self-restraint was beginning to have a bad effect on him. Must he really go to town for that purpose? And where to? How? That was the only thing that disturbed him; but as he was convinced that the thing was necessary and that he needed it, it really became a necessity, and he felt that he was not free and that his eyes involuntarily followed every young woman.

He did not approve of having relations with a married woman or a maid in his own village. He knew by report that both his father and grandfather had been quite different in this matter from other landowners of that time. At home they had never had any entanglements with peasant-women, and he had decided that he would not do so either; but afterwards, feeling himself ever more and more under compulsion and imagining with horror what might happen to him in the neighbouring country town, and reflecting on the fact that the days of serfdom were now over, he decided that it might be done on the spot. Only it must be done so that no one should know of it, and not for the sake of debauchery but merely for health's sake — as he said to himself. and when he had decided this he became still more restless. When talking to the village Elder, the peasants, or the carpenters, he involuntarily brought the conversation round to women, and when it turned to women he kept it on that theme. He noticed the women more and more.

To settle the matter in his own mind was one thing but to carry it out was another. To approach a woman himself was impossible. Which one? Where? It must be done through someone else, but to whom should he speak about it? He happened to go into a watchman's hut in the forest to get a drink of water. The watchman had been his father's huntsman, and Eugene Ivanich chatted with him, and the man began telling some strange tales of hunting sprees. It occurred to Eugene Ivanich that it would be convenient to arrange matters in this hut, or in the wood, only he did not know how to manage it and whether old Daniel would undertake the arrangement. "Perhaps he will be horrified at such a proposal and I shall have disgraced myself, but perhaps he will agree to it quite simply." So he thought while listening to Daniel's stories. Daniel was telling how once when they had been stopping at the hut of the sexton's wife in an outlying field, he had brought a woman for Fedor Zakharich Pryanishnikov.

"It will be all right," thought Eugene.

"Your father, may the kingdom of heaven be his, did not go in for nonsense of that kind."

"It won't do," thought Eugene. But to test the matter he said: "How was it you engaged on such bad things?"

"But what was there bad in it? She was glad, and Fedor Zakharich was satisfied, very satisfied. I got a ruble. Why, what was he to do? He too is a lively limb apparently, and drinks wine."

"Yes, I may speak," thought Eugene, and at once proceeded to do so.

"And do you know, Daniel, I don't know how to endure it," -he felt himself going scarlet. Daniel smiled.

"I am not a monk — I have been accustomed to it."

He felt that what he was saying was stupid, but was glad to see that Daniel approved.

"Why of course, you should have told me long ago. It can all be arranged," said he: "only tell me which one you want."

“Oh, it is really all the same to me. Of course not an ugly one, and she must be healthy.”

“I understand!” said Daniel briefly. He reflected.

“Ah! There is a tasty morsel,” he began. Again Eugene went red.

“A tasty morsel. See here, she was married last autumn.” Daniel whispered— “and he hasn’t been able to do anything. Think what that is worth to one who wants it!”

Eugene even frowned with shame.

“No, no,” he said. “I don’t want that at all. I want, on the contrary (what could the contrary be?), on the contrary I only want that she should be healthy and that there should be as little fuss as possible — a woman whose husband is away in the army or something of that kind.”

“I know. It’s Stepanida I must bring you. Her husband is away in town, just the same as a soldier. and she is a fine woman, and clean. You will be satisfied. As it is I was saying to her the other day — you should go, but she...”

“Well then, when is it to be?”

“Tomorrow if you like. I shall be going to get some tobacco and I will call in, and at the dinner-hour come here, or to the bath-house behind the kitchen garden. There will be nobody about. Besides after dinner everybody takes a nap.”

“All right then.”

A terrible excitement seized Eugene as he rode home. “what will happen? What is a peasant woman like? Suppose it turns out that she is hideous, horrible? No, she is handsome,” he told himself, remembering some he had been noticing. “But what shall I say? What shall I do?”

He was not himself all that day. Next day at noon he went to the forester’s hut. Daniel stood at the door and silently and significantly nodded towards the wood. The blood rushed to Eugene’s heart, he was conscious of it and went to the kitchen garden. No one was there. He went to the bath-house — there was no one about, he looked in, came out, and suddenly heard the crackling of a breaking twig. He looked

round — and she was standing in the thicket beyond the little ravine. He rushed there across the ravine. There were nettles in it which he had not noticed. They stung him and, losing the pince-nez from his nose, he ran up the slope on the farther side. She stood there, in a white embroidered apron, a red-brown skirt, and a bright red kerchief, barefoot, fresh, firm, and handsome, and smiling shyly. “There is a path leading round — you should have gone round,” she said. “I came long ago, ever so long.”

He went up to her and, looking her over, touched her.

A quarter of an hour later they separated; he found his pincenez, called in to see Daniel, and in reply to his question: “Are you satisfied, master?” gave him a ruble and went home.

He was satisfied. Only at first had he felt ashamed, then it had passed off. And everything had gone well. The best thing was that he now felt at ease, tranquil and vigorous. As for her, he had not even seen her thoroughly. He remembered that she was clean, fresh, not bad-looking, and simple, without any pretence. “Whose wife is she?” said he to himself. “Pechnikov’s, Daniel said. What Pechnikov is that? There are two households of that name. Probably she is old Michael’s daughter-in-law. Yes, that must be it. His son does live in Moscow. I’ll ask Daniel about it some time.”

From then onward that previously important drawback to country life — enforced self-restraint — was eliminated. Eugene’s freedom of mind was no longer disturbed and he was able to attend freely to his affairs.

And the matter Eugene had undertaken was far from easy: before he had time to stop up one hole a new one would unexpectedly show itself, and it sometimes seemed to him that he would not be able to go through with it and that it would end in his having to sell the estate after all, which would mean that all his efforts would be wasted and that he had failed to accomplish what he had undertaken. That prospect disturbed him most of all.

All this time more and more debts of his father’s unexpectedly came to light. It was evident that towards the end of his life he had borrowed



right and left. At the time of the settlement in May, Eugene had thought he at least knew everything, but in the middle of the summer he suddenly received a letter from which it appeared that there was still a debt of twelve thousand rubles to the widow Esipova. There was no promissory note, but only an ordinary receipt which his lawyer told him could be disputed. But it did not enter Eugene's head to refuse to pay a debt of his father's merely because the document could be challenged. He only wanted to know for certain whether there had been such a debt.

"Mamma! who is Kaleriya Vladimirovna Esipova?" he asked his mother when they met as usual for dinner.

"Esipova? she was brought up by your grandfather. Why?"

Eugene told his mother about the letter.

"I wonder she is not ashamed to ask for it. Your father gave her so much!"

"But do we owe her this?"

"Well now, how shall I put it? It is not a debt. Papa, out of his unbounded kindness..."

"Yes, but did Papa consider it a debt?"

"I cannot say. I don't know. I only know it is hard enough for you without that."

Eugene saw that Mary Pavlovna did not know what to say, and was as it were sounding him.

"I see from what you say that it must be paid," said he. "I will go to see her tomorrow and have a chat, and see if it cannot be deferred."

"Ah, how sorry I am for you, but you know that will be best. Tell her she must wait," said Mary Pavlovna, evidently tranquillized and proud of her son's decision.

Eugene's position was particularly hard because his mother, who was living with him, did not at all realize his position. She had been accustomed all her life long to live extravagantly that she could not even imagine to herself the position her son was in, that is to say, that today or tomorrow matters might shape themselves so that they would

have nothing left and he would have to sell everything and live and support his mother on what salary he could earn, which at the very most would be two thousand rubles. She did not understand that they could only save themselves from that position by cutting down expense in everything, and so she could not understand why Eugene was so careful about trifles, in expenditure on gardeners, coachmen, servants — even on food. Also, like most widows, she nourished feelings of devotion to the memory of her departed spouse quite different from those she had felt for him while he lived, and she did not admit the thought that anything the departed had done or arranged could be wrong or could be altered.

Eugene by great efforts managed to keep up the garden and the conservatory with two gardeners, and the stables with two coachmen. And Mary Pavlovna naively thought that she was sacrificing herself for her son and doing all a mother could do, by not complaining of the food which the old man-cook prepared, of the fact that the paths in the park were not all swept clean, and that instead of footmen they had only a boy.

So, too, concerning this new debt, in which Eugene saw an almost crushing blow to all his undertakings, Mary Pavlovna only saw an incident displaying Eugene's noble nature. Moreover she did not feel much anxiety about Eugene's position, because she was confident that he would make a brilliant marriage which would put everything right. And he could make a very brilliant marriage: she knew a dozen families who would be glad to give their daughters to him. And she wished to arrange the matter as soon as possible.

#### IV

Eugene himself dreamt of marriage, but not in the same way as his mother. The idea of using marriage as a means of putting his affairs in order was repulsive to him. He wished to marry honourably, for love. He observed the girls whom he met and those he knew, and compared himself with them, but no decision had yet been taken. Meanwhile, contrary to his expectations, his relations with Stepanida continued,

and even acquired the character of a settled affair. Eugene was so far from debauchery, it was so hard for him secretly to do this thing which he felt to be bad, that he could not arrange these meetings himself and even after the first one hoped not to see Stepanida again; but it turned out that after some time the same restlessness (due he believed to that cause) again overcame him.

And his restlessness this time was no longer impersonal, but suggested just those same bright, black eyes, and that deep voice, saying, "ever so long," that same scent of something fresh and strong, and that same full breast lifting the bib of her apron, and all this in that hazel and maple thicket, bathed in bright sunlight.

Though he felt ashamed he again approached Daniel. And again a rendezvous was fixed for midday in the wood. This time Eugene looked her over more carefully and everything about her seemed attractive. He tried talking to her and asked about her husband. He really was Michael's son and lived as a coachman in Moscow.

"Well, then, how is it you..." Eugene wanted to ask how it was she was untrue to him.

"What about 'how is it'?" asked she. Evidently she was clever and quick-witted.

"Well, how is it you come to me?"

"There now," said she merrily. "I bet he goes on the spree there. Why shouldn't I?"

Evidently she was putting on an air of sauciness and assurance, and this seemed charming to Eugene. but all the same he did not himself fix a rendezvous with her. Even when she proposed that they should meet without the aid of Daniel, to whom she seemed not very well disposed, he did not consent. He hoped that this meeting would be the last. He like her. He thought such intercourse was necessary for him and that there was nothing bad about it, but in the depth of his soul there was a stricter judge who did not approve of it and hoped that this would be the last time, or if he did not hope that, at any rate did not wish to Participate in arrangements to repeat it another time.

So the whole summer passed, during which they met a dozen times and always by Daniel's help. It happened once that she could not be there because her husband had come home, and Daniel proposed another woman, but Eugene refused with disgust. Then the husband went away and the meetings continued as before, at first through Daniel, but afterwards he simply fixed the time and she came with another woman, Prokhovova — as it would not do for a peasant-woman to go about alone.

Once at the very time fixed for the rendezvous a family came to call on Mary Pavlovna, with the very girl she wished Eugene to marry, and it was impossible for Eugene to get away. As soon as he could do so, he went out as though to the thrashing floor, and round by the path to their meeting place in the wood. She was not there, but at the accustomed spot everything within reach had been broken — the black alder, the hazel-twigs, and even a young maple the thickness of a stake. She had waited, had become excited and angry, and had skittishly left him a remembrance. He waited and waited, and then went to Daniel to ask him to call her for tomorrow. She came and was just as usual.

So the summer passed. The meetings were always arranged in the wood, and only once, when it grew towards autumn, in the shed that stood in her backyard.

It did not enter Eugene's head that these relations of his had any importance for him. About her he did not even think. He gave her money and nothing more. At first he did not know and did not think that the affair was known and that she was envied throughout the village, or that her relations took money from her and encouraged her, and that her conception of any sin in the matter had been quite obliterated by the influence of the money and her family's approval. It seemed to her that if people envied her, then what she was doing was good.

"It is simply necessary for my health," thought Eugene. "I grant it is not right, and though no one says anything, everybody, or many people, know of it. The woman who comes with her knows. And once she

knows she is sure to have told others. But what's to be done? I am acting badly," thought Eugene, "but what's one to do? Anyhow it is not for long.

What chiefly disturbed Eugene was the thought of the husband. At first for some reason it seemed to him that the husband must be a poor sort, and this as it were partly justified his conduct. But he saw the husband and was struck by his appearance: he was a fine fellow and smartly dressed, in no way a worse man than himself, but surely better. At their next meeting he told her he had seen her husband and had been surprised to see that he was such a fine fellow.

"There's not another man like him in the village," said she proudly. This surprised Eugene, and the thought of the husband tormented him still more after that. He happened to be at Daniel's one day and Daniel, having begun chatting said to him quite openly:

"And Michael asked me the other day: 'Is it true that the master is living with my wife?' I said I did not know. 'Anyway,' I said, 'better with the master than with a peasant.'"

"Well, and what did he say?"

"He said: 'Wait a bit. I'll get to know and I'll give it her all the same.'"

"Yes, if the husband returned to live here I would give her up," thought Eugene.

But the husband lived in town and for the present their intercourse continued.

"When necessary I will break it off, and there will be nothing left of it," thought he.

And this seemed to him certain, especially as during the whole summer many different things occupied him very fully: the erection of the new farm-house, and the harvest and building, and above all meeting the debts and selling the wasteland. All these were affairs that completely absorbed him and on which he spent his thoughts when he lay down and when he got up. All that was real life. His intercourse — he did not even call it connection-with Stepanida he paid no attention to. It is true that when the wish to see her arose it came with such strength that he

could think of nothing else. But this did not last long. A meeting was arranged, and he again forgot her for a week or even for a month.

In autumn Eugene often rode to town, and there became friendly with the Annenskis. They had a daughter who had just finished the Institute. And then, to Mary Pavlovna's great grief, it happened that Eugene "cheapened himself," as she expressed it, by falling in love with Liza Annenskaya and proposing to her.

From that time his relations with Stepanida ceased.

V

It is impossible to explain why Eugene chose Liza Annenskaya, as it is always impossible to explain why a man chooses this and not that woman. There were many reasons — positive and negative. One reason was that she was not a very rich heiress such as his mother sought for him, another that she was naive and to be pitied in her relations with her mother, another that she was not a beauty who attracted general attention to herself, and yet she was not bad-looking. But the chief reason was that his acquaintance with her began at the time when he was ripe for marriage. He fell in love because he knew that he would marry.

Liza Annenskaya was at first merely pleasing to Eugene, but when he decided to make her his wife his feelings for her became much stronger. He felt that he was in love.

Liza was tall, slender, and long. Everything about her was long; her face, and her nose (not prominently but downwards), and her fingers, and her feet. The colour of her face was very delicate, creamy white and delicately pink; she had long, soft, and curly, light-brown hair, and beautiful eyes, clear, mild, and confiding. Those eyes especially struck Eugene, and when he thought of Liza he always saw those clear, mild, confiding eyes.

Such was she physically; he knew nothing of her spiritually, but only saw those eyes. And those eyes seemed to tell him all he needed to know. The meaning of their expression was this: While still in the

Institute, when she was fifteen, Liza used continually to fall in love with all the attractive men she met and was animated and happy only when she was in love. After leaving the Institute she continued to fall in love in just the same way with all the young men she met, and of course fell in love with Eugene as soon as she made his acquaintance.

It was this being in love which gave her eyes that Particular expression which so captivated Eugene. already that winter she had been in love with tow young men at one and the same time, and blushed and became excited not only when they entered the room but whenever their names were mentioned. But afterwards, when her mother hinted to her that Irtenev seemed to have serious intentions, her love for him increased so that she became almost indifferent to the two previous attractions, and when Irtenev began to come to their balls and Parties and danced with her more than with others and evidently only wished to know whether she loved him, her love for him became painful.

She dreamed of him in her sleep and seemed to see him when she was awake in a dark room, and everyone else vanished from her mind. But when he proposed and they were formally engaged, and when they had kissed one another and were a betrothed couple, then she had no thoughts but of him, no desire but to be with him, to love him, and to be loved by him. She was also proud of him and felt emotional about him and herself and her love, and quite melted and felt faint from love of him.

The more he got to know her the more he loved her. He had not at all expected to find such love, and it strengthened his own feeling more.

VI

Towards spring he went to his estate at Semenovskoe to have a look at it and to give directions about the management, and especially about the house which was being done up for his wedding.

Mary Pavlovna was dissatisfied with her son's choice, not only because the match was not as brilliant as it might have been, but also because

she did not like Varvara Alexeevna, his future mother-in-law. Whether she was good-natured or not she did not know and could not decide, but that she was not well-bred, not *\*comme il faut\** — “not a lady” as Mary Pavlovna said to herself — she saw from their first acquaintance, and this distressed her; distressed her because she was accustomed to value breeding and knew that Eugene was sensitive to it, and she foresaw that he would suffer much annoyance on this account. But she liked the girl. Liked her chiefly because Eugene did. One could not help loving her, and Mary Pavlovna was quite sincerely ready to do so.

Eugene found his mother contented and in good spirits. She was getting everything straight in the house and preparing to go away herself as soon as he brought his young wife. Eugene persuaded her to stay for the time being, and the future remained undecided.

In the evening after tea Mary Pavlovna played patience as usual. Eugene sat by, helping her. This was the hour of their most intimate talks. Having finished one game and while preparing to begin another, she looked up at him and, with a little hesitation, began thus: “I wanted to tell you, Jenya — of course I do not know, but in general I wanted to suggest to you — that before your wedding it is absolutely necessary to have finished with all your bachelor affairs so that nothing may disturb either you or your wife. God forbid that it should. You understand me?”

And indeed Eugene at once understood that Mary Pavlovna was hinting at his relations with Stepanida which had ended in the previous autumn, and that she attributed much more importance to those relations than they deserved, as solitary women always do. Eugene blushed, not from shame so much as from vexation that good-natured Mary Pavlovna was bothering — out of affection no doubt, but still was bothering — about matters that were not her business and that she did not and could not understand. He answered that there was nothing that needed concealment, and that he had always conducted himself so that there should be nothing to hinder his marrying.



“Well, dear, that is excellent. Only, Jenya...don’t be vexed with me,” said Mary Pavlovna, and broke off in confusion.

Eugene saw that she had not finished and had not said what she wanted to. And this was confirmed, when a little later she began to tell him how, in his absence, she had been asked to stand godmother at ... the Pechnikovs.

Eugene flushed again, not with vexation or shame this time, but with some strange consciousness of the importance of what was about to be told him — an involuntary consciousness quite at variance with his conclusions. And what he expected happened. Mary Pavlovna, as if merely by way of conversation, mentioned that this year only boys were being born — evidently a sign of a coming war. Both at the Vasins and the Pechnikovs the young wife had a first child — at each house a boy. Mary Pavlovna wanted to say this casually, but she herself felt ashamed when she saw the colour mount to her son’s face and saw him nervously removing, tapping, and replacing his pince-nez and hurriedly lighting a cigarette. She became silent. He too was silent and could not think how to break that silence. So they both understood that they had understood one another.

“Yes, the chief thing is that there should be justice and no favouritism in the village — as under your grandfather.”

“Mamma,” said Eugene suddenly, “I know why you are saying this. You have no need to be disturbed. My future family life is so sacred to me that I should not infringe it in any case. and as to what occurred in my bachelor days, that is quite ended. I never formed any union and on one has any claims on me.”

“Well, I am glad,” said his mother. “I know how noble your feelings are.”

Eugene accepted his mother’s words as a tribute due to him, and did not reply.

Next day he drove to town thinking of his fiancé and of anything in the world except of Stepanida. but, as if purposely to remind him, on approaching the church he met people walking and driving back from it. He met old Matvey with Simon, some lads and girls, and then two

women, one elderly, the other, who seemed familiar, smartly dressed and wearing a bright-red kerchief. This woman was walking lightly and boldly, carrying a child in her arms. He came up to them, and the elder woman bowed, stopping in the old-fashioned way, but the young woman with the child only bent her head, and from under the kerchief gleamed familiar, merry, smiling eyes.

Yes, this was she, but all that was over and it was no use looking at her: "and the child may be mine," flashed through his mind. No, what nonsense! There was her husband, she used to see him. He did not even consider the matter further, so settled in his mind was it that it had been necessary for his health — he had paid her money and there was no more to be said; there was, there had been, and there could be, no question of any union between them. It was not that he stifled the voice of conscience, no-his conscience simply said nothing to him. And he thought no more about her after the conversation with his mother and this meeting. Nor did he meet her again.

Eugene was married in town the week after Easter, and left at once with his young wife for his country estate. The house had been arranged as usual for a young couple. Mary Pavlovna wished to leave, but Eugene begged her to remain, and Liza still more strongly, and she only moved into a detached wing of the house. And so a new life began for Eugene.

## VII

The first year of his marriage was a hard one for Eugene. It was hard because affairs he had managed to put off during the time of his courtship now, after his marriage, all came upon him at once.

To escape from debts was impossible. An outlying Part of the estate was sold and the most pressing obligations met, but others remained, and he had no money. The estate yielded a good revenue, but he had had to send payments to his brother and to spend on his own marriage, so that there was no ready money and the factory could not carry on

and would have to be closed down. The only way of escape was to use his wife's money; and Liza, having realized her husband's position, insisted on this herself. Eugene agreed, but only on condition that he should give her a mortgage on half his estate, which he did. Of course this was done not for his wife's sake, who felt offended at it, but to appease his mother-in-law.

These affairs with various fluctuations of success and failure helped to poison Eugene's life that first year. Another thing was his wife's ill-health. That same first year, seven months after their marriage, a misfortune befell Liza. She was driving out to meet her husband on his return from town, and the quiet horse became rather playful and she was frightened and jumped out. Her jump was comparatively fortunate — she might have been caught by the wheel — but she was pregnant, and that same night the pains began and she had a miscarriage from which she was long in recovering. The loss of the expected child and his wife's illness, together with the disorder in his affairs, and above all the presence of his mother-in-law, who arrived as soon as Liza fell ill — all this together made the year still harder for Eugene.

But notwithstanding these difficult circumstances, towards the end of the first year Eugene felt very well. First of all his cherished hope of restoring his fallen fortune and renewing his grandfather's way of life in a new form, was approaching accomplishment, though slowly and with difficulty. There was no longer any question of having to sell the whole estate to meet the debts. The chief estate, though transferred to his wife's name, was saved, and if only the beet crop succeeded and the price kept up, by next year his position of want and stress might be replaced by one of complete prosperity. That was one thing.

Another was that however much he had expected from his wife, he had never expected to find in her what he actually found. He found not what he had expected, but something much better. Raptures of love — though he tried to produce them — did not take place or were very slight, but he discovered something quite different, namely that he was not merely more cheerful and happier but that it had become easier to live. He did not know why this should be so, but it was.

And it was so because immediately after marriage his wife decided that Eugene Irtenev was superior to anyone else in the world: wiser, purer, and nobler than they, and that therefore it was right for everyone to serve him and please him; but that as it was impossible to make everyone do this, she must do it herself to the limit of her strength. And she did; directing all her strength of mind towards learning and guessing what he liked, and then doing just that thing, whatever it was and however difficult it might be.

She had the gift which furnishes the chief delight of intercourse with a loving woman: thanks to her love of her husband she penetrated into his soul. She knew his every state and his every shade of feeling — better it seemed to him than he himself—and she behaved correspondingly and therefore never hurt his feelings, but always lessened his distresses and strengthened his joys.

And she understood not only his feelings but also his joys. Things quite foreign to her — concerning the farming, the factory, or the appraisal of others — she immediately understood so that she could not merely converse with him, but could often, as he himself said, be a useful and irreplaceable counselor. She regarded affairs and people and everything in the world only through his eyes. She loved her mother, but having seen that Eugene disliked his mother-in-law's interference in their life she immediately took her husband's side, and did so with such decision that he had to restrain her.

Besides all this she had very good taste, much tact, and above all she had repose. All that she did, she did unnoticed; only the results of what she did were observable, namely, that always and in everything there was cleanliness, order, and elegance. Liza had at once understood in what her husband's ideal of life consisted, and she tried to attain, and in the arrangement and order of the house did attain, what he wanted. Children it is true were lacking, but there was hope of that also. In winter she went to Petersburg to see a specialist and he assured them that she was quite well and could have children.

And this desire was accomplished. By the end of the year she was again pregnant.

The one thing that threatened, not to say poisoned, their happiness was her jealousy — a jealousy she restrained and did not exhibit, but from which she often suffered. Not only might Eugene not love any other woman — because there was not a woman on earth worthy of him (as to whether she herself was worthy or not she never asked herself), — but not a single woman might therefore dare to love him.

## VIII

This was how they lived: he rose early, as he always had done, and went to see to the farm or the factory where work was going on, or sometimes to the fields. Towards ten o'clock he would come back for his coffee, which they had on the veranda: Mary Pavlovna, an uncle who lived with them, and Liza. After a conversation which was often very animated while they drank their coffee, they dispersed till dinner-time.

At two o'clock they dined and then went for a walk or a drive. In the evening when he returned from the office they drank their evening tea and sometimes he read aloud while she worked, or when there were guests they had music or conversation. When he went away on business he wrote to his wife and received letters from her every day. Sometimes she accompanied him, and then they were particularly merry. On his name-day and on her guests assembled, and it pleased him to see how well she managed to arrange things so that everybody enjoyed coming. He saw and heard that they all admired her — the young, agreeable hostess — and he loved her still more for this.

All went excellently. She bore her pregnancy easily and, though they were afraid, they both began making plans as to how they would bring the child up. The system of education and the arrangements were all decided by Eugene, and her only wish was to carry out his desires obediently. Eugene on his part read up medical works and intended to bring the child up according to all the precepts of science. She of course agreed to everything and made preparations, making warm and also

cool “envelopes”, and preparing a cradle. Thus the second year of their marriage arrived and the second spring.

## IX

It was just before Trinity Sunday. Liza was in her fifth month, and though careful she was still brisk and active. Both his mother and hers were living in the house, but under the pretext of watching and safeguarding her only upset her by their tiffs. Eugene was specially engrossed with a new experiment for the cultivation of sugar-beet on a large scale.

Just before Trinity Liza decided it was necessary to have a thorough house-cleaning as it had not been done since Easter, and she hired two women by the day to help the servants wash the floors and windows, beat the furniture and the carpets, and put covers on them. These women came early in the morning, heated the coppers, and set to work. One of the two was Stepanida, who had just weaned her baby boy and had begged for the job of washing the floors through the office-clerk — whom she now carried on with.

She wanted to have a good look at the new mistress. Stepanida was living by herself as formerly, her husband being away, and she was up to tricks as she had formerly been first with old Daniel (who had once caught her taking some logs of firewood), afterwards with the master, and now with the young clerk. She was not concerning herself any longer about her master. “He has a wife now,” she thought. But it would be good to have a look at the lady and at her establishment: folk said it was well arranged.

Eugene had not seen her since he had met her with the child. Having a baby to attend to she had not been going out to work, and he seldom walked through the village. that morning, on the eve of Trinity Sunday, he got up at five o’clock and rode to the fallow land which was to be sprinkled with phosphates, and had left the house before the women were about, and while they were still engaged lighting the copper fires.

He returned to breakfast merry, contented, and hungry; dismounting from his mare at the gate and handing her over to the gardener. Flicking the high grass with his whip and repeating a phrase he had just uttered, as one often does, he walked towards the house. The phrase was: “phosphates justify” — what or to whom, he neither knew nor reflected.

They were beating a carpet on the grass. The furniture had been brought out.

“There now! What a house-cleaning Liza has undertaken! ... Phosphates justify....What a manageress she is! Yes, a manageress,” said he to himself, vividly imagining her in her white wrapper and with her smiling joyful face, as it nearly always was when he looked at her. “Yes, I must change my boots, or else ‘phosphates justify’, that is, smell of manure, and the manageress in such a condition. Why ‘in such a condition’? Because a new little Irtenev is growing there inside her,” he thought. “Yes, phosphates justify,” and smiling at his thoughts he put his hand to the door of his room.

But he had not time to push the door before it opened of itself and he came face to face with a woman coming towards him carrying a pail, barefoot and with sleeves turned up high. He stepped aside to let her pass and she too stepped aside, adjusting her kerchief with a wet hand. “Go on, go on, I won’t go in, if you ... “ began Eugene and suddenly stopped, recognizing her.

She glanced merrily at him with smiling eyes, and pulling down her skirt went out at the door.

“What nonsense!...It is impossible,” said Eugene to himself, frowning and waving his hand as though to get rid of a fly, displeased at having noticed her. He was vexed that he had noticed her and yet he could not take his eyes from her strong body, swayed by her agile strides, from her bare feet, or from her arms and shoulders, and the pleasing folds of her shirt and the handsome skirt tucked up high above her white calves.

“But why am I looking?” said he to himself, lowering his eyes so as not to see her. “And anyhow I must go in to get some other boots.” and he turned back to go into his own room, but had not gone five steps before he again glanced round to have another look at her without knowing why or wherefore. She was just going round the corner and also glanced at him.

“Ah, what am I doing!” said he to himself. “She may think...It is even certain that she already does think...”

He entered his damp room. another woman, an old and skinny one, was there, and was still washing it. Eugene passed on tiptoe across the floor, wet with dirty water, to the wall where his boots stood, and he was about to leave the room when the woman herself went out.

“This one has gone and the other, Stepanida, will come here alone,” someone within him began to reflect.

“My God, what am I thinking of and what am I doing!” He seized his boots and ran out with them into the hall, put them on there, brushed himself, and went out onto the veranda where both the mammas were already drinking coffee. Liza had evidently been expecting him and came onto the veranda through another door at the same time.

“My God! If she, who considers me so honourable, pure, and innocent — if she only knew!” — thought he.

Liza as usual met him with shining face. But today somehow she seemed to him Particularly pale, yellow, long, and weak.

X

During coffee, as often happened, a peculiarly feminine kind of conversation went on which had no logical sequence but which evidently was connected in some way for it went on uninterruptedly. The two old ladies were pin-pricking one another, and Liza was skillfully manoeuvring between them.

“I am so vexed that we had not finished washing your room before you got back,” she said to her husband. “But I do so want to get everything arranged.”



“Well, did you sleep well after I got up?”

“Yes, I slept well and I felt well.”

“How can a woman be well in her condition during this intolerable heat, when her windows face the sun,” said Varvara Alexeevna, her mother.

“And they have no venetian-blinds or awnings. I always had awnings.”

“But you know we are in the shade after ten o’clock,” said Mary Pavlovna.

“That’s what causes fever; it comes of dampness,” said Varvara Alexeevna, not noticing that what she was saying did not agree with what she had just said. “My doctor always says that it is impossible to diagnose an illness unless one knows the patient. and he certainly knows, for he is the leading physician and we pay him a hundred rubles a visit. My late husband did not believe in doctors, but he did not grudge me anything.”

“How can a man grudge anything to a woman when perhaps her life and the child’s depend...”

“Yes, when she has means a wife need not depend on her husband. A good wife submits to her husband,” said Varvara Alexeevna— “only Liza is too weak after her illness.”

“Oh no, mamma, I feel quite well. But why have they not brought you any boiled cream?”

“I don’t want any. I can do with raw cream.”

“I offered some to Varvara Alexeevna, but she declined,” said Mary Pavlovna, as if justifying herself.

“No, I don’t want any today.” and as if to terminate an unpleasant conversation and yield magnanimously, Varvara Alexeevna turned to Eugene and said: “Well, and have you sprinkled the phosphates?”

Liza ran to fetch the cream.

“But I don’t want it. I don’t want it.”

“Liza, Liza, go gently,” said Mary Pavlovna. “Such rapid movements do her harm.”

“Nothing does harm if one’s mind is at peace,” said Varvara Alexeevna as if referring to something, though she knew that there was nothing her words could refer to.

Liza returned with the cream and Eugene drank his coffee and listened morosely. He was accustomed to these conversations, but today he was particularly annoyed by its lack of sense. He wanted to think over what had happened to him but this chatter disturbed him. Having finished her coffee Varvara Alexeevna went away in a bad humour. Liza, Eugene, and Mary Pavlovna stayed behind, and their conversation was simple and pleasant. But Liza, being sensitive, at once noticed that something was tormenting Eugene, and she asked him whether anything unpleasant had happened. He was not prepared for this question and hesitated a little before replying that there had been nothing. This reply made Liza think all the more. That something was tormenting him, and greatly tormenting, was as evident to her as that a fly had fallen into the milk, yet he would not speak of it. What could it be?

XI

After breakfast they all dispersed. Eugene as usual went to his study, but instead of beginning to read or write his letters, he sat smoking one cigarette after another and thinking. He was terribly surprised and disturbed by the unexpected recrudescence within him of the bad feeling from which he had thought himself free since his marriage. Since then he had not once experienced that feeling, either for her — the woman he had known — or for any other woman except his wife. He had often felt glad of this emancipation, and now suddenly a chance meeting, seemingly so unimportant, revealed to him the fact that he was not free. What now tormented him was not that he was yielding to that feeling and desired her — he did not dream of so doing — but that the feeling was awake within him and he had to be on his guard against it. He had not doubt but that he would suppress it.

He had a letter to answer and a paper to write, and sat down at his writing table and began to work. Having finished it and quite forgotten

what had disturbed him, he went out to go to the stables. And again as ill-luck would have it, either by unfortunate chance or intentionally, as soon as he stepped from the porch a red skirt and a red kerchief appeared from round the corner, and she went past him swinging her arms and swaying her body. She not only went past him, but on passing him ran, as if playfully, to overtake her fellow-servant.

Again the bright midday, the nettles, the back of Daniel's hut, and in the shade of the plant-trees her smiling face biting some leaves, rose in his imagination.

"No, it is impossible to let matters continue so," he said to himself, and waiting till the women had passed out of sight he went to the office.

It was just the dinner-hour and he hoped to find the steward still there, and so it happened. The steward was just waking up from his after-dinner nap, and stretching himself and yawning was standing in the office, looking at the herdsman who was telling him something.

"Vasili Nikolaich!" said Eugene to the steward.

"What is your pleasure?"

"Just finish what you are saying."

"Aren't you going to bring it in?" said Vasili Nikolaich to the herdsman.

"It's heavy, Vasili Nikolaich."

"What is it?" asked Eugene.

"Why, a cow has calved in the meadow. Well, all right, I'll order them to harness a horse at once. Tell Nicholas Lysukh to get out the dray cart."

The herdsman went out.

"Do you know," began Eugene, flushing and conscious that he was doing so, "do you know, Vasili Nikolaich, while I was a bachelor I went off the track a bit....You may have heard..."

Vasili Nikolaich, evidently sorry for his master, said with smiling eyes:

"Is it about Stepanida?"

"Why, yes. Look here. Please, please do not engage her to help in the house. You understand, it is very awkward for me..." "Yes, it must have been Vanya the clerk who arranged it." "Yes, please...and hadn't the

rest of the phosphate better be strewn?" said Eugene, to hide his confusion.

"Yes, I am just going to see to it."

So the matter ended, and Eugene calmed down, hoping that as he had lived for a year without seeing her, so things would go on now.

"Besides, Vasili Nikolaich will speak to Ivan the clerk; Ivan will speak to her, and she will understand that I don't want it," said Eugene to himself, and he was glad he had forced himself to speak to Vasili Nikolaich, hard as it had been to do so.

"Yes, it is better, much better, than that feeling of doubt, that feeling of shame." He shuddered at the mere remembrance of his sin in thought.

## XII

The moral effort he had made to overcome his shame and speak to Vasili Nikolaich tranquillized Eugene. It seemed to him that the matter was all over now. Liza at once noticed that he was quite calm, and even happier than usual. "No doubt he was upset by our mothers pin-pricking one another. It really is disagreeable, especially for him who is so sensitive and noble, always to hear such unfriendly and ill-mannered insinuations," thought she.

The next day was Trinity Sunday. It was a beautiful day, and the peasant-women, on their way into the woods to plait wreaths, came, according to custom, to the landowner's home and began to sing and dance. Mary Pavlovna and Varvara Alexeevna came out onto the porch in smart clothes, carrying sunshades, and went up to the ring of singers. With them, in a jacket of Chinese silk, came out the uncle, a flabby libertine and drunkard, who was living that summer with Eugene.

As usual there was a bright, many-coloured ring of young women and girls, the centre of everything, and around these from different sides like attendant planets that had detached themselves and were circling round, went girls hand in hand, rustling in their new print gowns; young lads giggling and running backwards and forwards after one another;

full-grown lads in dark blue or black coats and caps and with red shirts, who unceasingly spat out sunflower-seed shells; and the domestic servants or other outsiders watching the dance-circle from aside. Both the old ladies went close up to the ring, and Liza accompanied them in a light blue dress, with light blue ribbons on her head, and with wide sleeves under which her long white arms and angular elbows were visible.

Eugene did not wish to come out, but it was ridiculous to hide, and he too came out onto the porch smoking a cigarette, bowed to the men and lads, and talked with one of them. The women meanwhile shouted a dance-song with all their might, snapping their fingers, clapping their hands, and dancing.

“They are calling for the master,” said a youngster coming up to Eugene’s wife, who had not noticed the call. Liza called Eugene to look at the dance and at one of the women dancers who Particularly pleased her. This was Stepanida. She wore a yellow skirt, a velveteen sleeveless jacket and a silk kerchief, and was broad, energetic, ruddy, and merry. No doubt she danced well. He saw nothing.

“Yes, yes,” he said, removing and replacing his pince-nez. “Yes, yes,” he repeated. “So it seems I cannot be rid of her,” he thought. He did not look at her, fearing her attraction, and just on that account what his passing glance caught of her seemed to him especially attractive. Besides this he saw by her sparkling look that she saw him and saw that he admired her. He stood there as long as propriety demanded, and seeing that Varvara Alexeevna had called her “my dear” senselessly and insincerely and was talking to her, he turned aside and went away.

He went into the house in order not to see her, but on reaching the upper story he approached the window, without knowing how or why, and as long as the women remained at the porch he stood there and looked and looked at her, feasting his eyes on her.

He ran, while there was no one to see him, and then went with quiet steps onto the veranda and from there, smoking a cigarette, he passed through the garden as if going for a stroll, and followed the direction she had taken. He had not gone two steps along the alley before he noticed behind the trees a velveteen sleeveless jacket, with a pink and yellow skirt and a red kerchief. She was going somewhere with another woman. "Where are they going?"

And suddenly a terrible desire scorched him as though a hand were seizing his heart. As if by someone else's wish he looked round and went towards her.

"Eugene Ivanich, Eugene Ivanich! I have come to see your honour," said a voice behind him, and Eugene, seeing old Samokhin who was digging a well for him, roused himself and turning quickly round went to meet Samokhin. While speaking with him he turned sideways and saw that she and the woman who was with her went down the slope, evidently to the well or making an excuse of the well, and having stopped there a little while ran back to the dancecircle.

### XIII

After talking to Samokhin, Eugene returned to the house as depressed as if he had committed a crime. In the first place she had understood him, believed that he wanted to see her, and desired it herself. Secondly that other woman, Anna Prokhorova, evidently knew of it.

Above all he felt that he was conquered, that he was not master of his own will but that there was another power moving him, that he had been saved only by good fortune, and that if not today then tomorrow or a day later, he would perish all the same.

"Yes, perish," he did not understand it otherwise: to be unfaithful to his young and loving wife with a peasant woman in the village, in the sight of everyone — what was it but to perish, perish utterly, so that it would be impossible to live? No, something must be done.

“My God, my God! What am I to do? Can it be that I shall perish like this?” said he to himself. Is it not possible to do anything? Yet something must be done. Do not think about her”-he ordered himself. “Do not think!” and immediately he began thinking and seeing her before him, and seeing also the shade of the plane-tree.

He remembered having read of a hermit who, to avoid the temptation he felt for a woman on whom he had to lay his hand to heal her, thrust his other hand into a brazier and burnt his fingers. he called that to mind. “Yes, I am ready to burn my fingers rather than to perish.” He looked round to make sure that there was no one in the room, lit a candle, and put a finger into the flame. “There, now think about her,” he said to himself ironically. It hurt him and he withdrew his smoke-stained finger, threw away the match, and laughed at himself. What nonsense! That was not what had to be done.

But it was necessary to do something, to avoid seeing her — either to go away himself or to send her away. yes — send her away. Offer her husband money to remove to town or to another village. People would hear of it and would talk about it. Well, what of that? At any rate it was better than this danger. “Yes, that must be done,” he said to himself, and at that very moment he was looking at her without moving his eyes. “Where is she going?” he suddenly asked himself. She, it seemed to him, had seen him at the window and now, having glanced at him and taken another woman by the hand, was going towards the garden swinging her arm briskly. Without knowing why or wherefore, merely in accord with what he had been thinking, he went to the office.

Vasili Nikolaich in holiday costume and with oiled hair was sitting at tea with his wife and a guest who was wearing an oriental kerchief.

“I want a word with you, Vasili Nikolaich!”

“Please say what you want to. We have finished tea.”

“No. I’d rather you came out with me.”

“Directly; only let me get my cap. Tanya, put out the samovar,” said Vasili Nikolaich, stepping outside cheerfully. It seemed to Eugene that Vasili had been drinking, but what was to be done? It might be all the

better — he would sympathize with him in his difficulties the more readily.

“I have come again to speak about that same matter, Vasili Nikolaich,” said Eugene— “about that woman.”

“Well, what of her? I told them not to take her again on any account.”

“No, I have been thinking in general, and this is what I wanted to take your advice about. Isn’t it possible to get them away, to send the whole family away?”

“Where can they be sent?” said Vasili, disapprovingly and ironically as it seem to Eugene.

“Well, I thought of giving them money, or even some land in Koltovski, — so that she should not be here.”

“But how can they be sent away? Where is he to go — torn up from his roots? And why should you do it? What harm can she do you?”

“Ah, Vasili Nikolaich, you must understand that it would be dreadful for my wife to hear of it.”

“But who will tell her?”

“How can I live with this dread? The whole thing is vary painful for me.”

“But really, why should you distress yourself? Whoever stirs up the past — out with his eye! Who is not a sinner before God and to blame before the Tsar, as the saying is?”

“All the same it would be better to get rid of them. Can’t you speak to the husband?”

“But it is no use speaking! Eh, Eugene Ivanich, what is the matter with you? It is all past and forgotten. All sorts of things happen. Who is there that would now say anything bad of you? Everybody sees you.”

“But all the same go and have a talk with him.”

“All right, I will speak to him.”

Though he knew that nothing would come of it, this talk somewhat calmed Eugene. Above all, it made him feel that through excitement he had been exaggerating the danger.

Had he gone to meet her by appointment? It was impossible He had simply gone to stroll in the garden and she had happened to run out at the same time.



## XIV

After dinner that very Trinity Sunday Liza while walking from the garden to the meadow, where her husband wanted to show her the clover, took a false step and fell when crossing a little ditch. She fell gently, on her side; but she gave an exclamation, and her husband saw an expression in her face not only of fear but of pain. He was about to help her up, but she motioned him away with her hand.

“No, wait a bit, Eugene,” she said, with a weak smile, and looked up guiltily as it seemed to him. “My foot only gave way under me.”

“There, I always say,” remarked Varvara Alexeevna, “can anyone in her condition possibly jump over ditches?”

“But it is all right, mamma. I shall get up directly.” With her husband’s help she did get up, but she immediately turned pale, and looked frightened.

“Yes, I am not well!” and she whispered something to her mother.

“Oh, my God, what have you done! I said you ought not to go there,” cried Varvara Alexeevna. “Wait — I will call the servants. She must not walk. She must be carried!”

“Don’t be afraid, Liza, I will carry you,” said Eugene, putting his left arm round her. “Hold me by the neck. Like that.” And stopping down he put his right arm under her knees and lifted her. He could never afterwards forget the suffering and yet beatific expression of her face.

“I am too heavy for you, dear,” she said with a smile. “Mamma is running, tell her!” And she bent towards him and kissed him. She evidently wanted her mother to see how he was carrying her.

Eugene shouted to Varvara Alexeevna not to hurry, and that he would carry Liza home. Varvara Alexeevna stopped and began to shout still louder.

“You will drop her, you’ll be sure to drop her. You want to destroy her. You have no conscience!”

“But I am carrying her excellently.”

“I do not want to watch you killing my daughter, and I can’t.” And she ran round the bend in the alley.

“Never mind, it will pass,” said Liza, smiling.

“Yes, If only it does not have consequences like last time.” “No. I am not speaking of that. That is all right. I mean mamma. You are tired. Rest a bit.”

But though he found it heavy, Eugene carried his burden

proudly and gladly to the house and did not hand her over to the housemaid and the man-cook whom Varvara Alexeevna had found and sent to meet them. He carried her to the bedroom and put her on the bed.

“Now go away,” she said, and drawing his hand to her she kissed it.

“Annushka and I will manage all right.”

Mary Pavlovna also ran in from her rooms in the wing. They undressed Liza and laid her on the bed. Eugene sat in the drawing room with a book in his hand, waiting. Varvara Alexeevna went past him with such a reproachfully gloomy air that he felt alarmed.

“Well, how is it?” he asked.

“How is it? What’s the good of asking? It is probably what you wanted when you made your wife jump over the ditch.”

“Varvara Alexeevna!” he cried. “This is impossible. If you want to torment people and to poison their life” (he wanted to say, “then go elsewhere to do it,” but restrained himself). “How is it that it does not hurt you?”

“It is too late now.” And shaking her cap in a triumphant manner she passed out by the door.

The fall had really been a bad one; Liza’s foot had twisted awkwardly and there was danger of her having another miscarriage. Everyone knew that there was nothing to be done but that she must just lie quietly, yet all the same they decided to send for a doctor.

“Dear Nikolay Semenich,” wrote Eugene to the doctor, “you have always been so kind to us that I hope you will not refuse to come to my

wife's assistance. She..." and so on. Having written the letter he went to the stables to arrange about the horses and the carriage. Horses had to be got ready to bring the doctor and others to take him back. When an estate is not run on a large scale, such things cannot be quickly decided but have to be considered.

Having arranged it all and dispatched the coachman, it was past nine before he got back to the house. His wife was lying down, and said that she felt perfectly well and had no pain. But Varvara Alexeevna was sitting with a lamp screened from Liza by some sheets of music and knitting a large red coverlet, with a mien that said that after what had happened peace was impossible, but that she at any rate would do her duty no matter what anyone else did.

Eugene noticed this, but, to appear as if he had not done so, tried to assume a cheerful and tranquil air and told how he had chosen the horses and how capitably the mare, Kabushka, had galloped as left trace-horse in the troyka.

"Yes, of course, it is just the time to exercise the horses when help is needed. Probably the doctor will also be thrown into the ditch," remarked Varvara Alexeevna, examining her knitting from under her pince-nez and moving it close up to the lamp.

"But you know we had to send one way or another, and I made the best arrangement I could."

"Yes, I remember very well how your horses galloped with me under the arch of the gateway." This was a long-standing fancy of hers, and Eugene now was injudicious enough to remark that that was not quite what had happened.

"It is not for nothing that I have always said, and have often remarked to the prince, that it is hardest of all to live with people who are untruthful and insincere. I can endure anything except that."

"Well, if anyone has to suffer more than another, it is certainly I," said Eugene. "But you..."

"Yes, it is evident."

“What?”

“Nothing, I am only counting my stitches.”

Eugene was standing at the time by the bed and Liza was looking at him, and one of her moist hands outside the coverlet caught his hand and pressed it. “Bear with her for my sake. You know she cannot prevent our loving one another,” was what her look said.

“I won’t do so again. It’s nothing,” he whispered, and he kissed her damp, long hand and then her affectionate eyes, which closed while he kissed them.

“Can it be the same thing over again?” he asked. “How are you feeling?”

“I am afraid to say for fear of being mistaken, but I feel that he is alive and will live,” said she, glancing at her stomach.

“Ah, it is dreadful, dreadful to think of.”

Notwithstanding Liza’s insistence that he should go away, Eugene spent the night with her, hardly closing an eye and ready to attend on her. But she passed the night well, and had they not sent for the doctor she would perhaps have got up.

By dinner-time the doctor arrived and of course said that though if the symptoms recurred there might be cause for apprehension, yet actually there were no positive symptoms, but as there were also no contrary indications one might suppose on the one hand that — and on the other hand that... And therefore she must lie still, and that “though I do not like prescribing, yet all the same she should take this mixture and should lie quiet.” Besides this, the doctor gave Varvara Alexeevna a lecture on woman’s anatomy, during which Varvara Alexeevna nodded her head significantly. Having received his fee, as usual into the backmost Part of his palm, the doctor drove away and the patient was left to lie in bed for a week.

Eugene spent most of his time by his wife's bedside, talking to her, reading to her, and what was hardest of all, enduring without murmur Varvara Alexeevna's attacks, and even contriving to turn these into jokes.

But he could not stay at home all the time. In the first place his wife sent him away, saying that he would fall ill if he always remained with her; and secondly the farming was progressing in a way that demanded his presence at every step. He could not stay at home, but had to be in the fields, in the wood, in the garden, at the thrashing-floor; and everywhere he was pursued not merely by the thought but by the vivid image of Stepanida, and he only occasionally forgot her. But that would not have mattered, he could perhaps have mastered his feeling; what was worst of all was that, whereas he had previously lived for months without seeing her, he now continually came across her. She evidently understood that he wished to renew relations with her and tried to come in his way. Nothing was said either by him or by her, and therefore neither he nor she went directly to a rendezvous, but only sought opportunities of meeting.

The most possible place for them to meet was in the forest, where peasant-women went with sacks to collect grass for their cows. Eugene knew this and therefore went there every day. Every day he told himself that he would not go, and every day it ended by his making his way to the forest and, on hearing the sound of voices, standing behind the bushes with sinking heart looking to see if she was there.

Why he wanted to know whether it was she who was there, he did not know. If it had been she and she had been alone, he would not have gone to her — so he believed — he would have run away; but he wanted to see her.

Once he met her. As he was entering the forest she came out of it with two other women, carrying a heavy sack full of grass on her back. A little earlier he would perhaps have met her in the forest. Now, with the other women there, she could not go back to him. But though he realized this impossibility, he stood for a long time behind a hazel bush,

at the risk of attracting the other women's attention. Of course she did not return, but he stayed there a long time. and, great heavens, how delightful his imagination made her appear to him! And this not only once, but five or six times, and each time more intensely. never had she seemed so attractive, and never had he been so completely in her power.

He felt that he had lost control of himself and had become almost insane. His strictness with himself had not weakened a jot; on the contrary he saw all the abomination of his desire and even of his action, for his going to the wood was an action. He knew that he only need come near her anywhere in the dark, and if possible touch her, and he would yield to his feelings. He knew that it was only shame before people, before her, and no doubt before himself that restrained him. And he knew too that he had sought conditions in which that shame would not be apparent — darkness or proximity — in which it would be stifled by animal passion. and therefore he knew that he was a wretched criminal, and despised and hated himself with all his soul. He hated himself because he still had not surrendered: every day he prayed God to strengthen him, to save him from perishing; every day he determined that from today onward he would not take a step to see her, and would forget her. Every day he devised means of delivering himself from this enticement, and he made use of those means. But it was all in vain.

One of the means was continual occupation; another was intense physical work and fasting; a third was imagining to himself the shame that would fall upon him when everybody knew of it — his wife, his mother-in-law, and the folk around. He did all this and it seemed to him that he was conquering, but midday came — the hour of their former meetings and the hour when he had met her carrying the grass — and he went to the forest. Thus five days of torment passed. He only saw her from a distance, and did not once encounter her.

Liza was gradually recovering, she could move about and was only uneasy at the change that had taken place in her husband, which she did not understand.

Varvara Alexeevna had gone away for a while, and the only visitor was Eugene's uncle. Mary Pavlovna was as usual at home.

Eugene was in his semi-insane condition when there came two days of pouring rain, as often happens after thunder in June. The rain stopped all work. They even ceased carting manure on account of the dampness and dirt.

The peasants remained at home. The herdsmen wore themselves out with the cattle, and eventually drove them home. The cows and sheep wandered about in the pastureland and ran loose in the grounds. The peasant women, barefoot and wrapped in shawls, splashing through the mud, rushed about to seek the runaway cows. Streams flowed everywhere along the paths, all the leaves and all the grass were saturated with water, and streams flowed unceasingly from the spouts into the bubbling puddles. Eugene sat at home with his wife, who was particularly wearisome that day. She questioned Eugene several times as to the cause of his discontent, and he replied with vexation that nothing was the matter. She ceased questioning him but was still distressed.

They were sitting after breakfast in the drawing room. His uncle for the hundredth time was recounting fabrications about his society acquaintances. Liza was knitting a jacket and sighed, complaining of the weather and of a pain in the small of her back. The uncle advised her to lie down, and asked for vodka for himself. It was terribly dull for Eugene in the house. Everything was weak and dull. He read a book and a magazine, but understood nothing of them.

"I must go out and look at the rasping-machine they brought yesterday," said he, and got up and went out.

"Take an umbrella with you."

"Oh, no, I have a leather coat. And I am only going as far as the boiling-room."

He put on his boots and his leather coat and went to the factory; and he had not gone twenty steps before he met her coming towards him, with her skirts tucked up high above her white calves. She was walking, holding down the shawl in which her head and shoulders were wrapped.

“Where are you going?” said he, not recognizing her the first instant. When he recognized her it was already too late. She stopped, smiling, and looked long at him.

“I am looking for a calf. Where are you off to in such weather?” said she, as if she were seeing him every day.

“Come to the shed,” said he suddenly, without knowing how he said it. It was as if someone else had uttered the words.

She bit her shawl, winked, and ran in the direction which led from the garden to the shed, and he continued his path, intending to turn off beyond the lilac-bush and go there too.

“Master,” he heard a voice behind him. “The mistress is calling you, and wants you to come back for a minute.”

This was Misha, his man-servant.

“My God! This is the second time you have saved me,” thought Eugene, and immediately turned back. His wife reminded him that he had promised to take some medicine at the dinner hour to a sick woman, and he had better take it with him.

While they were getting the medicine some five minutes elapsed, and then, going away with the medicine, he hesitated to go direct to the shed lest he should be seen from the house, but as soon as he was out of sight he promptly turned and made his way to it. He already saw her in imagination inside the shed smiling gaily. But she was not there, and there was nothing in the shed to show that she had been there.

He was already thinking that she had not come, had not heard or understood his words — he had muttered them through his nose as if afraid of her hearing them — or perhaps she had not wanted to come. “And why did I imagine that she would rush to me? She has her own



husband; it is only I who am such a wretch as to have a wife, and a good one, and to run after another.” Thus he thought sitting in the shed, the thatch of which had a leak and dripped from its straw. “But how delightful it would be if she did come — alone here in this rain. If only I could embrace her once again, then let happen what may. But I could tell if she has been here by her footprints,” he reflected. He looked at the trodden ground near the shed and at the path overgrown by grass, and the fresh print of bare feet, and even of one that had slipped, was visible.

“Yes, she has been here. Well, now it is settled. Wherever I may see her I shall go straight to her. I will go to her at night.” He sat for a long time in the shed and left it exhausted and crushed. He delivered the medicine, returned home, and lay down in his room to wait for dinner.

## XVII

Before dinner Liza came to him and, still wondering what could be the cause of his discontent, began to say that she was afraid he did not like the idea of her going to Moscow for her confinement, and that she had decided that she would remain at home and on no account go to Moscow. He knew how she feared both her confinement itself and the risk of not having a healthy child, and therefore he could not help being touched at seeing how ready she was to sacrifice everything for his sake. All was so nice, so pleasant, so clean, in the house; and in his soul it was so dirty, despicable, and foul. the whole evening Eugene was tormented by knowing that notwithstanding his sincere repulsion at his own weakness, notwithstanding his firm intention to break off, — the same thing would happen again tomorrow.

“No, this is impossible,” he said to himself, walking up and down in his room. “There must be some remedy for it. My God! What am I to do?” Someone knocked at the door as foreigners do. he knew this must be his uncle. “Come in,” he said.

The uncle had come as a self-appointed ambassador from Liza. “Do you know, I really do notice that there is a change in you,” he said,— “and

Liza — I understand how it troubles her. I understand that it must be hard for you to leave all the business you have so excellently started, but *\*que veux-tu\**? I should advise you to go away. It will be more satisfactory both for you and for her. And do you know, I should advise you to go to the Crimea. The climate is beautiful and there is an excellent *\*accoucheur\** there, and you would be just in time for the best of the grape season.”

“Uncle,” Eugene suddenly exclaimed. “Can you keep a secret? A secret that is terrible to me, a shameful secret.”

“Oh, come — do you really feel any doubt of me?”

“Uncle, you can help me. Not only help, but save me!” said Eugene. And the thought of disclosing his secret to his uncle whom he did not respect, the thought that he should show himself in the worst light and humiliate himself before him, was pleasant. He felt himself to be despicable and guilty, and wished to punish himself.

“Speak, my dear fellow, you know how fond I am of you,” said the uncle, evidently well content that there was a secret and that it was a shameful one, and that it would be communicated to him, and that he could be of use.

“First of all I must tell you that I am a wretch, a good-for-nothing, a scoundrel — a real scoundrel.”

“Now what are you saying...” began his uncle, as if he were offended.

“What! Not a wretch when I — Liza’s husband, Liza’s! One has only to know her purity, her love — and that I, her husband, want to be untrue to her with a peasant-woman!”

“What is this? Why do you want to — you have not been unfaithful to her?”

“Yes, at least just the same as being untrue, for it did not depend on me. I was ready to do so. I was hindered, or else I should...now. I do not know what I should have done...”

“But please, explain to me...”

“Well, it is like this. When I was a bachelor I was stupid enough to have relations with a woman here in our village. That is to say, I used to have meetings with her in the forest, in the field...”

“Was she pretty?” asked his uncle.

Eugene frowned at this question, but he was in such need of external help that he made as if he did not hear it, and continued:

“Well, I thought this was just casual and that I should break it off and have done with it. And I did break it off before my marriage. For nearly a year I did not see her or think about her.” It seemed strange to Eugene himself to hear the description of his own condition. “Then suddenly, I don’t myself know why — really one sometimes believes in witchcraft — I saw her, and a worm crept into my heart; and it gnaws. I reproach myself, I understand the full horror of my action, that is to say, of the act I may commit any moment, and yet I myself turn to it, and if I have not

committed it, it is only because God preserved me. Yesterday I was on my way to see her when Liza sent for me.”

“What, in the rain?”

“Yes. I am worn out, Uncle, and have decided to confess to you and to ask your help.” “Yes, of course, it’s a bad thing on your own estate. People will get to know. I understand that Liza is weak and that it is necessary to spare her, but why on your own estate?”

Again Eugene tried not to hear what his uncle was saying, and hurried on to the core of the matter.

“Yes, save me from myself. That is what I ask of you. Today I was hindered by chance. But tomorrow or next time no one will hinder me. And she knows now. Don’t leave me alone.”

“Yes, all right,” said his uncle,— “but are you really so much in love?”

“Oh, it is not that at all. It is not that, it is some kind of power that has seized me and holds me. I do not know what to do. Perhaps I shall gain strength, and then...”

“Well, it turns out as I suggested,” said his uncle. “Let us be off to the Crimea.”

“Yes, yes, let us go, and meanwhile you will be with me and will talk to me.”

## XVIII

The fact that Eugene had confided his secret to his uncle, and still more the sufferings of his conscience and the feeling of shame he experienced after that rainy day, sobered him. It was settled that they would start for Yalta in a week's time. During that week Eugene drove to town to get money for the journey, gave instructions from the house and from the office concerning the management of the estate, again became gay and friendly with his wife, and began to awaken morally.

So without having once seen Stepanida after that rainy day he left with his wife for the Crimea. There he spent an excellent two months. He received so many new impressions that it seemed to him that the past was obliterated from his memory. In the Crimea they met former acquaintances and became Particularly friendly with them, and they also made new acquaintances. Life in the Crimea was a continual holiday for Eugene, besides being instructive and beneficial. They became friendly there with the former Marshal of the Nobility of their province, a clever and liberal-minded man who became fond of Eugene and coached him, and attracted him to his Party.

At the end of August Liza gave birth to a beautiful, healthy daughter, and her confinement was unexpectedly easy.

In September they returned home, the four of them, including the baby and its wet-nurse, as Liza was unable to nurse it herself. Eugene returned home entirely free from the former horrors and quite a new and happy man. Having gone through all that a husband goes through when his wife bears a child, he loved her more than ever. His feeling for the child when he took it in his arms was a funny, new, very pleasant and, as it were, a tickling feeling. Another new thing in his life now was that, besides his occupation with the estate, thanks to his acquaintance with Dumchin (the ex-Marshal) a new interest occupied his mind, that

of the Zemstvo — Partly an ambitious interest, Partly a feeling of duty. In October there was to be a special Assembly, at which he was to be elected. After arriving home he drove once to town and another time to Dumchin.

Of the torments of his temptation and struggle he had forgotten even to think, and could with difficulty recall them to mind. It seemed to him something like an attack of insanity he had undergone.

To such an extent did he now feel free from it that he was not even afraid to make inquiries on the first occasion when he remained alone with the steward. As he had previously spoken to him about the matter he was not ashamed to ask.

“Well, and is Sidor Pechnikov still away from home?” he inquired.

“Yes, he is still in town.”

“And his wife?”

“Oh, she is a worthless woman. She is now carrying on with Zenovi. She has gone quite on the loose.”

“Well, that is all right,” thought Eugene. “How wonderfully indifferent to it I am! How I have changed.”

## XIX

All that Eugene had wished had been realized. He had obtained the property, the factory was working successfully, the beet-crops were excellent, and he expected a large income; his wife had borne a child satisfactorily, his mother-in-law had left, and he had been unanimously elected to the Zemstvo.

He was returning home from town after the election. He had been congratulated and had had to return thanks. He had had dinner and had drunk some five glasses of champagne. Quite new plans of life now presented themselves to him, and he was thinking about these as he drove home. It was the Indian summer: an excellent road and a hot sun. As he approached his home Eugene was thinking of how, as a result of

this election, he would occupy among the people the position he had always dreamed of; that is to say, one in which he would be able to serve them not only by production, which gave employment, but also by direct influence.

He imagined what his own and the other peasants would think of him in three years' time. "For instance this one," he thought, drifting just then through the village and glancing at a peasant who with a peasant woman was crossing the street in front of him carrying a full water-tub. They stopped to let his carriage pass. The peasant was old Pechnikov, and the woman was Stepanida. Eugene looked at her, recognized her, and was glad to feel that he remained quite tranquil. She was still as good looking as ever, but this did not touch him at all. He drove home.

"Well, may we congratulate you?" said his uncle.

"Yes, I was elected."

"Capital! We must drink to it!"

Next day Eugene drove about to see to the farming which he had been neglecting. At the outlying farmstead a new thrashing machine was at work. While watching it Eugene stepped among the women, trying not to take notice of them; but try as he would he once or twice noticed the black eyes and red kerchief of Stepanida, who was carrying away the straw. Once or twice he glanced sideways at her and felt that something was happening, but could not account for it to himself.

Only next day, when he again drove to the thrashing floor and spent two hours there quite unnecessarily, without ceasing to caress with his eyes the familiar, handsome figure of the young woman, did he feel that he was lost, irremediably lost. Again those torments! Again all that horror and fear, and there was no saving himself. What he expected happened to him. The evening of the next day, without knowing how, he found himself at her back yard, by her hay shed, where in autumn they had once had a meeting. As though having a stroll, he stopped there lighting a cigarette. A neighbouring peasant-woman saw him, and as he turned back he heard her say to someone: "Go, he is waiting for you — on my dying word he is standing there. Go, you fool!"

He saw how a woman — she — ran to the hay shed; but as a peasant had met him it was no longer possible for him to turn back, and so he went home.

XX

When he entered the drawing-room everything seemed strange and unnatural to him. He had risen that morning vigorous, determined to fling it all aside, to forget it and not allow himself to think about it. But without noticing how it occurred he had all the morning not merely not interested himself in the work, but tried to avoid it. What had formerly cheered him and been important was now insignificant. Unconsciously he tried to free himself from business. It seemed to him that he had to do so in order to think and to plan. And he freed himself and remained alone. But as soon as he was alone he began to wander about in the garden and the forest.

And all those spots were besmirched in his recollection by memories that gripped him. He felt that he was walking in the garden and pretending to himself that he was thinking out something, but that really he was not thinking out anything, but insanely and unreasonably expecting her; expecting that by some miracle she would be aware that he was expecting her, and would come here at once and go somewhere where no one would see them, or would come at night when there would be no moon, and no one, not even she herself, would see — on such a night she would come and he would touch her body....

“There now, talking of breaking off when I wish to,” he said to himself. “Yes, and that is having a clean healthy woman for one’s health sake! No, it seems one can’t play with her like that. I thought I had taken her, but it was she who took me; took me and does not let me go. Why, I thought I was free, but I was not free and was deceiving myself when I married. It was all nonsense-fraud. From the time I had her I experienced a new feeling, the real feeling of a husband. Yes, I ought to have lived with her. “One of two lives is possible for me: that which I began with Liza: service, estate management, the child, and people’s

respect. If that is life, it is necessary that she, Stepanida, should not be there. She must be sent away, as I said, or destroyed so that she shall not exist.

And the other life — is this: For me to take her away from her husband, pay him money, disregard the shame and disgrace, and live with her. But in that case it is necessary that Liza should not exist, nor Mimi (the baby). No, that is not so, the baby does not matter, but it is necessary that there should be no Liza — that she should go away — that she should know, curse me, and go away. That she should know that I have exchanged her for a peasant woman, that I am a deceiver and a scoundrel! — No, that is too terrible! It is impossible. But it might happen,” he went on thinking— “it might happen that Liza might fall ill and die. Die, and then everything would be capital.

“Capital! Oh, scoundrel! No, if someone must die it should be Stepanida. If she were to die, how good it would be. “Yes, that is how men come to poison or kill their wives or lovers. Take a revolver and go and call her, and instead of embracing her, shoot her in the breast and have done with it. “Really she is — a devil. Simply a devil. She has possessed herself of me against my own will. “Kill? Yes. there are only two ways out: to kill my wife or her. For it is impossible to live like this. It is impossible! I must consider the matter and look ahead. If things remain as they are what will happen?

I shall again be saying to myself that I do not wish it and that I will throw her off, but it will be merely words; in the evening I shall be at her back yard, and she will know it and will come out. And if people know of it and tell my wife, or if I tell her myself — for I can't lie — I shall not be able to live so. I cannot! People will know. They will all know — Parasha and the blacksmith. Well, is it possible to live so? “Impossible! there are only two ways out: to kill my wife, or to kill her. yes, or else...Ah, yes, there is a third way: to kill myself,” said he softly, and suddenly a shudder ran over his skin. “Yes, kill myself, then I shall not need to kill them.” He became frightened, for he felt that only that way was possible. He had a revolver. “Shall I really kill myself? It is something I never thought of — how strange it will be...” He returned



to his study and at once opened the cupboard where the revolver lay, but before he had taken it out of its case his wife entered the room.

XXI

He threw a newspaper over the revolver.

“Again the same!” said she aghast when she had looked at him. “What is the same?”

“The same terrible expression that you had before and would not explain to me. Jenya, dear one, tell me about it. I see that you are suffering. Tell me and you will feel easier. Whatever it may be, it will be better than for you to suffer so. Don’t I know that it is nothing bad?”

“You know? While...” “Tell me, tell me, tell me. I won’t let you go.” He smiled a piteous smile. “Shall I? — No, it is impossible. And there is nothing to tell.” Perhaps he might have told her, but at that moment the wetnurse entered to ask if she should go for a walk. Liza went out to dress the baby. “Then you will tell me? I will be back directly.” “Yes, perhaps...”

She never could forget the piteous smile with which he said this. She went out.

Hurriedly, stealthily like a robber, he seized the revolver and took it out of its case. It was loaded, yes, but long ago, and one cartridge was missing. “Well, how will it be?” He put it to his temple and hesitated a little, but as soon as he remembered Stepanida — his decision not to see her, his struggle, temptation, fall, and renewed struggle — he shuddered with horror. “No, this is better,” and he pulled the trigger... When Liza ran into the room — she had only had time to step down from the balcony — he was lying face downwards on the floor: black, warm blood was gushing from the wound, and his corpse was twitching. There was an inquest. No one could understand or explain the suicide. It never even entered his uncle’s head that its cause could be anything in common with the confession Eugene had made to him two months previously.

Varvara Alexeevna assured them that she had always foreseen it. It had been evident from his way of disputing. Neither Liza nor Mary Pavlovna could at all understand why it had happened, but still they did not believe what the doctors said, namely, that he was mentally deranged — a psychopath. They were quite unable to accept this, for they knew he was saner than hundreds of their acquaintances. And indeed if Eugene Irtenev was mentally deranged everyone is in the same case; the most mentally deranged people are certainly those who see in others indications of insanity they do not notice in themselves.

### Alternate Ending

“To kill, yes. there are only two ways out: to kill my wife, or to kill her. For it is impossible to live like this,” said he to himself, and going up to the table he took from it a revolver and, having examined it — one cartridge was wanting — he put it in his trouser pocket.

“My God! What am I doing?” he suddenly exclaimed, and folding his hands he began to pray.

“O God, help me and deliver me! Thou knowest that I do not desire evil, but by myself am powerless. Help me,” said he, making the sign of the cross on his breast before the icon. “Yes, I can control myself. I will go out, walk about and think things over.” He went to the entrance-hall, put on his overcoat and went out onto the porch. Unconsciously his steps took him past the garden along the field path to the outlying farmstead. There the thrashing machine was still droning and the cries of the driver lads were heard. He entered the barn. She was there. He saw her at once.

She was raking up the corn, and on seeing him she ran briskly and merrily about, with laughing eyes, raking up the scattered corn with agility. Eugene could not help watching her though he did not wish to do so. He only recollected himself when she was no longer in sight. The clerk informed him that they were now finishing thrashing the corn that had been beaten down — that was why it was going slower and the output was less. Eugene went up to the drum, which occasionally gave a knock as sheaves not evenly fed in passed under it, and he asked the clerk if there were many such sheaves of beaten-down corn.

“There will be five cartloads of it.”

“Then look here...” began Eugene, but he did not finish the sentence. She had gone close up to the drum and was raking the corn from under it, and she scorched him with her laughing eyes. That look spoke of a merry, careless love between them, of the fact that she knew he wanted her and had come to her shed, and that she as always was ready to live and be merry with him regardless of all conditions or consequences. Eugene felt himself to be in her power but did not wish to yield.

He remembered his prayer and tried to repeat it. He began saying it to himself, but at once felt that it was useless. A single thought now engrossed him entirely: how to arrange a meeting with her so that the others should not notice it.

“If we finish this lot today, are we to start on a fresh stack or leave it till tomorrow?” asked the clerk.

“Yes, yes,” replied Eugene, involuntarily following her to the heap to which with the other women she was raking the corn.

“But can I really not master myself?” said he to himself. “Have I really perished? O God! But there is not God. There is only a devil. And it is she. She has possessed me. But I won’t, I won’t! A devil, yes, a devil.” Again he went up to her, drew the revolver from his pocket and shot her, once, twice, thrice, in the back. She ran a few steps and fell on the heap of corn.

“My God, my God! What is that?” cried the women.

“No, it was not an accident. I killed her on purpose,” cried Eugene.

“Send for the police-officer.”

He went home and went to his study and locked himself in, without speaking to his wife. “Do not come to me,” he cried to her through the door. “You will know all about it.” An hour later he rang, and bade the man-servant who answered the bell: “Go and find out whether Stepanida is alive.”

The servant already knew all about it, and told him she had died an hour ago.

“Well, all right. Now leave me alone. When the police officer or the magistrate comes, let me know.” The police officer and magistrate arrived next morning, and Eugene, having bidden his wife and baby farewell, was taken to prison. He was tried. It was during the early days of trial by jury, and the verdict was one of temporary insanity, and he was sentenced only to perform church penance.

He had been kept in prison for nine months and was then confined in a monastery for one month.

He had begun to drink while still in prison, continued to do so in the monastery, and returned home an enfeebled, irresponsible drunkard.

Varvara Alexeevna assured them that she had always predicted this. It was, she said, evident from the way he disputed. Neither Liza nor Mary Pavlovna could understand how the affair had happened, but for all that, they did not believe what the doctors said, namely, that he was mentally deranged — a psychopath. They could not accept that, for they knew that he was saner than hundreds of their acquaintances.

And indeed, if Eugene Iretnev was mentally deranged when he committed this crime, then everyone is similarly insane. The most mentally deranged people are certainly those who see in others indications of insanity they do not notice in themselves.

Father Sergius

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

Part I

In Petersburg in the eighteen-forties a surprising event occurred. An officer of the Cuirassier Life Guards, a handsome prince who everyone

predicted would become aide-de-camp to the Emperor Nicholas I and have a brilliant career, left the service, broke off his engagement to a beautiful maid of honour, a favourite of the Empress's, gave his small estate to his sister, and retired to a monastery to become a monk.

This event appeared extraordinary and inexplicable to those who did not know his inner motives, but for Prince Stepan Kasatsky himself it all occurred so naturally that he could not imagine how he could have acted otherwise.

His father, a retired colonel of the Guards, had died when Stepan was twelve, and sorry as his mother was to part from her son, she entered him at the Military College as her deceased husband had intended.

The widow herself, with her daughter, Varvara, moved to Petersburg to be near her son and have him with her for the holidays.

The boy was distinguished both by his brilliant ability and by his immense self-esteem. He was first both in his studies — especially in mathematics, of which he was particularly fond — and also in drill and in riding. Though of more than average height, he was handsome and agile, and he would have been an altogether exemplary cadet had it not been for his quick temper. He was remarkably truthful, and was neither dissipated nor addicted to drink.

The only faults that marred his conduct were fits of fury to which he was subject and during which he lost control of himself and became like a wild animal. He once nearly threw out of the window another cadet who had begun to tease him about his collection of minerals. On another occasion he came almost completely to grief by flinging a whole dish of cutlets at an officer who was acting as steward, attacking him and, it was said, striking him for having broken his word and told a barefaced lie. He would certainly have been reduced to the ranks had not the Director of the College hushed up the whole matter and dismissed the steward.

By the time he was eighteen he had finished his College course and received a commission as lieutenant in an aristocratic regiment of the Guards.

The Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich (Nicholas I) had noticed him while he was still at the College, and continued to take notice of him in the regiment, and it was on this account that people predicted for him an appointment as aide-de-camp to the Emperor. Kasatsky himself strongly desired it, not from ambition only but chiefly because since his cadet days he had been passionately devoted to Nicholas Pavlovich.

The Emperor had often visited the Military College and every time Kasatsky saw that tall erect figure, with breast expanded in its military overcoat, entering with brisk step, saw the cropped side-whiskers, the moustache, the aquiline nose, and heard the sonorous voice exchanging greetings with the cadets, he was seized by the same rapture that he experienced later on when he met the woman he loved. Indeed, his passionate adoration of the Emperor was even stronger: he wished to sacrifice something — everything, even himself — to prove his complete devotion.

And the Emperor Nicholas was conscious of evoking this rapture and deliberately aroused it. He played with the cadets, surrounded himself with them, treating them sometimes with childish simplicity, sometimes as a friend, and then again with majestic solemnity. After that affair with the officer, Nicholas Pavlovich said nothing to Kasatsky, but when the latter approached he waved him away theatrically, frowned, shook his finger at him, and afterwards when leaving, said: `Remember that I know everything. There are some things I would rather not know, but they remain here,` and he pointed to his heart.

When on leaving College the cadets were received by the Emperor, he did not again refer to Kasatsky's offence, but told them all, as was his custom, that they should serve him and the fatherland loyally, that he would always be their best friend, and that when necessary they might approach him direct. All the cadets were as usual greatly moved, and

Kasatsky even shed tears, remembering the past, and vowed that he would serve his beloved Tsar with all his soul.

When Kasatsky took up his commission his mother moved with her daughter first to Moscow and then to their country estate. Kasatsky gave half his property to his sister and kept only enough to maintain himself in the expensive regiment he had joined.

To all appearance he was just an ordinary, brilliant young officer of the Guards making a career for himself; but intense and complex strivings went on within him. From early childhood his efforts had seemed to be very varied, but essentially they were all one and the same. He tried in everything he took up to attain such success and perfection as would evoke praise and surprise. Whether it was his studies or his military exercises, he took them up and worked at them till he was praised and held up as an example to others. Mastering one subject he took up another, and obtained first place in his studies. For example, while still at College he noticed in himself an awkwardness in French conversation, and contrived to master French till he spoke it as well as Russian, and then he took up chess and became an excellent player.

APart from his main vocation, which was the service of his Tsar and the fatherland, he always set himself some Particular aim, and however unimportant it was, devoted himself completely to it and lived for it until it was accomplished. And as soon as it was attained another aim would immediately present itself, replacing its predecessor. This passion for distinguishing himself, or for accomplishing something in order to distinguish himself, filled his life.

On taking up his commission he set himself to acquire the utmost perfection in knowledge of the service, and very soon became a model officer, though still with the same fault of ungovernable irascibility, which here in the service again led him to commit actions inimical to his success. Then he took to reading, having once in conversation in society felt himself deficient in general education — and again achieved his purpose. Then, wishing to secure a brilliant position in high society, he learnt to dance excellently and very soon was invited to all the balls in

the best circles, and to some of their evening gatherings. But this did not satisfy him: he was accustomed to being first, and in this society was far from being so.

The highest society then consisted, and I think always consist, of four sorts of people: rich people who are received at Court, people not wealthy but born and brought up in Court circles, rich people who ingratiate themselves into the Court set, and people neither rich nor belonging to the Court but who ingratiate themselves into the first and second sets.

Kasatsky did not belong to the first two sets, but was readily welcomed in the others. On entering society he determined to have relations with some society lady, and to his own surprise quickly accomplished this purpose. He soon realized, however, that the circles in which he moved were not the highest, and that though he was received in the highest spheres he did not belong to them. They were polite to him, but showed by their whole manner that they had their own set and that he was not of it. And Kasatsky wished to belong to that inner circle. To attain that end it would be necessary to be an aide-de-camp to the Emperor — which he expected to become — or to marry into that exclusive set, which he resolved to do.

And his choice fell on a beauty belonging to the Court, who not merely belonged to the circle into which he wished to be accepted, but whose friendship was coveted by the very highest people and those most firmly established in that highest circle. This was Countess Korotkova. Kasatsky began to pay court to her, and not merely for the sake of his career. She was extremely attractive and he soon fell in love with her.

At first she was noticeably cool towards him, but then suddenly changed and became gracious, and her mother gave him pressing invitations to visit them. Kasatsky proposed and was accepted. He was surprised at the facility with which he attained such happiness. But though he noticed something strange and unusual in the behaviour towards him of both mother and daughter, he was blinded by being so deeply in love, and did not realize what almost the whole town knew —



namely, that his fiancée had been the Emperor Nicholas's mistress the previous year.

Two weeks before the day arranged for the wedding, Kasatsky was at Tsarskoe Selo at his fiancée's country place. It was a hot day in May. He and his betrothed had walked about the garden and were sitting on a bench in a shady linden alley. Mary's white muslin dress suited her particularly well, and she seemed the personification of innocence and love as she sat, now bending her head, now gazing up at the very tall and handsome man who was speaking to her with particular tenderness and self-restraint, as if he feared by word or gesture to offend or sully her angelic purity.

Kasatsky belonged to those men of the eighteen-forties (they are now no longer to be found) who while deliberately and without any conscientious scruples condoning impurity in themselves, required ideal and angelic purity in their women, regarded all unmarried women of their circle as possessed of such purity, and treated them accordingly. There was much that was false and harmful in this outlook, as concerning the laxity the men permitted themselves, but in regard to the women that old-fashioned view (sharply differing from that held by young people to-day who see in every girl merely a female seeking a mate) was, I think, of value. The girls, perceiving such adoration, endeavoured with more or less success to be goddesses.

Such was the view Kasatsky held of women, and that was how he regarded his fiancée. He was particularly in love that day, but did not experience any sensual desire for her. On the contrary he regarded her with tender adoration as something unattainable.

He rose to his full height, standing before her with both hands on his sabre.

'I have only now realized what happiness a man can experience! And it is you, my darling, who have given me this happiness,' he said with a timid smile.

Endearments had not yet become usual between them, and feeling himself morally inferior he felt terrified at this stage to use them to such an angel.

‘It is thanks to you that I have come to know myself. I have learnt that I am better than I thought.’

‘I have known that for a long time. That was why I began to love you.’

Nightingales trilled near by and the fresh leafage rustled, moved by a passing breeze.

He took her hand and kissed it, and tears came into his eyes.

She understood that he was thanking her for having said she loved him.

He silently took a few steps up and down, and then approached her again and sat down.

‘You know . . . I have to tell you . . . I was not disinterested when I began to make love to you. I wanted to get into society; but later . . . how unimportant that became in comparison with you — when I got to know you. You are not angry with me for that?’

She did not reply but merely touched his hand. He understood that this meant: ‘No, I am not angry.’

‘You said . . .’ He hesitated. It seemed too bold to say. ‘You said that you began to love me. I believe it — but there is something that troubles you and checks your feeling. What is it?’

‘Yes — now or never!’ thought she. ‘He is bound to know of it anyway. But now he will not forsake me. Ah, if he should, it would be terrible!’ And she threw a loving glance at his tall, noble, powerful figure. She loved him now more than she had loved the Tsar, and apart from the Imperial dignity would not have preferred the Emperor to him.

‘Listen! I cannot deceive you. I have to tell you. You ask what it is? It is that I have loved before.’

She again laid her hand on his with an imploring gesture. He was silent.

‘You want to know who it was? It was — the Emperor.’

‘We all love him. I can imagine you, a schoolgirl at the Institute . . .’

‘No, it was later. I was infatuated, but it passed . . . I must tell you . . .’

‘Well, what of it?’

‘No, it was not simply — ‘ She covered her face with her hands.

‘What? You gave yourself to him?’

She was silent.

‘His mistress?’

She did not answer.

He sprang up and stood before her with trembling jaws, pale as death. He now remembered how the Emperor, meeting him on the Nevsky, had amiably congratulated him.

‘O God, what have I done! Stiva!’

‘Don’t touch me! Don’t touch me! Oh, how it pains!’

He turned away and went to the house. There he met her mother.

‘What is the matter, Prince? I . . .’ She became silent on seeing his face. The blood had suddenly rushed to his head.

‘You knew it, and used me to shield them! If you weren’t a woman . . .

!’ he cried, lifting his enormous fist, and turning aside he ran away.

Had his fiancée’s lover been a private person he would have killed him, but it was his beloved Tsar.

Next day he applied both for furlough and his discharge, and professing to be ill, so as to see no one, he went away to the country.

He spent the summer at his village arranging his affairs. When summer was over he did not return to Petersburg, but entered a monastery and there became a monk.

His mother wrote to try to dissuade him from this decisive step, but he replied that he felt God’s call which transcended all other considerations. Only his sister, who was as proud and ambitious as he, understood him.

She understood that he had become a monk in order to be above those who considered themselves his superiors. And she understood him correctly. By becoming a monk he showed contempt for all that seemed most important to others and had seemed so to him while he was in the service, and he now ascended a height from which he could look down on those he had formerly envied. . . . But it was not this alone, as his sister Varvara supposed, that influenced him.

There was also in him something else — a sincere religious feeling which Varvara did not know, which intertwined itself with the feeling of pride and the desire for pre-eminence, and guided him. His disillusionment with Mary, whom he had thought of angelic purity, and his sense of injury, were so strong that they brought him to despair, and the despair led him — to what? To God, to his childhood's faith which had never been destroyed in him.

## Part II

Kasatsky entered the monastery on the feast of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin. The Abbot of that monastery was a gentleman by birth, a learned writer and a starets, that is, he belonged to that succession of monks originating in Walachia who each choose a director and teacher whom they implicitly obey. This Superior had been a disciple of the starets Ambrose, who was a disciple of Makarius, who was a disciple of the starets Leonid, who was a disciple of Paussy Velichkovsky.

To this Abbot Kasatsky submitted himself as to his chosen director. Here in the monastery, besides the feeling of ascendancy over others that such a life gave him, he felt much as he had done in the world: he found satisfaction in attaining the greatest possible perfection outwardly as well as inwardly. As in the regiment he had been not merely an irreproachable officer but had even exceeded his duties and widened the borders of perfection, so also as a monk he tried to be perfect, and was always industrious, abstemious, submissive, and meek, as well as pure both in deed and in thought, and obedient.

This last quality in Particular made life far easier for him. If many of the demands of life in the monastery, which was near the capital and much frequented, did not please him and were temptations to him, they were all nullified by obedience: `It is not for me to reason; my business is to do the task set me, whether it be standing beside the relics, singing in the choir, or making up accounts in the monastery guest-house.` All possibility of doubt about anything was silenced by obedience to the starets. Had it not been for this, he would have been

oppressed by the length and monotony of the church services, the bustle of the many visitors, and the bad qualities of the other monks.

As it was, he not only bore it all joyfully but found in it solace and support. `I don't know why it is necessary to hear the same prayers several times a day, but I know that it is necessary; and knowing this I find joy in them.` His director told him that as material food is necessary for the maintenance of the life of the body, so spiritual food — the church prayers — is necessary for the maintenance of the spiritual life. He believed this, and though the church services, for which he had to get up early in the morning, were a difficulty, they certainly calmed him and gave him joy. This was the result of his consciousness of humility, and the certainty that whatever he had to do, being fixed by the starets, was right.

The interest of his life consisted not only in an ever greater and greater subjugation of his will, but in the attainment of all the Christian virtues, which at first seemed to him easily attainable. He had given his whole estate to his sister and did not regret it, he had no personal claims, humility towards his inferiors was not merely easy for him but afforded him pleasure. Even victory over the sins of the flesh, greed and lust, was easily attained. His director had specially warned him against the latter sin, but Kasatsky felt free from it and was glad.

One thing only tormented him — the remembrance of his fiancée; and not merely the remembrance but the vivid image of what might have been. Involuntarily he recalled a lady he knew who had been a favourite of the Emperor's, but had afterwards married and become an admirable wife and mother. The husband had a high position, influence and honour, and a good and penitent wife.

In his better hours Kasatsky was not disturbed by such thoughts, and when he recalled them at such times he was merely glad to feel that the temptation was past. But there were moments when all that made up his present life suddenly grew dim before him, moments when, if he did not cease to believe in the aims he had set himself, he ceased to see them and could evoke no confidence in them but was seized by a

remembrance of, and — terrible to say — a regret for, the change of life he had made.

The only thing that saved him in that state of mind was obedience and work, and the fact that the whole day was occupied by prayer. He went through the usual forms of prayer, he bowed in prayer, he even prayed more than usual, but it was lip-service only and his soul was not in it. This condition would continue for a day, or sometimes for two days, and would then pass of itself. But those days were dreadful. Kasatsky felt that he was neither in his own hands nor in God`s, but was subject to something else. All he could do then was to obey the starets, to restrain himself, to undertake nothing, and simply to wait. In general all this time he lived not by his own will but by that of the starets, and in this obedience he found a special tranquillity.

So he lived in his first monastery for seven years. At the end of the third year he received the tonsure and was ordained to the priesthood by the name of Sergius. The profession was an important event in his inner life. He had previously experienced a great consolation and spiritual exaltation when receiving communion, and now when he himself officiated, the performance of the preparation filled him with ecstatic and deep emotion. But subsequently that feeling became more and more deadened, and once when he was officiating in a depressed state of mind he felt that the influence produced on him by the service would not endure. And it did in fact weaken till only the habit remained.

In general in the seventh year of his life in the monastery Sergius grew weary. He had learnt all there was to learn and had attained all there was to attain, there was nothing more to do and his spiritual drowsiness increased. During this time he heard of his mother`s death and his sister Varvara`s marriage, but both events were matters of indifference to him. His whole attention and his whole interest were concentrated on his inner life.

In the fourth year of his priesthood, during which the Bishop had been particularly kind to him, the starets told him that he ought not to decline it if he were offered an appointment to higher duties. Then

monastic ambition, the very thing he had found so repulsive in other monks, arose within him. He was assigned to a monastery near the metropolis. He wished to refuse but the starets ordered him to accept the appointment. He did so, and took leave of the starets and moved to the other monastery.

The exchange into the metropolitan monastery was an important event in Sergius's life. There he encountered many temptations, and his whole will-power was concentrated on meeting them.

In the first monastery, women had not been a temptation to him, but here that temptation arose with terrible strength and even took definite shape. There was a lady known for her frivolous behaviour who began to seek his favour. She talked to him and asked him to visit her. Sergius sternly declined, but was horrified by the definiteness of his desire. He was so alarmed that he wrote about it to the starets. And in addition, to keep himself in hand, he spoke to a young novice and, conquering his sense of shame, confessed his weakness to him, asking him to keep watch on him and not let him go anywhere except to service and to fulfil his duties.

Besides this, a great pitfall for Sergius lay in the fact of his extreme antipathy to his new Abbot, a cunning worldly man who was making a career for himself in the Church. Struggle with himself as he might, he could not master that feeling. He was submissive to the Abbot, but in the depths of his soul he never ceased to condemn him. And in the second year of his residence at the new monastery that ill-feeling broke out.

The Vigil service was being performed in the large church on the eve of the feast of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and there were many visitors. The Abbot himself was conducting the service. Father Sergius was standing in his usual place and praying: that is, he was in that condition of struggle which always occupied him during the service, especially in the large church when he was not himself conducting the service.

This conflict was occasioned by his irritation at the presence of fine folk, especially ladies. He tried not to see them or to notice all that went on: how a soldier conducted them, pushing the common people aside, how the ladies pointed out the monks to one another — especially himself and a monk noted for his good looks. He tried as it were to keep his mind in blinkers, to see nothing but the light of the candles on the altar-screen, the icons, and those conducting the service. He tried to hear nothing but the prayers that were being chanted or read, to feel nothing but self-oblivion in consciousness of the fulfilment of duty — a feeling he always experienced when hearing or reciting in advance the prayers he had so often heard.

So he stood, crossing and prostrating himself when necessary, and struggled with himself, now giving way to cold condemnation and now to a consciously evoked obliteration of thought and feeling. Then the sacristan, Father Nicodemus — also a great stumbling-block to Sergius who involuntarily reproached him for flattering and fawning on the Abbot — approached him and, bowing low, requested his presence behind the holy gates. Father Sergius straightened his mantle, put on his biretta, and went circumspectly through the crowd.

‘Lise, regarde a droite, c’est lui!’ he heard a woman’s voice say.  
‘Ou, ou? Il n’est pas tellement beau.’

He knew that they were speaking of him. He heard them and, as always at moments of temptation, he repeated the words, ‘Lead us not into temptation,’ and bowing his head and lowering his eyes went past the ambo and in by the north door, avoiding the canons in their cassocks who were just then passing the altar-screen. On entering the sanctuary he bowed, crossing himself as usual and bending double before the icons. Then, raising his head but without turning, he glanced out of the corner of his eye at the Abbot, whom he saw standing beside another glittering figure.

The Abbot was standing by the wall in his vestments. Having freed his short plump hands from beneath his chasuble he had folded them over his fat body and protruding stomach, and fingering the cords of his vestments was smilingly saying something to a military man in the



uniform of a general of the Imperial suite, with its insignia and shoulder-knots which Father Sergius's experienced eye at once recognized. This general had been the commander of the regiment in which Sergius had served. He now evidently occupied an important position, and Father Sergius at once noticed that the Abbot was aware of this and that his red face and bald head beamed with satisfaction and pleasure. This vexed and disgusted Father Sergius, the more so when he heard that the Abbot had only sent for him to satisfy the general's curiosity to see a man who had formerly served with him, as he expressed it.

'Very pleased to see you in your angelic guise,' said the general, holding out his hand. 'I hope you have not forgotten an old comrade.'

The whole thing — the Abbot's red, smiling face amid its fringe of grey, the general's words, his well-cared-for face with its self-satisfied smile and the smell of wine from his breath and of cigars from his whiskers — revolted Father Sergius. He bowed again to the Abbot and said:

'Your reverence deigned to send for me?' — and stopped, the whole expression of his face and eyes asking why.

'Yes, to meet the General,' replied the Abbot.

'Your reverence, I left the world to save myself from temptation,' said Father Sergius, turning pale and with quivering lips. 'Why do you expose me to it during prayers and in God's house?'

'You may go! Go!' said the Abbot, flaring up and frowning.

Next day Father Sergius asked pardon of the Abbot and of the brethren for his pride, but at the same time, after a night spent in prayer, he decided that he must leave this monastery, and he wrote to the starets begging permission to return to him. He wrote that he felt his weakness and incapacity to struggle against temptation without his help and penitently confessed his sin of pride. By return of post came a letter from the starets, who wrote that Sergius's pride was the cause of all that had happened. The old man pointed out that his fits of anger were due to the fact that in refusing all clerical honours he humiliated himself not for the sake of God but for the sake of his pride. 'There

now, am I not a splendid man not to want anything?` That was why he could not tolerate the Abbot`s action.

`I have renounced everything for the glory of God, and here I am exhibited like a wild beast!` `Had you renounced vanity for God`s sake you would have borne it. Worldly pride is not yet dead in you. I have thought about you, Sergius my son, and prayed also, and this is what God has suggested to me. At the Tambov hermitage the anchorite Hilary, a man of saintly life, has died. He had lived there eighteen years. The Tambov Abbot is asking whether there is not a brother who would take his place. And here comes your letter. Go to Father Paissy of the Tambov Monastery. I will write to him about you, and you must ask for Hilary`s cell. Not that you can replace Hilary, but you need solitude to quell your pride. May God bless you!`

Sergius obeyed the starets, showed his letter to the Abbot, and having obtained his permission, gave up his cell, handed all his possessions over to the monastery, and set out for the Tambov hermitage.

There the Abbot, an excellent manager of merchant origin, received Sergius simply and quietly and placed him in Hilary`s cell, at first assigning to him a lay brother but afterwards leaving him alone, at Sergius`s own request. The cell was a dual cave, dug into the hillside, and in it Hilary had been buried. In the back Part was Hilary`s grave, while in the front was a niche for sleeping, with a straw mattress, a small table, and a shelf with icons and books. Outside the outer door, which fastened with a hook, was another shelf on which, once a day, a monk placed food from the monastery. And so Sergius became a hermit.

### Part III

At Carnival time, in the sixth year of Sergius`s life at the hermitage, a merry company of rich people, men and women from a neighbouring town, made up a troyka-Party, after a meal of carnival-pancakes and wine. The company consisted of two lawyers, a wealthy landowner, an officer, and four ladies. One lady was the officer`s wife, another the

wife of the landowner, the third his sister — a young girl — and the fourth a divorcee, beautiful, rich, and eccentric, who amazed and shocked the town by her escapades.

The weather was excellent and the snow-covered road smooth as a floor. They drove some seven miles out of town, and then stopped and consulted as to whether they should turn back or drive farther.

‘But where does this road lead to?’ asked Makovkina, the beautiful divorcee.

‘To Tambov, eight miles from here,’ replied one of the lawyers, who was having a flirtation with her.

‘And then where?’

‘Then on to L — — , past the Monastery.’

‘Where that Father Sergius lives?’

‘Yes.’

‘Kasatsky, the handsome hermit?’

‘Yes.’

‘Mesdames et messieurs, let us drive on and see Kasatsky! We can stop at Tambov and have something to eat.’

‘But we shouldn’t get home to-night!’

‘Never mind, we will stay at Kasatsky’s.’

‘Well, there is a very good hostelry at the Monastery. I stayed there when I was defending Makhin.’

‘No, I shall spend the night at Kasatsky’s!’

‘Impossible! Even your omnipotence could not accomplish that!’

‘Impossible? Will you bet?’

‘All right! If you spend the night with him, the stake shall be whatever you like.’

‘A DISCRETION!’

‘But on your side too!’

‘Yes, of course. Let us drive on.’

Vodka was handed to the drivers, and the Party got out a box of pies, wine, and sweets for themselves. The ladies wrapped up in their white

dogskins. The drivers disputed as to whose troyka should go ahead, and the youngest, seating himself sideways with a dashing air, swung his long knout and shouted to the horses. The troyka-bells tinkled and the sledge-runners squeaked over the snow.

The sledge swayed hardly at all. The shaft-horse, with his tightly bound tail under his decorated breechband, galloped smoothly and briskly; the smooth road seemed to run rapidly backwards, while the driver dashingly shook the reins. One of the lawyers and the officer sitting opposite talked nonsense to Makovkina's neighbour, but Makovkina herself sat motionless and in thought, tightly wrapped in her fur.

`Always the same and always nasty! The same red shiny faces smelling of wine and cigars! The same talk, the same thoughts, and always about the same things! And they are all satisfied and confident that it should be so, and will go on living like that till they die. But I can't. It bores me. I want something that would upset it all and turn it upside down. Suppose it happened to us as to those people — at Saratov was it? — who kept on driving and froze to death. . . . What would our people do? How would they behave? Basely, for certain. Each for himself. And I too should act badly. But I at any rate have beauty. They all know it. And how about that monk? Is it possible that he has become indifferent to it? No! That is the one thing they all care for — like that cadet last autumn. What a fool he was!`

`Ivan Nikolaevich!` she said aloud.

`What are your commands?`

`How old is he?`

`Who?`

`Kasatsky.`

`Over forty, I should think.`

`And does he receive all visitors?`

`Yes, everybody, but not always.`

`Cover up my feet. Not like that — how clumsy you are! No! More, more — like that! But you need not squeeze them!`  
So they came to the forest where the cell was.

Makovkina got out of the sledge, and told them to drive on. They tried to dissuade her, but she grew irritable and ordered them to go on. When the sledges had gone she went up the path in her white dogskin coat. The lawyer got out and stopped to watch her.

It was Father Sergius's sixth year as a recluse, and he was now forty-nine. His life in solitude was hard — not on account of the fasts and the prayers (they were no hardship to him) but on account of an inner conflict he had not at all anticipated. The sources of that conflict were two: doubts, and the lust of the flesh. And these two enemies always appeared together. It seemed to him that they were two foes, but in reality they were one and the same. As soon as doubt was gone so was the lustful desire. But thinking them to be two different fiends he fought them separately.

‘O my God, my God!’ thought he. ‘Why dost thou not grant me faith? There is lust, of course: even the saints had to fight that — Saint Anthony and others. But they had faith, while I have moments, hours, and days, when it is absent. Why does the whole world, with all its delights, exist if it is sinful and must be renounced? Why hast Thou created this temptation? Temptation? Is it not rather a temptation that I wish to abandon all the joys of earth and prepare something for myself there where perhaps there is nothing?’ And he became horrified and filled with disgust at himself.

‘Vile creature! And it is you who wish to become a saint!’ he upbraided himself, and he began to pray. But as soon as he started to pray he saw himself vividly as he had been at the Monastery, in a majestic post in biretta and mantle, and he shook his head. ‘No, that is not right. It is deception. I may deceive others, but not myself or God. I am not a majestic man, but a pitiable and ridiculous one!’ And he threw back the folds of his cassock and smiled as he looked at his thin legs in their underclothing.

Then he dropped the folds of the cassock again and began reading the prayers, making the sign of the cross and prostrating himself. ‘Can it be

that this couch will be my bier?' he read. And it seemed as if a devil whispered to him: 'A solitary couch is itself a bier. Falsehood!' And in imagination he saw the shoulders of a widow with whom he had lived. He shook himself, and went on reading. Having read the precepts he took up the Gospels, opened the book, and happened on a passage he often repeated and knew by heart: 'Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief!' — and he put away all the doubts that had arisen.

As one replaces an object of insecure equilibrium, so he carefully replaced his belief on its shaky pedestal and carefully stepped back from it so as not to shake or upset it. The blinkers were adjusted again and he felt tranquillized, and repeating his childhood's prayer: 'Lord, receive me, receive me!' he felt not merely at ease, but thrilled and joyful. He crossed himself and lay down on the bedding on his narrow bench, tucking his summer cassock under his head. He fell asleep at once, and in his light slumber he seemed to hear the tinkling of sledge bells. He did not know whether he was dreaming or awake, but a knock at the door aroused him. He sat up, distrusting his senses, but the knock was repeated. Yes, it was a knock close at hand, at his door, and with it the sound of a woman's voice.

'My God! Can it be true, as I have read in the Lives of the Saints, that the devil takes on the form of a woman? Yes — it is a woman's voice. And a tender, timid, pleasant voice. Phui!' And he spat to exorcise the devil. 'No, it was only my imagination,' he assured himself, and he went to the corner where his lectern stood, falling on his knees in the regular and habitual manner which of itself gave him consolation and satisfaction. He sank down, his hair hanging over his face, and pressed his head, already going bald in front, to the cold damp strip of drugget on the draughty floor. He read the psalm old Father Pimon had told him ward off temptation.

He easily raised his light and emaciated body on his strong sinewy legs and tried to continue saying his prayers, but instead of doing so he involuntarily strained his hearing. He wished to hear more. All was quiet. From the corner of the roof regular drops continued to fall into the tub below. Outside was a mist and fog eating into the snow that lay

on the ground. It was still, very still. And suddenly there was a rustling at the window and a voice — that same tender, timid voice, which could only belong to an attractive woman — said:

‘Let me in, for Christ’s sake!’

It seemed as though his blood had all rushed to his heart and settled there. He could hardly breathe. ‘Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered . . .’

‘But I am not a devil!’ It was obvious that the lips that uttered this were smiling. ‘I am not a devil, but only a sinful woman who has lost her way, not figuratively but literally!’ She laughed. ‘I am frozen and beg for shelter.’

He pressed his face to the window, but the little icon-lamp was reflected by it and shone on the whole pane. He put his hands to both sides of his face and peered between them. Fog, mist, a tree, and — just opposite him — she herself. Yes, there, a few inches from him, was the sweet, kindly frightened face of a woman in a cap and a coat of long white fur, leaning towards him. Their eyes met with instant recognition: not that they had ever known one another, they had never met before, but by the look they exchanged they — and he Particularly — felt that they knew and understood one another. After that glance to imagine her to be a devil and not a simple, kindly, sweet, timid woman, was impossible.

‘Who are you? Why have you come?’ he asked.

‘Do please open the door!’ she replied, with capricious authority. ‘I am frozen. I tell you I have lost my way.’

‘But I am a monk — a hermit.’

‘Oh, do please open the door — or do you wish me to freeze under your window while you say your prayers?’

‘But how have you . . .’

‘I shan’t eat you. For God’s sake let me in! I am quite frozen.’

She really did feel afraid, and said this in an almost tearful voice.

He stepped back from the window and looked at an icon of the Saviour in His crown of thorns. ‘Lord, help me! Lord, help me!’ he exclaimed,

crossing himself and bowing low. Then he went to the door, and opening it into the tiny porch, felt for the hook that fastened the outer door and began to lift it. He heard steps outside. She was coming from the window to the door. `Ah!` she suddenly exclaimed, and he understood that she had stepped into the puddle that the dripping from the roof had formed at the threshold. His hands trembled, and he could not raise the hook of the tightly closed door.

`Oh, what are you doing? Let me in! I am all wet. I am frozen! You are thinking about saving your soul and are letting me freeze to death . . .` He jerked the door towards him, raised the hook, and without considering what he was doing, pushed it open with such force that it struck her.

`Oh — PARDON!` he suddenly exclaimed, reverting completely to his old manner with ladies.

She smiled on hearing that PARDON. `He is not quite so terrible, after all,` she thought. `It's all right. It is you who must pardon me,` she said, stepping past him. `I should never have ventured, but such an extraordinary circumstance . . .`

`If you please!` he uttered, and stood aside to let her pass him. A strong smell of fine scent, which he had long not encountered, struck him. She went through the little porch into the cell where he lived. He closed the outer door without fastening the hook, and stepped in after her.

`Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner! Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!` he prayed unceasingly, not merely to himself but involuntarily moving his lips. `If you please!` he said to her again. She stood in the middle of the room, moisture dripping from her to the floor as she looked him over. Her eyes were laughing.

`Forgive me for having disturbed your solitude. But you see what a position I am in. It all came about from our starting from town for a sledge-drive, and my making a bet that I would walk back by myself from the Vorobevka to the town. But then I lost my way, and if I had not happened to come upon your cell . . .` She began lying, but his face confused her so that she could not continue, but became silent. She



had not expected him to be at all such as he was. He was not as handsome as she had imagined, but was nevertheless beautiful in her eyes: his greyish hair and beard, slightly curling, his fine, regular nose, and his eyes like glowing coal when he looked at her, made a strong impression on her.

He saw that she was lying.

‘Yes . . . so,’ said he, looking at her and again lowering his eyes. ‘I will go in there, and this place is at your disposal.’

And taking down the little lamp, he lit a candle, and bowing low to her went into the small cell beyond the Partition, and she heard him begin to move something about there. ‘Probably he is barricading himself in from me!’ she thought with a smile, and throwing off her white dogskin cloak she tried to take off her cap, which had become entangled in her hair and in the woven kerchief she was wearing under it.

She had not got at all wet when standing under the window, and had said so only as a pretext to get him to let her in. But she really had stepped into the puddle at the door, and her left foot was wet up to the ankle and her overshoe full of water. She sat down on his bed — a bench only covered by a bit of carpet — and began to take off her boots. The little cell seemed to her charming. The narrow little room, some seven feet by nine, was as clean as glass. There was nothing in it but the bench on which she was sitting, the book-shelf above it, and a lectern in the corner.

A sheepskin coat and a cassock hung on nails by the door. Above the lectern was the little lamp and an icon of Christ in His crown of thorns. The room smelt strangely of perspiration and of earth. It all pleased her — even that smell. Her wet feet, especially one of them, were uncomfortable, and she quickly began to take off her boots and stockings without ceasing to smile, pleased not so much at having achieved her object as because she perceived that she had abashed that charming, strange, striking, and attractive man. ‘He did not respond, but what of that?’ she said to herself.

‘Father Sergius! Father Sergius! Or how does one call you?’

‘What do you want?’ replied a quiet voice.

‘Please forgive me for disturbing your solitude, but really I could not help it. I should simply have fallen ill. And I don’t know that I shan’t now. I am all wet and my feet are like ice.’

‘Pardon me,’ replied the quiet voice. ‘I cannot be of any assistance to you.’

‘I would not have disturbed you if I could have helped it. I am only here till daybreak.’

He did not reply and she heard him muttering something, probably his prayers.

‘You will not be coming in here?’ she asked, smiling. ‘For I must undress to dry myself.’

He did not reply, but continued to read his prayers.

‘Yes, that is a man!’ thought she, getting her dripping boot off with difficulty. She tugged at it, but could not get it off. The absurdity of it struck her and she began to laugh almost inaudibly. But knowing that he would hear her laughter and would be moved by it just as she wished him to be, she laughed louder, and her laughter — gay, natural, and kindly — really acted on him just in the way she wished.

‘Yes, I could love a man like that — such eyes and such a simple noble face, and passionate too despite all the prayers he mutters!’ thought she. ‘You can’t deceive a woman in these things. As soon as he put his face to the window and saw me, he understood and knew. The glimmer of it was in his eyes and remained there. He began to love me and desired me. Yes — desired!’ said she, getting her overshoe and her boot off at last and starting to take off her stockings. To remove those long stockings fastened with elastic it was necessary to raise her skirts. She felt embarrassed and said:

‘Don’t come in!’

But there was no reply from the other side of the wall. The steady muttering continued and also a sound of moving.

‘He is prostrating himself to the ground, no doubt,’ thought she. ‘But he won’t bow himself out of it. He is thinking of me just as I am thinking

of him. He is thinking of these feet of mine with the same feeling that I have!` And she pulled off her wet stockings and put her feet up on the bench, pressing them under her. She sat a while like that with her arms round her knees and looking pensively before her. `But it is a desert, here in this silence. No one would ever know. . . .`

She rose, took her stockings over to the stove, and hung them on the damper. It was a queer damper, and she turned it about, and then, stepping lightly on her bare feet, returned to the bench and sat down there again with her feet up.

There was complete silence on the other side of the Partition. She looked at the tiny watch that hung round her neck. It was two o'clock. `Our Party should return about three!` She had not more than an hour before her. `Well, am I to sit like this all alone? What nonsense! I don't want to. I will call him at once.`

`Father Sergius, Father Sergius! Sergey Dmitrich! Prince Kasatsky!`  
Beyond the Partition all was silent.

`Listen! This is cruel. I would not call you if it were not necessary. I am ill. I don't know what is the matter with me!` she exclaimed in a tone of suffering. `Oh! Oh!` she groaned, falling back on the bench. And strange to say she really felt that her strength was failing, that she was becoming faint, that everything in her ached, and that she was shivering with fever.

`Listen! Help me! I don't know what is the matter with me. Oh! Oh!`  
She unfastened her dress, exposing her breast, and lifted her arms, bare to the elbow. `Oh! Oh!`

All this time he stood on the other side of the Partition and prayed. Having finished all the evening prayers, he now stood motionless, his eyes looking at the end of his nose, and mentally repeated with all his soul: `Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me!`

But he had heard everything. He had heard how the silk rustled when she took off her dress, how she stepped with bare feet on the floor, and had heard how she rubbed her feet with her hand. He felt his own weakness, and that he might be lost at any moment. That was why he

prayed unceasingly. He felt rather as the hero in the fairy-tale must have felt when he had to go on and on without looking round. So Sergius heard and felt that danger and destruction were there, hovering above and around him, and that he could only save himself by not looking in that direction for an instant. But suddenly the desire to look seized him. At the same instant she said:

‘This is inhuman. I may die. . . .’

‘Yes, I will go to her, but like the Saint who laid one hand on the adulteress and thrust his other into the brazier. But there is no brazier here.’ He looked round. The lamp! He put his finger over the flame and frowned, preparing himself to suffer. And for a rather long time, as it seemed to him, there was no sensation, but suddenly — he had not yet decided whether it was painful enough — he writhed all over, jerked his hand away, and waved it in the air. ‘No, I can’t stand that!’

‘For God’s sake come to me! I am dying! Oh!’

‘Well — shall I perish? No, not so!’

‘I will come to you directly,’ he said, and having opened his door, he went without looking at her through the cell into the porch where he used to chop wood. There he felt for the block and for an axe which leant against the wall.

‘Immediately!’ he said, and taking up the axe with his right hand he laid the forefinger of his left hand on the block, swung the axe, and struck with it below the second joint. The finger flew off more lightly than a stick of similar thickness, and bounding up, turned over on the edge of the block and then fell to the floor.

He heard it fall before he felt any pain, but before he had time to be surprised he felt a burning pain and the warmth of flowing blood. He hastily wrapped the stump in the skirt of his cassock, and pressing it to his hip went back into the room, and standing in front of the woman, lowered his eyes and asked in a low voice: ‘What do you want?’

She looked at his pale face and his quivering left cheek, and suddenly felt ashamed. She jumped up, seized her fur cloak, and throwing it round her shoulders, wrapped herself up in it.

‘I was in pain . . . I have caught cold . . . I . . . Father Sergius . . . I . . .’

He let his eyes, shining with a quiet light of joy, rest upon her, and said: ‘Dear sister, why did you wish to ruin your immortal soul? Temptations must come into the world, but woe to him by whom temptation comes. Pray that God may forgive us!’

She listened and looked at him. Suddenly she heard the sound of something dripping. She looked down and saw that blood was flowing from his hand and down his cassock.

‘What have you done to your hand?’ She remembered the sound she had heard, and seizing the little lamp ran out into the porch. There on the floor she saw the bloody finger. She returned with her face paler than his and was about to speak to him, but he silently passed into the back cell and fastened the door.

‘Forgive me!’ she said. ‘How can I atone for my sin?’

‘Go away.’

‘Let me tie up your hand.’

‘Go away from here.’

She dressed hurriedly and silently, and when ready sat waiting in her furs. The sledge-bells were heard outside.

‘Father Sergius, forgive me!’

‘Go away. God will forgive.’

‘Father Sergius! I will change my life. Do not forsake me!’

‘Go away.’

‘Forgive me — and give me your blessing!’

‘In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!’ — she heard his voice from behind the Partition. ‘Go!’

She burst into sobs and left the cell. The lawyer came forward to meet her.

‘Well, I see I have lost the bet. It can’t be helped. Where will you sit?’

‘It is all the same to me.’

She took a seat in the sledge, and did not utter a word all the way home.

A year later she entered a convent as a novice, and lived a strict life under the direction of the hermit Arseny, who wrote letters to her at long intervals.

#### Part IV

Father Sergius lived as a recluse for another seven years.

At first he accepted much of what people brought him — tea, sugar, white bread, milk, clothing, and fire-wood. But as time went on he led a more and more austere life, refusing everything superfluous, and finally he accepted nothing but rye-bread once a week. Everything else that was brought to him he gave to the poor who came to him. He spent his entire time in his cell, in prayer or in conversation with callers, who became more and more numerous as time went on. Only three times a year did he go out to church, and when necessary he went out to fetch water and wood.

The episode with Makovkina had occurred after five years of his hermit life. That occurrence soon became generally known — her nocturnal visit, the change she underwent, and her entry into a convent. From that time Father Sergius's fame increased. More and more visitors came to see him, other monks settled down near his cell, and a church was erected there and also a hostelry. His fame, as usual exaggerating his feats, spread ever more and more widely. People began to come to him from a distance, and began bringing invalids to him whom they declared he cured.

His first cure occurred in the eighth year of his life as a hermit. It was the healing of a fourteen-year-old boy, whose mother brought him to Father Sergius insisting that he should lay his hand on the child's head.

It had never occurred to Father Sergius that he could cure the sick. He would have regarded such a thought as a great sin of pride; but the mother who brought the boy implored him insistently, falling at his feet and saying: `Why do you, who heal others, refuse to help my son?' She besought him in Christ's name. When Father Sergius assured her that

only God could heal the sick, she replied that she only wanted him to lay his hands on the boy and pray for him. Father Sergius refused and returned to his cell. But next day (it was in autumn and the nights were already cold) on going out for water he saw the same mother with her son, a pale boy of fourteen, and was met by the same petition.

He remembered the parable of the unjust judge, and though he had previously felt sure that he ought to refuse, he now began to hesitate and, having hesitated, took to prayer and prayed until a decision formed itself in his soul. This decision was, that he ought to accede to the woman's request and that her faith might save her son. As for himself, he would in this case be but an insignificant instrument chosen by God.

And going out to the mother he did what she asked — laid his hand on the boy's head and prayed.

The mother left with her son, and a month later the boy recovered, and the fame of the holy healing power of the starets Sergius (as they now called him) spread throughout the whole district. After that, not a week passed without sick people coming, riding or on foot, to Father Sergius; and having acceded to one petition he could not refuse others, and he laid his hands on many and prayed. Many recovered, and his fame spread more and more.

So seven years passed in the Monastery and thirteen in his hermit's cell. He now had the appearance of an old man: his beard was long and grey, but his hair, though thin, was still black and curly.

## Part V

For some weeks Father Sergius had been living with one persistent thought: whether he was right in accepting the position in which he had not so much placed himself as been placed by the Archimandrite and the Abbot. That position had begun after the recovery of the fourteen-year-old boy. From that time, with each month, week, and day that passed, Sergius felt his own inner life wasting away and being replaced by external life. It was as if he had been turned inside out.

Sergius saw that he was a means of attracting visitors and contributions to the monastery, and that therefore the authorities arranged matters in such a way as to make as much use of him as possible. For instance, they rendered it impossible for him to do any manual work. He was supplied with everything he could want, and they only demanded of him that he should not refuse his blessing to those who came to seek it. For his convenience they appointed days when he would receive. They arranged a reception-room for men, and a place was railed in so that he should not be pushed over by the crowds of women visitors, and so that he could conveniently bless those who came.

They told him that people needed him, and that fulfilling Christ's law of love he could not refuse their demand to see him, and that to avoid them would be cruel. He could not but agree with this, but the more he gave himself up to such a life the more he felt that what was internal became external, and that the fount of living water within him dried up, and that what he did now was done more and more for men and less and less for God.

Whether he admonished people, or simply blessed them, or prayed for the sick, or advised people about their lives, or listened to expressions of gratitude from those he had helped by precepts, or alms, or healing (as they assured him) — he could not help being pleased at it, and could not be indifferent to the results of his activity and to the influence he exerted. He thought himself a shining light, and the more he felt this the more was he conscious of a weakening, a dying down of the divine light of truth that shone within him.

‘In how far is what I do for God and in how far is it for men?’ That was the question that insisently tormented him and to which he was not so much unable to give himself an answer as unable to face the answer.

In the depth of his soul he felt that the devil had substituted an activity for men in place of his former activity for God. He felt this because, just as it had formerly been hard for him to be torn from his solitude so now that solitude itself was hard for him. He was oppressed and wearied by



visitors, but at the bottom of his heart he was glad of their presence and glad of the praise they heaped upon him.

There was a time when he decided to go away and hide. He even planned all that was necessary for that purpose. He prepared for himself a peasant's shirt, trousers, coat, and cap. He explained that he wanted these to give to those who asked. And he kept these clothes in his cell, planning how he would put them on, cut his hair short, and go away. First he would go some three hundred versts by train, then he would leave the train and walk from village to village. He asked an old man who had been a soldier how he tramped: what people gave him, and what shelter they allowed him. The soldier told him where people were most charitable, and where they would take a wanderer in for the night, and Father Sergius intended to avail himself of this information. He even put on those clothes one night in his desire to go, but he could not decide what was best — to remain or to escape. At first he was in doubt, but afterwards this indecision passed. He submitted to custom and yielded to the devil, and only the peasant garb reminded him of the thought and feeling he had had.

Every day more and more people flocked to him and less and less time was left him for prayer and for renewing his spiritual strength. Sometimes in lucid moments he thought he was like a place where there had once been a spring. 'There used to be a feeble spring of living water which flowed quietly from me and through me. That was true life, the time when she tempted me!' (He always thought with ecstasy of that night and of her who was now Mother Agnes.) She had tasted of that pure water, but since then there had not been time for it to collect before thirsty people came crowding in and pushing one another aside. And they had trampled everything down and nothing was left but mud.

So he thought in rare moments of lucidity, but his usual state of mind was one of weariness and a tender pity for himself because of that weariness.

It was in spring, on the eve of the mid-Pentecostal feast. Father Sergius was officiating at the Vigil Service in his hermitage church, where the

congregation was as large as the little church could hold — about twenty people. They were all well-to-do proprietors or merchants. Father Sergius admitted anyone, but a selection was made by the monk in attendance and by an assistant who was sent to the hermitage every day from the monastery. A crowd of some eighty people — pilgrims and peasants, and especially peasant-women — stood outside waiting for Father Sergius to come out and bless them. Meanwhile he conducted the service, but at the point at which he went out to the tomb of his predecessor, he staggered and would have fallen had he not been caught by a merchant standing behind him and by the monk acting as deacon.

‘What is the matter, Father Sergius? Dear man! O Lord!’ exclaimed the women. ‘He is as white as a sheet!’

But Father Sergius recovered immediately, and though very pale, he waved the merchant and the deacon aside and continued to chant the service.

Father Seraphim, the deacon, the acolytes, and Sofya Ivanovna, a lady who always lived near the hermitage and tended Father Sergius, begged him to bring the service to an end.

‘No, there’s nothing the matter,’ said Father Sergius, slightly smiling from beneath his moustache and continuing the service. ‘Yes, that is the way the Saints behave!’ thought he.

‘A holy man — an angel of God!’ he heard just then the voice of Sofya Ivanovna behind him, and also of the merchant who had supported him. He did not heed their entreaties, but went on with the service. Again crowding together they all made their way by the narrow passages back into the little church, and there, though abbreviating it slightly, Father Sergius completed vespers.

Immediately after the service Father Sergius, having pronounced the benediction on those present, went over to the bench under the elm tree at the entrance to the cave. He wished to rest and breathe the fresh air — he felt in need of it. But as soon as he left the church the crowd of people rushed to him soliciting his blessing, his advice, and his help. There were pilgrims who constantly tramped from one holy place

to another and from one starets to another, and were always entranced by every shrine and every starets.

Father Sergius knew this common, cold, conventional, and most irreligious type. There were pilgrims, for the most part discharged soldiers, unaccustomed to a settled life, poverty-stricken, and many of them drunken old men, who tramped from monastery to monastery merely to be fed. And there were rough peasants and peasant-women who had come with their selfish requirements, seeking cures or to have doubts about quite practical affairs solved for them: about marrying off a daughter, or hiring a shop, or buying a bit of land, or how to atone for having overlaid a child or having an illegitimate one.

All this was an old story and not in the least interesting to him. He knew he would hear nothing new from these folk, that they would arouse no religious emotion in him; but he liked to see the crowd to which his blessing and advice was necessary and precious, so while that crowd oppressed him it also pleased him. Father Seraphim began to drive them away, saying that Father Sergius was tired.

But Father Sergius, remembering the words of the Gospel: `Forbid them` (children) `not to come unto me,` and feeling tenderly towards himself at this recollection, said they should be allowed to approach.

He rose, went to the railing beyond which the crowd had gathered, and began blessing them and answering their questions, but in a voice so weak that he was touched with pity for himself. Yet despite his wish to receive them all he could not do it. Things again grew dark before his eyes, and he staggered and grasped the railings. He felt a rush of blood to his head and first went pale and then suddenly flushed.

`I must leave the rest till to-morrow. I cannot do more to-day,` and, pronouncing a general benediction, he returned to the bench. The merchant again supported him, and leading him by the arm helped him to be seated.

‘Father!’ came voices from the crowd. ‘Dear Father! Do not forsake us. Without you we are lost!’

The merchant, having seated Father Sergius on the bench under the elm, took on himself police duties and drove the people off very resolutely. It is true that he spoke in a low voice so that Father Sergius might not hear him, but his words were incisive and angry.

‘Be off, be off! He has blessed you, and what more do you want? Get along with you, or I’ll wring your necks! Move on there! Get along, you old woman with your dirty leg-bands! Go, go! Where are you shoving to? You’ve been told that it is finished. To-morrow will be as God wills, but for to-day he has finished!’

‘Father! Only let my eyes have a glimpse of his dear face!’ said an old woman.

‘I’ll glimpse you! Where are you shoving to?’

Father Sergius noticed that the merchant seemed to be acting roughly, and in a feeble voice told the attendant that the people should not be driven away. He knew that they would be driven away all the same, and he much desired to be left alone and to rest, but he sent the attendant with that message to produce an impression.

‘All right, all right! I am not driving them away. I am only remonstrating with them,’ replied the merchant. ‘You know they wouldn’t hesitate to drive a man to death. They have no pity, they only consider themselves. . . . You’ve been told you cannot see him. Go away! To-morrow!’ And he got rid of them all.

He took all these pains because he liked order and liked to domineer and drive the people away, but chiefly because he wanted to have Father Sergius to himself. He was a widower with an only daughter who was an invalid and unmarried, and whom he had brought fourteen hundred versts to Father Sergius to be healed.

For two years past he had been taking her to different places to be cured: first to the university clinic in the chief town of the province, but that did no good; then to a peasant in the province of Samara, where

she got a little better; then to a doctor in Moscow to whom he paid much money, but this did no good at all. Now he had been told that Father Sergius wrought cures, and had brought her to him. So when all the people had been driven away he approached Father Sergius, and suddenly falling on his knees loudly exclaimed:

‘Holy Father! Bless my afflicted offspring that she may be healed of her malady. I venture to prostrate myself at your holy feet.’

And he placed one hand on the other, cup-wise. He said and did all this as if he were doing something clearly and firmly appointed by law and usage — as if one must and should ask for a daughter to be cured in just this way and no other. He did it with such conviction that it seemed even to Father Sergius that it should be said and done in just that way, but nevertheless he bade him rise and tell him what the trouble was. The merchant said that his daughter, a girl of twenty-two, had fallen ill two years ago, after her mother’s sudden death. She had moaned (as he expressed it) and since then had not been herself. And now he had brought her fourteen hundred versts and she was waiting in the hostelry till Father Sergius should give orders to bring her. She did not go out during the day, being afraid of the light, and could only come after sunset.

‘Is she very weak?’ asked Father Sergius.

‘No, she has no Particular weakness. She is quite plump, and is only “nerastenic” the doctors say. If you will only let me bring her this evening, Father Sergius, I’ll fly like a spirit to fetch her. Holy Father! Revive a parent’s heart, restore his line, save his afflicted daughter by your prayers!’ And the merchant again threw himself on his knees and bending sideways, with his head resting on his clenched fists, remained stock still. Father Sergius again told him to get up, and thinking how heavy his activities were and how he went through with them patiently notwithstanding, he sighed heavily and after a few seconds of silence, said:

‘Well, bring her this evening. I will pray for her, but now I am tired . . .’ and he closed his eyes. ‘I will send for you.’

The merchant went away, stepping on tiptoe, which only made his boots creak the louder, and Father Sergius remained alone. His whole life was filled by Church services and by people who came to see him, but to-day had been a Particularly difficult one. In the morning an important official had arrived and had had a long conversation with him; after that a lady had come with her son. This son was a sceptical young professor whom the mother, an ardent believer and devoted to Father Sergius, had brought that he might talk to him. The conversation had been very trying. The young man, evidently not wishing to have a controversy with a monk, had agreed with him in everything as with someone who was mentally inferior. Father Sergius saw that the young man did not believe but yet was satisfied, tranquil, and at ease, and the memory of that conversation now disquieted him.

‘Have something to eat, Father,’ said the attendant.

‘All right, bring me something.’

The attendant went to a hut that had been arranged some ten paces from the cave, and Father Sergius remained alone.

The time was long past when he had lived alone doing everything for himself and eating only rye-bread, or rolls prepared for the Church. He had been advised long since that he had no right to neglect his health, and he was given wholesome, though Lenten, food. He ate sparingly, though much more than he had done, and often he ate with much pleasure, and not as formerly with aversion and a sense of guilt. So it was now. He had some gruel, drank a cup of tea, and ate half a white roll.

The attendant went away, and Father Sergius remained alone under the elm tree.

It was a wonderful May evening, when the birches, aspens, elms, wild cherries, and oaks, had just burst into foliage.

The bush of wild cherries behind the elm tree was in full bloom and had not yet begun to shed its blossoms, and the nightingales — one quite near at hand and two or three others in the bushes down by the river — burst into full song after some preliminary twitters. From the river

came the far-off songs of peasants returning, no doubt, from their work. The sun was setting behind the forest, its last rays glowing through the leaves. All that side was brilliant green, the other side with the elm tree was dark. The cockchafers flew clumsily about, falling to the ground when they collided with anything.

After supper Father Sergius began to repeat a silent prayer: `O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us!` and then he read a psalm, and suddenly in the middle of the psalm a sparrow flew out from the bush, alighted on the ground, and hopped towards him chirping as it came, but then it took fright at something and flew away. He said a prayer which referred to his abandonment of the world, and hastened to finish it in order to send for the merchant with the sick daughter. She interested him in that she presented a distraction, and because both she and her father considered him a saint whose prayers were efficacious. Outwardly he disavowed that idea, but in the depths of his soul he considered it to be true.

He was often amazed that this had happened, that he, Stepan Kasatsky, had come to be such an extraordinary saint and even a worker of miracles, but of the fact that he was such there could not be the least doubt. He could not fail to believe in the miracles he himself witnessed, beginning with the sick boy and ending with the old woman who had recovered her sight when he had prayed for her.

Strange as it might be, it was so. Accordingly the merchant's daughter interested him as a new individual who had faith in him, and also as a fresh opportunity to confirm his healing powers and enhance his fame. `They bring people a thousand versts and write about it in the papers. The Emperor knows of it, and they know of it in Europe, in unbelieving Europe` — thought he. And suddenly he felt ashamed of his vanity and again began to pray. `Lord, King of Heaven, Comforter, Soul of Truth! Come and enter into me and cleanse me from all sin and save and bless my soul.

Cleanse me from the sin of worldly vanity that troubles me!` he repeated, and he remembered how often he had prayed about this and

how vain till now his prayers had been in that respect. His prayers worked miracles for others, but in his own case God had not granted him liberation from this petty passion.

He remembered his prayers at the commencement of his life at the hermitage, when he prayed for purity, humility, and love, and how it seemed to him then that God heard his prayers. He had retained his purity and had chopped off his finger.

And he lifted the shrivelled stump of that finger to his lips and kissed it. It seemed to him now that he had been humble then when he had always seemed loathsome to himself on account of his sinfulness; and when he remembered the tender feelings with which he had then met an old man who was bringing a drunken soldier to him to ask alms; and how he had received HER, it seemed to him that he had then possessed love also. But now?

And he asked himself whether he loved anyone, whether he loved Sofya Ivanovna, or Father Seraphim, whether he had any feeling of love for all who had come to him that day — for that learned young man with whom he had had that instructive discussion in which he was concerned only to show off his own intelligence and that he had not lagged behind the times in knowledge. He wanted and needed their love, but felt none towards them. He now had neither love nor humility nor purity.

He was pleased to know that the merchant's daughter was twenty-two, and he wondered whether she was good-looking. When he inquired whether she was weak, he really wanted to know if she had feminine charm.

‘Can I have fallen so low?’ he thought. ‘Lord, help me! Restore me, my Lord and God!’ And he clasped his hands and began to pray. The nightingales burst into song, a cockchafer knocked against him and crept up the back of his neck. He brushed it off. ‘But does He exist? What if I am knocking at a door fastened from outside? The bar is on the door for all to see. Nature — the nightingales and the cockchafers



— is that bar. Perhaps the young man was right. And he began to pray aloud. He prayed for a long time till these thoughts vanished and he again felt calm and confident. He rang the bell and told the attendant to say that the merchant might bring his daughter to him now. The merchant came, leading his daughter by the arm. He led her into the cell and immediately left her.

She was a very fair girl, plump and very short, with a pale, frightened, childish face and a much developed feminine figure. Father Sergius remained seated on the bench at the entrance and when she was passing and stopped beside him for his blessing he was aghast at himself for the way he looked at her figure. As she passed by him he was acutely conscious of her femininity, though he saw by her face that she was sensual and feeble-minded. He rose and went into the cell. She was sitting on a stool waiting for him, and when he entered she rose.

‘I want to go back to Papa,’ she said.

‘Don’t be afraid,’ he replied. ‘What are you suffering from?’

‘I am in pain all over,’ she said, and suddenly her face lit up with a smile.

‘You will be well,’ said he. ‘Pray!’

‘What is the use of praying? I have prayed and it does no good’ — and she continued to smile. ‘I want you to pray for me and lay your hands on me. I saw you in a dream.’

‘How did you see me?’

‘I saw you put your hands on my breast like that.’ She took his hand and pressed it to her breast. ‘Just here.’

He yielded his right hand to her.

‘What is your name?’ he asked, trembling all over and feeling that he was overcome and that his desire had already passed beyond control.

‘Marie. Why?’

She took his hand and kissed it, and then put her arm round his waist and pressed him to herself.

‘What are you doing?’ he said. ‘Marie, you are a devil!’

‘Oh, perhaps. What does it matter?’

And embracing him she sat down with him on the bed.

At dawn he went out into the porch.

‘Can this all have happened? Her father will come and she will tell him everything. She is a devil! What am I to do? Here is the axe with which I chopped off my finger.’ He snatched up the axe and moved back towards the cell.

The attendant came up.

‘Do you want some wood chopped? Let me have the axe.’

Sergius yielded up the axe and entered the cell. She was lying there asleep. He looked at her with horror, and passed on beyond the Partition, where he took down the peasant clothes and put them on. Then he seized a pair of scissors, cut off his long hair, and went out along the path down the hill to the river, where he had not been for more than three years.

A road ran beside the river and he went along it and walked till noon. Then he went into a field of rye and lay down there. Towards evening he approached a village, but without entering it went towards the cliff that overhung the river. There he again lay down to rest.

It was early morning, half an hour before sunrise. All was damp and gloomy and a cold early wind was blowing from the west. ‘Yes, I must end it all. There is no God. But how am I to end it? Throw myself into the river? I can swim and should not drown. Hang myself? Yes, just throw this sash over a branch.’ This seemed so feasible and so easy that he felt horrified. As usual at moments of despair he felt the need of prayer. But there was no one to pray to. There was no God. He lay down resting on his arm, and suddenly such a longing for sleep overcame him that he could no longer support his head on his hand, but stretched out his arm, laid his head upon it, and fell asleep. But that sleep lasted only for a moment. He woke up immediately and began not to dream but to remember.

He saw himself as a child in his mother’s home in the country. A carriage drives up, and out of it steps Uncle Nicholas Sergeevich, with his long, spade-shaped, black beard, and with him Pashenka, a thin little girl with large mild eyes and a timid pathetic face. And into their

company of boys Pashenka is brought and they have to play with her, but it is dull. She is silly, and it ends by their making fun of her and forcing her to show how she can swim.

She lies down on the floor and shows them, and they all laugh and make a fool of her. She sees this and blushes red in patches and becomes more pitiable than before, so pitiable that he feels ashamed and can never forget that crooked, kindly, submissive smile. And Sergius remembered having seen her since then. Long after, just before he became a monk, she had married a landowner who squandered all her fortune and was in the habit of beating her.

She had had two children, a son and a daughter, but the son had died while still young. And Sergius remembered having seen her very wretched. Then again he had seen her in the monastery when she was a widow. She had been still the same, not exactly stupid, but insipid, insignificant, and pitiable. She had come with her daughter and her daughter's fiance. They were already poor at that time and later on he had heard that she was living in a small provincial town and was very poor.

`Why am I thinking about her?' he asked himself, but he could not cease doing so. `Where is she? How is she getting on? Is she still as unhappy as she was then when she had to show us how to swim on the floor? But why should I think about her? What am I doing? I must put an end to myself.`

And again he felt afraid, and again, to escape from that thought, he went on thinking about Pashenka.

So he lay for a long time, thinking now of his unavoidable end and now of Pashenka. She presented herself to him as a means of salvation. At last he fell asleep, and in his sleep he saw an angel who came to him and said: `Go to Pashenka and learn from her what you have to do, what your sin is, and wherein lies your salvation.`

He awoke, and having decided that this was a vision sent by God, he felt glad, and resolved to do what had been told him in the vision. He

knew the town where she lived. It was some three hundred versts (two hundred miles) away, and he set out to walk there.

## Part VI

Pashenka had already long ceased to be Pashenka and had become old, withered, wrinkled Praskovya Mikhaylovna, mother-in-law of that failure, the drunken official Mavrikyev. She was living in the country town where he had had his last appointment, and there she was supporting the family: her daughter, her ailing neurasthenic son-in-law, and her five grandchildren. She did this by giving music lessons to tradesmen`s daughters, giving four and sometimes five lessons a day of an hour each, and earning in this way some sixty rubles (6 pounds) a month. So they lived for the present, in expectation of another appointment. She had sent letters to all her relations and acquaintances asking them to obtain a post for her son-in-law, and among the rest she had written to Sergius, but that letter had not reached him.

It was a Saturday, and Praskovya Mikhaylovna was herself mixing dough for currant bread such as the serf-cook on her father`s estate used to make so well. She wished to give her grandchildren a treat on the Sunday.

Masha, her daughter, was nursing her youngest child, the eldest boy and girl were at school, and her son-in-law was asleep, not having slept during the night. Praskovya Mikhaylovna had remained awake too for a great Part of the night, trying to soften her daughter`s anger against her husband.

She saw that it was impossible for her son-in-law, a weak creature, to be other than he was, and realized that his wife`s reproaches could do no good — so she used all her efforts to soften those reproaches and to avoid recrimination and anger. Unkindly relations between people caused her actual physical suffering. It was so clear to her that bitter feelings do not make anything better, but only make everything worse. She did not in fact think about this: she simply suffered at the sight of

anger as she would from a bad smell, a harsh noise, or from blows on her body.

She had — with a feeling of self-satisfaction — just taught Lukerya how to mix the dough, when her six-year-old grandson Misha, wearing an apron and with darned stockings on his crooked little legs, ran into the kitchen with a frightened face.

‘Grandma, a dreadful old man wants to see you.’

Lukerya looked out at the door.

‘There is a pilgrim of some kind, a man . . .’

Praskovya Mikhaylovna rubbed her thin elbows against one another, wiped her hands on her apron and went upstairs to get a five-kopek piece about a penny out of her purse for him, but remembering that she had nothing less than a ten-kopek piece she decided to give him some bread instead. She returned to the cupboard, but suddenly blushed at the thought of having grudged the ten-kopek piece, and telling Lukerya to cut a slice of bread, went upstairs again to fetch it. ‘It serves you right,’ she said to herself. ‘You must now give twice over.’ She gave both the bread and the money to the pilgrim, and when doing so — far from being proud of her generosity — she excused herself for giving so little. The man had such an imposing appearance.

Though he had tramped two hundred versts as a beggar, though he was tattered and had grown thin and weatherbeaten, though he had cropped his long hair and was wearing a peasant’s cap and boots, and though he bowed very humbly, Sergius still had the impressive appearance that made him so attractive. But Praskovya Mikhaylovna did not recognize him. She could hardly do so, not having seen him for almost twenty years.

‘Don’t think ill of me, Father. Perhaps you want something to eat?’

He took the bread and the money, and Praskovya Mikhaylovna was surprised that he did not go, but stood looking at her.

‘Pashenka, I have come to you! Take me in . . .’

His beautiful black eyes, shining with the tears that started in them, were fixed on her with imploring insistence. And under his greyish moustache his lips quivered piteously.

Praskovya Mikhaylovna pressed her hands to her withered breast, opened her mouth, and stood petrified, staring at the pilgrim with dilated eyes.

‘It can’t be! Stepa! Sergey! Father Sergius!’

‘Yes, it is I,’ said Sergius in a low voice. ‘Only not Sergius, or Father Sergius, but a great sinner, Stepan Kasatsky — a great and lost sinner. Take me in and help me!’

‘It’s impossible! How have you so humbled yourself? But come in.’ She reached out her hand, but he did not take it and only followed her in.

But where was she to take him? The lodging was a small one. Formerly she had had a tiny room, almost a closet, for herself, but later she had given it up to her daughter, and Masha was now sitting there rocking the baby.

‘Sit here for the present,’ she said to Sergius, pointing to a bench in the kitchen.

He sat down at once, and with an evidently accustomed movement slipped the straps of his wallet first off one shoulder and then off the other.

‘My God, my God! How you have humbled yourself, Father! Such great fame, and now like this . . .’

Sergius did not reply, but only smiled meekly, placing his wallet under the bench on which he sat.

‘Masha, do you know who this is?’ — And in a whisper Praskovya Mikhaylovna told her daughter who he was, and together they then carried the bed and the cradle out of the tiny room and cleared it for Sergius.

Praskovya Mikhaylovna led him into it.

‘Here you can rest. Don’t take offence . . . but I must go out.’

‘Where to?’

‘I have to go to a lesson. I am ashamed to tell you, but I teach music!’

‘Music? But that is good. Only just one thing, Praskovya Mikhaylovna, I have come to you with a definite object. When can I have a talk with you?’

‘I shall be very glad. Will this evening do?’

‘Yes. But one thing more. Don’t speak about me, or say who I am. I have revealed myself only to you. No one knows where I have gone to. It must be so.’

‘Oh, but I have told my daughter.’

‘Well, ask her not to mention it.’

And Sergius took off his boots, lay down, and at once fell asleep after a sleepless night and a walk of nearly thirty miles.

When Praskovya Mikhaylovna returned, Sergius was sitting in the little room waiting for her. He did not come out for dinner, but had some soup and gruel which Lukerya brought him.

‘How is it that you have come back earlier than you said?’ asked Sergius. ‘Can I speak to you now?’

‘How is it that I have the happiness to receive such a guest? I have missed one of my lessons. That can wait . . . I had always been planning to go to see you. I wrote to you, and now this good fortune has come.’

‘Pashenka, please listen to what I am going to tell you as to a confession made to God at my last hour. Pashenka, I am not a holy man, I am not even as good as a simple ordinary man; I am a loathsome, vile, and proud sinner who has gone astray, and who, if not worse than everyone else, is at least worse than most very bad people.’ Pashenka looked at him at first with staring eyes. But she believed what he said, and when she had quite grasped it she touched his hand, smiling pityingly, and said:

‘Perhaps you exaggerate, Stiva?’

‘No, Pashenka. I am an adulterer, a murderer, a blasphemer, and a deceiver.’

‘My God! How is that?’ exclaimed Praskovya Mikhaylovna.

‘But I must go on living. And I, who thought I knew everything, who taught others how to live — I know nothing and ask you to teach me.’

‘What are you saying, Stiva? You are laughing at me. Why do you always make fun of me?’

‘Well, if you think I am jesting you must have it as you please. But tell me all the same how you live, and how you have lived your life.’

‘I? I have lived a very nasty, horrible life, and now God is punishing me as I deserve. I live so wretchedly, so wretchedly . . .’

‘How was it with your marriage? How did you live with your husband?’

‘It was all bad. I married because I fell in love in the nastiest way. Papa did not approve. But I would not listen to anything and just got married. Then instead of helping my husband I tormented him by my jealousy, which I could not restrain.’

‘I heard that he drank . . .’

‘Yes, but I did not give him any peace. I always reproached him, though you know it is a disease! He could not refrain from it. I now remember how I tried to prevent his having it, and the frightful scenes we had!’

And she looked at Kasatsky with beautiful eyes, suffering from the remembrance.

Kasatsky remembered how he had been told that Pashenka’s husband used to beat her, and now, looking at her thin withered neck with prominent veins behind her ears, and her scanty coil of hair, half grey half auburn, he seemed to see just how it had occurred.

‘Then I was left with two children and no means at all.’

‘But you had an estate!’

‘Oh, we sold that while Vasya was still alive, and the money was all spent. We had to live, and like all our young ladies I did not know how to earn anything. I was particularly useless and helpless. So we spent all we had. I taught the children and improved my own education a little. And then Mitya fell ill when he was already in the fourth form, and God took him. Masha fell in love with Vanya, my son-in-law. And — well, he is well-meaning but unfortunate. He is ill.’

‘Mamma!’ — her daughter’s voice interrupted her — ‘Take Mitya! I can’t be in two places at once.’



Praskovya Mikhaylovna shuddered, but rose and went out of the room, stepping quickly in her patched shoes. She soon came back with a boy of two in her arms, who threw himself backwards and grabbed at her shawl with his little hands.

‘Where was I? Oh yes, he had a good appointment here, and his chief was a kind man too. But Vanya could not go on, and had to give up his position.’

‘What is the matter with him?’

‘Neurasthenia — it is a dreadful complaint. We consulted a doctor, who told us he ought to go away, but we had no means. . . . I always hope it will pass of itself. He has no Particular pain, but . . .’

‘Lukerya!’ cried an angry and feeble voice. ‘She is always sent away when I want her. Mamma . . .’

‘I’m coming!’ Praskovya Mikhaylovna again interrupted herself. ‘He has not had his dinner yet. He can’t eat with us.’

She went out and arranged something, and came back wiping her thin dark hands.

‘So that is how I live. I always complain and am always dissatisfied, but thank God the grandchildren are all nice and healthy, and we can still live. But why talk about me?’

‘But what do you live on?’

‘Well, I earn a little. How I used to dislike music, but how useful it is to me now!’ Her small hand lay on the chest of drawers beside which she was sitting, and she drummed an exercise with her thin fingers.

‘How much do you get for a lesson?’

‘Sometimes a ruble, sometimes fifty kopeks, or sometimes thirty. They are all so kind to me.’

‘And do your pupils get on well?’ asked Kasatsky with a slight smile.

Praskovya Mikhaylovna did not at first believe that he was asking seriously, and looked inquiringly into his eyes.

‘Some of them do. One of them is a splendid girl — the butcher’s daughter — such a good kind girl! If I were a clever woman I ought, of

course, with the connexions Papa had, to be able to get an appointment for my son-in-law. But as it is I have not been able to do anything, and have brought them all to this — as you see.`

`Yes, yes,` said Kasatsky, lowering his head. `And how is it, Pashenka — do you take Part in Church life?`

`Oh, don`t speak of it. I am so bad that way, and have neglected it so! I keep the fasts with the children and sometimes go to church, and then again sometimes I don`t go for months. I only send the children.`

`But why don`t you go yourself?`

`To tell the truth` (she blushed) `I am ashamed, for my daughter`s sake and the children`s, to go there in tattered clothes, and I haven`t anything else. Besides, I am just lazy.`

`And do you pray at home?`

`I do. But what sort of prayer is it? Only mechanical. I know it should not be like that, but I lack real religious feeling. The only thing is that I know how bad I am . . .`

`Yes, yes, that`s right!` said Kasatsky, as if approvingly.

`I`m coming! I`m coming!` she replied to a call from her son-in-law, and tidying her scanty plait she left the room.

But this time it was long before she returned. When she came back, Kasatsky was sitting in the same position, his elbows resting on his knees and his head bowed. But his wallet was strapped on his back. When she came in, carrying a small tin lamp without a shade, he raised his fine weary eyes and sighed very deeply.

`I did not tell them who you are,` she began timidly. `I only said that you are a pilgrim, a nobleman, and that I used to know you. Come into the dining-room for tea.`

`No . . .`

`Well then, I`ll bring some to you here.`

`No, I don`t want anything. God bless you, Pashenka! I am going now. If you pity me, don`t tell anyone that you have seen me. For the love of God don`t tell anyone. Thank you. I would bow to your feet but I know

it would make you feel awkward. Thank you, and forgive me for Christ's sake!

'Give me your blessing.'

'God bless you! Forgive me for Christ's sake!'

He rose, but she would not let him go until she had given him bread and butter and rusks. He took it all and went away.

It was dark, and before he had passed the second house he was lost to sight. She only knew he was there because the dog at the priest's house was barking.

'So that is what my dream meant! Pashenka is what I ought to have been but failed to be. I lived for men on the pretext of living for God, while she lived for God imagining that she lives for men. Yes, one good deed — a cup of water given without thought of reward — is worth more than any benefit I imagined I was bestowing on people. But after all was there not some share of sincere desire to serve God?' he asked himself, and the answer was: 'Yes, there was, but it was all soiled and overgrown by desire for human praise. Yes, there is no God for the man who lives, as I did, for human praise. I will now seek Him!'

And he walked from village to village as he had done on his way to Pashenka, meeting and Parting from other pilgrims, men and women, and asking for bread and a night's rest in Christ's name. Occasionally some angry housewife scolded him, or a drunken peasant reviled him, but for the most Part he was given food and drink and even something to take with him. His noble bearing disposed some people in his favour, while others on the contrary seemed pleased at the sight of a gentleman who had come to beggary.

But his gentleness prevailed with everyone.

Often, finding a copy of the Gospels in a hut he would read it aloud, and when they heard him the people were always touched and surprised, as at something new yet familiar.

When he succeeded in helping people, either by advice, or by his knowledge of reading and writing, or by settling some quarrel, he did

not wait to see their gratitude but went away directly afterwards. And little by little God began to reveal Himself within him.

Once he was walking along with two old women and a soldier. They were stopped by a Party consisting of a lady and gentleman in a gig and another lady and gentleman on horseback. The husband was on horseback with his daughter, while in the gig his wife was driving with a Frenchman, evidently a traveller.

The Party stopped to let the Frenchman see the pilgrims who, in accord with a popular Russian superstition, tramped about from place to place instead of working.

They spoke French, thinking that the others would not understand them.

‘Demandez-leur,’ said the Frenchman, ‘s’ils sont bien sur de ce que leur pelerinage est agreable a Dieu.’

The question was asked, and one old woman replied:

‘As God takes it. Our feet have reached the holy places, but our hearts may not have done so.’

They asked the soldier. He said that he was alone in the world and had nowhere else to go.

They asked Kasatsky who he was.

‘A servant of God.’

‘Qu’est-ce qu’il dit? Il ne repond pas.’

‘Il dit qu’il est un serviteur de Dieu. Cela doit etre un fils de preetre. Il a de la race. Avez-vous de la petite monnaie?’

The Frenchman found some small change and gave twenty kopeks to each of the pilgrims.

‘Mais dites-leur que ce n’est pas pour les cierges que je leur donne, mais pour qu’ils se regalent de the. Chay, chay pour vous, mon vieux!’ he said with a smile. And he patted Kasatsky on the shoulder with his gloved hand.

‘May Christ bless you,’ replied Kasatsky without replacing his cap and bowing his bald head.

He rejoiced particularly at this meeting, because he had disregarded the opinion of men and had done the simplest, easiest thing — humbly accepted twenty kopeks and given them to his comrade, a blind beggar. The less importance he attached to the opinion of men the more did he feel the presence of God within him.

For eight months Kasatsky tramped on in this manner, and in the ninth month he was arrested for not having a passport. This happened at a night-refuge in a provincial town where he had passed the night with some pilgrims. He was taken to the police-station, and when asked who he was and where was his passport, he replied that he had no passport and that he was a servant of God. He was classed as a tramp, sentenced, and sent to live in Siberia.

In Siberia he has settled down as the hired man of a well-to-do peasant, in which capacity he works in the kitchen-garden, teaches children, and attends to the sick.

## The Bear Hunt

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

WE were out on a bear-hunting expedition. My comrade had shot at a bear, but only gave him a flesh-wound. There were traces of blood on the snow, but the bear had got away.

We all collected in a group in the forest, to decide whether we ought to go after the bear at once, or wait two or three days till he should settle down again. We asked the peasant bear-drivers whether it would be possible to get round the bear that day.

‘No. It’s impossible,’ said an old bear-driver. ‘You must let the bear quiet down. In five days’ time it will be possible to surround him; but if

you followed him now, you would only frighten him away, and he would not settle down.'

But a young bear-driver began disputing with the old man, saying that it was quite possible to get round the bear now.

'On such snow as this,' said he, 'he won't go far, for he is a fat bear. He will settle down before evening; or, if not, I can overtake him on snowshoes.'

The comrade I was with was against following up the bear, and advised waiting. But I said:

'We need not argue. You do as you like, but I will follow up the track with Damian. If we get round the bear, all right. If not, we lose nothing. It is still early, and there is nothing else for us to do to-day.'

So it was arranged.

The others went back to the sledges, and returned to the village.

Damian and I took some bread, and remained behind in the forest.

When they had all left us, Damian and I examined our guns, and after tucking the skirts of our warm coats into our belts, we started off, following the bear's tracks.

The weather was fine, frosty and calm; but it was hard work snowshoeing. The snow was deep and soft: it had not caked together at all in the forest, and fresh snow had fallen the day before, so that our snowshoes sank six inches deep in the snow, and sometimes more.

The bear's tracks were visible from a distance, and we could see how he had been going; sometimes sinking in up to his belly and ploughing up the snow as he went. At first, while under large trees, we kept in sight of his track; but when it turned into a thicket of small firs, Damian stopped.

'We must leave the trail now,' said he. 'He has probably settled somewhere here. You can see by the snow that he has been squatting down. Let us leave the track and go round; but we must go quietly. Don't shout or cough, or we shall frighten him away.'

Leaving the track, therefore, we turned off to the left. But when we had gone about five hundred yards, there were the bear's traces again right before us. We followed them, and they brought us out on to the road. There we stopped, examining the road to see which way the bear had gone. Here and there in the snow were prints of the bear's paw, claws and all, and here and there the marks of a peasant's bark shoes. The bear had evidently gone towards the village.

As we followed the road, Damian said:

'It's no use watching the road now. We shall see where he has turned off, to right or left, by the marks in the soft snow at the side. He must have turned off somewhere; for he won't have gone on to the village.' We went along the road for nearly a mile, and then saw, ahead of us, the bear's track turning off the road. We examined it. How strange! It was a bear's track right enough, only not going from the road into the forest, but from the forest on to the road! The toes were pointing towards the road.

'This must be another bear,' I said.

Damian looked at it, and considered a while.

'No,' said he. 'It's the same one. He's been playing tricks, and walked backwards when he left the road.'

We followed the track, and found it really was so! The bear had gone some ten steps backwards, and then, behind a fir tree, had turned round and gone straight ahead. Damian stopped and said:

'Now, we are sure to get round him. There is a marsh ahead of us, and he must have settled down there. Let us go round it.'

We began to make our way round, through a fir thicket. I was tired out by this time, and it had become still more difficult to get along. Now I glided on to juniper bushes and caught my snow-shoes in them, now a tiny fir tree appeared between my feet, or, from want of practise, my snow-shoes slipped off; and now I came upon a stump or a log hidden by the snow. I was getting very tired, and was drenched with perspiration; and I took off my fur cloak. And there was Damian all the time, gliding along as if in a boat, his snowshoes moving as if of their

own accord, never catching against anything, nor slipping off. He even took my fur and slung it over his shoulder, and still kept urging me on.

We went on for two more miles, and came out on the other side of the marsh. I was lagging behind. My snow-shoes kept slipping off, and my feet stumbled. Suddenly Damian, who was ahead of me, stopped and waved his arm. When I came up to him, he bent down, pointing with his hand, and whispered:

‘Do you see the magpie chattering above that undergrowth? It scents the bear from afar. That is where he must be.’

We turned off and went on for more than another half-mile, and presently we came on to the old track again. We had, therefore, been right round the bear who was now within the track we had left. We stopped, and I took off my cap and loosened all my clothes. I was as hot as in a steam bath, and as wet as a drowned rat. Damian too was flushed, and wiped his face with his sleeve.

‘Well, sir,’ he said, ‘we have done our job, and now we must have a rest.’

The evening glow already showed red through the forest. We took off our snow-shoes and sat down on them, and got some bread and salt out of our bags. First I ate some snow, and then some bread; and the bread tasted so good, that I thought I had never in my life had any like it before. We sat there resting until it began to grow dusk, and then I asked Damian if it was far to the village.

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘It must be about eight miles. We will go on there tonight, but now we must rest. Put on your fur coat, sir, or you’ll be catching cold.’

Damian flattened down the snow, and breaking off some fir branches made a bed of them. We lay down side by side, resting our heads on our arms. I do not remember how I fell asleep. Two hours later I woke up, hearing something crack.

I had slept so soundly that I did not know where I was. I looked around me. How wonderful! I was in some sort of a hall, all glittering and white



with gleaming pillars, and when I looked up I saw, through delicate white tracery, a vault, raven black and studded with coloured lights. After a good look, I remembered that we were in the forest, and that what I took for a hall and pillars, were trees covered with snow and hoar-frost, and the coloured lights were stars twinkling between the branches.

Hoar-frost had settled in the night; all the twigs were thick with it, Damian was covered with it, it was on my fur coat, and it dropped down from the trees. I woke Damian, and we put on our snowshoes and started. It was very quiet in the forest. No sound was heard but that of our snow-shoes pushing through the soft snow; except when now and then a tree, cracked by the frost, made the forest resound.

Only once we heard the sound of a living creature. Something rustled close to us, and then rushed away. I felt sure it was the bear, but when we went to the spot whence the sound had come, we found the footmarks of hares, and saw several young aspen trees with their bark gnawed. We had startled some hares while they were feeding.

We came out on the road, and followed it, dragging our snow-shoes behind us. It was easy walking now. Our snow-shoes clattered as they slid behind us from side to side of the hard-trodden road. The snow creaked under our boots, and the cold hoar-frost settled on our faces like down. Seen through the branches, the stars seemed to be running to meet us, now twinkling, now vanishing, as if the whole sky were on the move.

I found my comrade sleeping, but woke him up, and related how we had got round the bear. After telling our peasant host to collect beaters for the morning, we had supper and lay down to sleep.

I was so tired that I could have slept on till midday, if my comrade had not roused me. I jumped up, and saw that he was already dressed, and busy doing something to his gun.

‘Where is Damian?’ said I.

'In the forest, long ago. He has already been over the tracks you made, and been back here, and now he has gone to look after the beaters.' I washed and dressed, and loaded my guns; and then we got into a sledge, and started.

The sharp frost still continued. It was quiet, and the sun could not be seen. There was a thick mist above us, and hoar-frost still covered everything.

After driving about two miles along the road, as we came near the forest, we saw a cloud of smoke rising from a hollow, and presently reached a group of peasants, both men and women, armed with cudgels.

We got out and went up to them. The men sat roasting potatoes, and laughing and talking with the women.

Damian was there too; and when we arrived the people got up, and Damian led them away to place them in the circle we had made the day before. They went along in single file, men and women, thirty in all. The snow was so deep that we could only see them from their waists upwards. They turned into the forest, and my friend and I followed in their track.

Though they had trodden a path, walking was difficult, but, on the other hand, it was impossible to fall: it was like walking between two walls of snow.

We went on in this way for nearly half a mile, when all at once we saw Damian coming from another direction — running towards us on his snowshoes, and beckoning us to join him. We went towards him, and he showed us where to stand. I took my place, and looked round me.

To my left were tall fir trees, between the trunks of which I could see a good way, and, like a black patch just visible behind the trees, I could see a beater. In front of me was a thicket of young firs, about as high as a man, their branches weighed down and stuck together with snow. Through this copse ran a path thickly covered with snow, and leading straight up to where I stood. The thicket stretched away to the right of

me, and ended in a small glade, where I could see Damian placing my comrade.

I examined both my guns, and considered where I had better stand. Three steps behind me was a tall fir.

‘That’s where I’ll stand,’ thought I, ‘and then I can lean my second gun against the tree’; and I moved towards the tree, sinking up to my knees in the snow at each step. I trod the snow down, and made a clearance about a yard square, to stand on. One gun I kept in my hand; the other, ready cocked, I placed leaning up against the tree. Then I unsheathed and replaced my dagger, to make sure that I could draw it easily in case of need.

Just as I had finished these preparations, I heard Damian shouting in the forest:

‘He’s up! He’s up!’

And as soon as Damian shouted, the peasants round the circle all replied in their different voices.

‘Up, up, up! Ou! Ou! Ou!’ shouted the men.

‘Ay! Ay! Ay!’ screamed the women in high pitched tones.

The bear was inside the circle, and as Damian drove him on, the people all round kept shouting. Only my friend and I stood silent and motionless, waiting for the bear to come towards us. As I stood gazing and listening, my heart beat violently. I trembled, holding my gun fast.

‘Now now,’ I thought. ‘He will come suddenly. I shall aim, fire, and he will drop— ‘

Suddenly, to my left, but at a distance, I heard something falling on the snow. I looked between the tall fir trees, and, some fifty paces off, behind the trunks, saw something big and black. I took aim and waited, thinking:

‘Won’t he come any nearer?’

As I waited I saw him move his ears, turn, and go back; and then I caught a glimpse of the whole of him in profile. He was an immense

brute. In my excitement, I fired, and heard my bullet go 'flop' against a tree. Peering through the smoke, I saw my bear scampering back into the circle, and disappearing among the trees.

'Well,' thought I. 'My chance is lost. He won't come back to me. Either my comrade will shoot him, or he will escape through the line of beaters. In any case he won't give me another chance.'

I reloaded my gun, however, and again stood listening. The peasants were shouting all round, but to the right, not far from where my comrade stood, I heard a woman screaming in a frenzied voice: 'Here he is! Here he is! Come here, come here! Oh! Oh! Ay! Ay!'

Evidently she could see the bear. I had given up expecting him, and was looking to the right at my comrade. All at once I saw Damian with a stick in his hand, and without his snow-shoes, running along a footpath towards my friend. He crouched down beside him, pointing his stick as if aiming at something, and then I saw my friend raise his gun and aim in the same direction. Crack! He fired.

'There,' thought I. 'He has killed him.'

But I saw that my comrade did not run towards the bear. Evidently he had missed him, or the shot had not taken full effect.

'The bear will get away,' I thought. 'He will go back, but he won't come a second time towards me. — But what is that?'

Something was coming towards me like a whirlwind, snorting as it came; and I saw the snow flying up quite near me. I glanced straight before me, and there was the bear, rushing along the path through the thicket right at me, evidently beside himself with fear. He was hardly half a dozen paces off, and I could see the whole of him — his black chest and enormous head with a reddish patch.

There he was, blundering straight at me, and scattering the snow about as he came. I could see by his eyes that he did not see me, but, mad with fear, was rushing blindly along; and his path led him straight at the tree under which I was standing. I raised my gun and fired. He was

almost upon me now, and I saw that I had missed. My bullet had gone past him, and he did not even hear me fire, but still came headlong towards me. I lowered my gun, and fired again, almost touching his head. Crack! I had hit, but not killed him!

He raised his head, and laying his ears back, came at me, showing his teeth.

I snatched at my other gun, but almost before I had touched it, he had down at me and, knocking me over into the snow, had passed right over me.

'Thank goodness, he has left me,' thought I.

I tried to rise, but something pressed me down, and prevented my getting up. The bear's rush had carried him past me, but he had turned back, and had fallen on me with the whole weight of his body. I felt something heavy weighing me down, and something warm above my face, and I realized that he was drawing my whole face into his mouth. My nose was already in it, and I felt the heat of it, and smelt his blood.

He was pressing my shoulders down with his paws so that I could not move: all I could do was to draw my head down towards my chest away from his mouth, trying to free my nose and eyes, while he tried to get his teeth into them. Then I felt that he had seized my forehead just under the hair with the teeth of his lower jaw, and the flesh below my eyes with his upper jaw, and was closing his teeth. It was as if my face were being cut with knives. I struggled to get away, while he made haste to close his jaws like a dog gnawing. I managed to twist my face away, but he began drawing it again into his mouth.

'Now,' thought I, 'my end has come!'

Then I felt the weight lifted, and looking up, I saw that he was no longer there. He had jumped off me and run away.

When my comrade and Damian had seen the bear knock me down and begin worrying me, they rushed to the rescue. My comrade, in his haste, blundered, and instead of following the trodden path, ran into the deep snow and fell down. While he was struggling out of the snow,

the bear was gnawing at me. But Damian just as he was, without a gun, and with only a stick in his hand, rushed along the path shouting: 'He's eating the master! He's eating the master!'

And as he ran, he called to the bear:

'Oh you idiot! What are you doing? Leave off! Leave off!'

The bear obeyed him, and leaving me ran away. When I rose, there was as much blood on the snow as if a sheep had been killed, and the flesh hung in rags above my eyes, though in my excitement I felt no pain.

My comrade had come up by this time, and the other people collected round: they looked at my wound, and put snow on it. But I, forgetting about my wounds, only asked:

'Where's the bear? Which way has he gone?'

Suddenly I heard:

'Here he is! Here he is!'

And we saw the bear again running at us. We seized our guns, but before any one had time to fire he had run past. He had grown ferocious, and wanted to gnaw me again, but seeing so many people he took fright. We saw by his track that his head was bleeding and we wanted to follow him up; but, as my wounds had become very painful, we went, instead, to the town to find a doctor.

The doctor stitched up my wounds with silk, and they soon began to heal.

A month later we went to hunt that bear again, but I did not get a chance of finishing him. He would not come out of the circle, but went round and round growling in a terrible voice.

Damian killed him. The bear's lower jaw had been broken, and one of his teeth knocked out by my bullet.

He was a huge creature, and had splendid black fur.

I had him stuffed, and he now lies in my room. The wounds on my forehead healed up so that the scars can scarcely be seen.

## The Candle

Translated by Benjamin R Tucker 1890

IT WAS IN the time of serfdom — many years before Alexander II's liberation of the sixty million serfs in 1862. In those days the people were ruled by different kinds of lords. There were not a few who, remembering God, treated their slaves in a humane manner, and not as beasts of burden, while there were others who were seldom known to perform a kind or generous action; but the most barbarous and tyrannical of all were those former serfs who arose from the dirt and became princes.

It was this latter class who made life literally a burden to those who were unfortunate enough to come under their rule. Many of them had arisen from the ranks of the peasantry to become superintendents of noblemen's estates.

The peasants were obliged to work for their master a certain number of days each week. There was plenty of land and water and the soil was rich and fertile, while the meadows and forests were sufficient to supply the needs of both the peasants and their lord.

There was a certain nobleman who had chosen a superintendent from the peasantry on one of his other estates. No sooner had the power to govern been vested in this newly-made official than he began to practice the most outrageous cruelties upon the poor serfs who had been placed under his control. Although this man had a wife and two married daughters, and was making so much money that he could have lived happily without transgressing in any way against either God or man, yet he was filled with envy and jealousy and deeply sunk in sin.

Michael Simeonovitch began his persecutions by compelling the peasants to perform more days of service on the estate every week than the laws obliged them to work. He established a brick-yard, in

which he forced the men and women to do excessive labor, selling the bricks for his own profit.

On one occasion the overworked serfs sent a delegation to Moscow to complain of their treatment to their lord, but they obtained no satisfaction. When the poor peasants returned disconsolate from the nobleman their superintendent determined to have revenge for their boldness in going above him for redress, and their life and that of their fellow-victims became worse than before.

It happened that among the serfs there were some very treacherous people who would falsely accuse their fellows of wrong-doing and sow seeds of discord among the peasantry, whereupon Michael would become greatly enraged, while his poor subjects began to live in fear of their lives. When the superintendent passed through the village the people would run and hide themselves as from a wild beast. Seeing thus the terror which he had struck to the hearts of the moujiks, Michael's treatment of them became still more vindictive, so that from over-work and ill-usage the lot of the poor serfs was indeed a hard one.

There was a time when it was possible for the peasants, when driven to despair, to devise means whereby they could rid themselves of an inhuman monster such as Simeonovitch, and so these unfortunate people began to consider whether something could not be done to relieve them of their intolerable yoke. They would hold little meetings in secret places to bewail their misery and to confer with one another as to which would be the best way to act. Now and then the boldest of the gathering would rise and address his companions in this strain: "How much longer can we tolerate such a villain to rule over us? Let us make an end of it at once, for it were better for us to perish than to suffer. It is surely not a sin to kill such a devil in human form."

It happened once, before the Easter holidays, that one of these meetings was held in the woods, where Michael had sent the serfs to make a clearance for their master. At noon they assembled to eat their dinner and to hold a consultation. "Why can't we leave now?" said one. "Very soon we shall be reduced to nothing. Already we are almost



worked to death-there being no rest, night or day, either for us or our poor women. If anything should be done in a way not exactly to please him he will find fault and perhaps flog some of us to death-as was the case with poor Simeon, whom he killed not long ago.

Only recently Anisim was tortured in irons till he died. We certainly cannot stand this much longer.” “Yes,” said another, “what is the use of waiting? Let us act at once. Michael will be here this evening, and will be certain to abuse us shamefully. Let us, then, thrust him from his horse and with one blow of an axe give him what he deserves, and thus end our misery. We can then dig a big hole and bury him like a dog, and no one will know what became of him. Now let us come to an agreement — to stand together as one man and not to betray one another.”

The last speaker was Vasili Minayeff, who, if possible, had more cause to complain of Michael`s cruelty than any of his fellow-serfs. The superintendent was in the habit of flogging him severely every week, and he took also Vasili`s wife to serve him as cook.

Accordingly, during the evening that followed this meeting in the woods Michael arrived on the scene on horseback. He began at once to find fault with the manner in which the work had been done, and to complain because some lime-trees had been cut down.

“I told you not to cut down any lime-trees!” shouted the enraged superintendent. “Who did this thing? Tell me at once, or I shall flog every one of you!”

On investigation, a peasant named Sidor was pointed out as the guilty one, and his face was roundly slapped. Michael also severely punished Vasili, because he had not done sufficient work, after which the master rode safely home.

In the evening the serfs again assembled, and poor Vasili said: “Oh, what kind of people are we, anyway? We are only sparrows, and not men at all! We agree to stand by each other, but as soon as the time for action comes we all run and hide. Once a lot of sparrows conspired

against a hawk, but no sooner did the bird of prey appear than they sneaked off in the grass. Selecting one of the choicest sparrows, the hawk took it away to eat, after which the others came out crying, `Twee-twee!` and found that one was missing. `Who is killed?` they asked. `Vanka! Well, he deserved it.` You, my friends, are acting in just the same manner. When Michael attacked Sidor you should have stood by your promise. Why didn't you arise, and with one stroke put an end to him and to our misery?"

The effect of this speech was to make the peasants more firm in their determination to kill their superintendent. The latter had already given orders that they should be ready to plough during the Easter holidays, and to sow the field with oats, whereupon the serfs became stricken with grief, and gathered in Vasili's house to hold another indignation meeting. "If he has really forgotten God," they said, "and shall continue to commit such crimes against us, it is truly necessary that we should kill him. If not, let us perish, for it can make no difference to us now."

This despairing programme, however, met with considerable opposition from a peaceably-inclined man named Peter Mikhayeff. "Brethren," said he, "you are contemplating a grievous sin. The taking of human life is a very serious matter. Of course it is easy to end the mortal existence of a man, but what will become of the souls of those who commit the deed? If Michael continues to act toward us unjustly God will surely punish him. But, my friends, we must have patience."

This pacific utterance only served to intensify the anger of Vasili. Said he: "Peter is forever repeating the same old story, `It is a sin to kill any one.` Certainly it is sinful to murder; but we should consider the kind of man we are dealing with. We all know it is wrong to kill a good man, but even God would take away the life of such a dog as he is. It is our duty, if we have any love for mankind, to shoot a dog that is mad. It is a sin to let him live. If, therefore, we are to suffer at all, let it be in the interests of the people — and they will thank us for it. If we remain quiet any longer a flogging will be our only reward. You are talking nonsense, Mikhayeff. Why don't you think of the sin we shall be

committing if we work during the Easter holidays — for you will refuse to work then yourself?”

“Well, then,” replied Peter, “if they shall send me to plough, I will go. But I shall not be going of my own free will, and God will know whose sin it is, and shall punish the offender accordingly. Yet we must not forget him. Brethren, I am not giving you my own views only. The law of God is not to return evil for evil; indeed, if you try in this way to stamp out wickedness it will come upon you all the stronger. It is not difficult for you to kill the man, but his blood will surely stain your own soul. You may think you have killed a bad man — that you have gotten rid of evil — but you will soon find out that the seeds of still greater wickedness have been planted within you. If you yield to misfortune it will surely come to you.”

As Peter was not without sympathizers among the peasants, the poor serfs were consequently divided into two groups: the followers of Vasili and those who held the views of Mikhayeff.

On Easter Sunday no work was done. Toward the evening an elder came to the peasants from the nobleman`s court and said: “Our superintendent, Michael Simeonovitch, orders you to go to-morrow to plough the field for the oats.” Thus the official went through the village and directed the men to prepare for work the next day — some by the river and others by the roadway. The poor people were almost overcome with grief, many of them shedding tears, but none dared to disobey the orders of their master.

On the morning of Easter Monday, while the church bells were calling the inhabitants to religious services, and while every one else was about to enjoy a holiday, the unfortunate serfs started for the field to plough. Michael arose rather late and took a walk about the farm. The domestic servants were through with their work and had dressed themselves for the day, while Michael`s wife and their widowed daughter (who was visiting them, as was her custom on holidays) had been to church and returned. A steaming samovar awaited them, and they began to drink tea with Michael, who, after lighting his pipe, called the elder to him.

“Well,” said the superintendent, “have you ordered the moujiks to plough to-day?”

“Yes, sir, I did,” was the reply.

“Have they all gone to the field?”

“Yes, sir; all of them. I directed them myself where to begin.”

“That is all very well. You gave the orders, but are they ploughing? Go at once and see, and you may tell them that I shall be there after dinner. I shall expect to find one and a half acres done for every two ploughs, and the work must be well done; otherwise they shall be severely punished, notwithstanding the holiday.”

“I hear, sir, and obey.” The elder started to go, but Michael called him back. After hesitating for some time, as if he felt very uneasy, he said: “By the way, listen to what those scoundrels say about me. Doubtless some of them will curse me, and I want you to report the exact words. I know what villains they are. They don’t find work at all pleasant. They would rather lie down all day and do nothing. They would like to eat and drink and make merry on holidays, but they forget that if the ploughing is not done it will soon be too late. So you go and listen to what is said, and tell it to me in detail. Go at once.”

“I hear, sir, and obey.”

Turning his back and mounting his horse, the elder was soon at the field where the serfs were hard at work.

It happened that Michael’s wife, a very good-hearted woman, overheard the conversation which her husband had just been holding with the elder. Approaching him, she said:

“My good friend, Mishinka, I beg of you to consider the importance and solemnity of this holy-day. Do not sin, for Christ’s sake. Let the poor moujiks go home.”

Michael laughed, but made no reply to his wife’s humane request. Finally he said to her:

“You`ve not been whipped for a very long time, and now you have become bold enough to interfere in affairs that are not your own.”

“Mishinka,” she persisted, “I have had a frightful dream concerning you. You had better let the moujiks go.”

“Yes,” said he; “I perceive that you have gained so much flesh of late that you think you would not feel the whip. Lookout!”

Rudely thrusting his hot pipe against her cheek, Michael chased his wife from the room, after which he ordered his dinner. After eating a hearty meal consisting of cabbage-soup, roast pig, meat-cake, pastry with milk, jelly, sweet cakes, and vodki, he called his woman cook to him and ordered her to be seated and sing songs, Simeonovitch accompanying her on the guitar.

While the superintendent was thus enjoying himself to the fullest satisfaction in the musical society of his cook the elder returned, and, making a low bow to his superior, proceeded to give the desired information concerning the serfs.

“Well,” asked Michael, “did they plough?”

“Yes,” replied the elder; “they have accomplished about half the field.”

“Is there no fault to be found?”

“Not that I could discover. The work seems to be well done. They are evidently afraid of you.”

“How is the soil?”

“Very good. It appears to be quite soft.”

“Well,” said Simeonovitch, after a pause, “what did they say about me? Cursed me, I suppose?”

As the elder hesitated somewhat, Michael commanded him to speak and tell him the whole truth. “Tell me all,” said he; “I want to know their exact words. If you tell me the truth I shall reward you; but if you conceal anything from me you will be punished. See here, Catherine, pour out a glass of vodki to give him courage!”

After drinking to the health of his superior, the elder said to himself: "It is not my fault if they do not praise him. I shall tell him the truth." Then turning suddenly to the superintendent he said:

"They complain, Michael Simeonovitch! They complain bitterly."

"But what did they say?" demanded Michael. "Tell me!"

"Well, one thing they said was, 'He does not believe in God.'"

Michael laughed. "Who said that?" he asked.

"It seemed to be their unanimous opinion. 'He has been overcome by the Evil One,' they said."

"Very good," laughed the superintendent; "but tell me what each of them said. What did Vasili say?"

The elder did not wish to betray his people, but he had a certain grudge against Vasili, and he said:

"He cursed you more than did any of the others."

"But what did he say?"

"It is awful to repeat it, sir. Vasili said, 'He shall die like a dog, having no chance to repent!'"

"Oh, the villain!" exclaimed Michael. "He would kill me if he were not afraid. All right, Vasili; we shall have an accounting with you. And Tishka — he called me a dog, I suppose?"

"Well," said the elder, "they all spoke of you in anything but complimentary terms; but it is mean in me to repeat what they said."

"Mean or not you must tell me, I say!"

"Some of them declared that your back should be broken."

Simeonovitch appeared to enjoy this immensely, for he laughed outright. "We shall see whose back will be the first to be broken," said he. "Was that Tishka's opinion? While I did not suppose they would say anything good about me, I did not expect such curses and threats. And Peter Mikhayeff — was that fool cursing me too?"

"No; he did not curse you at all. He appeared to be the only silent one among them. Mikhayeff is a very wise moujik, and he surprises me very much. At his actions all the other peasants seemed amazed."

“What did he do?”

“He did something remarkable. He was diligently ploughing, and as I approached him I heard some one singing very sweetly. Looking between the ploughshares, I observed a bright object shining.”

“Well, what was it? Hurry up!”

“It was a small, five-kopeck wax candle, burning brightly, and the wind was unable to blow it out. Peter, wearing a new shirt, sang beautiful hymns as he ploughed, and no matter how he handled the implement the candle continued to burn. In my presence he fixed the plough, shaking it violently, but the bright little object between the colters remained undisturbed.”

“And what did Mikhayeff say?”

“He said nothing — except when, on seeing me, he gave me the holy-day salutation, after which he went on his way singing and ploughing as before. I did not say anything to him, but, on approaching the other moujiks, I found that they were laughing and making sport of their silent companion. ‘It is a great sin to plough on Easter Monday,’ they said. ‘You could not get absolution from your sin if you were to pray all your life.’”

“And did Mikhayeff make no reply?”

“He stood long enough to say: ‘There should be peace on earth and good-will to men,’ after which he resumed his ploughing and singing, the candle burning even more brightly than before.”

Simeonovitch had now ceased to ridicule, and, putting aside his guitar, his head dropped on his breast and he became lost in thought.

Presently he ordered the elder and cook to dePart, after which Michael went behind a screen and threw himself upon the bed. He was sighing and moaning, as if in great distress, when his wife came in and spoke kindly to him. He refused to listen to her, exclaiming:

“He has conquered me, and my end is near!”

“Mishinka,” said the woman, “arise and go to the moujiks in the field. Let them go home, and everything will be all right. Heretofore you have

run far greater risks without any fear, but now you appear to be very much alarmed.”

“He has conquered me!” he repeated. “I am lost!”

“What do you mean?” demanded his wife, angrily. “If you will go and do as I tell you there will be no danger. Come, Mishinka,” she added, tenderly; “I shall have the saddle-horse brought for you at once.”

When the horse arrived the woman persuaded her husband to mount the animal, and to fulfil her request concerning the serfs. When he reached the village a woman opened the gate for him to enter, and as he did so the inhabitants, seeing the brutal superintendent whom everybody feared, ran to hide themselves in their houses, gardens, and other secluded places.

At length Michael reached the other gate, which he found closed also, and, being unable to open it himself while seated on his horse, he called loudly for assistance. As no one responded to his shouts he dismounted and opened the gate, but as he was about to remount, and had one foot in the stirrup, the horse became frightened at some pigs and sprang suddenly to one side. The superintendent fell across the fence and a very sharp picket pierced his stomach, when Michael fell unconscious to the ground.

Toward the evening, when the serfs arrived at the village gate, their horses refused to enter. On looking around, the peasants discovered the dead body of their superintendent lying face downward in a pool of blood, where he had fallen from the fence. Peter Mikhayeff alone had sufficient courage to dismount and approach the prostrate form, his companions riding around the village and entering by way of the back yards. Peter closed the dead man's eyes, after which he put the body in a wagon and took it home.

When the nobleman learned of the fatal accident which had befallen his superintendent, and of the brutal treatment which he had meted out to those under him, he freed the serfs, exacting a small rent for the use of his land and the other agricultural opportunities.



And thus the peasants clearly understood that the power of God is manifested not in evil, but in goodness.

## The Coffee-House Of Surat

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

IN THE TOWN of Surat, in India, was a coffee-house where many travellers and foreigners from all Parts of the world met and conversed.

One day a learned Persian theologian visited this coffee-house. He was a man who had spent his life studying the nature of the Deity, and reading and writing books upon the subject. He had thought, read, and written so much about God, that eventually he lost his wits, became quite confused, and ceased even to believe in the existence of a God. The Shah, hearing of this, had banished him from Persia.

After having argued all his life about the First Cause, this unfortunate theologian had ended by quite perplexing himself, and instead of understanding that he had lost his own reason, he began to think that there was no higher Reason controlling the universe.

This man had an African slave who followed him everywhere. When the theologian entered the coffee-house, the slave remained outside, near the door, sitting on a stone in the glare of the sun, and driving away the flies that buzzed around him. The Persian having settled down on a divan in the coffee-house, ordered himself a cup of opium. When he had drunk it and the opium had begun to quicken the workings of his brain, he addressed his slave through the open door:

“Tell me, wretched slave,” said he, “do you think there is a God, or not?”

“Of course there is,” said the slave, and immediately drew from under his girdle a small idol of wood.

“There,” said he, “that is the God who has guarded me from the day of my birth. Every one in our country worships the fetish tree, from the wood of which this God was made.”

This conversation between the theologian and his slave was listened to with surprise by the other guests in the coffee-house. They were astonished at the master’s question, and yet more so at the slave’s reply.

One of them, a Brahmin, on hearing the words spoken by the slave, turned to him and said:

“Miserable fool! Is it possible you believe that God can be carried under a man’s girdle? There is one God — Brahma, and he is greater than the whole world, for he created it. Brahma is the One, the mighty God, and in His honour are built the temples on the Ganges’ banks, where his true priests, the Brahmins, worship him. They know the true God, and none but they. A thousand score of years have passed, and yet through revolution after revolution these priests have held their sway, because Brahma, the one true God, has protected them.”

So spoke the Brahmin, thinking to convince every one; but a Jewish broker who was present replied to him, and said:

“No! the temple of the true God is not in India. Neither does God protect the Brahmin caste. The true God is not the God of the Brahmins, but of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. None does He protect but His chosen people, the Israelites. From the commencement of the world, our nation has been beloved of Him, and ours alone. If we are now scattered over the whole earth, it is but to try us; for God has promised that He will one day gather His people together in Jerusalem. Then, with the Temple of Jerusalem — the wonder of the ancient world — restored to its splendor, shall Israel be established a ruler over all nations.”

So spoke the Jew, and burst into tears. He wished to say more, but an Italian missionary who was there interrupted him.

“What you are saying is untrue,” said he to the Jew. “You attribute injustice to God. He cannot love your nation above the rest. Nay rather,

even if it be true that of old He favored the Israelites, it is now nineteen hundred years since they angered Him, and caused Him to destroy their nation and scatter them over the earth, so that their faith makes no converts and has died out except here and there. God shows preference to no nation, but calls all who wish to be saved to the bosom of the Catholic Church of Rome, the one outside whose borders no salvation can be found.”

So spoke the Italian. But a Protestant minister, who happened to be present, growing pale, turned to the Catholic missionary and exclaimed: “How can you say that salvation belongs to your religion? Those only will be saved, who serve God according to the Gospel, in spirit and in truth, as bidden by the word of Christ.”

Then a Turk, an office-holder in the custom-house at Surat, who was sitting in the coffee-house smoking a pipe, turned with an air of superiority to both the Christians.

“Your belief in your Roman religion is vain,” said he. “It was superseded twelve hundred years ago by the true faith: that of Mohammed! You cannot but observe how the true Mohammed faith continues to spread both in Europe and Asia, and even in the enlightened country of China. You say yourselves that God has rejected the Jews; and, as a proof, you quote the fact that the Jews are humiliated and their faith does not spread. Confess then the truth of Mohammedanism, for it is triumphant and spreads far and wide. None will be saved but the followers of Mohammed, God’s latest prophet; and of them, only the followers of Omar, and not of Ali, for the latter are false to the faith.”

To this the Persian theologian, who was of the sect of Ali, wished to reply; but by this time a great dispute had arisen among all the strangers of different faiths and creeds present. There were Abyssinian Christians, Llamas from Thibet, Ismailians and Fireworshippers. They all argued about the nature of God, and how He should be worshipped. Each of them asserted that in his country alone was the true God known and rightly worshipped.

Every one argued and shouted, except a Chinaman, a student of Confucius, who sat quietly in one corner of the coffee-house, not joining in the dispute. He sat there drinking tea and listening to what the others said, but did not speak himself.

The Turk noticed him sitting there, and appealed to him, saying: "You can confirm what I say, my good Chinaman. You hold your peace, but if you spoke I know you would uphold my opinion. Traders from your country, who come to me for assistance, tell me that though many religions have been introduced into China, you Chinese consider Mohammedanism the best of all, and adopt it willingly. Confirm, then, my words, and tell us your opinion of the true God and of His prophet."

"Yes, yes," said the rest, turning to the Chinaman, "let us hear what you think on the subject."

The Chinaman, the student of Confucius, closed his eyes, and thought a while. Then he opened them again, and drawing his hands out of the wide sleeves of his garment, and folding them on his breast, he spoke as follows, in a calm and quiet voice.

"Sirs, it seems to me that it is chiefly pride that prevents men agreeing with one another on matters of faith. If you care to listen to me, I will tell you a story which will explain this by an example."

"I came here from China on an English steamer which had been round the world. We stopped for fresh water, and landed on the east coast of the island of Sumatra. It was midday, and some of us, having landed, sat in the shade of some cocoanut palms by the seashore, not far from a native village. We were a Party of men of different nationalities."

"As we sat there, a blind man approached us. We learned afterwards that he had gone blind from gazing too long and too persistently at the sun, trying to find out what it is, in order to seize its light."

"He strove a long time to accomplish this, constantly looking at the sun; but the only result was that his eyes were injured by its brightness, and he became blind."

“Then he said to himself:”

“The light of the sun is not a liquid; for if it were a liquid it would be possible to pour it from one vessel into another, and it would be moved, like water, by the wind. Neither is it fire; for if it were fire, water would extinguish it. Neither is light a spirit, for it is seen by the eye; nor is it matter, for it cannot be moved. Therefore, as the light of the sun is neither liquid, nor fire, nor spirit, nor matter, it is — nothing!”

“So he argued, and, as a result of always looking at the sun and always thinking about it, he lost both his sight and his reason. And when he went quite blind, he became fully convinced that the sun did not exist.”

“With this blind man came a slave, who after placing his master in the shade of a cocoanut tree, picked up a cocoanut from the ground, and began making it into a night-light. He twisted a wick from the fibre of the cocoanut: squeezed oil from the nut in the shell, and soaked the wick in it.”

“As the slave sat doing this, the blind man sighed and said to him:”

“Well, slave, was I not right when I told you there is no sun? Do you not see how dark it is? Yet people say there is a sun. . . . But if so, what is it?”

“I do not know what the sun is,” said the slave. “That is no business of mine. But I know what light is. Here I have made a night-light, by the help of which I can serve you and find anything I want in the hut.”

And the slave picked up the cocoanut shell, saying:

“This is my sun.”

A lame man with crutches, who was sitting near by, heard these words, and laughed:

“You have evidently been blind all your life,” said he to the blind man, “not to know what the sun is. I will tell you what it is. The sun is a ball of fire, which rises every morning out of the sea and goes down again among the mountains of our island each evening. We have all seen this, and if you had had your eyesight you too would have seen it.”

A fisherman, who had been listening to the conversation said:  
“It is plain enough that you have never been beyond your own island. If you were not lame, and if you had been out as I have in a fishing-boat, you would know that the sun does not set among the mountains of our island, but as it rises from the ocean every morning so it sets again in the sea every night. What I am telling you is true, for I see it every day with my own eyes.”

Then an Indian who was of our Party, interrupted him by saying:  
“I am astonished that a reasonable man should talk such nonsense. How can a ball of fire possibly descend into the water and not be extinguished? The sun is not a ball of fire at all, it is the Deity named Deva, who rides for ever in a chariot round the golden mountain, Meru. Sometimes the evil serpents Ragu and Ketu attack Deva and swallow him: and then the earth is dark. But our priests pray that the Deity may be released, and then he is set free. Only such ignorant men as you, who have never been beyond their own island, can imagine that the sun shines for their country alone.”

Then the master of an Egyptian vessel, who was present, spoke in his turn.

“No,” said he, “you also are wrong. The sun is not a Deity, and does not move only round India and its golden mountain. I have sailed much on the Black Sea, and along the coasts of Arabia, and have been to Madagascar and to the Philippines. The sun lights the whole earth, and not India alone. It does not circle round one mountain, but rises far in the East, beyond the Isles of Japan, and sets far, far away in the West, beyond the islands of England. That is why the Japanese call their country ‘Nippon,’ that is, ‘the birth of the sun.’ I know this well, for I have myself seen much, and heard more from my grandfather, who sailed to the very ends of the sea.”

He would have gone on, but an English sailor from our ship interrupted him.

“There is no country,” he said “where people know so much about the sun’s movements as in England. The sun, as every one in England knows, rises nowhere and sets nowhere. It is always moving round the earth. We can be sure of this for we have just been round the world ourselves, and nowhere knocked up against the sun. Wherever we went, the sun showed itself in the morning and hid itself at night, just as it does here.”

And the Englishman took a stick and, drawing circles on the sand, tried to explain how the sun moves in the heavens and goes round the world. But he was unable to explain it clearly, and pointing to the ship’s pilot said:

“This man knows more about it than I do. He can explain it properly.”

The pilot, who was an intelligent man, had listened in silence to the talk till he was asked to speak. Now every one turned to him, and he said: “You are all misleading one another, and are yourselves deceived. The sun does not go round the earth, but the earth goes round the sun, revolving as it goes, and turning towards the sun in the course of each twenty-four hours, not only Japan, and the Philippines, and Sumatra where we now are, but Africa, and Europe, and America, and many lands besides. The sun does not shine for some one mountain, or for some one island, or for some one sea, nor even for one earth alone, but for other planets as well as our earth. If you would only look up at the heavens, instead of at the ground beneath your own feet, you might all understand this, and would then no longer suppose that the sun shines for you, or for your country alone.”

Thus spoke the wise pilot, who had voyaged much about the world, and had gazed much upon the heavens above.

“So on matters of faith,” continued the Chinaman, the student of Confucius, “it is pride that causes error and discord among men. As with the sun, so it is with God. Each man wants to have a special God of his own, or at least a special God for his native land. Each nation wishes to confine in its own temples Him, whom the world cannot contain.

“Can any temple compare with that which God Himself has built to unite all men in one faith and one religion?”

“All human temples are built on the model of this temple, which is God’s own world. Every temple has its fonts, its vaulted roof, its lamps, its pictures or sculptures, its inscriptions, its books of the law, its offerings, its altars and its priests. But in what temple is there such a font as the ocean; such a vault as that of the heavens; such lamps as the sun, moon, and stars; or any figures to be compared with living, loving, mutually-helpful men?”

Where are there any records of God’s goodness so easy to understand as the blessings which God has strewn abroad for man’s happiness? Where is there any book of the law so clear to each man as that written in his heart? What sacrifices equal the self-denials which loving men and women make for one another? And what altar can be compared with the heart of a good man, on which God Himself accepts the sacrifice?

“The higher a man’s conception of God, the better will he know Him. And the better he knows God, the nearer will he draw to Him, imitating His goodness, His mercy, and His love of man.

“Therefore, let him who sees the sun’s whole light filling the world, refrain from blaming or despising the superstitious man, who in his own idol sees one ray of that same light. Let him not despise even the unbeliever who is blind and cannot see the sun at all.”

So spoke the Chinaman, the student of Confucius; and all who were present in the coffee-house were silent, and disputed no more as to whose faith was the best.

The Cutting Of The Forest

Translated by Leo Wiener 1904



I

In midwinter of 185 - the division of our battery- was doing frontier service in the Great Chechnya. Having learned, on the evening of the 14th of February, that the platoon, which I was to command in the absence of the officer, was detailed for the following day to cut timber, and having received and given the proper orders on that very evening, I repaired earlier than usual to my tent; as I did not have the bad habit of warming it up with burning coal, I lay down in my clothes on my bed, which was constructed of paling, drew my lambskin cap down to my eyes, wrapped myself in a fur coat, and fell into that peculiar, profound, and heavy sleep which one sleeps in moments of alarm and agitation before an imminent peril. The expectancy of the engagement of the following day had induced that condition in me.

At three o'clock in the morning, while it was still very dark, somebody pulled the warm fur coat from me, and the purple light of a candle disagreeably startled my sleepy eyes.

"Please get up!" said somebody's voice.

I closed my eyes, unconsciously pulled the fur coat over me, and again fell asleep. "Please get up!" repeated Dmitri, pitilessly shaking me by the shoulder. "The infantry is starting." I suddenly recalled the actuality, shuddered, and sprang to my feet. Having swallowed in a hurry a glass of tea and washed myself with ice-crusted water, I went out of the tent and walked over to the park (the place where the ordnance is stationed).

It was dark, misty, and cold. The night fires, which glimmered here and there in the camp, lighting up the figures of the drowsy soldiers who were lying about them, only intensified the darkness by their purple glamour. Near by one could hear the even, calm snoring of men; in the distance there was the motion, talking, and clanking of the infantry's weapons, getting ready for the march; there was an odour of smoke, dung, slow-matches, and mist; a morning chill ran down one's back, and one's teeth involuntarily clattered against each other.

By the snorting and occasional stamping alone could one make out, in this impenetrable darkness, where the hitched-up limbers and caissons were standing, and only by the burning dots of the linstocks could one tell where the ordnance was. With the words, " God be with you! " the first gun began to clatter, then the caisson rattled, and the platoon was on the move. We took off our hats and made the sign of the cross. Having taken up its position among the infantry, the platoon stopped, and for about fifteen minutes awaited the drawing up of the whole column and the arrival of the commander.

"We lack one soldier, Nikolay Petrovich! " said, approaching me, a black figure, which I recognized by the voice only as being that of the platoon gun-sergeant, Maksim o v.

"Who is it?"

"Velenchiik is not here. As we were hitching up, he was here, and I saw him, but now he is gone."

As there was no reason to suppose that the column would march at once, we decided to send Lance Corporal Antonov to find Velenchiik. Soon after, several horsemen galloped past us in the darkness: that was the commander with his suite; immediately there was a stir, the van of the column started, and then we began to march, — but Antonov and Velenchiik were not with us. We had scarcely taken one hundred steps, when both soldiers caught up with us.

"Where was he? " I asked of Antonov.

"Asleep in the park."

"Is he drunk?"

"No, sir."

"Why, then, did he go to sleep?"

"I can't tell you."

For something like three hours we moved slowly in the same silence and darkness over unploughed, snowless fields and low bushes, which crackled under the wheels of the ordnance. Finally, after fording a shallow, but extremely rapid torrent, we halted, and in the van could be

heard intermittent volleys of musketry. These sounds, as always, had an awakening effect upon all. The detachment seemed to have wakened from slumber: in the ranks could be heard conversation, animation, and laughter.

Some soldiers were wrestling with their comrades; others leaped now on one foot, now on another; others again were munching theirhardtack, or, to pass the time, pretended to stand sentry or keep time walking. In the meantime the mist was becoming perceptibly white in the east, the dampness grew more penetrating, and the surrounding objects emerged more and more from the darkness.

I could discern the green gun-carriages and caissons, the brass of the ordnance, covered by a misty dampness, the familiar forms of my soldiers, and the bay horses, which I had involuntarily learned to know down to their minutest details, and the rows of the infantry, with their sparkling bayonets, knapsacks, wad-hooks, and kettles over their backs.

Shortly afterward we were again put in motion, taken a couple of hundred steps across the field, and had a place pointed out to us. On the right could be seen the steep bank of a winding brook and tall wooden posts of a Tartar cemetery; on the left and in front of us shimmered a black streak, through the mist. The platoon came down from the limbers. The eighth company, which was flanking us, stacked arms, and a battalion of soldiers went into the woods with guns and axes.

Less than five minutes had elapsed when on all sides crackled and burned camp-fires; the soldiers scattered about them, fanning the fire with their hands and feet, carrying boughs and logs, and in the forest resounded without interruption hundreds of axes and falling trees.

The artillerists, vying with the infantrymen, had made a fire of their own, and though it was burning so well that it was impossible to come within two paces of it, and a dense smoke was passing through the ice-crusted branches, from which drops fell sizzling into the fire, and which the soldiers kept pressing down with their feet, and though coal had

formed underneath the fire, and the grass was burnt white all around it, — the soldiers were not yet satisfied; they dragged up whole logs, threw steppe-grass upon it, and fanned it more and more.

As I went up to the camp-fire to light a cigarette, Velenchuk, who was always officious, but who now, having failed in his duty, was unduly busy about the fire, in an attack of zeal pulled out with his naked hand a burning coal from the very middle, and, vaulting it a couple of times from one hand to another, threw it down on the ground.

“You had better light a stick and hand it,” said some one.  
“Hand him the linstock, boys! “ cried another.

When I finally lighted my cigarette without Velenchuk’s aid, who was again ready to pick up the coal with his hands, he wiped his singed fingers against the hind skirts of his fur coat, and, evidently anxious to be doing something, lifted a large plane-tree log and flung it into the fire with all his might. When, at last, it seemed to him that it was time to rest himself, he went up as near as he could to the burning wood, spread his over- coat, which he wore like a mantle on the back button, extended in front of him his large black hands, and, distorting his mouth a little, blinked with his eyes.

“Ah, I have forgotten my pipe. That’s bad, brothers! “ he said, after a moment’s silence, and addressing no one in Particular.

II.

In Russia there are three prevailing types of soldiers, among which may be classed the soldiers of all the armies: of the Caucasus, the Уне, the guards, the infantry, the cavalry, the artillery, and so forth.

These three types, capable of many subdivisions and blendings, are the following:

- (1) The submissive.
- (2) The commanding.
- (3) The desperate.

The submissive soldiers may be subdivided into (a) indifferently submissive and (b) busily submissive.

The commanding may be subdivided into (a) austerely commanding and (b) sagaciously commanding.

The desperate may be subdivided into (a) desperate jokers and (b) desperate debauchees.

The commonest type is a gentle, sympathetic type, which unites the best Christian virtues, meekness, piety, patience, and submission to the will of God, and is that of the submissive in general. The distinctive features of an indifferently submissive soldier are an imperturbable calm and contempt for all the vicissitudes of fortune to which he may be subjected. The distinctive feature of the submissive drunkard is a quiet, poetical inclination and sentimentality. The distinctive feature of the busily submissive is a limited mental capacity, united with an aimless industry and zeal.

The commanding type is found preponderantly in the higher spheres of the non-commissioned officers, among corporals, under-officers, sergeants, and so forth. Among these, the austerely commanding type is noble, energetic, preeminently martial, and not devoid of high poetical impulses. To this type belonged Corporal Antonov, with whom I intend to acquaint the reader. The second sub-division is formed by the sagaciously commanding, who of late have been getting quite common. A sagaciously commanding non-commissioned officer is always eloquent, knows how to read and write, wears a pink shirt, does not eat from the common kettle, at times smokes Musat tobacco, considers himself incomparably higher than a common soldier, and is rarely as good a soldier as the commanding of the first order.

The desperate type, like the commanding type, is good only in the first subdivision: the distinctive traits of desperate jokers are their imperturbable cheerfulness, their ability to do everything, a well-endowed nature, and dashing spirit of adventure; this type is just as dreadfully bad in the second subdivision of desperate debauchees, who, however, to the honour of the Russian army be it said, occur very

rarely, and wherever they are found are removed from companionship by the community of the soldiers themselves. The chief characteristics of this sub-division are faithlessness and a certain adventurousness in vice.

Velenchiik belonged to the order of the busily submissive. He was a Little-Russian by birth, fifteen years in active service, and though not a very fine-appearing man, and not a very agile soldier, he was simple-hearted, kindly, overzealous, though generally inopportunistically so, and exceedingly honest. I say "exceedingly honest," because the year before there had been an incident when he had very palpably displayed this characteristic quality. It must be remarked that nearly every soldier has some trade; the most popular trades are those of a tailor and a shoemaker. Velenchiik had learned the first, and, to judge from the fact that Sergeant Mikhail Dorofeich himself had him make his clothes for him, he must have reached a certain artistic perfection in it.

The year before, while in camp, Velenchuk had undertaken to make a fine overcoat for Mikhail Dorofeich; but in the night, when, after cutting the cloth and fixing the lining, he lay down to sleep with the goods under his head, a misfortune befell him: the cloth, which had cost seven roubles, had disappeared. With tears in his eyes, trembling lips, and restrained sobs, Velenchuk announced the fact to the sergeant. Mikhail Dorofeich was furious.

In the first moment of his anger he threatened the tailor, but later, being a man of means, and good at heart, he dropped the whole matter and did not ask any restitution of the value of the overcoat. However much bustling Velenchuk fretted and wept, as he was telling about his misfortune, the thief did not show up.

Though there were strong suspicions against a desperate debauchee of a soldier, Chernov by name, who was sleeping in the same tent with him, there were no positive proofs. The sagacious commander, Mikhail Dorofeich, being a man of means and in some kind of Partnership with the superintendent of arms and the steward, the aristocrats of the

battery, very soon completely forgot the loss of that particular overcoat; Velenchuk, on the contrary, could not forget his misfortune.

The soldiers said that they were afraid all the time that he would lay hands on himself or run away into the mountains, for this unfortunate accident had affected him powerfully. He did not eat, nor drink; he could not work, and wept all the time. Three days later he appeared before Mikhail Dorofeich, and, all pale, drew with trembling hands a gold coin out of his rolled up sleeve, and handed it to him.

“Upon my word, this is all I have, Mikhail Dorofeich, and I have borrowed it from Zhdanov,” he said, sobbing again. “The two roubles that are wanted I will give you, upon my word, as soon as I have earned them. He “ (Velenchuk himself did not know who that “ he “ was) “ has made me out a thief in your eyes. His contemptible soul has taken the last thing away from his brother soldier; here I have been serving fifteen years, and—” To Mikhail Dorofeich’s honour, it must be said that he did not take from him the lacking two roubles, though Velenchuk offered them to him two months later.

III.

Besides Velenchuk, five other soldiers of my platoon were warming themselves at the fire.

In the best place, protected from the wind, on a cask, sat the gunsergeant of the platoon, Maksimov, smoking a pipe. In the pose, the look, and all the motions of this man could be observed the habit of commanding and the consciousness of his personal dignity, even independently of the cask, on which he was sitting, and which, at a halt, formed the emblem of authority, and of the nankeen-covered fur half-coat.

When I came up, he turned his head toward me; but his eyes remained fixed upon the fire, and only much later did they follow the direction of his head, and rest upon me. Maksimov was a freeman; he was possessed of some means, had taken instruction in the school of the

brigade, and had picked up some information. He was dreadfully rich and dreadfully learned, as the soldiers expressed themselves.

I remember how once, at gun-practice with the quadrant, he explained to the soldiers who were crowding around him that the level was “nothing else than that it originates because the atmospheric quicksilver has its motion.” In reality, Maksimov was far from being stupid, and he knew his work very well, but he had an unfortunate peculiarity of speaking at times purposely in such a way that it was totally impossible to understand him, and so that, as I am convinced, he did not understand his own words.

He was especially fond of the words “originates” and “to continue,” and when he introduced his remarks with “originates” and “continuing,” I knew in advance that I should not understand a word of what followed. The soldiers, on the contrary, so far as I was able to observe, liked to hear his “originates,” and suspected that a deep meaning lay behind it, though, like myself, they did not comprehend a word. They referred this lack of comprehension to their own stupidity, and respected Fedor Maksimych the more for it. In short, Maksimych was a sagacious commander.

The second soldier, who was taking off the boots from his red, muscular legs, was Antonov, the same bombardier Antonov, who in the year '37, having been left with two others at a gun, without protection, had kept up a fire against a numerous enemy, and, with two bullets in his hip, had continued to attend to the gun and load it. “He would have been a gun-sergeant long ago, if it were not for his character,” the soldiers would say of him. Indeed, his was a strange character: in his sober mood there was not a quieter, prompter, and more peaceful soldier; but when he became intoxicated, he was an entirely different man: he did not respect the authorities, brawled, fought, and was an altogether useless soldier. Not more than a week before he had gone on a spree during Butter-week, and, in spite of all threats, persuasions, and calls to duty, he continued his drunken bouts and brawls until the first Monday in Lent.



But during the whole fast, in spite of the order for all men in the division to eat meat, he lived on nothing but hardtack, and in the first week he did not even take the prescribed dram of brandy. However, it was only necessary to see this undersized figure, built as though of iron, with his short, crooked legs and shining, whiskered face, take into his muscular hands the balalayka, while under the influence of liquor, and, carelessly casting his glances to both sides, strum some “ lady’s “ song, or, to see him, his overcoat, with the decorations danghng from it, thrown over shoulder, and his hands thrust into the pockets of his bhie nankeen trousers, stroll down the street, — it was only necessary to see the expression of military pride and contempt of everything un-military, which was displayed in his face at such a time, in order to understand how utterly impossible it was for him to keep from fighting at such a moment an imperti- nent or even innocent orderly, who got in his way, or a Cossack, a foot-soldier, or settler, in general one who did not belong to the artillery. He fought and was turbu- lent not so much for his own amusement, as for the sake of supporting the spirit of the whole soldierhood, of which he felt himself to be a representative.

The third soldier, with an earring in one ear, bristly moustache, a sharp, birdlike face, and a porcelain pipe between his teeth, who was squatting near the fire, was the artillery-rider Chikin. The dear man Chikin, as the soldiers called him, was a joker. Wliether in bitter cold, or up to his knees in mud, for two days without food, in an expedition, on parade, at instruction, the dear man always and everywhere made faces, pirouetted with his feet, and did such funny things that the whole platoon roared with laughter.

At a halt or in camp there was always around Chikin a circle of young soldiers, with whom he played cards; or he told them stories about a cunning soldier and an English milord, or imitated a Tartar or a German, or simply made his own remarks, which caused them nearly to die with laughter. It is true, his reputation as a joker was so well established in the battery that it was enough for him to open his mouth and wink, in order to provoke a general roar of laughter; but there was really something truly comical and unex- pected in all he said and did. In everything he saw something especial, something that would not have

occurred to anybody else, and what is more important, this ability to see something funny did not fail him under any trial.

The fourth soldier was a homely young lad, a recruit of the last year's draft, who was now for the first time taking part in an expedition. He was standing in the smoke, and so close to the fire that it looked as though his threadbare fur coat would soon ignite; but, notwithstanding this, it was evident, from the way he spread the skirts of his coat, from his self-satisfied pose with his arching calves, that he was experiencing great pleasure.

And, finally, the fifth soldier, seated a little distance from the fire, and whittling a stick, was Uncle Zhdanov. Zhdanov had seen more service than any other soldier in the battery; he had known them all as recruits, and they called him uncle, from force of habit. It was reported that he never drank, nor smoked, nor played cards (not even noM), nor ever swore.

All his time which was free from military service he spent in plying the shoemaker's trade; on holidays he went to church, whenever it was possible, or placed a kopek taper before the image, and opened the psalter, the only book which he could read. He associated little with the soldiers: he was coldly respectful to those who were higher in rank but younger in years; his equals he had little chance to meet, since he did not drink; but he was especially fond of recruits and young soldiers, — he always protected them, read the instructions to them, and frequently aided them.

Everybody in the battery considered him a capitalist because he was possessed of twenty-five roubles with which he was prepared to assist those who really needed assistance. That same Maksimov, who was now gun-sergeant, told me that when he had arrived ten years ago as a recruit, and the older soldiers, who were given to drinking, drank up with him all the money he had, Zhdanov, noticing his unfortunate plight, called him up, upbraided him for his conduct, even gave him some blows, read him the instruction about the behaviour of a soldier,

and sent him away, giving him a shirt, for Maksimov had got rid of his, and half a rouble in money.

“He has made a man of me,” Maksimov would say of him, with respect and gratitude. He had also helped Velenchuk, whom he had protected ever since he arrived as a recruit, at the time of the unfortunate loss of the overcoat, and he had aided many, many more during his twenty-five years of service.

It was impossible to expect in the service a man who knew his business better, or a soldier who was braver and more precise; but he was too meek and retiring to be promoted to the rank of gun-sergeant, though he had been bombardier fifteen years. Zhdanov’s one pleasure, and even passion, was songs; he was especially fond of some of them, and he always gathered a circle of singers from among the young soldiers, and, though he could not sing himself, stood behind them, and, putting his hands into the pockets of his fur coat, and closing his eyes, expressed his satisfaction by the movement of his head and cheeks.

I do not know why, but for some reason or other I discovered much expression in this even movement of the cheeks under his ears, which I had observed in nobody else but him. His snow-white head, his moustache dyed black, and his sunburnt, wrinkled face gave him, at first sight, a stern and austere expression; but, upon looking more closely into his large, round eyes, especially when they were smiling (he never smiled with his lips), you were impressed by something extraordinarily meek and almost childlike.

IV.

“Ah, I have forgotten my pipe. That’s bad, brothers,” repeated Velenchuk.

“You ought to smoke cigars, dear man!” remarked Chikin, screwing up his mouth and winking. “I always smoke cigars at home; they are sweeter.”

Of course, everybody rolled in laughter.

“So you forgot your pipe,” interrupted Maksimov, not paying any attention to the general merriment, and, with the air of a superior, proudly knocking out the ashes by striking the pipe against the palm of his left hand. “What have you been doing there? Eh, Velenchuk?” Velenchuk turned half-around to him, put his hand to his cap, and then dropped it.

“You evidently did not get enough sleep yesterday, and so you are now falling asleep standing. You won’t get any reward for such behaviour.” “May I be torn up on the spot, Fedor Maksimych, if I have had a drop in my mouth; I do not know myself what is the matter with me,” replied Velenchuk. “What occasion did I have to get drunk?” he muttered.

“That’s it. One has to be responsible for you fellows before the authorities, and you keep it up all the time, — it is disgusting,” concluded eloquent Maksimov, but in a calmer tone.

“It is really wonderful, brothers,” continued Velenchuk, after a moment’s silence, scratching the back of his head, and not addressing any one in particular. “Really, it is wonderful, brothers! Here I have been sixteen years in the service, and such a thing has never happened to me before. When we were ordered to get ready for the march, I got up as usual, — there was nothing the matter; but suddenly it caught me in the park — it caught me and threw me down on the ground, and that was all — And I myself do not know how I fell asleep, brothers! It must be the sleeping disease,” he concluded.

“Yes, I had a hard time waking you,” said Antdnov, pulling on his boot. “I kept pushing and pushing you, as though you were a log!”

“I say,” remarked Velenchuk, “just as though I were drunk—”

“There was a woman at home,” began Chikin, “who had not left the oven bed for at least two years. They began to wake her once, thinking that she was asleep, but they found she was dead, — though her death resembled sleep. Yes, my dear man!”

“Just tell us, Chikin, how you put on style when you had your leave of absence,” said Maksimov, smiling and looking at me, as though to say, “Would you not like to hear the story of a foolish man?”

“What style, Maksimych? “ said Chikin, casting a cursory side glance at me. “ I just told them all about the Caucasus.”

“Of course, of course! Don’t be so shy — tell us how you led them on.”

“It is very simple: they asked me how we were hving,” Chikin began, speaking hurriedly, having the appearance of a man who has told the same story several times. “ I said: ‘ We live well, dear man: we get our provisions in full, — in the morning and evening of chocolate a cup to each soldier is brought up; and for dinner we get soup, not of oats, but of noble barley groats, and instead of brandy we get a cup of Modeira, Modeira Divirioo which, without the bottle, is at forty- two!’“

“Great Modeira! “ shouted Velenchiik, louder than the rest, and bursting out laughing. “That’s what I call Modeira!”

“Well, and did you tell them about the Esiatics? “ Maksimov continued his inquiry, when the general laughter had subsided.

Chikin bent down toward the fire, got a coal out with a stick, put it in his pipe, and for a long while puffed in silence his tobacco roots, as though unconscious of the silent curiosity of his hearers. When he finally had puffed up sufficient smoke, he threw away the coal, poised his cap farther back on his head, and, shrugging his shoulder and lightly smiling, he continued. “ ‘ What kind of a man is your small Circassian down there? ‘ says one. \* Or is it the Turk you are fighting in the Caucasus? ‘ Says I: ‘ Dear man, there is not one kind of Circassians down there, but many different Circassians there are. There are some mountaineers who live in stone mountains, and who eat stone instead of bread.

They are big,’ says I, ‘ a big log in size; they have one eye in the middle of the forehead,’ and they wear red caps that glow like yours, dear man! “ he added, addressing a young recruit, who, in fact, wore a funny little cap with a red crown.

At this unexpected turn, the recruit suddenly sat down on the ground, slapped his knees, and burst out laughing and coughing so hard that he could hardly pronounce with a choking voice, "Those are fine mountaineers!"

"Then there are the Boobies," continued Chikin, with a jerk of his head drawing his cap back on his forehead, "' these are twins, wee little twins, about this size. They always run in pairs, holding each other's hands,' says I, ' and they run so fast that you can't catch them on horse- back.'" Are those Boobies,' says one, ' born with clasped hands, my dear fellow? ' " Chikin spoke in a guttural bass, as though imitating a peasant. " ' Yes/ says I, ' dear man, he is such by nature. If you tear their hands aPart, blood will ooze out, just as from a Chinaman; if you take off their caps, blood will flow." Now tell me, good fellow, how do they carry on war? ' says he. ' Like this,' says I, \* if they catch you, they sHt open your belly, and begin to wind your guts about your arms. They wind them, but you laugh and laugh, until you give up the ghost—"

"Well, did they believe you, Chikin? " said Maksimov, with a slight smile, while the others were rolling in laughter.

"They are such strange people, Fedor ' Maksimych. They believe everything, upon my word, they do. But when I began to tell them about Mount Kazbek, telling them that the snow did not melt all summer there, they ridiculed me. ' Don't tell such fibs, good fellow,' they said. ' Who has ever heard such a thing: a big moun- tain, and the snow not melting on it! Wliy, even with us the snow melts on the mounds long before it has melted in the hollows.' So, go and explain matters to them," concluded Chikin, winking.

V.

The bright disk of the sun, shining through the milk- white mist, had risen quite high; the grayish-violet horizon was widening all the time, and though it was farther away, it was also sharply closed in by the decep- tive white mist wall.

In front of us, beyond the forest which had been cut down, there was opened up a fairly large clearing. Over the clearing there spread on all sides the smoke from the fires, now black, now milk-white, now violet, and the white layers of the mist were forming themselves into fantastic shapes. Far in the distance, occasionally appeared groups of Tartar horsemen, and were heard the infrequent reports of our carbines, and their guns and cannon.

“This was not yet an engagement, but mere child’s play,” as the good Captain Khlopov used to say.

The commander of the ninth company of sharpshooters, who were to flank us, walked up to the guns, pointed to three Tartar horsemen, who were at that time riding near the forest, at a distance of more than six hundred fathoms from us; he asked me, with that eagerness to see an artillery fire which is characteristic of all infantry officers in general, to give them a shot or a shell.

“Do you see,” he said, with a kindly and convincing smile extending his hand from behind my shoulder, “there where the two high trees are? One of them, in front, is on a white horse, and dressed in a white mantle, and there, behind him, are two more. Do you see them? Couldn’t you just—”

“And there are three others, riding near the forest,” added Antonov, who had remarkably sharp eyes, approaching us, and concealing behind his back the pipe which he had been smoking. “The one in front has just taken out the gun from its case. You can see him plainly, your Honour!”

“I say, he has fired it off, brothers! There is the white puff of the smoke,” said Velenchuk, in a group of soldiers who were standing a short distance behind us.

“He must have aimed at our cordon, the rascal!” remarked another.

“See what a lot of them the forest is pouring out. I suppose they are trying to find a place to station their cannon,” added a third. “If we

could just burst a shell in the midst of them, — that would make them spit—”

“What is your opinion? will it reach so far, dear man? “ asked Chikin. “Five hundred or five hundred and twenty fathoms, not more,” Maksimov said, coolly, as though speaking to himself, though it was evident that he was anxious to fire off the cannon, as the rest were. “ If we were to give forty-five lines to the howitzer, we might hit it, — hit it square in the middle.”

“Do you know, if you were to aim straight at this group, you would certainly hit somebody. See how they have all gathered in a mass! Now, quickly, give the order to fire,” the commander of the company continued his entreaties.

“Do you order the gun to be aimed? “ Antonov suddenly asked, in a jerky bass voice, with gloomy malice in his eyes. I must confess that I myself was anxious for it, and so I ordered that the second cannon be brought into position. No sooner had I given the order than the shell was powdered, and rammed in, and Antonov, clinging to the gun-cheek, and placing his two fat fingers on the carriage-plate, was ordering the block-trail to the right and left.

“A trifle more to the left — a wee bit to the right — now, the least little bit more — now it’s all right,” he said, walking away from the gun with a proud face.

The infantry officer, I, and Maksimov, one after another put our eyes to the sight, and each expressed his Particular opinion.

“Upon my word, it will carry across,” remarked Velenchuk, clicking with his tongue, although he had only been looking over Antonov’s shoulder, and therefore did not have the least reason for such a supposition. “ Upon my word, it will carry across, and will strike that tree, brothers!”

“Second! “ I commanded.



The crew stepped aside. Antonov ran to one side, in order to see the flight of the projectile; the fuse flashed, and the brass rang out. At the same time we were enveloped in powder-smoke, and through the deafening boom of the report was heard the metallic, whizzing sound of the projectile, flying with the rapidity of lightning, dying away in the distance amid a universal silence. A little behind the group of the horsemen appeared white smoke, the Tartars galloped away in both directions, and we heard the sound of the explosion.

“That was fine! How they are scampering! See, the devils don’t like it! “ were heard the approvals and jests in the ranks of the artillery and infantry.

“If we had aimed a little lower, we should have hit Mm straight,” remarked Velenchuk. “ I told you it would strike the tree, and so it did, — it went to the right.”

VI.

Leaving the soldiers to discuss the flight of the Tartars when they saw the shell, and why they were riding there, and how many of them still might be in the woods, I walked away with the commander of the company a few steps to one side, and seated myself under a tree, waiting for the warmed forcemeat cutlets which he had offered me. The commander of the company, Bolkhov, was one of those officers who, in the regiment, are called “ bonjours.”

He had means, had served in the guards, and spoke French. Yet, notwithstanding this, his comrades liked him. He was quite clever, and had enough tact to wear a St. Petersburg coat, to eat a good dinner, and to speak French, without unduly offending the society of his fellow officers.

After speaking of the weather, of military engagements, of our common acquaintances among the officers, and convincing ourselves, by our questions and answers, and by our view of things, that there was a satisfactory understanding between us, we involuntarily passed to a more intimate conversation. Besides, in the Caucasus, among people of

the same circle naturally arises the question, though not always expressed, "Why are you here?" To this silent question my companion, so it seemed to me, was trying to give a reply.

"When will this frontier work end?" he said, lazily. « It is dull!"

"Not to me," said I. "It is more tiresome on the staff."

"Oh, on the staff it is ten thousand times worse," he said, angrily. "No, when will all this end?"

"What is it you want to end?"

"Everything, altogether! — Are the cutlets ready, Nikolaev?" he asked.

"Why did you go to the Caucasus to serve, if the Caucasus is so displeasing to you?"

"Do you know why?" he replied, with absolute frankness. "By tradition. In Russia, you know, there exists an exceedingly strange tradition about the Caucasus, as though it were a promised land for all kinds of unhappy people."

"Yes, that is almost true," I said, "the greater Part of us—"

"But what is best of all," he interrupted me, "is, that all of us who come to the Caucasus make dreadful mistakes in our calculations. Really, I can't see why, on account of an unfortunate love-affair or disorder in money matters, one should hasten to serve in the Caucasus rather than in Kazan or Kaluga. In Russia they imagine the Caucasus as something majestic, with eternal virgin snows, torrents, daggers, cloaks, Circassian maidens, — all this is terrifying, but, really, there is nothing jolly in it. If they only knew that you never are in the virgin snows, and that there is no special pleasure in being there, and that the Caucasus is divided into Governments, Stavropol, Tiflis, and so forth—"

"Yes," I said, laughing, "in Russia we take an entirely different view of the Caucasus from what we do here. Have you not experienced this? when you read poetry in a language that you do not know very well, you imagine it to be much better than it really is—"

"I don't know, only I have no use for the Caucasus," he interrupted me.

"No, not so with me. I like the Caucasus even now, but differently—"

“Maybe the Caucasus is all right,” he continued, as though provoked a little, “but I know this much: I am not good for the Caucasus.”

“Why not?” I asked, in order to say something.

“Because, in the first place, it has deceived me. All that from which I had come away to be cured in the Caucasus, as the tradition has it, has followed me up here, — but with this difference. Formerly I was led to it on a large staircase, and now it is a small, dirty staircase, at each step of which I find millions of petty annoyances, meanness, insults; in the second place, because I feel that I am every day falling morally lower and lower, and, what is most important, because I feel unfit for this kind of service; I am unable to bear danger — I am simply not a brave man—”

He stopped and looked earnestly at me.

Although this unasked-for confession surprised me very much, I did not contradict him, as my interlocutor had evidently expected me to do, but awaited from him the refutation of his own words, which is always forthcoming under such circumstances.

“Do you know, I am to-day taking Part in an action for the first time since I have been in the frontier guard,” he continued, “and you will hardly believe what happened to me yesterday. When the sergeant brought the order that my company was to be in the column, I grew as pale as a sheet, and was unable to speak from trepidation.

And if you only knew what a night I have passed! If it is true that people grow gray from fright, I ought to be entirely white to-day, for not one man condemned to death has suffered so much in one night as I have; though I am feeling a little more at ease now than I did in the night, it still goes around here,” he added, moving his clinched hand in front of his breast. “Now this is certainly ridiculous,” he continued, “a most terrible drama is being played here, and I myself am eating cutlets with onions, and persuading myself that all this is very gay. Have you any wine, Nikolaev?” he added, with a yawn.

“There he is, brothers! “ was heard at that moment the alarmed voice of one of the soldiers, and all eyes were directed to the edge of the far-off forest.

In the distance rose a bluish cloud of smoke, borne upwards by the wind, and constantly growing larger. When I understood that this was a shot which the enemy had aimed at us, everything that was before my eyes, everything suddenly assumed a new and majestic character.

The stacked guns, and the smoke of the camp-fires, and the blue sky, and the green gun-carriages, and the sunburnt, whiskered face of Nikolaev, — everything seemed to tell me that the cannon-ball which had emerged from the smoke and which at that moment was flying through space might be directed straight at my breast, “Where did you get your wine? “ I asked Bolkhov, lazily, while in the depth of my soul two voices were speaking with equal distinctness; one said, “ Lord, receive my soul in peace,” and the other, “ I hope I shall not cower, but smile as the ball flies past me,” and at the same instant something dreadfully disagreeable whistled over our heads, and struck the ground within two steps of us.

“Now, if I were a Napoleon or a Frederick,” Bolkhov remarked at that time, turning toward me with extraordinary composure, “ I should utter some witticism.”

“But you have told one just now,” I replied, with difficulty concealing the alarm caused within me by the danger just past, “Even if I have, nobody will make a note of it,”

“I will.”

“Yes, if you make a note of it, it will be to put in a critical paper, as Mishchenkov says,” he added, smiling.

“Pshaw, you accursed one! “ said Antonov, who was sitting behind us, angrily spitting to one side, “ just missed my legs,”

All my endeavours to appear cool and all our cunning phrases suddenly seemed intolerably stupid after this simple-hearted exclamation.

VII.

The enemy had really stationed two guns where the Tartars had been riding, and every twenty or thirty minutes they sent a shot at our wood-cutters. My platoon was moved out into the clearing, and the order was given to return the fire. At the edge of the forest appeared a puff of smoke, there was heard a discharge, a whistling, — and the ball fell behind or in front of us. The projectiles of the enemy lodged harmlessly, and we had no losses.

The artillerists conducted themselves well, as they always did, loaded expeditiously, carefully aimed at the puffs of smoke, and quietly joked each other. The flanking infantry detachment lay near us, in silent inaction, waiting for their turn. The wood-cutters did their work: the axes sounded through the woods faster and more frequently; only, whenever the whistling of the projectile was heard, everything suddenly grew quiet, and amid the dead silence could be heard the not very calm voices, “ Get out of the way, boys! ” and all eyes were directed toward the ball, ricocheting over the fires and the brush.

The fog was now completely lifted, and, assuming the forms of clouds, was slowly disappearing in the dark blue vault of the sky; the unshrouded sun shone brightly and cast its gleaming rays on the steel of the bayonets, the brass of the ordnance, the thawing earth, and the sparkling hoarfrost. The air was brisk with the freshness of the morning frost, together with the warmth of the vernal sun; thousands of different shadows and hues were mingled in the dry leaves of the forest, and on the hard shining road were distinctly visible the traces of the wheel tires and horse-shoe sponges.

Between the troops the motion grew more animated and more noticeable. On all sides flashed more and more frequently the bluish puffs of the discharges. The dragoons, with the pennons fluttering from their lances, rode out in front; in the companies of the infantry, songs were started, and the wagons with the wood were being drawn up in the rear. The general rode up to our platoon, and ordered us to get ready for the retreat. The enemy took up a position in the bushes, opposite our left flank, and began to harass us with musketry-fire.

On the left side a bullet whizzed by from the forest and struck a gun-  
car-riage, then a second, a third — The flanking infantry, which was  
lying near us, rose noisily, picked up their guns, and formed a cordon.  
The fusilade grew fiercer, and the bullets kept flying oftener and  
oftener. The retreat began, and, consequently, the real engagement, as  
is always the case in the Caucasus.

It was quite evident that the artillerists did not like the bullets, as  
awhile ago the foot-soldiers had enjoyed the cannon-balls. Antonov  
frowned. Chikin imitated the sound of the bullets and made fun of  
them; but it was apparent that he did not like them. Of one he said, “  
What a hurry it is in!” another he called a “little bee;” a third one,  
which flew over us slowly, and whining pitifully, he called an “orphan,”  
which provoked a uni-versal roar.

The recruit, who was not used to this, bent his head aside and craned  
his neck every time a bullet passed by, which, too, made the soldiers  
laugh. “Is it an acquaint-ance of yours, that you are bowing to it?”  
they said to him, Velenchiik, who otherwise was exceedingly indif-  
ferent to danger, now was in an agitated mood: he was obviously angry  
because we did not fire any canister-shot in the direction from which  
the bullets proceeded. He repeated several times, in a discontented  
voice: “Why do we let Mm shoot at us for nothing? If we trained our  
gun upon him, and treated him to a canister-shot, he probably would  
stop.”

It was indeed time to do so. I ordered the last shell let out, and a  
canister-shot loaded.

“Canister-shot!” cried Antonov, lustily, before the smoke had  
dispersed, and walking up with the sponge to the gun the moment the  
shell had been discharged.

Just then I suddenly heard a short distance behind me the ping of a  
whizzing bullet striking against something. My heart was compressed. “  
It seems to me it has struck somebody,” I thought, but at the same time  
I was afraid to turn around, under the influence of a heavy presenti-

ment. Indeed, immediately following upon this sound was heard the heavy fall of a body, and “ Oh, oh, oh! “ the piercing cry of a wounded man. “ It has struck me, brothers! “ uttered with difficulty a voice which I recog- nized. It was Velenchuk. He lay fiat on his back between the limber and the gun. The cartridge-box which he carried was thrown to one side. His forehead was blood-stained, and down his right eye and nose ran the thick red blood. The wound was in the abdomen, but he had hurt his forehead in his fall.

All this I found out much later; in the first moment I saw only an indistinct mass, and a terrible lot of blood, as I thought.

Not one of the soldiers, who were loading the gun, said a word, only the recruit mumbled something like, “ I say, all bloody,” and Antonov, scowling, angrily cleared his throat; but it was manifest that the thought of death had passed through the mind of each. Everybody went to work with a vim. The gun was loaded in a twinkle, and the cannoneer, in bringing the shot, made a couple of steps around the place on which the wounded man lay groaning.

VIII.

Every one who has been in an action has no doubt experienced that strange and strong, though not at all logical, feeling of disgust with the place where one has been killed or wounded. In the first moment my sol- diers were obviously experiencing this feeling, when it was necessary to lift up Velenchiik and carry him to the vehicle which had just come up. Zhdanov angrily went up to the wounded man, in spite of his increasing shrieks took him under his arms, and raised him. “ Don’t stand around! Take hold of him! “ he shouted, and imme- diately some ten men, even superfluous helpers, surrounded him. But the moment he was moved away, Velenchiik began to cry terribly and to struggle.

“Don’t yell like a rabbit! “ said Antonov, rudely, hold- ing his leg, “ or we will throw you down.”

The wounded man really quieted down, and only occa- sionally muttered, “ Oh, I shall die! Oh, brothers!”

When he was laid on the vehicle he stopped groaning, and I heard him speaking with his comrades in a soft, but audible voice, — he evidently was bidding them good- bye.

During an action, nobody likes to look at a wounded man, and I, instinctively hastening to get away from this spectacle, ordered that he be taken at once to the ambulance, and walked over to the guns; but a few minutes later I was told that Velenchiik was calling me, and I went up to the vehicle.

In the bottom of it, clinging with both hands to the edges, lay the wounded man. His healthy, broad face had completely changed in a few seconds: he looked rather haggard and had aged by several years; his lips were thin, pale, and compressed under an evident strain; the restless, dull expression of his glance had given way to a clear, quiet gleam, and on his blood-stained forehead and nose already lay the imprint of death.

Notwithstanding the fact that the least motion caused him untold sufferings, he asked them to remove the money-pouch which was tied around his left leg, below the knee.

A terrible oppressive sensation overcame me at the sight of his white healthy leg, when the boot was taken off, and the pouch was ungirded. "Here are three roubles and a half," he said to me, as I took the purse into my hand; " you keep them for me."

The vehicle started, but he stopped it.

"I was making an overcoat for Lieutenant Sulimovski. He has given me two roubles. For one rouble and a half I bought buttons; the remaining half-rouble is in the bag with the buttons. Give it to him!"

"Very well, very well," I said, " only get well, my friend!"

He made no reply; the vehicle started, and he again began to sob and groan in the most heartrending manner. It looked as though, having arranged all his worldly affairs, he no longer saw cause for restraining himself, and considered it permissible to alleviate his suffering.

IX.



“Where are you going? Come back! Where are you going?” I cried to the recruit, who, having put his reserve hstock under his arm, and with a stick in his hand, was coolly following the vehicle in which the wounded soldier was lying.

But the recruit only looked lazily at me, muttered something, and went ahead, so that I had to send a soldier after him. He doffed his red cap, and, smiling stupidly, gazed at me.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“To the camp.”

“What for?”

“Why, Velenchuk is wounded,” he said, smiling again.

“What have you to do with that? You must remain here.”

He looked at me in surprise, then coolly wheeled around, put on his cap, and went back to his place.

The engagement was favourable to us: it was reported that the Cossacks had made a fine attack and had taken three Tartar bodies; the infantry was provided with wood, and lost only six wounded, and in the artillery only Velenchuk and two horses were put out of action. To atone for these losses, they cut out about three versts of timber, and so cleared the place that it was impossible to recognize it: in place of the dense forest now was opened up an immense clearing, covered with smoking fires and with the cavalry and infantry moving toward the camp.

Although the enemy continued to harass us with artillery and musketry fire, until we reached the brook by the cemetery, where we had forded in the morning, the retreat was successfully accomplished. I was already beginning to dream of cabbage soup and a leg of mutton with buckwheat groats, which were awaiting me in the camp, when the information was received that the general had ordered the construction of redoubts, and that the third battalion of the K regiment and a detachment of four batteries were to remain here until to-morrow.

The wagons with the wood and the wounded, the Cossacks, the artillery, the infantry with their guns, and wood on their shoulders, — all passed by us, with noise and songs. All faces expressed animation and pleasure, induced by the past danger and the hope for a rest. But the third battahon and we were to postpone these pleasant sensations for the morrow.

X.

While we, of the artillery, were still busy about the ordnance, and placing the limbers and caissons, and pick-eting the horses, the infantry had stacked their arms, built camp-fires, constructed booths of boughs and corn- stalks, and were boiling their buckwheat grits.

It was growing dark. Pale blue clouds scudded over the sky. The fog, changed into a drizzly, damp mist, wet the earth and the overcoats of the soldiers; the horizon grew narrower, and the surroundings were overcast with gloomy shadows. The dampness, which I felt through my boots and behind my neck, the motion and conversa- tion, in which I took no Part, the viscous mud, in which my feet sHpped, and my empty stomach, put me in a very heavy and disagreeable mood, after a day of physical and moral fatigue. Velenchuk did not leave my mind. The whole simple story of his military life uninterruptedly obtruded on my imagination.

His last minutes were as clear and tranquil as all his life. He had hved too honestly and too simply for his whole-souled faith in a future, heavenly Hfe to be shaken at such a decisive moment.

“Your Honour,” said Nikolaev, approaching me, “ you are invited to take tea with the captain.”

Making my way between the stacked arms and the fires, I followed Nikolaev to Bolkhov’s, dreaming with pleasure of a glass of hot tea and a cheerful conversation, which would drive away my gloomy thoughts. “ Well, have you found him? “ was heard Bolkhov’s voice from a corn- stalk tent, in which a candle was glimmering.

“I have brought him, your Honour! “ was Nikolaev’s reply in a heavy bass.

In the booth, Bolkhov sat on a felt mantle, his coat being unbuttoned, and his cap off. Near him a samovar was boiling, and a drum stood with a lunch upon it. A bayonet, with a candle on it, was stuck in the ground. “ Well, how do you like this? “ he said, proudly, surveying his cosy little home. Indeed, the booth was so comfortable, that at tea I entirely forgot the dampness, the darkness, and Velenchiik’s wound. We talked about Moscow and about objects that had no relation whatsoever to the war and to the Caucasus.

After one of those minutes of silence, which frequently interrupt the most animated conversations, Bolkhov glanced at me with a smile. “I suppose our morning conversation must have appeared very strange to you? “ he said.

“No. Why should it? All I thought was that you were very frank, whereas there are some things which we all know but which one ought not to mention.”

“Not at all! If I had a chance of exchanging this life for a most wretched and petty life, provided it were without perils and service, I should not consider for a minute.”

“Why do you not go back to Russia? “ I said.

“Why? “ he repeated. “ Oh, I have been thinking of it quite awhile. I cannot return to Russia before receiving the Anna and the Vladimir crosses, — the Anna decoration around my neck and a majorship, as I had expected when I came out here.”

“But why should you, when, as you say, you feel unfit for the service here?”

“But I feel myself even more unfit to return to Russia in the condition in which I left it. This is another tradition, current in Russia and confirmed by Pdssek, Slyeptsov, and others, that all one has to do is to come to the Caucasus, in order to be overwhelmed with rewards. Everybody expects and demands this of us; and here I have been two

years, have taken Part in two expeditions, and have not received anything yet.

I have so much egotism that I will not leave this place until I am made a major with the Vladimir and Anna around my neck. I have got so far into this, that nothing will mortify me so much as to have Gnilokishkin get this promotion, and me not get one. Then again, how can I show up in Russia before my elder, the merchant Kotelnikov, to whom I sell my grain, before my Moscow aunt, and before all those gentlemen, after two years in the Caucasus, without any advancement? It is true, I do not care to know these gentlemen, and, no doubt, they care very little for me; and yet a man is so built that, although he does not care one bit for such gentlemen, he wastes the best years, the whole happiness of his life, and his whole future on account of them.”

XI.

Just then the voice of the commander of the battalion was heard outside the tent: “ With whom are you there, Nikolay Fedorovich?” Bolkhov gave him my name, and thereupon three officers entered the booth: Major Kirsanov, the adjutant of his battahon, and the captain, Trosenko.

Kirsanov was a short, plump man, with a black moustache, ruddy cheeks, and sparkling eyes. His small eyes were the most prominent feature of his face. Whenever he laughed, all there was left of them were two moist little stars, and these stars, together with his stretched lips and craning neck, assumed a very strange expression of blankness. Kirsanov conducted himself in the army better than anybody else; his inferiors did not speak ill of him, and his superiors respected him, although the common opinion was that he was exceedingly dull. He knew his duties, was exact and zealous, always had money, kept a carriage and a cook, and very naturally knew how to pretend that he was proud.

“What are you chatting about, Nikolay Fedorovich? “ he said, upon entering.

“About the amenities of the service in the Caucasus.”

But just then Kirsanov noticed me, a yunker, and, to let me feel his importance, he asked, as though not hearing Bolkhov’s answer, and glancing at the drum:

“Are you tired, Nikolay Fedorovich?”

“No, we—” Bolkhov began.

But again the dignity of the commander of the battalion seemed to demand that he should interrupt and propose a new question.

“Was it not a fine engagement we had to-day?”

The adjutant of the battahon was a young ensign, who had but lately been promoted from yunker, — a modest and quiet lad, with a bashful and good-naturedly pleasant face. I had seen liim before at Bolkhov’s. The young man used to call on him often, when he would bow, take a seat in the corner, for hours roll cigarettes and smoke them in silence, get up again, salute, and walk away. He was a type of a poor Russian yeoman, who had selected the military career as the only possible one with his cul- ture, and who placed the calling of an officer higher than anything else in the world, — a simple-hearted, pleasing type in spite of its ridiculous inseparable appurtenances, the tobacco-pouch, the dressing-gown, the guitar, and the moustache brush, with which we are accustomed to con- nect it.

They told of him in the army that he had boasted of being just, but severe with his orderly, that he had said, “I rarely punish, but when I am provoked they had better look out,” and that, when his drunken orderly had stolen a number of things of him and had even begun to insult him, he had brought him to the guard- house, and ordered him to be chastised, but that when he saw the preparations for the punishment, he so completely lost his composure that he was able only to say, “

Now, you see — I can—” and that in utter confusion he ran home, and never again was able to look straight into the eyes of his Chernov. His comrades gave him no rest, and teased him about it, and I had several times heard the simple-minded lad deny the allegation, and, blushing

up to his ears, insist that it was not only not true, but that quite the opposite was the fact.

The third person, Captain Trosenko, was an old Caucasus soldier in the full sense of the word, that is, a man for whom the company which he was commanding had become his family, the fortress where the staff was stationed his home, and the singers his only amusement in life, — a man for whom everything which was not the Caucasus was worthy of contempt, and almost undeserving belief; but everything which was the Caucasus was divided into two halves, ours, and not ours; the first he loved, the second he hated with all the powers of his soul, and, what is most important, he was a man of tried, quiet bravery, rare kindness of heart in relation to his comrades and inferiors, and of an aggravating straight-forwardness and even rudeness in relation to adjutants and bonjours, whom he for some reason despised. Upon entering the booth, he almost pierced the roof with his head, then suddenly lowered it, and sat down on the ground.

“Well?” he said, and, suddenly noticing my unfamiliar face, he stopped, gazing at me with his turbid, fixed glance.

“So, what were you talking about?” asked the major, taking out his watch and looking at it, though I was firmly convinced that there was no need for his doing so.

“He was asking me why I was serving here.”

“Of course, Nikolay Fedorovich wants to distinguish himself here, and then go back home.”

“Well, you tell me, Abram Ilich, why do you serve in the Caucasus?”

“Because, you see, in the first place, we are all obliged to serve. What?”

“he added, though all were silent. “Yesterday I received a letter from Russia, Nikolay Fedorovich,” he continued, evidently desiring to change the subject. “They write to me — they make such strange inquiries.”

“What inquiries?” asked Bolkhov.

He laughed.

— o—Really, strange questions — they want to know whether there can be any jealousy without love — What? “ he asked, looking at all of us.

“I say! “ said Bolkhov, smiling.

“Yes, you see, it is good in Russia,” he continued, as though his phrases naturally proceeded each from the previous one. “ AVlien I was in Tambdv in ‘52, I was everywhere received Ике an aid-de-camp. Will you believe me, at the governor’s ball, when I entered, don’t you know, I was beautifully received.

The wife of the governor, you know, talked with me and asked me about the Caucasus, and all — really I did not know — They looked at my gold sabre as at a rarity, and they asked me what I got the sabre for, and for what the Anna cross, and for what the Vladimir cross, and I told them — What? — This is what the Caucasus is good for, Nikolay Fedorovich! “ he continued, not waiting for an answer. “ There they look at us, Caucasus officers, very well. Young man, you know, a staff-officer with an Anna and a Vladimir cross, — that means a great deal in Russia — What?”

“I suppose you did a hittle bragging, Abram Ilich? “ said Bolkhov.

“He-he! “ he laughed his stupid smile. “ You know one must do that. And I did feast during those two months!”

“Is it nice there, in Russia? “ asked Trosenko, inquir- ing about Russia as though it were China or Japan.

“Yes, it was an awful lot of champagne we drank during those two months!”

“I don’t believe it. You must have drunk lemonade. If I had been there, I would have burst drinking, just to show them how officers of the Caucasus drink. My repu- tation would not be for nothing. I would have showed them how to drink — Hey, Bolkhov? “ he added.

“But you, uncle, have been for ten years in the Caucasus,” said Bolkhov, “ and do you remember what Ermoldv said? And Abram Ilich has been only six—”

“Ten years? It is nearly sixteen.”

“Bolkhov, let us have some of your sage. It is damp, bmr! Hey? “ he added, smiling. “ Let us have a drink, major!”

But the major was dissatisfied with the first remarks of the old captain, and now was even more mortified, and sought a refuge in his own grandeur. He tuned a song, and again looked at his watch.

“I will never travel to Russia,” continued Trosenko, paying no attention to the frowning major. “ I have forgotten how to walk and talk like a Russian. They will say, \* What monster is this that has arrived.’ I say, this is Asia. Is it not so, Nikolay Fedorovich? What am I to do in Russia? All the same, I shall be shot some day here. They will ask, ‘ Where is Trosenko? ‘ Shot. What are you going to do with the eighth company — eh? “ he added, addressing the major all the time.

“Send the officer of the day along the battalion! “ shouted Kirsanov, without replying to the captain, though I was again convinced that he had no orders to give.

“I suppose you are glad, young man, that you are receiving double pay now? “ said the major, after a few minutes’ silence, to the adjutant of the battalion.

“Of course, very much so.”

“I find that our pay is now very large, Nikolay Fedorovich,” he continued. “A young man can hve quite decently, and even allow liimself some luxuries.”

“No, really, Abram Ilich,” timidly said the adjutant, “ though the pay is double, yet — one must keep a horse—”

“Don’t ten me that, young man! I have myself been an ensign, and I know. Believe me, one can Hve, with proper care. Now, figure up,” he added, bending the little finger of his left hand.

“We take all our pay in advance, — so here is your calculation,” said Trosenko, swallowing a wine-glass of brandy.

« Well, what do you want for that — What?”



At this moment a white head with a flat nose was thrust through the opening of the booth, and a sharp voice with a German accent said: "Are you here, Abram Ilich? The officer of the day is looking for you." "Come in, Kraft!" said Bolkhov.

A long figure in the coat of the general staff squeezed through the door, and began to press everybody's hands with great fervour. "Ah, dear captain! you are here, too?" he said, addressing Trosenko.

The new guest, in spite of the darkness, made his way toward him, and to the captain's great surprise and dissatisfaction, as I thought, kissed his lips.

"This is a German who wants to be a good comrade," I thought.

XII.

My supposition was soon confirmed. Captain Kraft asked for some brandy, calling it by its popular name, and clearing his throat terribly, and throwing back his head, drained the wine-glass.

"Well, gentlemen, we have crisscrossed to-day over the plains of the Chechnya," he began, but, upon noticing the officer of the day, he grew silent, so as to give the major a chance to give his orders.

"Well, have you inspected the cordon?"

"I have, sir."

"Have the ambushes been sent out?"

"They have been, sir."

"Then communicate the order to the commanders of the companies to be as cautious as possible!"

"Yes, sir."

The major closed his eyes and became thoughtful.

"Tell the people that they may now cook their grits."

"They are cooking them now."

"Very well. You may go."

“Well, we were figuring out what an officer needed,” continued the major, with a condescending smile, addressing us. “Let us figure out!”

“You need one uniform and a pair of trousers. Is it not so?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Let us call it fifty roubles for two years; consequently, this makes twenty-five roubles a year for clothes; then for board forty kopeks a day. Is that right?”

“Yes; it is even too much.”

“Well, let us suppose it. Then, for the horse with the saddle for the remount, thirty roubles, — that is all. That makes in all twenty-five, and one hundred and twenty, and thirty, equal to one hundred and seventy-five roubles. There is still left enough for luxuries, for tea and sugar, and for tobacco, — say twenty roubles. Don’t you see? Am I right, Nikolay Fedorovich?”

“No, excuse me, Abram Ilich!” timidly remarked the adjutant. “Nothing will be left for tea and sugar.”

You figure one pair for two years, whereas in these expeditions you can’t get enough pantaloons. And the boots? I wear out a pair almost every month. Then the underwear, the shirts, the towels, the sock-rags, all these have to be bought. Count it up and nothing will be left. Upon my word, it is so, Abram Ilich.”

“Yes, it is fine to wear sock-rags,” Kraft suddenly remarked after a moment’s silence, with special delight pronouncing the word “sock-rags.”

“You know it is so simple, so Russian!”

“I will tell you something,” said Trosenko, “Count as you may, it will turn out that we fellows ought to be shelved, whereas in reality we manage to live, and to drink tea, and to smoke tobacco, and to drink brandy. After you have served as long as I have,” he continued, addressing the ensign, “you will learn how to get along. Do you know, gentlemen, how he treats his orderly?”

And Trosenko, almost dying with laughter, told us the whole story of the ensign with his orderly, although we had heard it a thousand times before.

“My friend, what makes you look like a rose?” he continued, addressing the ensign, who was blushing, perspiring, and smiling so that it was a pity to look at him.

“Never mind, I was just like you, and yet I have turned out to be a fine fellow. You let a young fellow from Russia get down here, — we have seen some of them.

— and he will get spasms and rheumatism, and all such things! But I am settled here, — here is my house, my bed, and everything. You see—”

Saying which, he drained another wine-glass of brandy.

“Ah!” he added, looking fixedly into Kraft’s eyes.

“This is what I respect! This is a genuine old Cossack officer! Let me have your hand!”

Kraft pushed us all aside, made his way toward Trosenko, and, grasping his hand, shook it with much feeling.

“Yes, we may say that we have experienced everything here,” he continued. “In the year ‘45 — you were there, captain? — do you remember the night of the 12th which we passed knee-deep in the mud and how the next day we went into the abatis? I was then attached to the commander-in-chief, and we took fifteen abatisses in one day. Do you remember it, captain?”

Trosenko made a sign of confirmation with his head, and closed his eyes, and protruded his lower lip.

“So you see—” began Kraft, with much animation, and making inappropriate gestures while addressing the major.

But the major, who no doubt had heard the story more than once, suddenly looked with such dim, dull eyes at his interlocutor that Kraft turned away from him and addressed Bolkhov and me, glancing now at one, now at the other. At Trosenko he did not once look during his recital.

“So you see, when we went out in the morning, the commander-in-chief said to me, \* Kraft, take the abatises! ‘ You know, our military service demands obedience with- out reflection, — so, hand to the visor, \* Yes, your Excel- lency! ‘ and off I went. When we reached the first abatis I turned around and said to the soldiers, \* Boys, courage! Look sharp! He who lags behind will be cut down by my own hand.’

With a Russian soldier, you know, you must speak plainly. Suddenly — a shell. I looked, one soldier, another soldier, a third, then bullets — whizz! whizz! whizz! Says I, \* Forward, boys, after me! ‘ No sooner had we reached it, you know, we looked, and there I saw that — you know — what do you call it? “ and the narrator waved his arms in his attempt to find the proper word.

“A ditch,” Bolkhov helped him out.

“No — ah, what is it called? My God! Well, what is it? — a ditch,” he said, hurriedly.”

“We, ‘ Charge bayonets! ‘ — Hurrah! Ta-ra-ta-ta-ta! Not a soul of the enemy. You know we were all surprised. Very well. We marched ahead, — the second abatis. That was an- other matter. We were now on our mettle. No sooner did we walk up than we saw, I observed, the second abatis, — impossible to advance. Here — what do you call it, well, what is that name? — ah, what is it?—”

“Again a ditch,” I helped him out.

“Not at all,” he continued, excitedly, “ No, not a ditch, but — well, what do you call it? “ and he made an insipid gesture with his hand. “ Ah, my God! What do you call it?”

He was apparently suffering so much that we wanted to help him out.

“Maybe a river,” said Bolkhov.

“No, simply a ditch. But the moment we went up there was such a fire, a hell—”

Just then somebody asked for me outside the tent. It was Maksimov. Since there were thirteen other abatises left after having listened to the varied story of the first two, I was glad to use this as an excuse for

leaving for my platoon. Trosenko went out with me. "He is lying," he said -to me after we had walked several steps away from the booth, "he never was in the abatisses," and Tro- senko laughed so heartily that I, too, felt amused.

XIII.

It was dark night, and the fires dimly illuminated the camp, when I, having put everything away, walked up to my soldiers. A large stump was ghmmering on the coals. Three soldiers only were sitting around it: Antonov, who was turning around on the fire a htte kettle in which hardtack soaked in lard was cooking, Zhdanov, who was thoughtfully poking the ashes with a stick, and Chikin, with his eternally unhghted pipe.

The others had already retired for their rest, some under the caissons, others in the hay, and others again around the fires. In the faint light of coals I could distinguish the famihar backs, legs, and heads; among the latter was also the recruit, who was lying close to the fire and was apparently asleep. Antonov made a place for me. I sat down near him and lighted my pipe. The mist and the pungent smoke from the green wood was borne through the air, and made my eyes smart, and the same damp mist drizzled down from the murky sky.

Near us could be heard the even snoring, the crackling of the branches in the fire, a light conversation, and occa- sionally the clattering of the infantry muskets. All about us glowed the fires, illuminating in a small circle the black shadows of the soldiers. At the nearest fires I could distinguish in the lighted spaces the figures of naked soldiers waving their shirts over the very fire.

Many other men were not asleep, but moving about and speaking in the space of fifteen square fathoms; but the dark, gloomy night gave a peculiar, mysterious aspect to all this motion, as though all felt this melancholy quiet and were afraid to break its tranquil harmony. When I began to speak, I felt that my voice sounded quite differ- ently; in the faces of all the soldiers who were sitting near the tire I read the same

mood. I thought that previous to my arrival they had been speaking of their wounded companion, but that was not at all the case: Chikiu was telling about the reception of goods at Tiuis, and about the schoolboys of that city.

Always and everywhere, but especially in the Caucasus, have I noticed the peculiar tact of our soldiers, who, during peril, pass over in silence and avoid all such things as might unhappily affect the minds of their comrades. The spirit of the Russian soldiers is not based, like the bravery of the southern nations, on an easily inflamed, and just as easily extinguished, enthusiasm.

They do not need effects, speeches, military cries, songs, and drums; they need, on the contrary, quiet, order, and the absence of all banality. In Russian, real Russian, soldiers, you will never observe vain bragging, posing, a desire to obscure themselves and to excite themselves in time of danger; on the contrary, modesty, simplicity, and an ability to see in a danger something else than the danger itself, are the distinctive features of their character.

I have seen an outrider, who had been wounded in his leg, in the first moment express his regrets only for the torn fur coat, and then creep out from under the horse, which had been killed under him, and loosen the straps, in order to take off the saddle.

Who does not remember the incident at the siege of Gergebel, when the fuse of a bomb which had just been filled caught fire in the laboratory, and the artificer told two soldiers to take the bomb and run away as fast as possible, in order to throw it into a ditch; the soldiers did not throw it away in the nearest place, which was not far from the colonel's tent, which stood over the ditch, but carried it farther away not to wake the gentlemen who were sleeping in the tent, and so they were both torn to pieces. I remember how, during frontier service in 1852, one of the young soldiers, for some reason, remarked during an action, that he thought the platoon would never come out alive from it, and how the whole platoon angrily upbraided him for such evil words, which they would not even repeat.

Even now, when the thought of Velenchilk ought to have been in everybody's mind, and when any moment a volley might be fired by Tartars creeping up to the camp, everybody was listening to Cliikin's animated story, and nobody recalled the action of the morning, nor the imminent danger, nor the wounded man, as though all that had happened God knows how long ago, or not at all. But it seemed to me that their faces were a little more melancholy than usual; they did not listen very attentively to Cliikin's story, and even Chikin felt that he was not listened to, and kept talking from mere force of habit.

Maksimov went up to the fire and sat down near me. Chikin made a place for him, grew silent, and again started sucking his pipe.

"The foot-soldiers have sent to camp for brandy," said Maksimov, after a considerable silence. "They have just returned." He spit into the fire. "An under-officer told me that he saw our man."

"Well, is he still alive?" asked Antonov, turning his kettle.

"No, he is dead."

The recruit in the small red cap suddenly raised his head above the fire, for a moment looked fixedly at Maksimov and at me, then swiftly lowered his head, and wrapped himself in his overcoat.

"You see, death did not come to him for nothing this morning, as I was waking him in the park," said Antonov.

"Nonsense!" said Zhdanov, turning around a glowing stump, and all grew silent.

Amid a universal silence, there was heard a shot behind us in the camp. Our drummers took note of it, and gave the tattoo. When the last roll died down, Zhdanov was the first to rise; he took off his cap, and we all followed his example.

Amid the deep hush of the night was heard the harmonious chorus of male voices:

"Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us to-day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that

is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

“It was in the year ‘45 that one of our men was con- tused in the same spot,” said Antónov, after we had put on our caps, and had seated ourselves again at the fire. “ We carried him for two days on the ordnance — Zhda- nov, do you remember Shevchenko? We left him there under a tree.”

Just then an infantry soldier, with immense whiskers and moustache, and wearing his cartridge-box, walked over to us.

“Coimtrymen, may I have some fire to Hght my pipe with? “ he said.

“Light it, there is plenty of fire here,” remarked Chikin.

“Countryman, you are, I suppose, telling about Dargi,” the footsoldier said, turning to Antonov.

“Yes, about the year ‘45, at Dargi,” replied Antdnov.

The foot-soldier shook his head, closed his eyes, and squatted down near us.

“It was dreadful there,” he remarked.

“Wliy did you leave him? “ I asked of Antdnov.

“He had terrible pain in his abdomen. As long as we stood still, it was all right; but the moment we moved, he shrieked terribly. He entreated us to leave him, but we pitied him. But when he began to harass us, and had killed three men on our guns, and an officer, and we had gone astray from our battery, it was terrible, — we thought we should never get the gun away. It was so muddy.”

“The worst was, it was muddy at Indian Mountain,” remarked a soldier.

“Well, and he grew worse! Then we considered, — Anóshenka and I, — Anoshenka was an old gun-sergeant, — that he could not hve anyway, and that he invoked God to leave him. And so we concluded we would do so. There was a brandling tree growing there. “We put down near him soakedhardtack, — Zhdanov had some, — and leaned him against the tree; we put a clean shirt on him, bade him farewell, as was proper, and left him.”



“Was he a good soldier?”

“A pretty good one,” remarked Zhdanov.

“God knows what became of him,” continued Antonov. “We left many soldiers there.”

“In Dargi?” said the foot-soldier, rising and poking his pipe, and again closing his eyes and shaking his head. “Yes, it was terrible there.”  
And he went away from us.

“Are there many soldiers in the battery who have been at Dargi?” I asked.

“Well! Zhdanov, I, Patsan, who is now on leave of absence, and six or seven other men. That is all.”

“I wonder whether Patsan is having a good time on his leave of absence,” said Chikin, stretching out his legs and putting his head on a log. “It will soon be a year since he left.”

“Did you take the annual leave?” I asked Zhdanov.

“No, I did not,” he answered, reluctantly.

“But it is good to go,” said Antonov, “when one is from a well-to-do house, or still able to work. It is pleasant, and people at home are glad to see you.”

“What use is there in going, when there are two brothers?” continued Zhdanov. “They have enough to do to support themselves, so what good would one of us soldiers be to them? A man is a poor helper when he has been a soldier for twenty-five years. And who knows whether they are alive?”

“Have you not written to them?” I asked.

“Of course I have! I have written them twice, but they have not yet answered. They are either dead, or they simply don’t care to answer, which means, they are poor, and have no time.”

“How long ago did you write?”

“Just when I came back from Dargi, I wrote my last letter!”

“Sing the song of the ‘Birch-tree,’” Zhdanov said to Antonov, who, leaning on his knees, was humming a song.

Antonov sang the “Birch-tree” song.

“This is Uncle Zhdanov’s favourite song,” Chikin said to me in a whisper, pulling me by the overcoat. “ Many a time, when Filipp Antonych sings it, he weeps.”

Zhdanov sat at first motionless, his eyes directed on the glowing coals, and his face, illuminated by the reddish light, looked exceedingly melancholy; then his cheeks under his ears began to move faster and faster, and finally he got up, spread out his overcoat, and lay down in the shadow, behind the fire. It may be the way he was tossing and groaning, or Velenchiik’s death and the gloomy weather had so affected me, but I really thought he was crying.

The lower Part of the stump, changed into coal, flickered now and then and illuminated Antdnov’s figure, with his gray moustache, red face, and his decorations on the overcoat thrown over liim, or lighted up somebody’s boots or head. From above, drizzled the same gloomy mist; in the air was the same odour of dampness and smoke; all around me were seen the same bright points of dying fires, and were heard amid a general silence the sounds of Antonov’s melancholy song; and whenever it stopped for a moment, its refrain was the sounds of the faint nocturnal motion of the camp, of the snoring, of the clattering of the sentries’ guns, and of subdued conversation.

“Second watch! Makatyuk and Zhdanov! “ shouted Maksimov.

Antonov stopped singing; Zhdanov rose, sighed, stepped across a log, and slowly walked over to the guns.

June 15, 1855.

A Dialogue Among Clever People

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1892

ONCE SOME GUESTS were gathered in a rich man’s home, and it happened that a serious conversation about life arose.

They talked about persons absent and persons pres-ent, and they could not hit upon a single one contented with his life.

Not only did each one find something to complain of in his fortune, but there was not one who would consider that he was living as a Christian ought to live. All confessed that they were living worldly lives, concerned only about themselves and their families, thinking little about their neighbors, and still less about God.

Thus talked the guests, and all agreed in blaming themselves for their godless, unchristian lives.

“ Then why do we live so ? ” cried one youth. “ Why do we do what we ourselves do not approve ? Have we not the power over our own lives ? We ourselves are conscious that our luxury, our effeminacy, our wealth, and especially our pride our separation from our breth-ren are our ruin. In order to be important and rich we must deprive ourselves of everything that gives man joy in living; we crowd ourselves into cities, we make our-selves effeminate, we ruin our constitutions; and notwithstanding all our diversion, we die of ennui and of disgust because our lives are not what they ought to be.

“ Why live so ? Why destroy our lives so, and all the good which God has bestowed on us ? I mean to give up living as I have. I will give up the studies I have begun; for, don’t you see, they would lead me to no other than that tormenting life which all of us are now complaining of. I will renounce my property, and I will go and live with the poor in the country. I will work with them; I will learn to labor with my hands, and if my culture is necessary to the poor, I will share it with them, but not through institutions and books, but directly, living with them as if I were their brother. .... Yes, I have made up my mind,” he added, looking inquiringly at his father, who was also present.

“ Your desire is a worthy one,” said his father,-’but foolish and ill-considered. Everything seems to you quite easy because you don’t know life. How beautiful it seems to us ! But the truth is, the accomplishment of this beautiful ideal is very difficult and complicated. It is hard enough to go well on a beaten track, but still more to trace

out new paths. They can be traced out only by men who have arrived at full maturity and have assimilated all that is in the power of man to absorb.

It seems to you easy to break out new paths in life, because, as yet, you have had no experience of life. This is all the heedlessness and pride of youth. We old people are needed to curb your impulses and to guide you by our experience, while you young people must obey us so as to profit by our experience. Your active life is still before you; now you are growing and developing. Get your education, and all the culture you can; stand on your own legs, have your own firm convictions, and then begin your new life, if you feel you have the strength for it. But now you must obey those that are guiding you for your own good, and you must not strike out into new paths in life ! “

The youth made no reply, and the older persons present agreed with what his father said.

“ You are right,” said a middle-aged, married man, addressing the youth’s father. “It is true that a youth having no experience of life may blunder in trying new paths of life, and his resolution may not be deeply settled; but, you see, we are all agreed on this point, that our lives are contrary to our consciences, and do not make us happy. And so we can’t help regarding your desire to enter upon this new life as laudable.

“ The young man may adopt his ideal through reason, but I am not a young man, and I am going to speak to you about myself. As I listened to our talk this evening the same thought entered my mind. The life which I am leading, it is plain to me, cannot give me a serene conscience and happiness. Both experience and reason prove this. Then what am I waiting for ! You struggle from morning till night for your family, and the result is that both you and your family continue to live un-godly lives, and you are all the while worse and worse entangled in your sins.

You work for your family, and it seems your family are not better off or happier because you work for them. And so I often think it would be

better if I changed my whole life and did exactly what this young man proposed ceased to bother about wife and children, and only thought about my soul. Not without reason does it say in St. Paul : ‘ He that is married takes thought about his wife, but he that is unmarried about God.’ ‘

Before this married man had finished his remarks, all the women present, including his wife, fell upon him :

“ You ought to have thought about all this earlier,” said one of the elderly ladies. “ ‘ Once harnessed, you must work.’ According to your plan every man will be saying, ‘ I want to be saved,’ when it seems to him hard to maintain and feed a family. It is all deception and basebess. No; a man ought to be able to live in a godly way even if he has a family. It is easy enough for him to save himself alone.

And then the main thing to act so is to act contrary to the teaching of Christ. God has commanded us to love others, but in this way you would offend others as if it were for God. No; a married man has his definite obligations, and he ought not to shirk them. It is another thing when your family has already been established. Then you may do as you please for yourself, but no one has any right to do violence to his family.”

The married man did not agree with this. He said :” I have no wish to give up my family. All I say is that it is not necessary to maintain one’s family and children in a worldly fashion, or to teach them to live for their own pleasures as we were just saying; but we ought to train them so that children in their early days may be accustomed to poverty, to labor, to help others; and, above all, to lead a fraternal life with all men. And to do this it is necessary to renounce all wealth and distinction.”

“ There is no sense in breaking in others while you yourself are not living a godly life,” retorted his wife, with some heat. “ Ever since your earliest youth you have lived for your own gratification. Why, then, should you wish to torment your children and family ? Let them grow up in peace, and then they will do as they themselves are inclined; but don’t you coerce them.”

The married man held his peace, but an elderly man who was present took up the cudgels in his defense :

“ Let us admit,” said he, “it is impossible for a married man who has accustomed his family to a certain degree of luxury, suddenly to deprive them of it all. It is true that if you have begun to educate your children, you had better carry out your plans than break them off. All the more, because the children, when they are grown up, will themselves choose the path which they think best. I admit that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a family man to change his life without working injury. But to us old men God has given this as a command. I will say of myself, I am living now without any responsibilities. I am living, to tell the truth, merely for my belly. I eat, I drink, I take my ease, and it is disgusting and repulsive to my nature.

“ So then it is time for me to give up this life, to distribute my property, and to live the rest of my days as God has commanded a Christian to live.”

The rest did not agree with the old man. His niece and goddaughter was present, all of whose children he had stood as sponsor for, always providing them with holiday gifts; and so was his son. All protested against his views.

“ No,” said his son, “you have worked hard in your day, you deserve to rest; and you have no right to torment yourself. You have lived sixty years in your own habits; it would be impossible for you to change them. You would only torment yourself for nothing.”

“Yes, yes,” exclaimed his niece, in confirmation of this, “ you would be in want, you would be out of sorts, you would grumble, and you would commit worse sin. But God is merciful and pardons all sinners much more such a good kind uncle as you are ! “

“Yes, and why should we?” asked another old man, a contemporary of the old uncle. “ You and I may not have two days longer to live. So what is the use of beginning ? “

“What a marvelous thing!” exclaimed one of the guests he had not spoken before “ What a marvel-ous thing ! All of us confess that it is good to live a godly life, and that we live ill and suffer in soul and body; but as soon as it comes to the point, then it seems that it is impossible to break in the children, but they must be educated, not in the godlike way, but in the old-fashioned way.

It is impossible for a young man to es-cape from his parents’ will, but he must live, not in the godlike way, but in the old way. A married man can-not restrain his wife and children, but must live the ungodlike life, in the old way. The old men cannot begin, they are not accustomed to it; and besides this, they may not live two days longer. So the upshot is that it is impossible for any one to live well, but only to talk about it.”

## Diary Of A Lunatic

Translated by Constance Garnett 1912

THIS MORNING I underwent a medical examination in the government council room. The opinions of the doctors were divided. They argued among themselves and came at last to the conclusion that I was not mad. But this was due to the fact that I tried hard during the examination not to give myself away. I was afraid of being sent to the lunatic asylum, where I would not be able to go on with the mad undertaking I have on my hands. They pronounced me subject to fits of excitement, and something else, too, but nevertheless of sound mind. The doctor prescribed a certain treatment, and assured me that by following his directions my trouble would completely disappear. Imagine, all that torments me disappearing completely! Oh, there is nothing I would not give to be free from my trouble. The suffering is too great!

I am going to tell explicitly how I came to undergo that examination; how I went mad, and how my madness was revealed to the outside world.

Up to the age of thirty-five I lived like the rest of the world, and nobody had noticed any peculiarities in me. Only in my early childhood, before I was ten, I had occasionally been in a mental state similar to the present one, and then only at intervals, whereas now I am continually conscious of it.

I remember going to bed one evening, when I was a child of five or six. Nurse Euprasia, a tall, lean woman in a brown dress, with a double chin, was undressing me, and was just lifting me up to put me into bed.

“I will get into bed myself,” I said, preparing to step over the net at the bedside.

“Lie down, Fedinka. You see, Mitinka is already lying quite still,” she said, pointing with her head to my brother in his bed.

I jumped into my bed still holding nurse’s hand in mine. Then I let it go, stretched my legs under the blanket and wrapped myself up. I felt so nice and warm! I grew silent all of a sudden and began thinking: “I love nurse, nurse loves me and Mitinka, I love Mitinka too, and he loves me and nurse. And nurse loves Taras; I love Taras too, and so does Mitinka. And Taras loves me and nurse. And mother loves me and nurse, nurse loves mother and me and father; everybody loves everybody, and everybody is happy.”

Suddenly the housekeeper rushed in and began to shout in an angry voice something about a sugar basin she could not find. Nurse got cross and said she did not take it. I felt frightened; it was all so strange. A cold horror came over me, and I hid myself under the blanket. But I felt no better in the darkness under the blanket. I thought of a boy who had got a thrashing one day in my presence-of his screams, and of the cruel face of Foka when he was beating the boy.

“Then you won’t do it any more; you won’t!” he repeated and went on beating.

“I won’t,” said the boy; and Foka kept on repeating over and over, “You won’t, you won’t!” and did not cease to strike the boy.



That was when my madness came over me for the first time. I burst into sobs, and they could not quiet me for a long while. The tears and despair of that day were the first signs of my present trouble.

I well remember the second time my madness seized me. It was when aunt was telling us about Christ. She told His story and got up to leave the room. But we held her back: "Tell us more about Jesus Christ!" we said.

"I must go," she replied.

"No, tell us more, please!" Mitinka insisted, and she repeated all she had said before. She told us how they crucified Him, how they beat and martyred Him, and how He went on praying and did not blame them.

"Auntie, why did they torture Him?"

"They were wicked."

"But wasn't he God?"

"Be still-it is nine o'clock, don't you hear the clock striking?"

"Why did they beat Him? He had forgiven them. Then why did they hit Him? Did it hurt Him? Auntie, did it hurt?"

"Be quiet, I say. I am going to the dining-room to have tea now."

"But perhaps it never happened, perhaps He was not beaten by them?"

"I am going."

"No, Auntie, don't go!..." And again my madness took possession of me. I sobbed and sobbed, and began knocking my head against the wall.

Such had been the fits of my madness in my childhood. But after I was fourteen, from the time the instincts of sex awoke and I began to give way to vice, my madness seemed to have passed, and I was a boy like other boys. Just as happens with all of us who are brought up on rich, over-abundant food, and are spoiled and made effeminate, because we never do any physical work, and are surrounded by all possible temptations, which excite our sensual nature when in the company of other children similarly spoiled, so I had been taught vice by other boys of my age and I indulged in it.

As time passed other vices came to take the place of the first. I began to know women, and so I went on living, up to the time I was thirty-five, looking out for all kinds of pleasures and enjoying them. I had a perfectly sound mind then, and never a sign of madness. Those twenty years of my normal life passed without leaving any special record on my memory, and now it is only with a great effort of mind and with utter disgust, that I can concentrate my thoughts upon that time.

Like all the boys of my set, who were of sound mind, I entered school, passed on to the university and went through a course of law studies. Then I entered the State service for a short time, married, and settled down in the country, educating-if our way of bringing up children can be called educating-my children, looking after the land, and filling the post of a Justice of the Peace.

It was when I had been married ten years that one of those attacks of madness I suffered from in my childhood made its appearance again. My wife and I had saved up money from her inheritance and from some Government bonds of mind which I had sold, and we decided that with that money we would buy another estate. I was naturally keen to increase our fortune, and to do it in the shrewdest way, better than any one else would manage it.

I went about inquiring what estates were to be sold, and used to read all the advertisements in the papers. What I wanted was to buy an estate, the produce or timber of which would cover the cost of purchase, and then I would have the estate practically for nothing. I was looking out for a fool who did not understand business, and there came a day when I thought I had found one. An estate with large forests attached to it was to be sold in the Pensa Government. To judge by the information I had received the proprietor of that estate was exactly the imbecile I wanted, and I might expect the forests to cover the price asked for the whole estate. I got my things ready and was soon on my way to the estate I wished to inspect.

We had first to go by train (I had taken my man-servant with me), then by coach, with relays of horses at the various stations. The journey was very pleasant, and my servant, a good-natured youth, liked it as much as I did. We enjoyed the new surroundings and the new people, and having now only about two hundred miles more to drive, we decided to go on without stopping, except to change horses at the stations. Night came on and we were still driving. I had been dozing, but presently I awoke, seized with a sudden fear. As often happens in such a case, I was so excited that I was thoroughly awake and it seemed as if sleep were gone for ever. "Why am I driving? Where am I going?" I suddenly asked myself. It was not that I disliked the idea of buying an estate at a bargain, but it seemed at that moment so senseless to journey to such a far away place, and I had a feeling as if I were going to die there, away from home. I was overcome with terror.

My servant Sergius awoke, and I took advantage of the fact to talk to him. I began to remark upon the scenery around us; he had also a good deal to say, of the people at home, of the pleasure of the journey, and it seemed strange to me that he could talk so gaily. He appeared so pleased with everything and in such good spirits, whereas I was annoyed with it all. Still, I felt more at ease when I was talking with him. Along with my feelings of restlessness and my secret horror, however, I was fatigued as well, and longed to break the journey somewhere. It seemed to me my uneasiness would cease if I could only enter a room, have tea, and, what I desired most of all, sleep.

We were approaching the town Arzamas.

"Don't you think we had better stop here and have a rest?"

"Why not? It's an excellent idea."

"How far are we from the town?" I asked the driver.

"Another seven miles."

The driver was a quiet, silent man. He was driving rather slowly and wearily.

We drove on. I was silent, but I felt better, looking forward to a rest and hoping to feel the better for it. We drove on and on in the darkness, and the seven miles seemed to have no end. At last we reached the

town. It was sound asleep at that early hour. First came the small houses, piercing the darkness, and as we passed them, the noise of our jingling bells and the trotting of our horses sounded louder. In a few places the houses were large and white, but I did not feel less dejected for seeing them. I was waiting for the station, and the samovar, and longed to lie down and rest.

At last we approached a house with pillars in front of it. The house was white, but it seemed to me very melancholy. I felt even frightened at its aspect and stepped slowly out of the carriage. Sergius was busying himself with our luggage, taking what we needed for the night, running about and stepping heavily on the doorsteps. The sound of his brisk tread increased my weariness. I walked in and came into a small passage. A man received us; he had a large spot on his cheek and that spot filled me with horror. He asked us into a room which was just an ordinary room. My uneasiness was growing.

“Could we have a room to rest in?” I asked.

“Oh, yes, I have a very nice bedroom at your disposal. A square room, newly whitewashed.”

The fact of the little room being square was-I remember it so well-most painful to me. It had one window with a red curtain, a table of birchwood and a sofa with a curved back and arms. Sergius boiled the water in the samovar and made the tea. I put a pillow on the sofa in the meantime and lay down. I was not asleep; I heard Sergius busy with the samovar and urging me to have tea. I was afraid to get up from the sofa, afraid of driving away sleep; and just to be sitting in that room seemed awful.

I did not get up, but fell into a sort of doze. When I started up out of it, nobody was in the room and it was quite dark. I woke up with the very same sensation I had the first time and knew sleep was gone. “Why am I here? Where am I going? Just as I am I must be for ever. Neither the Pensa nor any other estate will add to or take anything away from me. As for me, I am unbearably weary of myself. I want to go to sleep, to forget-and I cannot, I cannot get rid of self.”

I went out into the passage. Sergius was sleeping there on a narrow bench, his hand hanging down beside it. He was sleeping soundly, and the man with the spot on his cheek was also asleep. I thought, by going out of the room, to get away from what was tormenting me. But it followed me and made everything seem dark and dreary. My feeling of horror, instead of leaving me, was increasing.

“What nonsense!” I said to myself. “Why am I so dejected? What am I afraid of?” “You are afraid of me”-I heard the voice of Death-“I am here.”

I shuddered. Yes,-Death! Death will come, it will come and it ought not to come. Even in facing actual death I would certainly not feel anything of what I felt now. Then it would be simply fear, whereas now it was more than that. I was actually seeing, feeling the approach of death, and along with it I felt that death ought not to exist.

My entire being was conscious of the necessity of the right to live, and at the same time of the inevitability of dying. This inner conflict was causing me unbearable pain. I tried to shake off the horror; I found a half-burnt candle in a brass candlestick and lighted it. The candle with its red flame burnt down until it was not much taller than the low candlestick. The same thing seemed to be repeated over and over: nothing lasts, life is not, all is death-but death ought not to exist. I tried to turn my thoughts to what had interested me before, to the estate I was to buy and to my wife.

Far from being a relief, these seemed nothing to me now. To feel my life doomed to be taken from me was a terror shutting out any other thought. “I must try to sleep,” I decided. I went to bed, but the next instant I jumped up, seized with horror. A sickness overcame me, a spiritual sickness not unlike the physical uneasiness preceding actual illness-but in the spirit, not in the body. A terrible fear similar to the fear of death, when mingled with the recollections of my past life, developed into a horror as if life were departing. Life and death were flowing into one another. An unknown power was trying to tear my soul into pieces, but could not bend it. Once more I went out into the

passage to look at the two men asleep; once more I tried to go to sleep. The horror was always the same-now red, now white and square.

Something was tearing within but could not be torn aPart. A torturing sensation! An arid hatred deprived me of every spark of kindly feeling. Just a dull and steady hatred against myself and against that which had created me. What did create me? God? We say God...."What if I tried to pray?" I suddenly thought.

I had not said a prayer for more than twenty years and i had no religious sentiment, although just for formality's sake I fasted and Partook of the communion every year. I began saying prayers; "God, forgive me," "Our Father," "Our Lady," I was composing new prayers, crossing myself, bowing to the earth, looking around me all the while for fear I might be discovered in my devotional attitude. The prayers seemed to divert my thoughts from the previous terror, but it was more the fear of being seen by somebody that did it.

I went to bed again. but the moment I shut my eyes the very same feeling of terror made me jump up. I could not stand it any longer. I called the hotel servant, roused Sergius from his sleep, ordered him to harness the horses to the carriage and we were soon driving on once more. The open air and the drive made me feel much better. But I realised that something new had come into my soul, and had poisoned the life I had lived up to that hour.

We reached our destination in the evening. The whole day long I remained struggling with despair, and finally conquered it; but a horror remained in the depth of my soul. It was as if a misfortune had happened to me, and although I was able to forget it for a while, it remained at the bottom of my soul, and I was entirely dominated by it.

The manager of the estate, an old man, received us in a very friendly manner, though not exactly with great joy; he was sorry that the estate was to be sold. The clean little rooms with upholstered furniture, a new, shining samovar on the tea-table, nice large cups, honey served with the tea,-everything was pleasant to see. I began questioning him

about the estate without any interest, as if I were repeating a lesson learned long ago and nearly forgotten. It was so uninteresting. But that night I was able to go to sleep without feeling miserable. I thought this was due to having said my prayers again before going to bed.

After that incident I resumed my ordinary life; but the apprehension that this horror would again come upon me was continual. I had to live my usual life without any respite, not giving way to my thoughts, just like a schoolboy who repeats by habit and without thinking the lesson learned by heart. That was the only way to avoid being seized again by the horror and the despair I had experienced in Arzamas.

I had returned home safe from my journey; I had not bought the estate-I had not enough money. My life at home seemed to be just as it had always been, save for my having taken to saying prayers and to going to church. But now, when I recollect that time, I see that I only imagined my life to be the same as before. The fact was I merely continued what I had previously started, and was running with the same speed on rails already laid; but I did not undertake anything new.

Even in those things which I had already taken in hand my interest had diminished. I was tired of everything, and was growing very religious. My wife noticed this, and was often vexed with me for it. No new fit of distress occurred while I was at home. But one day I had to go unexpectedly to Moscow, where a lawsuit was pending. In the train I entered into conversation with a land-owner from Kharkov.

We were talking about the management of estates, about bank business, about the hotels in Moscow, and the theatres. We both decided to stop at the "Moscow Court," in the Miasnizkaia Street, and go that evening to the opera, to Faust. When we arrived I was shown into a small room, the heavy smell of the passage being still in my nostrils. the porter brought in my portmanteau, and the amid lighted the candle, the flame of which burned up brightly and then flickered, as it usually does.

In the room next to mine I heard somebody coughing, probably an old man. The maid went out, and the porter asked whether I wished him to open my bag. In the meanwhile the candle flame had flared up, throwing its light on the blue wallpaper with yellow stripes, on the Partition, on the shabby table, on the small sofa in the front of it, on the mirror hanging on the wall, and on the window. I saw what the small room was like, and suddenly felt the horror of the Arzamas night awakening within me.

“My God! Must I stay here for the night? How can I?” I thought. “Will you kindly unfasten my bag?” I said to the porter, to keep him longer in the room. “And now I’ll dress quickly and go to the theatre,” I said to myself.

When the bag had been untied I said to the porter, “Please tell the gentleman in Number 8—the one who came with me—that I shall be ready presently, and ask him to wait for me.”

The porter left, and I began to dress in haste, afraid to look at the walls. “But what nonsense!” I said to myself. “Why am I frightened like a child? I am not afraid of ghosts—” Ghosts! to be afraid of ghosts is nothing to what I was afraid of! “But what is it? Absolutely nothing. I am only afraid of myself....Nonsense!”

I slipped into a cold, rough, starched shirt, stuck in the studs, put on evening dress and new boots, and went to call for the Kharkov landowner, who was ready. We started for the opera house. He stopped on the way to have his hair curled, while I went to a French hairdresser to have mine cut, where I talked a little to the Frenchwoman in the shop and bought a pair of gloves. Everything seemed all right. I had completely forgotten the oblong room in the hotel, and the walls.

I enjoyed the Faust performance very much, and when it was over my companion proposed that we should have supper. This was contrary to my habits; but just at that moment I remembered the walls in my room, and accepted.



We returned home after one. I had two glasses of wine-an unusual thing for me-in spite of which I was feeling quite at ease. But the moment we entered the passage with the lowered lamp lighting it, the moment I was surrounded by the peculiar smell of the hotel. I felt a cold shudder of horror running down my back. But there was nothing to be done. I shook hands with my new friend, and stepped into my room.

I had a frightful night-much worse than the night at Arzamas; and it was not until dawn, when the old man in the next room was coughing again, that I fell asleep-and then not in my bed, but, after getting in and out of it many times, on the sofa.

I suffered the whole night unbearably. Once more my soul and my body were tearing themselves apart within me. the same thoughts came again: "I am living, I have lived up till now, I have the right to live; but all around me is death and destruction. Then why live? Why not die? Why not kill myself immediately? No; I could not. I am afraid. Is it better to wait for death to come when it will? No, that is even worse; and I am also afraid of that. Then, I must live. But what for? In order to die?"

I could not get out of that circle. I took a book, and began reading. For a moment it made me forget my thoughts. But then the same questions and the same horror came again. I got into bed, lay down, and shut my eyes. That made the horror worse. God had created things as they are. But why? They say, "Don't ask; pray." Well, I did pray; I was praying now, just as I did at Arzamas.

At that time I had prayed simply, like a child. now my prayers had a definite meaning: "If Thou exist, reveal Thy existence to me. To what end am I created? What am I?" I was bowing to the earth, repeating all the prayers I knew, composing new ones; and I was adding each time, "Reveal Thy existence to me!" I became quiet, waiting for an answer. But no answer came, as if there were nothing to answer. I was alone, alone with myself and was answering my own questions in place of him who would not answer. "What am I created for?" "To live in a future

life," I answered. "Then why this uncertainty and torment? I cannot believe in future life.

I did believe when I asked, but not with my whole soul. Now I cannot, I cannot! If Thou didst exist, Thou wouldst reveal it to me, to all men. But Thou dost not exist, and there is nothing true but distress." But I cannot accept that! I rebelled against it; I implored Him to reveal His existence to me. I did all that everybody does, but He did not reveal Himself to me. "Ask and it shall be given unto you," I remembered, and began to entreat; in doing so I felt no real comfort, but just surcease of despair. Perhaps it was not entreaty on my Part, but only denial of Him. You retreat a step from Him, and He goes from you a mile. I did not believe in Him, and yet here I was entreating Him. But He did not reveal Himself. I was balancing my accounts with Him, and was blaming Him. I simply did not believe.

The next day I used all my endeavors to get through with my affairs somehow during the day, in order to be saved from another night in the hotel room. Although I had not finished everything, I left for home in the evening.

That night at Moscow brought a still greater change into my life, which had been changing ever since the night at Arzamas. I was now paying less attention to my affairs, and grew more and more indifferent to everything around me. My health was also getting bad. My wife urged me to consult a doctor. To her my continual talk about God and religion was a sign of ill-health, whereas I knew I was ill and weak, because of the unsolved questions of religion and of God.

I was trying not to let that question dominate my mind, and continued living amid the old unaltered conditions, filling up my time with incessant occupations. On Sundays and feast days I went to church; I even fasted as I had begun to do since my journey to Pensa, and did not cease to pray. I had no faith in my prayers, but somehow I kept the demand note in my possession instead of tearing it up, and was always presenting it for payment, although I was aware of the impossibility of getting paid. I did it just on the chance. I occupied my days, not with the

management of the estate-I felt disgusted with all business because of the struggle it involved-but with the reading of papers, magazines, and novels, and with card-playing for small stakes. the only outlet for my energy was hunting. I had kept that up from habit, having been fond of this sport all my life.

One day in winter, a neighbor of mine came with his dogs to hunt wolves. Having arrived at the meeting place we put on snowshoes to walk over the snow and move rapidly along. The hunt was unsuccessful; the wolves contrived to escape through the stockade.

As I became aware of that from a distance, I took the direction of the forest to follow the fresh track of a hare. This led me far away into a field. There I spied the hare, but he had disappeared before I could fire. I turned to go back, and had to pass a forest of huge trees. The snow was deep, the snowshoes were sinking in, and the branches were entangling me. The wood was getting thicker and thicker. I wondered where I was, for the snow had changed all the familiar places. Suddenly I realised that I had lost my way. How should I get home or reach the hunting Party? Not a sound to guide me! I was tired and bathed in perspiration.

If I stopped, I would probably freeze to death; if I walked on, my strength would forsake me. I shouted, but all was quiet, and no answer came. I turned in the opposite direction, which was wrong again, and looked round. Nothing but the wood on every hand. I could not tell which was east or west. I turned back again, but I could hardly move a step. I was frightened, and stopped. the horror I had experienced in Arzamas and in Moscow seized me again, only a hundred times greater.

My heart was beating, my hands and feet were shaking. Am I to die here? I don't want to! Why death? What is death? I was about to ask again, to reproach God, when I suddenly felt I must not; I ought not. I had not the right to present any account to him; He had said all that was necessary, and the fault was wholly mine. I began to implore His forgiveness for I felt disgusted with myself. The horror, however, did not last long.

I stood still one moment, plucked up courage, took the direction which seemed to be the right one, and was actually soon out of the wood. I had not been far from its edge when I lost my way. As I came out on the main road, my hands and feet were still shaking, and my heart was beating violently. But my soul was full of joy. I soon found my Party, and we all returned home together. I was not quite happy but I knew there was a joy within me which I would understand later on; and that joy proved real. I went to my study to be alone and prayed remembering my sins, and asking for forgiveness. They did not seem to be numerous; but when I thought of what they were they were hateful to me.

Then I began to read the Scriptures. The Old Testament I found incomprehensible but enchanting, the New touching in its meekness. But my favorite reading was now the lives of the saints; they were consoling to me, affording example which seemed more and more possible to follow. Since that time I have grown even less interested in the management of affairs and in family matters. These things even became repulsive to me. Everything was wrong in my eyes. I did not quite realise why they were wrong, but I knew that the things of which my whole life had consisted, now counted for nothing. This was plainly revealed to me again on the occasion of the projected purchase of an estate, which was for sale in our neighborhood on very advantageous terms. I went to inspect it.

Everything was very satisfactory, the more so because the peasants on that estate had no land of their own beyond their vegetable gardens. I grasped at once that in exchange for the right of using the landowner's pasture-grounds, they would do all the harvesting for him; and the information I was given proved that I was right. I saw how important that was, and was pleased, as it was in accordance with my old habits of thought. But on my way home I met an old woman who asked her way, and I entered into a conversation with her, during which she told me about her poverty.

On returning home, when telling my wife about the advantages the estate afforded, all at once I felt ashamed and disgusted. I said I was not going to buy that estate, for its profits were based on the sufferings of the peasants. I was struck at that moment with the truth of what I was saying, the truth of the peasants having the same desire to live as ourselves, of their being our equals, our brethren, the children of the Father, as the Gospel says. But unexpectedly something which had been gnawing within me for a long time became loosened and was torn away, and something new seemed to be born instead.

My wife was vexed with me and abused me. But I was full of joy. This was the first sign of my madness. My utter madness began to show itself about a month later.

This began by my going to church; I was listening to the Mass with great attention and with a faithful heart, when I was suddenly given a wafer; after which every one began to move forward to kiss the Cross, pushing each other on all sides. As I was leaving church, beggars were standing on the steps. It became instantly clear to me that this ought not to be, and in reality was not. But if this is not, then there is no death and no fear, and nothing is being torn asunder within me, and I am not afraid of any calamity which may come.

At that moment the full light of the truth was kindled in me, and I grew into what I am now. If all this horror does not necessarily exist around me, then it certainly does exist within me. I distributed on the spot all the money I had among the beggars in the porch, and walked home instead of driving in my carriage as usual, and all the way I talked with the peasants.

The Empty Drum

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

EMELYÁN WAS A labourer and worked for a master. Crossing the meadows one day on his way to work, he nearly trod on a frog that

jumped right in front of him, but he just managed to avoid it. Suddenly he heard some one calling to him from behind.

Emelyán looked round and saw a lovely lassie, who said to him: 'Why don't you get married, Emelyán?'

'How can I marry, my lass?' said he. 'I have but the clothes I stand up in, nothing more, and no one would have me for a husband.'

'Take me for a wife,' said she.

Emelyán liked the maid. 'I should be glad to,' said he, 'but where and how could we live?'

'Why trouble about that?' said the girl. 'One only has to work more and sleep less, and one can clothe and feed oneself anywhere.'

'Very well then, let us marry,' said Emelyán. 'Where shall we go to?'

'Let us go to town.'

So Emelyán and the lass went to town, and she took him to a small hut on the very edge of the town, and they married and began housekeeping.

One day the King, driving through the town, passed by Emelyán's hut. Emelyán's wife came out to see the King. The King noticed her and was quite surprised.

'Where did such a beauty come from?' said he and stopping his carriage he called Emelyán's wife and asked her: 'Who are you?'

'The peasant Emelyán's wife,' said she.

'Why did you, who are such a beauty, marry a peasant?' said the King.

'You ought to be a queen!'

'Thank you for your kind words,' said she, 'but a peasant husband is good enough for me.'

The King talked to her awhile and then drove on. He returned to the palace, but could not get Emelyán's wife out of his head. All night he did not sleep, but kept thinking how to get her for himself. He could think of no way of doing it, so he called his servants and told them they must find a way.

The King's servants said: 'Command Emelyán to come to the palace to work, and we will work him so hard that he will die. His wife will be left a widow, and then you can take her for yourself.'

The King followed their advice. He sent an order that Emelyán should come to the palace as a workman and that he should live at the palace, and his wife with him.

The messengers came to Emelyán and gave him the King's message. His wife said, 'Go, Emelyán; work all day, but come back home at night.'

So Emelyán went, and when he got to the palace the King's steward asked him, 'Why have you come alone, without your wife?'

'Why should I drag her about?' said Emelyán. 'She has a house to live in.'

At the King's palace they gave Emelyán work enough for two. He began the job not hoping to finish it; but when evening came, lo and behold! it was all done. The steward saw that it was finished, and set him four times as much for next day.

Emelyán went home. Everything there was swept and tidy; the oven was heated, his supper was cooked and ready, and his wife sat by the table sewing and waiting for his return. She greeted him, laid the table, gave him to eat and drink, and then began to ask him about his work. 'Ah!' said he, 'it's a bad business: they give me tasks beyond my strength, and want to kill me with work.'

'Don't fret about the work,' said she, 'don't look either before or behind to see how much you have done or how much there is left to do; only keep on working and all will be right.'

So Emelyán lay down and slept. Next morning he went to work again and worked without once looking round. And, lo and behold! by the evening it was all done, and before dark he came home for the night.

Again and again they increased Emelyán's work, but he always got through it in good time and went back to his hut to sleep. A week passed, and the King's servants saw they could not crush him with rough work so they tried giving him work that required skill. But this,

also, was of no avail. Carpentering, and masonry, and roofing, whatever they set him to do, Emelyán had it ready in time, and went home to his wife at night. So a second week passed.

Then the King called his servants and said: 'Am I to feed you for nothing? Two weeks have gone, and I don't see that you have done anything. You were going to tire Emelyán out with work, but I see from my windows how he goes home every evening — singing cheerfully! Do you mean to make a fool of me?'

The King's servants began to excuse themselves. 'We tried our best to wear him out with rough work,' they said, 'but nothing was too hard for him; he cleared it all off as though he had swept it away with a broom. There was no tiring him out. Then we set him to tasks needing skill, which we did not think he was clever enough to do, but he managed them all. No matter what one sets him, he does it all, no one knows how.'

Either he or his wife must know some spell that helps them. We ourselves are sick of him, and wish to find a task he cannot master. We have now thought of setting him to build a cathedral in a single day. Send for Emelyán, and order him to build a cathedral in front of the palace in a single day. Then, if he does not do it, let his head be cut off for disobedience.'

The King sent for Emelyán. 'Listen to my command,' said he: 'build me a new cathedral on the square in front of my palace, and have it ready by to-morrow evening. If you have it ready I will reward you, but if not I will have your head cut off.'

When Emelyán heard the King's command he turned away and went home. 'My end is near,' thought he. And coming to his wife, he said: 'Get ready, wife we must fly from here, or I shall be lost by no fault of my own.'

'What has frightened you so?' said she, 'and why should we run away?'



‘How can I help being frightened? The King has ordered me, to-morrow, in a single day, to build him a cathedral. If I fail he will cut my head off. There is only one thing to be done: we must fly while there is yet time.’

But his wife would not hear of it. ‘The King has many soldiers,’ said she. ‘They would catch us anywhere. We cannot escape from him, but must obey him as long as strength holds out.’

‘How can I obey him when the task is beyond my strength?’

‘Eh, goodman, don’t be downhearted. Eat your supper now, and go to sleep. Rise early in the morning and all will get done.’

So Emelyán lay down and slept. His wife roused him early next day. ‘Go quickly,’ said she, ‘and finish the cathedral. Here are nails and a hammer; there is still enough work there for a day.’

Emelyán went into the town, reached the palace square, and there stood a large cathedral not quite finished. Emelyán set to work to do what was needed, and by the evening all was ready.

When the King awoke he looked out from his palace, and saw the cathedral, and Emelyán going about driving in nails here and there. And the King was not pleased to have the cathedral — he was annoyed at not being able to condemn Emelyán and take his wife. Again he called his servants. ‘Emelyán has done this task also,’ said the King, ‘and there is no excuse for putting him to death. Even this work was not too hard for him. You must find a more cunning plan, or I will cut off your heads as well as his.’

So his servants planned that Emelyán should be ordered to make a river round the palace, with ships sailing on it. And the King sent for Emelyán and set him this new task.

‘If,’ said he, ‘you could build a cathedral in one night, you can also do this. To-morrow all must be ready. If not, I will have your head off.’

Emelyán was more downcast than before, and returned to his wife sad at heart.

‘Why are you so sad?’ said his wife. ‘Has the King set you a fresh task?’ Emelyán told her about it. ‘We must fly,’ said he.

But his wife replied: 'There is no escaping the soldiers; they will catch us wherever we go. There is nothing for it but to obey.'  
'How can I do it?' groaned Emelyán.

'Eh! eh! goodman,' said she, 'don't be downhearted. Eat your supper now, and go to sleep. Rise early, and all will get done in good time.'  
So Emelyán lay down and slept. In the morning his wife woke him. 'Go,' said she 'to the palace — all is ready. Only, near the wharf in front of the palace, there is a mound left; take a spade and level it.

When the King awoke he saw a river where there had not been one; ships were sailing up and down, and Emelyán was levelling a mound with a spade. The King wondered, but was pleased neither with the river nor with the ships, so vexed was he at not being able to condemn Emelyán. 'There is no task,' thought he, 'that he cannot manage. What is to be done?' And he called his servants and again asked their advice.

'Find some task,' said he, 'which Emelyán cannot compass. For whatever we plan he fulfils, and I cannot take his wife from him.'  
The King's servants thought and thought, and at last devised a plan. They came to the King and said: 'Send for Emelyán and say to him: "Go to there, don't know where," and bring back "that, don't know what." Then he will not be able to escape you. No matter where he goes, you can say that he has not gone to the right place, and no matter what he brings, you can say it is not the right thing. Then you can have him beheaded and can take his wife.'

The King was pleased. 'That is well thought of,' said he. So the King sent for Emelyán and said to him: 'Go to "there, don't know where," and bring back "that, don't know what." If you fail to bring it, I will have you beheaded.'

Emelyán returned to his wife and told her what the King had said. His wife became thoughtful.

'Well,' said she, 'they have taught the King how to catch you. Now we must act warily.'  
So she sat and thought, and at last said to her husband: 'You must go far, to our Grandam — the old peasant woman,

the mother of soldiers — and you must ask her aid. If she helps you to anything, go straight to the palace with it, I shall be there: I cannot escape them now. They will take me by force, but it will not be for long. If you do everything as Grandam directs, you will soon save me.'

So the wife got her husband ready for the journey. She gave him a wallet, and also a spindle. 'Give her this,' said she. 'By this token she will know that you are my husband.' And his wife showed him his road.

Emelyán set off. He left the town behind, and came to where some soldiers were being drilled. Emelyán stood and watched them. After drill the soldiers sat down to rest. Then Emelyán went up to them and asked: 'Do you know, brothers, the way to "there, don't know where?" and how I can get "that, don't know what?"'

The soldiers listened to him with surprise. 'Who sent you on this errand?' said they

'The King,' said he.

'We ourselves,' said they, 'from the day we became soldiers, go we "don't know where," and never yet have we got there; and we seek we "don't know what," and cannot find it. We cannot help you.'

Emelyán sat a while with the soldiers and then went on again. He trudged many a mile, and at last came to a wood. In the wood was a hut, and in the hut sat an old, old woman, the mother of peasant soldiers, spinning flax and weeping. And as she spun she did not put her fingers to her mouth to wet them with spittle, but to her eyes to wet them with tears. When the old woman saw Emelyán she cried out at him: 'Why have you come here?' Then Emelyán gave her the spindle, and said his wife had sent it.

The old woman softened at once, and began to question him. And Emelyán told her his whole life: how he married the lass; how they went to live in the town; how he had worked, and what he had done at the palace; how he built the cathedral, and made a river with ships on it, and how the King had now told him to go to 'there, don't know where, and bring back 'that, don't know what.'

The Grandam listened to the end, and ceased weeping. She muttered to herself: 'The time has surely come,' and said to him: 'All right, my lad. Sit down now, and I will give you something to eat.'

Emelyán ate, and then the Grandam told him what to do. 'Here,' said she, 'is a ball of thread; roll it before you, and follow where it goes. You must go far till you come right to the sea. When you get there you will see a great city. Enter the city and ask for a night's lodging at the furthest house. There look out for what you are seeking.'  
'How shall I know it when I see it, Granny?' said he.

'When you see something men obey more than father or mother, that is it. Seize that, and take it to the King. When you bring it to the King, he will say it is not right, and you must answer: "If it is not the right thing it must be smashed," and you must beat it, and carry it to the river, break it in pieces, and throw it into the water. Then you will get your wife back and my tears will be dried.'

Emelyán bade farewell to the Grandam and began rolling his ball before him. It rolled and rolled until at last it reached the sea. By the sea stood a great city, and at the further end of the city was a big house. There Emelyán begged for a night's lodging, and was granted it. He lay down to sleep, and in the morning awoke and heard a father rousing his son to go and cut wood for the fire. But the son did not obey. 'It is too early,' said he, 'there is time enough.' Then Emelyán heard the mother say, 'Go, my son, your father's bones ache; would you have him go himself? It is time to be up!'

But the son only murmured some words and fell asleep again. Hardly was he asleep when something thundered and rattled in the street. Up jumped the son and quickly putting on his clothes ran out into the street. Up jumped Emelyán, too, and ran after him to see what it was that a son obeys more than father or mother. What he saw was a man walking along the street carrying, tied to his stomach, a thing which he beat with sticks, and that it was that rattled and thundered so, and that the son had obeyed. Emelyán ran up and had a look at it. He saw it was

round, like a small tub, with a skin stretched over both ends, and he asked what it was called.

He was told, 'A drum.'

'And is it empty?'

'Yes, it is empty.'

Emelyán was surprised. He asked them to give the thing to him, but they would not. So Emelyán left off asking, and followed the drummer. All day he followed, and when the drummer at last lay down to sleep, Emelyán snatched the drum from him and ran away with it.

He ran and ran, till at last he got back to his own town. He went to see his wife, but she was not at home. The day after he went away, the King had taken her. So Emelyán went to the palace, and sent in a message to the King: 'He has returned who went to "there, don't know where," and he has brought with him "that, don't know what."'

They told the King, and the King said he was to come again next day. But Emelyán said, 'Tell the King I am here to-day, and have brought what the King wanted. Let him come out to me, or I will go in to him!' The King came out. 'Where have you been?' said he. Emelyán told him.

'That's not the right place,' said the King. 'What have you brought?'

Emelyán pointed to the drum, but the King did not look at it.

'That is not it.'

'If it is not the right thing,' said Emelyán, 'it must be smashed, and may the devil take it!'

And Emelyán left the palace, carrying the drum and beating it. And as he beat it all the King's army ran out to follow Emelyán, and they saluted him and waited his commands.

The King, from his window, began to shout at his army telling them not to follow Emelyán. They did not listen to what he said, but all followed Emelyán.

When the King saw that, he gave orders that Emelyán's wife should be taken back to him, and he sent to ask Emelyán to give him the drum. 'It can't be done,' said Emelyán. 'I was told to smash it and to throw the splinters into the river.'

So Emelyán went down to the river carrying the drum, and the soldiers followed him. When he reached the river bank Emelyán smashed the drum to splinters, and threw the splinters into the stream. And then all the soldiers ran away.

Emelyán took his wife and went home with her. And after that the King ceased to trouble him; and so they lived happily ever after.

Evil Allures, But Good Endures

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

THERE LIVED IN olden times a good and kindly man. He had this world's goods in abundance, and many slaves to serve him. And the slaves prided themselves on their master, saying:

'There is no better lord than ours under the sun. He feeds and clothes us well, and gives us work suited to our strength. He bears no malice and never speaks a harsh word to any one. He is not like other masters, who treat their slaves worse than cattle: punishing them whether they deserve it or not, and never giving them a friendly word. He wishes us well, does good, and speaks kindly to us. We do not wish for a better life.'

Thus the slaves praised their lord, and the Devil, seeing it, was vexed that slaves should live in such love and harmony with their master. So getting one of them, whose name was Aleb, into his power, the Devil ordered him to tempt the other slaves. And one day, when they were all sitting together resting and talking of their master's goodness, Aleb raised his voice, and said:

'It is stupid to make so much of our master's goodness. The Devil himself would be kind to you, if you did what he wanted. We serve our master well, and humour him in all things. As soon as he thinks of anything, we do it: foreseeing all his wishes. What can he do but be kind to us? Just try how it will be if, instead of humouring him, we do him some harm instead. He will act like any one else, and will repay evil for evil, as the worst of masters do.

The other slaves began denying what Aleb had said and at last bet with him. Aleb undertook to make their master angry. If he failed, he was to lose his holiday garment; but if he succeeded, the other slaves were to give him theirs. Moreover, they promised to defend him against the master, and to set him free if he should be put in chains or imprisoned. Having arranged this bet, Aleb agreed to make his master angry next morning.

Aleb was a shepherd, and had in his charge a number of valuable, pure-bred sheep, of which his master was very fond. Next morning, when the master brought some visitors into the inclosure to show them the valuable sheep, Aleb winked at his companions, as if to say: 'See, now, how angry I will make him.'

All the other slaves assembled, looking in at the gates or over the fence, and the Devil climbed a tree near by to see how his servant would do his work. The master walked about the inclosure, showing his guests the ewes and lambs, and presently he wished to show them his finest ram.

'All the rams are valuable,' said he, 'but I have one with closely twisted horns, which is priceless. I prize him as the apple of my eye.'

Startled by the strangers, the sheep rushed about the inclosure, so that the visitors could not get a good look at the ram. As soon as it stood still, Aleb startled the sheep as if by accident, and they all got mixed up again. The visitors could not make out which was the priceless ram. At last the master got tired of it.

'Aleb, dear friend,' he said, 'pray catch our best ram for me, the one with the tightly twisted horns. Catch him very carefully, and hold him still for a moment.'

Scarcely had the master said this, when Aleb rushed in among the sheep like a lion, and clutched the priceless ram. Holding him fast by the wool, he seized the left hind leg with one hand, and, before his master's eyes, lifted it and jerked it so that it snapped like a dry branch. He had broken the ram's leg and it fell bleating on to its knees. Then Aleb seized the right hind leg, while the left twisted round and hung quite limp. The visitors and the slaves exclaimed in dismay, and the Devil, sitting up in the tree, rejoiced that Aleb had done his task so cleverly. The master looked as black as thunder, frowned, bent his head, and did not say a word. The visitors and the slaves were silent, too, waiting to see what would follow. After remaining silent for a while, the master shook himself as if to throw off some burden.

Then he lifted his head, and raising his eyes heavenward, remained so for a short time. Presently the wrinkles passed from his face, and he looked down at Aleb with a smile saying:

'Oh, Aleb, Aleb! Your master bade you anger me; but my master is stronger than yours. I am not angry with you, but I will make your master angry. You are afraid that I shall punish you, and you have been wishing for your freedom. Know, then, Aleb, that I shall not punish you; but, as you wish to be free, here, before my guests, I set you free. Go where you like, and take your holiday garment with you!'

And the kind master returned with his guests to the house; but the Devil, grinding his teeth, fell down from the tree, and sank through the ground.



## Fables For Children

Translated by Leo Wiener 1904

### AESOP'S FABLES

#### THE ANT AND THE DOVE

AN Ant came down to the brook : he wanted to drink. A wave washed him down and almost drowned him. A Dove was carrying a branch; she saw the Ant was drown-ing, so she cast the branch down to him in the brook. The Ant got up on the branch and was saved. Then a hunter placed a snare for the Dove, and was on the point of drawing it in. The Ant crawled up to the hunter and bit him on the leg; the hunter groaned and dropped the snare. The Dove fluttered upwards and flew away.

#### THE TURTLE AND THE EAGLE

A Turtle asked an Eagle to teach her how to fly. The Eagle advised her not to try, as she was not fit for it; but she insisted. The Eagle took her in his claws, raised her up, and dropped her : she fell on stones and broke to pieces.

#### THE POLECAT

A Polecat entered a smithy and began to lick the filings. Blood began to flow from the Polecat's mouth, but he was glad and continued to lick; he thought that the blood was coming from the iron, and lost his whole tongue.

#### THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A Lion was sleeping. A Mouse ran over his body. He awoke and caught her. The Mouse besought him; she said :

“ Let me go, and I will do you a favour ! “

The Lion laughed at the Mouse for promising him a favour, and let her go.

Then the hunters caught the Lion and tied him with a rope to a tree.

The Mouse heard the Lion’s roar, ran up, gnawed the rope through, and said :

“ Do you remember ? You laughed, not thinking that I could repay, but now you see that a favour may come also from a Mouse.”

### THE LIAR

A Boy was watching the sheep and, pretending that he saw a wolf, he began to cry :

Help ! A wolf ! A wolf ! “

The peasants came running up and saw that it was not so. After doing this for a second and a third time, it happened that a wolf came indeed.

The Boy began to cry:

“ Come, come, quickly, a wolf ! “

The peasants thought that he was deceiving them as usual, and paid no attention to him. The wolf saw there was no reason to be afraid : he leisurely killed the whole flock.

### THE ASS AND THE HORSE

A man had an Ass and a Horse. They were walking on the road; the Ass said to the Horse :

“ It is heavy for me, — I shall not be able to carry it all; take at least a Part of my load.”

The Horse paid no attention to him. The Ass fell down from overstraining himself, and died. When the master transferred the Ass’s load on the Horse, and added the Ass’s hide, the Horse began to complain :

“Oh, woe to me, poor one, woe to me, unfortunate Horse! I did not want to help him even a little, and now I have to carry everything, and his hide, too.”

#### THE JACKDAW AND THE DOVES

A Jackdaw saw that the Doves were well fed, so she painted herself white and flew into the dove-cot. The Doves thought at first that she was a dove like them, and let her in. But the Jackdaw forgot herself and croaked in jackdaw fashion. Then the Doves began to pick at her and drove her away. The Jackdaw flew back to her friends, but the jackdaws were frightened at her, seeing her white, and themselves drove her away.

#### THE WOMAN AND THE HEN

A Hen laid an egg each day. The Mistress thought that if she gave her more to eat, she would lay twice as much. So she did. The Hen grew fat and stopped lay-ing.

#### THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX

A Lion and a Bear procured some meat and began to fight for it. The Bear did not want to give in, nor did the Lion yield. They fought for so long a time that they both grew feeble and lay down. A Fox saw the meat between them; she grabbed it and ran away with it.

#### THE DOG, THE COCK, AND THE FOX

A Dog and a Cock went to travel together. At night the Cock fell asleep in a tree, and the Dog fixed a place for himself between the roots of that tree. When the time came, the Cock began to crow. A Fox heard

the Cock, ran up to the tree, and began to beg the Cock to come down, as she wanted to give him her respects for such a fine voice.

The Cock said :

“ You must first wake up the janitor, he is sleeping between the roots. Let him open up, and I will come down.”

The Fox began to look for the janitor, and started yelping. The Dog sprang out at once and killed the Fox.

### THE HORSE AND THE GROOM

A Groom stole the Horse's oats, and sold them, but he cleaned the Horse each day. Said the Horse :

“ If you really wish me to be in good condition, do not sell my oats.”

### THE FROG AND THE LION

A Lion heard a Frog croaking, and thought it was a large beast that was calling so loud. He walked up, and saw a Frog coming out of the swamp. The Lion crushed her with his paw and said :

“ There is nothing to look at, and yet I was fright-ened.”

### THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS

In the fall the wheat of the Ants got wet; they were drying it. A hungry Grasshopper asked them for some-thing to eat. The Ants said :

“ Why did you not gather food during the summer ? “

She said :

“ I had no time : I sang songs.”

They laughed, and said :

“ If you sang in the summer, dance in the winter ! “

## THE HEN AND THE GOLDEN EGGS

A master had a Hen which laid golden eggs. He wanted more gold at once, and so killed the Hen (he thought that inside of her there was a large lump of gold), but she was just like any other hen.

## THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN

An Ass put on a lion's skin, and all thought it was a lion. Men and animals ran away from him. A wind sprang up, and the skin was blown aside, and the Ass could be seen. People ran up and beat the Ass.

## THE HEN AND THE SWALLOW

A Hen found some snake's eggs and began to sit on them. A Swallow saw it and said:

" Stupid one ! You will hatch them out, and, when they grow up, you will be the first one to suffer from them."

## THE STAG AND THE FAWN

A Fawn once said to a Stag :

" Father, you are larger and fleeter than the dogs, and, besides, you have huge antlers for defence; why, then, are you so afraid of the dogs ? "

The Stag laughed, and said :

" You speak the truth, my child. The trouble is, the moment I hear the dogs bark, I run before I have time to think."

## THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

A Fox saw some ripe bunches of grapes hanging high, and tried to get at them, in order to eat them.

She tried hard, but could not get them. To drown her annoyance she said : “ They are still sour.”

#### THE MAIDS AND THE COCK

A mistress used to wake the Maids at night and, as soon as the cocks crowed, put them to work. The Maids found that hard, and decided to kill the Cock, so that the mistress should not be wakened. They killed him, but now they suffered more than ever : the mistress was afraid that she would sleep past the time and so began to wake the Maids earlier.

#### THE FISHERMAN AND THE FISH

A Fisherman caught a Fish. Said the Fish :

“ Fisherman, let me go into the water; you see I am small : you will have little profit of me. If you let me go, I shall grow up, and then you will catch me when it will be worth while.”

But the Fisherman said :

“ A fool would be he who should wait for greater profit, and let the lesser slip out of his hands.”

#### THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A Goat wanted to drink. . He went down the incline to the well, drank his fill, and gained in weight. He started to get out, but could not do so. He began to bleat. A Fox saw him and said :

“ That’s it, stupid one ! If you had as much sense in your head as there are hairs in your beard, you would have thought of how to get out before you climbed down.”

#### THE DOG AND HER SHADOW

A Dog was crossing the river over a plank, carrying a piece of meat in her teeth. She saw herself in the water and thought that another dog was carrying a piece of meat. She dropped her piece and dashed forward to take away what the other dog had : the other meat was gone, and her own was carried away by the stream. And thus the Dog was left without anything.

#### THE CRANE AND THE STORK

A peasant put out his nets to catch the Cranes for tramping down his field. In the nets were caught the Cranes, and with them one Stork.

The Stork said to the peasant :

“ Let me go ! I am not a Crane, but a Stork; we are most honoured birds; I live on your father’s house. You can see by my feathers that I am not a Crane.”

The peasant said :

“ With the Cranes I have caught you, and with them will I kill you.”

#### THE GARDENER AND HIS SONS

A Gardener wanted his Sons to get used to gardening. As he was dying, he called them up and said to them :

“ Children, when I am dead, look for what is hidden in the vineyard.”

The Sons thought that it was a treasure, and when their father died, they began to dig there, and dug up the whole ground. They did not find the treasure, but they ploughed the vineyard up so well that it brought forth more fruit than ever.

#### THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A Wolf had a bone stuck in his throat, and could not cough it up. He called the Crane, and said to him :

“ Crane, you have a long neck. Thrust your head into my throat and draw out the bone ! I will reward you.”

The Crane stuck his head in, pulled out the bone, and said:

“ Give me my reward ! “

The Wolf gnashed his teeth and said :

“ Is it not enough reward for you that I did not bite off your head when it was between my teeth ? “

## THE HARES AND THE FROGS

The Hares once got together, and began to complain about their life :

“ We perish from men, and from dogs, and from eagles, and from all the other beasts. It would be better to die at once than to live in fright and suffer. Come, let us drown ourselves ! “

And the Hares raced away to drown themselves in a lake. The Frogs heard the Hares and plumped into the water. So one of the Hares said :

“ Wait, boys ! Let us put off the drowning ! Evidently the Frogs are having a harder life than we: they are afraid even of us.”

## THE FATHER AND HIS SONS

A Father told his Sons to live in peace : they paid no attention to him.

So he told them to bring the bath broom, and said :

“ Break it ! “

No matter how much they tried, they could not break it. Then the Father unclosed the broom, and told them to break the rods singly.

They broke it.

The Father said :

“ So it is with you : if you live in peace, no one will overcome you; but if you quarrel, and are divided, any one will easily ruin you.”

## THE FOX



A Fox got caught in a trap. She tore off her tail, and got away. She began to contrive how to cover up her shame. She called together the Foxes, and begged them to cut off their tails.

“ A tail,” she said, “ is a useless thing. In vain do we drag along a dead weight.”

One of the Foxes said :

“ You would not be speaking thus, if you were not tail-less ! “

The tailless Fox grew silent and went away.

### THE WILD ASS AND THE TAME ASS

A Wild Ass saw a Tame Ass. The Wild Ass went up to him and began to praise his life, saying how smooth his body was, and what sweet feed he received. Later, when the Tame Ass was loaded down, and a driver began to goad him with a stick, the Wild Ass said :

“ No, brother, I do not envy you : I see that your life is going hard with you.”

### THE STAG

A Stag went to the brook to quench his thirst. He saw himself in the water, and began to admire his horns, seeing how large and branching they were; and he looked at his feet, and said : “ But my feet are unseemly and thin.”

Suddenly a Lion sprang out and made for the Stag. The Stag started to run over the open plain. He was get-ting away, but there came a forest, and his horns caught in the branches, and the lion caught him. As the Stag was dying, he said :

“How foolish I am! That which I thought to be unseemly and thin was saving me, and what I gloried in has been my ruin.”

### THE DOG AND THE WOLF

A Dog fell asleep back of the yard. A Wolf ran up and wanted to eat him.

Said the Dog :

“ Wolf, don't eat me yet : now I am lean and bony. Wait a little, — my master is going to celebrate a wedding; then I shall have plenty to eat; I shall grow fat. It will be better to eat me then.”

The Wolf believed her, and went away. Then he came a second time, and saw the Dog lying on the roof. The Wolf said to her :

“ Well, have they had the wedding? “

The Dog replied :

“ Listen, Wolf ! If you catch me again asleep in front of the yard, do not wait for the wedding.”

#### THE GNAT AND THE LION

A Gnat came to a Lion, and said: “Do you think that you have more strength than I? You are mistaken ! What does your strength consist in? Is it that you scratch with your claws, and gnaw with your teeth ? That is the way the women quarrel with their husbands. I am stronger than you : if you wish let us fight! “

And the Gnat sounded his horn, and began to bite the Lion on his bare cheeks and his nose. The Lion struck his face with his paws and scratched it with his claws. He tore his face until the blood came, and gave up.

The Gnat trumpeted for joy, and flew away. Then he became entangled in a spider's web, and the spider began to suck him up. The Gnat said : “ I have vanquished the strong beast, the Lion, and now I perish from this nasty spider.”

#### THE HORSE AND HIS MASTERS

A gardener had a Horse. She had much to do, but little to eat; so she began to pray to God to get another master. And so it happened. The gardener sold the Horse to a potter. The Horse was glad, but the potter had even more work for her to do. And again the Horse complained of her lot, and began to pray that she might get a better master. And this prayer, too, was fulfilled. The potter sold the Horse to a tanner. When the Horse saw the skins of horses in the tanner's yard, she began to cry: " Woe to me, wretched one ! It would be better if I could stay with my old masters. It is evident they have sold me now not for work, but for my skin's sake."

### THE OLD MAN AND DEATH

An Old Man cut some wood, which he carried away. He had to carry it far. He grew tired, so he put down his bundle, and said :

" Oh, if Death would only come ! "

Death came, and said :

" Here I-am, what do you want ? "

The Old Man was frightened, and said :

" Lift up my bundle ! "

### THE LION AND THE FOX

A Lion, growing old, was unable to catch the animals, and so intended to live by cunning. He went into a den, lay down there, and pretended that he was sick. The animals came to see him, and he ate up those that went into his den. The Fox guessed the trick. She stood at the entrance of the den, and said :

" Well, Lion, how are you feeling ? "

The Lion answered :

" Poorly. Why don't you come in ? " The Fox replied :

" I do not come in because I see by the tracks that many have entered, but none have come out."

## THE STAG AND THE VINEYARD

A Stag hid himself from the hunters in a vineyard. When the hunters missed him, the Stag began to nibble at the grape-vine leaves. The hunters noticed that the leaves were moving, and so they thought, "There must be an animal under those leaves," and fired their guns, and wounded the Stag. The Stag said, dying :  
" It serves me right for wanting to eat the leaves that saved me."

## THE CAT AND THE MICE

A house was overrun with Mice. A Cat found his way into the house, and began to catch them. The Mice saw that matters were bad, and said :  
" Mice, let us not come down from the ceiling ! The Cat cannot get up there."

When the Mice stopped coming down, the Cat decided that he must catch them by a trick. He grasped the ceiling with one leg, hung down from it, and made believe that he was dead. A Mouse looked out at him, but said :  
" No, my friend ! Even if you should turn into a bag, I would not go up to you."

## THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

A Wolf saw a Goat browsing on a rocky mountain, and he could not get at her; so he said to her :  
" Come down lower ! The place is more even, and the grass is much sweeter to feed on."  
But the Goat answered :  
" You are not calling me down for that, Wolf : you are troubling yourself not about my food, but about yours."

## THE REEDS AND THE OLIVE-TREE

The Olive-tree and the Reeds quarrelled about who was stronger and sounder. The Olive-tree laughed at the Reeds because they bent in every wind. The Reeds kept silence. A storm came : the Reeds swayed, tossed, bowed to the ground, and remained unharmed. The Olive-tree strained her branches against the wind, and broke.

## THE TWO COMPANIONS

Two Companions were walking through the forest when a Bear jumped out on them. One started to run, climbed a tree, and hid himself, but the other remained in the road. He had nothing to do, so he fell down on the ground and pretended that he was dead.

The Bear went up to him, and sniffed at him; but he had stopped breathing.

The Bear sniffed at his face; he thought that he was dead, and so went away.

When the Bear was gone, the Companion climbed down from the tree and , laughing, said : “ What did the Bear whisper in your ear ? ”

“ He told me that those who in danger run away from their companions are bad people.”

## THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A Wolf saw a Lamb drinking at a river. The Wolf wanted to eat the Lamb, and so he began to annoy him. He said :

“ You are muddling my water and do not let me drink.”

The Lamb said :

“ How can I muddle your water ? I am standing down-stream from you; besides, I drink with the tips of my lips.”

And the Wolf said :

“ Well, why did you call my father names last summer ? ”

The Lamb said :

“ But, Wolf, I was not yet born last summer.”

The Wolf got angry, and said :

“ It is hard to get the best of you. Besides, my stom-ach is empty, so I will devour you.”

### THE LION, THE WOLF, AND THE FOX

An old, sick Lion was lying in his den. All the ani-mals came to see the king, but the Fox kept away. So the Wolf was glad of the chance, and began to slander the Fox before the Lion.

“ She does not esteem you in the least,” he said, “ she has not come once to see the king.”

The Fox happened to run by as he was saying these words. She heard what the Wolf had said, and thought :

“ Wait, Wolf, I will get my revenge on you.”

So the Lion began to roar at the Fox, but she said :

“Do not have me killed, but let me say a word ! I did not come to see you because I had no time. And I had no time because I ran over the whole world to ask the doctors for a remedy for you. I have just got it, and so I have come to see you.”

The Lion said :

“ What is the remedy ? “

“ It is this : if you flay a live Wolf, and put his warm hide on you ‘

When the Lion stretched out the Wolf, the Fox laughed, and said :

“ That’s it, my friend : masters ought to be led to do good, not evil.”

### THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX

The Lion, the Ass, and the Fox went out to hunt. They caught a large number of animals, and the Lion told the Ass to divide them up. The Ass divided them into three equal Parts and said : “ Now, take them ! “

The Lion grew angry, ate up the Ass, and told the Fox to divide them up anew. The Fox collected them all into one heap, and left a small bit for herself. The Lion looked at it and said :

“ Clever Fox ! Who taught you to divide so well ? ”

She said :

“ What about that Ass ? ”

## THE PEASANT AND THE WATER-SPRITE

A Peasant lost his axe in the river; he sat down on the bank in grief, and began to weep.

The Water-sprite heard the Peasant and took pity on him. He brought a gold axe out of the river, and said : “ Is this your axe ? ”

The Peasant said : “ No, it is not mine.”

The Water-sprite brought another, a silver axe.

Again the Peasant said : “ It is not my axe.”

Then the Water-sprite brought out the real axe.

The Peasant said : “ Now this is my axe.”

The Water-sprite made the Peasant a present of all three axes, for having told the truth.

At home the Peasant showed his axes to his friends, and told them what had happened to him.

One of the peasants made up his mind to do the same : he went to the river, purposely threw his axe into the water, sat down on the bank, and began to weep.

The Water-sprite brought out a gold axe, and asked : “ Is this your axe ? ”

“

The Peasant was glad, and called out : “ It is mine, mine ! ”

The Water-sprite did not give him the gold axe, and did not bring him back his own either, because he had told an untruth.

## THE RAVEN AND THE FOX

A Raven got himself a piece of meat, and sat down on a tree. The Fox wanted to get it from him. She went up to him, and said :  
“Oh, Raven, as I look at you, — from your size and beauty, you ought to be a king ! And you would certainly be a king, if you had a good voice.”  
The Raven opened his mouth wide, and began to croak with all his might and main. The meat fell down. The Fox caught it and said :  
“ Oh, Raven ! If you had also sense, you would certainly be a king.”  
Adaptations and Imitations of Hindoo Fables

### THE SNAKE’S HEAD AND TAIL

Snake’s Tail had a quarrel with the Snake’s Head about who was to walk in front. The Head said :  
“You cannot walk in front, because you have no eyes and no ears.”  
The Tail said :  
“ Yes, but I have strength, I move you; if I want to, I can wind myself around a tree, and you cannot get off the spot.”  
The Head said :  
“ Let us separate ! “  
And the Tail tore himself loose from the Head, and crept on; but the moment he got away from the Head, he fell into a hole and was lost.

### FINE THREAD

A Man ordered some fine thread from a Spinner. The Spinner spun it for him, but the Man said that the thread was not good, and that he wanted the finest thread he could get. The Spinner said :  
“ If this is not fine enough, take this ! “ and she pointed to an empty space.  
He said that he did not see any. The Spinner said :  
“ You do not see it, because it is so fine. I do not see it myself.”  
The Fool was glad, and ordered some more thread of this kind, and paid her for what he got.



## THE PARTITION OF THE INHERITANCE

A Father had two Sons. He said to them : “ When I die, divide everything into two equal Parts.”

When the Father died, the Sons could not divide with-out quarrelling. They went to a Neighbour to have him settle the matter. The Neighbour asked them how their Father had told them to divide. They said :

“ He ordered us to divide everything into two equal Parts.”

The Neighbour said :

“ If so, tear all your garments into two halves, break your dishes into two halves, and cut all your cattle into two halves ! “

The Brothers obeyed their Neighbour, and lost every-thing.

## THE MONKEY

A Man went into the woods, cut down a tree, and began to saw it. He raised the end of the tree on a stump, sat astride over it, and began to saw. Then he drove a wedge into the split that he had sawed, and went on sawing; then he took out the wedge and drove it in farther down.

A Monkey was sitting on a tree and watching him. When the Man lay down to sleep, the Monkey seated herself astride the tree, and wanted to do the same; but when she took out the wedge, the tree sprang back and caught her tail. She began to tug and to cry. The Man woke up, beat the Monkey, and tied a rope to her.

## THE MONKEY AND THE PEASE

A Monkey was carrying both her hands full of pease. A pea dropped on the ground; the Monkey wanted to pick it up, and dropped twenty peas. She rushed to pick

them up and lost all the rest. Then she flew into a rage, swept away all the pease and ran off.

### THE MILCH COW

A Man had a Cow; she gave each day a pot full of milk. The Man invited a number of guests. To have as much milk as possible, he did not milk the Cow for ten days. He thought that on the tenth day the Cow would give him ten pitchers of milk.

But the Cow's milk went back, and she gave less milk than before.

### THE DUCK AND THE MOON

A Duck was swimming in the pond, trying to find some fish, but she did not find one in a whole day. When night came, she saw the Moon in the water; she thought that it was a fish, and plunged in to catch the Moon. The other ducks saw her do it and laughed at her.

That made the Duck feel so ashamed and bashful that when she saw a fish under the water, she did not try to catch it, and so died of hunger.

### THE WOLF IN THE DUST

A Wolf wanted to pick a sheep out of a flock, and stepped into the wind, so that the dust of the flock might blow on him.

The Sheep Dog saw him, and said :

“ There is no sense, Wolf, in your walking in the dust : it will make your eyes ache.”

But the Wolf said :

“ The trouble is, Doggy, that my eyes have been aching for quite awhile, and I have been told that the dust from a flock of sheep will cure the eyes.”

## THE MOUSE UNDER THE GRANARY

A Mouse was living under the granary. In the floor of the granary there was a little hole, and the grain fell down through it. The Mouse had an easy life of it, but she wanted to brag of her ease : she gnawed a larger hole in the floor, and invited other mice.

“ Come to a feast with me,” said she; “ there will be plenty to eat for everybody.”

When she brought the mice, she saw there was no hole. The peasant had noticed the big hole in the floor, and had stopped it up.

## THE BEST PEARS

A master sent his Servant to buy the best-tasting pears. The Servant came to the shop and asked for pears. The dealer gave him some; but the Servant said :

“ No, give me the best ! “

The dealer said :

“ Try one; you will see that they taste good.”

“ How shall I know,” said the Servant, “ that they all taste good, if I try one only ? “

He bit off a piece from each pear, and brought them to his master. Then his master sent him away.

## THE FALCON AND THE COCK

The Falcon was used to the master, and came to his hand when he was called; the Cock ran away from his master and cried when people went up to him. So the Falcon said to the Cock :

“ In you Cocks there is no gratitude; one can see that you are of a common breed. You go to your masters only when you are hungry. It is different with us wild birds. We have much strength, and we can fly faster than anybody; still we do not fly away from people, but of our own accord go to their hands when we are called. We remember that they feed us.”

Then the Cock said :

“ You do not run away from people because you have never seen a roast Falcon, but we, you know, see roast Cocks.”

## THE JACKALS AND THE ELEPHANT

The Jackals had eaten up all the carrion in the woods, and had nothing to eat. So an old Jackal was thinking how to find something to feed on.

He went to an Elephant, and said :

“ We had a king, but he became overweening : he told us to do things that nobody could do; we want to choose another king, and my people have sent me to ask you to be our king. You will have an easy life with us. Whatever you will order us to do, we will do, and we will honour you in everything. Come to our kingdom ! “

The Elephant consented, and followed the Jackal. The Jackal brought him to a swamp. When the Elephant stuck fast in it, the Jackal said :

“ Now command ! Whatever you command, we will do.”

The Elephant said :

“ I command you to pull me out from here.”

The Jackal began to laugh, and said :

“ Take hold of my tail with your trunk, and I will pull you out at once.”

The Elephant said :

“ Can I be pulled out by a tail ? “

But the Jackal said to him :

“ Why, then, do you command us to do what is impossible ? Did we not drive away our first king for telling us to do what could not be done ? “

When the Elephant died in the swamp the Jackals came and ate him up.

## THE HERON, THE FISHES, AND THE CRAB

A Heron was living near a pond. She grew old, and had no strength left with which to catch the fish. She began to contrive how to live by cunning. So she said to the Fishes :

“ You Fishes do not know that a calamity is in store for you : I have heard the people say that they are going to let off the pond, and catch every one of you. I know of a nice little pond back of the mountain. I should like to help you, but I am old, and it is hard for me to”

The Fishes begged the Heron to help them. So the Heron said :

“ All right, I will do what I can for you, and will carry you over : only I cannot do it at once, I will take you there one after another.”

And the Fishes were happy; they kept begging her : “ Carry me over ! Carry me over ! “

And the Heron started carrying them. She would take one up, would carry her into the field, and would eat her up. And thus she ate a large number of Fishes.

In the pond there lived an old Crab. When the Heron began to take out the Fishes, he saw what was up, and said:

“ Now, Heron, take me to the new abode ! “

The Heron took the Crab and carried him off. When she flew out on the field, she wanted to throw the Crab down. But the Crab saw the fish-bones on the ground, and so squeezed the Heron’s neck with his claws, and choked her to death. Then he crawled back to the pond, and told the Fishes.

## THE WATER-SPRITE AND THE PEARL

A Man was rowing in a boat, and dropped a costly pearl into the sea. The Man returned to the shore, took a pail, and began to draw up the water and to pour it out on the land. He drew the water and poured it out for three days without stopping.

On the fourth day the Water-sprite came out of the sea, and asked :

“ Why are you drawing the water ? “

The Man said :

“ I am drawing it because I have dropped a pearl into it.”

The Water-sprite asked him :

“ Will you stop soon ? “

The Man said :

“ I will stop when I dry up the sea.”

Then the Water-sprite returned to the sea, brought back that pearl, and gave it to the Man.

## THE BLIND MAN AND THE MILK

A Man born blind asked a Seeing Man

“ Of what colour is milk ? “

The Seeing Man said : “ The colour of milk is the same as that of white paper.”

The Blind Man asked : “ Well, does that colour rustle in your hands like paper ? “

The Seeing Man said : “ No, it is as white as white flour.”

The Blind Man asked : “ Well, is it as soft and as powdery as flour ? “

The Seeing Man said : “ No, it is simply as white as a white hare.”

The Blind Man asked : “ Well, is it as fluffy and soft as a hare ? “

The Seeing Man said : “ No, it is as white as snow.”

The Blind Man asked : “ Well, is it as cold as snow ? “

And no matter how many examples the Seeing Man gave, the Blind Man was unable to understand what the white colour of milk was like.

## THE WOLF AND THE BOW

A hunter went out to hunt with bow and arrows. He killed a goat. He threw her on his shoulders and carried her along. On his way he saw a boar. He threw down the goat, and shot at the boar and wounded him. The boar rushed against the hunter and butted him to death, and himself died on the spot. A Wolf scented the blood, and came to the place where lay the goat, the boar, the man, and his bow. The Wolf was glad, and said :

“ Now I shall have enough to eat for a long time; only I will not eat everything at once, but little by little, so that nothing may be lost : first I

will eat the tougher things, and then I will lunch on what is soft and sweet.”

The Wolf sniffed at the goat, the boar, and the man, and said :

“ This is all soft food, so I will eat it later; let me first start on these sinews of the bow.”

And he began to gnaw the sinews of the bow. When he bit threw the string, the bow sprang back and hit him on his belly. He died on the spot, and other wolves ate up the man, the goat, the boar, and the Wolf.

### THE BIRDS IN THE NET

A Hunter set out a net near a lake and caught a number of birds. The birds were large, and they raised the net and flew away with it. The Hunter ran after them. A Peasant saw the Hunter running, and said :  
“ Where are you running ? How can you catch up with the birds, while you are on foot ? “

The Hunter said :

“ If it were one bird, I should not catch it, but now I shall.”

And so it happened. When evening came, the birds began to pull for the night each in a different direction : one to the woods, another to the swamp, a third to the field; and all fell with the net to the ground, and the Hunter caught them.

### THE KING AND THE FALCON

A certain King let his favourite Falcon loose on a hare, and galloped after him.

The Falcon caught the hare. The King took him away, and began to look for some water to drink. The King found it on a knoll, but it came only drop by drop. The King fetched his cup from the saddle, and placed it under the water. The water flowed in drops, and when the cup was filled, the King raised it to his mouth and wanted to drink it. Suddenly

the Falcon fluttered on the King's arm and spilled the water. The King placed the cup once more under the drops. He waited for a long time for the cup to be filled even with the brim, and again, as he carried it to his mouth, the Falcon flapped his wings and spilled the water.

When the King filled his cup for the third time and began to carry it to his mouth, the Falcon again spilled it. The King flew into a rage and killed him by flinging him against a stone with all his force. Just then the King's servants rode up, and one of them ran up-hill to the spring, to find as much water as possible, and to fill the cup. But the servant did not bring the water; he returned with the empty cup, and said :  
" You cannot drink that water; there is a snake in the spring, and she has let her venom into the water. It is fortunate that the Falcon has spilled the water. If you had drunk it, you would have died."

The King said :

" How badly I have repaid the Falcon ! He has saved my life, and I killed him."

## THE KING AND THE ELEPHANTS

An Indian King ordered all the Blind People to be as-sembled, and when they came, he ordered that all the Elephants be shown to them. The Blind Men went to the stable and began to feel the Elephants. One felt a leg, another a tail, a third the stump of a tail, a fourth a belly, a fifth a back, a sixth the ears, a seventh the tusks, and an eighth a trunk. Then the King called the Blind Men, and asked them : " What are my Elephants like ? "

One Blind Man said : " Your Elephants are like posts." He had felt the legs.

Another Blind Man said : " They are like bath brooms." He had felt the end of the tail.

A third said : " They are like branches." He had felt the tail stump.

The one who had touched a belly said : " The Elephants are like a clod of earth."



The one who had touched the sides said : “ They are like a wall.”  
The one who had touched a back said : “ They are like a mound.”  
The one who had touched the ears said : “ They are like a mortar.”  
The one who had touched the tusks said : “ They are like horns.”  
The one who had touched the trunk said that they were like a stout rope.  
And all the Blind Men began to dispute and to quarrel.

## WHY THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD

A Hermit was living in the forest, and the animals were not afraid of him. He and the animals talked together and understood each other.

Once the Hermit lay down under a tree, and a Raven, a Dove, a Stag, and a Snake gathered in the same place, to pass the night. The animals began to discuss why there was evil in the world.

The Raven said :

“ All the evil in the world comes from hunger. When I eat my fill, I sit down on a branch and croak a little, and it is all jolly and good, and everything gives me pleasure; but let me just go without eating a day or two, and everything palls on me so that I do not feel like looking at God’s world. And something draws me on, and I fly from place to place, and have no rest. When I catch a glimpse of some meat, it makes me only feel sicker than ever, and I make for it without much thinking. At times they throw sticks and stones at me, and the wolves and dogs grab me, but I do not give in. Oh, how many of my brothers are perishing through hunger ! All evil comes from hunger.”

The Dove said :

“ According to my opinion, the evil does not come from hunger, but from love. If we lived singly, the trouble would not be so bad. One head is not poor, and if it is, it is only one. But here we live in pairs. And you come to like your mate so much that you have no rest : you keep thinking of her all the time, wondering whether she has had enough to eat, and whether she is warm. And when your mate flies away from you, you feel en-tirely lost, and you keep thinking that a hawk may have

carried her off, or men may have caught her; and you start out to find her, and fly to your ruin, — either into the hawk's claws, or into a snare. And when your mate is lost, nothing gives you any joy. You do not eat or drink, and all the time search and weep. Oh, so many of us perish in this way ! All the evil is not from hunger, but from love.”

The Snake said :

“ No, the evil is not from hunger, nor from love, but from rage. If we lived peacefully, without getting into a rage, everything would be nice for us. But, as it is, whenever a thing does not go exactly right, we get angry, and then nothing pleases us. All we think about is how to revenge ourselves on some one. Then we forget ourselves, and only hiss, and creep, and try to find some one to bite. And we do not spare a soul, — we even bite our own father and mother. We feel as though we could eat ourselves up. And we rage until we perish. All the evil in the world comes from rage.”

The Stag said :

“ No, not from rage, or from love, or from hunger does all the evil in the world come, but from terror. If it were possible not to be afraid, everything would be well. We have swift feet and much strength : against a small animal we defend ourselves with our horns, and from a large one we flee. But how can I help becoming fright-ened ? Let a branch crackle in the forest, or a leaf rustle, and I am all atremble with fear, and my heart flutters as though it wanted to jump out, and I fly as fast as I can. Again, let a hare run by, or a bird flap its wings, or a dry twig break off, and you think that it is a beast, and you run straight up against him. Or you run away from a dog and run into the hands of a man. Frequently you get frightened and run, not knowing whither, and at full speed rush down a steep hill, and get killed. We have no rest. All the evil comes from terror.”

Then the Hermit said :

“ Not from hunger, not from love, not from rage, not from terror are all our sufferings, but from our bodies comes all the evil in the world. From them come hunger, and love, and rage, and terror.”

## THE WOLF AND THE HUNTERS

A Wolf devoured a sheep. The Hunters caught the Wolf and began to beat him. The Wolf said :

“ In vain do you beat me : it is not my fault that I am gray, God has made me so.”

But the Hunters said :

“ We do not beat the Wolf for being gray, but for eating the sheep.”

## THE TWO PEASANTS

Once upon a time two Peasants drove toward each other and caught in each other's sleighs. One cried :

“ Get out of my way, I am hurrying to town.”

But the other said :

“ Get out of my way, I am hurrying home.”

They quarrelled for some time. A third Peasant saw them and said :

“ If you are in a hurry, back up ! “

## THE PEASANT AND THE HOUSE

A Peasant went to town to fetch some oats for his Horse. He had barely left the village, when the Horse began to turn around, toward the house. The Peasant struck the Horse with his whip. She went on, and kept thinking about the Peasant :

“ Whither is that fool driving me ? He had better go home.”

Before reaching town, the Peasant saw that the Horse trudged along through the mud with difficulty, so he turned her on the pavement; but the Horse began to turn back from the street. The Peasant gave the Horse the whip, and jerked at the reins; she went on the pavement, and thought :

“ Why has he turned me on the pavement ? It will only break my hoofs. It is rough underfoot.”

The Peasant went to the shop, bought the oats, and drove home. When he came home, he gave the Horse some oats. The Horse ate them and thought :

“ How stupid men are ! They are fond of exercising their wits on us, but they have less sense than we. What did he trouble himself about ? He drove me somewhere. No matter how far we went, we came home in the end. So it would have been better if we had remained at home from the start : he could have been sitting on the oven, and I eating oats.”

### THE TWO HORSES

Two Horses were drawing their carts. The Front Horse pulled well, but the Hind Horse kept stopping all the time. The load of the Hind Horse was transferred to the front cart; when all was transferred, the Hind Horse went along with ease, and said to the Front Horse :

“ Work hard and sweat ! The more you try, the harder they will make you work.”

When they arrived at the tavern, their master said :

Why should I feed two Horses, and haul with one only ? I shall do better to give one plenty to eat, and to kill the other : I shall at least have her hide.”

So he did.

### THE AXE AND THE SAW

Two Peasants went to the forest to cut wood. One of them had an axe, and the other a saw. They picked out a tree, and began to dispute. One said that the tree had to be chopped, while the other said that it had to be sawed down.

A third Peasant said :

“ I will easily make peace between you : if the axe is sharp, you had better chop it; but if the saw is sharp you had better saw it.”

He took the axe, and began to chop it; but the axe was so dull that it was not possible to cut with it. Then he took the saw; the saw was worthless, and did not BEW. So he said :

“ Stop quarrelling awhile; the axe does not chop, and the saw does not saw. First grind your axe and file your saw, and then quarrel.”

But the Peasants grew angrier still at one another, be-cause one had a dull axe, and the other a dull saw. And they came to blows.

### THE DOGS AND THE COOK

A Cook was preparing a dinner. The Dogs were lying at the kitchen door. The Cook killed a calf and threw the guts out into the yard. The Dogs picked them up and ate them, and said :

“ He is a good Cook : he cooks well.”

After awhile the Cook began to clean pease, turnips, and onions, and threw out the refuse. The Dogs made for it; but they turned their noses up, and said :

“ Our Cook has grown worse : he used to cook well, but now he is no longer any good.”

But the Cook paid no attention to the Dogs, and con-tinued to fix the dinner in his own way. The family, and not the Dogs, ate the dinner, and praised it.

### THE HARE AND THE HARRIER

A Hare once said to a Harrier :

“ Why do you bark when you run after us ? You would catch us easier, if you ran after us in silence. With your bark you only drive us against the hunter : he hears where we are running; and he rushes out with his gun and kills us, and does not give you anything.”

The Harrier said :

“ That is not the reason why I bark. I bark because, when I scent your odour, I am angry, and happy because I am about to catch you; I do not know why, but I cannot keep from barking.”

#### THE OAK AND THE HAZELBUSH

An old Oak dropped an acorn under a Hazelbush. The Hazelbush said to the Oak :

“ Have you not enough space under your own branches? Drop your acorns in an open space. Here I am myself crowded by my shoots, and I do not drop my nuts to the ground, but give them to men.”

“ I have lived for two hundred years,” said the Oak, “ and the Oakling which will sprout from that acorn will live just as long.”

Then the Hazelbush flew into a rage, and said :

“ If so, I will choke your Oakling, and he will not live for three days.”

The Oak made no reply, but told his son to sprout out of that acorn. The acorn got wet and burst, and clung to the ground with his crooked rootlet, and sent up a sprout.

The Hazelbush tried to choke him, and gave him no sun. But the Oakling spread upwards and grew stronger in the shade of the Hazelbush. A hundred years passed. The Hazelbush had long ago dried up, but the Oak from that acorn towered to the sky and spread his tent in all directions.

#### THE HEN AND THE CHICKS

A Hen hatched some Chicks, but did not know how to take care of them. So she said to them :

“ Creep back into your shells ! When you are inside your shells, I will sit on you as before, and will take care of you.”

The Chicks did as they were ordered and tried to creep into their shells, but were unable to do so, and only crushed their wings. Then one of the Chicks said to his mother :

“ If we are to stay all the time in our shells, you ought never to have hatched us.”

#### THE CORN-CRAKE AND HIS MATE

A Corn-crake had made a nest in the meadow late in the year, and at mowing time his Mate was still sitting on her eggs. Early in the morning the peasants came to the meadow, took off their coats, whetted their scythes, and started one after another to mow down the grass and to put it down in rows. The Corn-crake flew up to see what the mowers were doing. When he saw a peasant swing his scythe and cut a snake in two, he rejoiced and flew back to his Mate and said :

“ Don't fear the peasants ! They have come to cut the snakes to pieces; they have given us no rest for quite awhile.”

But his Mate said :

“ The peasants are cutting the grass, and with the grass they are cutting everything which is in their way, — the snakes, and the Corn-crake's nest, and the Corn-crake's head. My heart forebodes nothing good : but I cannot carry away the eggs, nor fly from the nest, for fear of chilling them.”

When the mowers came to the nest of the Corn-crake, one of the peasants swung his scythe and cut off the head of the Corn-crake's Mate, and put the eggs in his bosom and gave them to his children to play with.

#### THE COW AND THE BILLY GOAT

An old woman had a Cow and a Billy Goat. The two pastured together. At milking the Cow was restless. The old woman brought out some bread and salt, and gave it to the Cow, and said :

“ Stand still, motherkin; take it, take it ! I will bring you some more, only stand still.”

On the next evening the Goat came home from the field before the Cow, and spread his legs, and stood in front of the old woman. The old woman wanted to strike him with the towel, but he stood still, and did not stir. He remembered that the woman had promised the Cow some bread if she would stand still. When the woman saw that he would not budge, she picked up a stick, and beat him with it.

When the Goat went away, the woman began once more to feed the Cow with bread, and to talk to her.

“ There is no honesty in men,” thought the Goat. “ I stood still better than the Cow, and was beaten for it.”

He stepped aside, took a run, hit against the milk-pail, spilled the milk, and hurt the old woman.

## THE FOX'S TAIL

A Man caught a Fox, and asked her :

“ Who has taught you Foxes to cheat the dogs with your tails ? ”

The Fox asked : “ How do you mean, to cheat ? We do not cheat the dogs, but simply run from them as fast as we can.”

The Man said :

“ Yes, you do cheat them with your tails. When the dogs catch up with you and are about to clutch you, you turn your tails to one side; the dogs turn sharply after the tail, and then you run in the opposite direction.”

The Fox laughed, and said :

“ We do not do so in order to cheat the dogs, but in order to turn around; when a dog is after us, and we see that we cannot get away straight ahead, we turn to one side, and in order to do that suddenly, we have to swing the tail to the other side, just as you do with your arms, when you have to turn around. That is not our invention; God



himself invented it when He created us, so that the dogs might not be able to catch all the Foxes.”

## Fables Paraphrased From The Indian And Imitations

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1885

I

### HEAD AND TAIL OF THE SERPENT

serpent's Tail was disputing with the serpent's Head as to which should go first.

The Head said :

“You cannot go first; you have no eyes or ears.”

The Tail replied :

“ But at all events I have the strength to make you go. If I wanted, I could twine around a tree, and you could not stir.”

The Head said :

“ Let us Part company.”

And the Tail tore itself away from the Head, and crawled away in its own direction.

But as soon as it had left the Head, it came upon a cranny and fell into it.

II

### FINE THREADS

A MAN bade a spinner spin fine threads. The spinner spun fine threads; but the man declared that the threads were not good, and that he wished the very finest of fine threads.

The spinner said :

“ If these are not fine enough for you, then here are some others that will suit you.”

And she pointed to a bare spot. The man declared that he could not see them.

The spinner replied :

“ The fact that you cannot see them proves that they are very fine; I can’t see them myself.”

The fool was rejoiced, and ordered some more of the same thread, and paid down the money for it.

III

### DIVISION OF THE INHERITANCE

A FATHER had two sons. He said to them :

“ I am dying; divide everything equally.”

When the father was dead, the sons could not make the division without quarreling.

They went to a neighbor to help them decide.

The neighbor asked them what their father had com-manded them to do.

They replied :

“ He commanded us to make equal shares of every-thing.”

Then said the neighbor :

“ Tear all the raiment in two; break all the utensils in two; cut all the live stock in two.”

The brothers took the neighbor’s advice, and at the end neither had anything.

IV

### MONKEY

A MAN went into the woods. He felled a tree, and began to cut it in pieces. He lifted the end of the tree on the stump, sat astride upon it, and began to saw. Then he drove a wedge into the cleft, and began to saw farther along; then he removed the wedge, and put it in the new place.

A monkey was sitting on a tree, watching him.  
When the man lay down to sleep, the monkey got astride of the tree and began to saw; but when he took out the wedge, the tree closed together again, and nipped his tail.  
He began to struggle and squeal.  
The man awoke, knocked the monkey down, and tied him with a rope.

#### MONKEY AND THE PEAS

A MONKEY was carrying two handfuls of peas. One little pea dropped out. He tried to pick it up, and spilt twenty. He tried to pick up the twenty, and spilt them all. Then he lost his temper, scattered the peas in all directions, and ran away.

#### VI

#### MILCH COW

A MAN had a Cow; every day she gave a pail of milk. The man invited some guests. In order to get more milk he did not milk the Cow for ten days.  
He thought that on the tenth day the Cow would give him ten pails of milk.  
But the Cow's milk had dried up, and she gave less milk than ever before.

#### VII

#### DUCK AND THE MOON

A DUCK was floating down the river; she had been hunting for a fish, and all day long she had not found one.  
When night came, she saw the Moon in the water, and thought that it was a fish, and she dived down to catch the Moon.  
The other ducks saw this, and began to make sport of her.  
From that time forth the Duck began to be ashamed and lose courage, so that whenever she saw a fish under the water she would not seize it, and so she died of starvation.

## VIII

### WOLF IN THE DUST

A WOLF was anxious to steal a sheep from the flock, and went to the leeward, so that the dust from the flock might cover him. The Shepherd Dog saw him and said :

“ It ‘s no use, Wolf, for you to go in the dust; it will spoil your eyes.”

But the Wolf replied :

“ It is very unfortunate, Doggy, 1 my eyes were spoiled long ago, but they say that the dust from a flock of sheep is an excellent remedy for the eyes.”

## IX

### MOUSE UNDER THE GRANARY

A MOUSE lived under a granary. In the granary floor was a little hole and the grain slipped down through the hole. The Mouse’s life was happy, but the desire came ov^er her to make a show of her life. She gnawed a larger hole, and invited other Mice.

“ Come,” said she, “ and have a feast; there will be food enough for all.” But after she had brought the Mice, she discovered that there was no hole at all. The farmer had noticed .the big hole in the floor, and closed it up.

1 Sobachenka, diminutive of Sobaka.

## X

### VERY BEST PEAR

A GENTLEMAN sent his servant to buy the very best pears.

The servant went to the shop, and asked for pears.

The merchant gave them to him; but the servant said :

“ No; give me your very best pears.”

The merchant said :

“ Taste one; you will find that they are delicious.”

“How can I know,” exclaimed the servant, that they are all delicious, if I taste only one ? “

So he bit a little out of each pear, and took them to his master.

Then his master dismissed him.

XI

## FALCON AND THE COCK

A FALCON became tame, and would fly to his master's hand whenever he called. The Cock was afraid of the master, and screamed when he came near him.

And the Falcon said to the Cock :

“ You Cocks have no sense of gratitude ! What a race of slaves you are ! As soon as you are hungry, you go to your master. It is a very different thing with us wild birds; we are strong and we can fly faster than all others, and we are not afraid of men; but we go of our own accord and perch on their hands when they call us. We remember that they have given us food.”

And the Cock said :

“ You do not run away from men, because you never saw a Falcon roasted; but many a time have we seen Cocks roasted ! “

XII

## JACKALS AND THE ELEPHANT

Jackals had eaten all the carrion in the forest, and there was nothing left for them to devour. Now there was an aged Jackal, and he devised a plan to get food. He went to the Elephant, and said :

“ We used to have a tsar, but he became spoiled; he would lay such tasks on us that it was impossible to do them; we wish to elect another tsar; and my people have sent me to beg you to become our tsar. We

live well; whatever you wish, that we will do, and we will honor you in all respects. Come, let us go to our empire.”

The Elephant consented, and followed the Jackal. The Jackal led him into a bog. When the Elephant began to sink, the Jackal said :

“ Now order whatever you desire, and we will do it.”

The Elephant said :

“ I command you to pull me out of here.”

The Jackal laughed, and said :

“ Seize my tail with your proboscis, and I will instantly pull you out”

The Elephant replied :

“ Can you pull me out with your tail ? “

But the Jackal demanded :

“ Why, then, did you order anything that was impos-sible to do ? We drove away our first tsar for the very reason that he laid impossible commands on us ! “

When the Elephant had perished in the swamp, the Jackals came and ate him up.

XIII

### HERON, THE FISHES, AND THE CRAB

A HERON lived by a pond, and was beginning to grow old. She was no longer strong enough to catch fish. So she began to plan how she might contrive to get a living. And she said to the Fishes :

“ Fishes, you have not the least idea what a misfortune is threatening you. I have heard some men say that they are going to drain the pond, and catch all of you. I happen to know that beyond this mountain is a nice little pond. I would help you to get there; but I am now in years; it is hard for me to fly.”

The Fishes began to beseech the Heron to help them.

The Heron replied :

“ I will do my best for you, I will carry you over; but I cannot do it all at once, only one at a time.”

And so the Fishes were delighted; they all said :

“ Carry rne ! carry me ! “

And the Heron began to carry them; she would take up one at a time, carry him off to a field, and feast on him. In this way she ate up many fishes.

Now there lived in the pond an aged Crab. When the Heron began to carry off the Fishes, he suspected the true state of affairs; and he said :  
“ Well, now, Heron, take me also to your new settle-ment.”

The Heron seized the Crab, and flew off with him. As soon as she reached the field, she was going to drop the Crab. But the Crab, seeing the bones of the Fishes on the field, clasped his claws around the Heron’s neck, and strangled her; and then he crawled back to the pond and told the Fishes.

XIV

#### WATER-SPRITE AND THE PEARL

A MAN was sailing in a boat, and dropped a precious pearl into the sea. The man returned to land, and took a pail, and began to scoop up the water and pour it on the shore.

For three days unweariedly he scooped and poured.

On the fourth day a Water-sprite came up out of the water, and asked :  
“ Why art thou scooping ? ”

The man replied :

“ I am scooping because I have lost a pearl.”

The Water-sprite asked :

“ Are you going to stop before long ? ”

The man replied :

“When I have scooped the sea dry, then I shall stop.”

Then the Water-sprite returned into the depths, and brought up the very same pearl, and gave it to the man.

XV

#### BLIND MAN AND THE MILK

ONE blind from birth asked a man who could see :

“What color is milk?”

The man who could see replied :

“ The color of milk is like white paper.”

The blind man asked :

“ This color, then, rustles in the hands like paper ? “

The man who could see replied :

“ No; it is white, like white flour.”

The blind man asked :

“ Then it is soft and friable like flour, is it ? “

The man who could see replied :

“ No; it is simply white, like a rabbit.”

The blind man asked :

“ Then it is downy and soft like a rabbit, is it? “

The man who could see replied :

“ No; white is a color exactly like snow.”

The blind man asked :

“ Then it is cold like snow, is it ? “

And in spite of all the comparisons which the man who could see made, still the blind man was wholly un-able to comprehend what the color of milk really was.

XVI

## WOLF AND THE BOW

A HUNTSMAN with his bow and arrows went out to hunt; he killed a goat, flung it over his shoulders, and was carrying it home.

On the way he saw a wild boar.

The Huntsman dropped the goat, shot the boar, and wounded him.

The boar rushed upon the Huntsman, gored him to death with his tusks, and then himself died.

A Wolf smelled the blood, and came to the place where were lying the goat, the boar, the man and his bow.

The Wolf was overjoyed, and said to himself, “ Now I shall have enough to eat for a long time; but I am not going to eat it all up at once; I will



eat a little at a time, so that none of it may be wasted. First I will eat the hardest Part, and then I will feast on the softest and daintiest.”

The Wolf sniffed the goat, the boar, and the man, and he said :

“ This food is soft, I will eat this afterward; but first of all I will eat the tendon on this bow.”

And he began to gnaw at the tendon on the bow. When he had bitten through the bowstring, the bow sprang and hit the Wolf in the belly.

And the Wolf also perished, and the other wolves came and ate up the man, and the goat, and the boar, and the Wolf.

## XVII

### BIRDS IN THE SNARE

A HUNTSMAN set a snare by a lake. Many birds were caught in it. The birds were large; they seized the snare, and flew off with it.

The Huntsman began to run after the birds. A peasant saw him running after them, and he said : “ Where are you going? Can you catch birds on foot ? “

The Huntsman replied:

“ If there were only one bird, I should not catch him; but as it is, I shall bag my game.”

And so it proved.

When evening came, the birds each tried to fly off in his own direction; one to the forest, another to the swamp, a third to the field, and all fell with the net to the ground, and the Huntsman captured them.

## XVIII

### TSAR AND THE FALCON

A TSAR, while out hunting, unleashed his favorite Falcon at a hare, and galloped after it.

The Falcon caught the hare. The Tsar took away the hare, and started to seek for some water to quench his thirst. The Tsar found the water on a hillside. But it trickled out, a drop at a time. So the Tsar drew his cup from the holster, and placed it under the water.

The water trickled into the cup, and when the cup was full, the Tsar put it to his mouth, and was about to drink. Suddenly the Falcon fluttered down upon the Tsar's hand, flapped his wings, and spilled the water.

Again the Tsar placed the cup under the spring. He waited long, until it was filled brimming full, and again, when he lifted it to his lips, the Falcon flew upon his wrist and spilled the water.

When for the third time the Tsar managed to get his cup filled, and was lifting it to his lips, the Falcon again spilled it.

The Tsar grew wroth, and struck the Falcon with all his might with a stone, and killed him.

Then came the Tsar's servants, and one of them ran up to the spring in order to find a more plentiful supply of water and come back quickly with a full cup.

But the servant brought no water back; he returned with an empty cup, and said :

“ The water is not fit to drink; there is a serpent in the spring, and it has poisoned all the water. It is a good thing that the Falcon spilt it. If you had drunk of the water, you would have perished.

The Tsar said :

“ Foully have I recompensed the Falcon; he saved my life, and I killed him for it.”

XIX

## TSAR AND THE ELEPHANTS

AN Indian Tsar commanded to gather together all the blind men, and when they were collected, he com-manded to show them his Elephants. The blind men went to the stables, and began to feel of the Elephants.

One felt of the leg; another, of the tail; a third, of the rump; a fourth, of the belly; a fifth, of the back; a sixth, of the ears; a seventh, of the tusks; an eighth, of the proboscis.

Then the Tsar called the blind men to him, and asked them :

“ What are my Elephants like ? “

And one blind man said :  
“Thy Elephants are like pillars.”  
This blind man had felt of the legs.  
The second blind man said :  
“They are like brooms.”  
This one had felt of the tail.  
The third said :  
“ They are like wood.”  
This one had felt of the rump.  
The one who had felt of the belly said :  
“ Elephants are like lumps of earth.”  
The one who had felt of the side said :  
“ They are a wall.”  
The one who had felt of the back said :  
“ They are like a hill.”  
The one who had felt of the ears said :  
“They are like a handkerchief.”  
The one who had felt of the head said :  
“ They are like a mortar.”  
The one who had felt of the tusks said :  
“They are like horns.”  
The one who had felt of the proboscis said :-  
“ They are like a stout rope.”  
And all the blind men began to dispute and quarrel.

XX

## WHY THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD

A HERMIT lived in the forest, and the animals were not afraid of him. He and the wild animals used to talk together, and they understood one another.

Once the Hermit lay down under a tree, and a Raven, a Dove, a Stag, and a Snake came to the same place to sleep.

The animals began to reason why evil should exist in the world.

The Raven said :

“It is all owing to hunger that there is evil in the world. When we have as much as we wish to eat, we sit by ourselves on the bough and caw, and everything is good and gay, and we are in every respect well off; but some other day we are famished, and everything is quite the opposite, so that we can see no brightness in God’s world, and we feel full of unrest; we fly about from place to place, and there is no rest for us. And even if we see some meat afar off, then it becomes still worse; for if we fly down to get it, either sticks and stones are thrown at us, or wolves and dogs chase us, and we are absolutely destroyed. How much trouble comes upon us from hunger ! All evil is caused by it.”

The Dove said :

“ In my opinion, evil does not arise from hunger, but it all comes from love. If we only lived alone, we should have little trouble. Wretchedness shared makes one doubly wretched. And so we always live in pairs. And if we love our mates there is no peace for us at all. We are always thinking, \* Has she had enough to eat ? is she warm ? ‘ And when our mate is away from us anywhere, then we are wholly lost; we cannot help worrying all the time, ‘ If only the hawk does not carry her off, or men make way with her; ‘ and we ourselves fly off in pursuit of her, and perhaps find the poor thing either in the hawk’s claws or in the snare. And if our mate is lost, then there is no more comfort for us. We cannot eat, we cannot drink; we can only fly about and mourn. How many of us have perished in this way ! No; evil comes not from hunger, but from love.”

The Snake said :

“ No; evil arises neither from hunger nor from love, but from ill-temper. If we lived peacefully, we should not do so much harm; everything would be delightful for us. But now if anything is done to us, we fall into a rage, and then there is nothing gentle about us; we only think how we can avenge the wrong on some one. We lose control of ourselves and hiss, and try to bite some one. We would not have pity on any one, we would bite our own father and mother ! It seems as if we could eat our own selves. The moment we begin to lose our temper we are undone. All the evil in the world arises from ill-temper.”

The Stag said :

“ No; not from ill-temper, and not from love, and not from hunger arises all the evil that is in the world, but evil arises from fear. If it were possible for us to live without fear, all would be well with us. We are swift-footed, and have great strength. With our antlers we can defend ourselves from little animals; and we can run from the large ones. But it is impossible to escape fear. If it is only the twigs creaking in the forest, or the leaves rustling, we are all of a tremble with fear, our heart beats, we instinctively start to run, and fly with all our might. Another time a hare runs by or a bird flutters, or a dry twig crackles, and we think it is a wild beast, and in running away we really run into danger. And again we are running from a dog, and we come upon a man. Oftentimes we are frightened and start to flee, we don't know whither, and we roll over a precipice and perish. And we have to sleep with one eye open, with one ear alert, and we are always in alarm. There is no peace. All evil comes from fear.”

Then the Hermit said:

“ Not from hunger, nor from love, nor from ill-temper, nor from fear come all our troubles; but all the evil that is in the world is due to our different natures. Hence come hunger and love, ill-temper and fear.”

XXI

## WOLF AND THE HUNTSMEN

A WOLF was eating up a sheep. The Huntsmen discovered him, and began to beat him.

The Wolf said:

“ It is not right for you to beat me. It is not my fault that I am a wild beast; God made me so.”

But the Huntsmen replied :

“ We do not beat wolves because they are wild beasts, but because they eat the sheep.”

XXII

## TWO PEASANTS

ONCE upon a time two peasants attempted to pass each other, and their sledges became entangled. One cried :

“ Give me room; I must get to town as quickly as possible; “ and the other said :-

“ You give me room; I must get home as quickly as possible.”

Thus for a long time they disputed. A third peasant saw it, and said :

“ If you are in such a hurry, then each of you give way a little.” I

## XXIII

### PEASANT AND THE HORSE

A PEASANT went to town to get oats for his Horse. As soon as he got out of the village, the Horse wanted to return home. The Peasant lashed the Horse with his whip.

The horse started up, but in regard to the Peasant it thought :

“ The fool ! Where is he driving me ? We should be better off at home.”

Before they reached the city the Peasant noticed that the mud made the going hard for the Horse, so he turned him upon the wood-block pavement; but the Horse re-fused to go upon the pavement.

The Peasant lashed the Horse again, and twitched at the reins. The animal turned off upon the pavement, and said to himself :

“ Why did he turn me off upon the pavement; it only breaks my hoofs. It is hard here under my feet.”

The Peasant drove up to the shop, bought his oats, and went home.

When he reached home he gave the Horse the oats. The Horse began to eat, and said to himself :

“What stupid things men are! They only love to show their mastery over us, but their intelligence is less than ours. Why did he take so much trouble to-day ? Where did he go and drive me ? We had no sooner got there than we returned home. It would have been better for both of us if we had stayed at home in the first place. He would have sat on the oven, I and I should have been eating oats.”

## XXIV

### TWO HORSES

Two Horses were carrying two loads. The front Horse went well, but the rear Horse was lazy. The men began to pile the rear Horse's load on the front Horse; when they had transferred it all, the rear Horse found it easy going, and he said to the front Horse :-

“ Toil and sweat ! The more you try, the more you have to suffer.”

When they reached the tavern, the owner said :

“ Why should I fodder two horses when I carry all on one ? I had better give the one all the food it wants, and cut the throat of the other; at least I shall have the hide.”

And so he did.

## XXV

### AX AND THE SAW

Two peasants were going to the forest after wood. One had an ax and the other had a saw. After they had selected a tree they began to dispute.

One said it was better to chop down the tree, and the other said it ought to be sawed.

A third peasant said :

“ I will settle the question for you in a moment : if the ax is sharp, then it is better to chop; but if the saw is sharper, then it is better to saw.”

He took the ax and began to chop the tree. But the ax was dull, so that it was impossible for him to cut.

1 In Russian huts the oven is made of earth; and, as it is never very hot, the peasants use it for a bed and lounge.

He took the saw; the saw was wretched, and would not cut at all. Then he said :

“ Don't be in haste to quarrel; the ax does not chop, and the saw does not cut. Sharpen your ax and file your saw, and then quarrel as much as you wish.”

The two peasants, however, became even more angry with each other than before, because the one had a blunted ax, the other had an ill-set saw; and they fell to blows.

XXVI

#### DOGS AND THE COOK

A COOK was preparing dinner; some dogs were lying at the kitchen door. The cook killed a calf, and threw the insides into the yard. The dogs seized them, ate them up, and said : “ The cook is good; he knows how to cook well.” After a little while the cook began to clean tur-nips and onions, and he threw away the outsides. The dogs ran up to them, turned up their noses, and said :

“ Our cook is spoiled; he used to make good things, but now he is worthless.”

But the cook did not hear the dogs, and cooked the dinner in his usual way. The people of the house, however, ate up the dinner and praised it, if the dogs did not.

XXVII

#### HARE AND THE HOUND

A HARE once asked a Hound :

“ Why do you bark when you chase us ? You would be much more likely to catch us, if you ran without barking. But when you bark, you only drive us into the huntsman’s hands; he hears where we are running, and he hastens up, shoots us with his gun, kills us, and does not give you anything.”

The Dog replied :

“ That is not the reason that I bark; I bark simply because I get scent of you; I become excited, or else glad because I am going to catch you immediately; and I myself know not why, but I cannot help barking.”

XXVIII



## OAK AND THE HAZEL BUSH

AN ancient Oak let drop an acorn on a Hazel Bush. The Hazel Bush said to the Oak :

“ Have you, then, so little room under your branches? You might drop your acorns on a clear space. Here I myself have scarcely room for my branches; I don't throw my nuts away, though, but I give them to men.”  
“I live two hundred years,” replied the Oak; “and the little oak that will come up from the acorn will live as many more.”

Then the Hazel Bush grew angry, and said :

“ Then I will choke off your little oak, and it will not live three days.”  
The Oak made no reply to this, but told his little son to come forth from the acorn.

The acorn grew moist, burst open, and the rootlet caught hold of the earth with its little hooks, and another sprout was sent up above. The Hazel Bush tried to choke it, and would not give it the sun. But the little Oak stretched up into the air, and waxed strong in the Hazel Bush's shadow.

A hundred years passed away. The Hazel Bush had long ago died away; and the Oak had grown from the acorn as high as heaven, and spread its tent on every side.

## XXIX

## SETTING HEN AND THE CHICKENS

A BROOD HEN hatched out some Chickens, and did not know how to take care of them. And so she said to them :

“ Creep into the shell again; when you are in the shell, I will sit on you, as I used to sit on you, and I will take care of you.”

The Chickens obeyed their mother, tried to creep into the shell; but they found it perfectly impossible to get into it again, and they only broke their wings.

Then one of the Chickens said to his mother :

“ If we were to remain always in the shell, it would have been better if you had not let us out of it.”

XXX

### QUAIL AND HIS MATE

A QUAIL had been late in building his nest in a meadow; and when haying-time came, his Mate was still sitting on her eggs.

Early in the morning the peasants came to the meadow, took off their kaftans, whetted their scythes, and went, one after the other, cutting the grass and lay-ing it in windrows.

The Quail flew up to see what the mowers were doing. When he saw that one peasant was swinging his scythe and had just cut a snake in two, he was rejoiced, flew back to his Mate, and said :

“ Don’t be afraid of the peasants; they have come out to kill our snakes; for a long time there has been no living on account of them.”

But his Mate said :

“ The peasants are cutting grass; and with the grass they cut everything that comes in their way, either a snake or a quail’s nest. I am sick at heart, for I can-not either carry away my eggs, or leave my nest lest they get cold.” ‘

When the mowers reached the quail’s nest, one peas-ant swung his scythe and cut off the mother-bird’s head; but he put the eggs in his pocket, and gave them to his children to play with.

XXXI

### COW AND THE GOAT

AN old woman had a Cow and a Goat. The Cow and the Goat went to pasture together. The Cow always turned around when they came after her. The old woman brought bread and salt, gave it to the Cow, and said :

“ Now stand still, little mother, 1 na, na, I will bring you some more; only stand still.”

On the next evening the Goat returned from the pasture before the Cow, spread his legs, and stood before the old woman. The old woman waved her handkerchief at him, but the Goat stood without moving.

He thought that the old woman gave bread to the Cow because she stood still.

The old woman perceived that the Goat did not move away; she took her stick and beat him.

When the Goat went away, the old woman began to feed the Cow again with grain, and to coax her.

“There is no justice in men,” thought the Goat; “I stood stiller than the Cow does, but she beat me.”

He ran to one side, hurried back, kicked over the milk-pail, spilled the milk, and knocked over the old woman.

1 Matushka.

XXXII

FOX'S BRUSH

A MAN met a Fox, and asked her :

“ Who taught you Foxes to deceive dogs with your tails?”

The Fox asked :

“ How do you mean deceive ? We do not deceive the dogs, but merely run from them with all our might.”

The man said :

“ No; you deceive them with your brushes. When the dogs chase you, and are about to seize you, you throw your brushes to one side; the dog makes a sharp turn after it, and then you dash off in another direction.”

The Fox laughed, and said :

“ We do this, not to deceive the dogs, but we only do it so as to dodge; when the dogs chase us, and we see that we cannot run straight, we dodge to one side; and in order that we may dodge to that side, we have to fling our brushes to the other, just as you do the same thing with your hands when you try to turn round when you are running. This is not reason on our Part. God Him-self thought it out when He made us for this reason, that the dogs might not catch all the foxes.”

## My Dream

Translated by C. Hagberg Wright 1912

I

“AS A DAUGHTER she no longer exists for me. Can't you understand? She simply doesn't exist. Still, I cannot possibly leave her to the charity of strangers. I will arrange things so that she can live as she pleases, but I do not wish to hear of her. Who would ever have thought . . . the horror of it, the horror of it.”

He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, and raised his eyes. These words were spoken by Prince Michael Ivanovich to his brother Peter, who was governor of a province in Central Russia. Prince Peter was a man of fifty, Michael's junior by ten years.

On discovering that his daughter, who had left his house a year before, had settled here with her child, the elder brother had come from St. Petersburg to the provincial town, where the above conversation took place.

Prince Michael Ivanovich was a tall, handsome, white-haired, fresh coloured man, proud and attractive in appearance and bearing. His family consisted of a vulgar, irritable wife, who wrangled with him continually over every petty detail, a son, a ne'er-do-well, spendthrift and rouse — yet a “gentleman,” according to his father's code, two daughters, of whom the elder had married well, and was living in St. Petersburg; and the younger, Lisa — his favourite, who had disappeared from home a year before. Only a short while ago he had found her with her child in this provincial town.

Prince Peter wanted to ask his brother how, and under what circumstances, Lisa had left home, and who could possibly be the father of her child. But he could not make up his mind to inquire.

That very morning, when his wife had attempted to condole with her brother-in-law, Prince Peter had observed a look of pain on his brother's face. The look had at once been masked by an expression of unapproachable pride, and he had begun to question her about their flat, and the price she paid. At luncheon, before the family and guests, he had been witty and sarcastic as usual. Towards every one, excepting the children, whom he treated with almost reverent tenderness, he adopted an attitude of distant hauteur. And yet it was so natural to him that every one somehow acknowledged his right to be haughty.

In the evening his brother arranged a game of whist. When he retired to the room which had been made ready for him, and was just beginning to take out his artificial teeth, some one tapped lightly on the door with two fingers.

"Who is that?"

"C'est moi, Michael."

Prince Michael Ivanovich recognised the voice of his sister-in-law, frowned, replaced his teeth, and said to himself, "What does she want?" Aloud he said, "Entrez."

His sister-in-law was a quiet, gentle creature, who bowed in submission to her husband's will. But to many she seemed a crank, and some did not hesitate to call her a fool. She was pretty, but her hair was always carelessly dressed, and she herself was untidy and absent-minded. She had, also, the strangest, most unaristocratic ideas, by no means fitting in the wife of a high official. These ideas she would express most unexpectedly, to everybody's astonishment, her husband's no less than her friends'.

"Fous pouvez me renvoyer, mais je ne m'en irai pas, je vous le dis d'avance," she began, in her characteristic, indifferent way.

"Dieu preserve," answered her brother-in-law, with his usual somewhat exaggerated politeness, and brought forward a chair for her.

"Ca ne vous derange pas?" she asked, taking out a cigarette. "I'm not going to say anything unpleasant, Michael. I only wanted to say something about Lisochka."

Michael Ivanovich sighed — the word pained him; but mastering himself at once, he answered with a tired smile. “Our conversation can only be on one subject, and that is the subject you wish to discuss.” He spoke without looking at her, and avoided even naming the subject. But his plump, pretty little sister-in-law was unabashed. She continued to regard him with the same gentle, imploring look in her blue eyes, sighing even more deeply.

“Michael, mon bon ami, have pity on her. She is only human.”

“I never doubted that,” said Michael Ivanovich with a bitter smile.

“She is your daughter.”

“She was — but my dear Aline, why talk about this?”

“Michael, dear, won’t you see her? I only wanted to say, that the one who is to blame— “

Prince Michael Ivanovich flushed; his face became cruel.

“For heaven’s sake, let us stop. I have suffered enough. I have now but one desire, and that is to put her in such a position that she will be independent of others, and that she shall have no further need of communicating with me. Then she can live her own life, and my family and I need know nothing more about her. That is all I can do.”

“Michael, you say nothing but ‘I’! She, too, is ‘I.’”

“No doubt; but, dear Aline, please let us drop the matter. I feel it too deeply.”

Alexandra Dmitrievna remained silent for a few moments, shaking her head. “And Masha, your wife, thinks as you do?”

“Yes, quite.”

Alexandra Dmitrievna made an inarticulate sound.

“Brisons la dessus et bonne nuit,” said he. But she did not go. She stood silent a moment. Then,— “Peter tells me you intend to leave the money with the woman where she lives. Have you the address?”

“I have.”

“Don’t leave it with the woman, Michael! Go yourself. Just see how she lives. If you don’t want to see her, you need not. HE isn’t there; there is no one there.”

Michael Ivanovich shuddered violently.

“Why do you torture me so? It’s a sin against hospitality!”

Alexandra Dmitrievna rose, and almost in tears, being touched by her own pleading, said, “She is so miserable, but she is such a dear.”

He got up, and stood waiting for her to finish. She held out her hand.

“Michael, you do wrong,” said she, and left him.

For a long while after she had gone Michael Ivanovich walked to and fro on the square of carpet. He frowned and shivered, and exclaimed, “Oh, oh!” And then the sound of his own voice frightened him, and he was silent.

His wounded pride tortured him. His daughter — his — brought up in the house of her mother, the famous Avdotia Borisovna, whom the Empress honoured with her visits, and acquaintance with whom was an honour for all the world! His daughter — ; and he had lived his life as a knight of old, knowing neither fear nor blame. The fact that he had a natural son born of a Frenchwoman, whom he had settled abroad, did not lower his own self-esteem.

And now this daughter, for whom he had not only done everything that a father could and should do; this daughter to whom he had given a splendid education and every opportunity to make a match in the best Russian society — this daughter to whom he had not only given all that a girl could desire, but whom he had really LOVED; whom he had admired, been proud of — this daughter had repaid him with such disgrace, that he was ashamed and could not face the eyes of men!

He recalled the time when she was not merely his child, and a member of his family, but his darling, his joy and his pride. He saw her again, a little thing of eight or nine, bright, intelligent, lively, impetuous, graceful, with brilliant black eyes and flowing auburn hair. He remembered how she used to jump up on his knees and hug him, and tickle his neck; and how she would laugh, regardless of his protests, and

continue to tickle him, and kiss his lips, his eyes, and his cheeks. He was naturally opposed to all demonstration, but this impetuous love moved him, and he often submitted to her petting. He remembered also how sweet it was to caress her. To remember all this, when that sweet child had become what she now was, a creature of whom he could not think without loathing.

He also recalled the time when she was growing into womanhood, and the curious feeling of fear and anger that he experienced when he became aware that men regarded her as a woman. He thought of his jealous love when she came coquettishly to him dressed for a ball, and knowing that she was pretty. He dreaded the passionate glances which fell upon her, that she not only did not understand but rejoiced in. "Yes," thought he, "that superstition of woman's purity! Quite the contrary, they do not know shame — they lack this sense." He remembered how, quite inexplicably to him, she had refused two very good suitors. She had become more and more fascinated by her own success in the round of gaieties she lived in.

But this success could not last long. A year passed, then two, then three. She was a familiar figure, beautiful — but her first youth had passed, and she had become somehow Part of the ball-room furniture. Michael Ivanovich remembered how he had realised that she was on the road to spinsterhood, and desired but one thing for her. He must get her married off as quickly as possible, perhaps not quite so well as might have been arranged earlier, but still a respectable match.

But it seemed to him she had behaved with a pride that bordered on insolence. Remembering this, his anger rose more and more fiercely against her. To think of her refusing so many decent men, only to end in this disgrace. "Oh, oh!" he groaned again.

Then stopping, he lit a cigarette, and tried to think of other things. He would send her money, without ever letting her see him. But memories came again. He remembered — it was not so very long ago, for she was more than twenty then — her beginning a flirtation with a boy of fourteen, a cadet of the Corps of Pages who had been staying with



them in the country. She had driven the boy half crazy; he had wept in his distraction. Then how she had rebuked her father severely, coldly, and even rudely, when, to put an end to this stupid affair, he had sent the boy away. She seemed somehow to consider herself insulted. Since then father and daughter had drifted into undisguised hostility. "I was right," he said to himself. "She is a wicked and shameless woman."

And then, as a last ghastly memory, there was the letter from Moscow, in which she wrote that she could not return home; that she was a miserable, abandoned woman, asking only to be forgiven and forgotten. Then the horrid recollection of the scene with his wife came to him; their surmises and their suspicions, which became a certainty. The calamity had happened in Finland, where they had let her visit her aunt; and the culprit was an insignificant Swede, a student, an empty-headed, worthless creature — and married.

All this came back to him now as he paced backwards and forwards on the bedroom carpet, recollecting his former love for her, his pride in her. He recoiled with terror before the incomprehensible fact of her downfall, and he hated her for the agony she was causing him. He remembered the conversation with his sister-in-law, and tried to imagine how he might forgive her. But as soon as the thought of "him" arose, there surged up in his heart horror, disgust, and wounded pride. He groaned aloud, and tried to think of something else. "No, it is impossible; I will hand over the money to Peter to give her monthly. And as for me, I have no longer a daughter."

And again a curious feeling overpowered him: a mixture of self-pity at the recollection of his love for her, and of fury against her for causing him this anguish.

II

DURING the last year Lisa had without doubt lived through more than in all the preceding twenty-five. Suddenly she had realised the emptiness of her whole life. It rose before her, base and sordid — this

life at home and among the rich set in St. Petersburg — this animal existence that never sounded the depths, but only touched the shallows of life.

It was well enough for a year or two, or perhaps even three. But when it went on for seven or eight years, with its Parties, balls, concerts, and suppers; with its costumes and coiffures to display the charms of the body; with its adorers old and young, all alike seemingly possessed of some unaccountable right to have everything, to laugh at everything; and with its summer months spent in the same way, everything yielding but a superficial pleasure, even music and reading merely touching upon life's problems, but never solving them — all this holding out no promise of change, and losing its charm more and more — she began to despair. She had desperate moods when she longed to die.

Her friends directed her thoughts to charity. On the one hand, she saw poverty which was real and repulsive, and a sham poverty even more repulsive and pitiable; on the other, she saw the terrible indifference of the lady patronesses who came in carriages and gowns worth thousands. Life became to her more and more unbearable. She yearned for something real, for life itself — not this playing at living, not this skimming life of its cream. Of real life there was none. The best of her memories was her love for the little cadet Koko. That had been a good, honest, straight-forward impulse, and now there was nothing like it. There could not be. She grew more and more depressed, and in this gloomy mood she went to visit an aunt in Finland. The fresh scenery and surroundings, the people strangely different to her own, appealed to her at any rate as a new experience.

How and when it all began she could not clearly remember. Her aunt had another guest, a Swede. He talked of his work, his people, the latest Swedish novel. Somehow, she herself did not know how that terrible fascination of glances and smiles began, the meaning of which cannot be put into words.

These smiles and glances seemed to reveal to each, not only the soul of the other, but some vital and universal mystery. Every word they spoke

was invested by these smiles with a profound and wonderful significance. Music, too, when they were listening together, or when they sang duets, became full of the same deep meaning. So, also, the words in the books they read aloud. Sometimes they would argue, but the moment their eyes met, or a smile flashed between them, the discussion remained far behind. They soared beyond it to some higher plane consecrated to themselves.

How it had come about, how and when the devil, who had seized hold of them both, first appeared behind these smiles and glances, she could not say. But, when terror first seized her, the invisible threads that bound them were already so interwoven that she had no power to tear herself free. She could only count on him and on his honour. She hoped that he would not make use of his power; yet all the while she vaguely desired it.

Her weakness was the greater, because she had nothing to support her in the struggle. She was weary of society life and she had no affection for her mother. Her father, so she thought, had cast her away from him, and she longed passionately to live and to have done with play. Love, the perfect love of a woman for a man, held the promise of life for her. Her strong, passionate nature, too, was dragging her thither. In the tall, strong figure of this man, with his fair hair and light upturned moustache, under which shone a smile attractive and compelling, she saw the promise of that life for which she longed. And then the smiles and glances, the hope of something so incredibly beautiful, led, as they were bound to lead, to that which she feared but unconsciously awaited.

Suddenly all that was beautiful, joyous, spiritual, and full of promise for the future, became animal and sordid, sad and despairing.

She looked into his eyes and tried to smile, pretending that she feared nothing, that everything was as it should be; but deep down in her soul she knew it was all over. She understood that she had not found in him what she had sought; that which she had once known in herself and in

Koko. She told him that he must write to her father asking her hand in marriage.

This he promised to do; but when she met him next he said it was impossible for him to write just then. She saw something vague and furtive in his eyes, and her distrust of him grew. The following day he wrote to her, telling her that he was already married, though his wife had left him long since; that he knew she would despise him for the wrong he had done her, and implored her forgiveness. She made him come to see her.

She said she loved him; that she felt herself bound to him for ever whether he was married or not, and would never leave him. The next time they met he told her that he and his parents were so poor that he could only offer her the meanest existence. She answered that she needed nothing, and was ready to go with him at once wherever he wished. He endeavoured to dissuade her, advising her to wait; and so she waited. But to live on with this secret, with occasional meetings, and merely corresponding with him, all hidden from her family, was agonising, and she insisted again that he must take her away. At first, when she returned to St. Petersburg, he wrote promising to come, and then letters ceased and she knew no more of him.

She tried to lead her old life, but it was impossible. She fell ill, and the efforts of the doctors were unavailing; in her hopelessness she resolved to kill herself. But how was she to do this, so that her death might seem natural? She really desired to take her life, and imagined that she had irrevocably decided on the step. So, obtaining some poison, she poured it into a glass, and in another instant would have drunk it, had not her sister's little son of five at that very moment run in to show her a toy his grandmother had given him. She caressed the child, and, suddenly stopping short, burst into tears.

The thought overpowered her that she, too, might have been a mother had he not been married, and this vision of motherhood made her look into her own soul for the first time. She began to think not of what others would say of her, but of her own life. To kill oneself because of

what the world might say was easy; but the moment she saw her own life dissociated from the world, to take that life was out of the question. She threw away the poison, and ceased to think of suicide.

Then her life within began. It was real life, and despite the torture of it, had the possibility been given her, she would not have turned back from it. She began to pray, but there was no comfort in prayer; and her suffering was less for herself than for her father, whose grief she foresaw and understood.

Thus months dragged along, and then something happened which entirely transformed her life. One day, when she was at work upon a quilt, she suddenly experienced a strange sensation. No — it seemed impossible. Motionless she sat with her work in hand. Was it possible that this was IT. Forgetting everything, his baseness and deceit, her mother's querulousness, and her father's sorrow, she smiled. She shuddered at the recollection that she was on the point of killing it, together with herself.

She now directed all her thoughts to getting away — somewhere where she could bear her child — and become a miserable, pitiful mother, but a mother withal. Somehow she planned and arranged it all, leaving her home and settling in a distant provincial town, where no one could find her, and where she thought she would be far from her people. But, unfortunately, her father's brother received an appointment there, a thing she could not possibly foresee. For four months she had been living in the house of a midwife — one Maria Ivanovna; and, on learning that her uncle had come to the town, she was preparing to fly to a still remoter hiding-place.

III

MICHAEL IVANOVICH awoke early next morning. He entered his brother's study, and handed him the cheque, filled in for a sum which he asked him to pay in monthly instalments to his daughter. He inquired when the express left for St. Petersburg. The train left at seven in the evening, giving him time for an early dinner before leaving. He

breakfasted with his sister-in-law, who refrained from mentioning the subject which was so painful to him, but only looked at him timidly; and after breakfast he went out for his regular morning walk. Alexandra Dmitrievna followed him into the hall.

“Go into the public gardens, Michael — it is very charming there, and quite near to Everything,” said she, meeting his sombre looks with a pathetic glance.

Michael Ivanovich followed her advice and went to the public gardens, which were so near to Everything, and meditated with annoyance on the stupidity, the obstinacy, and heartlessness of women.

“She is not in the very least sorry for me,” he thought of his sister-in-law. “She cannot even understand my sorrow. And what of her?” He was thinking of his daughter. “She knows what all this means to me — the torture. What a blow in one’s old age! My days will be shortened by it! But I’d rather have it over than endure this agony. And all that ‘pour les beaux yeux d’un chenapan’ — oh!” he moaned; and a wave of hatred and fury arose in him as he thought of what would be said in the town when every one knew. (And no doubt every one knew already.) Such a feeling of rage possessed him that he would have liked to beat it into her head, and make her understand what she had done. These women never understand. “It is quite near Everything,” suddenly came to his mind, and getting out his notebook, he found her address. Vera Ivanovna Silvestrova, Kukonskaya Street, Abromov’s house. She was living under this name. He left the gardens and called a cab.

“Whom do you wish to see, sir?” asked the midwife, Maria Ivanovna, when he stepped on the narrow landing of the steep, stuffy staircase. “Does Madame Silvestrova live here?”

“Vera Ivanovna? Yes; please come in. She has gone out; she’s gone to the shop round the corner. But she’ll be back in a minute.”

Michael Ivanovich followed the stout figure of Maria Ivanovna into a tiny parlour, and from the next room came the screams of a baby, sounding cross and peevish, which filled him with disgust. They cut him like a knife.

Maria Ivanovna apologised, and went into the room, and he could hear her soothing the child. The child became quiet, and she returned.

“That is her baby; she’ll be back in a minute. You are a friend of hers, I suppose?”

“Yes — a friend — but I think I had better come back later on,” said Michael Ivanovich, preparing to go. It was too unbearable, this preparation to meet her, and any explanation seemed impossible.

He had just turned to leave, when he heard quick, light steps on the stairs, and he recognised Lisa’s voice.

“Maria Ivanovna-has he been crying while I’ve been gone-I was-”

Then she saw her father. The parcel she was carrying fell from her hands.

“Father!” she cried, and stopped in the doorway, white and trembling.

He remained motionless, staring at her. She had grown so thin. Her eyes were larger, her nose sharper, her hands worn and bony. He neither knew what to do, nor what to say. He forgot all his grief about his dishonour. He only felt sorrow, infinite sorrow for her; sorrow for her thinness, and for her miserable rough clothing; and most of all, for her pitiful face and imploring eyes.

“Father — forgive,” she said, moving towards him.

“Forgive — forgive me,” he murmured; and he began to sob like a child, kissing her face and hands, and wetting them with his tears.

In his pity for her he understood himself. And when he saw himself as he was, he realised how he had wronged her, how guilty he had been in his pride, in his coldness, even in his anger towards her. He was glad that it was he who was guilty, and that he had nothing to forgive, but that he himself needed forgiveness. She took him to her tiny room, and told him how she lived; but she did not show him the child, nor did she mention the past, knowing how painful it would be to him.

He told her that she must live differently.

“Yes; if I could only live in the country,” said she.

“We will talk it over,” he said. Suddenly the child began to wail and to scream. She opened her eyes very wide; and, not taking them from her father’s face, remained hesitating and motionless.

“Well-I suppose you must feed him,” said Michael Ivanovich, and frowned with the obvious effort.

She got up, and suddenly the wild idea seized her to show him whom she loved so deeply the thing she now loved best of all in the world. But first she looked at her father’s face. Would he be angry or not? His face revealed no anger, only suffering.

“Yes, go, go,” said he; “God bless you. Yes. I’ll come again to-morrow, and we will decide. Good-bye, my darling-good-bye.” Again he found it hard to swallow the lump in his throat.

When Michael Ivanovich returned to his brother’s house, Alexandra Dmitrievna immediately rushed to him.

“Well?”

“Well? Nothing.”

“Have you seen?” she asked, guessing from his expression that something had happened.

“Yes,” he answered shortly, and began to cry. “I’m getting old and stupid,” said he, mastering his emotion.

“No; you are growing wise-very wise.”

There Are No Guilty People

Translated by C. Hagberg Wright 1912

I

MINE is a strange and wonderful lot! The chances are that there is not a single wretched beggar suffering under the luxury and oppression of the rich who feels anything like as keenly as I do either the injustice, the cruelty, and the horror of their oppression of and contempt for the



poor; or the grinding humiliation and misery which befall the great majority of the workers, the real producers of all that makes life possible.

I have felt this for a long time, and as the years have passed by the feeling has grown and grown, until recently it reached its climax. Although I feel all this so vividly, I still live on amid the depravity and sins of rich society; and I cannot leave it, because I have neither the knowledge nor the strength to do so. I cannot. I do not know how to change my life so that my physical needs — food, sleep, clothing, my going to and fro — may be satisfied without a sense of shame and wrongdoing in the position which I fill.

There was a time when I tried to change my position, which was not in harmony with my conscience; but the conditions created by the past, by my family and its claims upon me, were so complicated that they would not let me out of their grasp, or rather, I did not know how to free myself. I had not the strength. Now that I am over eighty and have become feeble, I have given up trying to free myself; and, strange to say, as my feebleness increases I realise more and more strongly the wrongfulness of my position, and it grows more and more intolerable to me.

It has occurred to me that I do not occupy this position for nothing: that Providence intended that I should lay bare the truth of my feelings, so that I might atone for all that causes my suffering, and might perhaps open the eyes of those — or at least of some of those — who are still blind to what I see so clearly, and thus might lighten the burden of that vast majority who, under existing conditions, are subjected to bodily and spiritual suffering by those who deceive them and also deceive themselves.

Indeed, it may be that the position which I occupy gives me special facilities for revealing the artificial and criminal relations which exist between men — for telling the whole truth in regard to that position without confusing the issue by attempting to vindicate myself, and

without rousing the envy of the rich and feelings of oppression in the hearts of the poor and downtrodden.

I am so placed that I not only have no desire to vindicate myself; but, on the contrary, I find it necessary to make an effort lest I should exaggerate the wickedness of the great among whom I live, of whose society I am ashamed, whose attitude towards their fellow-men I detest with my whole soul, though I find it impossible to separate my lot from theirs. But I must also avoid the error of those democrats and others who, in defending the oppressed and the enslaved, do not see their failings and mistakes, and who do not make sufficient allowance for the difficulties created, the mistakes inherited from the past, which in a degree lessens the responsibility of the upper classes.

Free from desire for self-vindication, free from fear of an emancipated people, free from that envy and hatred which the oppressed feel for their oppressors, I am in the best possible position to see the truth and to tell it. Perhaps that is why Providence placed me in such a position. I will do my best to turn it to account.

## II

Alexander Ivanovich Volgin, a bachelor and a clerk in a Moscow bank at a salary of eight thousand roubles a year, a man much respected in his own set, was staying in a country-house. His host was a wealthy landowner, owning some twenty-five hundred acres, and had married his guest's cousin. Volgin, tired after an evening spent in playing vint\* for small stakes with [\* A game of cards similar to auction bridge.] members of the family, went to his room and placed his watch, silver cigarette-case, pocket-book, big leather purse, and pocket-brush and comb on a small table covered with a white cloth, and then, taking off his coat, waistcoat, shirt, trousers, and underclothes, his silk socks and English boots, put on his nightshirt and dressing-gown. His watch pointed to midnight. Volgin smoked a cigarette, lay on his face for about five minutes reviewing the day's impressions; then, blowing out his candle, he turned over on his side and fell asleep about one o'clock,

in spite of a good deal of restlessness. Awaking next morning at eight he put on his slippers and dressing-gown, and rang the bell.

The old butler, Stephen, the father of a family and the grandfather of six grandchildren, who had served in that house for thirty years, entered the room hurriedly, with bent legs, carrying in the newly blackened boots which Volgin had taken off the night before, a well-brushed suit, and a clean shirt. The guest thanked him, and then asked what the weather was like (the blinds were drawn so that the sun should not prevent any one from sleeping till eleven o'clock if he were so inclined), and whether his hosts had slept well. He glanced at his watch — it was still early — and began to wash and dress. His water was ready, and everything on the washing-stand and dressing-table was ready for use and properly laid out — his soap, his tooth and hair brushes, his nail scissors and files. He washed his hands and face in a leisurely fashion, cleaned and manicured his nails, pushed back the skin with the towel, and sponged his stout white body from head to foot.

Then he began to brush his hair. Standing in front of the mirror, he first brushed his curly beard, which was beginning to turn grey, with two English brushes, Parting it down the middle. Then he combed his hair, which was already showing signs of getting thin, with a large tortoise-shell comb. Putting on his underlinen, his socks, his boots, his trousers — which were held up by elegant braces — and his waistcoat, he sat down coatless in an easy chair to rest after dressing, lit a cigarette, and began to think where he should go for a walk that morning — to the park or to Littleports (what a funny name for a wood!). He thought he would go to Littleports.

Then he must answer Simon Nicholaevich's letter; but there was time enough for that. Getting up with an air of resolution, he took out his watch. It was already five minutes to nine. He put his watch into his waistcoat pocket, and his purse — with all that was left of the hundred and eighty roubles he had taken for his journey, and for the incidental expenses of his fortnight's stay with his cousin — and then he placed into his trouser pocket his cigarette-case and electric cigarette-lighter, and two clean handkerchiefs into his coat pockets, and went out of the

room, leaving as usual the mess and confusion which he had made to be cleared up by Stephen, an old man of over fifty. Stephen expected Volgin to “remunerate” him, as he said, being so accustomed to the work that he did not feel the slightest repugnance for it. Glancing at a mirror, and feeling satisfied with his appearance, Volgin went into the dining-room.

There, thanks to the efforts of the housekeeper, the footman, and under-butler — the latter had risen at dawn in order to run home to sharpen his son’s scythe — breakfast was ready. On a spotless white cloth stood a boiling, shiny, silver samovar (at least it looked like silver), a coffee-pot, hot milk, cream, butter, and all sorts of fancy white bread and biscuits. The only persons at table were the second son of the house, his tutor (a student), and the secretary.

The host, who was an active member of the Zemstvo and a great farmer, had already left the house, having gone at eight o’clock to attend to his work. Volgin, while drinking his coffee, talked to the student and the secretary about the weather, and yesterday’s vint, and discussed Theodorite’s peculiar behaviour the night before, as he had been very rude to his father without the slightest cause. Theodorite was the grown-up son of the house, and a ne’er-do-well.

His name was Theodore, but some one had once called him Theodorite either as a joke or to tease him; and, as it seemed funny, the name stuck to him, although his doings were no longer in the least amusing. So it was now. He had been to the university, but left it in his second year, and joined a regiment of horse guards; but he gave that up also, and was now living in the country, doing nothing, finding fault, and feeling discontented with everything. Theodorite was still in bed: so were the other members of the household — Anna Mikhailovna, its mistress; her sister, the widow of a general; and a landscape painter who lived with the family.

Volgin took his panama hat from the hall table (it had cost twenty roubles) and his cane with its carved ivory handle, and went out. Crossing the veranda, gay with flowers, he walked through the flower

garden, in the centre of which was a raised round bed, with rings of red, white, and blue flowers, and the initials of the mistress of the house done in carpet bedding in the centre.

Leaving the flower garden Volgin entered the avenue of lime trees, hundreds of years old, which peasant girls were tidying and sweeping with spades and brooms. The gardener was busy measuring, and a boy was bringing something in a cart. Passing these Volgin went into the park of at least a hundred and twenty-five acres, filled with fine old trees, and intersected by a network of well-kept walks. Smoking as he strolled Volgin took his favourite path past the summer-house into the fields beyond. It was pleasant in the park, but it was still nicer in the fields. On the right some women who were digging potatoes formed a mass of bright red and white colour; on the left were wheat fields, meadows, and grazing cattle; and in the foreground, slightly to the right, were the dark, dark oaks of Littleports. Volgin took a deep breath, and felt glad that he was alive, especially here in his cousin's home, where he was so thoroughly enjoying the rest from his work at the bank.

"Lucky people to live in the country," he thought. "True, what with his farming and his Zemstvo, the owner of the estate has very little peace even in the country, but that is his own lookout." Volgin shook his head, lit another cigarette, and, stepping out firmly with his powerful feet clad in his thick English boots, began to think of the heavy winter's work in the bank that was in front of him. "I shall be there every day from ten to two, sometimes even till five. And the board meetings . . . And private interviews with clients. . . . Then the Duma. Whereas here. . . . It is delightful.

It may be a little dull, but it is not for long." He smiled. After a stroll in Littleports he turned back, going straight across a fallow field which was being ploughed. A herd of cows, calves, sheep, and pigs, which belonged to the village community, was grazing there. The shortest way to the park was to pass through the herd. He frightened the sheep, which ran away one after another, and were followed by the pigs, of which two little ones stared solemnly at him. The shepherd boy called

to the sheep and cracked his whip. "How far behind Europe we are," thought Volgin, recalling his frequent holidays abroad. "You would not find a single cow like that anywhere in Europe." Then, wanting to find out where the path which branched off from the one he was on led to and who was the owner of the herd, he called to the boy.

"Whose herd is it?"

The boy was so filled with wonder, verging on terror, when he gazed at the hat, the well-brushed beard, and above all the gold-rimmed eyeglasses, that he could not reply at once. When Volgin repeated his question the boy pulled himself together, and said, "Ours." "But whose is 'ours'?" said Volgin, shaking his head and smiling. The boy was wearing shoes of plaited birch bark, bands of linen round his legs, a dirty, unbleached shirt ragged at the shoulder, and a cap the peak of which had been torn.

"Whose is 'ours'?"

"The Pirogov village herd."

"How old are you?"

"I don't know."

"Can you read?"

"No, I can't."

"Didn't you go to school?"

"Yes, I did."

"Couldn't you learn to read?"

"No."

"Where does that path lead?"

The boy told him, and Volgin went on towards the house, thinking how he would chaff Nicholas Petrovich about the deplorable condition of the village schools in spite of all his efforts.

On approaching the house Volgin looked at his watch, and saw that it was already past eleven. He remembered that Nicholas Petrovich was going to drive to the nearest town, and that he had meant to give him a letter to post to Moscow; but the letter was not written. The letter was a very important one to a friend, asking him to bid for him for a picture of the Madonna which was to be offered for sale at an auction. As he

reached the house he saw at the door four big, well-fed, well-groomed, thoroughbred horses harnessed to a carriage, the black lacquer of which glistened in the sun. The coachman was seated on the box in a kaftan, with a silver belt, and the horses were jingling their silver bells from time to time.

A bare-headed, barefooted peasant in a ragged kaftan stood at the front door. He bowed. Volgin asked what he wanted.

“I have come to see Nicholas Petrovich.”

“What about?”

“Because I am in distress — my horse has died.”

Volgin began to question him. The peasant told him how he was situated. He had five children, and this had been his only horse. Now it was gone. He wept.

“What are you going to do?”

“To beg.” And he knelt down, and remained kneeling in spite of Volgin’s expostulations.

“What is your name?”

“Mitri Sudarikov,” answered the peasant, still kneeling.

Volgin took three roubles from his purse and gave them to the peasant, who showed his gratitude by touching the ground with his forehead, and then went into the house. His host was standing in the hall.

“Where is your letter?” he asked, approaching Volgin; “I am just off.”

“I’m awfully sorry, I’ll write it this minute, if you will let me. I forgot all about it. It’s so pleasant here that one can forget anything.”

“All right, but do be quick. The horses have already been standing a quarter of an hour, and the flies are biting viciously. Can you wait, Arsenty?” he asked the coachman.

“Why not?” said the coachman, thinking to himself, “why do they order the horses when they aren’t ready? The rush the grooms and I had — just to stand here and feed the flies.”

“Directly, directly,” Volgin went towards his room, but turned back to ask Nicholas Petrovich about the begging peasant.

“Did you see him? — He’s a drunkard, but still he is to be pitied. Do be quick!”

Volgin got out his case, with all the requisites for writing, wrote the letter, made out a cheque for a hundred and eighty roubles, and, sealing down the envelope, took it to Nicholas Petrovich.

“Good-bye.”

Volgin read the newspapers till luncheon. He only read the Liberal papers: The Russian Gazette, Speech, sometimes The Russian Word — but he would not touch The New Times, to which his host subscribed.

While he was scanning at his ease the political news, the Tsar’s doings, the doings of President, and ministers and decisions in the Duma, and was just about to pass on to the general news, theatres, science, murders and cholera, he heard the luncheon bell ring.

Thanks to the efforts of upwards of ten human beings — counting laundresses, gardeners, cooks, kitchen-maids, butlers and footmen — the table was sumptuously laid for eight, with silver waterjugs, decanters, kvass, wine, mineral waters, cut glass, and fine table linen, while two men-servants were continually hurrying to and fro, bringing in and serving, and then clearing away the hors d’oeuvre and the various hot and cold courses.

The hostess talked incessantly about everything that she had been doing, thinking, and saying; and she evidently considered that everything that she thought, said, or did was perfect, and that it would please every one except those who were fools. Volgin felt and knew that everything she said was stupid, but it would never do to let it be seen, and so he kept up the conversation. Theodorite was glum and silent; the student occasionally exchanged a few words with the widow. Now and again there was a pause in the conversation, and then Theodorite interposed, and every one became miserably depressed. At such moments the hostess ordered some dish that had not been served, and the footman hurried off to the kitchen, or to the housekeeper, and hurried back again. Nobody felt inclined either to talk or to eat. But they all forced themselves to eat and to talk, and so luncheon went on.



The peasant who had been begging because his horse had died was named Mitri Sudarikov. He had spent the whole day before he went to the squire over his dead horse. First of all he went to the knacker, Sanin, who lived in a village near.

The knacker was out, but he waited for him, and it was dinner-time when he had finished bargaining over the price of the skin. Then he borrowed a neighbour's horse to take his own to a field to be buried, as it is forbidden to bury dead animals near a village. Adrian would not lend his horse because he was getting in his potatoes, but Stephen took pity on Mitri and gave way to his persuasion. He even lent a hand in lifting the dead horse into the cart.

Mitri tore off the shoes from the forelegs and gave them to his wife. One was broken, but the other one was whole. While he was digging the grave with a spade which was very blunt, the knacker appeared and took off the skin; and the carcass was then thrown into the hole and covered up. Mitri felt tired, and went into Matrena's hut, where he drank half a bottle of vodka with Sanin to console himself.

Then he went home, quarrelled with his wife, and lay down to sleep on the hay. He did not undress, but slept just as he was, with a ragged coat for a coverlet. His wife was in the hut with the girls — there were four of them, and the youngest was only five weeks old. Mitri woke up before dawn as usual. He groaned as the memory of the day before broke in upon him — how the horse had struggled and struggled, and then fallen down. Now there was no horse, and all he had was the price of the skin, four roubles and eighty kopeks. Getting up he arranged the linen bands on his legs, and went through the yard into the hut. His wife was putting straw into the stove with one hand, with the other she was holding a baby girl to her breast, which was hanging out of her dirty chemise.

Mitri crossed himself three times, turning towards the corner in which the ikons hung, and repeated some utterly meaningless words, which

he called prayers, to the Trinity and the Virgin, the Creed and our Father.

“Isn’t there any water?”

“The girl’s gone for it. I’ve got some tea. Will you go up to the squire?”

“Yes, I’d better.” The smoke from the stove made him cough. He took a rag off the wooden bench and went into the porch. The girl had just come back with the water. Mitri filled his mouth with water from the pail and squirted it out on his hands, took some more in his mouth to wash his face, dried himself with the rag, then Parted and smoothed his curly hair with his fingers and went out. A little girl of about ten, with nothing on but a dirty shirt, came towards him. “Good-morning, Uncle Mitri,” she said; “you are to come and thrash.” “All right, I’ll come,” replied Mitri. He understood that he was expected to return the help given the week before by Kumushkir, a man as poor as he was himself, when he was thrashing his own corn with a horse-driven machine.

“Tell them I’ll come — I’ll come at lunch time. I’ve got to go to Ugrumi.” Mitri went back to the hut, and changing his birch-bark shoes and the linen bands on his legs, started off to see the squire. After he had got three roubles from Volgin, and the same sum from Nicholas Petrovich, he returned to his house, gave the money to his wife, and went to his neighbour’s. The thrashing machine was humming, and the driver was shouting.

The lean horses were going slowly round him, straining at their traces. The driver was shouting to them in a monotone, “Now, there, my dears.” Some women were unbinding sheaves, others were raking up the scattered straw and ears, and others again were gathering great armfuls of corn and handing them to the men to feed the machine. The work was in full swing. In the kitchen garden, which Mitri had to pass, a girl, clad only in a long shirt, was digging potatoes which she put into a basket.

“Where’s your grandfather?” asked Mitri. “He’s in the barn.” Mitri went to the barn and set to work at once. The old man of eighty knew of Mitri’s trouble. After greeting him, he gave him his place to feed the machine.

Mitri took off his ragged coat, laid it out of the way near the fence, and then began to work vigorously, raking the corn together and throwing it into the machine. The work went on without interruption until the dinner-hour. The cocks had crowed two or three times, but no one paid any attention to them; not because the workers did not believe them, but because they were scarcely heard for the noise of the work and the talk about it. At last the whistle of the squire's steam thrasher sounded three miles away, and then the owner came into the barn. He was a straight old man of eighty. "It's time to stop," he said; "it's dinner-time." Those at work seemed to redouble their efforts. In a moment the straw was cleared away; the grain that had been thrashed was separated from the chaff and brought in, and then the workers went into the hut.

The hut was smoke-begrimed, as its stove had no chimney, but it had been tidied up, and benches stood round the table, making room for all those who had been working, of whom there were nine, not counting the owners. Bread, soup, boiled potatoes, and kvass were placed on the table.

An old one-armed beggar, with a bag slung over his shoulder, came in with a crutch during the meal.

"Peace be to this house. A good appetite to you. For Christ's sake give me something."

"God will give it to you," said the mistress, already an old woman, and the daughter-in-law of the master. "Don't be angry with us." An old man, who was still standing near the door, said, "Give him some bread, Martha. How can you?"

"I am only wondering whether we shall have enough." "Oh, it is wrong, Martha. God tells us to help the poor. Cut him a slice."

Martha obeyed. The beggar went away. The man in charge of the thrashing-machine got up, said grace, thanked his hosts, and went away to rest.

Mitri did not lie down, but ran to the shop to buy some tobacco. He was longing for a smoke. While he smoked he chatted to a man from

Demensk, asking the price of cattle, as he saw that he would not be able to manage without selling a cow. When he returned to the others, they were already back at work again; and so it went on till the evening.

Among these downtrodden, duped, and defrauded men, who are becoming demoralised by overwork, and being gradually done to death by underfeeding, there are men living who consider themselves Christians; and others so enlightened that they feel no further need for Christianity or for any religion, so superior do they appear in their own esteem. And yet their hideous, lazy lives are supported by the degrading, excessive labour of these slaves, not to mention the labour of millions of other slaves, toiling in factories to produce samovars, silver, carriages, machines, and the like for their use. They live among these horrors, seeing them and yet not seeing them, although often kind at heart — old men and women, young men and maidens, mothers and children — poor children who are being vitiated and trained into moral blindness.

Here is a bachelor grown old, the owner of thousands of acres, who has lived a life of idleness, greed, and over-indulgence, who reads *The New Times*, and is astonished that the government can be so unwise as to permit Jews to enter the university. There is his guest, formerly the governor of a province, now a senator with a big salary, who reads with satisfaction that a congress of lawyers has passed a resolution in favor of capital punishment. Their political enemy, N. P., reads a liberal paper, and cannot understand the blindness of the government in allowing the union of Russian men to exist.

Here is a kind, gentle mother of a little girl reading a story to her about Fox, a dog that lamed some rabbits. And here is this little girl. During her walks she sees other children, barefooted, hungry, hunting for green apples that have fallen from the trees; and, so accustomed is she to the sight, that these children do not seem to her to be children such as she is, but only Part of the usual surroundings — the familiar landscape.

Why is this?

## The Young Tsar

Translated by C. Hagberg Wright 1912

YOUNG TSAR HAD just ascended the throne. For five weeks he had worked without ceasing, in the way that Tsars are accustomed to work. He had been attending to reports, signing papers, receiving ambassadors and high officials who came to be presented to him, and reviewing troops. He was tired, and as a traveller exhausted by heat and thirst longs for a draught of water and for rest, so he longed for a respite of just one day at least from receptions, from speeches, from parades — a few free hours to spend like an ordinary human being with his young, clever, and beautiful wife, to whom he had been married only a month before.

It was Christmas Eve. The young Tsar had arranged to have a complete rest that evening. The night before he had worked till very late at documents which his ministers of state had left for him to examine. In the morning he was present at the Te Deum, and then at a military service. In the afternoon he received official visitors; and later he had been obliged to listen to the reports of three ministers of state, and had given his assent to many important matters.

In his conference with the Minister of Finance he had agreed to an increase of duties on imported goods, which should in the future add many millions to the State revenues. Then he sanctioned the sale of brandy by the Crown in various Parts of the country, and signed a decree permitting the sale of alcohol in villages having markets. This was also calculated to increase the principal revenue to the State, which was derived from the sale of spirits.

He had also approved of the issuing of a new gold loan required for a financial negotiation. The Minister of justice having reported on the complicated case of the succession of the Baron Snyders, the young

Tsar confirmed the decision by his signature; and also approved the new rules relating to the application of Article 1830 of the penal code, providing for the punishment of tramps. In his conference with the Minister of the Interior he ratified the order concerning the collection of taxes in arrears, signed the order settling what measures should be taken in regard to the persecution of religious dissenters, and also one providing for the continuance of martial law in those provinces where it had already been established.

With the Minister of War he arranged for the nomination of a new Corps Commander for the raising of recruits, and for punishment of breach of discipline. These things kept him occupied till dinner-time, and even then his freedom was not complete. A number of high officials had been invited to dinner, and he was obliged to talk to them: not in the way he felt disposed to do, but according to what he was expected to say. At last the tiresome dinner was over, and the guests departed.

The young Tsar heaved a sigh of relief, stretched himself and retired to his apartments to take off his uniform with the decorations on it, and to don the jacket he used to wear before his accession to the throne. His young wife had also retired to take off her dinner-dress, remarking that she would join him presently.

When he had passed the row of footmen who were standing erect before him, and reached his room; when he had thrown off his heavy uniform and put on his jacket, the young Tsar felt glad to be free from work; and his heart was filled with a tender emotion which sprang from the consciousness of his freedom, of his joyous, robust young life, and of his love. He threw himself on the sofa, stretched out his legs upon it, leaned his head on his hand, fixed his gaze on the dull glass shade of the lamp, and then a sensation which he had not experienced since his childhood, — the pleasure of going to sleep, and a drowsiness that was irresistible — suddenly came over him.

“My wife will be here presently and will find me asleep. No, I must not go to sleep,” he thought. He let his elbow drop down, laid his cheek in

the palm of his hand, made himself comfortable, and was so utterly happy that he only felt a desire not to be aroused from this delightful state.

And then what happens to all of us every day happened to him — he fell asleep without knowing himself when or how. He passed from one state into another without his will having any share in it, without even desiring it, and without regretting the state out of which he had passed. He fell into a heavy sleep which was like death. How long he had slept he did not know, but he was suddenly aroused by the soft touch of a hand upon his shoulder.

“It is my darling, it is she,” he thought. “What a shame to have dozed off!”

But it was not she. Before his eyes, which were wide open and blinking at the light, she, that charming and beautiful creature whom he was expecting, did not stand, but he stood. Who he was the young Tsar did not know, but somehow it did not strike him that he was a stranger whom he had never seen before. It seemed as if he had known him for a long time and was fond of him, and as if he trusted him as he would trust himself. He had expected his beloved wife, but in her stead that man whom he had never seen before had come. Yet to the young Tsar, who was far from feeling regret or astonishment, it seemed not only a most natural, but also a necessary thing to happen.

“Come!” said the stranger.

“Yes, let us go,” said the young Tsar, not knowing where he was to go, but quite aware that he could not help submitting to the command of the stranger. “But how shall we go?” he asked.

“In this way.”

The stranger laid his hand on the Tsar’s head, and the Tsar for a moment lost consciousness. He could not tell whether he had been unconscious a long or a short time, but when he recovered his senses he found himself in a strange place. The first thing he was aware of was a strong and stifling smell of sewage. The place in which he stood was a broad passage lit by the red glow of two dim lamps. Running along one

side of the passage was a thick wall with windows protected by iron gratings.

On the other side were doors secured with locks. In the passage stood a soldier, leaning up against the wall, asleep. Through the doors the young Tsar heard the muffled sound of living human beings: not of one alone, but of many. He was standing at the side of the young Tsar, and pressing his shoulder slightly with his soft hand, pushed him to the first door, unmindful of the sentry. The young Tsar felt he could not do otherwise than yield, and approached the door.

To his amazement the sentry looked straight at him, evidently without seeing him, as he neither straightened himself up nor saluted, but yawned loudly and, lifting his hand, scratched the back of his neck. The door had a small hole, and in obedience to the pressure of the hand that pushed him, the young Tsar approached a step nearer and put his eye to the small opening. Close to the door, the foul smell that stifled him was stronger, and the young Tsar hesitated to go nearer, but the hand pushed him on. He leaned forward, put his eye close to the opening, and suddenly ceased to perceive the odour. The sight he saw deadened his sense of smell.

In a large room, about ten yards long and six yards wide, there walked unceasingly from one end to the other, six men in long grey coats, some in felt boots, some barefoot. There were over twenty men in all in the room, but in that first moment the young Tsar only saw those who were walking with quick, even, silent steps. It was a horrid sight to watch the continual, quick, aimless movements of the men who passed and overtook each other, turning sharply when they reached the wall, never looking at one another, and evidently concentrated each on his own thoughts. The young Tsar had observed a similar sight one day when he was watching a tiger in a menagerie pacing rapidly with noiseless tread from one end of his cage to the other, waving its tail, silently turning when it reached the bars, and looking at nobody.

Of these men one, apparently a young peasant, with curly hair, would have been handsome were it not for the unnatural pallor of his face,



and the concentrated, wicked, scarcely human, look in his eyes. Another was a Jew, hairy and gloomy. The third was a lean old man, bald, with a beard that had been shaven and had since grown like bristles. The fourth was extraordinarily heavily built, with well-developed muscles, a low receding forehead and a flat nose. The fifth was hardly more than a boy, long, thin, obviously consumptive. The sixth was small and dark, with nervous, convulsive movements.

He walked as if he were skipping, and muttered continuously to himself. They were all walking rapidly backwards and forwards past the hole through which the young Tsar was looking. He watched their faces and their gait with keen interest. Having examined them closely, he presently became aware of a number of other men at the back of the room, standing round, or lying on the shelf that served as a bed. Standing close to the door he also saw the pail which caused such an unbearable stench. On the shelf about ten men, entirely covered with their cloaks, were sleeping. A red-haired man with a huge beard was sitting sideways on the shelf, with his shirt off. He was examining it, lifting it up to the light, and evidently catching the vermin on it. Another man, aged and white as snow, stood with his profile turned towards the door. He was praying, crossing himself, and bowing low, apparently so absorbed in his devotions as to be oblivious of all around him.

“I see — this is a prison,” thought the young Tsar. “They certainly deserve pity. It is a dreadful life. But it cannot be helped. It is their own fault.”

But this thought had hardly come into his head before he, who was his guide, replied to it.

“They are all here under lock and key by your order. They have all been sentenced in your name. But far from meriting their present condition which is due to your human judgment, the greater Part of them are far better than you or those who were their judges and who keep them here. This one” — he pointed to the handsome, curly-headed fellow— “is a murderer. I do not consider him more guilty than those who kill in war or in duelling, and are rewarded for their deeds. He had neither

education nor moral guidance, and his life had been cast among thieves and drunkards. This lessens his guilt, but he has done wrong, nevertheless, in being a murderer.

He killed a merchant, to rob him. The other man, the Jew, is a thief, one of a gang of thieves. That uncommonly strong fellow is a horse-stealer, and guilty also, but compared with others not as culpable. Look!" — and suddenly the young Tsar found himself in an open field on a vast frontier. On the right were potato fields; the plants had been rooted out, and were lying in heaps, blackened by the frost; in alternate streaks were rows of winter corn.

In the distance a little village with its tiled roofs was visible; on the left were fields of winter corn, and fields of stubble. No one was to be seen on any side, save a black human figure in front at the border-line, a gun slung on his back, and at his feet a dog. On the spot where the young Tsar stood, sitting beside him, almost at his feet, was a young Russian soldier with a green band on his cap, and with his rifle slung over his shoulders, who was rolling up a paper to make a cigarette.

The soldier was obviously unaware of the presence of the young Tsar and his companion, and had not heard them. He did not turn round when the Tsar, who was standing directly over the soldier, asked, "Where are we?" "On the Prussian frontier," his guide answered. Suddenly, far away in front of them, a shot was fired. The soldier jumped to his feet, and seeing two men running, bent low to the ground, hastily put his tobacco into his pocket, and ran after one of them. "Stop, or I'll shoot!" cried the soldier. The fugitive, without stopping, turned his head and called out something evidently abusive or blasphemous.

"Damn you!" shouted the soldier, who put one foot a little forward and stopped, after which, bending his head over his rifle, and raising his right hand, he rapidly adjusted something, took aim, and, pointing the gun in the direction of the fugitive, probably fired, although no sound was heard. "Smokeless powder, no doubt," thought the young Tsar, and looking after the fleeing man saw him take a few hurried steps, and

bending lower and lower, fall to the ground and crawl on his hands and knees. At last he remained lying and did not move. The other fugitive, who was ahead of him, turned round and ran back to the man who was lying on the ground. He did something for him and then resumed his flight.

“What does all this mean? “ asked the Tsar.

“These are the guards on the frontier, enforcing the revenue laws. That man was killed to protect the revenues of the State.”

“Has he actually been killed? “

The guide again laid his hand upon the head of the young Tsar, and again the Tsar lost consciousness. When he had recovered his senses he found himself in a small room — the customs office. The dead body of a man, with a thin grizzled beard, an aquiline nose, and big eyes with the eyelids closed, was lying on the floor. His arms were thrown asunder, his feet bare, and his thick, dirty toes were turned up at right angles and stuck out straight. He had a wound in his side, and on his ragged cloth jacket, as well as on his blue shirt, were stains of clotted blood, which had turned black save for a few red spots here and there. A woman stood close to the wall, so wrapped up in shawls that her face could scarcely be seen. Motionless she gazed at the aquiline nose, the upturned feet, and the protruding eyeballs; sobbing and sighing, and drying her tears at long, regular intervals. A pretty girl of thirteen was standing at her mother’s side, with her eyes and mouth wide open. A boy of eight clung to his mother’s skirt, and looked intently at his dead father without blinking.

From a door near them an official, an officer, a doctor, and a clerk with documents, entered. After them came a soldier, the one who had shot the man. He stepped briskly along behind his superiors, but the instant he saw the corpse he went suddenly pale, and quivered; and dropping his head stood still. When the official asked him whether that was the man who was escaping across the frontier, and at whom he had fired, he was unable to answer. His lips trembled, and his face twitched. “The s — s — s— “ he began, but could not get out the words which he

wanted to say. "The same, your excellency." The officials looked at each other and wrote something down.

"You see the beneficial results of that same system!"

In a room of sumptuous vulgarity two men sat drinking wine. One of them was old and grey, the other a young Jew. The young Jew was holding a roll of bank-notes in his hand, and was bargaining with the old man. He was buying smuggled goods.

"You've got 'em cheap," he said, smiling.

"Yes — but the risk— "

"This is indeed terrible," said the young Tsar; but it cannot be avoided. Such proceedings are necessary."

His companion made no response, saying merely, "Let us move on," and laid his hand again on the head of the Tsar. When the Tsar recovered consciousness, he was standing in a small room lit by a shaded lamp. A woman was sitting at the table sewing. A boy of eight was bending over the table, drawing, with his feet doubled up under him in the armchair. A student was reading aloud. The father and daughter of the family entered the room noisily.

"You signed the order concerning the sale of spirits," said the guide to the Tsar.

"Well?" said the woman.

"He's not likely to live."

"What's the matter with him?"

"They've kept him drunk all the time."

"It's not possible!" exclaimed the wife.

"It's true. And the boy's only nine years old, that Vania Moroshkine."

"What did you do to try to save him?" asked the wife.

"I tried everything that could be done. I gave him an emetic and put a mustard-plaster on him. He has every symptom of delirium tremens."

"It's no wonder — the whole family are drunkards. Annisia is only a little better than the rest, and even she is generally more or less drunk," said the daughter.

“And what about your temperance society?” the student asked his sister.

“What can we do when they are given every opportunity of drinking? Father tried to have the public-house shut up, but the law is against him. And, besides, when I was trying to convince Vasily Ermiline that it was disgraceful to keep a public-house and ruin the people with drink, he answered very haughtily, and indeed got the better of me before the crowd: ‘But I have a license with the Imperial eagle on it.

If there was anything wrong in my business, the Tsar wouldn’t have issued a decree authorising it.’ Isn’t it terrible? The whole village has been drunk for the last three days. And as for feastedays, it is simply horrible to think of! It has been proved conclusively that alcohol does no good in any case, but invariably does harm, and it has been demonstrated to be an absolute poison. Then, ninety-nine per cent. of the crimes in the world are committed through its influence.

We all know how the standard of morality and the general welfare improved at once in all the countries where drinking has been suppressed — like Sweden and Finland, and we know that it can be suppressed by exercising a moral influence over the masses. But in our country the class which could exert that influence — the Government, the Tsar and his officials — simply encourage drink. Their main revenues are drawn from the continual drunkenness of the people. They drink themselves — they are always drinking the health of somebody: ‘Gentlemen, the Regiment!’ The preachers drink, the bishops drink— “

Again the guide touched the head of the young Tsar, who again lost consciousness. This time he found himself in a peasant’s cottage. The peasant — a man of forty, with red face and blood-shot eyes — was furiously striking the face of an old man, who tried in vain to protect himself from the blows. The younger peasant seized the beard of the old man and held it fast.

“For shame! To strike your father — !”

“I don’t care, I’ll kill him! Let them send me to Siberia, I don’t care!”

The women were screaming. Drunken officials rushed into the cottage and separated father and son. The father had an arm broken and the son's beard was torn out. In the doorway a drunken girl was making violent love to an old besotted peasant.

"They are beasts!" said the young Tsar.

Another touch of his guide's hand and the young Tsar awoke in a new place. It was the office of the justice of the peace. A fat, bald-headed man, with a double chin and a chain round his neck, had just risen from his seat, and was reading the sentence in a loud voice, while a crowd of peasants stood behind the grating. There was a woman in rags in the crowd who did not rise. The guard gave her a push.

"Asleep! I tell you to stand up!" The woman rose.

"According to the decree of his Imperial Majesty— " the judge began reading the sentence. The case concerned that very woman. She had taken away half a bundle of oats as she was passing the thrashing-floor of a landowner. The justice of the peace sentenced her to two months' imprisonment. The landowner whose oats had been stolen was among the audience. When the judge adjourned the court the landowner approached, and shook hands, and the judge entered into conversation with him. The next case was about a stolen samovar. Then there was a trial about some timber which had been cut, to the detriment of the landowner. Some peasants were being tried for having assaulted the constable of the district.

When the young Tsar again lost consciousness, he awoke to find himself in the middle of a village, where he saw hungry, half-frozen children and the wife of the man who had assaulted the constable broken down from overwork.

Then came a new scene. In Siberia, a tramp is being flogged with the lash, the direct result of an order issued by the Minister of justice. Again oblivion, and another scene. The family of a Jewish watchmaker is evicted for being too poor. The children are crying, and the Jew,

Isaaks, is greatly distressed. At last they come to an arrangement, and he is allowed to stay on in the lodgings.

The chief of police takes a bribe. The governor of the province also secretly accepts a bribe. Taxes are being collected. In the village, while a cow is sold for payment, the police inspector is bribed by a factory owner, who thus escapes taxes altogether. And again a village court scene, and a sentence carried into execution — the lash!

“Ilia Vasilievich, could you not spare me that?”

“No.”

The peasant burst into tears. “Well, of course, Christ suffered, and He bids us suffer too.”

Then other scenes. The Stundists — a sect — being broken up and dispersed; the clergy refusing first to marry, then to bury a Protestant. Orders given concerning the passage of the Imperial railway train. Soldiers kept sitting in the mud — cold, hungry, and cursing. Decrees issued relating to the educational institutions of the Empress Mary DePartment. Corruption rampant in the foundling homes. An undeserved monument. Thieving among the clergy. The reinforcement of the political police. A woman being searched. A prison for convicts who are sentenced to be deported. A man being hanged for murdering a shop assistant.

Then the result of military discipline: soldiers wearing uniform and scoffing at it. A gipsy encampment. The son of a millionaire exempted from military duty, while the only support of a large family is forced to serve. The university: a teacher relieved of military service, while the most gifted musicians are compelled to perform it. Soldiers and their debauchery — and the spreading of disease.

Then a soldier who has made an attempt to desert. He is being tried. Another is on trial for striking an officer who has insulted his mother. He is put to death. Others, again, are tried for having refused to shoot. The runaway soldier sent to a disciplinary battalion and flogged to death. Another, who is guiltless, flogged, and his wounds sprinkled with

salt till he dies. One of the superior officers stealing money belonging to the soldiers. Nothing but drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, and arrogance on the Part of the authorities.

What is the general condition of the people: the children are half-starving and degenerate; the houses are full of vermin; an everlasting dull round of labour, of submission, and of sadness. On the other hand: ministers, governors of provinces, covetous, ambitious, full of vanity, and anxious to inspire fear.

“But where are men with human feelings?”

“I will show you where they are.”

Here is the cell of a woman in solitary confinement at Schlüsselburg. She is going mad. Here is another woman — a girl — indisposed, violated by soldiers. A man in exile, alone, embittered, half-dead. A prison for convicts condemned to hard labour, and women flogged. They are many.

Tens of thousands of the best people. Some shut up in prisons, others ruined by false education, by the vain desire to bring them up as we wish. But not succeeding in this, whatever might have been is ruined as well, for it is made impossible. It is as if we were trying to make buckwheat out of corn sprouts by splitting the ears. One may spoil the corn, but one could never change it to buckwheat. Thus all the youth of the world, the entire younger generation, is being ruined.

But woe to those who destroy one of these little ones, woe to you if you destroy even one of them. On your soul, however, are hosts of them, who have been ruined in your name, all of those over whom your power extends.

“But what can I do?” exclaimed the Tsar in despair. “I do not wish to torture, to flog, to corrupt, to kill any one! I only want the welfare of all. Just as I yearn for happiness myself, so I want the world to be happy as well. Am I actually responsible for everything that is done in my name? What can I do? What am I to do to rid myself of such a responsibility? What can I do? I do not admit that the responsibility for all this is mine.



If I felt myself responsible for one-hundredth Part of it, I would shoot myself on the spot. It would not be possible to live if that were true. But how can I put an end, to all this evil? It is bound up with the very existence of the State. I am the head of the State! What am I to do? Kill myself? Or abdicate? But that would mean renouncing my duty. O God, O God, God, help me!" He burst into tears and awoke.

"How glad I am that it was only a dream," was his first thought. But when he began to recollect what he had seen in his dream, and to compare it with actuality, he realised that the problem propounded to him in dream remained just as important and as insoluble now that he was awake. For the first time the young Tsar became aware of the heavy responsibility weighing on him, and was aghast. His thoughts no longer turned to the young Queen and to the happiness he had anticipated for that evening, but became centred on the unanswerable question which hung over him: "What was to be done?"

In a state of great agitation he arose and went into the next room. An old courtier, a co-worker and friend of his father's, was standing there in the middle of the room in conversation with the young Queen, who was on her way to join her husband. The young Tsar approached them, and addressing his conversation principally to the old courtier, told him what he had seen in his dream and what doubts the dream had left in his mind.

"That is a noble idea. It proves the rare nobility of your spirit," said the old man. "But forgive me for speaking frankly — you are too kind to be an emperor, and you exaggerate your responsibility. In the first place, the state of things is not as you imagine it to be. The people are not poor. They are well-to-do. Those who are poor are poor through their own fault. Only the guilty are punished, and if an unavoidable mistake does sometimes occur, it is like a thunder-bolt — an accident, or the will of God. You have but one responsibility: to fulfil your task courageously and to retain the power that is given to you.

You wish the best for your people and God sees that. As for the errors which you have committed unwittingly, you can pray for forgiveness, and God will guide you and pardon you. All the more because you have done nothing that demands forgiveness, and there never have been and never will be men possessed of such extraordinary qualities as you and your father. Therefore all we implore you to do is to live, and to reward our endless devotion and love with your favour, and every one, save scoundrels who deserve no happiness, will be happy.”

“What do you think about that?” the young Tsar asked his wife.

“I have a different opinion,” said the clever young woman, who had been brought up in a free country. “I am glad you had that dream, and I agree with you that there are grave responsibilities resting upon you. I have often thought about it with great anxiety, and I think there is a simple means of casting off a Part of the responsibility you are unable to bear, if not all of it. A large proportion of the power which is too heavy for you, you should delegate to the people, to its representatives, reserving for yourself only the supreme control, that is, the general direction of the affairs of State.”

The Queen had hardly ceased to expound her views, when the old courtier began eagerly to refute her arguments, and they started a polite but very heated discussion.

For a time the young Tsar followed their arguments, but presently he ceased to be aware of what they said, listening only to the voice of him who had been his guide in the dream, and who was now speaking audibly in his heart.

“You are not only the Tsar,” said the voice, “but more. You are a human being, who only yesterday came into this world, and will perchance tomorrow dePart out of it. APart from your duties as a Tsar, of which that old man is now speaking, you have more immediate duties not by any means to be disregarded; human duties, not the duties of a Tsar towards his subjects, which are only accidental, but an eternal duty, the duty of a man in his relation to God, the duty toward your own soul, which is to save it, and also, to serve God in establishing his kingdom on

earth. You are not to be guarded in your actions either by what has been or what will be, but only by what it is your own duty to do.

...

He opened his eyes — his wife was awakening him. Which of the three courses the young Tsar chose, will be told in fifty years.

## The Godson

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

‘YE HAVE HEARD that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil.’ — Matt. v. 38, 39.  
‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay.’ — Rom. xii. 19.

I

A SON was born to a poor peasant. He was glad and went to his neighbour to ask him to stand godfather to the boy. The neighbour refused — he did not like standing godfather to a poor man’s child.

The peasant asked another neighbour, but he too refused, and after that the poor father went to every house in the village, but found no one willing to be godfather to his son. So he set off to another village, and on the way he met a man who stopped and said:

‘Good-day, my good man; where are you off to?’

‘God has given me a child,’ said the peasant, ‘to rejoice my eyes in youth, to comfort my old age, and to pray for my soul after death. But I am poor, and no one in our village will stand godfather to him, so I am now on my way to seek a godfather for him elsewhere.’

‘Let me be godfather,’ said the stranger.

The peasant was glad, and thanked him, but added: ‘And whom shall I ask to be godmother?’

‘Go to the town,’ replied the stranger, ‘and, in the square, you will see a stone house with shop-windows in the front. At the entrance you will find the tradesman to whom it belongs. Ask him to let his daughter stand godmother to your child.’

The peasant hesitated.

‘How can I ask a rich tradesman?’ said he. ‘He will despise me, and will not let his daughter come.’

‘Don’t trouble about that. Go and ask. Get everything ready by to-morrow morning, and I will come to the christening.’

The poor peasant returned home, and then drove to the town to find the tradesman. He had hardly taken his horse into the yard, when the tradesman himself came out.

‘What do you want?’ said he.

‘Why, sir,’ said the peasant, ‘you see God has given me a son to rejoice my eyes in youth, to comfort my old age, and to pray for my soul after death. Be so kind as to let your daughter stand godmother to him.’

‘And when is the christening?’ said the tradesman.

‘To-morrow morning.’

‘Very well. Go in peace. She shall be with you at Mass to-morrow morning.’

The next day the godmother came, and the godfather also, and the infant was baptized. Immediately after the christening the godfather went away. They did not know who he was, and never saw him again.

## II

The child grew up to be a joy to his parents. He was strong, willing to work, clever and obedient. When he was ten years old his parents sent him to school to learn to read and write. What others learnt in five years, he learnt in one, and soon there was nothing more they could teach him.

Easter came round, and the boy went to see his godmother, to give her his Easter greeting.

'Father and mother,' said he when he got home again, 'where does my godfather live? I should like to give him my Easter greeting, too.'

And his father answered:

'We know nothing about your godfather, dear son. We often regret it ourselves. Since the day you were christened we have never seen him, nor had any news of him. We do not know where he lives, or even whether he is still alive.'

The son bowed to his parents.

'Father and mother,' said he, 'let me go and look for my godfather. I must find him and give him my Easter greeting.'

So his father and mother let him go, and the boy set off to find his godfather.

III

The boy left the house and set out along the road. He had been walking for several hours when he met a stranger who stopped him and said:

'Good-day to you, my boy. Where are you going?'

And the boy answered:

'I went to see my godmother and to give her my Easter greeting, and when I got home I asked my parents where my godfather lives, that I might go and greet him also. They told me they did not know. They said he went away as soon as I was christened, and they know nothing about him, not even if he be still alive. But I wished to see my godfather, and so I have set out to look for him.'

Then the stranger said: 'I am your godfather.'

The boy was glad to hear this. After kissing his godfather three times for an Easter greeting, he asked him:

'Which way are you going now, godfather? If you are coming our way, please come to our house; but if you are going home, I will go with you.'

'I have no time now,' replied his godfather, 'to come to your house. I have business in several villages; but I shall return home again tomorrow. Come and see me then.'

'But how shall I find you, godfather?'

'When you leave home, go straight towards the rising sun, and you will come to a forest; going through the forest you will come to a glade. When you reach this glade sit down and rest awhile, and look around you and see what happens. On the further side of the forest you will find a garden, and in it a house with a golden roof. That is my home. Go up to the gate, and I will myself be there to meet you.'

And having said this the godfather disappeared from his godson's sight.

#### IV

The boy did as his godfather had told him. He walked eastward until he reached a forest, and there he came to a glade, and in the midst of the glade he saw a pine tree to a branch of which was tied a rope supporting a heavy log of oak. Close under this log stood a wooden trough filled with honey. Hardly had the boy had time to wonder why the honey was placed there, and why the log hung above it, when he heard a crackling in the wood, and saw some bears approaching; a she-bear, followed by a yearling and three tiny cubs.

The she-bear, sniffing the air, went straight to the trough, the cubs following her. She thrust her muzzle into the honey, and called the cubs to do the same. They scampered up and began to eat. As they did so, the log, which the she-bear had moved aside with her head, swung away a little and, returning, gave the cubs a push. Seeing this the she-bear shoved the log away with her paw. It swung further out and returned more forcibly, striking one cub on the back and another on the head.

The cubs ran away howling with pain, and the mother, with a growl, caught the log in her fore paws and, raising it above her head flung it away. The log flew high in the air and the yearling, rushing to the trough, pushed his muzzle into the honey and began to suck noisily. The

others also drew near, but they had not reached the trough when the log, flying back, struck the yearling on the head and killed him. The mother growled louder than before and, seizing the log, flung it from her with all her might.

It flew higher than the branch it was tied to; so high that the rope slackened; and the she-bear returned to the trough, and the little cubs after her. The log flew higher and higher, then stopped, and began to fall. The nearer it came the faster it swung, and at last, at full speed, it crashed down on her head. The she-bear rolled over, her legs jerked and she died! The cubs ran away into the forest.

The boy watched all this in surprise, and then continued his way. Leaving the forest, he came upon a large garden in the midst of which stood a lofty palace with a golden roof. At the gate stood his godfather, smiling. He welcomed his godson, and led him through the gateway into the garden. The boy had never dreamed of such beauty and delight as surrounded him in that place.

Then his godfather led him into the palace, which was even more beautiful inside than outside. The godfather showed the boy through all the rooms: each brighter and finer than the other, but at last they came to one door that was sealed up.

‘You see this door,’ said he. ‘It is not locked, but only sealed. It can be opened, but I forbid you to open it. You may live here, and go where you please and enjoy all the delights of the place. My only command is — do not open that door! But should you ever do so, remember what you saw in the forest.’

Having said this the godfather went away. The godson remained in the palace, and life there was so bright and joyful that he thought he had only been there three hours, when he had really lived there thirty years. When thirty years had gone by, the godson happened to be passing the sealed door one day, and he wondered why his godfather had forbidden him to enter that room.

‘I’ll just look in and see what is there,’ thought he, and he gave the door a push.

The seals gave way, the door opened, and the godson entering saw a hall more lofty and beautiful than all the others, and in the midst of it a throne. He wandered about the hall for a while, and then mounted the steps and seated himself upon the throne. As he sat there he noticed a sceptre leaning against the throne, and took it in his hand. Hardly had he done so when the four walls of the hall suddenly disappeared. The godson looked around, and saw the whole world, and all that men were doing in it. He looked in front, and saw the sea with ships sailing on it. He looked to the right, and saw where strange heathen people lived. He looked to the left, and saw where men who were Christians, but not Russians, lived. He looked round, and on the fourth side, he saw Russian people, like himself.

‘I will look,’ said he, ‘and see what is happening at home, and whether the harvest is good.’

He looked towards his father’s fields and saw the sheaves standing in stooks. He began counting them to see whether there was much corn, when he noticed a peasant driving in a cart. It was night, and the godson thought it was his father coming to cart the corn by night. But as he looked he recognized Vasíly Koudryashóf, the thief, driving into the field and beginning to load the sheaves on to his cart. This made the godson angry, and he called out:

‘Father, the sheaves are being stolen from our field!’

His father, who was out with the horses in the night-pasture, woke up. ‘I dreamt the sheaves were being stolen,’ said he. ‘I will just ride down and see.’

So he got on a horse and rode out to the field. Finding Vasíly there, he called together other peasants to help him, and Vasíly was beaten, bound, and taken to prison.

Then the godson looked at the town, where his godmother lived. He saw that she was now married to a tradesman. She lay asleep, and her husband rose and went to his mistress. The godson shouted to her:

‘Get up, get up, your husband has taken to evil ways.’



The godmother jumped up and dressed, and finding out where her husband was, she shamed and beat his mistress, and drove him away. Then the godson looked for his mother, and saw her lying asleep in her cottage. And a thief crept into the cottage and began to break open the chest in which she kept her things. The mother awoke and screamed, and the robber seizing an axe, swung it over his head to kill her.

The godson could not refrain from hurling the sceptre at the robber. It struck him upon the temple, and killed him on the spot.

## VI

As soon as the godson had killed the robber, the walls closed and the hall became just as it had been before.

Then the door opened and the godfather entered, and coming up to his godson he took him by the hand and led him down from the throne. 'You have not obeyed my command,' said he. 'You did one wrong thing, when you opened the forbidden door; another, when you mounted the throne and took my sceptre into your hands; and you have now done a third wrong, which has much increased the evil in the world. Had you sat here an hour longer, you would have ruined half mankind.'

Then the godfather led his godson back to the throne, and took the sceptre in his hand; and again the walls fell asunder and all things became visible. And the godfather said:

'See what you have done to your father. Vasíly has now been a year in prison, and has come out having learnt every kind of wickedness, and has become quite incorrigible. See, he has stolen two of your father's horses, and he is now setting fire to his barn. All this you have brought upon your father.'

The godson saw his father's barn breaking into flames, but his godfather shut off the sight from him, and told him to look another way.

'Here is your godmother's husband,' he said. 'It is a year since he left his wife, and now he goes after other women. His former mistress has

sunk to still lower depths. Sorrow has driven his wife to drink. That's what you have done to your godmother.'

The godfather shut off this also, and showed the godson his father's house. There he saw his mother weeping for her sins, repenting, and saying:

'It would have been better had the robber killed me that night. I should not have sinned so heavily.'

'That,' said the godfather, 'is what you have done to your mother.'

He shut this off also, and pointed downwards; and the godson saw two warders holding the robber in front of a prison-house.

And the godfather said:

'This man had murdered ten men. He should have expiated his sins himself, but by killing him you have taken his sins on yourself. Now you must answer for all his sins. That is what you have done to yourself. The she-bear pushed the log aside once, and disturbed her cubs; she pushed it again, and killed her yearling; she pushed it a third time, and was killed herself. You have done the same. Now I give you thirty years to go into the world and atone for the robber's sins. If you do not atone for them, you will have to take his place.'

'How am I to atone for his sins?' asked the godson.

And the godfather answered:

'When you have rid the world of as much evil as you have brought into it, you will have atoned both for your own sins and for those of the robber.'

'How can I destroy evil in the world?' the godson asked.

'Go out,' replied the godfather, 'and walk straight towards the rising sun. After a time you will come to a field with some men in it. Notice what they are doing, and teach them what you know. Then go on and note what you see. On the fourth day you will come to a forest. In the midst of the forest is a cell and in the cell lives a hermit. Tell him all that has happened. He will teach you what to do. When you have done all he tells you, you will have atoned for your own and the robber's sins.' And, having said this, the godfather led his godson out of the gate.

## VII

The godson went his way, and as he went he thought: How am I to destroy evil in the world? Evil is destroyed by banishing evil men, keeping them in prison, or putting them to death. How then am I to destroy evil without taking the sins of others upon myself?’

The godson pondered over it for a long time, but could come to no conclusion. He went on until he came to a field where corn was growing thick and good and ready for the reapers. The godson saw that a little calf had got in among the corn. Some men who were at hand saw it, and mounting their horses they chased it backwards and forwards through the corn. Each time the calf was about to come out of the corn some one rode up and the calf got frightened and turned back again, and they all galloped after it, trampling down the corn. On the road stood a woman crying.

‘They will chase my calf to death,’ she said.

And the godson said to the peasants:

‘What are you doing? Come out of the cornfield all of you, and let the woman call her calf.’

The men did so; and the woman came to the edge of the cornfield and called to the calf. ‘Come along browney, come along,’ said she. The calf pricked up its ears, listened a while, and then ran towards the woman of its own accord, and hid its head in her skirts, almost knocking her over. The men were glad the woman was glad, and so was the little calf. The godson went on, and he thought:

‘Now I see that evil spreads evil. The more people try to drive away evil, the more the evil grows. Evil, it seems, cannot be destroyed by evil; but in what way it can be destroyed, I do not know. The calf obeyed its mistress and so all went well; but if it had not obeyed her, how could we have got it out of the field?’

The godson pondered again, but came to no conclusion, and continued his way.

## VIII

He went on until he came to a village. At the furthest end he stopped and asked leave to stay the night. The woman of the house was there alone, house-cleaning, and she let him in. The godson entered, and taking his seat upon the brick oven he watched what the woman was doing. He saw her finish scrubbing the room and begin scrubbing the table. Having done this, she began wiping the table with a dirty cloth.

She wiped it from side to side — but it did not come clean. The soiled cloth left streaks of dirt. Then she wiped it the other way. The first streaks disappeared, but others came in their place. Then she wiped it from one end to the other, but again the same thing happened. The soiled cloth messed the table; when one streak was wiped off another was left on. The godson watched for awhile in silence, and then said: ‘What are you doing, mistress?’

‘Don’t you see I’m cleaning up for the holiday. Only I can’t manage this table, it won’t come clean. I’m quite tired out.’

‘You should rinse your cloth,’ said the godson, ‘before you wipe the table with it.’

The woman did so, and soon had the table clean.

‘Thank you for telling me,’ said she.

In the morning he took leave of the woman and went on his way. After walking a good while, he came to the edge of a forest. There he saw some peasants who were making wheel-rims of bent wood. Coming nearer, the godson saw that the men were going round and round, but could not bend the wood.

He stood and looked on, and noticed that the block, to which the piece of wood was fastened, was not fixed, but as the men moved round it went round too. Then the godson said:

‘What are you doing, friends?’

‘Why, don’t you see, we are making wheel rims. We have twice steamed the wood, and are quite tired out, but the wood will not bend.’

‘You should fix the block, friends,’ said the godson, ‘or else it goes round when you do.’

The peasants took his advice and fixed the block, and then the work went on merrily.

The godson spent the night with them, and then went on. He walked all day and all night, and just before dawn he came upon some drovers encamped for the night, and lay down beside them. He saw that they had got all their cattle settled, and were trying to light a fire. They had taken dry twigs and lighted them, but before the twigs had time to burn up, they smothered them with damp brushwood. The brushwood hissed and the fire smouldered and went out. Then the drovers brought more dry wood, lit it, and again put on the brushwood — and again the fire went out. They struggled with it for a long time, but could not get the fire to burn. Then the godson said:

‘Do not be in such a hurry to put on the brushwood. Let the dry wood burn up properly before you put any on. When the fire is well alight you can put on as much as you please.’

The drovers followed his advice. They let the fire burn up fiercely before adding the brushwood, which then flared up so that they soon had a roaring fire.

The godson remained with them for a while, and then continued his way. He went on, wondering what the three things he had seen might mean; but he could not fathom them.

## IX

The godson walked the whole of that day, and in the evening came to another forest. There he found a hermit’s cell, at which he knocked.

‘Who is there?’ asked a voice from within.

‘A great sinner,’ replied the godson. I must atone for another’s sins as well as for my own.

The hermit hearing this came out.

‘What sins are those that you have to bear for another?’

The godson told him everything: about his godfather; about the she-bear with the cubs; about the throne in the sealed room; about the commands his godfather had given him, as well as about the peasants he had seen trampling down the corn, and the calf that ran out when its mistress called it.

‘I have seen that one cannot destroy evil by evil,’ said he, ‘but I cannot understand how it is to be destroyed. Teach me how it can be done.

‘Tell me,’ replied the hermit, ‘what else you have seen on your way.’

The godson told him about the woman washing the table, and the men making cart-wheels, and the drovers fighting their fire.

The hermit listened to it all, and then went back to his cell and brought out an old jagged axe.

‘Come with me,’ said he.

When they had gone some way, the hermit pointed to a tree.

‘Cut it down,’ he said.

The godson felled the tree.

‘Now chop it into three,’ said the hermit.

The godson chopped the tree into three pieces. Then the hermit went back to his cell, and brought out some blazing sticks.

‘Burn those three logs,’ said he.

So the godson made a fire, and burnt the three logs till only three charred stumps remained.

‘Now plant them half in the ground, like this.’

The godson did so.

‘You see that river at the foot of the hill. Bring water from there in your mouth, and water these stumps. Water this stump, as you taught the woman: this one as you taught the wheel-wrights: and this one, as you taught the drovers. When all three have taken root and from these charred stumps apple-trees have sprung you will know how to destroy evil in men, and will have atoned for all your sins.’

Having said this, the hermit returned to his cell. The godson pondered for a long time, but could not understand what the hermit meant. Nevertheless he set to work to do as he had been told.

The godson went down to the river, filled his mouth with water, and returning, emptied it on to one of the charred stumps. This he did again and again, and watered all three-stumps. When he was hungry and quite tired out, he went to the cell to ask the old hermit for some food. He opened the door, and there upon a bench he saw the old man lying dead. The godson looked round for food, and he found some dried bread and ate a little of it. Then he took a spade and set to work to dig the hermit's grave. During the night he carried water and watered the stumps, and in the day he dug the grave. He had hardly finished the grave and was about to bury the corpse, when some people from the village came, bringing food for the old man.

The people heard that the old hermit was dead, and that he had given the godson his blessing, and left him in his place. So they buried the old man, gave the bread they had brought to the godson, and promising to bring him some more, they went away.

The godson remained in the old man's place. There he lived, eating the food people brought him, and doing as he had been told: carrying water from the river in his mouth and watering the charred stumps. He lived thus for a year, and many people visited him. His fame spread abroad, as a holy man who lived in the forest and brought water from the bottom of a hill in his mouth to water charred stumps for the salvation of his soul. People flocked to see him. Rich merchants drove up bringing him presents, but he kept only the barest necessities for himself, and gave the rest away to the poor.

And so the godson lived: carrying water in his mouth and watering the stumps half the day, and resting and receiving people the other half. And he began to think that this was the way he had been told to live, in order to destroy evil and atone for his sins.

He spent two years in this manner, not omitting for a single day to water the stumps. But still not one of them sprouted.

One day, as he sat in his cell, he heard a man ride past, singing as he went. The godson came out to see what sort of a man it was. He saw a strong young fellow, well dressed, and mounted on a handsome, well-saddled horse.

The godson stopped him, and asked him who he was, and where he was going.

'I am a robber,' the man answered, drawing rein. 'I ride about the highways killing people; and the more I kill, the merrier are the songs I sing.'

The godson was horror-struck, and thought:

'How can the evil be destroyed in such a man as this? It is easy to speak to those who come to me of their own accord and confess their sins.

But this one boasts of the evil he does.'

So he said nothing, and turned away, thinking: 'What am I to do now?

This robber may take to riding about here, and he will frighten away the people. They will leave off coming to me. It will be a loss to them, and I shall not know how to live.'

So the godson turned back, and said to the robber:

'People come to me here, not to boast of their sins, but to repent, and to pray for forgiveness. Repent of your sins, if you fear God; but if there is no repentance in your heart, then go away and never come here again. Do not trouble me, and do not frighten people away from me. If you do not hearken, God will punish you.'

The robber laughed:

'I am not afraid of God, and I will not listen to you. You are not my master,' said he. 'You live by your piety, and I by my robbery. We all must live. You may teach the old women who come to you, but you have nothing to teach me. And because you have reminded me of God, I will kill two more men tomorrow. I would kill you, but I do not want to soil my hands just now. See that in future you keep out of my way!'

Having uttered this threat, the robber rode away. He did not come again, and the godson lived in peace, as before, for eight more years.



One night the godson watered his stumps, and, after returning to his cell, he sat down to rest, and watched the footpath, wondering if some one would soon come. But no one came at all that day. He sat alone till evening, feeling lonely and dull, and he thought about his past life. He remembered how the robber had reproached him for living by his piety; and he reflected on his way of life. 'I am not living as the hermit commanded me to,' thought he. 'The hermit laid a penance upon me, and I have made both a living and fame out of it; and have been so tempted by it, that now I feel dull when people do not come to me; and when they do come, I only rejoice because they praise my holiness. That is not how one should live. I have been led astray by love of praise. I have not atoned for my past sins, but have added fresh ones. I will go to another Part of the forest where people will not find me; and I will live so as to atone for my old sins and commit no fresh ones.'

Having come to this conclusion the godson filled a bag with dried bread and, taking a spade, left the cell and started for a ravine he knew of in a lonely spot, where he could dig himself a cave and hide from the people.

As he was going along with his bag and his spade he saw the robber riding towards him. The godson was frightened, and started to run away, but the robber overtook him. 'Where are you going?' asked the robber.

The godson told him he wished to get away from the people and live somewhere where no one would come to him. This surprised the robber.

'What will you live on, if people do not come to see you?' asked he. The godson had not even thought of this, but the robber's question reminded him that food would be necessary.

'On what God pleases to give me,' he replied.

The robber said nothing, and rode away.

'Why did I not say anything to him about his way of life?' thought the godson. 'He might repent now. To-day he seems in a gentler mood, and has not threatened to kill me.' And he shouted to the robber:

‘You have still to repent of your sins. You cannot escape from God.’

The robber turned his horse, and drawing a knife from his girdle threatened the hermit with it. The latter was alarmed, and ran away further into the forest.

The robber did not follow him, but only shouted:

‘Twice I have let you off, old man, but next time you come in my way I will kill you!’

Having said this, he rode away. In the evening when the godson went to water his stumps — one of them was sprouting! A little apple tree was growing out of it.

## XII

After hiding himself from everybody, the godson lived all alone. When his supply of bread was exhausted, he thought: ‘Now I must go and look for some roots to eat.’ He had not gone far, however, before he saw a bag of dried bread hanging on a branch. He took it down, and as long as it lasted he lived upon that.

When he had eaten it all, he found another bagful on the same branch. So he lived on, his only trouble being his fear of the robber. Whenever he heard the robber passing he hid thinking:

‘He may kill me before I have had time to atone for my sins.’

In this way he lived for ten more years. The one apple-tree continued to grow, but the other two stumps remained exactly as they were.

One morning the godson rose early and went to his work. By the time he had thoroughly moistened the ground round the stumps, he was tired out and sat down to rest. As he sat there he thought to himself: ‘I have sinned, and have become afraid of death. It may be God’s will that I should redeem my sins by death.’

Hardly had this thought crossed his mind when he heard the robber riding up, swearing at something. When the godson heard this, he thought:

‘No evil and no good can befall me from any one but from God.’

And he went to meet the robber. He saw the robber was not alone, but behind him on the saddle sat another man, gagged, and bound hand and foot. The man was doing nothing, but the robber was abusing him violently. The godson went up and stood in front of the horse.

‘Where are you taking this man?’ he asked.

‘Into the forest,’ replied the robber. ‘He is a merchant’s son, and will not tell me where his father’s money is hidden. I am going to flog him till he tells me.’

And the robber spurred on his horse, but the godson caught hold of his bridle, and would not let him pass.

‘Let this man go!’ he said.

The robber grew angry, and raised his arm to strike.

‘Would you like a taste of what I am going to give this man? Have I not promised to kill you? Let go!’

The godson was not afraid.

‘You shall not go,’ said he. ‘I do not fear you. I fear no one but God, and He wills that I should not let you pass. Set this man free!’

The robber frowned, and snatching out his knife, cut the ropes with which the merchant’s son was bound, and set him free.

‘Get away both of you,’ he said, ‘and beware hour you cross my path again.’

The merchant’s son jumped down and ran away. The robber was about to ride on, but the godson stopped him again, and again spoke to him about giving up his evil life. The robber heard him to the end in silence, and then rode away without a word.

The next morning the godson went to water his stumps and lo! the second stump was sprouting. A second young apple-tree had begun to grow.

### XIII

Another ten years had gone by. The godson was sitting quietly one day, desiring nothing, fearing nothing, and with a heart full of joy.

‘What blessings God showers on men!’ thought he. ‘Yet how needlessly they torment themselves. What prevents them from living happily?’ And remembering all the evil in men, and the troubles they bring upon themselves, his heart filled with pity.

‘It is wrong of me to live as I do,’ he said to himself. ‘I must go and teach others what I have myself learnt.’

Hardly had he thought this, when he heard the robber approaching. He let him pass, thinking:

‘It is no good talking to him, he will not understand.’

That was his first thought, but he changed his mind and went out into the road. He saw that the robber was gloomy, and was riding with downcast eyes. The godson looked at him, pitied him, and running up to him laid his hand upon his knee.

‘Brother, dear,’ said he, ‘have some pity on your own soul! In you lives the spirit of God. You suffer, and torment others, and lay up more and more suffering for the future. Yet God loves you, and has prepared such blessings for you. Do not ruin yourself utterly. Change your life!’

The robber frowned and turned away.

‘Leave me alone!’ said he.

But the godson held the robber still faster, and began to weep.

Then the robber lifted his eyes and looked at the godson. He looked at him for a long time, and alighting from his horse, fell on his knees at the godson’s feet.

‘You have overcome me, old man,’ said he. ‘For twenty years I have resisted you, but now you have conquered me. Do what you will with me, for I have no more power over myself. When you first tried to persuade me, it only angered me more. Only when you hid yourself from men did I begin to consider your words: for I saw then that you asked nothing of them for yourself. Since that day I have brought food for you, hanging it upon the tree.’

Then the godson remembered that the woman got her table clean only after she had rinsed her cloth. In the same way, it was only when he ceased caring about himself, and cleansed his own heart, that he was able to cleanse the hearts of others.

The robber went on.

‘When I saw that you did not fear death, my heart turned.’

Then the godson remembered that the wheel-wrights could not bend the rims until they had fixed their block. So, not till he had cast away the fear of death and made his life fast in God, could he subdue this man’s unruly heart.

‘But my heart did not quite melt,’ continued the robber, ‘until you pitied me and wept for me.’

The godson, full of joy, led the robber to the place where the stumps were. And when they got there, they saw that from the third stump an apple-tree had begun to sprout. And the godson remembered that the drovers had not been able to light the damp wood until the fire had burnt up well. So it was only when his own heart burnt warmly, that another’s heart had been kindled by it.

And the godson was full of joy that he had at last atoned for his sins. He told all this to the robber, and died. The robber buried him, and lived as the godson had commanded him, teaching to others what the godson had taught him.

## The Great Bear

Translated Rochelle S. Townsend 1916

A LONG, LONG time ago there was a big drought on the earth. All the rivers dried up and the streams and wells, and the trees withered and the bushes and grass, and men and beasts died of thirst.

One night a little girl went out with a pitcher to find some water for her sick mother. She wandered and wandered everywhere, but could find no water, and she grew so tired that she lay down on the grass and fell asleep. When she awoke and took up the pitcher she nearly upset the water it contained. The pitcher was full of clear, fresh water. The little girl was glad and was about to put it to her lips, but she remembered

her mother and ran home with the pitcher as fast as she could. She hurried so much that she did not notice a little dog in her path; she stumbled over it and dropped the pitcher. The dog whined pitifully; the little girl seized the pitcher.

She thought the water would have been upset, but the pitcher stood upright and the water was there as before. She poured a little into the palm of her hand and the dog lapped it and was comforted. When the little girl again took up the pitcher, it had turned from common wood to silver. She took the pitcher home and gave it to her mother.

The mother said, " I shall die just the same; you had better drink it," : and she handed the pitcher to the child. In that moment the pitcher turned from silver to gold. The little girl could no longer contain herself and was about to put the pitcher to her lips, when the door opened and a stranger entered who begged for a drink. The little girl swallowed her saliva and gave the pitcher to him. And suddenly seven large diamonds sprang out of the pitcher and a stream of clear, fresh water flowed from it. And the seven diamonds began to rise, and they rose higher and higher till they reached the sky and became the Great Bear.

Ilyás

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

THERE ONCE LIVED, in the Government of Oufá a Bashkír named Ilyás. His father, who died a year after he had found his son a wife, did not leave him much property. Ilyás then had only seven mares, two cows, and about a score of sheep. He was a good manager, however, and soon began to acquire more. He and his wife worked from morn till night; rising earlier than others and going later to bed; and his possessions increased year by year. Living in this way, Ilyás little by little acquired great wealth. At the end of thirty-five years he had 200 horses, 150 head of cattle, and 1,200 sheep.

Hired labourers tended his flocks and herds, and hired women milked his mares and cows, and made kumiss (Kumiss (or more properly koumys) is a fermented drink prepared from mare's milk), butter and cheese. Ilyás had abundance of everything, and every one in the district envied him. They said of him:

'Ilyás is a fortunate man: he has plenty of everything. This world must be a pleasant place for him.'

People of position heard of Ilyás and sought his acquaintance. Visitors came to him from afar; and he welcomed every one, and gave them food and drink. Whoever might come, there was always kumiss, tea, sherbet, and mutton to set before them. Whenever visitors arrived a sheep would be killed, or sometimes two; and if many guests came he would even slaughter a mare for them.

Ilyás had three children: two sons and a daughter; and he married them all off. While he was poor, his sons worked with him, and looked after the flocks and herds themselves; but when he grew rich they got spoiled and one of them took to drink. The eldest was killed in a brawl; and the younger, who had married a self-willed woman, ceased to obey his father, and they could not live together any more.

So they Parted, and Ilyás gave his son a house and some of the cattle; and this diminished his wealth. Soon after that, a disease broke out among Ilyás's sheep, and many died. Then followed a bad harvest, and the hay crop failed; and many cattle died that winter. Then the Kirghíz captured his best herd of horses; and Ilyás's property dwindled away. It became smaller and smaller, while at the same time his strength grew less; till, by the time he was seventy years old, he had begun to sell his furs, carpets, saddles, and tents.

At last he had to Part with his remaining cattle, and found himself face to face with want. Before he knew how it had happened, he had lost everything, and in their old age he and his wife had to go into service. Ilyás had nothing left, except the clothes on his back, a fur cloak, a cup, his indoor shoes and overshoes, and his wife, Sham-Shemagi, who also was old by this time. The son who had Parted from him had gone into a

far country, and his daughter was dead, so that there was no one to help the old couple.

Their neighbour, Muhammad-Shah, took pity on them. Muhammad-Shah was neither rich nor poor, but lived comfortably, and was a good man. He remembered Ilyás's hospitality, and pitying him, said: 'Come and live with me, Ilyás, you and your old woman. In summer you can work in my melon-garden as much as your strength allows, and in winter feed my cattle; and Sham-Shemagi shall milk my mares and make kumiss. I will feed and clothe you both. When you need anything, tell me, and you shall have it.'

Ilyás thanked his neighbour, and he and his wife took service with Muhammad-Shah as labourers. At first the position seemed hard to them, but they got used to it, and lived on, working as much as their strength allowed.

Muhammad-Shah found it was to his advantage to keep such people, because, having been masters themselves, they knew how to manage and were not lazy, but did all the work they could. Yet it grieved Muhammad-Shah to see people brought so low who had been of such high standing.

It happened once that some of Muhammad-Shah's relatives came from a great distance to visit him, and a Mullah came too. Muhammad-Shah told Ilyás to catch a sheep and kill it. Ilyás skinned the sheep, and boiled it, and sent it in to the guests. The guests ate the mutton, had some tea, and then began drinking kumiss. As they were sitting with their host on down cushions on a carpet, conversing and sipping kumiss from their cups, Ilyás, having finished his work passed by the open door.

Muhammad-Shah, seeing him pass, said to one of the guests:

'Did you notice that old man who passed just now?'

'Yes,' said the visitor, 'what is there remarkable about him?'

'Only this — that he was once the richest man among us,' replied the host. 'His name is Ilyás. You may have heard of him.'



‘Of course I have heard of him,’ the guest answered ‘I never saw him before, but his fame has spread far and wide.’

‘Yes, and now he has nothing left,’ said Muhammad-Shah, ‘and he lives with me as my labourer, and his old woman is here too — she milks the mares.’

The guest was astonished: he clicked with his tongue, shook his head, and said:

‘Fortune turns like a wheel. One man it lifts, another it sets down! Does not the old man grieve over all he has lost?’

‘Who can tell. He lives quietly and peacefully, and works well.’

‘May I speak to him?’ asked the guest. ‘I should like to ask him about his life.’

‘Why not?’ replied the master, and he called from the kibítka (A kibitk is a movable dwelling, made up of detachable wooden frames, forming a round, and covered over with felt) in which they were sitting:

‘Babay;’ (which in the Bashkir tongue means ‘Grandfather’) ‘come in and have a cup of kumiss with us, and call your wife here also.’

Ilyás entered with his wife; and after exchanging greetings with his master and the guests, he repeated a prayer, and seated himself near the door. His wife passed in behind the curtain and sat down with her mistress.

A Cup of kumiss was handed to Ilyás; he wished the guests and his master good health, bowed, drank a little, and put down the cup.

‘Well, Daddy,’ said the guest who had wished to speak to him, ‘I suppose you feel rather sad at the sight of us. It must remind you of your former prosperity, and of your present sorrows.’

Ilyás smiled, and said:

‘If I were to tell you what is happiness and what is misfortune, you would not believe me. You had better ask my wife. She is a woman, and what is in her heart is on her tongue. She will tell you the whole truth.’  
The guest turned towards the curtain.

‘Well, Granny,’ he cried, ‘tell me how your former happiness compares with your present misfortune.’

And Sham-Shemagi answered from behind the curtain:

‘This is what I think about it: My old man and I lived for fifty years seeking happiness and not finding it; and it is only now, these last two years, since we had nothing left and have lived as labourers, that we have found real happiness, and we wish for nothing better than our present lot.’

The guests were astonished, and so was the master; he even rose and drew the curtain back, so as to see the old woman’s face. There she stood with her arms folded, looking at her old husband, and smiling; and he smiled back at her. The old woman went on:

‘I speak the truth and do not jest. For half a century we sought for happiness, and as long as we were rich we never found it. Now that we have nothing left, and have taken service as labourers, we have found such happiness that we want nothing better.’

‘But in what does your happiness consist?’ asked the guest.

‘Why, in this,’ she replied, ‘when we were rich my husband and I had so many cares that we had no time to talk to one another, or to think of our souls, or to pray to God. Now we had visitors, and had to consider what food to set before them, and what presents to give them, lest they should speak ill of us. When they left, we had to look after our labourers who were always trying to shirk work and get the best food, while we wanted to get all we could out of them. So we sinned. Then we were in fear lest a wolf should kill a foal or a calf, or thieves steal our horses.

We lay awake at night, worrying lest the ewes should overlie their lambs, and we got up again and again to see that all was well. One thing attended to, another care would spring up: how, for instance, to get enough fodder for the winter. And besides that, my old man and I used to disagree. He would say we must do so and so, and I would differ from him; and then we disputed — sinning again. So we passed from one trouble to another, from one sin to another, and found no happiness.’

‘Well, and now?’

‘Now, when my husband and I wake in the morning, we always have a loving word for one another and we live peacefully, having nothing to quarrel about. We have no care but how best to serve our master. We work as much as our strength allows and do it with a will, that our master may not lose but profit by us. When we come in, dinner or supper is ready and there is kumiss to drink. We have fuel to burn when it is cold and we have our fur cloak. And we have time to talk, time to think of our souls, and time to pray. For fifty years we sought happiness, but only now at last have we found it.’

The guests laughed.

But Ilyás said:

‘Do not laugh, friends. It is not a matter for jesting — it is the truth of life. We also were foolish at first, and wept at the loss of our wealth; but now God has shown us the truth, and we tell it, not for our own consolation, but for your good.’

And the Mullah said:

‘That is a wise speech. Ilyás has spoken the exact truth. The same is said in Holy Writ.’

And the guests ceased laughing and became thoughtful.

## The Imp And The Crust

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

A POOR PEASANT set out early one morning to plough, taking with him for his breakfast a crust of bread. He got his plough ready, wrapped the bread in his coat, put it under a bush, and set to work. After a while when his horse was tired and he was hungry, the peasant fixed the plough, let the horse loose to graze and went to get his coat and his breakfast.

He lifted the coat, but the bread was gone! He looked and looked, turned the coat over, shook it out — but the bread was gone. The peasant could not make this out at all.

‘That’s strange,’ thought he; ‘I saw no one, but all the same some one has been here and has taken the bread!’

It was an imp who had stolen the bread while the peasant was ploughing, and at that moment he was sitting behind the bush, waiting to hear the peasant swear and call on the Devil.

The peasant was sorry to lose his breakfast, but ‘It can’t be helped,’ said he. ‘After all, I shan’t die of hunger! No doubt whoever took the bread needed it. May it do him good!’

And he went to the well, had a drink of water, and rested a bit. Then he caught his horse, harnessed it, and began ploughing again.

The imp was crestfallen at not having made the peasant sin, and he went to report what had happened to the Devil, his master.

He came to the Devil and told how he had taken the peasant’s bread, and how the peasant instead of cursing had said, ‘May it do him good!’

The Devil was angry, and replied: ‘If the man got the better of you, it was your own fault — you don’t understand your business! If the peasants, and their wives after them, take to that sort of thing, it will be all up with us. The matter can’t be left like that! Go back at once,’ said he, ‘and put things right. If in three years you don’t get the better of that peasant, I’ll have you ducked in holy water!’

The imp was frightened. He scampered back to earth, thinking how he could redeem his fault. He thought and thought, and at last hit upon a good plan.

He turned himself into a labouring man, and went and took service with the poor peasant. The first year he advised the peasant to sow corn in a marshy place. The peasant took his advice, and sowed in the marsh.

The year turned out a very dry one, and the crops of the other peasants were all scorched by the sun, but the poor peasant’s corn grew thick and tall and full-eared. Not only had he grain enough to last him for the whole year, but he had much left over besides.

The next year the imp advised the peasant to sow on the hill; and it turned out a wet summer. Other people’s corn was beaten down and

rotted and the ears did not fill; but the peasant's crop, up on the hill, was a fine one. He had more grain left over than before, so that he did not know what to do with it all.

Then the imp showed the peasant how he could mash the grain and distil spirit from it; and the peasant made strong drink, and began to drink it himself and to give it to his friends.

So the imp went to the Devil, his master, and boasted that he had made up for his failure. The Devil said that he would come and see for himself how the case stood.

He came to the peasant's house, and saw that the peasant had invited his well-to-do neighbours and was treating them to drink. His wife was offering the drink to the guests, and as she handed it round she tumbled against the table and spilt a glassful.

The peasant was angry, and scolded his wife: 'What do you mean, you slut? Do you think it's ditchwater, you cripple, that you must go pouring good stuff like that over the floor?'

The imp nudged the Devil, his master, with his elbow: 'See,' said he, 'that's the man who did not grudge his last crust!'

The peasant, still railing at his wife, began to carry the drink round himself. Just then a poor peasant returning from work came in uninvited. He greeted the company, sat down, and saw that they were drinking. Tired with his day's work he felt that he too would like a drop. He sat and sat, and his mouth kept watering, but the host instead of offering him any only muttered: 'I can't find drink for every one who comes along.'

This pleased the Devil; but the imp chuckled and said, 'Wait a bit, there's more to come yet!'

The rich peasants drank, and their host drank too. And they began to make false, oily speeches to one another.

The Devil listened and listened, and praised the imp.

‘If,’ said he, ‘the drink makes them so foxy that they begin to cheat each other, they will soon all be in our hands.’

‘Wait for what’s coming,’ said the imp. ‘Let them have another glass all round. Now they are like foxes, wagging their tails and trying to get round one another; but presently you will see them like savage wolves.’

The peasants had another glass each, and their talk became wilder and rougher. Instead of oily speeches they began to abuse and snarl at one another. Soon they took to fighting, and punched one another’s noses. And the host joined in the fight, and he too got well beaten.

The Devil looked on and was much pleased at all this. ‘This is first-rate!’ said he.

But the imp replied: ‘Wait a bit — the best is yet to come. Wait till they have had a third glass. Now they are raging like wolves, but let them have one more glass, and they will be like swine.’

The peasants had their third glass, and became quite like brutes. They muttered and shouted, not knowing why, and not listening to one another.

Then the Party began to break up. Some went alone, some in twos, and some in threes, all staggering down the street. The host went out to speed his guests, but he fell on his nose into a puddle, smeared himself from top to toe, and lay there grunting like a hog.

This pleased the Devil still more.

‘Well,’ said he, ‘you have hit on a first-rate drink, and have quite made up for your blunder about the bread. But now tell me how this drink is made. You must first have put in fox’s blood: that was what made the peasants sly as foxes. Then, I suppose, you added wolf’s blood: that is what made them fierce like wolves. And you must have finished off with swine’s blood, to make them behave like swine.’

‘No,’ said the imp, ‘that was not the way I did it. All I did was to see that the peasant had more corn than he needed. The blood of the beasts is always in man; but as long as he has only enough corn for his needs, it is kept in bounds. While that was the case, the peasant did not grudge

his last crust. But when he had corn left over, he looked for ways of getting pleasure out of it. And I showed him a pleasure — drinking! And when he began to turn God's good gifts into spirits for his own pleasure — the fox's, wolf's and swine's blood in him all came out. If only he goes on drinking, he will always be a beast!'

The Devil praised the imp, forgave him for his former blunder, and advanced him to a post of high honour.

## The Long Exile

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1888

IN THE TOWN of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksionov was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-bye to his family, his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitrich, do not start to-day; I have had a bad dream about you."

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

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

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

So he said good-bye to his family, and drove away.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aksionov looked, and seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.



“How is it there is blood on this knife?”

Aksionov tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: “I — don’t know — not mine.”

## A Lost Opportunity

Translated by Benjamin R Tucker 1890

“Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?”...

“So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” — ST.  
MATTHEW xviii., 21-35.

In a certain village there lived a peasant by the name of Ivan Scherbakoff. He was prosperous, strong, and vigorous, and was considered the hardest worker in the whole village. He had three sons, who supported themselves by their own labor. The eldest was married, the second about to be married, and the youngest took care of the horses and occasionally attended to the plowing.

The peasant’s wife, Ivanovna, was intelligent and industrious, while her daughter-in-law was a simple, quiet soul, but a hard worker.

There was only one idle person in the household, and that was Ivan’s father, a very old man who for seven years had suffered from asthma, and who spent the greater Part of his time lying on the brick oven.

Ivan had plenty of everything — three horses, with one colt, a cow with calf, and fifteen sheep. The women made the men’s clothes, and in addition to performing all the necessary household labor, also worked in the field; while the men’s industry was confined altogether to the farm.

What was left of the previous year's supply of provisions was ample for their needs, and they sold a quantity of oats sufficient to pay their taxes and other expenses.

Thus life went smoothly for Ivan.

The peasant's next-door neighbor was a son of Gordey Ivanoff, called "Gavryl the Lame." It once happened that Ivan had a quarrel with him; but while old man Gordey was yet alive, and Ivan's father was the head of the household, the two peasants lived as good neighbors should. If the women of one house required the use of a sieve or pail, they borrowed it from the inmates of the other house. The same condition of affairs existed between the men. They lived more like one family, the one dividing his possessions with the other, and perfect harmony reigned between the two families.

If a stray calf or cow invaded the garden of one of the farmers, the other willingly drove it away, saying: "Be careful, neighbor, that your stock does not again stray into my garden; we should put a fence up." In the same way they had no secrets from each other. The doors of their houses and barns had neither bolts nor locks, so sure were they of each other's honesty. Not a shadow of suspicion darkened their daily intercourse.

Thus lived the old people.

In time the younger members of the two households started farming. It soon became apparent that they would not get along as peacefully as the old people had done, for they began quarrelling without the slightest provocation.

A hen belonging to Ivan's daughter-in-law commenced laying eggs, which the young woman collected each morning, intending to keep them for the Easter holidays. She made daily visits to the barn, where, under an old wagon, she was sure to find the precious egg.

One day the children frightened the hen and she flew over their neighbor's fence and laid her egg in their garden.

Ivan's daughter-in-law heard the hen cackling, but said: "I am very busy just at present, for this is the eve of a holy day, and I must clean and arrange this room. I will go for the egg later on."

When evening came, and she had finished her task, she went to the barn, and as usual looked under the old wagon, expecting to find an egg. But, alas! no egg was visible in the accustomed place.

Greatly disappointed, she returned to the house and inquired of her mother-in-law and the other members of the family if they had taken it. "No," they said, "we know nothing of it."

Taraska, the youngest brother-in-law, coming in soon after, she also inquired of him if he knew anything about the missing egg. "Yes," he replied; "your pretty, crested hen laid her egg in our neighbors' garden, and after she had finished cackling she flew back again over the fence."

The young woman, greatly surprised on hearing this, turned and looked long and seriously at the hen, which was sitting with closed eyes beside the rooster in the chimney-corner. She asked the hen where it laid the egg. At the sound of her voice it simply opened and closed its eyes, but could make no answer.

She then went to the neighbors' house, where she was met by an old woman, who said: "What do you want, young woman?"

Ivan's daughter-in-law replied: "You see, babushka [grandmother], my hen flew into your yard this morning. Did she not lay an egg there?"

"We did not see any," the old woman replied; "we have our own hens — God be praised! — and they have been laying for this long time. We hunt only for the eggs our own hens lay, and have no use for the eggs other people's hens lay. Another thing I want to tell you, young woman: we do not go into other people's yards to look for eggs."

Now this speech greatly angered the young woman, and she replied in the same spirit in which she had been spoken to, only using much stronger language and speaking at greater length.

The neighbor replied in the same angry manner, and finally the women began to abuse each other and call vile names. It happened that old

Ivan's wife, on her way to the well for water, heard the dispute, and joined the others, taking her daughter-in-law's part.

Gavryl's housekeeper, hearing the noise, could not resist the temptation to join the rest and to make her voice heard. As soon as she appeared on the scene, she, too, began to abuse her neighbor, reminding her of many disagreeable things which had happened (and many which had not happened) between them. She became so infuriated during her denunciations that she lost all control of herself, and ran around like some mad creature.

Then all the women began to shout at the same time, each trying to say two words to another's one, and using the vilest language in the quarreller's vocabulary.

"You are such and such," shouted one of the women. "You are a thief, a schlukha [a mean, dirty, low creature]; your father-in-law is even now starving, and you have no shame. You beggar, you borrowed my sieve and broke it. You made a large hole in it, and did not buy me another."

"You have our scale-beam," cried another woman, "and must give it back to me;" whereupon she seized the scale-beam and tried to remove it from the shoulders of Ivan's wife.

In the melee which followed they upset the pails of water. They tore the covering from each other's head, and a general fight ensued. Gavryl's wife had by this time joined in the fracas, and he, crossing the field and seeing the trouble, came to her rescue.

Ivan and his son, seeing that their womenfolk were being badly used, jumped into the midst of the fray, and a fearful fight followed. Ivan was the most powerful peasant in all the country round, and it did not take him long to disperse the crowd, for they flew in all directions. During the progress of the fight Ivan tore out a large quantity of Gavryl's beard.

By this time a large crowd of peasants had collected, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they persuaded the two families to stop quarrelling.

This was the beginning.

Gavryl took the portion of his beard which Ivan had torn out, and, wrapping it in a paper, went to the volostnoye (moujiks' court) and entered a complaint against Ivan.

Holding up the hair, he said, "I did not grow this for that bear Ivan to tear out!"

Gavryl's wife went round among the neighbors, telling them that they must not repeat what she told them, but that she and her husband were going to get the best of Ivan, and that he was to be sent to Siberia.

And so the quarrelling went on.

The poor old grandfather, sick with asthma and lying on the brick oven all the time, tried from the first to dissuade them from quarrelling, and begged of them to live in peace; but they would not listen to his good advice. He said to them: "You children are making a great fuss and much trouble about nothing. I beg of you to stop and think of what a little thing has caused all this trouble. It has arisen from only one egg. If our neighbors' children picked it up, it is all right. God bless them! One egg is of but little value, and without it God will supply sufficient for all our needs."

Ivan's daughter-in-law here interposed and said, "But they called us vile names."

The old grandfather again spoke, saying: "Well, even if they did call you bad names, it would have been better to return good for evil, and by your example show them how to speak better. Such conduct on your Part would have been best for all concerned." He continued: "Well, you had a fight, you wicked people. Such things sometimes happen, but it would be better if you went afterward and asked forgiveness and buried your grievances out of sight.

Scatter them to the four winds of heaven, for if you do not do so it will be the worse for you in the end."

The younger members of the family, still obstinate, refused to profit by the old man's advice, and declared he was not right, and that he only liked to grumble in his old-fashioned way.

Ivan refused to go to his neighbor, as the grandfather wished, saying: "I did not tear out Gavryl's beard. He did it himself, and his son tore my shirt and trousers into shreds."

Ivan entered suit against Gavryl. He first went to the village justice, and not getting satisfaction from him he carried his case to the village court.

While the neighbors were wrangling over the affair, each suing the other, it happened that a perch-bolt from Gavryl's wagon was lost; and the women of Gavryl's household accused Ivan's son of stealing it.

They said: "We saw him in the night-time pass by our window, on his way to where the wagon was standing." "And my kumushka [sponsor]," said one of them, "told me that Ivan's son had offered it for sale at the kabak [tavern]."

This accusation caused them again to go into court for a settlement of their grievances.

While the heads of the families were trying to have their troubles settled in court, their home quarrels were constant, and frequently resulted in hand-to-hand encounters. Even the little children followed the example of their elders and quarrelled incessantly.

The women, when they met on the riverbank to do the family washing, instead of attending to their work passed the time in abusing each other, and not infrequently they came to blows.

At first the male members of the families were content with accusing each other of various crimes, such as stealing and like meannesses. But the trouble in this mild form did not last long.

They soon resorted to other measures. They began to appropriate one another's things without asking permission, while various articles disappeared from both houses and could not be found. This was done out of revenge.

This example being set by the men, the women and children also followed, and life soon became a burden to all who took Part in the strife.

Ivan Scherbakoff and "Gavryl the Lame" at last laid their trouble before the mir (village meeting), in addition to having been in court and calling on the justice of the peace. Both of the latter had grown tired of them and their incessant wrangling. One time Gavryl would succeed in having Ivan fined, and if he was not able to pay it he would be locked up in the cold dreary prison for days. Then it would be Ivan's turn to get Gavryl punished in like manner, and the greater the injury the one could do the other the more delight he took in it.

The success of either in having the other punished only served to increase their rage against each other, until they were like mad dogs in their warfare.

If anything went wrong with one of them he immediately accused his adversary of conspiring to ruin him, and sought revenge without stopping to inquire into the rights of the case.

When the peasants went into court, and had each other fined and imprisoned, it did not soften their hearts in the least. They would only taunt one another on such occasions, saying: "Never mind; I will repay you for all this."

This state of affairs lasted for six years.

Ivan's father, the sick old man, constantly repeated his good advice. He would try to arouse their conscience by saying: "What are you doing, my children? Can you not throw off all these troubles, pay more attention to your business, and suppress your anger against your neighbors? There is no use in your continuing to live in this way, for the more enraged you become against each other the worse it is for you."

Again was the wise advice of the old man rejected.

At the beginning of the seventh year of the existence of the feud it happened that a daughter-in-law of Ivan's was present at a marriage. At the wedding feast she openly accused Gavryl of stealing a horse. Gavryl was intoxicated at the time and was in no mood to stand the

insult, so in retaliation he struck the woman a terrific blow, which confined her to her bed for more than a week. The woman being in delicate health, the worst results were feared.

Ivan, glad of a fresh opportunity to harass his neighbor, lodged a formal complaint before the district-attorney, hoping to rid himself forever of Gavryl by having him sent to Siberia.

On examining the complaint the district-attorney would not consider it, as by that time the injured woman was walking about and as well as ever.

Thus again Ivan was disappointed in obtaining his revenge, and, not being satisfied with the district-attorney's decision, had the case transferred to the court, where he used all possible means to push his suit. To secure the favor of the starshina (village mayor) he made him a present of half a gallon of sweet vodki; and to the mayor's pisar (secretary) also he gave presents. By this means he succeeded in securing a verdict against Gavryl. The sentence was that Gavryl was to receive twenty lashes on his bare back, and the punishment was to be administered in the yard which surrounded the court-house.

When Ivan heard the sentence read he looked triumphantly at Gavryl to see what effect it would produce on him. Gavryl turned very white on hearing that he was to be treated with such indignity, and turning his back on the assembly left the room without uttering a word.

Ivan followed him out, and as he reached his horse he heard Gavryl saying: "Very well; my spine will burn from the lashes, but something will burn with greater fierceness in Ivan's household before long."

Ivan, on hearing these words, instantly returned to the court, and going up to the judges said: "Oh! just judges, he threatens to burn my house and all it contains."

A messenger was immediately sent in search of Gavryl, who was soon found and again brought into the presence of the judges.

"Is it true," they asked, "that you said you would burn Ivan's house and all it contained?"



Gavryl replied: "I did not say anything of the kind. You may give me as many lashes as you please — that is, if you have the power to do so. It seems to me that I alone have to suffer for the truth, while he," pointing to Ivan, "is allowed to do and say what he pleases." Gavryl wished to say something more, but his lips trembled, and the words refused to come; so in silence he turned his face toward the wall.

The sight of so much suffering moved even the judges to pity, and, becoming alarmed at Gavryl's continued silence, they said, "He may do both his neighbor and himself some frightful injury."

"See here, my brothers," said one feeble old judge, looking at Ivan and Gavryl as he spoke, "I think you had better try to arrange this matter peaceably. You, brother Gavryl, did wrong to strike a woman who was in delicate health. It was a lucky thing for you that God had mercy on you and that the woman did not die, for if she had I know not what dire misfortune might have overtaken you! It will not do either of you any good to go on living as you are at present. Go, Gavryl, and make friends with Ivan; I am sure he will forgive you, and we will set aside the verdict just given."

The secretary on hearing this said: "It is impossible to do this on the present case. According to Article 117 this matter has gone too far to be settled peaceably now, as the verdict has been rendered and must be enforced."

But the judges would not listen to the secretary, saying to him: "You talk altogether too much. You must remember that the first thing is to fulfill God's command to 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' and all will be well with you."

Thus with kind words the judges tried to reconcile the two peasants. Their words fell on stony ground, however, for Gavryl would not listen to them.

"I am fifty years old," said Gavryl, "and have a son married, and never from my birth has the lash been applied to my back; but now this bear

Ivan has secured a verdict against me which condemns me to receive twenty lashes, and I am forced to bow to this decision and suffer the shame of a public beating. Well, he will have cause to remember this.” At this Gavryl’s voice trembled and he stopped speaking, and turning his back on the judges took his deParture.

It was about ten versts’ distance from the court to the homes of the neighbors, and this Ivan travelled late. The women had already gone out for the cattle. He unharnessed his horse and put everything in its place, and then went into the izba (room), but found no one there.

The men had not yet returned from their work in the field and the women had gone to look for the cattle, so that all about the place was quiet. Going into the room, Ivan seated himself on a wooden bench and soon became lost in thought. He remembered how, when Gavryl first heard the sentence which had been passed upon him, he grew very pale, and turned his face to the wall, all the while remaining silent.

Ivan’s heart ached when he thought of the disgrace which he had been the means of bring-ing upon Gavryl, and he wondered how he would feel if the same sentence had been passed upon him. His thoughts were interrupted by the coughing of his father, who was lying on the oven.

The old man, on seeing Ivan, came down off the oven, and slowly approaching his son seated himself on the bench beside him, looking at him as though ashamed. He continued to cough as he leaned on the table and said, “Well, did they sentence him?”

“Yes, they sentenced him to receive twenty lashes,” replied Ivan.

On hearing this the old man sorrowfully shook his head, and said: “This is very bad, Ivan, and what is the meaning of it all? It is indeed very bad, but not so bad for Gavryl as for yourself. Well, suppose his sentence IS carried out, and he gets the twenty lashes, what will it benefit you?”

“He will not again strike a woman,” Ivan replied.

“What is it he will not do? He does not do anything worse than what you are constantly doing!”

This conversation enraged Ivan, and he shouted: "Well, what did he do? He beat a woman nearly to death, and even now he threatens to burn my house! Must I bow to him for all this?"

The old man sighed deeply as he said: "You, Ivan, are strong and free to go wherever you please, while I have been lying for years on the oven. You think that you know everything and that I do not know anything.

No! you are still a child, and as such you cannot see that a kind of madness controls your actions and blinds your sight. The sins of others are ever before you, while you resolutely keep your own behind your back. I know that what Gavryl did was wrong, but if he alone should do wrong there would be no evil in the world. Do you think that all the evil in the world is the work of one man alone? No! it requires two persons to work much evil in the world. You see only the bad in Gavryl's character, but you are blind to the evil that is in your own nature. If he alone were bad and you good, then there would be no wrong."

The old man, after a pause, continued: "Who tore Gavryl's beard? Who destroyed his heaps of rye? Who dragged him into court? — and yet you try to put all the blame on his shoulders. You are behaving very badly yourself, and for that reason you are wrong. I did not act in such a manner, and certainly I never taught you to do so. I lived in peace with Gavryl's father all the time we were neighbors.

We were always the best of friends. If he was without flour his wife would come to me and say, 'Diadia Frol [Grandfather], we need flour.' I would then say: 'My good woman, go to the warehouse and take as much as you want.' If he had no one to care for his horses I would say, 'Go, Ivanushka [diminutive of Ivan], and help him to care for them.' If I required anything I would go to him and say, 'Grandfather Gordey, I need this or that,' and he would always reply, 'Take just whatever you want.' By this means we passed an easy and peaceful life. But what is your life compared with it? As the soldiers fought at Plevna, so are you and Gavryl fighting all the time, only that your battles are far more disgraceful than that fought at Plevna."

The old man went on: "And you call this living! and what a sin it all is! You are a peasant, and the head of the house; therefore, the responsibility of the trouble rests with you. What an example you set your wife and children by constantly quarrelling with your neighbor! Only a short time since your little boy, Taraska, was cursing his aunt Arina, and his mother only laughed at it, saying, 'What a bright child he is!' Is that right?"

You are to blame for all this. You should think of the salvation of your soul. Is that the way to do it? You say one unkind word to me and I will reply with two. You will give me one slap in the face, and I will retaliate with two slaps. No, my son; Christ did not teach us foolish people to act in such a way. If any one should say an unkind word to you it is better not to answer at all; but if you do reply do it kindly, and his conscience will accuse him, and he will regret his unkindness to you. This is the way Christ taught us to live. He tells us that if a person smite us on the one cheek we should offer unto him the other. That is Christ's command to us, and we should follow it. You should therefore subdue your pride. Am I not right?"

Ivan remained silent, but his father's words had sunk deep into his heart.

The old man coughed and continued: "Do you think Christ thought us wicked? Did he not die that we might be saved? Now you think only of this earthly life. Are you better or worse for thinking alone of it? Are you better or worse for having begun that Plevna battle? Think of your expense at court and the time lost in going back and forth, and what have you gained? Your sons have reached manhood, and are able now to work for you. You are therefore at liberty to enjoy life and be happy. With the assistance of your children you could reach a high state of prosperity.

But now your property instead of increasing is gradually growing less, and why? It is the result of your pride. When it becomes necessary for you and your boys to go to the field to work, your enemy instead summons you to appear at court or before some kind of judicial person.

If you do not plow at the proper time and sow at the proper time mother earth will not yield up her products, and you and your children will be left destitute. Why did your oats fail this year?

When did you sow them? Were you not quarrelling with your neighbor instead of attending to your work? You have just now returned from the town, where you have been the means of having your neighbor humiliated. You have succeeded in getting him sentenced, but in the end the punishment will fall on your own shoulders. Oh! my child, it would be better for you to attend to your work on the farm and train your boys to become good farmers and honest men. If any one offend you forgive him for Christ's sake, and then prosperity will smile on your work and a light and happy feeling will fill your heart."

Ivan still remained silent.

The old father in a pleading voice continued: "Take an old man's advice. Go and harness your horse, drive back to the court, and withdraw all these complaints against your neighbor. To-morrow go to him, offer to make peace in Christ's name, and invite him to your house. It will be a holy day (the birth of the Virgin Mary). Get out the samovar and have some vodki, and over both forgive and forget each other's sins, promising not to transgress in the future, and advise your women and children to do the same."

Ivan heaved a deep sigh but felt easier in his heart, as he thought: "The old man speaks the truth;" yet he was in doubt as to how he would put his father's advice into practice.

The old man, surmising his uncertainty, said to Ivan: "Go, Ivanushka; do not delay. Extinguish the fire in the beginning, before it grows large, for then it may be impossible."

Ivan's father wished to say more to him, but was prevented by the arrival of the women, who came into the room chattering like so many magpies. They had already heard of Gavryl's sentence, and of how he threatened to set fire to Ivan's house.

They found out all about it, and in telling it to their neighbors added their own versions of the story, with the usual exaggeration. Meeting in the pasture-ground, they proceeded to quarrel with Gavryl's women. They related how the latter's daughter-in-law had threatened to secure the influence of the manager of a certain noble's estate in behalf of his friend Gavryl; also that the school-teacher was writing a petition to the Czar himself against Ivan, explaining in detail his theft of the perchbolt and partial destruction of Gavryl's garden — declaring that half of Ivan's land was to be given to them.

Ivan listened calmly to their stories, but his anger was soon aroused once more, when he abandoned his intention of making peace with Gavryl.

As Ivan was always busy about the household, he did not stop to speak to the wrangling women, but immediately left the room, directing his steps toward the barn. Before getting through with his work the sun had set and the boys had returned from their plowing.

Ivan met them and asked about their work, helping them to put things in order and leaving the broken horse-collar aside to be repaired. He intended to perform some other duties, but it became too dark and he was obliged to leave them till the next day. He fed the cattle, however, and opened the gate that Taraska might take his horses to pasture for the night, after which he closed it again and went into the house for his supper.

By this time he had forgotten all about Gavryl and what his father had said to him. Yet, just as he touched the door-knob, he heard sounds of quarrelling proceeding from his neighbor's house.

“What do I want with that devil?” shouted Gavryl to some one. “He deserves to be killed!”

Ivan stopped and listened for a moment, when he shook his head threateningly and entered the room. When he came in, the apartment was already lighted. His daughter-in-law was working with her loom,

while the old woman was preparing the supper. The eldest son was twining strings for his lapti (peasant's shoes made of strips of bark from the linden-tree). The other son was sitting by the table reading a book. The room presented a pleasant appearance, everything being in order and the inmates apparently gay and happy — the only dark shadow being that cast over the household by Ivan's trouble with his neighbor.

Ivan came in very cross, and, angrily throwing aside a cat which lay sleeping on the bench, cursed the women for having misplaced a pail. He looked very sad and serious, and, seating himself in a corner of the room, proceeded to repair the horse-collar. He could not forget Gavryl, however — the threatening words he had used in the court-room and those which Ivan had just heard.

Presently Taraska came in, and after having his supper, put on his sheepskin coat, and, taking some bread with him, returned to watch over his horses for the night. His eldest brother wished to accompany him, but Ivan himself arose and went with him as far as the porch. The night was dark and cloudy and a strong wind was blowing, which produced a peculiar whistling sound that was most unpleasant to the ear. Ivan helped his son to mount his horse, which, followed by a colt, started off on a gallop.

Ivan stood for a few moments looking around him and listening to the clatter of the horse's hoofs as Taraska rode down the village street. He heard him meet other boys on horseback, who rode quite as well as Taraska, and soon all were lost in the darkness.

Ivan remained standing by the gate in a gloomy mood, as he was unable to banish from his mind the harassing thoughts of Gavryl, which the latter's menacing words had inspired: "Something will burn with greater fierceness in Ivan's household before long."

"He is so desperate," thought Ivan, "that he may set fire to my house regardless of the danger to his own. At present everything is dry, and as the wind is so high he may sneak from the back of his own building, start a fire, and get away unseen by any of us."

He may burn and steal without being found out, and thus go unpunished. I wish I could catch him.”

This thought so worried Ivan that he decided not to return to his house, but went out and stood on the street-corner.

“I guess,” thought Ivan to himself, “I will take a walk around the premises and examine everything carefully, for who knows what he may be tempted to do?”

Ivan moved very cautiously round to the back of his buildings, not making the slightest noise, and scarcely daring to breathe. Just as he reached a corner of the house he looked toward the fence, and it seemed to him that he saw something moving, and that it was slowly creeping toward the corner of the house opposite to where he was standing. He stepped back quickly and hid himself in the shadow of the building.

Ivan stood and listened, but all was quiet. Not a sound could be heard but the moaning of the wind through the branches of the trees, and the rustling of the leaves as it caught them up and whirled them in all directions. So dense was the darkness that it was at first impossible for Ivan to see more than a few feet beyond where he stood.

After a time, however, his sight becoming accustomed to the gloom, he was enabled to see for a considerable distance. The plow and his other farming implements stood just where he had placed them. He could see also the opposite corner of the house.

He looked in every direction, but no one was in sight, and he thought to himself that his imagination must have played him some trick, leading him to believe that some one was moving when there really was no one there.

Still, Ivan was not satisfied, and decided to make a further examination of the premises. As on the previous occasion, he moved so very cautiously that he could not hear even the sound of his own footsteps. He had taken the precaution to remove his shoes, that he might step



the more noiselessly. When he reached the corner of the barn it again seemed to him that he saw something moving, this time near the plow; but it quickly disappeared.

By this time Ivan's heart was beating very fast, and he was standing in a listening attitude when a sudden flash of light illumined the spot, and he could distinctly see the figure of a man seated on his haunches with his back turned toward him, and in the act of lighting a bunch of straw which he held in his hand! Ivan's heart began to beat yet faster, and he became terribly excited, walking up and down with rapid strides, but without making a noise.

Ivan said: "Well, now, he cannot get away, for he will be caught in the very act."

Ivan had taken a few more steps when suddenly a bright light flamed up, but not in the same spot in which he had seen the figure of the man sitting. Gavryl had lighted the straw, and running to the barn held it under the edge of the roof, which began to burn fiercely; and by the light of the fire he could distinctly see his neighbor standing.

As an eagle springs at a skylark, so sprang Ivan at Gavryl, saying: "I will tear you into pieces! You shall not get away from me this time!" But "Gavryl the lame," hearing footsteps, wrenched himself free from Ivan's grasp and ran like a hare past the buildings.

Ivan, now terribly excited, shouted, "You shall not escape me!" and started in pursuit; but just as he reached him and was about to grasp the collar of his coat, Gavryl succeeded in jumping to one side, and Ivan's coat became entangled in something and he was thrown violently to the ground. Jumping quickly to his feet he shouted, "Karaool! derji!"(watch! catch!)

While Ivan was regaining his feet Gavryl succeeded in reaching his house, but Ivan followed so quickly that he caught up with him before he could enter. Just as he was about to grasp him he was struck on the head with some hard substance. He had been hit on the temple as with a stone. The blow was struck by Gavryl, who had picked up an oaken stave, and with it gave Ivan a terrible blow on the head.

Ivan was stunned, and bright sparks danced before his eyes, while he swayed from side to side like a drunken man, until finally all became dark and he sank to the ground unconscious.

When he recovered his senses, Gavryl was nowhere to be seen, but all around him was as light as day. Strange sounds proceeded from the direction of his house, and turning his face that way he saw that his barns were on fire. The rear Parts of both were already destroyed, and the flames were leaping toward the front. Fire, smoke, and bits of burning straw were being rapidly whirled by the high wind over to where his house stood, and he expected every moment to see it burst into flames.

“What is this, brother?” Ivan cried out, as he beat his thighs with his hands. “I should have stopped to snatch the bunch of burning straw, and, throwing it on the ground, should have extinguished it with my feet!”

Ivan tried to cry out and arouse his people, but his lips refused to utter a word. He next tried to run, but he could not move his feet, and his legs seemed to twist themselves around each other. After several attempts he succeeded in taking one or two steps, when he again began to stagger and gasp for breath. It was some moments before he made another attempt to move, but after considerable exertion he finally reached the barn, the rear of which was by this time entirely consumed; and the corner of his house had already caught fire. Dense volumes of smoke began to pour out of the room, which made it difficult to approach.

A crowd of peasants had by this time gathered, but they found it impossible to save their homes, so they carried everything which they could to a place of safety. The cattle they drove into neighboring pastures and left some one to care for them.

The wind carried the sparks from Ivan’s house to Gavryl’s, and it, too, took fire and was consumed. The wind continued to increase with great

fury, and the flames spread to both sides of the street, until in a very short time more than half the village was burned.

The members of Ivan's household had great difficulty in getting out of the burning building, but the neighbors rescued the old man and carried him to a place of safety, while the women escaped in only their night-clothes. Everything was burned, including the cattle and all the farm implements. The women lost their trunks, which were filled with quantities of clothing, the accumulation of years. The storehouse and all the provisions perished in the flames, not even the chickens being saved.

Gavryl, however, more fortunate than Ivan, saved his cattle and a few other things.

The village was burning all night.

Ivan stood near his home, gazing sadly at the burning building, and he kept constantly repeating to himself: "I should have taken away the bunch of burning straw, and have stamped out the fire with my feet."

But when he saw his home fall in a smouldering heap, in spite of the terrible heat he sprang into the midst of it and carried out a charred log. The women seeing him, and fearing that he would lose his life, called to him to come back, but he would not pay any attention to them and went a second time to get a log. Still weak from the terrible blow which Gavryl had given him, he was overcome by the heat, and fell into the midst of the burning mass. Fortunately, his eldest son saw him fall, and rushing into the fire succeeded in getting hold of him and carrying him out of it. Ivan's hair, beard, and clothing were burned entirely off. His hands were also frightfully injured, but he seemed indifferent to pain.

"Grief drove him crazy," the people said.

The fire was growing less, but Ivan still stood where he could see it, and kept repeating to himself, "I should have taken," etc.

The morning after the fire the starosta (village elder) sent his son to Ivan to tell him that the old man, his father, was dying, and wanted to see him to bid him good-bye.

In his grief Ivan had forgotten all about his father, and could not understand what was being said to him. In a dazed way he asked: "What father? Whom does he want?"

The elder's son again repeated his father's message to Ivan. "Your aged parent is at our house dying, and he wants to see you and bid you good-bye. Won't you go now, uncle Ivan?" the boy said. Finally Ivan understood, and followed the elder's son.

When Ivan's father was carried from the oven, he was slightly injured by a big bunch of burning straw falling on him just as he reached the street. To insure his safety he was removed to the elder's house, which stood a considerable distance from his late home, and where it was not likely that the fire would reach it.

When Ivan arrived at the elder's home he found only the latter's wife and children, who were all seated on the brick oven. The old man was lying on a bench holding a lighted candle in his hand (a Russian custom when a person is dying). Hearing a noise, he turned his face toward the door, and when he saw it was his son he tried to move. He motioned for Ivan to come nearer, and when he did so he whispered in a trembling voice: "Well, Ivanushka, did I not tell you before what would be the result of this sad affair? Who set the village on fire?"

"He, he, batiushka [little father]; he did it. I caught him. He placed the bunch of burning straw to the barn in my presence. Instead of running after him, I should have snatched the bunch of burning straw and throwing it on the ground have stamped it out with my feet; and then there would have been no fire."

"Ivan," said the old man, "death is fast approaching me, and remember that you also will have to die. Who did this dreadful thing? Whose is the sin?"

Ivan gazed at the noble face of his dying father and was silent. His heart was too full for utterance.

"In the presence of God," the old man continued, "whose is the sin?"

It was only now that the truth began to dawn upon Ivan's mind, and that he realized how foolish he had acted. He sobbed bitterly, and fell on his knees before his father, and, crying like a child, said:

"My dear father, forgive me, for Christ's sake, for I am guilty before God and before you!"

The old man transferred the lighted candle from his right hand to the left, and, raising the former to his forehead, tried to make the sign of the cross, but owing to weakness was unable to do so.

"Glory to Thee, O Lord! Glory to Thee!" he exclaimed; and turning his dim eyes toward his son, he said: "See here, Ivanushka! Ivanushka, my dear son!"

"What, my dear father?" Ivan asked.

"What are you going to do," replied the old man, "now that you have no home?"

Ivan cried and said: "I do not know how we shall live now."

The old man closed his eyes and made a movement with his lips, as if gathering his feeble strength for a final effort. Slowly opening his eyes, he whispered:

"Should you live according to God's commands you will be happy and prosperous again."

The old man was now silent for awhile and then, smiling sadly, he continued:

"See here, Ivanushka, keep silent concerning this trouble, and do not tell who set the village on fire. Forgive one sin of your neighbor's, and God will forgive two of yours."

Grasping the candle with both hands, Ivan's father heaved a deep sigh, and, stretching himself out on his back, yielded up the ghost.

Ivan for once accepted his father's advice. He did not betray Gavryl, and no one ever learned the origin of the fire.

Ivan's heart became more kindly disposed toward his old enemy, feeling that much of the fault in connection with this sad affair rested with himself.

Gavryl was greatly surprised that Ivan did not denounce him before all the villagers, and at first he stood in much fear of him, but he soon afterward overcame this feeling.

The two peasants ceased to quarrel, and their families followed their example. While they were building new houses, both families lived beneath the same roof, and when they moved into their respective homes, Ivan and Gavryl lived on as good terms as their fathers had done before them.

Ivan remembered his dying father's command, and took deeply to heart the evident warning of God that A FIRE SHOULD BE EXTINGUISHED IN THE BEGINNING. If any one wronged him he did not seek revenge, but instead made every effort to settle the matter peaceably. If any one spoke to him unkindly, he did not answer in the same way, but replied softly, and tried to persuade the person not to speak evil. He taught the women and children of his household to do the same.

Ivan Scherbakoff was now a reformed man.

He lived well and peacefully, and again became prosperous.

Let us, therefore, have peace, live in brotherly love and kindness, and we will be happy.

An Old Acquaintance

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1887

OUR DIVISION HAD been out in the field. The work in hand was accomplished: we had cut a way through the forest, and each day we were expecting from headquarters orders for our return to the fort. Our division of fieldpieces was stationed at the top of a steep mountain-crest which was terminated by the swift mountain-river Mechik, and had to command the plain that stretched before us. Here and there on this picturesque plain, out of the reach of gunshot, now and then, especially at evening, groups of mounted mountaineers showed themselves, attracted by curiosity to ride up and view the Russian camp.

The evening was clear, mild, and fresh, as it is apt to be in December in the Caucasus; the sun was setting behind the steep chain of the mountains at the left, and threw rosy rays upon the tents scattered over the slope, upon the soldiers moving about, and upon our two guns, which seemed to crane their necks as they rested motionless on the earthwork two paces from us. The infantry picket, stationed on the knoll at the left, stood in perfect silhouette against the light of the sunset; no less distinct were the stacks of muskets, the form of the sentry, the groups of soldiers, and the smoke of the smouldering camp-fire.

At the right and left of the slope, on the black, sodden earth, the tents gleamed white; and behind the tents, black, stood the bare trunks of the platane forest, which rang with the incessant sound of axes, the crackling of the bonfires, and the crashing of the trees as they fell under the axes. The bluish smoke arose from tobacco-pipes on all sides, and vanished in the transparent blue of the frosty sky.

By the tents and on the lower ground around the arms rushed the Cossacks, dragoons, and artillerists, with great galloping and snorting of horses as they returned from getting water. It began to freeze; all sounds were heard with extraordinary distinctness, and one could see an immense distance across the plain through the clear, rare atmosphere. The groups of the enemy, their curiosity at seeing the soldiers satisfied, quietly galloped off across the fields, still yellow with the golden corn-stubble, toward their auls, or villages, which were

visible beyond the forest, with the tall posts of the cemeteries and the smoke rising in the air.

Our tent was pitched not far from the guns on a place high and dry, from which we had a remarkably extended view. Near the tent, on a cleared space, around the battery itself, we had our games of skittles, or chushki. The obliging soldiers had made for us rustic benches and tables. On account of all these amusements, the artillery officers, our comrades, and a few infantry men liked to gather of an evening around our battery, and the place came to be called the club.

As the evening was fine, the best players had come, and we were amusing ourselves with skittles. Ensign D., Lieutenant O., and myself had played two games in succession; and to the common satisfaction and amusement of all the spectators, officers, soldiers, and servants who were watching us from their tents, we had twice carried the winning Party on our backs from one end of the ground to the other. Especially droll was the situation of the huge fat Captain S., who, puffing and smiling good-naturedly, with legs dragging on the ground, rode pickaback on the feeble little Lieutenant O.

When it grew somewhat later, the servants brought three glasses of tea for the six men of us, and not a spoon; and we who had finished our game came to the plaited settees.

There was standing near them a small bow-legged man, a stranger to us, in a sheepskin jacket, and a papakha, or Circassian cap, with a long overhanging white crown. As soon as we came near where he stood, he took a few irresolute steps, and put on his cap; and several times he seemed to make up his mind to come to meet us, and then stopped again. But after deciding, probably, that it was impossible to remain irresolute, the stranger took off his cap, and, going in a circuit around us, approached Captain S.

“Ah, Guskantinli, how is it, old man?” said S., still smiling good-naturedly, under the influence of his ride.

Guskantni, as S. called him, instantly replaced his cap, and made a motion as though to thrust his hands into the pockets of his jacket;



[Footnote: Polushubok, little half shuba, or fur cloak.] but on the side toward me there was no pocket in the jacket, and his small red hand fell into an awkward position. I felt a strong desire to make out who this man was (was he a yunker, or a degraded officer?), and, not realizing that my gaze (that is, the gaze of a strange officer) disconcerted him, I continued to stare at his dress and appearance.

I judged that he was about thirty. His small, round, gray eyes had a sleepy expression, and at the same time gazed calmly out from under the dirty white lambskin of his cap, which hung down over his face. His thick, irregular nose, standing out between his sunken cheeks, gave evidence of emaciation that was the result of illness, and not natural. His restless lips, barely covered by a sparse, soft, whitish moustache, were constantly changing their shape as though they were trying to assume now one expression, now another. But all these expressions seemed to be endless, and his face retained one predominating expression of timidity and fright. Around his thin neck, where the veins stood out, was tied a green woollen scarf tucked into his jacket, his fur jacket, or polushubok, was worn bare, short, and had dog-fur sewed on the collar and on the false pockets. The trousers were checkered, of ash-gray color, and his sapogi had short, unblackened military bootlegs.

"I beg of you, do not disturb yourself," said I when he for the second time, timidly glancing at me, had taken off his cap.

He bowed to me with an expression of gratitude, replaced his hat, and, drawing from his pocket a dirty chintz tobacco-pouch with lacings, began to roll a cigarette.

I myself had not been long a yunker, an elderly yunker; and as I was incapable, as yet, of being good-naturedly serviceable to my younger comrades, and without means, I well knew all the moral difficulties of this situation for a proud man no longer young, and I sympathized with all men who found themselves in such a situation, and I endeavored to make clear to myself their character and rank, and the tendencies of their intellectual peculiarities, in order to judge of the degree of their moral sufferings.

This yunker or degraded officer, judging by his restless eyes and that intentionally constant variation of expression which I noticed in him, was a man very far from stupid, and extremely egotistical, and therefore much to be pitied.

Captain S. invited us to play another game of skittles, with the stakes to consist, not only of the usual pickaback ride of the winning Party, but also of a few bottles of red wine, rum, sugar, cinnamon, and cloves for the mulled wine which that winter, on account of the cold, was greatly popular in our division.

Guskantini, as S. again called him, was also invited to take Part; but before the game began, the man, struggling between gratification because he had been invited and a certain timidity, drew Captain S. aside, and began to say something in a whisper. The good-natured captain punched him in the ribs with his big, fat hand, and replied, loud enough to be heard:

“Not at all, old fellow, I assure you.”

When the game was over, and that side in which the stranger whose rank was so low had taken Part, had come out winners, and it fell to his lot to ride on one of our officers, Ensign D., the ensign grew red in the face: he went to the little divan and offered the stranger a cigarette by way of a compromise.

While they were ordering the mulled wine, and in the steward's tent were heard assiduous preparations on the Part of Nikita, who had sent an orderly for cinnamon and cloves, and the shadow of his back was alternately lengthening and shortening on the dingy sides of the tent, we men, seven in all, sat around on the benches; and while we took turns in drinking tea from the three glasses, and gazed out over the plain, which was now beginning to glow in the twilight, we talked and laughed over the various incidents of the game.

The stranger in the fur jacket took no share in the conversation, obstinately refused to drink the tea which I several times offered him, and as he sat there on the ground in Tartar fashion, occupied himself in making cigarettes of fine-cut tobacco, and smoking them one after

another, evidently not so much for his own satisfaction as to give himself the appearance of a man with something to do.

When it was remarked that the summons to return was expected on the morrow, and that there might be an engagement, he lifted himself on his knees, and, addressing Captain B. only, said that he had been at the adjutant's, and had himself written the order for the return on the next day. We all said nothing while he was speaking; and notwithstanding the fact that he was so bashful, we begged him to repeat this most interesting piece of news. He repeated what he had said, adding only that he had been staying at the adjutant's (since he made it his home there) when the order came.

"Look here, old fellow, if you are not telling us false, I shall have to go to my company and give some orders for to-morrow," said Captain S.

"No . . . why . . . it may be, I am sure," . . . stammered the stranger, but suddenly stopped, and, apparently feeling himself affronted, contracted his brows, and, muttering something between his teeth, again began to roll a cigarette. But the fine-cut tobacco in his chintz pouch began to show signs of giving out, and he asked S. to lend him a little cigarette.

We kept on for a considerable time with that monotonous military chatter which every one who has ever been on an expedition will appreciate; all of us, with one and the same expression, complaining of the dullness and length of the expedition, in one and the same fashion sitting in judgment on our superiors, and all of us likewise, as we had done many times before, praising one comrade, pitying another, wondering how much this one had gained, how much that one had lost, and so on, and so on.

"Here, fellows, this adjutant of ours is completely broken up," said Captain S. "At headquarters he was everlastingly on the winning side; no matter whom he sat down with, he'd rake in everything: but now for two months past he has been losing all the time. The present expedition hasn't been lucky for him. I think he has got away with two

thousand silver rubles and five hundred rubles' worth of articles, — the carpet that he won at Mukhin's, Nikitin's pistols, Sada's gold watch which Vorontsof gave him. He has lost it all."

"The truth of the matter in his case," said Lieutenant O., "was that he used to cheat everybody; it was impossible to play with him."

"He cheated every one, but now it's all gone up in his pipe;" and here Captain S. laughed good-naturedly. "Our friend Guskof here lives with him. He hasn't quite lost HIM yet: that's so, isn't it, old fellow?" he asked, addressing Guskof.

Guskof tried to laugh. It was a melancholy, sickly laugh, which completely changed the expression of his countenance. Till this moment it had seemed to me that I had seen and known this man before; and, besides the name Guskof, by which Captain S. called him, was familiar to me; but how and when I had seen and known him, I actually could not remember.

"Yes," said Guskof, incessantly putting his hand to his moustaches, but instantly dropping it again without touching them. "Pavel Dmitrievitch's luck has been against him in this expedition, such a *veine de malheur*" he added in a careful but pure French pronunciation, again giving me to think that I had seen him, and seen him often, somewhere. "I know Pavel Dmitrievitch very well.

He has great confidence in me," he proceeded to say; "he and I are old friends; that is, he is fond of me," he explained, evidently fearing that it might be taken as presumption for him to claim old friendship with the adjutant. "Pavel Dmitrievitch plays admirably; but now, strange as it may seem, it's all up with him, he is just about perfectly ruined; *la chance a tourne*," he added, addressing himself Particularly to me.

At first we had listened to Guskof with condescending attention; but as soon as he made use of that second French phrase, we all involuntarily turned from him.

"I have played with him a thousand times, and we agreed then that it was strange," said Lieutenant O., with peculiar emphasis on the word

STRANGE . “I never once won a ruble from him. Why was it, when I used to win of others?”

“Pavel Dmitrievitch plays admirably: I have known him for a long time,” said I. In fact, I had known the adjutant for several years; more than once I had seen him in the full swing of a game, surrounded by officers, and I had remarked his handsome, rather gloomy and always passionless calm face, his deliberate Malo-Russian pronunciation, his handsome belongings and horses, his bold, manly figure, and above all his skill and self-restraint in carrying on the game accurately and agreeably.

More than once, I am sorry to say, as I looked at his plump white hands with a diamond ring on the index-finger, passing out one card after another, I grew angry with that ring, with his white hands, with the whole of the adjutant’s person, and evil thoughts on his account arose in my mind.

But as I afterwards reconsidered the matter coolly, I persuaded myself that he played more skilfully than all with whom he happened to play: the more so, because as I heard his general observations concerning the game, — how one ought not to back out when one had laid the smallest stake, how one ought not to leave off in certain cases as the first rule for honest men, and so forth, and so forth, — it was evident that he was always on the winning side merely from the fact that he played more sagaciously and coolly than the rest of us. And now it seemed that this self-reliant, careful player had been stripped not only of his money but of his effects, which marks the lowest depths of loss for an officer.

“He always had devilish good luck with me,” said Lieutenant O. “I made a vow never to play with him again.”

“What a marvel you are, old fellow!” said S., nodding at me, and addressing O. “You lost three hundred silver rubles, that’s what you lost to him.”

“More than that,” said the lieutenant savagely.

“And now you have come to your senses; it is rather late in the day, old man, for the rest of us have known for a long time that he was the cheat of the regiment,” said S., with difficulty restraining his laughter, and feeling very well satisfied with his fabrication. “Here is Guskof right here, — he FIXES his cards for him. That’s the reason of the friendship between them, old man” . . . and Captain S., shaking all over, burst out into such a hearty “ha, ha, ha!” that he spilt the glass of mulled wine which he was holding in his hand.

On Guskof’s pale emaciated face there showed something like a color; he opened his mouth several times, raised his hands to his moustaches, and once more dropped them to his side where the pockets should have been, stood up, and then sat down again, and finally in an unnatural voice said to S.:

“It’s no joke, Nikolai Ivanovitch, for you to say such things before people who don’t know me and who see me in this unlined jacket . . . because— “ His voice failed him, and again his small red hands with their dirty nails went from his jacket to his face, touching his moustache, his hair, his nose, rubbing his eyes, or needlessly scratching his cheek.

“As to saying that, everybody knows it, old fellow,” continued S., thoroughly satisfied with his jest, and not heeding Guskof’s complaint. Guskof was still trying to say something; and placing the palm of his right hand on his left knee in a most unnatural position, and gazing at S., he had an appearance of smiling contemptuously.

“No,” said I to myself, as I noticed that smile of his, “I have not only seen him, but have spoken with him somewhere.”

“You and I have met somewhere,” said I to him when, under the influence of the common silence, S.’s laughter began to calm down. Guskof’s mobile face suddenly lighted up, and his eyes, for the first time with a truly joyous expression, rested upon me.

“Why, I recognized you immediately,” he replied in French. “In ‘48 I had the pleasure of meeting you quite frequently in Moscow at my sister’s.” I had to apologize for not recognizing him at first in that costume and in that new garb. He arose, came to me, and with his moist hand

irresolutely and weakly seized my hand, and sat down by me. Instead of looking at me, though he apparently seemed so glad to see me, he gazed with an expression of unfriendly bravado at the officers.

Either because I recognized in him a man whom I had met a few years before in a dresscoat in a parlor, or because he was suddenly raised in his own opinion by the fact of being recognized, — at all events it seemed to me that his face and even his motions completely changed: they now expressed lively intelligence, a childish self-satisfaction in the consciousness of such intelligence, and a certain contemptuous indifference; so that I confess, notwithstanding the pitiable position in which he found himself, my old acquaintance did not so much excite sympathy in me as it did a sort of unfavorable sentiment.

I now vividly remembered our first meeting. In 1848, while I was staying at Moscow, I frequently went to the house of Ivashin, who from childhood had been an old friend of mine. His wife was an agreeable hostess, a charming woman, as everybody said; but she never pleased me. . . . The winter that I knew her, she often spoke with hardly concealed pride of her brother, who had shortly before completed his course, and promised to be one of the most fashionable and popular young men in the best society of Petersburg. As I knew by reputation the father of the Guskofs, who was very rich and had a distinguished position, and as I knew also the sister's ways, I felt some prejudice against meeting the young man.

One evening when I was at Ivashin's, I saw a short, thoroughly pleasant-looking young man, in a black coat, white vest and necktie. My host hastened to make me acquainted with him. The young man, evidently dressed for a ball, with his cap in his hand, was standing before Ivashin, and was eagerly but politely arguing with him about a common friend of ours, who had distinguished himself at the time of the Hungarian campaign. He said that this acquaintance was not at all a hero or a man born for war, as was said of him, but was simply a clever and cultivated man.

I recollect, I took Part in the argument against Guskof, and went to the extreme of declaring also that intellect and cultivation always bore an inverse relation to bravery; and I recollect how Guskof pleasantly and cleverly pointed out to me that bravery was necessarily the result of intellect and a decided degree of development, — a statement which I, who considered myself an intellectual and cultivated man, could not in my heart of hearts agree with.

I recollect that towards the close of our conversation Madame Ivashina introduced me to her brother; and he, with a condescending smile, offered me his little hand on which he had not yet had time to draw his kid gloves, and weakly and irresolutely pressed my hand as he did now. Though I had been prejudiced against Guskof, I could not help granting that he was in the right, and agreeing with his sister that he was really a clever and agreeable young man, who ought to have great success in society. He was extraordinarily neat, beautifully dressed, and fresh, and had affectedly modest manners, and a thoroughly youthful, almost childish appearance, on account of which you could not help excusing his expression of self-sufficiency, though it modified the impression of his high-mightiness caused by his intellectual face and especially his smile.

It is said that he had great success that winter with the high-born ladies of Moscow. As I saw him at his sister's I could only infer how far this was true by the feeling of pleasure and contentment constantly excited in me by his youthful appearance and by his sometimes indiscreet anecdotes. He and I met half a dozen times, and talked a good deal; or, rather, he talked a good deal, and I listened. He spoke for the most Part in French, always with a good accent, very fluently and ornately; and he had the skill of drawing others gently and politely into the conversation. As a general thing, he behaved toward all, and toward me, in a somewhat supercilious manner, and I felt that he was perfectly right in this way of treating people. I always feel that way in regard to men who are firmly convinced that they ought to treat me superciliously, and who are comparative strangers to me.



Now, as he sat with me, and gave me his hand, I keenly recalled in him that same old haughtiness of expression; and it seemed to me that he did not properly appreciate his position of official inferiority, as, in the presence of the officers, he asked me what I had been doing in all that time, and how I happened to be there. In spite of the fact that I invariably made my replies in Russian, he kept putting his questions in French, expressing himself as before in remarkably correct language. About himself he said fluently that after his unhappy, wretched story (what the story was, I did not know, and he had not yet told me), he had been three months under arrest, and then had been sent to the Caucasus to the N. regiment, and now had been serving three years as a soldier in that regiment.

“You would not believe,” said he to me in French, “how much I have to suffer in these regiments from the society of the officers. Still it is a pleasure to me, that I used to know the adjutant of whom we were just speaking: he is a good man — it’s a fact,” he remarked condescendingly. “I live with him, and that’s something of a relief for me. Yes, my dear, the days fly by, but they aren’t all alike,” he added; and suddenly hesitated, reddened, and stood up, as he caught sight of the adjutant himself coming toward us.

“It is such a pleasure to meet such a man as you,” said Guskof to me in a whisper as he turned from me. “I should like very, very much, to have a long talk with you.”

I said that I should be very happy to talk with him, but in reality I confess that Guskof excited in me a sort of dull pity that was not akin to sympathy.

I had a presentiment that I should feel a constraint in a private conversation with him; but still I was anxious to learn from him several things, and, above all, why it was, when his father had been so rich, that he was in poverty, as was evident by his dress and appearance.

The adjutant greeted us all, including Guskof, and sat down by me in the seat which the cashiered officer had just vacated. Pavel Dmitrievitch, who had always been calm and leisurely, a genuine gambler, and a man of means, was now very different from what he

had been in the flowery days of his success; he seemed to be in haste to go somewhere, kept constantly glancing at everybody, and it was not five minutes before he proposed to Lieutenant O., who had sworn off from playing, to set up a small faro-bank. Lieutenant O. refused, under the pretext of having to attend to his duties, but in reality because, as he knew that the adjutant had few possessions and little money left, he did not feel himself justified in risking his three hundred rubles against a hundred or even less which the adjutant might stake.

“Well, Pavel Dmitrievitch,” said the lieutenant, anxious to avoid a repetition of the invitation, “is it true, what they tell us, that we return to-morrow?”

“I don’t know,” replied the adjutant. “Orders came to be in readiness; but if it’s true, then you’d better play a game. I would wager my Kabarda cloak.”

“No, to-day already” . . .

“It’s a gray one, never been worn; but if you prefer, play for money. How is that?”

“Yes, but . . . I should be willing — pray don’t think that” . . . said Lieutenant O., answering the implied suspicion; “but as there may be a raid or some movement, I must go to bed early.”

The adjutant stood up, and, thrusting his hands into his pockets, started to go across the grounds. His face assumed its ordinary expression of coldness and pride, which I admired in him.

“Won’t you have a glass of mulled wine?” I asked him.

“That might be acceptable,” and he came back to me; but Guskof politely took the glass from me, and handed it to the adjutant, striving at the same time not to look at him. But as he did not notice the tent-rope, he stumbled over it, and fell on his hand, dropping the glass.

“What a bungler!” exclaimed the adjutant, still holding out his hand for the glass. Everybody burst out laughing, not excepting Guskof, who was rubbing his hand on his sore knee, which he had somehow struck as he fell. “That’s the way the bear waited on the hermit,” continued the

adjutant. "It's the way he waits on me every day. He has pulled up all the tent-pins; he's always tripping up."

Guskof, not hearing him, apologized to us, and glanced toward me with a smile of almost noticeable melancholy, as though saying that I alone could understand him. He was pitiable to see; but the adjutant, his protector, seemed, on that very account, to be severe on his messmate, and did not try to put him at his ease.

"Well, you're a graceful lad! Where did you think you were going?"

"Well, who can help tripping over these pins, Pavel Dmitrievitch?" said Guskof. "You tripped over them yourself the other day."

"I, old man, [Footnote: batiushka] — I am not of the rank and file, and such gracefulness is not expected of me."

"He can be lazy," said Captain S., keeping the ball rolling, "but low-rank men have to make their legs fly."

"Ill-timed jest," said Guskof, almost in a whisper, and casting down his eyes. The adjutant was evidently vexed with his messmate; he listened with inquisitive attention to every word that he said.

"He'll have to be sent out into ambush again," said he, addressing S., and pointing to the cashiered officer.

"Well, there'll be some more tears," said S., laughing. Guskof no longer looked at me, but acted as though he were going to take some tobacco from his pouch, though there had been none there for some time.

"Get ready for the ambush, old man," said S., addressing him with shouts of laughter. "To-day the scouts have brought the news, there'll be an attack on the camp to-night, so it's necessary to designate the trusty lads." Guskof's face showed a fleeting smile as though he were preparing to make some reply, but several times he cast a supplicating look at S.

"Well, you know I have been, and I'm ready to go again if I am sent," he said hastily.

"Then you'll be sent."

"Well, I'll go. Isn't that all right?"

“Yes, as at Arguna, you deserted the ambush and threw away your gun,” said the adjutant; and turning from him he began to tell us the orders for the next day.

As a matter of fact, we expected from the enemy a cannonade of the camp that night, and the next day some sort of diversion. While we were still chatting about various subjects of general interest, the adjutant, as though from a sudden and unexpected impulse, proposed to Lieutenant O. to have a little game.

The lieutenant most unexpectedly consented; and, together with S. and the ensign, they went off to the adjutant’s tent, where there was a folding green table with cards on it. The captain, the commander of our division, went to our tent to sleep; the other gentlemen also separated, and Guskof and I were left alone. I was not mistaken, it was really very uncomfortable for me to have a tete-a-tete with him; I arose involuntarily, and began to promenade up and down on the battery. Guskof walked in silence by my side, hastily and awkwardly wheeling around so as not to delay or incommode me.

“I do not annoy you?” he asked in a soft, mournful voice. So far as I could see his face in the dim light, it seemed to me deeply thoughtful and melancholy.

“Not at all,” I replied; but as he did not immediately begin to speak, and as I did not know what to say to him, we walked in silence a considerably long time.

The twilight had now absolutely changed into dark night; over the black profile of the mountains gleamed the bright evening heat-lightning; over our heads in the light-blue frosty sky twinkled the little stars; on all sides gleamed the ruddy flames of the smoking watch-fires; near us, the white tents stood out in contrast to the frowning blackness of our earth-works. The light from the nearest watch-fire, around which our servants, engaged in quiet conversation, were warming themselves, occasionally flashed on the brass of our heavy guns, and fell on the form of the sentry, who, wrapped in his cloak, paced with measured tread along the battery.

“You cannot imagine what a delight it is for me to talk with such a man as you are,” said Guskof, although as yet he had not spoken a word to me. “Only one who had been in my position could appreciate it.”

I did not know how to reply to him, and we again relapsed into silence, although it was evident that he was anxious to talk and have me listen to him.

“Why were you . . . why did you suffer this?” I inquired at last, not being able to invent any better way of breaking the ice.

“Why, didn’t you hear about this wretched business from Metenin?”

“Yes, a duel, I believe; I did not hear much about it,” I replied. “You see, I have been for some time in the Caucasus.”

“No, it wasn’t a duel, but it was a stupid and horrid story. I will tell you all about it, if you don’t know. It happened that the same year that I met you at my sister’s I was living at Petersburg. I must tell you I had then what they call *une position dans le monde*, — a position good enough if it was not brilliant. *Mon pere me donnait ten thousand par an*. In ‘49 I was promised a place in the embassy at Turin; my uncle on my mother’s side had influence, and was always ready to do a great deal for me. That sort of thing is all past now. *J’etais recu dans la meilleure societe de Petersburg*; I might have aspired to any girl in the city.

I was well educated, as we all are who come from the school, but was not especially cultivated; to be sure, I read a good deal afterwards, *mais j’avais surtout*, you know, *ce jargon du monde*, and, however it came about, I was looked upon as a leading light among the young men of Petersburg. What raised me more than all in common estimation, *c’est cette liaison avec Madame D.*, about which a great deal was said in Petersburg; but I was frightfully young at that time, and did not prize these advantages very highly. I was simply young and stupid. What more did I need? Just then that Metenin had some notoriety— “

And Guskof went on in the same fashion to relate to me the history of his misfortunes, which I will omit, as it would not be at all interesting.

“Two months I remained under arrest,” he continued, “absolutely alone; and what thoughts did I not have during that time? But, you know, when it was all over, as though every tie had been broken with the past, then it became easier for me. Mon pere, — you have heard tell of him, of course, a man of iron will and strong convictions, — il m’a desherite, and broken off all intercourse with me.

According to his convictions he had to do as he did, and I don’t blame him at all. He was consistent. Consequently, I have not taken a step to induce him to change his mind. My sister was abroad. Madame D. is the only one who wrote to me when I was released, and she sent me assistance; but you understand that I could not accept it, so that I had none of those little things which make one’s position a little easier, you know, — books, linen, food, nothing at all.

At this time I thought things over and over, and began to look at life with different eyes. For instance, this noise, this society gossip about me in Petersburg, did not interest me, did not flatter me; it all seemed to me ridiculous. I felt that I myself had been to blame; I was young and indiscreet; I had spoiled my career, and I only thought how I might get into the right track again. And I felt that I had strength and energy enough for it. After my arrest, as I told you, I was sent here to the Caucasus to the N. regiment.

“I thought,” he went on to say, all the time becoming more and more animated, — “I thought that here in the Caucasus, la vie de camp, the simple, honest men with whom I should associate, and war and danger, would all admirably agree with my mental state, so that I might begin a new life. They will see me under fire. I shall make myself liked; I shall be respected for my real self, — the cross — non-commissioned officer; they will relieve me of my fine; and I shall get up again, et vous savez avec ce prestige du malheur! But, quel desenchantement! You can’t imagine how I have been deceived! You know what sort of men the officers of our regiment are.”

He did not speak for some little time, waiting, as it appeared, for me to tell him that I knew the society of our officers here was bad; but I made him no reply. It went against my grain that he should expect me, because I knew French, forsooth, to be obliged to take issue with the society of the officers, which, during my long residence in the Caucasus, I had had time enough to appreciate fully, and for which I had far higher respect than for the society from which Mr. Guskof had sprung. I wanted to tell him so, but his position constrained me.

“In the N. regiment the society of the officers is a thousand times worse than it is here,” he continued. “I hope that it is saying a good deal; J’ESPERE QUE C’EST BEAUCOUP DIRE; that is, you cannot imagine what it is. I am not speaking of the yunkers and the soldiers. That is horrible, it is so bad. At first they received me very kindly, that is absolutely the truth; but when they saw that I could not help despising them, you know, in these inconceivably small circumstances, they saw that I was a man absolutely different, standing far above them, they got angry with me, and began to put various little humiliations on me.

You haven’t an idea what I had to suffer. Then this forced relationship with the yunkers, and especially with the small means that I had — I lacked everything; [Footnote: AVEC LES PETITS MOYENS QUE J’AVAIS, JE MANQUAIS DE TOUT] I had only what my sister used to send me. And here’s a proof for you! As much as it made me suffer, I with my character, AVEC MA FIERTE J’AI ECRIS A MON PERE, begged him to send me something. I understand how living four years of such a life may make a man like our cashiered Dromof who drinks with soldiers, and writes notes to all the officers asking them to loan him three rubles, and signing it, TOUT A VOUS, DROMOF. One must have such a character as I have, not to be mired in the least by such a horrible position.”

For some time he walked in silence by my side.  
“Have you a cigarette?” he asked me.

“And so I stayed right where I was? Yes. I could not endure it physically, because, though we were wretched, cold, and ill-fed, I lived like a

common soldier, but still the officers had some sort of consideration for me. I had still some prestige that they regarded. I wasn't sent out on guard nor for drill. I could not have stood that. But morally my sufferings were frightful; and especially because I didn't see any escape from my position.

I wrote my uncle, begged him to get me transferred to my present regiment, which, at least, sees some service; and I thought that here Pavel Dmitrievitch, *qui est le fils de l'intendant de mon pere*, might be of some use to me. My uncle did this for me; I was transferred. After that regiment this one seemed to me a collection of chamberlains. Then Pavel Dmitrievitch was here; he knew who I was, and I was splendidly received.

At my uncle's request — a Guskof, *vous savez*; but I forgot that with these men without cultivation and undeveloped, — they can't appreciate a man, and show him marks of esteem, unless he has that aureole of wealth, of friends; and I noticed how, little by little, when they saw that I was poor, their behavior to me showed more and more indifference until they have come almost to despise me. It is horrible, but it is absolutely the truth.

"Here I have been in action, I have fought, they have seen me under fire," he continued; "but when will it all end? I think, never. And my strength and energy have already begun to flag. Then I had imagined *la guerre, la vie de camp*; but it isn't at all what I see, in a sheepskin jacket, dirty linen, soldier's boots, and you go out in ambuscade, and the whole night long lie in the ditch with some Antonof reduced to the ranks for drunkenness, and any minute from behind the bush may come a rifle-shot and hit you or Antonof, — it's all the same which. That is not bravery; it's horrible, *c'est affreux*, it's killing!"

"Well, you can be promoted a non-commissioned officer for this campaign, and next year an ensign," said I.

"Yes, it may be: they promised me that in two years, and it's not up yet. What would those two years amount to, if I knew any one! You can



imagine this life with Pavel Dmitrievitch; cards, low jokes, drinking all the time; if you wish to tell anything that is weighing on your mind, you would not be understood, or you would be laughed at: they talk with you, not for the sake of sharing a thought, but to get something funny out of you. Yes, and so it has gone — in a brutal, beastly way, and you are always conscious that you belong to the rank and file; they always make you feel that. Hence you can't realize what an enjoyment it is to talk a *coeur ouvert* to such a man as you are."

I had never imagined what kind of a man I was, and consequently I did not know what answer to make him.

"Will you have your lunch now?" asked Nikita at this juncture, approaching me unseen in the darkness, and, as I could perceive, vexed at the presence of a guest. "Nothing but curd dumplings, there's none of the roast beef left."

"Has the captain had his lunch yet?"

"He went to bed long ago," replied Nikita, gruffly, "According to my directions, I was to bring you lunch here and your brandy." He muttered something else discontentedly, and sauntered off to his tent. After loitering a while longer, he brought us, nevertheless, a lunch-case; he placed a candle on the lunch-case, and shielded it from the wind with a sheet of paper. He brought a saucepan, some mustard in a jar, a tin dipper with a handle, and a bottle of absinthe.

After arranging these things, Nikita lingered around us for some moments, and looked on as Guskof and I were drinking the liquor, and it was evidently very distasteful to him. By the feeble light shed by the candle through the paper, amid the encircling darkness, could be seen the seal-skin cover of the lunch-case, the supper arranged upon it, Guskof's sheepskin jacket, his face, and his small red hands which he used in lifting the patties from the pan.

Everything around us was black; and only by straining the sight could be seen the dark battery, the dark form of the sentry moving along the breastwork, on all sides the watch-fires, and on high the ruddy stars.

Guskof wore a melancholy, almost guilty smile as though it were awkward for him to look into my face after his confession. He drank still another glass of liquor, and ate ravenously, emptying the saucepan.

“Yes; for you it must be a relief all the same,” said I, for the sake of saying something,— “your acquaintance with the adjutant. He is a very good man, I have heard.”

“Yes,” replied the cashiered officer, “he is a kind man; but he can’t help being what he is, with his education, and it is useless to expect it.”

A flush seemed suddenly to cross his face. “You remarked his coarse jest this evening about the ambuscade;” and Guskof, though I tried several times to interrupt him, began to justify himself before me, and to show that he had not run away from the ambuscade, and that he was not a coward as the adjutant and Capt. S. tried to make him out.

“As I was telling you,” he went on to say, wiping his hands on his jacket, “such people can’t show any delicacy toward a man, a common soldier, who hasn’t much money either. That’s beyond their strength.

And here recently, while I haven’t received anything at all from my sister, I have been conscious that they have changed toward me. This sheepskin jacket, which I bought of a soldier, and which hasn’t any warmth in it, because it’s all worn off” (and here he showed me where the wool was gone from the inside), “it doesn’t arouse in him any sympathy or consideration for my unhappiness, but scorn, which he does not take pains to hide.

Whatever my necessities may be, as now when I have nothing to eat except soldiers’ gruel, and nothing to wear,” he continued, casting down his eyes, and pouring out for himself still another glass of liquor, “he does not even offer to lend me some money, though he knows perfectly well that I would give it back to him; but he waits till I am obliged to ask him for it. But you appreciate how it is for me to go to him. In your case I should say, square and fair, *vous etes audessus de cela, mon cher, je n’ai pas le sou.* And you know,” said he, looking straight into my eyes with an expression of desperation, “I am going to

tell you, square and fair, I am in a terrible situation: pouvez-vous me preter dix rubles argent? My sister ought to send me some by the mail, et mon pere— “

“Why, most willingly,” said I, although, on the contrary, it was trying and unpleasant, especially because the evening before, having lost at cards, I had left only about five rubles in Nikita’s care. “In a moment,” said I, arising, “I will go and get it at the tent.”

“No, by and by: ne vous derangez pas.”

Nevertheless, not heeding him, I hastened to the closed tent, where stood my bed, and where the captain was sleeping.

“Aleksei Ivanuitch, let me have ten rubles, please, for rations,” said I to the captain, shaking him.

“What! have you been losing again? But this very evening, you were not going to play any more,” murmured the captain, still half asleep.

“No, I have not been playing; but I want the money; let me have it, please.”

“Makatiuk!” shouted the captain to his servant, “hand me my bag with the money.”

“Hush, hush!” said I, hearing Guskof’s measured steps near the tent.

“What? Why hush?”

“Because that cashiered fellow has asked to borrow it of me. He’s right there.”

“Well, if you knew him, you wouldn’t let him have it,” remarked the captain. “I have heard about him. He’s a dirty, low-lived fellow.”

Nevertheless, the captain gave me the money, ordered his man to put away the bag, pulled the flap of the tent neatly to, and, again saying, “If you only knew him, you wouldn’t let him have it,” drew his head down under the coverlet. “Now you owe me thirty-two, remember,” he shouted after me.

When I came out of the tent, Guskof was walking near the settees; and his slight figure, with his crooked legs, his shapeless cap, his long white

hair, kept appearing and disappearing in the darkness, as he passed in and out of the light of the candles. He made believe not to see me.

I handed him the money. He said “Merci,” and, crumpling the bank-bill, thrust it into his trousers pocket.

“Now I suppose the game is in full swing at the adjutant’s,” he began immediately after this.

“Yes, I suppose so.”

“He’s a wonderful player, always bold, and never backs out. When he’s in luck, it’s fine; but when it does not go well with him, he can lose frightfully. He has given proof of that. During this expedition, if you reckon his valuables, he has lost more than fifteen hundred rubles. But, as he played discreetly before, that officer of yours seemed to have some doubts about his honor.”

“Well, that’s because he . . . Nikita, haven’t we any of that red Kavkas wine left?” I asked, very much enlivened by Guskof’s conversational talent. Nikita still kept muttering; but he brought us the red wine, and again looked on angrily as Guskof drained his glass. In Guskof’s behavior was noticeable his old freedom from constraint. I wished that he would go as soon as possible; it seemed as if his only reason for not going was because he did not wish to go immediately after receiving the money. I said nothing.

“How could you, who have means, and were under no necessity, simply *de gaiete de coeur*, make up your mind to come and serve in the Caucasus? That’s what I don’t understand,” said he to me.

I endeavored to explain this act of renunciation, which seemed so strange to him.

“I can imagine how disagreeable the society of those officers — men without any comprehension of culture — must be for you. You could not understand each other. You see, you might live ten years, and not see anything, and not hear about anything, except cards, wine, and gossip about rewards and campaigns.”

It was unpleasant for me, that he wished me to put myself on a par with him in his position; and, with absolute honesty, I assured him that I was very fond of cards and wine, and gossip about campaigns, and that I did not care to have any better comrades than those with whom I was associated. But he would not believe me.

“Well, you may say so,” he continued; “but the lack of women’s society, — I mean, of course, FEMMES COMME IL FAUT, — is that not a terrible deprivation? I don’t know what I would give now to go into a parlor, if only for a moment, and to have a look at a pretty woman, even though it were through a crack.”

He said nothing for a little, and drank still another glass of the red wine.

“Oh, my God, my God! If it only might be our fate to meet again, somewhere in Petersburg, to live and move among men, among ladies!”

He drank up the dregs of the wine still left in the bottle, and when he had finished it he said: “AKH! PARDON, maybe you wanted some more. It was horribly careless of me. However, I suppose I must have taken too much, and my head isn’t very strong. [Footnote: ET JE N’AI PAS LA TETE FORTE.] There was a time when I lived on Morskaia Street, AU REZ-DE-CHAUSSEE, and had marvellous apartments, furniture, you know, and I was able to arrange it all beautifully, not so very expensively though; my father, to be sure, gave me porcelains, flowers, and silver — a wonderful lot.

Le matin je sortais, visits, 5 heures regulierement. I used to go and dine with her; often she was alone. Il faut avouer que c’etait une femme ravissante! You didn’t know her at all, did you?”

“No.”

“You see, there was such high degree of womanliness in her, and such tenderness, and what love! Lord! I did not know how to appreciate my happiness then. We would return after the theatre, and have a little supper together. It was never dull where she was, toujours gaie, toujours aimante. Yes, and I had never imagined what rare happiness it

was. Et j'ai beaucoup a me reprocher in regard to her. Je l'ai fait souffrir et souvent. I was outrageous. AKH! What a marvellous time that was! Do I bore you?"

"No, not at all."

"Then I will tell you about our evenings. I used to go — that stairway, every flower-pot I knew, — the door-handle, all was so lovely, so familiar; then the vestibule, her room. . . . No, it will never, never come back to me again! Even now she writes to me: if you will let me, I will show you her letters.

But I am not what I was; I am ruined; I am no longer worthy of her. . . . Yes, I am ruined for ever. Je suis casse. There's no energy in me, no pride, nothing — nor even any rank. . . . [Footnote: Blagorodstva, noble birth, nobility.] Yes, I am ruined; and no one will ever appreciate my sufferings. Every one is indifferent. I am a lost man. Never any chance for me to rise, because I have fallen morally . . . into the mire — I have fallen. . . ."

At this moment there was evident in his words a genuine, deep despair: he did not look at me, but sat motionless.

"Why are you in such despair?" I asked.

"Because I am abominable. This life has degraded me, all that was in me, all is crushed out. It is not by pride that I hold out, but by abjectness: there's no dignite dans le malheur. I am humiliated every moment; I endure it all; I got myself into this abasement.

This mire has soiled me. I myself have become coarse; I have forgotten what I used to know; I can't speak French any more; I am conscious that I am base and low. I cannot tear myself away from these surroundings, indeed I cannot. I might have been a hero: give me a regiment, gold epaulets, a trumpeter, but to march in the ranks with some wild Anton Bondarenko or the like, and feel that between me and him there was no difference at all — that he might be killed or I might be killed — all the same, that thought is maddening.

You understand how horrible it is to think that some ragamuffin may kill me, a man who has thoughts and feelings, and that it would make no difference if alongside of me some Antonof were killed, — a being not different from an animal — and that it might easily happen that I and not this Antonof were killed, which is always UNE FATALITE for every lofty and good man. I know that they call me a coward: grant that I am a coward, I certainly am a coward, and can't be anything else.

Not only am I a coward, but I am in my way a low and despicable man. Here I have just been borrowing money of you, and you have the right to despise me. No, take back your money." And he held out to me the crumpled bank-bill. "I want you to have a good opinion of me." He covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears. I really did not know what to say or do.

"Calm yourself," I said to him. "You are too sensitive; don't take everything so to heart; don't indulge in self-analysis, look at things more simply. You yourself say that you have character. Keep up good heart, you won't have long to wait," I said to him, but not very consistently, because I was much stirred both by a feeling of sympathy and a feeling of repentance, because I had allowed myself mentally to sin in my judgment of a man truly and deeply unhappy.

"Yes," he began, "if I had heard even once, at the time when I was in that hell, one single word of sympathy, of advice, of friendship — one humane word such as you have just spoken, perhaps I might have calmly endured all; perhaps I might have struggled, and been a soldier. But now this is horrible. . . . When I think soberly, I long for death. Why should I love my despicable life and my own self, now that I am ruined for all that is worth while in the world?"

And at the least danger, I suddenly, in spite of myself, begin to pray for my miserable life, and to watch over it as though it were precious, and I cannot, *je ne puis pas*, control myself. That is, I could," he continued again after a minute's silence, "but this is too hard work for me, a monstrous work, when I am alone. With others, under special circumstances, when you are going into action, I am brave, *j'ai fait mes*

epreuves, because I am vain and proud: that is my failing, and in presence of others. . . . Do you know, let me spend the night with you: with us, they will play all night long; it makes no difference, anywhere, on the ground.”

While Nikita was making the bed, we got up, and once more began to walk up and down in the darkness on the battery. Certainly Guskof's head must have been very weak, because two glasses of liquor and two of wine made him dizzy. As we got up and moved away from the candles, I noticed that he again thrust the ten-ruble bill into his pocket, trying to do so without my seeing it. During all the foregoing conversation, he had held it in his hand. He continued to reiterate how he felt that he might regain his old station if he had a man such as I were to take some interest in him.

We were just going into the tent to go to bed when suddenly a cannon-ball whistled over us, and buried itself in the ground not far from us. So strange it was, — that peacefully sleeping camp, our conversation, and suddenly the hostile cannon-ball which flew from God knows where, the midst of our tents, — so strange that it was some time before I could realize what it was. Our sentinel, Andreief, walking up and down on the battery, moved toward me.

“Ha! he's crept up to us. It was the fire here that he aimed at,” said he. “We must rouse the captain,” said I, and gazed at Guskof.

He stood cowering close to the ground, and stammered, trying to say, “Th-that's th-the ene-my's . . . f-f-fire — th-that's — hidi — .” Further he could not say a word, and I did not see how and where he disappeared so instantaneously.

In the captain's tent a candle gleamed; his cough, which always troubled him when he was awake, was heard; and he himself soon appeared, asking for a linstock to light his little pipe.

“What does this mean, old man?” he asked with a smile. “Aren't they willing to give me a little sleep to-night? First it's you with your cashiered friend, and then it's Shamyl. What shall we do, answer him or not? There was nothing about this in the instructions, was there?”



“Nothing at all. There he goes again,” said I. “Two of them!” Indeed, in the darkness, directly in front of us, flashed two fires, like two eyes; and quickly over our heads flew one cannon-ball and one heavy shell. It must have been meant for us, coming with a loud and penetrating hum. From the neighboring tents the soldiers hastened. You could hear them hawking and talking and stretching themselves.

“Hist! the fuse sings like a nightingale,” was the remark of the artilleryist. “Send for Nikita,” said the captain with his perpetually benevolent smile. “Nikita, don’t hide yourself, but listen to the mountain nightingales.”

“Well, your honor,” said Nikita, who was standing near the captain, “I have seen them — these nightingales. I am not afraid of ‘em; but here was that stranger who was here, he was drinking up your red wine. When he heard how that shot dashed by our tents, and the shell rolled by, he cowered down like some wild beast.”

“However, we must send to the commander of the artillery,” said the captain to me, in a serious tone of authority, “and ask whether we shall reply to the fire or not. It will probably be nothing at all, but still it may. Have the goodness to go and ask him. Have a horse saddled. Do it as quickly as possible, even if you take my Polkan.”

In five minutes they brought me a horse, and I galloped off to the commander of the artillery. “Look you, return on foot,” whispered the punctilious captain, “else they won’t let you through the lines.”

It was half a verst to the artillery commander’s, the whole road ran between the tents. As soon as I rode away from our fire, it became so black that I could not see even the horse’s ears, but only the watch-fires, now seeming very near, now very far off, as they gleamed into my eyes.

After I had ridden some distance, trusting to the intelligence of the horse whom I allowed free rein, I began to distinguish the white four-cornered tents and then the black tracks of the road. After a half-hour,

having asked my way three times, and twice stumbled over the tent-stakes, causing each time a volley of curses from the tents, and twice been detained by the sentinels, I reached the artillery commander's.

While I was on the way, I heard two more cannon shot in the direction of our camp; but the projectiles did not reach to the place where the headquarters were. The artillery commander ordered not to reply to the firing, the more as the enemy did not remain in the same place; and I went back, leading the horse by the bridle, making my way on foot between the infantry tents. More than once I delayed my steps, as I went by some soldier's tent where a light was shining, and some merry-andrew was telling a story; or I listened to some educated soldier reading from some book while the whole division overflowed the tent, or hung around it, sometimes interrupting the reading with various remarks; or I simply listened to the talk about the expedition, about the fatherland, or about their chiefs.

As I came around one of the tents of the third battalion, I heard Guskof's rough voice: he was speaking hilariously and rapidly. Young voices replied to him, not those of soldiers, but of gay gentlemen. It was evidently the tent of some yunker or sergeant-major. I stopped short.

"I've known him a long time," Guskof was saying. "When I lived in Petersburg, he used to come to my house often; and I went to his. He moved in the best society."

"Whom are you talking about?" asked the drunken voice.

"About the prince," said Guskof. "We were relatives, you see, but, more than all, we were old friends. It's a mighty good thing, you know, gentlemen, to have such an acquaintance. You see he's fearfully rich. To him a hundred silver rubles is a mere bagatelle. Here, I just got a little money out of him, enough to last me till my sister sends."

"Let's have some."

"Right away. — Savelitch, my dear," said Guskof, coming to the door of the tent, "here's ten rubles for you: go to the sutler, get two bottles of

Kakhetinski. Anything else, gentlemen? What do you say?" and Guskof, with unsteady gait, with dishevelled hair, without his hat, came out of the tent. Throwing open his jacket, and thrusting his hands into the pockets of his trousers, he stood at the door of the tent. Though he was in the light, and I in darkness; I trembled with fear lest he should see me, and I went on, trying to make no noise.

"Who goes there?" shouted Guskof after me in a thoroughly drunken voice. Apparently, the cold took hold of him. "Who the devil is going off with that horse?"

I made no answer, and silently went on my way.

## Scenes From Commonlife

### Chapter I

#### WILLOW

ONE Easter a peasant went to see whether the frost was out of the ground.

He went to his vegetable garden and poked into the ground with a stake. The soil was soft.

The peasant went into the forest. In the woods the catkins on a young willow were already beginning to swell. And the peasant said to himself

:

" Let me plant young willows around my garden; they will grow and make a hedge."

He took his ax, cut down a dozen young sprouts, trimmed down the butts into points, and planted them in the ground.

All the willow sticks put forth sprouts and green foliage above; and below, underground, they sent out similar sprouts in place of roots, and some of them took hold of the earth and strengthened themselves; but others did not take hold of the earth with their roots, and these died and toppled over.

When autumn came, the peasant was delighted with his willows; six of them had taken root. The next spring some sheep girdled four of them, and thus only two were left.

The following spring, sheep girdled these also. One died away entirely, but the other took new lease of life, sent down deeper roots, and became a tree. Every spring the bees hummed on in the branches. Oftentimes they would swarm there, and the peasants would gather them into hives.

Peasants and their wives often came to lunch and nap under the tree, and their children climbed up its trunk and broke off its twigs.

. The peasant the one who had set out the slip had died long ago, and still the willow grew.

His eldest son twice trimmed off its branches and used them for fuel.

And still the willow grew. They cut the branches all round and made a cone of it, and when spring came, it still again put forth new branches, though they were small, but twice as many as before, like the mane of a colt.

And the eldest son ceased to be master of the house, and the village was removed to another place, but still the willow grew in the bare field.

Other peasants came and cut it down, and still it grew. The lightning struck the tree; it sent out fresh branches from the sides, and still it grew and bloomed.

One peasant wanted to cut it down to a block, and actually felled it; but it was badly rotted. The tree fell over and held only by one side, but still it kept growing, and every year the bees flew to it to gather pollen from its flowers.

Once, early in the spring, the children gathered together to tend the horses under the tree.

They thought that it was rather cold, and they began to make a fire, and they collected stubble, mugwort, and twigs. One boy climbed the

willow and broke off branches. They piled all their tinder in the hollow of the willow and set it on fire.

The willow began to hiss; the sap in its wood boiled, the smoke poured forth, and then it began to blaze; all the inside turned black. The young sprouts crumpled up; the blossoms wilted.

The children drove their horses home. The burned willow remained alone in the field. A black crow flew up to it, perched on it, and cried :  
“ So the old poker is dead; it was time long ago ! “

## Chapter II

### GRAY HARE

A GRAY hare lived during the winter near a village. When night came, he would prick up one ear and listen, then he would prick up the other, jerk his whiskers, snuff, and sit up on his hind legs.

Then he would give one leap, two leaps, through the deep snow, and sit up again, on his hind legs and look all around.

On all sides nothing was to be seen except snow. The snow lay in billows and glittered white as sugar. Above the hare was frosty vapor, and through this vapor glis-tened the big bright stars.

The hare was obliged to make a long circuit across the highway to reach his favorite granary. On the highway he could hear the creaking of sledges, the whinnying of horses, the groaning of the seats in the sledges.

Once more the hare paused near the road. The peas-ants were walking alongside of their sledges, with their kaftan collars turned up. Their faces were scarcely visible. Their beards, their mustaches, their eyebrows, were white. Steam came from their mouths and noses.

Their horses were covered with sweat, and the sweat grew white with hoar-frost. The horses strained on their collars, plunged into the hollows and came up out of them again. The peasants urged them

along and lashed them with their knouts. Two old men were walking side by side, and one was telling the other how a horse had been stolen from him.

As soon as the teams had passed, the hare crossed the road, and leaped unconcernedly toward the threshing-floor. A little dog belonging to the teams caught sight of the hare. He began to bark, and darted after him.

The hare made for the threshing-floor, across the snowdrifts; but the depth of the snow impeded the hare, and even the dog, after a dozen leaps, sank deep in the snow and gave up the chase.

The hare also stopped, sat up on his hind legs, and then proceeded at his leisure toward the threshing-floor.

On the way across the field he fell in with two other hares. They were nibbling and playing. The gray hare joined his mates, helped them clear away the icy snow, ate a few seeds of winter wheat, and then went on his way.

In the village it was all quiet; the fires were out; the only sound on the street was an infant crying in a cottage, and the framework of the houses creaking under the frost.

The hare hastened to the threshing-floor, and there he found some of his mates. He played with them on the well-swept floor, ate some oats from the tub on which they had already begun, mounted the snow-covered roof into the granary, and then went through the hedge back to his hole.

In the east the dawn was already beginning to redden, the stars dwindled, and the frosty vapor grew thicker over the face of the earth. In the neighboring village the women woke up and went out after water; the peas-ants began carrying fodder from the granaries; children were shouting and crying; along the highway more and more teams passed by, and the peasants talked in louder tones.

The hare leaped across the road, went to his old hole, selected a place a little higher up, dug away the snow, curled up in the depths of his new hole, stretched his ears along his back, and went to sleep with eyes wide open.

### Chapter III

#### FOUNDLING

A POOR woman had a daughter, Masha. Masha one morning, in going after water, saw something lying on the door-step, wrapped up in rags. Masha set down her pail and undid the rags. When she had opened the bundle, there came forth a cry from out the rags, ua! ua! ua ! Masha bent over and saw that it was a pretty little baby. He was crying lustily, ua! ua! ua! Masha took him up in her arms and carried him into the house, and tried to give him some milk with a spoon.

The mother said :

“ What have you brought in ? “

Masha said :

“ A baby; I found it at our door.”

The mother said :

“ We are so poor, how can we get food for another child ? I am going to the police and tell them to take it away.”

Masha wept, and said :

“ Matushka, he will not eat much; do keep him ! Just see what pretty little dimpled hands and fingers he has.”

The mother looked, and she had compassion on the child. She decided to keep him. Masha fed him and swaddled him, and she sang cradle songs to him when she put him to sleep.

### Chapter IV

#### PEASANT AND THE CUCUMBERS

ONCE upon a time a peasant went to steal some cu-cumbers of a gardener. He crept down among the cucumbers, and said to himself :

“ Let me just get away with a bag of cucumbers; then I will sell them. With the money I will buy me a hen. The hen will lay some eggs, and will hatch them out, and I shall have a lot of chickens. I will feed up the chickens, and sell them, and buy a shoat a nice little pig. In time she will farrow, and I shall have a litter of pigs. I will sell the little pigs and buy a mare; the mare will foal, and I shall have a colt. I will raise the colt and sell it; then I will buy a house and start a garden; I will have a garden and raise cucumbers; but [ won't let them be stolen, I will keep a strict watch. I will hire watchmen, and will station them among the cucumbers, and often I, myself, will come unexpectedly among them, and I will shout, ' Hollo, there! keep a closer watch.' ”

As these words came into his head he shouted them at the top of his voice. The guards heard him, ran out, and belabored him with their sticks.

## Chapter V

### FIRE

IT was harvest-time, and the men and women <sup>1</sup> had gone out to work. Only the very old and the very young stayed in the village. A grandmother and three of her grandchildren were left in one cottage. <sup>2</sup> The grandmother kindled a fire in the oven, and lay down for a nap. The flies lighted on her and annoyed her with their biting. She covered up her head with a towel and went to sleep.

One of the grandchildren, Masha, she was three years old, opened the oven, shoveled out some of the coals into a dish, and ran out into the entry. Now in the entry lay some sheaves. <sup>3</sup> The women had been preparing these sheaves for bands.

Masha brought the coals, emptied them under the sheaves, and began to blow. When the straw took fire, she was delighted; she ran into the sitting-room, and seized her little brother, Kiriushka, he was eighteen months old, and was only just beginning to walk, and she said, “ Look, Kiliuska ! see what a nice fire I have started ! ”  
The sheaves were already flaming and cracking.



When Masha saw the entry full of smoke, she was frightened and hastened back into the hut. Kiriushka stumbled on the threshold and bumped his nose, and set up a cry. His sister dragged him into the room, and both of them hid under the bench. The grandmother heard nothing, as she was asleep.

The oldest brother, Vanya, he was eight, was in the street. When he saw that smoke was pouring from the entry, he ran indoors, bounded through the smoke into the hut, and tried to waken the grandmother; but the grandmother, who was only half awake, was dazed, and, forgetting all about the children, leaped up and ran about the village after help.

Meantime Masha was crouching under the bench; but the little one cried because he had hurt his nose so badly. Vanya heard him crying, looked under the bench, and called to Masha, “ Run quick ! you will be burnt up ! “

Masha ran to the entry; but it was impossible for her to pass, on account of the smoke and fire.

She came back. Then Vanya opened the window and told her to crawl out. When she had crawled out, Vanya seized his little brother and tried to drag him along.

But the little fellow was heavy and would not let his brother help him. He screamed, and struck Vanya. Twice Vanya fell while he was dragging him to the window; and by this time the door of the hut was on fire,

Vanya thrust the baby boy’s head up to the window, and tried to push him through, but the little fellow, who was very much frightened, clung with his hands, and would not let go. Then Vanya cried to Masha, “ Pull him by the head ! “ and he himself pushed from behind. And thus they dragged him through the window out-of-doors.

## Chapter VI

### TREASURE TROVE

AN old woman and her granddaughter lived in a village. They were very poor and had nothing to eat. Easter Sunday came. The people were full of rejoicing. All made their purchases for the great feast, but the old woman and her granddaughter had nothing to make merry with. They shed tears, and began to pray God to help them.

Then the old woman remembered that long ago, in the time of the Frenchman^ the peasants used to hide their money in the ground. And the old woman said to her granddaughter :

“ Granddaughter, take your shovel and go over to the site of the old village, ask God’s help, and dig into the ground; perhaps God will send us something.”

And the granddaughter said to herself: “It is impos-sible that I should find anything. Still, I will do as grandma 2 bade me.”

She took the shovel and went. After she had dug a hole, she began to think :

“ I have dug long enough; I am going home now.”

She was just going to take out the shovel when she heard it knock against something. She leaned over, and saw a large jug. She shook it; something jingled. She threw down her shovel, and ran to her grandma, crying, “ Babushka, I have found a treasure !”

“They opened the jug and found it full of silver coins. And the grandmother and granddaughter were able to have an Easter feast, and they bought a cow, and thanked God because He had heard their prayer.

## Chapter VII

### BIRD

IT was Serozha’s birthday, and he received many different gifts, peg-tops and hobby-horses and pictures. But Serozha’s uncle gave him a gift which he prized above all the rest : it was a trap for snaring birds. The trap was constructed in such a way that a board was fitted on the frame and shut down upon the top. If seed were scattered on the

board, and it was put out in the yard, the little bird would fly down, hop upon the board, the board would give way, and the trap would shut with a clap.

Serozha was delighted and he ran to his mother to show her the trap. His mother said :

“ It is not a good plaything. What do you want to do with birds ? Why do you want to torture them ? “

“ I am going to put them in a cage. They will sing, and I will feed them.” Serozha got some seed, scattered it on the board, and set the trap in the garden. And he stood by and expected the birds to fly down. But the birds were afraid of him, and did not come near the cage. Serozha ran in to get something to eat, and left the cage.

After dinner he went to look at it; the cage had shut, and in it a little bird was beating against the bars.

Serozha was delighted, took up the bird, and carried it into the house. “ Mamma, I have caught a bird; I think it is a night-ingale; and how its heart beats ! “

His mother said it was a canary.

“ Be careful ! don't hurt it; you would better let it go.”

“ No; I am going to give it something to eat and drink.”

Serozha put the canary in a cage, and for two days gave him seed and water and cleaned the cage. But on the third day he forgot all about the canary, and did not change the water.

And his mother said :

“ See here : you have forgotten your bird; you would better let it go.”

“ No; I will not forget it again; I will immediately give it fresh water and clean its cage.”

Serozha thrust his hand into the cage and began to clean it, but the little bird was frightened and fluttered. After Serozha had cleaned the cage, he went to get some water. His mother perceived that he had forgotten to shut the cage door, and she called after him :

“ Serozha, shut up your cage, else your bird will fly out and hurt itself.”

She had hardly spoken these words, when the bird found the door, was delighted, spread its wings, and flew around the room toward the window. But it did not see the glass, and struck against it and fell back on the window-sill. Serozha came running in, picked up the bird, and put it back in the cage. The bird was still alive, but it lay on its breast, with its wings spread out, and breathed heavily. Serozha looked and looked, and began to cry :

“ Mamma, what can I do now ? “

“You can do nothing now.”

.Serozha did not leave the cage all day, but gazed at the canary, and all the time the bird lay on its breast and breathed hard and fast.

When Serozha went to bed, the bird was dead. Sero-zha could not get to sleep for a long time; every time that he shut his eyes he seemed to see the bird still lying and sighing.

In the morning, when Serozha went to his cage, he saw the bird lying on his back, with his legs crossed, and all stiff.

After that Serozha never again tried to snare birds.

## Chapter VIII

### HOW UNCLE SEMYON TOLD ABOUT HIS ADVENTURE IN THE WOODS

ONE time in winter I had gone into the woods after timber. I had cut down three trees, and lopped off the limbs, and was hewing them, when I looked up and saw that it was getting late; that it was time to go home. But the weather was bad; it was snowing and blowing. I said to myself :

“ The night is coming on, and you don't know the way.”

I whipped up the horse and drove on; still there was no sign of outlet. Forest all around.

I thought how thin my shuba was; I was in danger of freezing to death. I still pushed on; it grew dark, and I was entirely off the road.

I was just going to unyoke the sled and protect myself under it, when I heard not far away the jingle of bells. I went in the direction of the bells, and saw a troika of roan horses, their manes tied with ribbons ! their bells were jingling, and two young men were in the sleigh.

“Good evening, brothers.”

“ Good evening, peasant.”

“ Where is the road, brothers ? “

“ Here we are right on the road.”

I went to them, and I saw that strangely enough the road was unbroken, all drifted over.

“ Follow us,” said they, and they whipped up their horses.

My wretched mare could not keep up with them. I began to shout :

“ Hold on, brothers ! “

They waited for me, laughing.

“Get in with us,” said they; “it will be easier for your horse without a load.”

“ Thank you,” said I.

I clmbed into their sledge. It was handsome well lined. As soon as I sat down, how they spurred on the horses ! “ Now then, my darlings / “

The roan horses dashed away, making the snow fly in clouds.

What a wonderful thing ! It grew lighter and lighter, and the road became as glare as ice, and we flew so fast that it took away my breath, and the twigs lashed my face. It began to be painful.

I looked ahead; there was a steep mountain, a very steep mountain, and at the foot of the mountain a ravine. The roans were flying straight for the ravine.

I was frightened, and cried :

“Heavens and earth! slow up, you, slow up; you will kill us ! “

But the men only laughed, and urged on the horses the more. I saw there was no saving us; the ravine was under our very runners. But I saw a bough right over my head.

“ Well,” I said to myself, “you may go over alone.”

I stood up and seized the bough, and there I hung !

As I caught it I shouted :

“ Hold on ! “ And then I heard women shouting :

“ Uncle Semyon ! what is the matter ? Start up the fire, you women ! Something is wrong with Uncle Semyon ! he is screaming ! Stir up the fire ! “

I woke up, and there I was in my cottage, clinging to the loft, and screaming at the top of my voice. And all that I had seen had been a dream !

## Chapter IX

### COW

widow Mary a lived with her mother and six children. Their means of life were small. But they used their last money in the purchase of a red cow, so as to have milk for the children. The eldest children pastured Brownie 1 in the field, and gave her slops at home.

One-time while the mother was away from home, the oldest son, Misha, in climbing on the shelf after bread, knocked over a tumbler and broke it.

Misha was afraid that his mother would chide him. So he gathered up the large pieces of broken glass, carried them into the yard, and buried them in the dung-heap, but the little pieces he threw into the basin. The mother missed the glass, and made in-quiries; but Misha said nothing, and so the matter rested.

On the next day, after dinner, when the mother went to give Brownie the swill from the basin, she found that Brownie was ailing and would not eat her food. They tried to give her medicine, and they called the babka. 2 The babka said that the cow would not live; it was best to slaughter her for beef.

They called a peasant and proceeded to slaughter the cow. The children heard Brownie lowing in the yard; they all climbed upon the oven and began to weep.

After they had slaughtered Brownie, they took off the hide and cut the carcass in pieces, and there, in the throat, they found a piece of glass. And so they knew that her death was caused by her swallowing the glass in the slops.

When Misha heard this he began to weep bitterly, and confessed to his mother that he broke the glass. The mother said nothing, but also wept. Then she said :

“ We have killed our Brownie, and have nothing to get another cow with. How will the little ones live without milk ? “

Misha kept howling louder and louder, and would not come down from the oven when they ate the jelly made from the cow’s head. Every time when he went to sleep, he saw in his dreams how Uncle Vasili brought the red cow by the horns, Brownie, with her wide eyes and beautiful neck.

From that time the children had no more milk. Only on holidays they had milk, for then Marya asked her neighbor for a mug of it.

It happened that the lady of that estate needed a child’s nurse. And the grandmother said to the daughter :

“ Let me go; I will take the place as nurse, and maybe God will let you get along with the children alone. And if God spares me, I can earn enough in a year to buy a cow.”

Thus they did. The grandmother went to the lady; but it grew still more hard for Marya and the children. The children lived a whole year without having milk. They had nothing but kisel jelly and tiuria I to eat and they grew thin and pale.

After the year was over, the grandmother came home, bringing twenty rubles.

“ Well, daughter,” says she, “ now we will buy a cow.”

Marya was delighted; all the children were delighted. Marya and the grandmother went to market to buy their cow. They asked a neighbor to stay with the children, and they asked another neighbor, Uncle Zakhar, to go with them and help them to select the cow.

After saying their prayers they went to town. In the afternoon the children kept running into the street to see if they could see the cow. They amused them-selves guessing what kind of a cow she would be red or black. They kept telling one another how they would feed her. All day long they waited and waited. They walked a verst to meet the cow, but as it was already growing dark, they turned back.

Suddenly they saw coming along the road a cart, and in it sat their grandmother, and beside the hind wheel walked a brindle cow tied by the horn, and their mother was walking behind urging her on with a dry stick.

The children ran to them and began to examine the cow. They brought bread and grass and tried to feed her. The mother went into the cottage, changed her clothes, and went out with her towel and milk-pail. She sat down under the cow and began to wipe the udder. The Lord be praised ! The cow gave milk, and the children stood around and watched the milk straining into the pail, and listened to its sound under the mother's fingers. When the mother had milked the pail half full, she carried it down cellar, and each of the children had a mug for supper.

## Chapter X

### FILIPOK

ONCE there was a little boy whose name was Filipp. All the children were going to school. Filipp took his hat and wanted to go too.

But his mother said to him :

“ Where are you going, Filipok ? “

“ To school.”

“ You are too small; you can't go,” and his mother kept him at home. The children went off to school. Their father had gone early in the morning to the woods; the mother was engaged in her daily work. Filipok and his grandmother were left in the cottage, on the oven. Filipok began to feel lonely; his grand-mother was asleep, and he began



to search for his hat. When he could not find his own, he took an old one, made of sheepskin, and started for school.

School was kept at the village church. When Filipp walked along his own street, 1 the dogs did not meddle with him, for they knew him; but when he reached the street in the next estate, a black dog 2 came bounding out and barking, and behind this dog came another still bigger, named Wolfie, 3 and Filipp started to run, the dogs after him. Filipok began to cry; then he stubbed his toe and fell. A peasant came out and called off the dogs, and asked :

“ Where are you going all sole alone, you little rascal? “

Filipok made no answer, pulled up his skirt, and started to run with all his might. He ran to the school. There was no one on the steps, but in school the voices of the children could be heard in a confused murmur. Filipp was now filled with fear :

“ Suppose the teacher should drive me away ? “

And he began to consider what he should do. If he should go back, the dogs might bite him; but if he went into school, he was afraid of the teacher.

A peasant woman passed the school, with a pail, and she said :

“ All the rest are studying, and what are you standing there for?”

So Filipok went into school. In the entry he took off his cap and opened the door. The room was full of children. All were talking at once, and the teacher, in a red scarf, was walking up and down in the midst of them.

“ Who are you ? “ he demanded of Filipok.

Filipok clutched his cap and said nothing.

“Who are you?”

Filipok said never a word.

“Are you dumb?”

Filipok was so scared that he could not speak.

“Well, then, go home if you can't speak.”

Now Filipok would have been glad to say something, but his throat was all parched with terror.

He looked at the teacher and burst into tears.

Then the teacher felt sorry for him. He caressed his head, and inquired of the children who the little fellow was.

“This is Filipok, Kostiuska’s brother; he has been wanting for a long time to go to school, but his mother would not let him, and he must have run away to school.”

“ Well, sit down on the bench next your brother, and I will ask your mother to let you come to school.”

The teacher began to teach Filipok his letters; but

Filipok already knew them, and could even read a little. “ Very well; spell your name, then.” Filipok said, “ Khve-i, khvi le-i, li peok, pok.” Everybody laughed.

“Bravo!” said the teacher; “who taught you to read?” Filipok summoned courage, and said : “ Kostiuska. I am mischievous. I learned them

all at once. I am terribly smart! “ The teacher laughed, and asked : “ And do you know your prayer ? “ Filipok said yes, and began to repeat the Ave Maria:

but he did not get every word quite correct. The teacher interrupted him, and said : “You must not boast. I will teach you.” After this Filipok began to go to school regularly with the children.

Stories From Botany

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1888

Chapter I

MY APPLE TREES

I SET OUT two hundred young apple trees, and for three years, in the spring and autumn, I dug around them, and when winter came, I wrapped them around with straw as a protection against rabbits.

On the fourth year, when the snow had gone, I went out to examine my apple trees. They had grown during the winter, their bark was smooth and full of sap, the branches were all perfect, and on all the extremities of the twigs were the buds of flowers, as round as little peas.

Here and there, where the buds had already burst, the edges of the petals could be seen.

I knew that all the buds would become flowers and fruit, and I was full of gladness as I watched my apple trees.

But when I came to strip off the straw from the first tree, I noticed that at its foot, just below the level of the soil, the bark of the tree had been nibbled around, down to the rind, just like a white ring.

The mice had done it.

I stripped the next tree, and on the next tree it was just the same. Out of two hundred apple trees not one was untouched. I smeared the injured places with pitch and wax; but as soon as the apple trees bloomed, the flowers immediately fell to the ground. Little leaves came out, but they faded and dried up. The bark grew rough and black. Out of my two hundred trees only nine were saved.

The bark of these nine apple trees had not been entirely girdled, but in the white rings there was left a band of bark. At the juncture of these bands with the bark warts grew; but though the trees were badly injured, still they survived. All the rest were lost, save that below the girdled place little sprouts came up; but they were wild.

The bark on trees is the same as the veins in man; the blood flows through a man's veins, and through the bark the sap flows over the tree and provides it with branches, leaves, and flowers. The whole inside of a tree may be removed, as often happens with old willows, and if only the bark is alive, the tree will live; but if the bark is destroyed, the tree

is destroyed. If a man's veins are cut, the man dies : in the first place, because the blood runs out of them; and in the second place, because then the blood cannot be distributed over the body.

And in the same way the birch tree perishes when children make a hole in it to drink the sap; all the sap runs out.

And in the same way my apple trees perished because the mice entirely girdled the bark so that there was no way for the sap from the roots to reach the branches, the leaves, and the blossoms.

## Chapter II

### OLD POPLAR

OUR park had been neglected for five years. I engaged workmen with axes and shovels, and I myself began to work with them in my park. We cut down and lopped off dead and wild growths and superfluous thickets and trees.

More abundantly and luxuriantly than anything else had grown the poplar and bird cherry. The poplar starts from roots, and it is impossible to pull it up; but you have to cut the roots out of the ground.

Behind the pond stood a monstrous poplar, two spans in circumference. On all sides of it was a field, and this field was overgrown with young poplar shoots. I ordered the men to cut them down : I wanted to make the place more cheerful; but, above all, I wanted to make it easier for the old poplar, because I thought that all these young trees came from it and robbed it of sap.

As we were cutting down the young poplars, I sometimes felt a pang of regret to see the roots full of sap hacked in pieces underground.

Sometimes four of us tried to pull up the roots of some young poplar that had been cut down, and found it impossible. It would resist with all its might, and would not die. I said to myself :

“ Evidently it ought to live, if it clings so stoutly to life.”

But it was essential to cut them down; and I persisted in having them destroyed. But afterward, when it was too late, I learned that I ought not to have destroyed them.

I supposed that the saplings drew the sap from the old poplar, but it proved to be quite the reverse. By the time I had cut them down, the old poplar was also beginning to die. When it put forth leaves, I saw that one of its halves it grew in two great branches was bare, and that same summer it dried up. It had been long dying, and was conscious of it, and had been giving its life to its shoots.

That was the reason that they had grown so rapidly, and I, who had wished to help it, had killed all its children.

### Chapter III

#### BIRD CHERRY TREE

A BIRD cherry I had taken root on the path through the hazelnut grove, and was beginning to choke off the hazel bushes.

For some time I queried whether to cut it or not to cut it; I felt sorry to do so. This bird cherry did not grow in a clump, but in a tree more than five inches in diameter, and twenty-eight feet high, full of branches, bushy, and wholly covered with bright, white, fragrant blossoms. The perfume from it was wafted a long distance.

I certainly should not have cut it down, but one of the workmen I had given him orders before to cut down every bird cherry began to fell it in my absence. When I came he had already cut halfway into it, and the sap was dripping down under the ax as he let it fall into the gash.

“There ‘s no help for it,” I said to myself; “evidently it is its fate.” So I myself took the ax, and began to help the peasant cut it down.

It is delightful to work at all sorts of work; it is delightful even to cut wood. It is delightful to sink the ax deep in the wood, with a slanting stroke, and then to cut it in straight, and thus to advance deeper and deeper into the tree.

I entirely forgot about the bird cherry tree, and thought only about getting it cut down as quickly as possible.

When I got out of breath, I laid down the ax, and the peasant and I leaned against the tree, and tried to push it over. We pushed hard; the tree shook its foliage and sprinkled us with drops of dew, and strewed all around the white, fragrant petals of its blossoms.

At this instant something shrieked; there was a sharp, crackling sound in the center of the tree, and the tree began to fall.

It broke off near the gash, and, slowly wavering, toppled over on the grass, with all its leaves and blossoms. The branches and blossoms trembled for a moment after it fell, and then grew motionless.

“ Ekh ! what a splendid piece ! ” said the peasant; “it’s a real shame ! ”  
As for me, I felt so sorry that I hastened off to look after other work.  
1 Three vershoks, 5.25 inches.

## Chapter IV

### HOW TREES WALK

ONCE we were clearing an overgrown path on the hillside, near the pond. We had cut down many briers, willows, and poplars, and at last we came to a bird cherry.

It was growing on the path itself, and it was so old and thick that it seemed as if it must have been there at least ten years. And yet I knew that only five years before the park had been cleared.

I could not understand how such a mature cherry tree could have sprung up there.

We cut it down and went on. A little farther away, in another thicket, there was another bird cherry tree like the first, only even more dense. I examined its root, and found that it sprang from under an old linden. The linden had been smothering it with its shade, and the cherry had run under the ground for a distance of a dozen feet, 1 with a straight

stem; and when it came out into the light, it had raised its head and begun to flourish.

I cut it up by the root, and was amazed to see how light-colored and rotten the root was. After I had cut it off, the peasants and I tried to pull up the tree; but in spite of all our best efforts we could not stir it; it seemed to be fastened to the ground.

I said :

“ Look and see if we have not failed to cut it entirely off.”

One of the workmen crawled down under it, and cried :

“Yes, there ‘s another root; there it is under the path.”

I went to him, and found that this was the case.

The cherry tree, in order not to be choked off by the linden, had crept from under the linden to the path, seven feet from its original root. Then the root which I had cut off was rotten and dried up, but the new one was alive. It had evidently felt that it would not live under the linden, had stretched itself out, had taken hold of the soil with its branch, had made a root out of the branch, and then abandoned the old root.

Then I began to understand how the first bird cherry had grown up in the path. It had evidently done the same thing, but had succeeded in so thoroughly ridding itself of its old root that I could not find it.

Stories From Physics

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1888

Chapter I

THE MAGNET

IN days of old there was a shepherd whose name was Magnis. One of Magnis's sheep went astray. He went to the mountains to search for it. He reached a spot where there were only bare rocks. As he walked over these rocks he began to be conscious that his boots were adhering to them. He felt of them with his hand; the rocks were dry, and did not stick to his hands. He started to walk on again; still his boots stuck fast.

He sat down, took off one of his boots, and holding it in his hands, began to touch the rocks with it.

When he touched them with the leather or the sole, it did not adhere; but when he touched them with the nails, then it adhered.

Magnis had a crook with an iron point. He touched the stones with the wood, it did not adhere; but when he touched it with the iron, it clung so powerfully that he had to pull it away by main force.

When Magnis examined the stone, he' saw that it was like iron, and he carried some of the pieces of rock home with him. From that time they understood this stone, and called it lodestone, or magnet.

Magnets are found in the ground, together with iron ore. The best iron is found when the ore contains lodestone.

If a piece of iron is put on the magnet, then the iron also begins to attract other pieces of iron. And if a steel needle is laid on a magnet and kept there for some time, then the needle itself becomes a magnet, and is able to attract iron to itself.

If two magnets are laid side by side, two of the ends or poles will repel each other; the other two will attract each other. If a magnetic needle be broken in two, then again each half will attract at one pole and repel at the other. And if it be broken again, the same thing will happen; and no matter how many times it is broken, it will be always the same like poles repelling one another, unlike poles attracting one another; just as if the magnet pushed with one end and pulled with the other.

And, however often you break it, one pole will always push and the other draw.



It is exactly like a pine cone : no matter where it is broken off, one end is always convex, the other hollow. And if they are put end to end, the convex fits into the hollow; but the convex will not fit the convex, nor the cup the cup.

If a needle is magnetized by being left some time in contact with a magnet, and is balanced on a point in such a way that it will move freely on the point, then no matter in which direction the magnetic needle is turned, as soon as it is set free, it will come to rest with one pole pointing to the south, the other pointing to the north.

Before the magnet was discovered men did not dare to sail very far out on the sea. Whenever they sailed out of sight of land, then they could judge only by the sun and the stars where they were going. But if it was stormy, and the sun and stars were hid, then they had no way of telling where their course lay; and the vessel would drift before the wind, and be dashed on the rocks and go to pieces.

Until the discovery of the magnet they did not sail on the ocean far from land; but after it was discovered, then they made use of the magnetic needle balanced on the point so as to turn freely. By means of this needle they could tell in which direction they were sailing. With the magnetic needle they began to make long voyages far from land, and afterward they discovered many new countries.

There is always on board ship a magnetic needle, called the compass, and they have a measuring-line with knots, at the stern of the ship. And the cord is so constructed that it uncoils and tells how fast the vessel is sailing.

Thus it is that, when they sail a ship, they always know where they are at any given time, and whether they are far from land, and in what direction they are going.

## Chapter II

### HUMIDITY

WHY does the spider sometimes make a closely spun web and sit in the very center of its nest, and why does it sometimes come out of its nest and spin a new web ?

The spider makes its web according as the weather is at the time, and as it is going to be. By examining its web one can predict what the weather will be; if the spider hides itself away deep down in its nest and does not come out, it means rain. If it emerges from its nest and spins new threads, it means that it will be fine.

How can the spider tell in advance what the weather will be ?

Its sensibilities are so delicate that as soon as the atmosphere begins to have greater humidity, even though this humidity is not perceptible to us, and to us the weather is still clear, the spider perceives that rain is coming. Just as a man feels the dampness when he is undressed, but does not feel it when he is dressed, so the rain is perceptible to the spider when for us it is only preparing to rain.

Why is it that in winter doors swell and refuse to shut, but in summer they dry up and shrink ?

Because in autumn and winter the wood absorbs moisture like a sponge, and swells; but in summer the water evaporates and the wood shrinks.

Why does a soft wood like poplar swell more than oak, for example ?

Because in the hard wood, in the oak, there are less empty spaces, and less room for the water to sink in; while in the soft wood, in the poplar, there are more empty spaces and more room for the water. In decaying wood there is still more room and therefore decayed wood swells more than any other kind and sinks sooner.

Beehives are made of the softest wood or of rotten wood; the best hives are made of rotten willow. Why ? Because the air penetrates the rotten stump, and bees like the air in this kind of a hive.

Why do boards warp ?

Because they dry unevenly. If you put a damp board into an oven, the water exudes from one side, and the board gets dry on that side and

makes the other side yield to it. It is impossible to shrink the damp side because there is water in it and the whole board bends.

In order to keep floors from warping, they cut out pieces of dry wood and plunge them into boiling water. When the water has been wholly boiled away the pieces are glued together and will not warp, and this kind of inlaid floor is called parquet.

### Chapter III

#### DIFFERENT DEGREES OF COHERENCE

WHY is it that the bolsters under a wagon are made of oak while the naves of the wheels are turned out of birch ?

It is necessary to have the bolsters and naves strong, but oak is not more expensive than birch. It is because oak splits lengthwise, while birch\* is not easily split, but is made of tough filaments.

Accordingly, though oak has a closer texture than birch, it is so constituted that it splits, while birch is not easily split.

Why are the rims of the wheels and the bounds bent from oak or elm, but never out of birch or linden ?

Because oak and elm, when soaked and softened, become elastic and do not break, while birch and linden splinter on all sides.

All this is due to the fact that the coherence of Particles in oak and birch wood differs in degree.

### Chapter IV

#### CRYSTALS

IF salt is stirred up in water the Particles of the salt are diffused through it and become invisible, but if more and more salt is added then at last the salt ceases to dissolve, and, however much you stir it, the salt remains like a white powder at the bottom. The water had dissolved the salt to the point of saturation and could take no more. But if the water be heated it will dissolve more; and the salt which refused to

melt in the cold water will dissolve away. But if still more salt be added, then not even boiling water will dissolve it. Now, if you still continue to boil the water, the water itself will evaporate in the form of steam, and the salt will be left.

So it is of everything which water dissolves : the water has a limit beyond which it cease\* to dissolve sub-stances. Everything is more readily dissolved by hot water than by cold water; but, nevertheless, when the hot water is saturated, it ceases to dissolve any more. The substance remains unchanged but the water may pass off as steam.

If powdered saltpeter is dissolved in water and then more saltpeter is added, and if the whole is heated and allowed to cool without being stirred, then the super-fluous saltpeter will not settle on the bottom in the form of a powder, but will form in clustering hexagonal prisms on the bottom and on the sides. If powdered saltpeter is dissolved in water and then put in a warm place, then the water will evaporate and the residuum of saltpeter will be precipitated in the form of hexagonal crystals.

If common salt is dissolved in water and the water is heated and allowed to evaporate, then the residuum of salt is precipitated also, not in the form of a powder, but in cubes. If saltpeter and salt are dissolved to-gether, the residuum of the two substances do not com-bine, but each is precipitated in its own form : the salt-peter in prisms, the salt in cubes.

If lime or any other salt or any other substance is dissolved in water and the water is evaporated, each substance is precipitated in its own peculiar way : one in triangular prisms, another in octagonal, another in brick-like forms, another in stars each in its own way. These figures are different in all solid substances. Sometimes they are large and are found like stones in the ground; sometimes they are so small that they are invisible to the naked eye; but still each substance has its own form.

If, when water is saturated with saltpeter and the figures begin to form, the edges of the figure are broken with a needle, then again in the same place there will be deposited new atoms of the saltpeter, and the

broken edge will be repaired just exactly in its own proper form in hexagonal prisms. It is the same with salt and with everything else. All the infinitesimal atoms move and take their places where they are needed.

When water becomes ice, the same phenomenon takes place. A snowflake comes flying down; no figure can be seen in it. But as soon as it lights on anything moist and cold, on a pane of glass, or on fur, its form may be discerned. You can see a little star or a little plate. On the window-panes the vapor does not freeze at haphazard, but as soon as it begins to freeze it instantly branches out into star shapes.

What is ice ? It is cold solid water. When water turns from a liquid to a solid it forms figures and liberates heat. The same thing takes place with salt-peter when it changes from a liquid to a solid form : heat is liberated. The same with salt, the same with cast-iron, when it cools down from its melted to its solid form.

When anything turns from a liquid to a solid, it liberates heat and begins to form crystals. But when it changes from a solid to a liquid then it absorbs heat; its coldness disappears and its crystals melt.

Take melted iron and let it cool; take hot dough and let it cool; take slaked lime and let it cool heat is produced. Take ice and melt it cold is produced. Take saltpeter, salt, or anything else which is soluble, and put it into water cold is produced. So that when you want to make ice-cream, you melt salt and water.

## Chapter V

### BAD AIR

ONE festive day, at the village of Nikolskoye, the people had gone to mass. On the estate 1 were left the cattle-woman, the village elder, 2 and the hostler.

The cattle-woman went to the well after water. The well was in the yard itself. She was drawing up the bucket, but failed to hold it. The

bucket slipped from her, struck against the side of the well, and broke the rope.

The cattle-woman returned to her cottage, and said to the elder :  
“ Aleksandr, come, little father, to the well; I have dropped the bucket”

Aleksandr replied :

“ You dropped it, and you must get it out.”

The cattle-woman replied that she was going to climb down into the well, only she wanted him to hold her.

The elder said :

“Very well, then; let us go; you have been fasting lately, so I can hold you; but if you had had dinner, it would be impossible.”

The elder fastened a stake to the rope, and the woman sat astride of it, clinging to the rope, and she began to descend into the well, and the elder unwound the rope by means of the windlass. The well was about fourteen feet 1 deep, and there was a third of a fathom of water in it.

The elder kept turning back the windlass slowly, and shouting to the woman :

“ Is that enough ? “

And the cattle-woman kept crying :

“Just a little more.”

Suddenly the elder felt the rope slacken; he shouted to the woman, but she gave no answer. The elder looked down into the well, and saw that the woman was lying with her head in the water and her feet in the air.

The elder began to shout and call the people, but there was no one to come. Only the hostler came running.

The elder bade him hold the windlass, and he himself pulled up the rope, got astride of the stake, and de-scended into the well.

As soon as the hostler let the elder down to the water's edge, the same thing happened. He let go of the rope, and fell head-first down on the cattle-woman.

The hostler began to cry for help; then he ran to the church for the people. Mass was over, and the people were returning from church. All

the peasant men and women hastened to the well. They all stood around the curb, and each offered advice, but no one knew what to do.

A young carpenter forced his way through the throng, up to the well, seized the rope, sat on the stake, and told them to let him down. But Ivan took the precaution to fasten the rope to his waist. Two men let him down, and all the rest looked into the well to see what would happen to Ivan.

As soon as he reached the level of the water, he let go of the rope with his hands, and would have fallen in head-first, but for the fact of the girdle holding him.

All cried :

“Pull him back!”

And they lifted Ivan to the top.

He hung on the rope like a dead weight. His head hung down and thumped against the edge of the well.

His face was bluish purple. They seized him, un-fastened the rope, and laid him on the ground. They thought that he was dead; but he suddenly drew a deep sigh, began to clear his throat, and came to.

Then still others proposed to go down; but an old peasant said that it was impossible to go down into the well, for there was bad air in it, and this bad air was death to men.

Then the men ran to get gaffs, and they attempted to hook up the elder and the woman. The elder's wife and mother were shrieking near the well; the others were trying to calm them.

Then the peasants brought the gaffs to the well, and began to grapple for the two victims. Twice they lifted the elder, by means of his clothes, halfway up the well, to the well-curb; but he was heavy, his clothes tore, and he fell back. At last they hooked him with two gaffs and brought him to the surface. Then they brought up the cattle-woman in the same way.

Both were stone dead, and could not be brought to life.

Then, when an investigation of the well was made, they found that the bottom of the well was full of bad air.

This sort of air is so heavy, that no man can live in it nor any living thing exist in it.

They let a cat down into the well, and as soon as it reached the place where the bad air was, it immediately died.

Not only can no living thing live in it, but a candle cannot burn in it.

They let down a candle, and as soon as it reached the same place, it was immediately extinguished.

There are places under the earth where this bad air accumulates; and if you should go into them, you would immediately perish. Hence in mines they have lamps, and before a man goes into such a place they let a lamp down first.

If the lamp goes out, then it is impossible for a man to enter. So they send down a supply of fresh air until the lamp will burn. Near the city of Naples there is such a grotto. In it the bad air always stands to a height of an arshin I above the ground, and above that the air is pure. A man can walk through this grotto and receive no harm; but as soon as a dog enters, he chokes to death.

Whence comes this bad air ?

It is made out of the same good air which we breathe. If many people are collected in one room, and all the doors and windows are shut so that no fresh air can get in, then the atmosphere becomes the same as in the well, and the people perish.

A hundred years ago the Hindus shut one hundred and forty-six Englishmen into a dungeon, and locked them up in an underground hole, where the air could not get to them.

The imprisoned Englishmen, after they had been there a few hours, began to choke, and at the end of the night one hundred and twenty-three of them were dead, and the rest were taken out barely alive, and ill.



At first the air had been pure in the dungeon; but when the prisoners had breathed up all the good air, and it was impossible to get any fresh supply, it became bad, like that in the well, and they died.

How is it that bad air is made out of good air, when many people are together ?

Because when people breathe, the good air is taken into the lungs, and breathed out as bad air.

## Chapter VI

### HOW AIR BALLOONS ARE MADE

IF you take an inflated bladder and immerse it in water and then let go of it, the bladder rises to the top and begins to float. In exactly the same way if you boil water in a kettle, you will see on the bottom, over the fire, how the water becomes volatile, becomes a gas; and when a little of this aqueous gas collects it immediately rises to the top in the form of bubbles. First, one bubble flies up, then another, and when the water is thoroughly heated, then the bubbles rise unceasingly; then the water boils.

Just exactly as the bubbles filled with steam fly up to the top because they are lighter than water so up through the atmosphere will rise a balloon inflated with hydrogen gas or with heated air, because heated air is lighter than cold air, and hydrogen is the lightest of all gases.

Air balloons are made of hydrogen or of heated air. This is the way they are made of hydrogen. A large bag is made and attached by ropes to stakes, and then it is filled with hydrogen gas. As soon as the ropes are cut, the balloon rises and floats until it escapes from the atmosphere that is heavier than hydrogen. But when it reaches a rarer part of the atmosphere, the balloon stops rising and then it floats along like a bubble on the top of the water.

Balloons are made of heated air in this manner: a large empty bag is made with a wide mouth below like a pitcher upside down, and in the mouth is placed a bunch of cotton which is soaked with ether and then

set on fire. The air in the balloon is heated by the fire and becomes lighter than the cold air outside, and the balloon rises like a bubble in water, and it floats up in the air until it reaches atmosphere so rare as to be lighter than the heated air.

Almost a century ago some Frenchmen the Mont-golfier brothers <sup>1</sup> invented the hot air balloon. They made a bag of cloth and paper and filled it with hot air; it floated. Then they made another still larger, attached a ram, a cock, and a duck to it and sent it up. The balloon ascended and returned successfully. Then they attached a small boat to it, and a man took his place in the boat. The balloon went up so high that it was lost to sight; it floated off and then came down without injury. Then they invented the method of inflating balloons with hydrogen, and they kept going higher and more rapidly.

In order to make a balloon ascension a basket is attached to the bag, and two, three, and even as many as eight men accommodate themselves in it, taking with them food and drink.

In order to regulate the movements of the balloon up and down at will, a valve is constructed in the balloon, and the aeronaut <sup>2</sup> can open it or shut it at his own pleasure. If the balloon rises too high, and the aeronaut wishes to descend, he opens the valve, the gas escapes, the balloon contracts, and begins to sink. Moreover, he always carries bags of sand. If a bag is thrown out, the balloon becomes lighter, and it rises. If the aero-naut wishes to come down, and sees that it is not a fit place for landing, on account of a river or a forest, then he empties out some sand, and the balloon becomes lighter and rises again.

## Chapter VII

### GALVANISM

ONCE there was a learned Italian named Galvani. He had an electrical machine and he was showing his pupils what electricity was. He rubbed glass vigorously with oiled silk, and then he approached to the glass a copper knob with a glass handle, and instantly a spark leaped from the glass to the copper knob. He told them that a similar spark would be

elicited by sealing-wax and am-ber. He showed how feathers and pieces of paper are sometimes attracted by electricity, sometimes repelled, and why this is. He performed many different experi-ments with electricity and showed them to his pupils.

Once it happened that his wife was taken ill. He summoned the doctor and asked him how to cure her. The doctor ordered him to have made for her a frog soup. Galvani sent out to get some edible frogs. They were caught, killed, and laid on the table.

The cook did not come to get the frogs, and Galvani went on to show his pupils his experiment with the electrical machine, and produced sparks.

Suddenly he noticed that the dead frogs lying on the table moved their legs. He began to study them and discovered that each time he elicited a spark from the electrical machine the frogs kicked.

Galvani procured some more frogs and began a series of experiments. Each time it proved that whenever he produced a spark the dead frogs acted as if they were alive. And so it occurred to Galvani that living frogs might move their legs from this cause, that electricity might pass through them.

But Galvani knew that electricity is in the atmos-phere; that while it is more noticeable in sealing-wax, amber, and glass, still it is in the air, and that thunder and lightning are produced by atmospheric electricity.

So he began to make experiments whether dead frogs would move their legs 'under the influence of atmospheric electricity. For this purpose he took some frogs, skinned them, cut off their heads and fore paws, and attached them by copper hooks to the roof, under an iron gutter. He thought that if a thunder-shower came up and the atmosphere was full of electricity, then the electricity would be brought to the frogs through the copper wire, and they would begin to kick.

But though several thunder-showers came up, the frogs did not move. Galvani proceeded to take them down, and while he was doing so, he touched the leg of one of the frogs to the gutter and the leg kicked !

Galvani then took the frogs and began to make the following experiment : he attached iron wire to the copper hook and then touched the frog's leg with the wire the leg kicked.

Here Galvani came to the conclusion that all animals are alive only because they have electricity in them, and that electricity leaps from the brain into the flesh and thus animals move.

No one had at that time gone very thoroughly into the study of this matter, and as nothing was known about it, every one put faith in Galvani's explanation.

But about this time another scientist, Volta, began to experiment for himself, and proved conclusively that Galvani was mistaken. He tried touching the frogs, not as Galvani had done with a copper hook and an iron wire, but first with a copper hook and a copper wire and then with an iron hook and an iron wire and the frogs did not stir. They moved only when Volta touched them with an iron wire attached to copper.

So Volta came to the conclusion that the electricity was not in the dead frog, but in the iron and copper. He continued to make his tests, and this was the result : As soon as he placed iron and copper together, electricity was produced, and the electricity caused the dead frogs to kick. Then Volta began to try how to make electricity in a different way from what had been done before. He tried putting together various metals like the iron and copper, and he reached the conclusion that only from the contact of such metals as silver, platinum, zinc, tin, iron, he could produce electric sparks.

After Volta, new methods were invented for getting a stronger current of electricity by putting the metals into various liquids, water, and acids. By the use of these liquids electricity acquired so much more energy that it was no longer necessary to rub, as had been done before; all that was required was to place in a single dish pieces of different metals and pour on them the liquid, and electricity would be created and sparks would be elicited.

As soon as this kind of electricity was discovered, methods were invented for putting it to use; they could cover objects with gold and

silver by means of electricity, and by means of electricity they could transmit signals from one distant place to another.

To do this, pieces of different metals are placed in glass jars, and liquids are poured over them. The electricity is produced in these jars, and this electricity is conveyed by means of a wire to any desired place, and from that place is led into the earth. The electricity in the earth runs back again to the jars and is conducted into them by means of another wire. Thus this electricity keeps going in a circuit, as in a ring by the wire to the earth and back by the earth and again by the wire and again by the earth. Electricity can go in either direction, according as you may wish : it may go first by the wire and return by the earth, or go first by the earth and return by the wire.

Over the wire, in the place where the signals are given, is placed a magnetic needle, and this needle points in one direction if the electric current comes by the wire and returns by the earth, and in the other if the electric current comes by the earth and returns by the wire. By this needle signals are given, and by means of these signals telegraphic messages are sent from one place to another.

## Chapter VIII

### SOLAR HEAT

ON a clear, frosty day in winter, if you happen to be in a field or in the forest, and look around you and listen, you see the snow everywhere, the rivers are frozen across, the dry grass sticks out from the snow, the trees stand bare; there is not a sound.

Then look in the summer : the rivers are running and murmuring; in every little pond the frogs are calling and croaking; the birds are flying about and singing and whistling; flies and gnats are humming and buzzing; the trees and the grass are growing and waving. Freeze a kettle of water, it grows as hard as stone. Place the frozen kettle on the fire; the ice begins to crack, to melt, to move. The water begins to tremble and to send up bubbles; then when it begins to boil, it tosses and is

agitated. The same phenomenon happens all over the world by the action of heat. When there is no heat, everything is dead. When there is heat, everything lives and moves. Little heat little motion; more heat more motion; much heat much motion; great heat great motion.

Whence comes the heat to the world ?

It comes from the sun.

In winter the sun runs low, its rays do not warm the earth, and nothing stirs. The little sun begins to go higher above our heads; it begins to send its light down directly on the earth everything grows warm, and life and motion increase.

The snow begins to melt, the ice on the rivers begins to break up, the brooks come leaping down from the hills, the vapor from the waters rises into the sky and becomes clouds, and the showers fall.

What does all this ?

The sun.

Seeds are sown, the germs sprout, the roots catch hold of the soil, from the old roots new runners strike out; the trees and grasses begin to grow.

What does all this ?

The sun.

The moles and bears come out of their lairs, flies and bees grow lively, gnats abound, fishes come out from their eggs into the warmth.

What does all that ?

The sun.

In one place the air grows warm, begins to rise, and into its place flows a colder air there is a wind.

What does that ?

The sun.

The clouds come up, they roll up and they separate, then there is lightning.

What makes those flashes ?

The sun.

Herbs, grain, fruits, trees grow. Animals feed on them, human beings make their sustenance of them, and store them up for fodder and fuel against the winter; men build houses, railways, and cities.

What furnishes the material ?

The sun.

A man builds himself a house. What does he make it out of? Of lumber.

The lumber is sawed out of trees, the sun made the trees grow.

You heat a stove with fuel.

What produced the fuel ?

The sun.

A man eats bread and potatoes.

What produced them ?

The sun.

A man eats meat. What fed the animals, the birds ? Grass, but the sun produced the grass. A man builds a stone house with brick and mortar. The brick and mortar were burnt with fuel. The sun produced the fuel.

Everything needed by man, everything that comes directly into use, is due to the sun, and much of the sun's heat goes into everything. Grain is necessary to all men because the sun makes it grow and there is much solar heat stored away in it. Grain warms who-ever eats it.

Fuel and lumber are useful because there is much heat in them.

Whoever buys fuel for winter's use, buys solar heat. And in winter you can burn your fuel when-ever you please and liberate the solar heat into your room.

And when there is heat there is also motion. What-ever motion there is, it all comes from heat either di-rectly from the sun's heat or from heat stored away by the sun in coal, in firewood, in grain, and in grass. Horses and cattle draw loads, men work; what moves them ? Heat. But whence comes the heat ? From food. But the food was produced by the sun.

Water-mills and windmills are set in motion and grind. What moves them ? Wind and water. But what drives the wind ? Heat. And what drives the water? Heat, to be sure. It raises the water in the form of vapor into the sky, and if it were not for heat the water would not fall.

A machine does work. Steam moves it. What makes the steam ? Fuel; and in the fuel is the sun's heat.

Out of heat comes motion, and out of motion comes heat. And both the heat and the motion are due to the sun.

## Stories From The New Speller

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1888

### I. THE WOLF AND THE KIDS

A GOAT was going to the field after provender, and she shut up her Kids in the barn, with injunctions not to let any one in. Said she :  
“ But when you hear my voice then open the door.” A Wolf overheard, crept up to the barn, and sang after the manner of the Goat :  
“ Little children, open the door; your mother has come with some food for you.”  
The Kids peered out of the window, and said :  
“ The voice is our mamma's, but the legs are those of a wolf. We cannot let you in.”

### II. THE FARMER'S WIFE AND THE CAT

A FARMER'S wife was annoyed by mice eating up the tallow in her cellar. She shut the cat into the cellar, so that the cat might catch the mice.  
But the cat ate up, not only the tallow, but the milk and the meat also.



### III. THE CROW AND THE EAGLE

sheep went out to pasture.

Suddenly an Eagle appeared, swooped down from the sky, caught a little lamb with its claws, and bore him away.

A Crow saw it, and felt also an inclination to dine on meat. She said :  
“ That was not a very bright performance. Now I am going to do it, but in better style. The Eagle was stupid; he carried off a little lamb, but I am going to take that fat ram yonder.”

The Crow buried her claws deep in the ram’s fleece, and tried to fly off with him; but all in vain. And she was not able to extricate her claws from the wool.

The shepherd came along, freed the ram from the Crow’s claws, and killed the Crow, and flung it away.

### IV. THE MOUSE AND THE FROG

A MOUSE went to visit a Frog. The Frog met the Mouse on the bank, and urged him to visit his chamber under the water.

The Mouse climbed down to the water’s edge, took a taste of it, and then climbed back again.

“Never,” said he, “will I make visits to people of alien race.”

### V. THE VAINGLORIOUS COCKEREL

Two Cockerels fought on a dungheap.

One Cockerel was the stronger : he vanquished the other and drove him from the dungheap.

All the Hens gathered around the Cockerel, and began to laud him. The Cockerel wanted his strength and glory to be known in the next yard. He flew on top of the barn, flapped his wings, and crowed in a loud voice :

“ Look at me, all of you. I am a victorious Cockerel. No other Cockerel in the world has such strength as I.”

The Cockerel had not finished his paeon, when an Eagle killed him, seized him in his claws, and carried him to his nest.

## VI. THE ASS AND THE LION

ONCE upon a time a Lion went out to hunt, and he took with him an Ass. And he said to him :

“ Ass, now you go into the woods, and roar as loud as you can; you have a capacious throat. The prey that run away from your roaring will fall into my clutches.”

And so he did. The Ass brayed, and the timid creatures of the wood fled in all directions, and the Lion caught them.

After the hunting was over, the Lion said to the Ass :

“ Now I will praise you. You roared splendidly.”

And since that time the Ass is always braying, and always expects to be praised.

## VII. THE FOOL AND HIS KNIFE

A FOOL had an excellent knife.

With this knife the fool tried to cut a nail. The knife would not cut the nail.

Then the fool said :

“ My knife is mean,” and he tried to cut some soft kisel jelly with his knife. Wherever the knife went through the jelly the liquid closed together again.

The fool said, “ Miserable knife ! it won't cut kisel, either,” and he threw away his good knife.

## VIII. THE BOY DRIVER

A PEASANT was returning from market with his son Vanka. 1 The peasant went to sleep in his cart, and Vanka held the reins and cracked the whip. They happened to meet another team. Vanka shouted :

“ Turn out to the right ! I shall run over you ! “ .

And the peasant with the team said :

“ It is not a big cricket, but it chirps so as to be heard ! “

## IX. LIFE DULL WITHOUT SONG

IN the upper Part of a house lived a rich barin, and on the floor below lived a poor tailor. The tailor was always singing songs at his work, and prevented the barin from sleeping.

The barin gave the tailor a purse full of money not to sing. The tailor became rich, and took good care of his money, and refrained from singing.

But it grew tiresome to him; he took the money and returned it to the barin, saying :

“ Take back your money and let me sing my songs again, or I shall die of melancholy.”

## X. THE SQUIRREL AND THE WOLF

A SQUIRREL was leaping from limb to limb, and fell directly upon a sleeping Wolf. The Wolf jumped up, and was going to devour him. But the Squirrel begged the Wolf to let him go. .

The Wolf said :-^

“ All right; I will let you go on condition that you tell me why it is that you squirrels are always so happy. I am always melancholy; but I see you playing and leaping all the time in the trees.”

The Squirrel said :

“ Let me go first, and then I will tell you; but now I am afraid of you.”

The Wolf let him go, and the Squirrel leaped up into a tree, and from there it said :

“ You are melancholy because you are bad. Wicked-ness consumes your heart. But we are happy because we are good, and do no one any harm.”

## XI. UNCLE MITYA’S HORSE

UNCLE MITYA had a very fine bay horse.

Some thieves heard about the bay horse, and laid their plans to steal it. They came after it was dark, and crept into the yard.

Now it happened that a peasant who had a bear with him came to spend the night at Uncle Mitya’s. Uncle Mitya took the peasant into the

cottage, let out the bay horse into the yard, and put the bear into the inclosure where the bay horse was.

The thieves came in the dark into the inclosure, and began to grope around. The bear got on his hind legs, and seized one of the thieves, who was so frightened that he bawled with all his might.

Uncle Mitya came out and caught the thieves.

## XII. THE BOOK

Two men together found a book in the street, and began to dispute as to the ownership of it.

A third happened along, and asked :

“ Which of you can read ? ”

“ Neither of us.”

“ Then why do you want the book ? Your quarrel reminds me of two bald men who fought for possession of a comb, when neither had any hair on his head.”

## XIII. THE WOLF AND THE FOX

A WOLF was running from the dogs, and wanted to hide in a cleft. But a Fox was lying in the cleft; she showed her teeth at the Wolf, and said :

“ You cannot come in here; this is my place.”

The Wolf did not stop to dispute the matter, but merely said :

“If the dogs were not so near, I would teach you whose place it is; but now the right is on your side.”

## XIV. THE PEASANT AND HIS HORSE

SOME soldiers made a foray into hostile territory. A peasant ran out into the field where his horse was, and tried to catch it. But the horse would not come to the peasant.

And the peasant said to him :-

“ Stupid, if you don't let me catch you, the enemy will carry you off.”

The Horse asked :

“ What would the enemy do with me ? ”

The peasant replied :

“ Of course they would make you carry burdens.”

And the Horse rejoined :

“ Well, don't I carry burdens for you ? So then it is all the same to me whether I work for you or your enemies.”

## XV. THE EAGLE AND THE SOW

AN Eagle built a nest on a tree, and hatched out some eaglets. And a wild Sow brought her litter under the tree.

The Eagle used to fly off after her prey, and bring it back to her young. And the Sow rooted around the tree and hunted in the woods, and when night came she would bring her young something to eat.

And the Eagle and the Sow lived in neighborly fashion.

And a Grimalkin laid his plans to destroy the eaglets and the little sucking pigs. He went to the Eagle, and said :

“ Eagle, you had better not fly very far away. Be-ware of the Sow; she is planning an evil design. She is going to undermine the roots of the tree. You see she is rooting all the time.”

Then the Grimalkin went to the Sow and said :

“ Sow, you have not a good neighbor. Last evening I heard the Eagle saying to her eaglets : ‘ My dear little eaglets, I am going to treat you to a nice little pig. Just as soon as the Sow is gone, I will bring you a little young sucking pig.’ ‘

From that time the Eagle ceased to fly out after prey, and the Sow did not go any more into the forest. The eaglets and the young pigs perished of starvation, and Grimalkin feasted on them.

## XVI. THE LOAD

AFTER the French had left Moscow, two peasants went out to search for treasures. One was wise, the other stupid.

They went together to the burnt Part of the city, and found some scorched wool. . They said, “ That will be useful at home.”

They gathered up as much as they could carry, and started home with it.

On the way they saw lying in the street a lot of cloth. The wise peasant threw down the wool, seized as much of the cloth as he could carry, and put it on his shoulders. The stupid one said :

“ Why throw away the wool ? It is nicely tied up, and nicely fastened on.” And so he did not take any of the cloth.

They went farther, and saw lying in the street some ready-made clothes that had been thrown away. The wise peasant unloaded the cloth, picked up the clothes, and put them on his shoulders. The stupid one said :

“ Why should I throw away the wool ? It is nicely tied up and securely fastened on my back.”

They went on their way, and saw silver plate scattered about. The wise peasant threw down the clothes, and gathered up as much of the silver as he could, and started off with it; but the stupid one did not give up his wool, because it was nicely tied up and securely tied on.

Going still farther, they saw gold lying on the road. The wise peasant threw down his silver and picked up the gold; but the stupid one said :  
“ What is the good of taking off the wool ? It is nicely tied up and securely fastened to my back.”

And they went home. On the way a rain set in, and the wool became water-soaked, so that the stupid man had to throw it away, and thus reached home empty-handed; but the wise peasant kept his gold and became rich.

## XVII. THE BIG OVEN

ONCE upon a time a man had a big house, and in the house there was a big oven; but this man's family was small only himself and his wife. When winter came, the man tried to keep his oven going; and in one month he burnt up all his firewood. He had nothing to feed the fire, and it was cold.

Then the man began to break up his fences, and use the boards for fuel. When he had burnt up all of his fences, the house, now without any protection against the wind, was colder than ever, and still they had no firewood.

Then the man began to tear down the ceiling of his house, and burn that in the oven.

A neighbor noticed that he was tearing down his ceiling, and said to him :

“ Why, neighbor, have you lost your mind ? pulling down your ceiling in winter. You and your wife will freeze to death!”

But the man said :

“ No, brother; you see I am pulling down my ceiling so as to have something to heat my oven with. We have such a curious one; the more I heat it up, the colder we are ! “

The neighbor laughed, and said :

“Well, then, after you have burnt up your ceiling, then you will be tearing down your house. You won't have anywhere to live; only the oven will be left, and even that will be cold ! “

“Well, that is my misfortune,” said the man. “All my neighbors have firewood enough for all winter; but I have already burnt up my fences and the ceiling of my house, and have nothing left.”

The neighbor replied :

“ All you need is to have your oven rebuilt”

But the man said :

“ I know well that you are jealous of my house and my oven because they are larger than yours, and so you advise me to rebuild it.”

And he turned a deaf ear to his neighbor's advice, and burnt up his ceiling, and burnt up his whole house, and had to go and live with strangers.

Stories Of My Dogs

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1888

Chapter I BULKA

I HAD a bulldog, and his name was Bulka. He was perfectly black, except for the paws of his fore legs, which were white. All bulldogs have the lower jaw longer than the upper, and the upper teeth set into the lower; but in the case of Bulka the lower jaw was pushed so far forward that the finger could be inserted between the upper and lower teeth.

Bulka had a broad face and big, black, brilliant eyes. And his teeth and white tusks were always uncovered. He was like a negro.

Bulka had a gentle disposition and he would not bite; but he was very powerful and tenacious. Whenever he took hold of anything, he set his teeth together and hung on like a rag, and it was impossible to make him let go; he was like a pair of pincers.

One time he was set on a bear, and he seized the bear by the ear, and hung on like a bloodsucker. The bear pounded him with his paws, hugged him, shook him from side to side, but he could not get rid of him; then he stood on his head in his attempts to crush him, but Bulka hung on until they could dash cold water over him.

I took him when he was a puppy, and reared him myself. When I went to the Caucasus, I did not care to take him with me, and I went away noiselessly, and gave orders to keep him chained up.

At the first post-station I was just going to start off with a fresh team, when suddenly I saw something black and bright dashing along the road.

It was Bulka in his brass collar. He flew with all his might toward the station. He leaped up on me, licked my hand, and then stretched himself out in the shadow of the telyega. His tongue lolled out at full length. He kept drawing it back, swallowing the spittle, and then thrusting it out again. He was all panting; he could not get his breath; his sides actually labored. He twisted from side to side, and pounded the ground with his tail.

I learned afterward that, when he found I had gone, he broke his chain, and jumped out of the window, and dashed over the road after my trail, and had thus run twenty versts in the heat of the day.



## Chapter II BULKA AND THE WILD BOAR

ONE time in the Caucasus we went boar hunting, and Bulka ran to go with me. As soon as the boar-hounds got to work, Bulka dashed off in the direction of their music and disappeared in the woods.

This was in the month of November; at that time the wild boars and pigs are usually very fat. In the forests of the Caucasus, frequented by wild boars, grow all man-ner of fruits, wild grapes, cones, apples, pears, black-berries, acorns, and rose-apples. And when all these fruits get ripe, and the frost loosens them, the wild swine feed on them and fatten.

At this time of the year the wild boar becomes so fat that he cannot run far when pursued by the dogs. When they have chased him for two hours, he strikes into a thicket and comes to bay there.

Then the hunters run to the place where he is at bay and shoot him. By the barking of the dogs one can tell whether the boar has taken to cover or is still running. If he is running, then the dogs bark with a yelp, as if some one were beating them; but if he has taken to cover, then they bay with a long howl, as if at a man.

In this expedition I had been running a long time through the forest, but without once coming across the track of a boar. At last I heard the protracted howl and whine of the hounds, and I turned my steps in that direction.

I was already near the boar. I could hear a crashing in the thicket. This was made by the boar, pursued by the dogs. But I could tell by their barking that they had not yet brought him to bay, but were only chasing around him.

Suddenly I heard something rushing behind me, and looking around, I saw Bulka. He had evidently lost track of the boar-hounds in the forest, and had become confused; but now he had heard their baying, and also, like myself, was in full tilt in their direction.

He was running across a clearing through the tall grass, and all I could see of him was his black head, and his tongue lolling out between his white teeth.

I called him, but he did not look around; he dashed by me, and was lost to sight in the thicket. I hurried after him, but the farther I went, the denser became the underbrush. The branches knocked off my hat and whipped my face; the thorns of the briars clutched my coat. By this time I was very near the barking dogs, but I could not see anything.

Suddenly I heard the dogs barking louder; there was a tremendous crash, and the boar, which was trying to break his way through, began to squeal. And this made me think that now Bulka had reached the scene and was attacking him.

I put forth all my strength, and made my way through the underbrush to the spot.

Here, in the very thickest of the woods, I caught a glimpse of a spotted boar-hound. He was barking and howling without stirring from one spot. Three paces from him I saw something black struggling.

When I came nearer I perceived that it was the boar, and I heard Bulka whining piteously. The boar was grunting and charging the hound, which, with his tail between his legs, was backing away from him. I had a fair shot at the side and the head of the boar. I aimed at his side and fired; I could see that my shot took effect. The boar uttered a squeal, and turning from me dashed into the thicket. The dogs ran bark-ing and yelping on his trail. I broke my way through the thicket after them.

Suddenly I heard and saw something under my very feet. It was Bulka. He was lying on his side and whining. Under him was a pool of blood. I said to myself, " My dog is ruined; " but now I had something else to attend to, and I rushed on.

Soon I saw the boar. The dogs were attacking him from behind, and he was snapping first to one side, then to the other. When the boar saw me, he made a dash at me. I fired for the second time, with the gun

almost touching him, so that his bristles were singed. The boar gave one last grunt, stumbled, and fell with all his weight on the ground. When I reached him, he was already dead; only here and there his body twitched, or purred up a little.

But the dogs, with bristling hair, were tearing at his belly and his legs, and others were licking the blood from where he was wounded. That reminded me of Bulka, and I hastened back to find him. He crawled to meet me, and groaned. I went to him, knelt down, and examined his wound. His belly was torn open, and a whole mass of his bowels protruded and lay upon the dry leaves.

When my comrades joined me, we replaced Bulka's intestines, and sewed up his belly. While we were sew-ing up his belly and puncturing the skin, he kept lick-ing my hand.

They fastened the boar to a horse's tail, so as to bring it from the woods, and we put Bulka on a horse's back, and thus we brought him home. Bulka was an invalid for six weeks, but he got well at last.

### Chapter III PHEASANTS

IN the Caucasus woodcock are called fazamii, or pheasants. They are so abundant that they are cheaper than domestic fowl. Pheasants are hunted with the kobuilka} with the podsada, or by means of the dog.

This is the method of hunting with the kobuilka : You take canvas and stretch it over a frame; in the middle of the frame you put a joist, and make a hole in the canvas. This canvas-covered frame is called a kobuilka. With this kobuilka and a gun you go out into the forest just after sunrise. You carry the kobuilka in front of you, and through the hole you keep a lookout for pheasants. The pheasants in the early morning go out in search of food. Sometimes you come across a whole family; sometimes the hen with the chicks; sometimes the cock with his hen; sometimes several cocks together.

The pheasants see no man, and they are not afraid of the canvas, and they let any one approach very near. Then the hunter sets down his

kobuilka, puts the muzzle of his musket out through the hole, and shoots at his leisure.

The following is the method of hunting with the podsada: You let loose in the woods a little common house-dog, and follow after him. When the dog starts up a pheasant, he chases it. The pheasant flies into a tree, and then the whelp begins to yelp. The hunts-man goes in the direction of the barking, and shoots the pheasant in the tree.

This mode of hunting would be easy if the pheasant would fly into an isolated tree, or would sit on an exposed branch so as to be in full sight. But the pheasants always choose a tree in the densest Part of the thicket, and when they see the huntsman they hide behind the branches.

It is not only hard to make your way through the thicket to the tree where the pheasant is perched, but it is hard, also, to get sight of him. When it is only a dog barking under the tree, the pheasant is not afraid; he sits on the limb, and cocks 1 his head at him, and flaps his wings. But the instant he sees a man, he stretches himself out along the limb, so that only an experienced sportsman would be likely to perceive him, while an inexperienced man would stand underneath and see nothing.

When the Cossacks steal out against pheasants, they always hide their faces behind their caps, and don't look up, because the pheasant is afraid of a man with a musket, but is most of all afraid of his eyes.

Pheasants are hunted by means of the dog 2 in this manner: They take a setter and follow him into the woods. The setter catches the scent where early in the morning the pheasants have been out feeding, and he begins to follow the trail. No matter how many times the pheasants have crossed their tracks, a good setter will always pick out the last one, leading from the place where they had been feeding.

The farther the dog gets on the track, the stronger the scent becomes, and thus he reaches the very place where the pheasant has stopped for the day to rest or walk in the grass. When he comes near, his scent tells

him that the pheasant is directly in front of him, and he now begins to go more cautiously, so as not to scare the bird, and then he stops to make the leap and seize it. When the dog is very near to the bird, then the pheasant flies up, and the sportsman shoots him.

#### Chapter IV MILTON AND BULKA

I GOT a setter for pheasants. This dog's name was Milton. He was tall, thin, gray, with spots, and with long lips and ears, and very strong and intelligent.

He and Bulka never quarreled. Never did dog dare to pick a quarrel with Bulka. All he had to do was once to show his teeth, and other dogs would put their tails between their legs and flee.

One time I was going with Milton out after pheasants. Suddenly Bulka came bounding along to overtake me, after I had reached the woods. I tried to drive him back, but in vain. And it was a long way to go home for the sake of getting rid of him.

I came to the conclusion that he would not interfere, and went on my way; but as soon as Milton scented a pheasant in the grass and started on the trail, Bulka would dash ahead and begin to hunt about on all sides.

He was anxious to get the pheasant before Milton. If he heard anything in the grass, he would leap and jump about; but his scent was not keen, and he could not keep to the trail, and so he would watch Milton, and follow wherever Milton went. As soon as Milton found a trail, Bulka would dash ahead.

I tried to call Bulka back, I whipped him; but I could do nothing with him.

As soon as Milton found a trail, he would dash ahead and spoil all.

I began to think seriously of going home, because I felt that my hunting was spoiled; but Milton knew better than I did how to throw Bulka off the track. This was the way he did it : As soon as Bulka ran ahead of him, Milton would quit the scent, turn to one side, and pretend that he

was hunting for it. Bulka would then run back where Milton was pointing, and Milton, glancing at me, would wag his tail, and again set out on the right track.

Then once more Bulka would dash ahead of Milton, and once more the setter Milton would purposely run ten feet aside from the right trail for the purpose of de-ceiving Bulka, and then lead me straight on again, so that throughout the whole hunt he kept deceiving Bulka, and did not let him spoil my sport.

## Chapter V THE TURTLE

ONE time I went out hunting with Milton. Just as we reached the forest he began to get a scent. He stretched out his tail, pricked up his ears, and began to sniff.

I got my musket ready and started after him. I sup-posed that he was on the track of a Partridge, or a pheas-ant, or a hare. But Milton did not turn off into the woods, but into a field. I followed him and looked ahead.

Suddenly I caught sight of what he was after. In front of him a little turtle was making its way it was of the size of a hat. Its bald, dark gray head and long neck were thrust out like a pistil. The turtle was mov-ing along by the aid of its bare feet, and its back was wholly covered by its shell.

As soon as it saw the dog, it drew in its legs and head and flattened itself down into the grass, so that only its shell was visible.

Milton grabbed it and tried to bite it; but he could not set his teeth through it, because the turtle has over its belly the same sort of crust as over its back, with mere openings in front, on the side, and at the back for putting out its head, legs, and tail.

I rescued the turtle from Milton, and examined how its back was marked, and how its shell was constructed, and how it managed to hide itself away. When you hold one in your hands and look under the shell, then, only, can you see something within, black and living.

I laid the turtle down on the grass and went on, but Milton was loath to leave it; he seized it in his teeth and followed me. .

Suddenly Milton whined and dropped it. The turtle in his mouth had extended a claw and scratched his lips. He was so indignant against it on account of this that he began to bark, and again picked it up and trotted after me.

I told him to drop it again, but Milton would not heed me. Then I took the turtle from him and threw it away.

But he would not give it up. He began in all haste to scratch up a hole with his paws, and then with his paws he pushed the turtle into the hole and covered it up with earth.

Turtles live both on land and in the water, like adders and frogs. They produce their young from eggs, and they lay the eggs in the ground; they do not sit on them, however, but the eggs themselves hatch out like fishes' spawn and become turtles.

Turtles are often small not larger than a saucer; and then, again, they are big, reaching a length of seven feet and a weight of seven hundred and twenty pounds. The great turtles inhabit the sea.

One single female turtle in the spring will lay hundreds of eggs. The shell of the turtle is its ribs. In men and other animals the ribs are each separate, but in the case of the turtle the ribs form the shell. It is also a peculiarity that in all animals the ribs are underneath the flesh, but in the case of the turtle, the ribs are outside, and the flesh is underneath them.

## Chapter VI BULKA AND THE WOLF

AT the time when I was about to leave the Caucasus, war was still in progress, and it was hazardous traveling by night without an escort. I was anxious to start as early as possible in the morning, and therefore I did not go to bed at all.

A friend of mine came to keep me company, and we spent the whole evening and night sitting in front of my khata, or hut, on the street of the stanitsa, or Cossack outpost.

It was a misty, moonlight night, and so light that one could see to read, though the moon itself was invisible.

At midnight we suddenly heard a little pig squealing in a yard on the other side of the street. One of us cried :

“There ‘s a wolf throttlng a young pig.”

I ran into my khata, seized my loaded musket, and hastened out into the street. All were standing at the gates of the yard where the young pig was squealing, and they shouted to me, “ Here ! here ! “

Milton came leaping after me, evidently thinking that as I had my gun I was going hunting; and Bulka pricked up his short ears and bounded from side to side, as if inquiring what it was that he should grip.

As I was running toward the wattled hedge, I saw a wild animal coming directly for me from the other side of the yard.

It was the wolf.

He was running toward the hedge, and gave a leap at it. I retreated before him and got my musket ready.

As soon as the wolf leaped down from the hedge on my side, I leveled the gun at him, almost touching him, and pulled the trigger; but the gun only gave a “chik” and missed fire.

The wolf did not stop, but darted down the street. Milton and Bulka set out in pursuit. Milton was near the wolf, but evidently did not dare to seize him; while Bulka, though he put forth all the strength of his short legs, could not catch up with him.

We ran as fast as we could after the wolf, but wolf and dogs were now out of sight.

But we soon heard near the ditch at the corner of the stanitsa a barking and whining, and we could make out through the moonlit mist that something was kicking up a dust, and that the dogs had tackled the wolf.



When we reached the ditch, the wolf was gone, and both the dogs returned to us with tails erect and excited faces. Bulka growled and rubbed his head against me; he evidently wanted to tell me about it, but was not able.

We examined the dogs and discovered that there was a small bite on Bulka's head. He had probably overtaken the wolf in front of the ditch, but had not dared to tackle him, and the wolf had snapped at him and made off. The wound was small, so that we had no apprehension in regard to it.

We returned to the khata, sat down, and talked over what had happened. I was vexed enough that my musket had missed fire, and I could not help thinking that, if it had gone off, the wolf would have fallen on the spot. My friend was surprised that a wolf had ventured to make its way into the yard.

An old Cossack declared that there was nothing wonderful about it; that it was not a wolf, but a witch, and that she had cast a spell over my gun !  
Thus we sat and talked.

Suddenly the dogs sprang up, and we saw in the middle of the street, right in front of us, the very same wolf; but this time he made off so swiftly at the sound of our voices that the dogs could not overtake him.

The old Cossack after this was entirely convinced that it was no wolf, but a witch; but it occurred to me whether it was not a mad wolf, because I had never heard or known of a wolf returning among men after once he had been chased.

At all events, I scattered gunpowder over Bulka's wound and set it on fire. The powder blazed up and cauterized the sore place. I cauterized the wound with powder so as to consume the mad virus, in case it had not yet had time to reach the blood.

In case of the spittle being poisonous and reaching the blood, I knew that it would spread all over his body, and then there would be no means of curing him.

## Chapter VII WHAT HAPPENED TO BULKA AT PYETIGORSK

FROM the stanitsa, I did not return directly to Russia, but stopped at Pyetigorsk, and there I spent two months. I gave Milton to the old Cossack hunter, but Bulka I took with me to Pyetigorsk.

Pyetigorsk, or Five Mountain, is so called because it is built on Mount Besh-Tau. Besh in the Tartar language means five; and Tau, mountain. From this mountain flows a sulphur hot spring. The water boils like a kettle, and over the spot where the waters spring from the mountain steam always rises, just as it does from a samovar.

The whole region where the city is built is very charm-ing. The hot springs flow down from the mountains; at their feet flows the little river Podkumok. The hill-sides are clothed with forests; in all directions are fields, and on the horizon rise the mighty mountains of the Caucasus. The snow on these mountains never melts, and they are always as white as sugar.

One mighty mountain is Elbrus, like a white sugar-loaf; and it can be seen from every point when the weather is clear.

People come to these hot springs for medical treatment, and over the springs summer-houses and canopies are built, and gardens and paths are laid out all around. In the morning the band plays, and the people drink the water, or take the baths, and promenade.

The city itself stands on the mountain, and below the city is the suburb. I lodged in a little house in this suburb. The house stood in a yard, and there was a little garden in front of the windows, and in the garden were arranged my landlord's bees, not in hollow tree-trunks as in Russia, but in round basket-hives. The bees there were so peaceable that always in the forenoon Bulka and I used to sit out in the garden, among the hives. Bulka used to run among the hives, and wonder at the

bees, and smell, and listen to their buzzing; but he moved among them so carefully that the bees did not interfere with him and did not touch him.

One morning I came home from the waters and sat drinking my coffee in the latticed garden. Bulka began to scratch himself behind the ears and to rattle his collar. This noise disturbed the bees, and I removed the collar from Bulka's neck.

After a little while I heard in the direction of the city on the mountain a strange and terrible uproar. Dogs were barking, yelping, and howling, men were yelling, and this tumult came down from the mountain and seemed to come nearer and nearer to our suburb.

Bulka had ceased scratching himself, and had laid his broad head between his white fore paws, and with his white teeth exposed and his tongue lolling out, as his habit was, was lying peaceably beside me. When he heard the uproar, he seemed to understand what it was all about; he pricked up his ears, showed his teeth, jumped up, and began to growl.

The tumult came nearer. It seemed as if all the dogs from the whole city were yelping, whining, and barking. I went out to the gate to look, and my landlady joined me there.

I asked :

“What is that?”

She replied :

“ Prisoners from the jail coming to kill dogs. Many dogs are running loose, and the city authorities have ordered all dogs in the city to be killed.”

“What ! would they kill Bulka if they saw him ? “

“ No; they are ordered to kill only those without collars.”

Just as I was speaking, the prisoners were already on their way toward our yard.

In front marched soldiers, followed by four convicts in chains. Two of the convicts had long iron hooks in their hands, and the other two had

clubs. When they came in front of our gate, one of the prisoners with a hook caught a cur of low degree, dragged him into the middle of the street, and the other prisoner began to maul him with his club. The whelp yelped horribly, and the convicts shouted something and roared with laughter. The convict with the hook turned the little dog over, and when he saw that he was dead, he pulled back his crook and began to look about for other victims.

At this moment Bulka leaped headlong at the convict, just as he had at the bear. I remembered that he was without a collar, and I cried, "Back, Bulka," and I shouted to the convicts not to kill my dog.

But the convict saw Bulka, guffawed, and skilfully speared at him with his hook, and caught him under the thigh.

Bulka tried to break away, but the convict pulled him toward him, and shouted to the other, "Kill him ! "

The other was already swinging his club, and Bulka would have been surely killed, but he struggled, the skin on his haunch gave way, and, putting his tail between his legs, and with a frightful wound in his thigh, he dashed at full speed through the gate, into the house, and hid under my bed.

What saved him was the fact that the skin on the place where the hook seized him tore out entirely.

## Chapter VIII THE END OF BULKA AND MILTON

BULKA and Milton met their death about the same time. The old Cossack did not understand how to treat Milton. Instead of taking him with him only when he went after birds, he tried to make a boar-hunter of him.

That same autumn a sekatch I boar gored him. No one knew how to sew up the wound, and Milton died.

Bulka also did not live long after his rescue from the convicts. Soon after his rescue from the convicts, he began to mope and to lick

everything that came in his way. He would lick my hand, but not as in former days when he meant to caress me. He licked long, and energetically thrust out his tongue, and then he began to seize things with his teeth.

Evidently he felt the impulse to bite the hand, but tried to refrain. I did not like to let him have my hand.

Then he began to lick my boot and the table leg, and then to bite the boot or the table leg.

This lasted two days, and on the third day he disappeared, and no one ever saw him or heard of him again.

It was impossible for him to have been stolen, and he could not have run away from me.

Now this happened to be about six weeks after the wolf had bitten him. It must have been that the wolf was quite rabid. Bulka also became rabid and went off. He was afflicted with what hunters call stetchka the first stage of madness. It is said that madness is first shown by spasms in the throat. Rabid animals desire to drink, but are unable, because water makes the spasms more violent. Then they get beside themselves with pain and thirst, and begin to bite.

Probably these spasms were just beginning with Bulka, when he showed such a disposition to lick everything, and then to bite my boot and the table leg.

I traveled over the whole region and made inquiries about Bulka, but I could learn nothing about where he had gone or how he died.

If he had run mad and bitten any one as mad dogs usually do, I should have heard from him. But probably he went out somewhere into the thick woods, and died there alone.

Huntsmen declare that when an intelligent dog is attacked by madness, he runs off into the field or woods, and there finds the herb which he needs, rolls over in the dew, and cures himself.

Evidently Bulka did not get well. He never returned, and he disappeared forever.

## Tales From Zoology

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1888

### Chapter I

#### OWL AND THE HARE

IT was growing dark. The owls began to fly in the forest, over the ravine, in search of their prey.

A big gray hare was bounding over the field, and began to smooth his fur.

An old owl, as she sat on the bough, was watching the gray hare; and a young owl said, " Why don't you pounce down on the hare ? "

The old one replied :

" I am not strong enough. The hare is large. If you should clutch him, he would carry you off into the thicket."

But the young owl said :

" Why, I could hold him with one claw, and with the other I could cling to the tree."

And the young owl swooped down on the hare, clutched his back with his claw in such a way that all the nails sank into the fur, and he was going to cling to the tree with the other claw; and he said to him-self :  
" He will not escape."

But the hare darted himself away, and pulled the owl in two. One claw remained in the tree; the other in the hare's back.

The next year a sportsman killed this hare, and was surprised to find on his back the talons of a full-grown owl.

### Chapter II

#### HOW WOLVES TEACH THEIR CUBS

I WAS riding along the road, when I heard some one shouting behind me. It was a young shepherd. He was running across a field, and pointing at something.

I looked, and saw two wolves running across the field. One was full grown; the other was a cub. The cub had on his back a lamb which had just been killed, and he had the leg in his mouth.

The old wolf was running behind.

As soon as I saw the wolves, I joined the shepherd, and we started in pursuit, setting up a shout.

When they heard our shout, some peasants started out also in pursuit, with their dogs.

.As soon as the old wolf caught sight of the dogs and the men, he ran to the young one, snatched the lamb from him, jerked it over his own back, and both wolves increased their pace and were soon lost from view.

Then the lad began to relate how it had happened. The big wolf had sprung out from the ravine, seized the lamb, killed it, and carried it off. The cub came to meet him, and threw himself on the lamb. The old wolf allowed the young wolf to carry the lamb, but kept running a short distance behind.

But as soon as there was danger, the old one ceased giving the lesson, and seized the lamb for himself.

## Chapter III

### HARES AND WOLVES

HARES feed at night on the bark of trees; field-hares, on seeds and grass; barn-hares, on grains of wheat on the threshing-floors.

In the night-time hares leave on the snow a deep, noticeable trail. Men and dogs and foxes and crows and eagles delight in hunting hares.

If a hare went in a straight line without doubling, then in the morning there would be no trouble in following his trail and catching him; but

God has endowed the hare with timidity, and this timidity is his salvation.

At night the hare runs over the fields and woods with-out fear and leaves a straight track; but as soon as morning comes, and his foes awake, then the hare begins to listen, now for the barking of dogs, now for the creaking of sledges, now for the voices of peasants, now for the noise of wolves in the woods, and so he leaps first to one side and then to the other.

He darts ahead, and something frightens him, and so he doubles on his track. Then he hears something else, and with all his might he leaps to one side and makes away from his former track. Again something startles him, and the hare turns back and again jumps to one side. When it is daylight, he is in his hole.

In the morning, when the sportsmen begin to track the hare, they become confused in this maze of double tracks and long leaps, and they marvel at the hare's shrewdness.

But the hare had no thought of being shrewd : he was merely afraid of everything.

## Chapter IV

### SCENT

A MAN sees with his eyes, hears with his ears, smells with his nose, tastes with his tongue, and feels with his fingers. Some men have more serviceable eyes. Some men have less serviceable eyes than others. One man has keen sense of hearing, another is deaf. One man has a more delicate sense of smell than another, and he perceives an odor from a long distance, while another will not notice the stench from a bad egg. One person recognizes an object by touching it, while another can do nothing of the sort, and is unable to distinguish wood from paper by the touch. One no sooner puts a substance into his mouth than he tells it is sweet, while another swallows it and cannot make out whether it is sweet or bitter.



In the same way wild animals have various senses in various degrees of power. But all wild animals have a keener scent than man has. When a man wants to tell what an object is, he examines it, he listens when it makes a noise, sometimes he smells of it and tastes it; but more than all, if a man wants to be sure what an object is, he must feel of it.

But in the case of almost all wild animals, their chief dependence is on smelling the object. The horse, the wolf, the dog, the cow, the bear, do not recognize sub-stances until they test them by smelling.

When a horse is afraid of anything, it snorts; in other words, it clears its nose so as to smell better, and its fear does not disappear until it has scented the object. A dog will often follow its master by its scent, and when it sees its master it is afraid, it does not recognize him, and it keeps on barking until it smells him, and recognizes that what seemed terrible to his eyes is really his master. Cattle see other cattle killed, they hear other cattle bellow in the abattoir, and yet they have no comprehension of what is taking place. But if the cow or the ox happens to find a place where the blood of cattle has been shed and catches the scent of it, then the creature understands, begins to low, kicks, and resists being driven from the place.

An old man had a sick wife; he himself went to milk the cow. The cow lowed; she knew it was not her mistress, and she would not give any milk. The man's wife told him to wear her cloak and put her kerchief on his head; and when he did so the cow let herself be milked. But when the old man threw off these garments, the cow smelt him and again held back her milk.

Hounds when they track a wild animal often run, not on the trail itself, but at one side, even as far as twenty paces.

When an inexperienced huntsman wants to set his dog on the trail of an animal, and touches the dog's nose to the trail itself, the dog always goes to one side. The trail smells so strong to the dog that it cannot make the proper distinctions by the trail itself, and cannot tell whether the animal was running one way or the other. It goes to one side and

then only it tells by its sense of smell in which direction the scent increases, and so runs after the animal.

It does what we do when any one speaks too loudly in our ear : we move away, and then at a proper distance we distinguish what is said. Or when we are looking at any object which is too near us, we hold it farther from our eyes, and then we look at it.

Dogs recognize one another and communicate with one another by means of smells.

Still more delicate is the sense of smell in insects. The bee flies straight to the flower which it needs. The worm crawls to its leaf. The bug, the flea, the gnat, smell a man distant a hundred thousand times its own length away.

If the atoms emanating from substances and penetrating our nostrils are minute, how infinitesimal must be the Particles which affect the smellers of insects !

## Chapter V

### TOUCH AND SIGHT

TWIST the index finger with the middle finger and place between these fingers intertwined a small ball in such a way that it touches both, and then shut your eyes. It will seem to you that you are holding two balls. Open your eyes and you will see that it is only one. Your fingers have deceived you, and your eyes have corrected the impression.

Look best of all a little sidewise at a good, clear mirror, it will seem to you that it is a window or a door, and that there is something behind it. Touch it with your fingers and you will assure yourself that it is a mirror. Your eyes deceived you, but your fingers corrected the impression.

## Chapter VI

### SILKWORM

IN my garden there were some old mulberry trees. They had been set out long ago by my grandfather.

One autumn I was given a quantity 1 of silkworm eggs, and advised to raise the worms and make silk.

These eggs were dark gray and so small that in my zolotnik I counted five thousand eight hundred and thirty-five of them. They were smaller than the heads of the smallest pins. They were perfectly inert; only, when they were crushed, they made a crackling sound.

I heaped them up on my table and had forgotten all about them.

But when spring came, I went one day out into my garden and noticed that the mulberry buds were swelling, and were even in leaf where the sun got to them. Then I remembered about my silkworm eggs, and as soon as I went into the house I began to examine them and scatter them over a wider surface.

The larger Part of them were no longer of a dark gray as before, but some had turned into a light gray color, while others were still brighter, with milky shades. The next morning I went early to look at the eggs, and saw that the worms had already crept out of some of them, and that others were swollen and filled up. They had evidently become conscious in their shells that their nutriment was ready for them.

The little worms were black and hairy, and so small that it was difficult to see them. I examined them with a magnifying glass, and could see that in the egg they lay curled up in little rings, and when they emerged they straightened themselves out.

I went out into the garden to my mulberry tree, gathered three handfuls of leaves, and laid them by themselves on the table, and went to make a place for them, as I had been told to do.

While I was getting ready the paper, the worms perceived the presence of the leaves on the table, and crawled over to them. I moved the leaves away and tried to attract the worms along, and they, just like dogs attracted by a piece of meat, crept in pursuit of the leaves over the table-cloth, across the pencils, pen-knives, and papers.

Then I cut out a sheet of paper and riddled it with holes made with a knife. I spread the leaves on the paper and laid the paper with the leaves over the worms. The worms crept through the holes; they all mounted on the leaves and immediately set to work feeding.

In the same way I laid a paper covered with leaves over the other worms, and they likewise, as soon as they were hatched, immediately crept through the holes and began to feed.

All the worms on each sheet of paper gathered together and ate the leaves, beginning at the edge. Then, when they had stripped them clean, they began to crawl over the paper in search of new food. Then I would spread over them fresh sheets of perforated paper covered with mulberry leaves, and they would crawl through to the new food.

They lay in my room on a shelf, and when there were no leaves, they would crawl over the shelf, reaching the very edge; but they never fell to the floor, although they were blind.

As soon as a worm would come to the abyss, before letting himself down, he would put out of his mouth a little thread and fasten it to the edge, then let himself down, hang suspended, make investigations, and if it pleased him to let himself down, he would let himself down; but if he wanted to return, then he would pull himself back by means of his web.

During all the twenty-four hours of the day the worms did nothing else but feed; and it was necessary to give them mulberry leaves in greater and greater quantities. When fresh leaves were brought, and they were crawling over them, then there would be a rustling sound, like the noise of rain on foliage. This was made by them as they began to eat.

In this way the old worms lived five days. By this time they had grown enormously, and would eat ten times as much as at first.

I knew that on the fifth day it was time for them to roll themselves up, and I was on the watch for this to begin. In the evening of the fifth day one of the old worms stretched himself out on the paper and ceased to eat or to move.

During the next twenty-four hours I watched him for a long time. I knew that the worms shed their skins a number of times, when they have grown so large that their shells are too small for them, and then they put on new ones.

One of my companions took turns with me in watching the process. In the evening he cried :

“ Come; he is beginning to undress ! “

I went over to the shelf, and was just in time to see that this worm had fastened his old shell to the paper and had made a rent near his mouth, was thrusting out his head, and was struggling and twisting so as to get out; but his old shirt would not let him go.

I looked at him for a long time struggling there and unable to extricate himself, and I felt a desire to help him.

I tried to pick him out by means of my finger-nail, but instantly saw that I had done a foolish thing. A sort of liquid gushed over my finger-nail, and the worm died.

I thought that it was his blood; but then I saw that the worm had under his skin a watery juice for the purpose of facilitating the process of slipping out of the shirt. My finger-nail had evidently disturbed the formation of the new shirt, for the worm, though he was loosened, speedily perished.

I did not touch any of the others, and in the same way they all came out of their shirts. A few of them, however, died; but all of them, after a long and painful struggle, at last emerged from their old shirts.

After they had moulted, the worms began to eat more voraciously than ever, and I had to bring them still more mulberry leaves. In the course of four days they went to sleep again, and again went through the change of skin.

Then they ate still more leaves, and they measured as much as an eighth of a vershok x in length.

Then at the end of six days they again went to sleep, and once more the transformation from old shells into new ones took place, and they began to be very large and fat, and we had really considerable trouble to keep them supplied with leaves.

On the ninth day the old worms entirely ceased to feed, and they went crawling up on the shelf and the supports. I caught some of them and gave them fresh leaves, but they turned their heads away from the leaves and crawled off again.

I then recollected that the silkworms, when they are about to spin their cocoons, absolutely cease to feed, and go to climbing.

I put them back, and began to watch what they would do.

Some of the old ones crawled up on the ceiling, took up positions apart, each by himself, crawled around a little, and then began to fasten a web in various directions.

I watched one in particular. He went into a corner, extended a half-dozen threads at a distance of a vershok from him in every direction; then he hung himself to them, doubled himself almost in two, like a horseshoe, and began to move his head round and round, and to send out a silken web in such a way that the web began to whip itself around him.

By evening he was, as it were, in a mist of his own weaving. He could be scarcely seen, and on the next day he was entirely invisible in his cocoon. He was entirely enwrapped in silk, and yet he still kept spinning. At the end of three days he ceased to spin, and died.

Afterward I learned how long a thread he had spun in those three days. If the whole cocoon be unwound, it will sometimes give a thread more than a verst 1 in length, and rarely less; and it is easy to reckon how many times the worm has to turn his head during these three days to spin such a thread; it will be not less than three hundred thousand times. In other words, he turns his head round without ceasing once every second for seventy-two hours. We noticed also after this labor was finished, when we took a few of the cocoons and cut them open, that the worms were perfectly dry and white as wax.

I was aware that from these cocoons, with their dry, white, wax-like insides, butterflies would come forth; but as I looked at them, I could not believe it. Still, on the twentieth day, I began to watch what would happen to those that I had left.

I knew that on the twentieth day the change would take place. As yet nothing was to be seen, and I even began to think that there was some mistake about it, when suddenly I noticed that the end of one of the cocoons had grown dark and moist. I was even inclined to believe that it was spoiled, and was inclined to throw it away. But then I thought, “ May it not be the beginning of the change ? “ And so I kept watching it to see what would happen.

And, in fact, from the moist spot something moved. For a long time I could not make out what it was. But then something appeared like a head with feelers.

( The feelers moved. Then I perceived that a leg was thrust through the hole, then another, and the leg was clinging hold and trying to get loose from the cocoon. Something came out farther and farther, and at last I perceived a moist butterfly.

When all its six legs were freed, the tail followed; when it was entirely out, it sat there. When the butterfly became dry, it was white; it spread its wings, flew up, circled around, and lighted on the window-pane.

At the end of two days the butterfly laid its eggs on the window-sill, and fastened them together. The eggs were yellowish in color. Twenty-five butterflies laid their eggs : I collected five thousand of them.

The next year I raised still more silkworms, and spun off still more silk.

Three Parables

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1895

## PARABLE THE FIRST

A WEED had spread over a beautiful meadow. And in order to get rid of it the tenants of the meadow mowed it, but the weed only increased in consequence. And now the kind, wise master came to visit the tenants of the meadow, and among the other good counsels which he gave them, he told them they ought not to mow the weed, since that only made it grow the more luxuriantly, but that they must pull it up by the roots.

But either because the tenants of the meadow did not, amongst the other prescriptions of the good master, take heed of his advice not to mow down the weed, but to pull it up, or because they did not understand him, or because, according to their calculations, it seemed foolish to obey, the result was that his advice not to mow the weed but to pull it up was not followed, just as if he had never proffered it, and the men went on mowing the weed and spreading it.

And although, during the succeeding years, there were men that reminded the tenants of the meadow of the advice of the kind, wise master, they did not heed them, and continued to do as before, so that mowing of the weed as soon as it began to appear became not only a custom but even a sacred tradition, and the meadow grew more and more infested. And the matter went so far that the meadow grew nothing but weeds, and men lamented this and invented all kinds of means to correct the evil; but the only one they did not use was that which had long ago been prescribed by their kind, wise master.

And now, as time went on, it occurred to one man who saw the wretched condition into which the meadow had fallen, and who found among the master's forgotten prescriptions the rule not to mow the weed, but to pull it up by the root it occurred to the man, I say, to remind the tenants of the meadow that they were acting foolishly, and that their folly had long ago been pointed out by the kind, wise master.



But what do you think instead of putting credence in the correctness of this man's recollections, and in case they proved to be reliable ceasing to mow the weed, and in case he were mistaken proving to him the incorrectness of his recollections, or stigmatizing the good, wise master's recommendations as impracticable and not obligatory upon them, the tenants of the meadow did nothing' of the sort; but they took exception to this man's recollections and began to abuse him.

Some called him a conceited fool who imagined that he was the only one to understand the master's regulations; others called him a malicious false interpreter and slanderer; still others, forgetting that he was not giving them his own opinions, but was only reminding them of the prescriptions of the wise master whom they all revered, called him a dangerous man because he wished to pull up the weed and deprive them of their meadow. " He says we ought not to mow the meadow," said they, purposely suppressing the fact that the man did not say that it was not necessary to destroy the weed, but said that they should pull it up by the roots instead of mowing it, "but if we do not destroy the weed, then it will spread and wholly ruin our meadow. And why was the meadow granted to us if we must train the weed in it ? "

And the general impression that this man was either a fool or a false interpreter, or had the purpose of injuring the people, became so deeply grounded that every one cast reproaches and ridicule upon him. And however earnestly he asseverated that he not only did not desire to spread the weed, but on the contrary considered that the destruction of the weed was one of the chief duties of the agriculturist, just as it was meant by the good, wise master whose words he merely repeated, still they would not listen to him because they had definitely made up their minds that he was either a conceited fool misinterpreting the good, wise master's words, or a villain trying to induce men not to destroy the weeds but to protect and spread them more widely.

The same thing took place in my own case when I pointed out the injunction of the evangelical teaching about the non-resistance of evil

by violence. This rule was laid down by Christ and after Him in all times by all His true disciples.

But either because they did not notice this rule, or because they did not understand it, or because its fulfilment seemed to them too difficult, as time went the more completely this rule was forgotten, the farther the manner of men's lives departed from this rule; and finally it came to the pass to which it has now come that this rule has already begun to seem to people something new, strange, unheard-of, and even foolish. And I, also, have the same experience as the man had who reminded men of the good, wise master's prescription to refrain from mowing the weed, but to pull it up by the roots.

As the tenants of the meadow purposely shut their eyes to the fact that the counsel was not to give up destroying the weed, but to destroy it by a different method, and said, " We will not listen to this man, he is a fool; he forbids us to mow down the weeds and tells us to pull them up " so in reply to my reminder that according to Christ's teaching in order to annihilate evil we must not employ violence against it, but must destroy it from the root with love, men said : " We will not listen to him, he is a fool; he advises not to oppose evil to evil so that evil may overwhelm us."

I said that, according to Christ's teaching, evil cannot be eradicated by evil; that all resistance of evil by violence only intensifies the evil, that according to Christ's teaching evil is eradicated by good. Bless them that curse you, pray for them that abuse you, do good to them that hate you, love your enemies, and you will have no enemies!

I said that, according to Christ's teaching, the whole life of man is a battle with evil, a resistance of evil by reason and love, but that out of all the methods of resisting evil Christ excepted only the one unreasonable method of resisting evil with violence, which is equivalent to fighting evil with evil.

And I was misunderstood as saying that Christ taught that we must not resist evil. And all those whose lives were based on violence, and to

whom in consequence violence was dear, were glad to take such a misconstruction of my words, and at the same time of Christ's words, and it was avowed that the teaching of non-resistance of evil was incredible, stupid, godless, and dangerous. And men calmly continue under the guise of destroying evil to make it more widely spread.

## PARABLE THE SECOND

MEN were trafficking in flour, butter, milk, and all kinds of food-stuffs. And as each one was desirous of receiving the greatest profit and becoming rich as soon as possible, all these men got more and more into the habit of adulterating their goods with cheap and injurious mixtures : with the flour they mixed bran and lime, they put oleomargarin into their butter, they put water and chalk into their milk. And until these goods reached the consumers all went well : the wholesale traders sold them to the retailers, and the retailers distributed them in small quantities.

There were many stores and shops, and the wares, it seemed, went off very rapidly. And the tradesmen were satisfied. But the city consumers, those that did not raise their own produce and were therefore obliged to buy it, found it very harmful and disagreeable. The flour was bad, the butter and milk were bad, but as there were no other wares except those adulterated to be had in the city markets, the city consumers continued to buy them, and they complained because the food tasted bad and was unwholesome; they blamed themselves, and ascribed it to the wretched way in which the food was prepared. Meantime the tradespeople continued more and more flagrantly to adulterate their food-stuffs with cheap foreign ingredients. Thus passed a sufficiently long time. The city people were all suffering, and no one had the resolution to express his dissatisfaction.

And it happened that a housekeeper who had always given her family food and drink of her own make came to the city. This woman had spent her whole life in the preparation of food, and though she was not a famous cook, still she knew very well how to bake bread and to cook good dinners.

This woman bought various articles in the city and began to bake and cook. Her loaves did not rise, but fell. Her cakes, owing to the oleomargarin butter, seemed tasteless. She set her milk, but there was no cream. The housekeeper instantly came to the conclusion that her purchases were poor. She examined them, and her surmises were confirmed. She found lime in the flour, oleomargarin in the butter, chalk in the milk. Finding that all the materials she had bought were adulterated, the housekeeper went to the bazaars and began in a loud voice to accuse the tradesmen, and to demand that they should either stock their shops with good, nutritious, unadulterated articles, or else cease to trade, and shut up shop.

But the tradesmen paid no attention to the housekeeper, but told her that their goods were first class, that the whole city had been buying of them for so many years, and that they even had medals, and they showed her their medals on their signs. But the housekeeper did not give in.

“I don’t need any medals,” said she, “but wholesome food, so that I and my children may not have stomach troubles from it.”

“Apparently, my good woman, you have never seen genuine flour and butter,” said the tradesmen, showing her the white, pure-looking flour in varnished bins, the wretched imitation of butter lying in neat dishes, and the white fluid in glittering transparent jars.

“Of course I know them,” replied the housekeeper, “because all my life long I have had to do with them, and I have cooked with them and have eaten them, I and my children. Your goods are adulterated. Here is the proof of it,” said she, displaying the spoilt bread, the oleomargarin in the cakes, and the sediment in the milk. “You ought to throw all this stuff of yours into the river or burn it, and get unadulterated goods instead.”

And the woman, standing in front of the shops, kept incessantly crying her one message to the purchasers who came by, and the purchasers began to be troubled.

Then perceiving that this audacious housekeeper was likely to injure their wares, the tradesmen said to the purchasers :

“ Look here, gentlemen, what a lunatic this woman is ! She wants people to perish of starvation. She insists on our burning up and destroying all our provisions. What would you have to eat if we should heed her and refuse to sell you our goods ? Do not listen to her, she is a coarse countrywoman, and she is no judge of provisions, and it is nothing but envy which makes her attack us. She is poor, and wants every one else to be as poor as she is.”

Thus spoke the tradesmen to the gathering throng, purposely blinking the fact that the woman wanted, not that all provisions should be destroyed, but that good ones should be substituted for bad.

And thereupon the throng fell upon the woman and began to beat her. And though she assured them all that she had no wish to destroy the food-stuffs, that, on the contrary, she had all her life been occupied in feeding others and herself, but that she only wanted that those men that took upon themselves the feeding of the people should not poison them with deleterious adulterations pretending to be edible. Though she pleaded her cause eloquently, they refused to hear her because their minds were made up that she wanted to deprive people of the food which they needed.

The same thing has happened to me in regard to the art and science of our day.

All my life long I have been fed on this food, and to the best of my ability I have attempted to feed others on it. And as this for me is a food and not an object of traffic or luxury, I know beyond a question when food is food and when it is only a counterfeit. And now when I made trial of the food which in our time began to be offered for sale in the intellectual bazaar under the guise of art and science, and attempted to feed those dear to me with it, I discovered that a large Part of this food was not genuine.

And when I declared that the art and the science on sale in the intellectual bazaar are margarine or at least contain great mixtures of what is foreign to true art and true science, and that I know this because the produce I have bought in the intellectual bazaar has been proved to be, not merely disadvantageous to me and those near and dear to me, but positively deleterious, then I was hooted at and abused, and it was insinuated that I did this because I was untrained and could not properly treat of such lofty objects.

When I began to show that the dealers themselves in these intellectual wares were all the time charging one another of cheating, when I called to mind that in all times under the name of art and science much that was bad and harmful was offered to men, and that consequently in our time also the same danger was threatening, that this was no joke, that the poison for the soul was many times more dangerous than a poison for the body, and that therefore these spiritual products ought to be examined with the greatest attention when they are offered to us. in the form of food, and everything counterfeit and deleterious ought to be rejected, when I began to say this, no one, no one, not a single man in a single article or book made reply to these arguments, but from all the shops there was a chorus of cries against me as against the woman : “ He is a fool ! He wants to destroy art and science which we live by ! Beware of him and do not heed him ! Hear us, hear us ! We have the very latest foreign wares ! “

### PARABLE THE THIRD

TRAVELERS were making a journey. And they happened to lose their way, so that they found themselves proceeding, not on a smooth road, but across a bog, among clumps of bushes, briers, and fallen trees, which blocked their progress, and even to move grew more and more difficult.

Then the travelers divided into two Parties; one decided not to stop, but to keep going in the direction that they had been going, assuring themselves and the others that they had not wandered from the right road, and were sure to reach their journey's end.

The other Party decided that, as the direction in which they were now going was evidently not the right one otherwise they would long ago have reached the journey's end it was necessary to find the road, and in order to find it, it was requisite that without delay they should move as rapidly as possible in all directions.

All the travelers were divided between these two opinions : some decided to keep going straight ahead, the others decided to make trials in all directions; but there was one man who, without sharing either opinion, declared that before continuing in the direction in which they had been going, or beginning to move rapidly in all directions, hoping that by this means they might find the right way, it was necessary first of all to pause and deliberate on their situation, and then after due deliberation to decide on one thing or the other.

But the travelers were so excited by the disturbance, were so alarmed at their situation, they were so desirous of flattering themselves with the hope that they had not lost their way, but had only temporarily wandered from the road, and would soon find it again, and, above all, they had such a desire to forget their terror by moving about, that this opinion was met with universal indignation, with reproaches, and with the ridicule of those of both Parties.

“ It is the advice of weakness, cowardice, sloth,” they said.

“ It is a fine way to reach the end of our journey, sitting down and not moving from the place ! “ cried others.

“ For this are we men, and for this is strength given us, to struggle and labor, conquering obstacles, and not pusillanimously giving in to them,” exclaimed still others.

And in spite of what was said by the man that differed from the rest, “ how if we proceeded in a wrong direction without changing it, we should never attain our goal, but go farther from it, and how we should never attain it either if we kept flying from one direction to another, and how the only means of attaining our goal was by taking

observation from the sun or the stars and thus finding what direction we must take to reach it, and having chosen it to stick to it and how to do this it was necessary first of all to halt, and to halt not for the purpose of stopping, but to find the right way and then unfalteringly to go in it, and how for either case it was necessary to stop and consider” in spite of all this argument, they refused to heed him.

And the first division of the travelers went off in the direction in which they had been going, and the second division kept changing their course; but neither division succeeded in attaining their journey’s end, but up to the present time, moreover, they have not yet escaped from the bushes and the briers, but are still lost.

Exactly the same thing happened to me when I attempted to express my doubts as to whether the road which we have taken through the dark forest of the labor question and through the all-swallowing bog of the endless armament of the nations is exactly the right route by which we ought to go, that it is very possible that we have lost our way, and that, therefore, it might be well for us for a time to stop moving in that direction which is evidently wrong, and first of all to consider, by means of the universal and eternal laws of truth revealed to us, what the direction is by which we intend to go.

No one replied to this, not a person said, “ We are not mistaken in our direction and we are not gone astray; we are sure of this for this reason and for that.”

Not a person said, “ Possibly we are mistaken, but we have an infallible means of correcting our error without ceasing to move.”

No one said either the one thing or the other. But all were indignant, took offense, and hastened to quench my solitary voice with a simultaneous outburst.

“ We are so indolent and backward ! And this is the advice of indolence, sluggishness, inefficiency ! “

Some even went so far as to add :

“ It ‘s all nonsense ! Don’t listen to him. Follow us.”



And they shouted like those that reckon that salvation is to be found in unchangedly traveling a once selected road, whatever it may have been; like those also that expect to find salvation in flying about in all directions.

“Why wait? Why consider? Push forward! Everything will come out of itself ! “

Men have lost their way and are suffering in consequence. It would seem that the first main application of energy which should be put forth ought to be directed, not to the confirmation of the movement that has seduced us into the false position where we are, but to the cessation of it. It would seem clear that as soon as we stopped we might, in a measure, comprehend our situation, and discover the direction in which we ought to go in order to attain true happiness, not for one man, not for one class of men, but that general good of humanity toward which all men are striving and every human heart by itself.

But how is it ? Men invent everything possible, but do not hit upon the one thing that might prove their salvation, or if it did not do that, might at least ameliorate their condition; I mean, that they should pause for a moment and not go on increasing their misfortunes by their fallacious activity. Men are conscious of the wretchedness of their condition, and are doing all they can to avoid it, but the one thing that would assuredly ameliorate it they are unwilling to do, and the advice given them to do it, more than anything else, rouses their indignation.

If there were any possibility of doubting the fact that we have gone astray, then this treatment of the advice to “ think it over “ proves more distinctly than anything else how hopelessly astray we have gone and how great is our despair.

The Two Brothers And The Gold

Translated by R. Nesbit Bain 1903

ONCE UPON A time, in the days long since gone by, there dwelt at Jerusalem two brothers; the name of the elder was Athanasius, the name of the younger John. They dwelt on a hill not far from the town, and lived upon what people gave to them. Every day the brothers went out to work. They worked not for themselves, but for the poor. Wherever the overworked, the sick were to be found — wherever there were widows and orphans, thither went the brothers, and there they worked and spent their time, taking no payment.

Thus the brothers went about separately the whole week, and only met together in the evening of the Sabbath at their own dwelling. Only on Sunday did they remain at home, praying and conversing together. And the Angel of the Lord came down to them and blessed them. On the Monday they separated again, each going his own way. Thus did the brothers live for many years, and every week the Angel of the Lord came down to them and blessed them.

One Monday, when the brothers had gone forth to work, and had parted their several ways, the elder brother, Athanasius, felt sorry at having had to part from his beloved brother, and he stood still and glanced after him. John was walking with bent head, and he did not look back. But suddenly John also stopped as if he perceived something and continued to gaze fixedly at it. Presently he drew near to that which he had been looking upon, and then suddenly leaped aside, and, not stopping for another instant, ran towards the mountain and up the mountain, right away from the place, just as if some savage beast were pursuing him.

Athanasius was astonished, and turned back to the place to find out what his brother had been so afraid of. At last he approached the spot, and then he saw something glistening in the sun. He drew nearer — on the grass, as if poured out from a measure, lay a heap of gold. And Athanasius was still more astonished, both at the sight of the gold and at the leaping aside of his brother.

“What was he afraid of, and what did he run away from?” thought Athanasius. “There is no sin in gold, sin is in man. You may do ill with gold, but you may also do good. How many widows and orphans might not be fed therewith, how many naked ones might not be clothed, how many poor and sick might not be cared for and cured by means of this gold? Now, indeed, we minister to people, but our ministrations are but little, because our power is small, and with this gold we might minister to people much more than we do now.” Thus thought Athanasius, and would have said so to his brother, but John was by this time out of hearing, and looked no bigger than a cockchafer on the further mountain.

And Athanasius took off his garment, shovelled as much gold into it as he was able to carry, threw it over his shoulder, and went into the town. He went to an inn, gave the gold to the innkeeper, and then went off to fetch the rest of it. And when he had brought in all the gold he went to the merchants, bought land in that town, bought stones, wood, hired labourers, and set about building three houses.

And Athanasius abode in the town three months, and built the three houses in that town; one of the houses was an asylum for widows and orphans, the second house was a hospital for the sick, the third house was a hospice for the poor and for pilgrims. And Athanasius sought him out three God-fearing elders, and the first elder he placed over the refuge, the second over the hospital, and the third over the hospice for pilgrims.

And Athanasius had three thousand gold pieces still left. And he gave a thousand to each of the elders that they might have wherewith to distribute among the poor. And all three houses began to be filled with people, and the people began to praise Athanasius for all that he had done. And Athanasius rejoiced thereat, so that he had no desire to depart from the town. But Athanasius loved his brother, and, taking leave of the people, and not keeping for himself a single coin of all this money, he went back to his dwelling in the selfsame old garment in which he had come to town.

Athanasius was drawing near to his mountain, and he thought to himself: "My brother judged wrongly when he leaped aside from the gold and ran away from it. Haven't I done much better?"

And Athanasius had no sooner thought this than suddenly he beheld standing in his path the Angel who had been sent to bless them, but now looked threateningly upon him. And Athanasius was aghast and could only say:

"Wherefore, my Lord?"

And the Angel opened his mouth and said:

"DePart from hence! Thou art not worthy to dwell with thy brother. That one leap aside of thy brother's was worth more than all that thou hast done with thy gold."

Athanasius began to talk of how many poor and how many pilgrims he had fed, and of how many orphans he had cared for.

And the Angel said to him:

"That same Devil who placed the gold there in order to corrupt thee, hath also put these big words into thy mouth.

And then the conscience of Athanasius upbraided him, and he understood that what he had done was not done for God, and he wept and began to repent.

Then the Angel stepped aside from the road, and left free for him the path in which John was already standing awaiting his brother. And from thenceforth Athanasius yielded no more to the wiles of the Devil who had strewn the gold in his path, and he understood that not by gold, but by good works only, could he render service to God and his fellow-man.

And the brethren dwelt together as before.

Neglect The Fire

AND YOU CANNOT PUT IT OUT

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. (Matt. xviii. 21-35.)

There lived in a village a peasant, by the name of Iván Shcherbakóv. He lived well; he was himself in full strength, the first worker in the village, and he had three sons, — all of them on their legs: one was married, the second about to marry, and the third a grown-up lad who drove horses and was beginning to plough. Iván's wife was a clever woman and a good housekeeper, and his daughter-in-law turned out to be a quiet person and a good worker. There was no reason why Iván should not have led a good life with his family. The only idle mouth on the farm was his old, ailing father (he had been lying on the oven for seven years, sick with the asthma).

Iván had plenty of everything, three horses and a colt, a cow and a yearling calf, and fifteen sheep. The women made the shoes and the clothes for the men and worked in the field; the men worked on their farms.

They had enough grain until the next crop. From the oats they paid their taxes and met all their obligations. An easy life, indeed, might Iván have led with his children. But next door to him he had a neighbour, Gavrílo the Lamé, Gordyéy Ivánov's son. And there was an enmity between him and Iván.

So long as old man Gordyéy was alive, and Iván's father ran the farm, the peasants lived in neighbourly fashion. If the women needed a sieve or a vat, or the men had to get another axle or wheel for a time, they sent from one farm to another, and helped each other out in a neighbourly way. If a calf ran into the yard of the threshing-floor, they drove it out and only said: "Don't let it out, for the heap has not yet been put away." And it was not their custom to put it away and lock it up in the threshing-floor or in a shed, or to revile each other.

Thus they lived so long as the old men were alive. But when the young people began to farm, things went quite differently.

The whole thing began from a mere nothing. A hen of Iván's daughter-in-law started laying early. The young woman gathered the eggs for Passion week. Every day she went to the shed to pick up an egg from the wagon-box. But, it seems, the boys scared away the hen, and she flew across the wicker fence to the neighbour's yard, and laid an egg there. The young woman heard the hen cackle, so she thought: "I have no time now, I must get the hut in order for the holiday; I will go there later to get it."

In the evening she went to the wagon-box under the shed, to fetch the egg, but it was not there. The young woman asked her mother-in-law and her brother-in-law if they had taken it; but Taráska, her youngest brother-in-law, said:

"Your hen laid an egg in the neighbour's yard, for she cackled there and flew out from that yard."

The young woman went to look at her hen, and found her sitting with the cock on the perch; she had closed her eyes and was getting ready to sleep. The woman would have liked to ask her where she laid the egg, but she would not have given her any answer. Then the young woman went to her neighbour. The old woman met her.

"What do you want, young woman?"

"Granny, my hen has been in your yard to-day, — did she not lay an egg there?"

"I have not set eyes on her. We have hens of our own, thank God, and they have been laying for quite awhile. We have gathered our own eggs, and we do not need other people's eggs. Young woman, we do not go to other people's yards to gather eggs."

The young woman was offended. She said a word too much, the neighbour answered with two, and the women began to scold. Iván's wife was carrying water, and she, too, took a hand in it. Gavrílo's wife jumped out, and began to rebuke her neighbour. She reminded her of things that had happened, and mentioned things that had not happened at all. And the tongue-lashing began. All yelled together, trying to say two words at the same time. And they used bad words.

“You are such and such a one; you are a thief, a sneak; you are simply starving your father-in-law; you are a tramp.”

“And you are a beggar: you have torn my sieve; and you have our shoulder-yoke. Give me back the yoke!”

They grabbed the yoke, spilled the water, tore off their kerchiefs, and began to fight. Gavrílo drove up from the field, and he took his wife's Part. Iván jumped out with his son, and they all fell in a heap. Iván was a sturdy peasant, and he scattered them all. He yanked out a piece of Gavrílo's beard. People ran up to them, and they were with difficulty pulled aPart.

That's the way it began.

Gavrílo wrapped the piece of his beard in a petition and went to the township court to enter a complaint.

“I did not raise a beard for freckled Iván to pull it out.”

In the meantime his wife bragged to the neighbours that they would now get Iván sentenced and would have him sent to Siberia, and the feud began.

The old man on the oven tried to persuade them to stop the first day they started to quarrel, but the young people paid no attention to him. He said to them:

“Children, you are doing a foolish thing, and for a foolish thing have you started a feud. Think of it, — the whole affair began from an egg. The children picked up the egg, — well, God be with them! There is no profit in one egg. With God's aid there will be enough for everybody. Well, you have said a bad word, so correct it, show her how to use better words! Well, you have had a fight, — you are sinful people. That, too, happens. Well, go and make peace, and let there be an end to it! If you keep it up, it will only be worse.”

The young people did not obey the old man; they thought that he was not using sense, but just babbling in old man's fashion.

Iván did not give in to his neighbour.



“I did not pull his beard,” he said. “He jerked it out himself; but his son has yanked off my shirt-button and has torn my whole shirt. Here it is.” And Iván, too, took the matter to court. The case was heard before a justice of the peace, and in the township court. While they were suing each other, Gavrílo lost a coupling-pin out of his cart. The women in Gavrílo’s house accused Iván’s son of having taken it.

“We saw him in the night,” they said, “making his way under the window to the cart, and the gossip says that he went to the dram-shop and asked the dram-shopkeeper to take the pin from him.”

Again they started a suit. But at home not a day passed but that they quarrelled, nay, even fought. The children cursed one another, — they learned this from their elders, — and when the women met at the brook, they did not so much strike the beetles as let loose their tongues, and to no good.

At first the men just accused each other, but later they began to snatch up things that lay about loose. And they taught the women and children to do the same. Their life grew worse and worse. Iván Shcherbakóv and Gavrílo the Lamé kept suing one another at the meetings of the Commune, and in the township court, and before the justices of the peace, and all the judges were tired of them.

Now Gavrílo got Iván to pay a fine, or he sent him to the lockup, and now Iván did the same to Gavrílo. And the more they did each other harm, the more furious they grew. When dogs make for each other, they get more enraged the more they fight. You strike a dog from behind, and he thinks that the other dog is biting him, and gets only madder than ever. Just so it was with these peasants: when they went to court, one or the other was punished, either by being made to pay a fine, or by being thrown into prison, and that only made their rage flame up more and more toward one another.

“Just wait, I will pay you back for it!”

And thus it went on for six years. The old man on the oven kept repeating the same advice. He would say to them:

“What are you doing, my children? Drop all your accounts, stick to your work, don’t show such malice toward others, and it will be better. The more you rage, the worse will it be.”

They paid no attention to the old man.

In the seventh year the matter went so far that Iván’s daughter-in-law at a wedding accused Gavrílo before people of having been caught with horses. Gavrílo was drunk, and he did not hold back his anger, but struck the woman and hurt her so that she lay sick for a week, for she was heavy with child. Iván rejoiced, and went with a petition to the prosecuting magistrate.

“Now,” he thought, “I will get even with my neighbour: he shall not escape the penitentiary or Siberia.”

Again Iván was not successful. The magistrate did not accept the petition: they examined the woman, but she was up and there were no marks upon her. Iván went to the justice of the peace; but the justice sent the case to the township court. Iván bestirred himself in the township office, filled the elder and the scribe with half a bucket of sweet liquor, and got them to sentence Gavrílo to having his back flogged. The sentence was read to Gavrílo in the court.

The scribe read:

“The court has decreed that the peasant Gavrílo Gordyék receive twenty blows with rods in the township office.”

Iván listened to the decree and looked at Gavrílo, wondering what he would do. Gavrílo, too, heard the decree, and he became as pale as a sheet, and turned away and walked out into the vestibule. Iván followed him out and wanted to go to his horse, when he heard Gavrílo say:

“Very well, he will beat my back, and it will burn, but something of his may burn worse than that.”

When Iván heard these words, he returned to the judges.

“Righteous judges! He threatens to set fire to my house. Listen, he said it in the presence of witnesses.”

Gavrílo was called in.

“Is it true that you said so?”

“I said nothing. Flog me, if you please. Evidently I must suffer for my truth, while he may do anything he wishes.”

Gavrílo wanted to say something more, but his lips and cheeks trembled. He turned away toward the wall. Even the judges were frightened as they looked at him.

“It would not be surprising,” they thought, “if he actually did some harm to his neighbour or to himself.”

And an old judge said to them:

“Listen, friends! You had better make peace with each other. Did you do right, brother Gavrílo, to strike a pregnant woman? Luckily God was merciful to you, but think what crime you might have committed! Is that good? Confess your guilt and beg his pardon! And he will pardon you. Then we shall change the decree.”

The scribe heard that, and said:

“That is impossible, because on the basis of Article 117 there has taken place no reconciliation, but the decree of the court has been handed down, and the decree has to be executed.”

But the judge paid no attention to the scribe.

“Stop currycombing your tongue. The first article, my friend, is to remember God, and God has commanded me to make peace.”

And the judge began once more to talk to the peasants, but he could not persuade them. Gavrílo would not listen to him.

“I am fifty years old less one,” he said, “and I have a married son. I have not been beaten in all my life, and now freckled Iván has brought me to being beaten with rods, and am I to beg his forgiveness? Well, he will — Iván will remember me!”

Gavrílo’s voice trembled again. He could not talk. He turned around and went out.

From the township office to the village was a distance of ten versts, and Iván returned home late. The women had already gone out to meet the cattle. He unhitched his horse, put it away, and entered the hut. The room was empty. The children had not yet returned from the field, and the women were out to meet the cattle. Iván went in, sat down on a bench, and began to think. He recalled how the decision was announced to Gavrílo, and how he grew pale, and turned to the wall.

And his heart was pinched. He thought of how he should feel if he were condemned to be flogged. He felt sorry for Gavrílo. He heard the old man coughing on the oven. The old man turned around, let down his legs, and sat up. He pulled himself with difficulty up to the bench, and coughed and coughed, until he cleared his throat, and leaned against the table, and said:

“Well, have they condemned him?”

Iván said:

“He has been sentenced to twenty strokes with the rods.”

The old man shook his head.

“Iván, you are not doing right. It’s wrong, not wrong to him, but to yourself. Well, will it make you feel easier, if they flog him?”

“He will never do it again,” said Iván.

“Why not? In what way is he doing worse than you?”

“What, he has not harmed me?” exclaimed Iván. “He might have killed the woman; and he even now threatens to set fire to my house. Well, shall I bow to him for it?”

The old man heaved a sigh, and said:

“You, Iván, walk and drive wherever you please in the free world, and I have passed many years on the oven, and so you think that you see everything, while I see nothing. No, my son, you see nothing, — malice has dimmed your eyes. Another man’s sins are in front of you, but your own are behind your back. You say that he has done wrong. If he alone had done wrong, there would be no harm.

Does evil between people arise from one man only? Evil arises between two. You see his badness, but you do not see your own. If he himself were bad, and you good, there would be no evil. Who pulled out his beard? Who blasted the rick which was at halves? Who is dragging him to the courts? And yet you put it always on him. You yourself live badly, that's why it is bad. Not thus did I live, and no such thing, my dear, did I teach you.

Did I and the old man, his father, live this way? How did we live? In neighbourly fashion. If his flour gave out, and the woman came: 'Uncle Frol, I need some flour.'— 'Go, young woman, into the granary, and take as much as you need.' If he had nobody to send out with the horses,— 'Go, Iván, and look after his horses!' And if I was short of anything, I used to go to him. 'Uncle Gordyék, I need this and that.' And how is it now? The other day a soldier was talking about Plévna. Why, your war is worse than what they did at Plévna. Do you call this living? It is a sin! You are a peasant, a head of a house. You will be responsible.

What are you teaching your women and your children? To curse. The other day Taráska, that dirty nose, cursed Aunt Arína, and his mother only laughed at him. Is that good? You will be responsible for it. Think of your soul. Is that right? You say a word to me, and I answer with two; you box my ears, and I box you twice. No, my son, Christ walked over the earth and taught us fools something quite different. If a word is said to you, — keep quiet, and let conscience smite him. That's what he, my son, has taught us. If they box your ears, you turn the other cheek to them: 'Here, strike it if I deserve it.' His own conscience will prick him. He will be pacified and will do as you wish. That's what he has commanded us to do, and not to crow. Why are you silent? Do I tell you right?"

Iván was silent, and he listened.

The old man coughed again, and with difficulty coughed up the phlegm, and began to speak again:

"Do you think Christ has taught us anything bad? He has taught us for our own good. Think of your earthly life: are you better off, or worse, since that Plévna of yours was started? Figure out how much you have

spent on these courts, how much you have spent in travelling and in feeding yourself on the way? See what eagles of sons you have! You ought to live, and live well, and go up, but your property is growing less. Why? For the same reason. From your pride.

You ought to be ploughing with the boys in the field and attend to your sowing, but the fiend carries you to court or to some pettifogger. You do not plough in time and do not sow in time, and mother earth does not bring forth anything. Why did the oats not do well this year? When did you sow them? When you came back from the city. And what did you gain from the court? Only trouble for yourself. Oh, son, stick to your business, and attend to your field and your house, and if any one has offended you, forgive him in godly fashion, and things will go better with you, and you will feel easier at heart.”

Iván kept silence.

“Listen, Iván! Pay attention to me, an old man. Go and hitch the gray horse, and drive straight back to the office: squash there the whole business, and in the morning go to Gavrílo, make peace with him in godly fashion, and invite him to the holiday” (it was before Lady-day), “have the samovár prepared, get a half bottle, and make an end to all sins, so that may never happen again, and command the women and children to live in peace.”

Iván heaved a sigh, and thought: “The old man is speaking the truth,” and his heart melted. The only thing he did not know was how to manage things so as to make peace with his neighbour.

And the old man, as though guessing what he had in mind, began once more:

“Go, Iván, do not put it off! Put out the fire at the start, for when it burns up, you can’t control it.”

The old man wanted to say something else, but did not finish, for the women entered the room and began to prattle like magpies. The news had already reached them about how Gavrílo had been sentenced to be flogged, and how he had threatened to set fire to the house. They had found out everything, and had had time in the pasture to exchange

words with the women of Gavrílo's house. They said that Gavrílo's daughter-in-law had threatened them with the examining magistrate. The magistrate, they said, was receiving gifts from Gavrílo.

He would now upset the whole case, and the teacher had already written another petition to the Tsar about Iván, and that petition mentioned all the affairs, about the coupling-pin, and about the garden, — and half of the estate would go back to him. Iván listened to their talk, and his heart was chilled again, and he changed his mind about making peace with Gavrílo.

In a farmer's yard there is always much to do. Iván did not stop to talk with the women, but got up and went out of the house, and walked over to the threshing-floor and the shed. Before he fixed everything and started back again, the sun went down, and the boys returned from the field. They had been ploughing up the field for the winter crop. Iván met them, and asked them about their work and helped them to put up the horses. He laid aside the torn collar and was about to put some poles under the shed, when it grew quite dark. Iván left the poles until the morrow; instead he threw some fodder down to the cattle, opened the gate, let Taráska out with the horses into the street, to go to the night pasture, and again closed the gate and put down the gate board.

"Now to supper and to bed," thought Iván. He took the torn collar and went into the house. He had entirely forgotten about Gavrílo, and about what his father had told him. As he took hold of the ring and was about to enter the vestibule, he heard his neighbour on the other side of the wicker fence scolding some one in a hoarse voice.

"The devil take him!" Gavrílo was crying to some one. "He ought to be killed."

These words made all the old anger toward his neighbour burst forth in Iván. He stood awhile and listened to Gavrílo's scolding. Then Gavrílo grew quiet, and Iván went into the house.

He entered the room. Fire was burning within. The young woman was sitting in the corner behind the spinning-wheel; the old woman was

getting supper ready; the eldest son was making laces for the bast shoes, the second was at the table with a book, and Taráska was getting ready to go to the night pasture.

In the house everything was good and merry, if it were not for that curse, — a bad neighbour.

Iván was angry when he entered the room. He knocked the cat down from the bench and scolded the women because the vat was not in the right place. Iván felt out of humour. He sat down, frowning, and began to mend the collar. He could not forget Gavrílo's words, with which he had threatened him in court, and how he had said about somebody, speaking in a hoarse voice: "He ought to be killed."

The old woman got Taráska something to eat. When he was through with his supper, he put on a fur coat and a caftan, girded himself, took a piece of bread, and went out to the horses. The eldest brother wanted to see him off, but Iván himself got up and went out on the porch. It was pitch-dark outside, the sky was clouded, and a wind had risen. Iván stepped down from the porch, helped his little son to get on a horse, frightened a colt behind him, and stood looking and listening while Taráska rode down the village, where he met other children, and until they all rode out of hearing. Iván stood and stood at the gate, and could not get Gavrílo's words out of his head, "Something of yours may burn worse."

"He will not consider himself," thought Iván. "It is dry, and a wind is blowing. He will enter somewhere from behind, the scoundrel, and will set the house on fire, and he will go free. If I could catch him, he would not get away from me."

This thought troubled Iván so much that he did not go back to the porch, but walked straight into the street and through the gate, around the corner of the house.

"I will examine the yard, — who knows?"

And Iván walked softly down along the gate. He had just turned around the corner and looked up the fence, when it seemed to him that



something stirred at the other end, as though it got up and sat down again. Iván stopped and stood still, — he listened and looked: everything was quiet, only the wind rustled the leaves in the willow-tree and crackled through the straw. It was pitch-dark, but his eyes got used to the darkness: Iván could see the whole corner and the plough and the penthouse. He stood and looked, but there was no one there.

“It must have only seemed so to me,” thought Iván, “but I will, nevertheless, go and see,” and he stole up along the shed. Iván stepped softly in his bast shoes, so that he did not hear his own steps. He came to the corner, when, behold, something flashed by near the plough, and disappeared again. Iván felt as though something hit him in the heart, and he stopped. As he stopped he could see something flashing up, and he could see clearly some one in a cap squatting down with his back toward him, and setting fire to a bunch of straw in his hands. He stood stock-still.

“Now,” he thought, “he will not get away from me. I will catch him on the spot.”

Before Iván had walked two lengths of the fence it grew quite bright, and no longer in the former place, nor was it a small fire, but the flame licked up in the straw of the penthouse and was going toward the roof, and there stood Gavrílo so that the whole of him could be seen.

As a hawk swoops down on a lark, so Iván rushed up against Gavrílo the Lamé.

“I will twist him up,” he thought, “and he will not get away from me.” But Gavrílo the Lamé evidently heard his steps and ran along the shed with as much speed as a hare.

“You will not get away,” shouted Iván, swooping down on him.

He wanted to grab him by the collar, but Gavrílo got away from him, and Iván caught him by the skirt of his coat. The skirt tore off, and Iván fell down.

Iván jumped up.

“Help! Hold him!” and again he ran.

As he was getting up, Gavrílo was already near his yard, but Iván caught up with him. He was just going to take hold of him, when something stunned him, as though a stone had come down on his head. Gavrílo had picked up an oak post near his house and hit Iván with all his might on the head, when he ran up to him.

Iván staggered, sparks flew from his eyes, then all grew dark, and he fell down. When he came to his senses, Gavrílo was gone. It was as light as day, and from his yard came a sound as though an engine were working, and it roared and crackled there. Iván turned around and saw that his back shed was all on fire and the side shed was beginning to burn; the fire, and the smoke, and the burning straw were being carried toward the house.

“What is this? Friend!” cried Iván. He raised his hands and brought them down on his calves. “If I could only pull it out from the penthouse, and put it out! What is this? Friends!” he repeated. He wanted to shout, but he nearly strangled, — he had no voice. He wanted to run, but his feet would not move, — they tripped each other up. He tried to walk slowly, but he staggered, and he nearly strangled. He stood still again and drew breath, and started to walk. Before he came to the shed and reached the fire, the side shed was all on fire, and he could not get into the yard. People came running up, but nothing could be done. The neighbours dragged their own things out of their houses, and drove the cattle out. After Iván’s house, Gavrílo’s caught fire; a wind rose and carried the fire across the street. Half the village burned down.

All they saved from Iván’s house was the old man, who was pulled out, and everybody jumped out in just what they had on. Everything else was burned, except the horses in the pasture: the cattle were burned, the chickens on their roosts, the carts, the ploughs, the harrows, the women’s chests, the grain in the granary, — everything was burned.

Gavrílo’s cattle were saved, and they dragged a few things out of his house.

It burned for a long time, all night long. Iván stood near his yard, and kept looking at it, and saying:

“What is this? Friends! If I could just pull it out and put it out!”

But when the ceiling in the hut fell down, he jumped into the hottest place, took hold of a brand, and wanted to pull it out. The women saw him and began to call him back, but he pulled out one log and started for another: he staggered and fell on the fire. Then his son rushed after him and dragged him out. Iván had his hair and beard singed and his garments burnt and his hands blistered, but he did not feel anything.

“His sorrow has bereft him of his senses,” people said.

The fire died down, but Iván was still standing there, and saying:

“Friends, what is this? If I could only pull it out.”

In the morning the elder sent his son to Iván.

“Uncle Iván, your father is dying: he has sent for you, to bid you good-bye.”

Iván had forgotten about his father, and did not understand what they were saying to him.

“What father?” he said. “Send for whom?”

“He has sent for you, to bid you good-bye. He is dying in our house.

Come, Uncle Iván!” said the elder’s son, pulling him by his arm.

Iván followed the elder’s son.

When the old man, was carried out, burning straw fell on him and scorched him. He was taken to the elder’s house in a distant Part of the village. This Part did not burn.

When Iván came to his father, only the elder’s wife was there, and the children on the oven. The rest were all at the fire. The old man was lying on a bench, with a taper in his hand, and looking toward the door. When his son entered, he stirred a little. The old woman went up to him and said that his son had come. He told her to have him come closer to him. Iván went up, and then the old man said:

“What have I told you, Iván? Who has burned the village?”

“He, father,” said Iván, “he, — I caught him at it. He put the fire to the roof while I was standing near. If I could only have caught the burning bunch of straw and put it out, there would not have been anything.”

“Iván,” said the old man, “my death has come, and you, too, will die. Whose sin is it?”

Iván stared at his father and kept silence; he could not say a word.

“Speak before God: whose sin is it? What have I told you?”

It was only then that Iván came to his senses, and understood everything. And he snuffled, and said:

“Mine, father.” And he knelt before his father, and wept, and said:

“Forgive me, father! I am guilty toward you and toward God.”

The old man moved his hands, took the taper in his left hand, and was moving his right hand toward his brow, to make the sign of the cross, but he did not get it so far, and he stopped.

“Glory be to thee, O Lord! Glory be to thee, O Lord!” he said, and his eyes were again turned toward his son.

“Iván! Oh, Iván!”

“What is it, father?”

“What is to be done now?”

Iván was weeping.

“I do not know, father,” he said. “How am I to live now, father?”

The old man closed his eyes and lisped something, as though gathering all his strength, and he once more opened his eyes and said:

“You will get along. With God’s aid will you get along.” The old man was silent awhile, and he smiled and said:

“Remember, Iván, you must not tell who started the fire. Cover up another man’s sin! God will forgive two sins.”

And the old man took the taper into both hands, folded them over his heart, heaved a sigh, stretched himself, and died.

Iván did not tell on Gavrílo, and nobody found out how the fire had been started.

And Iván's heart was softened toward Gavrílo, and Gavrílo marvelled at Iván, because he did not tell anybody. At first Gavrílo was afraid of him, but later he got used to him. The peasants stopped quarrelling, and so did their families. While they rebuilt their homes, the two families lived in one house, and when the village was built again, and the farmhouses were built farther aPart, Iván and Gavrílo again were neighbours, living in the same block.

And Iván and Gavrílo lived neighbourly together, just as their fathers had lived. Iván Shcherbakóv remembered his father's injunction and God's command to put out the fire in the beginning. And if a person did him some harm, he did not try to have his revenge on the man, but to mend matters; and if a person called him a bad name, he did not try to answer with worse words still, but to teach him not to speak badly. And thus he taught, also the women folk and the children. And Iván Shcherbakóv improved and began to live better than ever.

## Two Old Men

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

'The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.'

— John iv. 19-21, 23.

THERE were once two old men who decided to go on a pilgrimage to worship God at Jerusalem. One of them was a well-to-do peasant named Efím Tarásitch Shevélef. The other, Elisha Bódrof, was not so well off.

Efím was a staid man, serious and firm. He neither drank nor smoked nor took snuff, and had never used bad language in his life. He had twice served as village Elder, and when he left office his accounts were in good order. He had a large family: two sons and a married grandson, all living with him. He was hale, long-bearded and erect, and it was only when he was past sixty that a little grey began to show itself in his beard.

Elisha was neither rich nor poor. He had formerly gone out carpentering, but now that he was growing old he stayed at home and kept bees. One of his sons had gone away to find work, the other was living at home. Elisha was a kindly and cheerful old man. It is true he drank sometimes, and he took snuff, and was fond of singing, but he was a peaceable man, and lived on good terms with his family and with his neighbours. He was short and dark, with a curly beard, and, like his patron saint Elisha, he was quite bald-headed.

The two old men had taken a vow long since and had arranged to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem together: but Efím could never spare the time; he always had so much business on hand; as soon as one thing was finished he started another. First he had to arrange his grandson's marriage; then to wait for his youngest son's return from the army, and after that he began building a new hut.

One holiday the two old men met outside the hut and, sitting down on some timber, began to talk.

'Well,' asked Elisha, 'when are we to fulfil our vow?'

Efím made a wry face.

'We must wait,' he said. 'This year has turned out a hard one for me. I started building this hut thinking it would cost me something over a hundred roubles, but now it's getting on for three hundred and it's still

not finished. We shall have to wait in the summer. In summer, God willing, we will go without fail.'

'It seems to me we ought not to put it off, but should go at once,' said Elisha. 'Spring is the best time.'

'The time's right enough, but what about my building? How can I leave that?'

'As if you had no one to leave in charge! Your son can look after it.'

'But how? My eldest son is not trustworthy — he sometimes takes a glass too much.'

'Ah, neighbour, when we die they'll get on without us. Let your son begin now to get some experience.'

'That's true enough, but somehow when one begins a thing one likes to see it done.'

'Eh, friend, we can never get through all we have to do. The other day the women-folk at home were washing and house cleaning for Easter. Here something needed doing, there something else, and they could not get everything done. So my eldest daughter-in-law, who's a sensible woman, says: 'We may be thankful the holiday comes without waiting for us, or however hard we worked we should never be ready for it.'

Efím became thoughtful.

'I've spent a lot of money on this building,' he said 'and one can't start on the journey with empty pockets. We shall want a hundred roubles apiece — and it's no small sum.'

Elisha laughed.

'Now, come, come, old friend!' he said, 'you have ten times as much as I, and yet you talk about money. Only say when we are to start, and though I have nothing now I shall have enough by then.'

Efím also smiled.

'Dear me, I did not know you were so rich!' said he. 'Why, where will you get it from?'

'I can scrape some together at home, and if that's not enough, I'll sell half a score of hives to my neighbour. He's long been wanting to buy them.'

'If they swarm well this year, you'll regret it.'

'Regret it! Not I, neighbour! I never regretted anything in my life, except my sins. There's nothing more precious than the soul.'

'That's so; still it's not right to neglect things at home.'

'But what if our souls are neglected? That's worse. We took the vow, so let us go! Now, seriously, let us go!'

II

Elisha succeeded in persuading his comrade. In the morning, after thinking it well over, Efím came to Elisha.

'You are right,' said he, 'let us go. Life and death are in God's hands. We must go now, while we are still alive and have the strength.'

A week later the old men were ready to start. Efím had money enough at hand. He took a hundred roubles himself, and left two hundred with his wife.

Elisha, too, got ready. He sold ten hives to his neighbour, with any new swarms that might come from them before the summer. He took seventy roubles for the lot. The rest of the hundred roubles he scraped together from the other members of his household, fairly clearing them all out. His wife gave him all she had been saving up for her funeral; and his daughter-in-law also gave him what she had.

Efím gave his eldest son definite orders about every thing: when and how much grass to mow, where to cart the manure, and how to finish off and roof the cottage. He thought out everything, and gave his orders accordingly. Elisha, on the other hand, only explained to his wife that she was to keep separate the swarms from the hives he had sold, and to be sure to let the neighbour have them all, without any tricks. As to household affairs, he did not even mention them.



‘You will see what to do and how to do it, as the needs arise,’ he said. ‘You are the masters, and will know how to do what’s best for yourselves.’

So the old men got ready. Their people baked them cakes, and made bags for them, and cut them linen for leg-bands (Worn by Russian peasants instead of stockings) They put on new leather shoes, and took with them spare shoes of platted bark. Their families went with them to the end of the village and there took leave of them, and the old men started on their pilgrimage.

Elisha left home in a cheerful mood, and as soon as he was out of the village forgot all his home affairs. His only care was how to please his comrade, how to avoid saying a rude word to any one, how to get to his destination and home again in peace and love.

Walking along the road, Elisha would either whisper some prayer to himself or go over in his mind such of the lives of the saints as he was able to remember. When he came across any one on the road, or turned in anywhere for the night, he tried to behave as gently as possible and to say a godly word. So he journeyed on, rejoicing. One thing only he could not do, he could not give up taking snuff. Though he had left his snuff-box behind, he hankered after it. Then a man he met on the road gave him some snuff; and every now and then he would lag behind (not to lead his comrade into temptation) and would take a pinch of snuff.

Efím too walked well and firmly; doing no wrong and speaking no vain words, but his heart was not so light. Household cares weighed on his mind. He kept worrying about what was going on at home. Had he not forgotten to give his son this or that order? Would his son do things properly? If he happened to see potatoes being planted or manure carted, as he went along, he wondered if his son was doing as he had been told. And he almost wanted to turn back and show him how to do things, or even do them himself.

The old men had been walking for five weeks, they had worn out their home-made bark shoes, and had to begin buying new ones when they reached Little Russia (Little Russia is situated in the south-western Part of Russia, and consists of the Governments of Kief, Poltava, Tchernigof, and Part of Kharkof and Kherson) From the time they left home they had had to pay for their food and for their night's lodging, but when they reached Little Russia the people vied with one another in asking them into their huts. They took them in and fed them, and would accept no payment; and more than that, they put bread or even cakes into their bags for them to eat on the road.

The old men travelled some five hundred miles in this manner free of expense, but after they had crossed the next province, they came to a district where the harvest had failed. The peasants still gave them free lodging at night, but no longer fed them for nothing. Sometimes, even, they could get no bread: they offered to pay for it, but there was none to be had. The people said the harvest had completely failed the year before. Those who had been rich were ruined and had had to sell all they possessed; those of moderate means were left destitute, and those of the poor who had not left those Parts, wandered about begging, or starved at home in utter want. In the winter they had had to eat husks and goosefoot.

One night the old men stopped in a small village; they bought fifteen pounds of bread, slept there, and started before sunrise, to get well on their way before the heat of the day. When they had gone some eight miles, on coming to a stream they sat down, and, filling a bowl with water, they steeped some bread in it, and ate it. Then they changed their leg-bands, and rested for a while. Elisha took out his snuff-box. Efím shook his head at him.

'How is it you don't give up that nasty habit?' said he.

Elisha waved his hand. 'The evil habit is stronger than I,' he said.

Presently they got up and went on. After walking for nearly another eight miles, they came to a large village and passed right through it. It had now grown hot. Elisha was tired out and wanted to rest and have a

drink, but Efím did not stop. Efím was the better walker of the two, and Elisha found it hard to keep up with him.

‘If I could only have a drink,’ said he.

‘Well, have a drink,’ said Efím. ‘I don’t want any.’

Elisha stopped.

‘You go on,’ he said, ‘but I’ll just run in to the little hut there. I will catch you up in a moment.’

‘All right,’ said Efím, and he went on along the high road alone, while Elisha turned back to the hut.

It was a small hut plastered with clay, the bottom a dark colour, the top whitewashed; but the clay had crumbled away. Evidently it was long since it had been re-plastered, and the thatch was off the roof on one side.

The entrance to the hut was through the yard. Elisha entered the yard, and saw, lying close to a bank of earth that ran round the hut, a gaunt, beardless man with his shirt tucked into his trousers, as is the custom in Little Russia (In Great Russia the peasants let their shirt hang outside their trousers). The man must have lain down in the shade, but the sun had come round and now shone full on him. Though not asleep, he still lay there. Elisha called to him, and asked for a drink, but the man gave no answer.

‘He is either ill or unfriendly,’ thought Elisha; and going to the door he heard a child crying in the hut. He took hold of the ring that served as a door-handle, and knocked with it.

‘Hey, masters!’ he called. No answer. He knocked again with his staff.

‘Hey, Christians!’ Nothing stirred.

‘Hey, servants of God!’ Still no reply.

Elisha was about to turn away, when he thought he heard a groan the other side of the door.

‘Dear me, some misfortune must have happened to the people? I had better have a look.’

And Elisha entered the hut.

#### IV

Elisha turned the ring; the door was not fastened. He opened it and went along up the narrow passage. The door into the dwelling-room was open. To the left was a brick oven; in front against the wall was an icon-stand (An icon (properly ikón) is a representation of God, Christ, an angel, or a saint, usually painted, enamelled, or embossed) and a table before it, by the table was a bench on which sat an old woman, bareheaded and wearing only a single garment. There she sat with her head resting on the table, and near her was a thin, wax-coloured boy, with a protruding stomach.

He was asking for something, pulling at her sleeve, and crying bitterly. Elisha entered. The air in the hut was very foul. He looked round, and saw a woman lying on the floor behind the oven: she lay flat on the ground with her eyes closed and her throat rattling, now stretching out a leg, now dragging it in, tossing from side to side; and the foul smell came from her. Evidently she could do nothing for herself and no one had been attending to her needs. The old woman lifted her head, and saw the stranger.

‘What do you want?’ said she.’ What do you want man? We have nothing.’

Elisha understood her, though she spoke in the Little-Russian dialect.

‘I came in for a drink of water, servant of God,’ he said.

‘There’s no one — no one — we have nothing to fetch it in. Go your way.’

Then Elisha asked:

‘Is there no one among you, then, well enough to attend to that woman?’

‘No, we have no one. My son is dying outside, and we are dying in here.’

The little boy had ceased crying when he saw the stranger, but when the old woman began to speak, he began again, and clutching hold of her sleeve cried:

‘Bread, Granny, bread.’

Elisha was about to question the old woman, when the man staggered into the hut. He came along the passage, clinging to the wall, but as he was entering the dwelling-room he fell in the corner near the threshold, and without trying to get up again to reach the bench, he began to speak in broken words. He brought out a word at a time, stopping to draw breath, and gasping.

‘Illness has seized us . . . ,’ said he, ‘and famine. He is dying . . . of hunger.’

And he motioned towards the boy, and began to sob.

Elisha jerked up the sack behind his shoulder and pulling the straps off his arms, put it on the floor. Then he lifted it on to the bench, and untied the strings. Having opened the sack, he took out a loaf of bread, and, cutting off a piece with his knife, handed it to the man. The man would not take it, but pointed to the little boy and to a little girl crouching behind the oven, as if to say:

‘Give it to them.’

Elisha held it out to the boy. When the boy smelt bread, he stretched out his arms, and seizing the slice with both his little hands, bit into it so that his nose disappeared in the chunk. The little girl came out from behind the oven and fixed her eyes on the bread. Elisha gave her also a slice. Then he cut off another piece and gave it to the old woman, and she too began munching it.

‘If only some water could be brought,’ she said, ‘their mouths are parched. I tried to fetch some water yesterday — or was it to-day — I can’t remember, but I fell down and could go no further, and the pail has remained there, unless some one has taken it.’

Elisha asked where the well was. The old woman told him. Elisha went out, found the pail, brought some water, and gave the people a drink.

The children and the old woman ate some more bread with the water, but the man would not eat.

‘I cannot eat,’ he said.

All this time the younger woman did not show any consciousness, but continued to toss from side to side. Presently Elisha went to the village shop and bought some millet, salt, flour, and oil. He found an axe, chopped some wood, and made a fire. The little girl came and helped him. Then he boiled some soup, and gave the starving people a meal.

The man ate a little, the old woman had some too, and the little girl and boy licked the bowl clean, and then curled up and fell fast asleep in one another’s arms.

The man and the old woman then began telling Elisha how they had sunk to their present state.

‘We were poor enough before?’ said they, ‘but when the crops failed, what we gathered hardly lasted us through the autumn. We had nothing left by the time winter came, and had to beg from the neighbours and from any one we could. At first they gave, then they began to refuse. Some would have been glad enough to help us, but had nothing to give. And we were ashamed of asking: we were in debt all round, and owed money, and flour, and bread.’

‘I went to look for work,’ the man said, ‘but could find none.

Everywhere people were offering to work merely for their own keep. One day you’d get a short job, and then you might spend two days looking for work.

Then the old woman and the girl went begging, further away. But they got very little; bread was so scarce. Still we scraped food together somehow, and hoped to struggle through till next harvest, but towards spring people ceased to give anything. And then this illness seized us. Things became worse and worse. One day we might have something to eat, and then nothing for two days. We began eating grass. Whether it was the grass, or what, made my wife ill, I don’t know. She could not

keep on her legs, and I had no strength left, and there was nothing to help us to recovery.'

'I struggled on alone for a while,' said the old woman, 'but at last I broke down too for want of food, and grew quite weak. The girl also grew weak and timid. I told her to go to the neighbours — she would not leave the hut, but crept into a corner and sat there. The day before yesterday a neighbour looked in, but seeing that we were ill and hungry she turned away and left us. Her husband has had to go away, and she has nothing for her own little ones to eat. And so we lay, waiting for death.'

Having heard their story, Elisha gave up the thought of overtaking his comrade that day, and remained with them all night. In the morning he got up and began doing the housework, just as if it were his own home. He kneaded the bread with the old woman's help, and lit the fire. Then he went with the little girl to the neighbours to get the most necessary things, for there was nothing in the hut: everything had been sold for bread — cooking utensils, clothing, and all.

So Elisha began replacing what was necessary, making some things himself, and buying some. He remained there one day, then another, and then a third. The little boy picked up strength and, whenever Elisha sat down, crept along the bench and nestled up to him. The little girl brightened up and helped in all the work, running after Elisha and calling,  
'Daddy, daddy.'

The old woman grew stronger, and managed to go out to see a neighbour. The man too improved, and was able to get about, holding on to the wall. Only the wife could not get up, but even she regained consciousness on the third day, and asked for food.

'Well,' thought Elisha, 'I never expected to waste so much time on the way. Now I must be getting on.'

The fourth day was the feast day after the summer fast, and Elisha thought:

‘I will stay and break the fast with these people. I’ll go and buy them something, and keep the feast with them, and to-morrow evening I will start.’

So Elisha went into the village, bought milk, wheat-flour and dripping, and helped the old woman to boil and bake for the morrow. On the feast day Elisha went to church, and then broke the fast with his friends at the hut. That day the wife got up, and managed to move about a bit. The husband had shaved and put on a clean shirt, which the old woman had washed for him; and he went to beg for mercy of a rich peasant in the village to whom his ploughland and meadow were mortgaged. He went to beg the rich peasant to grant him the use of the meadow and field till after the harvest; but in the evening he came back very sad, and began to weep. The rich peasant had shown no mercy, but had said: ‘Bring me the money.’

Elisha again grew thoughtful. ‘How are they to live now?’ thought he to himself. ‘Other people will go haymaking, but there will be nothing for these to mow, their grass land is mortgaged. The rye will ripen. Others will reap (and what a fine crop mother-earth is giving this year), but they have nothing to look forward to. Their three acres are pledged to the rich peasant. When I am gone, they’ll drift back into the state I found them in.’

Elisha was in two minds, but finally decided not to leave that evening, but to wait until the morrow. He went out into the yard to sleep. He said his prayers, and lay down; but he could not sleep. On the one hand he felt he ought to be going, for he had spent too much time and money as it was; on the other hand he felt sorry for the people.

‘There seems to be no end to it, he said. ‘First I only meant to bring them a little water and give them each a slice of bread: and just see where it has landed me. It’s a case of redeeming the meadow and the cornfield. And when I have done that, I shall have to buy a cow for



them, and a horse for the man to cart his sheaves. A nice coil you've got yourself into, brother Elisha! You've slipped your cables and lost your reckoning!

Elisha got up, lifted his coat which he had been using for a pillow, unfolded it, got out his snuff-box and took a pinch, thinking that it might perhaps clear his thoughts.

But no! He thought and thought, and came to no conclusion. He ought to be going; and yet pity held him back. He did not know what to do. He refolded his coat and put it under his head again. He lay thus for a long time, till the cocks had already crowed once: then he was quite drowsy. And suddenly it seemed as if some one had roused him. He saw that he was dressed for the journey, with the sack on his back and the staff in his hand, and the gate stood ajar so that he could just squeeze through. He was about to pass out, when his sack caught against the fence on one side: he tried to free it, but then his leg-band caught on the other side and came undone. He pulled at the sack, and saw that it had not caught on the fence, but that the little girl was holding it and crying,

'Bread, daddy, bread!'

He looked at his foot, and there was the tiny boy holding him by the leg-band, while the master of the hut and the old woman were looking at him through the window.

Elisha awoke, and said to himself in an audible voice:

'To-morrow I will redeem their cornfield, and will buy them a horse, and flour to last till the harvest, and a cow for the little ones; or else while I go to seek the Lord beyond the sea, I may lose Him in myself.'

Then Elisha fell asleep, and slept till morning. He awoke early, and going to the rich peasant, redeemed both the cornfield and the meadow land. He bought a scythe (for that also had been sold) and brought it back with him. Then he sent the man to mow, and himself went into the village. He heard that there was a horse and cart for sale at the public-house, and he struck a bargain with the owner, and bought them. Then he bought a sack of flour, put it in the cart, and went to see about a cow. As he was going along he overtook two

women talking as they went. Though they spake the Little-Russian dialect, he understood what they were saying.

‘At first, it seems, they did not know him; they thought he was just an ordinary man. He came in to ask for a drink of water, and then he remained. Just think of the things he has bought for them! Why they say he bought a horse and cart for them at the publican’s, only this morning! There are not many such men in the world. It’s worth while going to have a look at him.’

Elisha heard and understood that he was being praised, and he did not go to buy the cow, but returned to the inn, paid for the horse, harnessed it, drove up to the hut, and got out. The people in the hut were astonished when they saw the horse. They thought it might be for them, but dared not ask. The man came out to open the gate.

‘Where did you get a horse from, grandfather,’ he asked.

‘Why, I bought it,’ said Elisha. ‘It was going cheap. Go and cut some grass and put it in the manger for it to eat during the night. And take in the sack.’

The man unharnessed the horse, and carried the sack into the barn. Then he mowed some grass and put it in the manger. Everybody lay down to sleep. Elisha went outside and lay by the roadside. That evening he took his bag out with him. When every one was asleep, he got up, packed and fastened his bag, wrapped the linen bands round his legs, put on his shoes and coat, and set off to follow Efím.

## VII

When Elisha had walked rather more than three miles it began to grow light. He sat down under a tree, opened his bag, counted his money, and found he had only seventeen roubles and twenty kopeks left.

‘Well,’ thought he, ‘it is no use trying to cross the sea with this. If I beg my way it may be worse than not going at all. Friend Efím will get to Jerusalem without me, and will place a candle at the shrines in my name. As for me, I’m afraid I shall never fulfil my vow in this life. I must

be thankful it was made to a merciful Master, and to one who pardons sinners.'

Elisha rose, jerked his bag well up on his shoulders, and turned back.

Not wishing to be recognized by any one, he made a circuit to avoid the village, and walked briskly homeward. Coming from home the way had seemed difficult to him, and he had found it hard to keep up with Efím, but now on his return journey, God helped him to get over the ground so that he hardly felt fatigue. Walking seemed like child's play. He went along swinging his staff, and did his forty to fifty miles a day.

When Elisha reached home the harvest was over. His family were delighted to see him again, and all wanted to know what had happened: Why and how he had been left behind? And why he had returned without reaching Jerusalem? But Elisha did not tell them.

'It was not God's will that I should get there,' said he. 'I lost my money on the way, and lagged behind my companion. Forgive me, for the Lord's sake!'

Elisha gave his old wife what money he had left. Then he questioned them about home affairs. Everything was going on well; all the work had been done, nothing neglected, and all were living in peace and concord.

Efím's family heard of his return the same day, and came for news of their old man; and to them Elisha gave the same answers.

'Efím is a fast walker. We Parted three days before St. Peter's day, and I meant to catch him up again, but all sorts of things happened. I lost my money, and had no means to get any further, so I turned back.'

The folks were astonished that so sensible a man should have acted so foolishly: should have started and not got to his destination, and should have squandered all his money. They wondered at it for a while, and then forgot all about it, and Elisha forgot it too. He set to work again on his homestead. With his son's help he cut wood for fuel for the winter. He and the women threshed the corn.

Then he mended the thatch on the outhouses, put the bees under cover, and handed over to his neighbour the ten hives he had sold him in spring, and all the swarms that had come from them. His wife tried not to tell how many swarms there had been from these hives, but Elisha knew well enough from which there had been swarms and from which not. And instead of ten, he handed over seventeen swarms to his neighbour. Having got everything ready for the winter, Elisha sent his son away to find work, while he himself took to plating shoes of bark, and hollowing out logs for hives.

## VIII

All that day while Elisha stopped behind in the hut with the sick people, Efím waited for him. He only went on a little way before he sat down. He waited and waited, had a nap, woke up again, and again sat waiting; but his comrade did not come. He gazed till his eyes ached. The sun was already sinking behind a tree, and still no Elisha was to be seen.

‘Perhaps he has passed me,’ thought Efím, ‘or perhaps some one gave him a lift and he drove by while I slept, and did not see me. But how could he help seeing me? One can see so far here in the steppe. Shall I go back? Suppose he is on in front, we shall then miss each other completely and it will be still worse. I had better go on, and we shall be sure to meet where we put up for the night.’

He came to a village, and told the watchman, if an old man of a certain description came along, to bring him to the hut where Efím stopped. But Elisha did not turn up that night. Efím went on, asking all he met whether they had not seen a little, bald-headed, old man? No one had seen such a traveller. Efím wondered, but went on alone, saying: ‘We shall be sure to meet in Odessa, or on board the ship,’ and he did not trouble more about it.

On the way, he came across a pilgrim wearing a priest’s coat, with long hair and a skull-cap such as priests wear. This pilgrim had been to Mount Athos, and was now going to Jerusalem for the second time.

They both stopped at the same place one night, and, having met, they travelled on together.

They got safely to Odessa, and there had to wait three days for a ship. Many pilgrims from many different Parts were in the same case. Again Efím asked about Elisha, but no one had seen him.

Efím got himself a foreign passport, which cost him five roubles. He paid forty roubles for a return ticket to Jerusalem, and bought a supply of bread and herrings for the voyage.

The pilgrim began explaining to Efím how he might get on to the ship without paying his fare; but Efím would not listen. 'No, I came prepared to pay, and I shall pay,' said he.

The ship was freighted, and the pilgrims went on board, Efím and his new comrade among them. The anchors were weighed, and the ship put out to sea.

All day they sailed smoothly, but towards night a wind arose, rain came on, and the vessel tossed about and shipped water. The people were frightened: the women wailed and screamed, and some of the weaker men ran about the ship looking for shelter. Efím too was frightened, but he would not show it, and remained at the place on deck where he had settled down when first he came on board, beside some old men from Tambóf.

There they sat silent, all night and all next day, holding on to their sacks. On the third day it grew calm, and on the fifth day they anchored at Constantinople. Some of the pilgrims went on shore to visit the Church of St. Sophia, now held by the Turks. Efím remained on the ship, and only bought some white bread. They lay there for twenty-four hours, and then put to sea again. At Smyrna they stopped again; and at Alexandria; but at last they arrived safely at Jaffa, where all the pilgrims had to disembark. From there still it was more than forty miles by road to Jerusalem. When disembarking the people were again much frightened. The ship was high, and the people were dropped into boats, which rocked so much that it was easy to miss them and fall into the

water. A couple of men did get a wetting, but at last all were safely landed.

They went on on foot, and at noon on the third day reached Jerusalem. They stopped outside the town, at the Russian inn, where their passports were indorsed. Then, after dinner, Efím visited the Holy Places with his companion, the pilgrim. It was not the time when they could be admitted to the Holy Sepulchre, but they went to the Patriarchate. All the pilgrims assembled there. The women were separated from the men, who were all told to sit in a circle, barefoot. Then a monk came in with a towel to wash their feet.

He washed, wiped, and then kissed their feet, and did this to every one in the circle. Efím's feet were washed and kissed, with the rest. He stood through vespers and matins, prayed, placed candles at the shrines, handed in booklets inscribed with his parents, names, that they might be mentioned in the church prayers.

Here at the Patriarchate food and wine were given them. Next morning they went to the cell of Mary of Egypt, where she had lived doing penance. Here too they placed candles and had prayers read.

From there they went to Abraham's Monastery, and saw the place where Abraham intended to slay his son as an offering to God. Then they visited the spot where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, and the Church of James, the Lord's brother. The pilgrim showed Efím all these places, and told him how much money to give at each place. At mid-day they returned to the inn and had dinner. As they were preparing to lie down and rest, the pilgrim cried out, and began to search his clothes, feeling them all over.

'My purse has been stolen, there were twenty-three roubles in it,' said he, 'two ten-rouble notes and the rest in change.'  
He sighed and lamented a great deal, but as there was no help for it, they lay down to sleep.

As Efím lay there, he was assailed by temptation.

‘No one has stolen any money from this pilgrim,’ thought he, ‘I do not believe he had any. He gave none away anywhere, though he made me give, and even borrowed a rouble of me.’

This thought had no sooner crossed his mind, than Efím rebuked himself, saying: ‘What right have I to judge a man? It is a sin. I will think no more about it.’ But as soon as his thoughts began to wander, they turned again to the pilgrim: how interested he seemed to be in money, and how unlikely it sounded when he declared that his purse had been stolen.

‘He never had any money,’ thought Efím. ‘It’s all an invention.’

Towards evening they got up, and went to midnight Mass at the great Church of the Resurrection, where the Lord’s Sepulchre is. The pilgrim kept close to Efím and went with him everywhere. They came to the Church; a great many pilgrims were there; some Russians and some of other nationalities: Greeks, Armenians, Turks, and Syrians. Efím entered the Holy Gates with the crowd.

A monk led them past the Turkish sentinels, to the place where the Saviour was taken down from the cross and anointed, and where candles were burning in nine great candlesticks. The monk showed and explained everything. Efím offered a candle there. Then the monk led Efím to the right, up the steps to Golgotha, to the place where the cross had stood. Efím prayed there. Then they showed him the cleft where the ground had been rent asunder to its nethermost depths; then the place where Christ’s hands and feet were nailed to the cross; then Adam’s tomb, where the blood of Christ had dripped on to Adam’s bones.

Then they showed him the stone on which Christ sat when the crown of thorns was placed on His head; then the post to which Christ was bound when He was scourged. Then Efím saw the stone with two holes for Christ’s feet. They were going to show him something else, but there was a stir in the crowd, and the people all hurried to the church

of the Lord's Sepulchre itself. The Latin Mass had just finished there, and the Russian Mass was beginning. And Efím went with the crowd to the tomb cut in the rock.

He tried to get rid of the pilgrim, against whom he was still sinning in his mind, but the pilgrim would not leave him, but went with him to the Mass at the Holy Sepulchre. They tried to get to the front, but were too late. There was such a crowd that it was impossible to move either backwards or forwards. Efím stood looking in front of him, praying, and every now and then feeling for his purse. He was in two minds: sometimes he thought that the pilgrim was deceiving him, and then again he thought that if the pilgrim spoke the truth and his purse had really been stolen, the same thing might happen to himself.

Efím stood there gazing into the little chapel in which was the Holy Sepulchre itself with thirty-six lamps burning above it. As he stood looking over the people's heads, he saw something that surprised him. Just beneath the lamps in which the sacred fire burns and in front of every one, Efím saw an old man in a grey coat, whose bald, shining head was just like Elisha Bódrof.

'It is like him,' thought Efím, 'but it cannot be Elisha. He could not have got ahead of me. The ship before ours started a week sooner. He could not have caught that; and he was not on ours, for I saw every pilgrim on board.'

Hardly had Efím thought this, when the little old man began to pray, and bowed three times: once forwards to God, then once on each side — to the brethren. And as he turned his head to the right, Efím recognized him. It was Elisha Bódrof himself with his dark, curly beard turning grey at the cheeks, with his brows, his eyes and nose, and his expression of face. Yes, it was he!

Efím was very pleased to have found his comrade again, and wondered how Elisha had got ahead of him.

'Well done, Elisha!' thought he. 'See how he has pushed ahead. He must have come across some one who showed him the way. When we



get out, I will find him, get rid of this fellow in the skull-cap, and keep to Elisha. Perhaps he will show me how to get to the front also.'

Efím kept looking out, so as not to lose sight of Elisha. But when the Mass was over, the crowd began to sway, pushing forward to kiss the tomb, and pushed Efím aside. He was again seized with fear lest his purse should be stolen. Pressing it with his hand, he began elbowing through the crowd, anxious only to get out. When he reached the open, he went about for a long time searching for Elisha both outside and in the Church itself. In the cells of the Church he saw many people of all kinds, eating, and drinking wine, and reading and sleeping there. But Elisha was nowhere to be seen. So Efím returned to the inn without having found his comrade. That evening the pilgrim in the skull-cap did not turn up. He had gone off without repaying the rouble, and Efím was left alone.

The next day Efím went to the Holy Sepulchre again, with an old man from Tambóf, whom he had met on the ship. He tried to get to the front, but was again pressed back; so he stood by a pillar and prayed. He looked before him, and there in the foremost place under the lamps, close to the very Sepulchre of the Lord, stood Elisha, with his arms spread out like a priest at the altar, and with his bald head all shining.

'Well, now,' thought Efím, 'I won't lose him!'

He pushed forward to the front, but when he got there, there was no Elisha: he had evidently gone away.

Again on the third day Efím looked, and saw at the Sepulchre, in the holiest place, Elisha standing in the sight of all men, his arms outspread, and his eyes gazing upwards as if he saw something above. And his bald head was all shining.

'Well, this time,' thought Efím, 'he shall not escape me! I will go and stand at the door, then we can't miss one another!'

Efím went out and stood by the door till past noon. Every one had passed out, but still Elisha did not appear.

Efím remained six weeks in Jerusalem, and went everywhere: to Bethlehem, and to Bethany, and to the Jordan. He had a new shirt sealed at the Holy Sepulchre for his burial, and he took a bottle of water from the Jordan, and some holy earth, and bought candles that had been lit at the sacred flame. In eight places he inscribed names to be prayed for, and he spent all his money, except just enough to get home with. Then he started homeward. He walked to Jaffa, sailed thence to Odessa, and walked home from there on foot.

XI

Efím travelled the same road he had come by; and as he drew nearer home his former anxiety returned as to how affairs were getting on in his absence. 'Much water flows away in a year,' the proverb says. It takes a lifetime to build up a homestead, but not long to ruin it, thought he.

And he wondered how his son had managed without him, what sort of spring they were having, how the cattle had wintered, and whether the cottage was well finished. When Efím came to the district where he had parted from Elisha the summer before, he could hardly believe that the people living there were the same. The year before they had been starving, but now they were living in comfort. The harvest had been good, and the people had recovered and had forgotten their former misery.

One evening Efím reached the very place where Elisha had remained behind; and as he entered the village, a little girl in a white smock ran out of a hut.

Daddy, daddy, come to our house!

Efím meant to pass on, but the little girl would not let him. She took hold of his coat, laughing, and pulled him towards the hut, where a woman with a small boy came out into the porch and beckoned to him. 'Come in, grandfather,' she said. 'Have supper and spend the night with us.'

So Efím went in.

‘I may as well ask about Elisha,’ he thought. ‘I fancy this is the very hut he went to for a drink of water.’

The woman helped him off with the bag he carried, and gave him water to wash his face. Then she made him sit down to table, and set milk, curd-cakes and porridge before him. Efím thanked her, and praised her for her kindness to a pilgrim. The woman shook her head.

‘We have good reason to welcome pilgrims,’ she said. ‘It was a pilgrim who showed us what life is. We were living forgetful of God, and God punished us almost to death. We reached such a pass last summer, that we all lay ill and helpless with nothing to eat. And we should have died, but that God sent an old man to help us — just such a one as you. He came in one day to ask for a drink of water, saw the state we were in, took pity on us, and remained with us. He gave us food and drink, and set us on our feet again; and he redeemed our land, and bought a cart and horse and gave them to us.’

Here the old woman entering the hut, interrupted the younger one and said:

‘We don’t know whether it was a man, or an angel from God. He loved us all, pitied us all, and went away without telling us his name, so that we don’t even know whom to pray for. I can see it all before me now! There I lay waiting for death, when in comes a bald-headed old man. He was not anything much to look at, and he asked for a drink of water. I, sinner that I am, thought to myself: “What does he come prowling about here for?” And just think what he did! As soon as he saw us, he let down his bag, on this very spot, and untied it.’

Here the little girl joined in.

‘No, Granny,’ said she, ‘first he put it down here in the middle of the hut, and then he lifted it on to the bench.’

And they began discussing and recalling all he had said and done, where he sat and slept, and what he had said to each of them.

At night the peasant himself came home on his horse, and he too began to tell about Elisha and how he had lived with them.

'Had he not come we should all have died in our sins. We were dying in despair, murmuring against God and man. But he set us on our feet again; and through him we learned to know God, and to believe that there is good in man. May the Lord bless him! We used to live like animals; he made human beings of us.

After giving Efím food and drink, they showed him where he was to sleep; and lay down to sleep themselves.

But though Efím lay down, he could not sleep. He could not get Elisha out of his mind, but remembered how he had seen him three times at Jerusalem, standing in the foremost place.

'So that is how he got ahead of me,' thought Efím. 'God may or may not have accepted my pilgrimage but He has certainly accepted his!'

Next morning Efím bade farewell to the people, who put some patties in his sack before they went to their work, and he continued his journey.

## XII

Efím had been away just a year, and it was spring again when he reached home one evening. His son was not at home, but had gone to the public-house and when he came back, he had had a drop too much. Efím began questioning him. Everything showed that the young fellow had been unsteady during his father's absence. The money had all been wrongly spent, and the work had been neglected. The father began to upbraid the son; and the son answered rudely.

'Why didn't you stay and look after it yourself?' he said. 'You go off, taking the money with you and now you demand it of me!'

The old man grew angry, and struck his son.

In the morning Efím went to the village Elder to complain of his son's conduct. As he was passing Elisha's house, his friend's wife greeted him from the porch.

'How do you do, neighbour,' she said. 'How do you do, dear friend? Did you get to Jerusalem safely?'

Efím stopped.

‘Yes, thank God,’ he said. ‘I have been there. I lost sight of your old man, but I hear he got home safely.’

The old woman was fond of talking:

‘Yes, neighbour, he has come back,’ said she. ‘He’s been back a long time. Soon after Assumption, I think it was, he returned. And we were glad the Lord had sent him back to us! We were dull without him. We can’t expect much work from him any more, his years for work are past; but still he is the head of the household and it’s more cheerful when he’s at home. And how glad our lad was! He said, “It’s like being without sunlight, when father’s away!” It was dull without him, dear friend. We’re fond of him, and take good care of him.’

‘Is he at home now?’

‘He is, dear friend. He is with his bees. He is hiving the swarms. He says they are swarming well this year. The Lord has given such strength to the bees that my husband doesn’t remember the like. “The Lord is not rewarding us according to our sins,” he says. Come in, dear neighbour, he will be so glad to see you again.’

Efím passed through the passage into the yard and to the apiary, to see Elisha. There was Elisha in his grey coat, without any face-net or gloves, standing, under the birch trees, looking upwards, his arms stretched out and his bald head shining, as Efím had seen him at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem: and above him the sunlight shone through the birches as the flames of fire had done in the holy place, and the golden bees flew round his head like a halo, and did not sting him.

Efím stopped. The old woman called to her husband.

‘Here’s your friend come,’ she cried.

Elisha looked round with a pleased face, and came towards Efím, gently picking bees out of his own beard.

‘Good day, neighbour, good-day, dear friend. Did you get there safely?’

'My feet walked there, and I have brought you some water from the river Jordan. You must come to my house for it. But whether the Lord accepted my efforts. . . .'

'Well the Lord be thanked! May Christ bless you!' said Elisha.

Efím was silent for a while, and then added:

'My feet have been there, but whether my soul, or another's, has been there more truly . . .'

'That's God's business, neighbour, God's business,' interrupted Elisha.

'On my return journey I stopped at the hut where you remained behind. . . .'

Elisha was alarmed, and said hurriedly:

'God's business, neighbour, God's business! Come into the cottage, I'll give you some of our honey.' And Elisha changed the conversation, and talked of home affairs.

Efím sighed, and did not speak to Elisha of the people in the hut, nor of how he had seen him in Jerusalem. But he now understood that the best way to keep one's vows to God and to do His will, is for each man while he lives to show love and do good to others.

## Yermak, The Conqueror Of Siberia

AT THE TIME of the Tsar Ivan the Terrible, 1 the Strogonofs were rich merchants, and lived in Perm, on the river Kama.

They had heard that on the river Kama, for a hundred and forty versts around, there was rich land; the soil had not been plowed for a century; the black forest for a century had not been felled. In the forests were many wild animals, and along the river were lakes full of fish, and no one lived in this land except wandering Tartars.

So the Strogonofs wrote a letter to the Tsar :

“ Grant us this land, and we ourselves will found cities, and we will gather men together and establish them, and we will not allow the Tartars to pass through it.”

The Tsar consented, and granted them the land. The Strogonofs sent out agents to collect people. And there came to them many people who were out of work. The Strogonofs assigned lands and forest to all who came, gave cattle to each, and agreed not to tax them during their lives, and only required of them that if it were necessary they should go to fight the Tartars.

Thus this land was settled with a Russian population.

Twenty years passed. The Strogonof merchants grew richer and richer, and this territory of one hundred and forty versts became too small for them. They wanted still more land. Now there were lofty mountains a hundred versts distant, the Urals, and they heard that beyond these Urals was excellent land. The ruler

1 Ioann Vasilyevitch “ Groznui,” 1530-1584.

of this land, which was boundless, was a petty Siberian prince named Kuchum.

In former times Kuchum had given his allegiance to the Russian Tsar, but since then he had revolted, and he was threatening to destroy the Strogonof colonies.

And again the Strogonofs wrote to the Tsar :

“ You granted us land, and we have brought it under your sway; now the thievish little Tsar 1 Kuchum has revolted from you, and he wants to take this land away and destroy us. Bid us take the territory that lies beyond the Ural Mountains; we will conquer Kuchum and bring all his land under your sway.”

The Tsar consented, and replied :

“ If you have the power, get possession of Kuchum’s land. But do not take many men away from Russia.”

As soon as the Strogonofs received this missive from the Tsar they sent their agents to collect still more people. And they gave them orders above all to get Cossacks from the Volga and the Don.

Now at this time there were many Cossacks wandering along the Volga and the Don. They formed bands numbering two hundred, three hundred, or six hundred men, elected their atamans, or leaders, and sailed up and down in bateaux, seizing and plundering merchant boats, and wintering in a stronghold on the banks.

The Strogonofs' agents came to the Volga and began to make inquiries: "Who are the most famous Cossacks here?"

And it was said in reply:

"There are many Cossacks. And they make life unendurable. There is Mishka the Circassian, 2 there is Sarui-Azman....but there is no one uglier than Yermak Timofeftch, the ataman. He has an army of a thousand men, and not only the people and the merchants fear him, but even the Tsar's army dares not engage with him."

And the agents went to the ataman Yermak and tried to persuade him to take service with the Strogonofs.

1 Tsarek.

2 Cherkashenin; Mishka is the diminutive of Mikhail Michael.

Yermak received the agents, listened to their words, and agreed to come with his army about the time of the Assumption.

At the time of the Feast of the Assumption six hundred Cossacks, with their ataman Yermak, the son of Timofe'f, came to the Strogonofs. At first Strogonof sent them out against the neighboring Tartars. The Cossacks defeated them. Then when there was nothing further to do, the Cossacks began to wander about and pillage. Strogonof summoned Yermak, and said:

"I am not going to keep you any longer, if you act so lawlessly."

And Yermak replied:

"I myself am sorry. But it is not so easy to manage my men; they are wild fellows. Give us something to do."

And Strogonof said:

"Go beyond the Urals, and fight with Kuchum and master his land. Even the Tsar will reward you."

And he read to Yermak the Tsar's missive, and Yermak was delighted; he called together his Cossacks, and said:



“ You scandalize me before the master here. You are always up to some lawlessness. If you don’t behave, he will dismiss you, and then where will you go ? On the Volga the Tsar has a great army; they will take you prisoners, and it will go hard with you on account of the deeds that you have done. But if you find it dull here, we must find some work for you to do.”

And he showed them the Tsar’s missive permitting Strogonof to conquer the land beyond the Urals. The Cossacks talked it over and agreed to go.

Yermak returned to Strogonof, and the two began to consult together how best to make the expedition.

They decided how many bateaux would be needed, how much grain, powder, lead; how many cattle, fire-arms; how many Tartar prisoners for interpreters; how many German gunsmiths.

Strogonof said to himself :

“ Though this is going to cost me dear, still I must give him all he asks, or otherwise they will settle down here and ruin me.”

So Strogonof agreed, got everything together, and fitted out Yermak and his Cossacks.

On the tenth of September, Yermak and his Cossacks started to row up the river Chusovaya in thirty-two bateaux, each bateau carrying a score of men.

For four days they rowed up-stream and entered the Silver River. 1 This was as far as they could go by boat.

They made inquiries of the interpreters, and learned that they would be obliged to go from that point over the mountains, two hundred versts by land, and then they would come to other rivers.

The Cossacks disembarked here; they built a city and unloaded all their belongings, and they threw aside their bateaux, and constructed carts, loaded them up, and set out on their journey across the mountains. The whole region was forest, and no one lived there.

For ten days they went across the country, and reached the Zharovnya River. There again they halted, and set to work to build bateaux. After

they were built they started on their voyage down the river. They sailed down for five days, and reached regions still more delightful, fields, forests, lakes. And there was abundance of fish and game, and the game was not afraid of them.

They sailed down one day more, and sailed into the Tura River. There on the Tura River they began to fall in with inhabitants, and saw Tartar towns.

Yermak sent some Cossacks to investigate one town, bidding them find out what kind of a town it was, and whether it had many defenders. Twenty men went on this expedition; they threw all the Tartars into a panic, and captured the whole town, and captured all their cattle. Some of the Tartars they killed, and some they took as prisoners.

Yermak, through an interpreter, asked the Tartars

1 The Serebrannaya.

what people they were, and under whose sway they lived.

The Tartars replied that they belonged to the Tsardom of Siberia, and their Tsar was Kuchum.

Yermak let the Tartars go, except three of the most intelligent, whom he retained to act as guides.

They sailed farther. The farther they sailed, the bigger grew the river all the time, and the country grew better and better.

And they kept encountering more and more people. But the inhabitants were not powerful, and the Cossacks captured all the towns along the river.

In one town they made a great number of Tartars prisoners, and one person of authority, an old Tartar.

They began to ask the Tartar who he was. And he said : "I am Tazuk, and I am a servant of my Tsar Kuchum, and I am his head man in this city."

Yermak proceeded to ask Tazuk about his Tsar. "Was his city of Sibir far distant? Had Kuchum a large army ? had he great wealth ? "

Tazuk told him all about it.

“ Kuchum is the very first Tsar in all the world. His city of Sibir is the biggest city in the world. In this city,” said he, “there are as many men and cattle as there are stars in the sky. The Tsar Kuchum’s army is beyond number; all the other tsars banded together could not vanquish him.”

And Yermak said :

“ We Russians have come here to vanquish your Tsar Kuchum, and to take his city, and to bring him under the sway of the Russian Tsar. And we have a great army. Those who have come with me are only the vanguard, but those who follow us in bateaux are beyond number, and they all have guns. And our guns will shoot through a tree, and are not like your bows and arrows. Just look here ! “

And Yermak shot at a tree and split it, and the Cos-sacks from all sides began to fire off their guns.

Tauzik fell on his knees with fright, and Yermak said to him :

“ Now do you hasten to your Tsar Kuchum and tell him what you have seen. Let him submit to us; but if he does not submit, then we will bring him to destruction.”

And he let Tauzik go.

The Cossacks sailed farther. They entered into the great river Tobol, and all the time they were drawing nearer and nearer to the city of Sibir. They came to the mouth of the little river Babasan, and behold ! on the bank stands a town, and around the town are many Tartars. An interpreter was sent to the Tartars to inquire who those men were. The interpreter came back with the answer :

“ This army has been collected by Kuchum. And the general who commands the army is Kuchum’s own son-in-law, Mametkul. He sent me, and commanded me to say to you, ‘ Go back, or else he will cut you in pieces.’ “

Yermak collected his Cossacks, went on shore, and began to fire at the Tartars. As soon as the Tartars heard the noise of the firing they fled. The Cossacks set out in pursuit of them, and some they killed, and some they captured. Mametkul himself barely escaped.

The Cossacks sailed farther. They came out upon a broad, swift river, the Irtuish. They sailed down this river a whole day; and they arrived at a handsome town, and there they stopped.

The Cossacks marched against the town. As soon as they reached it, the Tartars began to shoot arrows at them, and they wounded three Cossacks.

Yermak sent his interpreter to say to the Tartars :

“Give up your city, or else we will cut you in pieces.”

The interpreter returned, saying :

“ Here lives Kuchum’s servant, Atik Murza Kachara. He has a great army, and he declares that he will not surrender the town.”

Yermak gathered his Cossacks, and said :

“ Now, boys, if we do not take this town, the Tartars will hold us back and will not let us pass. And, there-fore, the more speedily we inspire them with fear, the better it will be for us. All of you come on ! Fling yourselves on them all at once ! “

And thus they did.

There were many Tartars there, and brave fellows ! As the Cossacks rushed forward, the Tartars began to shoot with their bows. They overwhelmed the Cossacks with their arrows. Some of them they killed, and others they wounded. And the Cossacks were filled with fury, and rushed against the Tartars, and all whom they fell upon they killed.

In this town the Cossacks found many treasures, cattle, rugs, many furs, and much mead. After they had buried the dead and rested, they took their plunder and went on.

They had not sailed very far when, behold ! on the bank there stood something like a city, and there was an army that seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see; and the whole army was surrounded by a ditch, and the ditch was protected by a palisade.

The Cossacks came to a pause. They began to feel dubious. Yermak called a council.

“ Well, boys, what shall be done ? “

The Cossacks were disheartened. Some said :

“ We must sail by.” Others said :

“We must go back.”

And they grew desperate, and blamed Yermak, saying :

“ Why did you bring us hither ? Already they have killed so many of us, and wounded still more, and here we shall all perish.”

And they began to shed tears.

And Yermak said to his sub-ataman, Ivan Koltso :

“ Well, now, Vanya, what do you think about it ? “

And Koltso replied :

“What do I think about it? If we are not killed to-day, then we shall be to-morrow, and if not to-morrow, then we shall die ingloriously in our beds. My advice is, leap on shore and make straight for the Tartars and God will decide.”

And Yermak exclaimed :

“AY! brave fellow, Vanya ! That is what we must do! Ekh! you boys! You aren't Cossacks, but old women! Of course it was to catch sturgeon and to scare Tartar women; simply for that that I brought you hither. Don't you yourselves see ? If we go back we shall be killed ! If we row by, we shall be killed ! If we stay here, we shall be killed ! Where, then, shall we betake ourselves ? First labor, then rest !

Boys, you are like a healthy mare that my father had. When she was going downhill she would draw, and on level ground she would draw; but when it came to going up-hill, she would balk and back and try to find something easier. Then my father took a stake, beat her and beat her with the stake. And the mare jumped around, and kicked and tipped over the cart. Then father took her out of the thills and put her through the mill. Now, if she had pulled, she would not have got the thrashing. So it is with you, boys. There 's only one thing left for us, to go straight for the Tartars.” ....

The Cossacks laughed, and said :

“ It is plain that you are wiser than we are, Timo-fei'tch. We fools have no right to give advice. Take us wherever you wish. We can't die twice, but we must die once.”

And Yermak said :

“ Now listen, boys. This is the way that we must do it. They have n’t yet seen the whole of us. We will divide ourselves into three bands. Those in the middle will march straight at them, and the other two divisions will make a flank movement to the right and left. Now when the middle division begins to engage them, they will think that we are all there they will come out. And then we will give it to them from the flanks. That ‘s the way, boys. And if we beat these, there will be nothing left to fear. We shall be tsars ourselves.”

That was the way that they did.

As soon as the middle division went forward under Yermak, the Tartars began to yell and rushed out.

Then the wings joined battle, the right under Ivan Koltso, the left under the ataman Meshcheryak.

The Tartars were panic-stricken, and took to their heels. The Cossacks slaughtered them. And no one at all dared to oppose Yermak any longer. And thus they made their entrance into the very city of Sibir. And there Yermak took up his abode exactly as if he had been Tsar.

The neighboring princes I began to come to Yermak with salutations, and the Tartars came back and began to settle down in Sibir. Kuchum and his son-in-law, however, dared not make a direct attack on Yermak, but wandered round and round, and laid their plans to capture him.

In the spring, at the time for the freshets, some Tar-tars came to Yermak, saying :

“ Mametkul is coming against you again, and he has collected a great army, and is now on the Vagaya River.”

Yermak hastened over rivers, swamps, streams, and forests, crept up with his Cossacks, fell on Mametkul, and killed many of the Tartars, and took Mametkul him-self prisoner and brought him back to Sibir. And now there remained few Tartars who were not subdued, and that summer Yermak marched against those that would not submit, and\_ on the Irtuish and on the Obi rivers Yermak brought so much land under subjection that you could not go around it in two months.

After he had conquered all this land, he sent a messenger to the Strogonofs with a letter, in which he said :

“ I have taken Kuchum’s city, and have Mametkul in captivity, and I have brought all the people round about under my sway. But it has cost me many Cossacks. Send us people, so that we may be more lively. And the wealth in this land is limitless in extent.”

And he sent also costly furs, foxskins and martens and sable.

After this two years passed. Yermak still held Sibir,

1 Tsar’ki, petty tsar; it is a moot question whether the word tsar is derived from the Latin Caesar, or whether Coesar may not itself be an Oriental title of similar derivation. The spelling of “ czar “ is not Russian.

but no reinforcements arrived from Russia, and Yermak’s Russian forces were growing small.

One time the Tartar Kachara sent a messenger to Yermak, saying :

“We have submitted to your sway, but the Nogai are harassing us; let some of your braves come to our aid. We will conquer the Nogai’ together. And we give you our oath that we will do no manner of harm to your braves.”

Yermak had faith in their oath, and he sent to them Ivan Koltso with forty men. As soon as these forty men came to them, the Tartars fell on them and killed them; and this still further reduced the Cossacks.

Another time some Bukhara traders sent word to Yermak that they were on their way with merchandise which they wished to give him in his city of Sibir, but that Kuchum and his army were in their way, and would not let them pass.

Yermak took fifty men and went out to clear the road for the Bukharians. But when he reached the Irtysh River he did not find any merchants. So they prepared to bivouac there.

The night was dark and rainy.

No sooner had the Cossacks lain down for the night, than the Tartars rushed in from every side, threw themselves on the sleeping Cossacks, and began to hew them down. Yer-mak leaped up and began to fight. He was wounded in the arm by a knife. Then he ran to the river and threw himself into it the Tartars after him. He was already in the water. But he was never seen again, and his body was never found, and no one knows how he died.

The End