The Possessed
by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
Translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett

"Strike me dead, the track has vanished,
Well, what now? We've lost the way,
Demons have bewitched our horses,
Led us in the wilds astray.

What a number! Whither drift they?
What's the mournful dirge they sing?
Do they hail a witch's marriage
Or a goblin's burying?"

A. Pushkin.

"And there was one herd of many swine feeding on this mountain; and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. "Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake and were choked. "When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. "Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus and found the man, out of

whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid."

Luke, ch. VIII. 32-37.

Part I

Chapter I. Introductory
Some details of the biography of that highly respected gentleman Stefan Teofimovitch Verhovensky.

I

IN UNDERTAKING to describe the recent and strange incidents in our town, till lately wrapped in uneventful obscurity, I find myself forced in absence of literary skill to begin my story rather far back, that is to say, with certain biographical details concerning that talented and highly-esteemed gentleman, Stepan Trofimovitch Verhovensky. I trust that these details may at least serve as an introduction, while my projected story itself will come later.

I will say at once that Stepan Trofimovitch had always filled a particular role among us, that of the

progressive patriot, so to say, and he was passionately fond of playing the part — so much so that I really believe he could not have existed without it. Not that I would put him on a level with an actor at a theatre, God forbid, for I really have a respect for him. This may all have been the effect of habit, or rather, more exactly of a generous propensity he had from his earliest years for indulging in an agreeable day-dream in which he figured as a picturesque public character. He fondly loved, for instance, his position as a "persecuted" man and, so to speak, an "exile." There is a sort of traditional glamour about those two little words that fascinated him once for all and, exalting him gradually in his own opinion, raised him in the course of years to a lofty pedestal very gratifying to vanity. In an English satire of the last century, Gulliver, returning from the land of the Lilliputians where the people were only three or four inches high, had grown so accustomed to consider himself a giant among them, that as he walked along the streets of London he could not help crying out to carriages and passers-by to be careful and get out of his way for fear he should crush them, imagining that they were little and he was still a giant. He was laughed at and abused for it, and rough coachmen even lashed at the giant with their whips. But was that just? What may not be done by habit? Habit had brought Stepan Trofimovitch almost to the same position, but in a more innocent and inoffensive form, if one may use such

expressions, for he was a most excellent man.

I am even inclined to suppose that towards the end he had been entirely forgotten everywhere; but still it cannot be said that his name had never been known. It is beyond question that he had at one time belonged to a certain distinguished constellation of celebrated leaders of the last generation, and at one time — though only for the briefest moment — his name was pronounced by many hasty persons of that day almost as though it were on a level with the names of Tchaadaev, of Byelinsky. of Granovsky, and of Herzen, who had only just begun to write abroad. But Stepan Trofimovitch's activity ceased almost at the moment it began, owing, so to say, to a "vortex of combined circumstances." And would you believe it? It turned out afterwards that there had been no "vortex" and even no "circumstances," at least in that connection. I only learned the other day to my intense amazement, though on the most unimpeachable authority, that Stepan Trofimovitch had lived among us in our province not as an "exile" as we were accustomed to believe, and had never even been under police supervision at all. Such is the force of imagination! All his life he sincerely believed that in certain spheres he was a constant cause of apprehension, that every step he took was watched and noted, and that each one of the three governors who succeeded one another during twenty years in our province came with special and uneasy ideas

concerning him, which had, by higher powers, been impressed upon each before everything else, on receiving the appointment. Had anyone assured the honest man on the most irrefutable grounds that he had nothing to be afraid of, he would certainly have been offended. Yet Stepan Trofimovitch was a most intelligent and gifted man, even, so to say, a man of science, though indeed, in science . . . well, in fact he had not done such great things in science. I believe indeed he had done nothing at all. But that's very often the case, of course, with men of science among us in Russia.

He came back from abroad and was brilliant in the capacity of lecturer at the university, towards the end of the forties. He only had time to deliver a few lectures, I believe they were about the Arabs; he maintained, too, a brilliant thesis on the political and Hanseatic importance of the German town Hanau, of which there was promise in the epoch between 1413 and 1428, and on the special and obscure reasons why that promise was never fulfilled. This dissertation was a cruel and skilful thrust at the Slavophils of the day, and at once made him numerous and irreconcilable enemies among them. Later on — after he had lost his post as lecturer, however — he published (by way of revenge, so to say, and to show them what a man they had lost) in a progressive monthly review, which translated Dickens and advocated the views of George Sand, the

beginning of a very profound investigation into the causes, I believe, of the extraordinary moral nobility of certain knights at a certain epoch or something of that nature.

Some lofty and exceptionally noble idea was maintained in it, anyway. It was said afterwards that the continuation was hurriedly forbidden and even that the progressive review had to suffer for having printed the first part. That may very well have been so, for what was not possible in those days? Though, in this case, it is more likely that there was nothing of the kind, and that the author himself was too lazy to conclude his essay. He cut short his lectures on the Arabs because, somehow and by some one (probably one of his reactionary enemies) a letter had been seized giving an account of certain circumstances, in consequence of which some one had demanded an explanation from him. I don't know whether the story is true, but it was asserted that at the same time there was discovered in Petersburg a vast, unnatural, and illegal conspiracy of thirty people which almost shook society to its foundations. It was said that they were positively on the point of translating Fourier. As though of design a poem of Stepan Trofimovitch's was seized in Moscow at that very time, though it had been written six years before in Berlin in his earliest youth, and manuscript copies had been passed round a circle consisting of two poetical amateurs and one student. This poem is lying

now on my table. No longer ago than last year I received a recent copy in his own handwriting from Stepan Trofimovitch himself, signed by him, and bound in a splendid red leather binding. It is not without poetic merit, however, and even a certain talent. It's strange, but in those days (or to be more exact, in the thirties) people were constantly composing in that style. I find it difficult to describe the subject, for I really do not understand it. It is some sort of an allegory in lyrical-dramatic form, recalling the second part of Faust. The scene opens with a chorus of women, followed by a chorus of men, then a chorus of incorporeal powers of some sort, and at the end of all a chorus of spirits not yet living but very eager to come to life. All these choruses sing about something very indefinite, for the most part about somebody's curse, but with a tinge of the higher humour. But the scene is suddenly changed. There begins a sort of "festival of life" at which even insects sing, a tortoise comes on the scene with certain sacramental Latin words, and even, if I remember aright, a mineral sings about something that is a quite inanimate object. In fact, they all sing continually, or if they converse, it is simply to abuse one another vaguely, but again with a tinge of higher meaning. At last the scene is changed again; a wilderness appears, and among the rocks there wanders a civilized young man who picks and sucks certain herbs. Asked by a fairy why he sucks these herbs, he

answers that, conscious of a superfluity of life in himself, he seeks forgetfulness, and finds it in the juice of these herbs, but that his great desire is to lose his reason at once (a desire possibly superfluous). Then a youth of indescribable beauty rides in on a black steed, and an immense multitude of all nations follow him. The youth represents death, for whom all the peoples are yearning. And finally, in the last scene we are suddenly shown the Tower of Babel, and certain athletes at last finish building it with a song of new hope, and when at length they complete the topmost pinnacle, the lord (of Olympia, let us say) takes flight in a comic fashion, and man, grasping the situation and seizing his place, at once begins a new life with new insight into things. Well, this poem was thought at that time to be dangerous. Last year I proposed to Stepan Trofimovitch to publish it, on the ground of its perfect harmlessness nowadays, but he declined the suggestion with evident dissatisfaction. My view of its complete harmlessness evidently displeased him, and I even ascribe to it a certain coldness on his part, which lasted two whole months.

And what do you think? Suddenly, almost at the time I proposed printing it here, our poem was published abroad in a collection of revolutionary verse, without the knowledge of Stepan Trofimovitch. He was at first alarmed, rushed to the governor, and wrote a noble letter in self-defence to Petersburg. He read it to

me twice, but did not send it, not knowing to whom to address it. In fact he was in a state of agitation for a whole month, but I am convinced that in the secret recesses of his heart he was enormously flattered. He almost took the copy of the collection to bed with him, and kept it hidden under his mattress in the daytime; he positively would not allow the women to turn his bed, and although he expected every day a telegram, he held his head high. No telegram came. Then he made friends with me again, which is a proof of the extreme kindness of his gentle and unresentful heart.

II

Of course I don't assert that he had never suffered for his convictions at all, but I am fully convinced that he might have gone on lecturing on his Arabs as long as he liked, if he had only given the necessary explanations. But he was too lofty, and he proceeded with peculiar haste to assure himself that his career was ruined for ever "by the vortex of circumstance." And if the whole truth is to be told the real cause of the change in his career was the very delicate proposition which had been made before and was then renewed by Varvara Petrovna Stavrogin, a lady of great wealth, the wife of a lieutenant-general, that he should undertake the education and the whole intellectual development of her only son in the capacity of a superior sort of teacher

and friend, to say nothing of a magnificent salary. This proposal had been made to him the first time in Berlin, at the moment when he was first left a widower. His first wife was a frivolous girl from our province, whom he married in his early and unthinking youth, and apparently he had had a great deal of trouble with this young person, charming as she was, owing to the lack of means for her support; and also from other, more delicate, reasons. She died in Paris after three years' separation from him, leaving him a son of five years old; "the fruit of our first, joyous, and unclouded love," were the words the sorrowing father once let fall in my presence.

The child had, from the first, been sent back to Russia, where he was brought up in the charge of distant cousins in some remote region. Stepan Trofimovitch had declined Varvara Petrovna's proposal on that occasion and had quickly married again, before the year was over, a taciturn Berlin girl, and, what makes it more strange, there was no particular necessity for him to do so. But apart from his marriage there were, it appears, other reasons for his declining the situation. He was tempted by the resounding fame of a professor, celebrated at that time, and he, in his turn, hastened to the lecturer's chair for which he had been preparing himself, to try his eagle wings in flight. But now with singed wings he naturally remembered the proposition which even then had made him hesitate.

The sudden death of his second wife, who did not live a year with him, settled the matter decisively. To put it plainly it was all brought about by the passionate sympathy and priceless, so to speak, classic friendship of Varvara Petrovna, if one may use such an expression of friendship. He flung himself into the arms of this friendship, and his position was settled for more than twenty years. I use the expression "flung himself into the arms of," but God forbid that anyone should fly to idle and superfluous conclusions. These embraces must be understood only in the most loftily moral sense. The most refined and delicate tie united these two beings, both so remarkable, for ever.

The post of tutor was the more readily accepted too, as the property — a very small one — left to Stepan Trofimovitch by his first wife was close to Skvoreshniki, the Stavrogins' magnificent estate on the outskirts of our provincial town. Besides, in the stillness of his study, far from the immense burden of university work, it was always possible to devote himself to the service of science, and to enrich the literature of his country with erudite studies. These works did not appear. But on the other hand it did appear possible to spend the rest of his life, more than twenty years, "a reproach incarnate," so to speak, to his native country, in the words of a popular poet:

Reproach incarnate

thou didst stand
Erect before thy
Fatherland,
0 Liberal idealist!

But the person to whom the popular poet referred may perhaps have had the right to adopt that pose for the rest of his life if he had wished to do so, though it must have been tedious. Our Stepan Trofimovitch was, to tell the truth, only an imitator compared with such people; moreover, he had grown weary of standing erect and often lay down for a while. But, to do him justice, the "incarnation of reproach" was preserved even in the recumbent attitude, the more so as that was quite sufficient for the province. You should have seen him at our club when he sat down to cards. His whole figure seemed to exclaim "Cards! Me sit down to whist with you! Is it consistent? Who is responsible for it? Who has shattered my energies and turned them to whist? Ah, perish, Russia!" and he would majestically trump with a heart.

And to tell the truth he dearly loved a game of cards, which led him, especially in later years, into frequent and unpleasant skirmishes with Varvara Petrovna, particularly as he was always losing. But of that later. I will only observe that he was a man of tender conscience (that is, sometimes) and so was often depressed. In the course of his twenty years' friendship

with Varvara Petrovna he used regularly, three or four times a year, to sink into a state of "patriotic grief," as it was called among us, or rather really into an attack of spleen, but our estimable Varvara Petrovna preferred the former phrase. Of late years his grief had begun to be not only patriotic, but at times alcoholic too; but Varvara Petrovna's alertness succeeded in keeping him all his life from trivial inclinations. And he needed some one to look after him indeed, for he sometimes behaved very oddly: in the midst of his exalted sorrow he would begin laughing like any simple peasant. There were moments when he began to take a humorous tone even about himself. But there was nothing Varvara Petrovna dreaded so much as a humorous tone. She was a woman of the classic type, a female Maecenas, invariably guided only by the highest considerations. The influence of this exalted lady over her poor friend for twenty years is a fact of the first importance. I shall need to speak of her more particularly, which I now proceed to do.

III

There are strange friendships. The two friends are always ready to fly at one another, and go on like that all their lives, and yet they cannot separate. Parting, in fact, is utterly impossible. The one who has begun the quarrel and separated will be the first to fall ill and even

die, perhaps, if the separation comes off. I know for a positive fact that several times Stepan Trofimovitch has jumped up from the sofa and beaten the wall with his fists after the most intimate and emotional *tete-a-tete* with Varvara Petrovna.

This proceeding was by no means an empty symbol; indeed, on one occasion, he broke some plaster off the wall. It may be asked how I come to know such delicate details. What if I were myself a witness of it? What if Stepan Trofimovitch himself has, on more than one occasion, sobbed on my shoulder while he described to me in lurid colours all his most secret feelings. (And what was there he did not say at such times!) But what almost always happened after these tearful outbreaks was that next day he was ready to crucify himself for his ingratitude. He would send for me in a hurry or run over to see me simply to assure me that Varvara Petrovna was "an angel of honour and delicacy, while he was very much the opposite." He did not only run to confide in me, but, on more than one occasion, described it all to her in the most eloquent letter, and wrote a full signed confession that no longer ago than the day before he had told an outsider that she kept him out of vanity, that she was envious of his talents and erudition, that she hated him and was only afraid to express her hatred openly, dreading that he would leave her and so damage her literary reputation, that this drove him to self-contempt, and he was

resolved to die a violent death, and that he was waiting for the final word from her which would decide everything, and so on and so on in the same style. You can fancy after this what an hysterical pitch the nervous outbreaks of this most innocent of all fifty-year-old infants sometimes reached! I once read one of these letters after some quarrel between them, arising from a trivial matter, but growing venomous as it went on. I was horrified and besought him not to send it.

"I must . . . more honourable . . . duty ... I shall die if I don't confess everything, everything!" he answered almost in delirium, and he did send the letter.

That was the difference between them, that Varvara Petrovna never would have sent such a letter. It is true that he was passionately fond of writing, he wrote to her though he lived in the same house, and during hysterical interludes he would write two letters a day. I know for a fact that she always read these letters with the greatest attention, even when she received two a day, and after reading them she put them away in a special drawer, sorted and annotated; moreover, she pondered them in her heart. But she kept her friend all day without an answer, met him as though there were nothing the matter, exactly as though nothing special had happened the day before. By degrees she broke him in so completely that at last he did not himself dare to allude to what had happened the day before, and only glanced into her eyes at times. But she never forgot

anything, while he sometimes forgot too quickly, and encouraged by her composure he would not infrequently, if friends came in, laugh and make jokes over the champagne the very same day. With what malignancy she must have looked at him at such moments, while he noticed nothing! Perhaps in a week's time, a month's time, or even six months later, chancing to recall some phrase in such a letter, and then the whole letter with all its attendant circumstances, he would suddenly grow hot with shame, and be so upset that he fell ill with one of his attacks of "summer cholera." These attacks of a sort of "summer cholera" were, in some cases, the regular consequence of his nervous agitations and were an interesting peculiarity of his physical constitution.

No doubt Varvara Petrovna did very often hate him. But there was one thing he had not discerned up to the end: that was that he had become for her a son, her creation, even, one may say, her invention; he had become flesh of her flesh, and she kept and supported him not simply from "envy of his talents." And how wounded she must have been by such suppositions! An inexhaustible love for him lay concealed in her heart in the midst of continual hatred, jealousy, and contempt. She would not let a speck of dust fall upon him, coddled him up for twenty-two years, would not have slept for nights together if there were the faintest breath against his reputation as a poet, a learned man, and a

public character. She had invented him, and had been the first to believe in her own invention. He was, after a fashion, her day-dream. . . . But in return she exacted a great deal from him, sometimes even slavishness. It was incredible how long she harboured resentment. I have two anecdotes to tell about that.

IV

On one occasion, just at the time when the first rumours of the emancipation of the serfs were in the air, when all Russia was exulting and making ready for a complete regeneration, Varvara Petrovna was visited by a baron from Petersburg, a man of the highest connections, and very closely associated with the new reform. Varvara Petrovna prized such visits highly, as her connections in higher circles had grown weaker and weaker since the death of her husband, and had at last ceased altogether. The baron spent an hour drinking tea with her. There was no one else present but Stepan Trofimovitch, whom Varvara Petrovna invited and exhibited. The baron had heard something about him before or affected to have done so, but paid little attention to him at tea. Stepan Trofimovitch of course was incapable of making a social blunder, and his manners were most elegant. Though I believe he was by no means of exalted origin, yet it happened that he had from earliest childhood been brought up in a

Moscow household — of high rank, and consequently was well bred. He spoke French like a Parisian. Thus the baron was to have seen from the first glance the sort of people with whom Varvara Petrovna surrounded herself, even in provincial seclusion. But things did not fall out like this. When the baron positively asserted the absolute truth of the rumours of the great reform, which were then only just beginning to be heard, Stepan Trofimovitch could not contain himself, and suddenly shouted "Hurrah!" and even made some gesticulation indicative of delight. His ejaculation was not over-loud and quite polite, his delight was even perhaps premeditated, and his gesture purposely studied before the looking-glass half an hour before tea. But something must have been amiss with it, for the baron permitted himself a faint smile, though he, at once, with extraordinary courtesy, put in a phrase concerning the universal and befitting emotion of all Russian hearts in view of the great event. Shortly afterwards he took his leave and at parting did not forget to hold out two fingers to Stepan Trofimovitch. On returning to the drawing-room Varvara Petrovna was at first silent for two or three minutes, and seemed to be looking for something on the table. Then she turned to Stepan Trofimovitch, and with pale face and flashing eyes she hissed in a whisper:

"I shall never forgive you for that!"

Next day she met her friend as though nothing

had happened, she never referred to the incident, but thirteen years afterwards, at a tragic moment, she recalled it and reproached him with it, and she turned pale, just as she had done thirteen years before. Only twice in the course of her life did she say to him:

"I shall never forgive you for that!"

The incident with the baron was the second time, but the first incident was so characteristic and had so much influence on the fate of Stepan Trofimovitch that I venture to refer to that too.

It was in 1855, in spring-time, in May, just after the news had reached Skvoreshniki of the death of Lieutenant-General Gavrogin, a frivolous old gentleman who died of a stomach ailment on the way to the Crimea, where he was hastening to join the army on active service. Varvara Petrovna was left a widow and put on deep mourning. She could not, it is true, deplore his death very deeply, since, for the last four years, she had been completely separated from him owing to incompatibility of temper, and was giving him an allowance. (The Lieutenant-General himself had nothing but one hundred and fifty serfs and his pay, besides his position and his connections. All the money and Skvoreshniki belonged to Varvara Petrovna, the only daughter of a very rich contractor.) Yet she was shocked by the suddenness of the news, and retired into complete solitude. Stepan Trofimovitch, of course, was always at her side.

May was in its full beauty. The evenings were exquisite. The wild cherry was in flower. The two friends walked every evening in the garden and used to sit till nightfall in the arbour, and pour out their thoughts and feelings to one another. They had poetic moments. Under the influence of the change in her position Varvara Petrovna talked more than usual. She, as it were, clung to the heart of her friend, and this continued for several evenings. A strange idea suddenly came over Stepan Trofimovitch: "Was not the inconsolable widow reckoning upon him, and expecting from him, when her mourning was over, the offer of his hand?" A cynical idea, but the very loftiness of a man's nature sometimes increases a disposition to cynical ideas if only from the many-sidedness of his culture. He began to look more deeply into it, and thought it seemed like it. He pondered: "Her fortune is immense, of course, but . . ." Varvara Petrovna certainly could not be called a beauty. She was a tall, yellow, bony woman with an extremely long face, suggestive of a horse. Stepan Trofimovitch hesitated more and more, he was tortured by doubts, he positively shed tears of indecision once or twice (he wept not infrequently). In the evenings, that is to say in the arbour, his countenance involuntarily began to express something capricious and ironical, something coquettish and at the same time condescending. This is apt to happen as it were by accident, and the more gentlemanly the man

the more noticeable it is. Goodness only knows what one is to think about it, but it's most likely that nothing had begun working in her heart that could have fully justified Stepan Trofimovitch's suspicions. Moreover, she would not have changed her name, Stavrogin, for his name, famous as it was. Perhaps there was nothing in it but the play of femininity on her side; the manifestation of an unconscious feminine yearning so natural in some extremely feminine types. However, I won't answer for it; the depths of the female heart have not been explored to this day. But I must continue.

It is to be supposed that she soon inwardly guessed the significance of her friend's strange expression; she was quick and observant, and he was sometimes extremely guileless. But the evenings went on as before, and their conversations were just as poetic and interesting. And behold on one occasion at nightfall, after the most lively and poetical conversation, they parted affectionately, warmly pressing each other's hands at the steps of the lodge where Stepan Trofimovitch slept. Every summer he used to move into this little lodge which stood adjoining the huge seignorial house of Skvoreshniki, almost in the garden. He had only just gone in, and in restless hesitation taken a cigar, and not having yet lighted it, was standing weary and motionless before the open window, gazing at the light feathery white clouds gliding around the bright moon, when suddenly

a faint rustle made him start and turn round. Varvara Petrovna, whom he had left only four minutes earlier, was standing before him again. Her yellow face was almost blue. Her lips were pressed tightly together and twitching at the corners. For ten full seconds she looked him in the eyes in silence with a firm relentless gaze, and suddenly whispered rapidly:

"I shall never forgive you for this!"

When, ten years later, Stepan Trofimovitch, after closing the doors, told me this melancholy tale in a whisper, he vowed that he had been so petrified on the spot that he had not seen or heard how .Varvara Petrovna had disappeared. As she never once afterwards alluded to the incident and everything went on as though nothing had happened, he was all his life inclined to the idea that it was all an hallucination, a symptom of illness, the more so as he was actually taken ill that very night and was indisposed for a fortnight, which, by the way, cut short the interviews in the arbour.

But in spite of his vague theory of hallucination he seemed every day, all his life, to be expecting the continuation, and, so to say, the *denouement* of this affair. He could not believe that that was the end of it! And if so he must have looked strangely sometimes at his friend.

V

She had herself designed the costume for him which he wore for the rest of his life. It was elegant and characteristic; a long black frock-coat, buttoned almost to the top, but stylishly cut; a soft hat (in summer a straw hat) with a wide brim, a white batiste cravat with a full bow and hanging ends, a cane with a silver knob; his hair flowed on to his shoulders. It was dark brown, and only lately had begun to get a little grey. He was clean-shaven. He was said to have been very handsome in his youth. And, to my mind, he was still an exceptionally impressive figure even in old age. Besides, who can talk of old age at fifty-three? From his special pose as a patriot, however, he did not try to appear younger, but seemed rather to pride himself on the solidity of his age, and, dressed as described, tall and thin with flowing hair, he looked almost like a patriarch, or even more like the portrait of the poet Kukolnik, engraved in the edition of his works published in 1830 or thereabouts. This resemblance was especially striking when he sat in the garden in summertime, on a seat under a bush of flowering lilac, with both hands propped on his cane and an open book beside him, musing poetically over the setting sun. In regard to books I may remark that he came in later years rather to avoid reading. But that was only quite towards the end. The papers and magazines ordered in great profusion by Varvara Petrovna he was continually

reading. He never lost interest in the successes of Russian literature either, though he always maintained a dignified attitude with regard to them. He was at one time engrossed in the study of our home and foreign politics, but he soon gave up the undertaking with a gesture of despair. It sometimes happened that he would take De Tocqueville with him into the garden while he had a Paul de Kock in his pocket. But these are trivial matters.

I must observe in parenthesis about the portrait of Kukolnik; the engraving had first come into the hands of Varvara Petrovna when she was a girl in a high-class boarding-school in Moscow. She fell in love with the portrait at once, after the habit of all girls at school who fall in love with anything they come across, as well as with their teachers, especially the drawing and writing masters. What is interesting in this, though, is not the characteristics of girls but the fact that even at fifty Varvara Petrovna kept the engraving among her most intimate and treasured possessions, so that perhaps it was only on this account that she had designed for Stepan Trofimovitch a costume somewhat like the poet's in the engraving. But that, of course, is a trifling matter too.

For the first years or, more accurately, for the first half of the time he spent with Varvara Petrovna, Stepan Trofimovitch was still planning a book and every day seriously prepared to write it. But during the later

period he must have forgotten even what he had done. More and more frequently he used to say to us:

"I seem to be ready for work, my materials are collected, yet the work doesn't get done! Nothing is done!"

And he would bow his head dejectedly. No doubt this was calculated to increase his prestige in our eyes as a martyr to science, but. he himself was longing for something else. "They have forgotten me! I'm no use to anyone!" broke from him more than once. This intensified depression took special hold of him towards the end of the fifties. Varvara Petrovna realised at last that it was a serious matter. Besides, she could not endure the idea that her friend was forgotten and useless. To distract him and at the same time to renew his fame she carried him off to Moscow, where she had fashionable acquaintances in the literary and scientific world; but it appeared that Moscow too was unsatisfactory.

It was a peculiar time; something new was beginning, quite unlike the stagnation of the past, something very strange too, though it was felt everywhere, even at Skvoreshniki. Rumours of all sorts reached us. The facts were generally more or less well known, but it was evident that in addition to the facts there were certain ideas accompanying them, and what's more, a great number of them. And this was perplexing. It was impossible to estimate and find out

exactly what was the drift of these ideas. Varvara Petrovna was prompted by the feminine composition of her character to a compelling desire to penetrate the secret of them. She took to reading newspapers and magazines, prohibited publications printed abroad and even the revolutionary manifestoes which were just beginning to appear at the time (she was able to procure them all); but this only set her head in a whirl. She fell to writing letters; she got few answers, and they grew more incomprehensible as time went on. Stepan Trofimovitch was solemnly called upon to explain "these ideas" to her once for all, but she remained distinctly dissatisfied with his explanations.

Stepan Trofimovitch's view of the general movement was supercilious in the extreme. In his eyes all it amounted to was that he was forgotten and of no use. At last his name was mentioned, at first in periodicals published abroad as that of an exiled martyr, and immediately afterwards in Petersburg as that of a former star in a celebrated constellation. He was even for some reason compared with Radishtchev. Then some one printed the statement that he was dead and promised an obituary notice of him. Stepan Trofimovitch instantly perked up and assumed an air of immense dignity. All his disdain for his contemporaries evaporated and he began to cherish the dream of joining the movement and showing his powers. Varvara Petrovna's faith in everything instantly revived and she

was thrown into a violent ferment. It was decided to go to Petersburg without a moment's delay, to find out everything on the spot, to go into everything personally, and, if possible, to throw themselves heart and soul into the new movement. Among other things she announced that she was prepared to found a magazine of her own, and henceforward to devote her whole life to it. Seeing what it had come to, Stepan Trofimovitch became more condescending than ever, and on the journey began to behave almost patronisingly to Varvara Petrovna — which she at once laid up in her heart against him. She had, however, another very important reason for the trip, which was to renew her connections in higher spheres. It was necessary, as far as she could, to remind the world of her existence, or at any rate to make an attempt to do so. The ostensible object of the journey was to see her only son, who was just finishing his studies at a Petersburg lyceum.

VI

They spent almost the whole winter season in Petersburg. But by Lent everything burst like a rainbow-coloured soap-bubble.

Their dreams were dissipated, and the muddle, far from being cleared up, had become even more revoltingly incomprehensible. To begin with, connections with the higher spheres were not

established, or only on a microscopic scale, and by humiliating exertions. In her mortification Varvara Petrovna threw herself heart and soul into the "new ideas," and began giving evening receptions. She invited literary people, and they were brought to her at once in multitudes. Afterwards they came of themselves without invitation, one brought another. Never had she seen such literary men. They were incredibly vain, but quite open in their vanity, as though they were performing a duty by the display of it. Some (but by no means all) of them even turned up intoxicated, seeming, however, to detect in this a peculiar, only recently discovered, merit. They were all strangely proud of something. On every face was written that they had only just discovered some extremely important secret. They abused one another, and took credit to themselves for it. It was rather difficult to find out what they had written exactly, but among them there were critics, novelists, dramatists, satirists, and exposers of abuses. Stepan Trofimovitch penetrated into their very highest circle from which the movement was directed. Incredible heights had to be scaled to reach this group; but they gave him a cordial welcome, though, of course, no one of them had ever heard of him or knew anything about him except that he "represented an idea." His manoeuvres among them were so successful that he got them twice to Varvara Petrovna's salon in spite of their Olympian grandeur.

These people were very serious and very polite; they behaved nicely; the others were evidently afraid of them; but it was obvious that they had no time to spare. Two or three former literary celebrities who happened to be in Petersburg, and with whom Varvara Petrovna had long maintained a most refined correspondence, came also. But to her surprise these genuine and quite indubitable celebrities were stiller than water, humbler than the grass, and some of them simply hung on to this new rabble, and were shamefully cringing before them. At first Stepan Trofimovitch was a success. People caught at him and began to exhibit him at public literary gatherings. The first time he came on to the platform at some public reading in which he was to take part, he was received with enthusiastic clapping which lasted for five minutes. He recalled this with tears nine years afterwards, though rather from his natural artistic sensibility than from gratitude. “I swear, and I'm ready to bet,” he declared (but only to me, and in secret), “that not one of that audience knew anything whatever about me.” A noteworthy admission. He must have had a keen intelligence since he was capable of grasping his position so clearly even on the platform, even in such a state of exaltation; it also follows that he had not a keen intelligence if, nine years afterwards, he could not recall it without mortification, he was made to sign two or three collective protests (against what he did not know); he signed them. Varvara Petrovna too was made

to protest against some “disgraceful action” and she signed too. The majority of these new people, however, though they visited Varvara Petrovna, felt themselves for some reason called upon to regard her with contempt, and with undisguised irony. Stepan Trofimovitch hinted to me at bitter moments afterwards that it was from that time she had been envious of him. She saw, of course, that she could not get on with these people, yet she received them eagerly, with all the hysterical impatience of her sex, and, what is more, she expected something. At her parties she talked little, although she could talk, but she listened the more. They talked of the abolition of the censorship, and of phonetic spelling, of the substitution of the Latin characters for the Russian alphabet, of some one's having been sent into exile the day before, of some scandal, of the advantage of splitting Russia into nationalities united in a free federation, of the abolition of the army and the navy, of the restoration of Poland as far as the Dnieper, of the peasant reforms, and of the manifestoes, of the abolition of the hereditary principle, of the family, of children, and of priests, of women's rights, of Kraevsky's house, for which no one ever seemed able to forgive Mr. Kraevsky, and so on, and so on. It was evident that in this mob of new people there were many impostors, but undoubtedly there were also many honest and very attractive people, in spite of some surprising characteristics in them. The honest

ones were far more difficult to understand than the coarse and dishonest, but it was impossible to tell which was being made a tool of by the other. When Varvara Petrovna announced her idea of founding a magazine, people flocked to her in even larger numbers, but charges of being a capitalist and an exploiter of labour were showered upon her to her face. The rudeness of these accusations was only equalled by their unexpectedness. The aged General Ivan Ivanovitch Drozdov, an old friend and comrade of the late General Stavrogin's, known to us all here as an extremely stubborn and irritable, though very estimable, man (in his own way, of course), who ate a great deal, and was dreadfully afraid of atheism, quarrelled at one of Varvara Petrovna's parties with a distinguished young man. The latter at the first word exclaimed, "You must be a general if you talk like that," meaning that he could find no word of abuse worse than "general."

Ivan Ivanovitch flew into a terrible passion: "Yes, sir, I am a general, and a lieutenant-general, and I have served my Tsar, and you, sir, are a puppy and an infidel!"

An outrageous scene followed. Next day the incident was exposed in print, and they began getting up a collective protest against Varvara Petrovna's disgraceful conduct in not having immediately turned the general out. In an illustrated paper there appeared a

malignant caricature in which Varvara Petrovna, Stepan Trofimovitch, and General Drozdov were depicted as three reactionary friends. There were verses attached to this caricature written by a popular poet especially for the occasion. I may observe, for my own part, that many persons of general's rank certainly have an absurd habit of saying, "I have served my Tsar "... just as though they had not the same Tsar as all the rest of us, their simple fellow-subjects, but had a special Tsar of their own.

It was impossible, of course, to remain any longer in Petersburg, all the more so as Stepan Trofimovitch was overtaken by a complete fiasco. He could not resist talking of the claims of art, and they laughed at him more loudly as time went on. At his last lecture he thought to impress them with patriotic eloquence, hoping to touch their hearts, and reckoning on the respect inspired by his "persecution." He did not attempt to dispute the uselessness and absurdity of the word "fatherland," acknowledged the pernicious influence of religion, but firmly and loudly declared that boots were of less consequence than Pushkin; of much less, indeed. He was hissed so mercilessly that he burst into tears, there and then, on the platform. Varvara Petrovna took him home more dead than alive. "*On m'a traits, comme un vieux bonnet de coton,* " he babbled senselessly. She was looking after him all night, giving him laurel-drops and repeating to him till

daybreak, “You will still be of use; you will still make your mark; you will be appreciated ... in another place.”

Early next morning five literary men called on Varvara Petrovna, three of them complete strangers, whom she had ever set eyes on before. With a stern air they informed her that they had looked into the question of her magazine, and had brought her their decision on the subject. Varvara Petrovna had never authorised anyone to look into or decide anything concerning her magazine. Their decision was that, having founded the magazine, she should at once hand it over to them with the capital to run it, on the basis of a co-operative society. She herself was to go back to Skvoreshniki, not forgetting to take with her Stepan Trofimovitch, who was “out of date.” From delicacy they agreed to recognise the right of property in her case, and to send her every year a sixth part of the net profits. What was most touching about it was that of these five men, four certainly were not actuated by any mercenary motive, and were simply acting in the interests of the “cause.”

“We came away utterly at a loss,” Stepan Trofimovitch used to say afterwards. “I couldn't make head or tail of it, and kept muttering, I remember, to the rumble of the train:

'Vyek, *and vyek, and*
Lyov Kambek,

and goodness knows what, all the way to Moscow. It was only in Moscow that I came to myself — as though we really might find something different there."

"Oh, my friends!" he would exclaim to us sometimes with fervour, " you cannot imagine what wrath and sadness overcome your whole soul when a great idea, which you have long cherished as holy, is caught up by the ignorant and dragged forth before fools like themselves into the street, and you suddenly meet it in the market unrecognisable, in the mud, absurdly set up, without proportion, without harmony, the plaything of foolish louts! No! In our day it was not so, and it was not this for which we strove. No, no, not this at all. I don't recognise it. ... Our day will come again and will turn all the tottering fabric of to-day into a true path. If not, what will happen? . . ."

VII

Immediately on their return from Petersburg Varvara Petrovna sent her friend abroad to "recruit"; and, indeed, it was necessary for them to part for a time, she felt that. Stepan Trofimovitch was delighted to go.

"There I shall revive!" he exclaimed. "There, at last, I shall set to work!" But in the first of his letters from Berlin he struck his usual note:

"My heart is broken!" he wrote to Varvara Petrovna. "I can forget nothing! Here, in Berlin, everything brings back to me my old past, my first raptures and my first agonies. Where is she? Where are they both? Where are you two angels of whom I was never worthy? Where is my son, my beloved son? And last of all, where am *I,* where is my old self, strong as steel. firm as a rock, when now some Andreev, our orthodox clown with a beard, *pent briser man existence en deux"—* and so on.

As for Stepan Trofimovitch's son, he had only seen him twice in his life, the first time when he was born and the second time lately in Petersburg, where the young man was preparing to enter the university. The boy had been all his life, as we have said already, brought up by his aunts (at Varvara Petrovna's expense) in a remote province, nearly six hundred miles from Skvoreshniki. As for Andreev, he was nothing more or less than our local shopkeeper, a very eccentric fellow, a self-taught archaeologist who had a passion for collecting Russian antiquities and sometimes tried to outshine Stepan Trofimovitch in erudition and in the progressiveness of his opinions. This worthy shopkeeper, with a grey beard and silver-rimmed spectacles, still owed Stepan Trofimovitch four

hundred roubles for some acres of timber he had bought on the latter's little estate (near Skvoreshniki). Though Varvara Petrovna had liberally provided her friend with funds when she sent him to Berlin, yet Stepan Trofimovitch had, before starting, particularly reckoned on getting that four hundred roubles, probably for his secret expenditure, and was ready to cry when Andreev asked leave to defer payment for a month, which he had a right to do, since he had brought the first installments of the money almost six months in advance to meet Stepan Trofimovitch's special need at the time.

Varvara Petrovna read this first letter greedily, and underlining in pencil the exclamation: "Where are they both?" numbered it and put it away in a drawer. He had, of course, referred to his two deceased wives. The second letter she received from Berlin was in a different strain:

"I am working twelve hours out of the twenty-four." ("Eleven would be enough," muttered Varvara Petrovna.) "I'm rummaging in the libraries, collating, copying, rushing about. I've visited the professors. I have renewed my acquaintance with the delightful Dundasov family. What a charming creature Lizaveta Mkolaevna is even now! She sends you her greetings. Her young husband and three nephews are all in Berlin. I sit up talking till daybreak with the young people and *we* have almost Athenian evenings, Athenian, I mean, only in their intellectual subtlety and

refinement. Everything is in noble style; Â» great deal of music, Spanish airs, dreams of the regeneration of all humanity, ideas of eternal beauty, of the Sistine Madonna, light interspersed with darkness, but there are spots even on the sun! Oh, my friend, my noble, faithful friend! In heart I am with you and am yours; with you alone, always, *en tout pays,* even in *le pays de Makar et de ses veaux,* of which we often used to talk in agitation in Petersburg, do you remember, before we came away. I think of it with a smile. Crossing the frontier I felt myself in safety, a sensation, strange and new, for the first time after so many years"— and so on and so on.

"Come, it's all nonsense!" Varvara Petrovna commented, folding up that letter too. "If he's up till daybreak with his Athenian nights, he isn't at his books for twelve hours a day. Was he drunk when he wrote it? That Dundasov woman dares to send me greetings! But there, let him amuse himself!"

The phrase "*dans le pays de Makar et de ses veaux* " meant: "wherever Makar may drive his calves." Stepan Trofimovitch sometimes purposely translated Russian proverbs and traditional sayings into French in the most stupid way, though no doubt he was able to understand and translate them better. But he did it from a feeling that it was chic, and thought it witty.

But he did not amuse himself for long. He could not hold out for four months, and was soon flying back

to Skvoreshniki. His last letters consisted of nothing but outpourings of the most sentimental love for his absent friend, and were literally wet with tears. There are natures extremely attached to home like lap-dogs. The meeting of the friends was enthusiastic. Within two days everything was as before and even duller than before. “My friend,” Stepan Trofimovitch said to me a fortnight after, m dead secret, “I have discovered something awful for me . . . something new: *je suis un simple* dependent, *et rien de plus! Mais r-r-rien de plus .' “*

VIII

After this we had a period of stagnation which lasted nine years. The hysterical outbreaks and sobbings on my shoulder that recurred at regular intervals did not in the least mar our prosperity. I wonder that Stepan Trofimovitch did not grow stout during this period. His nose was a little redder, and his manner had gained in urbanity, that was all. By degrees a circle of friends had formed around him, although it was never a very large one. Though Varvara Petrovna had little to do with the circle, yet we all recognised her as our patroness. After the lesson she had received in Petersburg, she settled down in our town for good. In winter she lived in her town house and spent the summer on her estate in the neighbourhood. She had

never enjoyed so much consequence and prestige in our provincial society as during the last seven years of this period, that is up to the time of the appointment of our present governor. Our former governor, the mild Ivan Ossipovitch, who will never be forgotten among us, was a near relation of Varvara Petrovna's, and had at one time been under obligations to her. His wife trembled at the very thought of displeasing her, while the homage paid her by provincial society was carried almost to a pitch that suggested idolatry. So Stepan Trofimovitch, too, had a good time. He was a member of the club, lost at cards majestically, and was everywhere treated with respect, though many people regarded him only as a "learned man." Later on, when Varvara Petrovna allowed him to live in a separate house, we enjoyed greater freedom than before. Twice a week we used to meet at his house. We were a merry party, especially when he was not sparing of the champagne. The wine came from the shop of the same Andreev. The bill was paid twice a year by Varvara Petrovna, and on the day it was paid Stepan Trofimoivitch almost invariably suffered from an attack of his "summer cholera."

One of the first members of our circle was Liputin, an elderly provincial official, and a great liberal, who was reputed in the town to be an atheist. He had married for the second time a young and pretty wife with a dowry, and had, besides, three grown-up

daughters. He brought up his family in the fear of God, and kept a tight hand over them. He was extremely stingy, and out of his salary had bought himself a house and amassed a fortune. He was an uncomfortable sort of man, and had not been in the service. He was not much respected in the town, and was not received in the best circles. Moreover, he was a scandal-monger, and had more than once had to smart for his back-biting, for which he had been badly punished by an officer, and again by a country gentleman, the respectable head of a family- But we liked his wit, his inquiring mind, his peculiar, malicious liveliness. Varvara Petrovna disliked him, but he always knew how to make up to her.

Nor did she care for Shatov, who became one of our circle during the last years of this period. Shatov had been a student and had been expelled from the university after some disturbance. In his childhood he had been a student of Stepan Trofimovitch's and was by birth a serf of Varvara Petrovna's, the son of a former valet of hers, Pavel Fyodoritch, and was greatly indebted to her bounty. She disliked him for his pride and ingratitude and could never forgive him for not having come straight to her on his expulsion from the university. On the contrary he had not even answered the letter she had expressly sent him at the time, and preferred to be a drudge in the family of a merchant of the new style, with whom he went abroad, looking after

his children more in the position of a nurse than of a tutor. He was very eager to travel at the time. The children had a governess too, a lively young Russian lady, who also became one of the household on the eve of their departure, and had been engaged chiefly because she was so cheap. Two months later the merchant turned her out of the house for "free thinking." Shatov took himself off after her and soon afterwards married her in Geneva. They lived together about three weeks, and then parted as free people recognising no bonds, though, no doubt, also through poverty. He wandered about Europe alone for a long time afterwards, living God knows how; he is said to have blacked boots in the street, and to have been a porter in some dockyard. At last, a year before, he had returned to his native place among us and settled with an old aunt, whom he buried a month later. His sister Dasha, who had also been brought up by Varvara Petrovna, was a favourite of hers, and treated with respect and consideration in her house. He saw his sister rarely and was not on intimate terms with her. In our circle he was always sullen, and never talkative; but from time to time, when his convictions were touched upon, he became morbidly irritable and very unrestrained in his language.

"One has to tie Shatov up and then argue with him," Stepan Trofimovitch would sometimes say in joke, but he liked him.

Shatov had radically changed some of his former socialistic convictions abroad and had rushed to the opposite extreme. He was one of those idealistic beings common in Russia, who are suddenly struck by some overmastering idea which seems, as it were, to crush them at once, and sometimes for ever. They are never equal to coping with it, but put passionate faith in it, and their whole life passes afterwards, as it were, in the last agonies under the weight of the stone that has fallen upon them and half crushed them. In appearance Shatov was in complete harmony with his convictions: he was short, awkward, had a shock of flaxen hair, broad shoulders, thick lips, very thick overhanging white eyebrows, a wrinkled forehead, and a hostile, obstinately downcast, as it were shamefaced, expression in his eyes. His hair was always in a wild tangle and stood up in a shock which nothing could smooth. He was seven- or eight-and-twenty.

"I no longer wonder that his wife ran away from him," Varvara Petrovna enunciated on one occasion after gazing intently at him. He tried to be neat in his dress, in spite of his extreme poverty. He refrained again from appealing to Varvara Petrovna, and struggled along as best he could, doing various jobs for tradespeople. At one time he served in a shop, at another he was on the point of going as an assistant clerk on a freight steamer, but he fell ill just at the time of sailing. It is hard to imagine what poverty he was

capable of enduring without thinking about it at all. After his illness Varvara Petrovna sent him a hundred roubles, anonymously and in secret. He found out the secret, however, and after some reflection took the money and went to Varvara Petrovna to thank her. She received him with warmth, but on this occasion, too, he shamefully disappointed her. He only stayed five minutes, staring blankly at the ground and smiling stupidly in profound silence, and suddenly, at the most interesting point, without listening to what she was saying, he got up, made an uncouth sideways bow, helpless with confusion, caught against the lady's expensive inlaid work-table, upsetting it on the floor and smashing it to atoms, and walked out nearly dead with shame. Liputin blamed him severely afterwards for having accepted the hundred roubles and having even gone to thank Varvara Petrovna for them, instead of having returned the money with contempt, because it had come from his former despotic mistress. He lived in solitude on the outskirts of the town, and did not like any of us to go and see him. He used to turn up invariably at Stepan Trofimovitch's evenings, and borrowed newspapers and books from him.

There was another young man who always came, one Virginsky, a clerk in the service here, who had something in common with Shatov, though on the surface he seemed his complete opposite in every respect. He was a “family man” too. He was a pathetic

and very quiet young man though he was thirty; he had considerable education though he was chiefly self-taught. He was poor, married, and in the service, and supported the aunt and sister of his wife. His wife and all the ladies of his family professed the very latest convictions, but in rather a crude form. It was a case of "an idea dragged forth into the street," as Stepan Trofimovitch had expressed it upon a former occasion. They got it all out of books, and at the first hint coming from any of our little progressive corners in Petersburg they were prepared to throw anything overboard, so soon as they were advised to do so, Madame Virginsky practised as a midwife in the town. She had lived a long while in Petersburg as a girl. Virginsky himself was a man of rare single-heartedness, and I have seldom met more honest fervour.

"I will never, never, abandon these bright hopes," he used to say to me with shining eyes. Of these "bright hopes" he always spoke quietly, in a blissful half-whisper, as it were secretly. He was rather tall, but extremely thin and narrow-shouldered, and had extraordinarily lank hair of a reddish hue. All Stepan Trofimovitch's condescending gibes at some of his opinions he accepted mildly, answered him sometimes very seriously, and often nonplussed him. Stepan Trofimovitch treated him very kindly, and indeed he behaved like a father to all of us. "You are all half-hearted chickens," he observed to Virginsky in

joke. “All who are like you, though in you, Virginsky, I have not observed that narrow-mindedness I found in Petersburg, *chez ces siminaristes.* But you're a half-hatched chicken all the same. Shatov would give anything to hatch out,, but he's half-hatched too.”

“And I?” Liputin inquired.

” You're simply the golden mean which will get on anywhere in its own way.” Liputin was offended.

The story was told of Virginsky, and it was unhappily only too true, that before his wife had spent a year in lawful wedlock with him she announced that he was superseded and that she preferred Lebyadkin. This Lebyadkin, a stranger to the town, turned out afterwards to be a very dubious character, and not a retired captain as he represented himself to be. He could do nothing but twist his moustache, drink, and chatter the most inept nonsense that can possibly be imagined. This fellow, who was utterly lacking in delicacy, at once settled in his house, glad to live at another man's expense, ate and slept there and came, in the end, to treating the master of the house with condescension. It was asserted that when Virginsky's wife had announced to him that he was superseded he said to her:

“My dear, hitherto I have only loved you, but now I respect you,” but I doubt whether this renunciation, worthy of ancient Home, was ever really uttered. On the contrary they say that he wept violently.

A fortnight after he was superseded, all of them, in a "family party," went one day for a picnic to a wood outside the town to drink tea with their friends. Virginsky was in a feverishly lively mood and took part in the dances. But suddenly, without any preliminary quarrel, he seized the giant Lebyadkin with both hands, by the hair, just as the latter was dancing a *can-can* solo, pushed him down, and began dragging him along with shrieks, shouts, and tears. The giant was so panic-stricken that he did not attempt to defend himself, and hardly uttered a sound all the time he was being dragged along. But afterwards he resented it with all the heat of an honourable man. Virginsky spent a whole night on his knees begging his wife's forgiveness. But this forgiveness was not granted, as he refused to apologise to Lebyadkin; moreover, he was upbraided for the meanness of his ideas and his foolishness, the latter charge based on the fact that he knelt down in the interview with his wife. The captain soon disappeared and did not reappear in our town till quite lately, when he came with his sister, and with entirely different aims; but of him later. It was no wonder that the poor young husband sought our society and found comfort in it. But he never spoke of his home-life to us. On one occasion only, returning with me from Stepan Trofimovitch's, he made a remote allusion to his position, but clutching my hand at once he cried ardently:

“It's of no consequence. It's only a personal incident. It's no hindrance to the 'cause,' not the slightest!”

Stray guests visited our circle too; a Jew, called Lyamshin, and a Captain Kartusov came. An old gentleman of inquiring mind used to come at one time, but he died. Liputin brought an exiled Polish priest called Slontsevsky, and for a time we received him on principle, but afterwards we didn't keep it up.

IX

At one time it was reported about the town that our little circle was a hotbed of nihilism, profligacy, and godlessness, and the rumour gained more and more strength. And yet we did nothing but indulge in the most harmless, agreeable, typically Russian, light-hearted liberal chatter. “The higher liberalism” and the “higher liberal,” that is, a liberal without any definite aim, is only possible in Russia.

Stepan Trofimovitch, like every witty man, needed a listener, and, besides that, he needed the consciousness that he was fulfilling the lofty duty of disseminating ideas. And finally he had to have some one to drink champagne with, and over the wine to exchange light-hearted views of a certain sort, about Russia and the “Russian spirit,” about God in general, and the “Russian God” in particular, to repeat for the

hundredth time the same Russian scandalous stories that every one knew and everyone repeated. We had no distaste for the gossip of the town which often, indeed, led us to the most severe and loftily moral verdicts. We fell into generalising about humanity, made stern reflections on the future of Europe and mankind in general, authoritatively predicted that after Caesarism France would at once sink into the position of a second-rate power, and were firmly convinced that this might terribly easily and quickly come to pass. We had long ago predicted that the Pope would play the part of a simple archbishop in a united Italy, and were firmly convinced that this thousand-year-old question had, in our age of humanitarianism, industry, and railways, become a trifling matter. But, of course, "Russian higher liberalism" could not look at the question in any other way. Stepan Trofimovitch sometimes talked of art, and very well, though rather abstractly. He sometimes spoke of the friends of his youth — all names noteworthy in the history of Russian progress. He talked of them with emotion and reverence, though sometimes with envy. If we were very much bored, the Jew, Lyamshin (a little post-office clerk), a wonderful performer on the piano, sat down to play, and in the intervals would imitate a pig, a thunderstorm, a confinement with the first cry of the baby, and so on, and so on; it was only for this that he was invited, indeed. If we had drunk a great deal — and that did

happen sometimes, though not often — we flew into raptures, and even on one occasion sang the "Marseillaise" in chorus to the accompaniment of Lyamshin, though I don't know how it went off. The great day, the nineteenth of February, we welcomed enthusiastically, and for a long time beforehand drank toasts in its honour. But that was long ago, before the advent of Shatov or Virginsky, when Stepan Trofimovitch was still living in the same house with Varvara Petrovna. For some time before the great day Stepan Trofimovitch fell into the habit of muttering to himself well-known, though rather far-fetched, lines which must have been written by some liberal landowner of the past:

"*The peasant with his axe is coming,*
Something terrible will happen. "

Something of that sort, I don't remember the exact words. Varvara Petrovna overheard him on one occasion, and crying, "Nonsense, nonsense!" she went out of the room in a rage. Liputin, who happened to be present, observed malignantly to Stepan Trofimovitch:

"It'll be a pity if their former serfs really do some mischief to *messieurs les* landowners to celebrate the occasion," and he drew his forefinger round his throat.

"*Cher ami,* " Stepan Trofimovitch observed, "believe me that -this (he repeated the gesture) will never be of any use to our landowners nor to any of us in general. We shall never be capable of organising anything even without our heads, though our heads hinder our understanding more than anything."

I may observe that many people among us anticipated that something extraordinary, such as Liputin predicted, would take place on the day of the emancipation, and those who held this view were the so-called "authorities" on the peasantry and the government. I believe Stepan Trofimovitch shared this idea, so much so that almost on the eve of the great day he began asking Varvara Petrovna's leave to go abroad; in fact he began to be uneasy. But the great day passed, and some time passed after it, and the condescending smile reappeared on Stepan Trofimovitch's lips. In our presence he delivered himself of some noteworthy thoughts on the character of the Russian in general, and the Russian peasant in particular.

"Like hasty people we have been in too great a hurry with our peasants," he said in conclusion of a series of remarkable utterances. "We have made them the fashion, and a whole section of writers have for several years treated them as though they were newly discovered curiosities. We have put laurel-wreaths on lousy heads. The Russian village has given us only 'Kamarinsky' in a thousand years. A remarkable

Russian poet who was also something of a wit, seeing the great Rachel on the stage for the first time cried in ecstasy, 'I wouldn't exchange Rachel for a peasant! 'I am prepared to go further. I would'; give all the peasants in Russia for one Rachel. It's high time to look things in the face more soberly, and not to mix up our national rustic pitch with *bouquet de I'lmpiratrice.* "

Liputin agreed at once, but remarked that one had to perjure oneself and praise the peasant all the same for the sake of being progressive, that even ladies in good society shed tears reading "Poor Anton," and that some of them even wrote from Paris to their bailiffs that they were, henceforward, to treat the peasants as humanely as possible.

It happened, and as ill-luck would have it just after the rumours of the Anton Petrov affair had reached us, that there was some disturbance in our province too, only about ten miles from Skvoreshniki, so that a detachment of soldiers was sent down in a hurry.

This time Stepan Trofimovitch was so much upset that he even frightened us. He cried out at the club that more troops were needed, that they ought to be telegraphed for from another province; he rushed off to the governor to protest that he had no hand in it, begged him not to allow his name on account of old associations to be brought into it, and offered to write about his protest to the proper quarter in Petersburg.

Fortunately it all passed over quickly and ended in nothing, but I was surprised at Stepan Trofimovitch at the time.

Three years later, as every one knows, people were beginning to talk of nationalism, and "public opinion" first came upon the scene. Stepan Trofimovitch laughed a great deal.

"My friends," he instructed us, "if our nationalism has 'dawned' as they keep repeating in the papers — it's still at school, at some German 'Peterschule,' sitting over a German book and repeating its everlasting German lesson, and its German teacher will make it go down on its knees when he thinks fit. I think highly of the German teacher. But nothing has happened and nothing of the kind has dawned and everything is going on in the old way, that is, as ordained by God. To my thinking that should be enough for Russia, *pour notre Sainte Russie.* Besides, all this Slavism and nationalism is too old to be new. Nationalism, if you like, has never existed among us except as a distraction for gentlemen's clubs, and Moscow ones at that. I'm not talking of the days of Igor, of course. And besides it all comes of idleness. Everything in Russia comes of idleness, everything good and fine even. It all springs from the charming, cultured, whimsical idleness of our gentry! I'm ready to repeat it for thirty thousand years. We don't know how to live by our own labour. And as for the fuss they're

making now about the 'dawn' of some sort of public opinion, has it so suddenly dropped from heaven without any warning? How is it they don't understand that before we can have an opinion of our own we must have work, our own work, our own initiative in things, our own experience. Nothing is to be gained for nothing. If we work we shall have an opinion of our own. But as we never shall work, our opinions will be formed for us by those who have hitherto done the work instead of us, that is, as always, Europe, the everlasting Germans — our teachers for the last two centuries. Moreover, Russia is too big a tangle for us to unravel alone without the Germans, and without hard work. For the last twenty years I've been sounding the alarm, and the summons to work. I've given up my life to that appeal, and, in my folly I put faith in it. Now I have lost faith in it, but I sound the alarm still, and shall sound it to the' tomb. I will pull at the bell-ropes until they toll for my own requiem!"

"Alas! We could do nothing but assent. We applauded our teacher and with what warmth, indeed! And, after all, my friends, don't we still hear to-day, every hour, at every step, the game "charming," "clever," "liberal," old Russian nonsense? Our teacher believed in God.

"I can't understand why they make me out an infidel here," he used to say sometimes. "I believe in God, *mais distinguons,* I believe in Him as a Being

who is conscious of Himself in me only. I cannot believe as my Nastasya (the servant) or like some country gentleman who believes 'to be on the safe side,' or like our dear Shatov — but no, Shatov doesn't come into it. Shitov believes 'on principle,' like a Moscow Slavophil. as for Christianity, for all my genuine respect for it, I'm not a Christian. I am more of an antique pagan, like the great Goethe, or like an ancient Greek. The very fact that Christianity has failed to understand woman is enough, as George Sand has so splendidly shown in one of her great 'novels. As for the bowings, fasting and all the rest of it, I don't understand what they have to do with me. However busy the informers may be here, I don't care to become a Jesuit. In the year 1847 Byelinsky, who was abroad, sent his famous letter to Gogol, and warmly reproached him for believing in some sort of God. *Entre nous soit dit, I* can imagine nothing more comic than the moment when Gogol (the Gogol of that period!) read that phrase, and . . . the whole letter! But dismissing the humorous aspect, and, as I am fundamentally in agreement, I point to them and say — these were men! They knew how to love their people, they knew how to suffer for them, they knew how to sacrifice everything for them, yet they knew how to differ from them when they ought, and did not filch certain ideas from them. Could Byelinsky have sought salvation in Lenten oil, or peas with radish! . . .” But at this point Shatov

interposed.

"Those men of yours never loved the people, they didn't suffer for them, and didn't sacrifice anything for them, though they may have amused themselves by imagining it!" he growled sullenly, looking down, and moving impatiently in his chair.

"They didn't love the people!" yelled Stepan Trofimovitch. "Oh, how they loved Russia!"

"Neither Russia nor the people!" Shatov yelled too. with flashing eyes. "You can't love what you don't know and they had no conception of the Russian people. All of them peered at the Russian people through their fingers, and you do too; Byelinsky especially: from that very letter to Gogol one can see it. Byelinsky, like the Inquisitive Man in Krylov's fable, did not notice the elephant in the museum of curiosities, but concentrated his whole attention on the French Socialist beetles; he did not get beyond them. And yet perhaps he was cleverer than any of you. You've not only overlooked the people, you've taken up an attitude of disgusting contempt for them, if only because you could not imagine any but the French people, the Parisians indeed, and were ashamed that the Russians were not like them. That's the naked truth. And he who has no people has no God. You may be sure that all who cease to understand their own people and lose their connection with them at once lose to the same extent the faith of their fathers, and become atheistic or

indifferent. I'm speaking the truth! This is a fact which will be realised. That's why all of you and all of us now are either beastly atheists or careless, dissolute imbeciles, and nothing more. And you too, Stepan Trofimovitch, I don't make an exception of you at all! In fact, it is on your account I am speaking, let me tell you that!"

As a rule, after uttering such monologues (which happened to him pretty frequently) Shatov snatched up his cap and rushed to the door, in the full conviction that everything was now over, and that he had cut short all friendly relations with Stepan Trofimovitch for ever. But the latter always succeeded in stopping him in time.

"Hadn't we better make it up, Shatov, after all these endearments," he would say, benignly holding out his hand to him from his arm-chair.

Shatov, clumsy and bashful, disliked sentimentality. Externally he was rough, but inwardly, I believe, he had great delicacy. Although he often went too far, he was the first to suffer for it. Muttering something between his teeth in response to Stepan Trofimovitch's appeal, and shuffling with his feet like a bear, he gave a sudden and unexpected smile, put down his cap, and sat down in the same chair as before, with his eyes stubbornly fixed on the ground. Wine was, of course, brought in, and Stepan Trofimovitch proposed some suitable toast, for instance the memory of some leading man of the past.

Chapter II.
Prince Harry. Matchmaking.

I

THERE WAS ANOTHER being in the world to whom Varvara Petrovna was as much attached as she was to Stepan Trofimovitch, her only son, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch Stavrogin. It was to undertake his education that Stepan Trofimovitch had been engaged. The boy was at that time eight years old, and his frivolous father, General Stavrogin, was already living apart from Varvara Petrovna, so that the child grew up entirely in his mother's care. To do Stepan Trofimovitch justice, he knew how to win his pupil's heart. The whole secret of this lay in the fact that he was a child himself. I was not there in those days, and he continually felt the want of a real friend. He did not hesitate to make a friend of this little creature as soon as he had grown a little older. It somehow came to pass quite naturally that there seemed to be no discrepancy of age between them. More than once he awaked his ten- or eleven-year-old friend at night, simply to pour out his wounded feelings and weep before him, or to tell him some family secret, without realising that this was an outrageous proceeding. They threw themselves into each other's arms and wept. The boy knew that his mother loved him very much, but I doubt whether he cared much for her. She talked little to him and did not often interfere with him, but he was always morbidly conscious of her intent, searching eyes fixed upon him. Yet the mother confided his whole instruction and

moral education to Stepan Trofimovitch. At that time her faith in him was unshaken. One can't help believing that the tutor had rather a bad influence on his pupil's nerves. When at sixteen he was taken to a lyceum he was fragile-looking and pale, strangely quiet and dreamy. (Later on he was distinguished by great physical strength.) One must assume too that the friends went on weeping at night, throwing themselves in each other's arms, though their tears were not always due to domestic difficulties. Stepan Trofimovitch succeeded in reaching the deepest chords in his pupil's heart, and had aroused in him a vague sensation of that eternal, sacred yearning which some elect souls can never give up for cheap gratification when once they have tasted and known it. (There are some connoisseurs who prize this yearning more than the most complete satisfaction of it, if such were possible.) But in any case it was just as well that the pupil and the preceptor were, though none too soon, parted.

For the first two years the lad used to come home from the lyceum for the holidays. While Varvara Petrovna and Stepan Trofimovitch were staying in Petersburg he was sometimes present at the literary evenings at his mother's, he listened and looked on. He spoke little, and was quiet and shy as before. His manner to Stepan Trofimovitch was as affectionately attentive as ever, but there was a shade of reserve in it. He unmistakably avoided distressing, lofty subjects or

reminiscences of the past. By his mother's wish he entered the army on completing the school course, and soon received a commission in one of the most brilliant regiments of the Horse Guards. He did not come to show himself to his mother in his uniform, and his letters from Petersburg began to be infrequent. Varvara Petrovna sent him money without stint, though after the emancipation the revenue from her estate was so diminished that at first her income was less than half what it had been before. She had, however, a considerable sum laid by through years of economy. She took great interest in her son's success in the highest Petersburg society. Where she had failed, the wealthy young officer with expectations succeeded. He renewed acquaintances which she had hardly dared to dream of, and was welcomed everywhere with pleasure. But very soon rather strange rumours reached Varvara Petrovna. The young man had suddenly taken to riotous living with a sort of frenzy. Not that he gambled or drank too much; there was only talk of savage recklessness, of running over people in the street with his horses, of brutal conduct to a lady of good society with whom he had a liaison and whom he afterwards publicly insulted. There was a callous nastiness about this affair. It was added, too, that he had developed into a regular bully, insulting people for the mere pleasure of insulting them. Varvara Petrovna was greatly agitated and distressed. Stepan Trofimovitch

assured her that this was only the first riotous effervescence of a too richly endowed nature, that the storm would subside and that this was only like the youth of Prince Harry, who caroused with Falstaff, Poins, and Mrs. Quickly, as described by Shakespeare.

This time Varvara Petrovna did not cry out, "Nonsense, nonense!" as she was very apt to do in later years in response to Stepan Trofimovitch. On the contrary she listened very eagerly, asked him to explain this theory more exactly, took up Shakespeare herself and with great attention read the immortal chronicle. But it did not comfort her, and indeed she did not find the resemblance very striking. With feverish impatience she awaited answers to some of her letters. She had not long to wait for them. The fatal news soon reached her that "Prince Harry" had been involved in two duels almost at once, was entirely to blame for both of them, had killed one of his adversaries on the spot and had maimed the other and was awaiting his trial in consequence. The case ended in his being degraded to the ranks, deprived of the rights of a nobleman, and transferred to an infantry line regiment, and he only escaped worse punishment by special favour.

In 1863 he somehow succeeded in distinguishing himself; he received a cross, was promoted to be a non-commissioned officer, and rose rapidly to the rank of an officer. During this period Varvara Petrovna despatched perhaps hundreds of letters to the capital,

full of prayers and supplications. She even stooped to some humiliation in this extremity. After his promotion the young man suddenly resigned his commission, but he did not come back to Skvoreshniki again, and gave up writing to his mother altogether. They learned by roundabout means that he was back in Petersburg, but that he was not to be met in the same society as before; he seemed to be in hiding. They found out that he was living in strange company, associating with the dregs of the population of Petersburg, with slip-shod government clerks, discharged military men, beggars of the higher class, and drunkards of all sorts — that he visited their filthy families, spent days and nights in dark slums and all sorts of low haunts, that he had sunk very low, that he was in rags, and that apparently he liked it. He did not ask his mother for money, he had his own little estate — once the property of his father, General Stavrogin, which yielded at least some revenue, and which, it was reported, he had let to a German from Saxony. At last his mother besought him to come to her, and "Prince Harry" made his appearance in our town. I had never feet eyes him before, but now I got a very distinct impression of him. He was a very handsome young man of five-and-twenty, and I must own I was impressed by him. I had expected to see a dirty ragamuffin, sodden with drink and debauchery. He was on the contrary, the most elegant gentleman I had ever met' extremely well

dressed, with an air and manner only to be found in a man accustomed to culture and refinement. I was not the only person surprised. It was a surprise to all the townspeople to whom, of course, young Stavrogin's whole biography was well known in its minutest details, though one could not imagine how they had got hold of them, and, what was still more surprising, half of their stories about him turned out to be true.

All our ladies were wild over the new visitor. They were sharply divided into two parties, one of which adored him while the other half regarded him with a hatred that was almost blood-thirsty: but both were crazy about him. Some of them were particularly fascinated by the idea that he had perhaps a fateful secret hidden in his soul; others were positively delighted at the fact that he was a murderer. It appeared too that he had had a very good education and was indeed a man of considerable culture. No great acquirements were needed, of course, to astonish us. But he could judge also of very interesting everyday affairs, and, what was of the utmost value, he judged of them with remarkable good sense. I must mention as a peculiar fact that almost from the first day we all of us thought him a very sensible fellow. He was not very talkative, he was elegant without exaggeration, surprisingly modest, and at the same time bold and self-reliant, as none of us were. Our dandies gazed at him with envy, and were completely eclipsed by him.

His face, too, impressed me. His hair was of a peculiarly intense black, his light-coloured eyes were peculiarly light and calm, his complexion was peculiarly soft and white, the red in his cheeks was too bright and clear, his teeth were like pearls, and his lips like coral — one would have thought that he must be a paragon of beauty, yet at the same time there seemed something repellent about him. It was said that his face suggested a mask; so much was said though, among other things they talked of his extraordinary physical strength. He was rather tall. Varvara Petrovna looked at him with pride, yet with continual uneasiness. He spent about six months among us — listless, quiet, rather morose. He made his appearance in society, and with unfailing propriety performed all the duties demanded by our provincial etiquette. He was related, on his father's side, to the governor, and was received by the latter as a near kinsman. But a few months passed and the wild beast showed his claws.

I may observe by the way, in parenthesis, that Ivan Ossipovitch, our dear mild governor, was rather like an old woman, though he was of good family and highly connected — which explains the fact that he remained so long among us, though he steadily avoided all the duties of his office. From his munificence and hospitality he ought rather to have been a marshal of nobility of the good old days than a governor in such busy times as ours. It was always said in the town that

it was not he, but Varvara Petrovna who governed the province. Of course this was said sarcastically; however, it was certainly a falsehood. And, indeed, much wit was wasted on the subject among us. On the contrary, in later years, Varvara Petrovna purposely and consciously withdrew from anything like a position of authority, and, in spite of the extraordinary respect in which she was held by the whole province, voluntarily confined her influence within strict limits set up by herself. Instead of these higher responsibilities she suddenly took up the management of her estate, and, within two or three years, raised the revenue from it almost to what it had yielded in the past. Giving up her former romantic impulses (trips to Petersburg, plans for founding a magazine, and so on) she began to be careful and to save money. She kept even Stepan Trofimovitch at a distance, allowing him to take lodgings in another house (a change for which he had long been worrying her under various pretexts). Little by little Stepan Trofimovitch began to call her a prosaic woman, or more jestingly, "My prosaic friend." I need hardly say he only ventured on such jests in an extremely respectful form, and on rare, and carefully chosen, occasions.

All of us in her intimate circle felt — Stepan Trofimovitch more acutely than any of us — that her son had come to her almost, as it were, as a new hope, and even as a sort of new aspiration. Her passion for

her son dated from the time of his successes in Petersburg society, and grew more intense from the moment that he was degraded in the army. Yet she was evidently afraid of him, and seemed like a slave in his presence. It could be seen that she was afraid of something vague and mysterious which she could not have put into words, and she often stole searching glances at "Nicolas," scrutinising him reflectively . . . and behold — the wild beast suddenly showed his claws.

II

Suddenly, apropos of nothing, our prince was guilty of incredible outrages upon various persons and, what was most striking these outrages were utterly unheard of, quite inconceivable, unlike anything commonly done, utterly silly and mischievous, quite unprovoked and objectless. One of the most respected of our club members, on our committee of management, Pyotr Pavlovitch Gaganov, an elderly man of high rank in the service, had formed the innocent habit of declaring vehemently on all sorts of occasions: "No, you can't lead me by the nose!" Well, there is no harm in that. But one day at the club, when he brought out this phrase in connection with some heated discussion in the midst of a little group of members (all persons of some consequence) Nikolay

Vsyevolodovitch, who was standing on one side, alone and unnoticed, suddenly went up to Pyotr Pavlovitch, took him unexpectedly and firmly with two fingers by the nose, and succeeded in leading him two or three steps across the room. He could have had no grudge against Mr. Gaganov. It might be thought to be a mere schoolboy prank, though, of course, a most unpardonable one. Yet, describing it afterwards, people said that he looked almost dreamy at the very instant of the operation, "as though he had gone out of his mind," but that was recalled and reflected upon long afterwards. In the excitement of the moment all they recalled was the minute after, when he certainly saw it all as it really was, and far from being confused smiled gaily and maliciously "without the slightest regret." There was a terrific outcry; he was surrounded. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch kept turning round, looking about him, answering nobody, and glancing curiously at the persons exclaiming around him. At last he seemed suddenly, as it were, to sink into thought again — so at least it was reported — frowned, went firmly up to the affronted Pyotr Pavlovitch, and with evident vexation said in a rapid mutter:

"You must forgive me, of course ... I really don't know what suddenly came over me . . . it's silly."

The carelessness of his apology was almost equivalent to a fresh insult. The outcry was greater than ever. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch shrugged his shoulders

and went away. All this was very stupid, to say nothing of its gross indecency — A calculated and premeditated indecency as it seemed at first sight — and therefore a premeditated and utterly brutal insult to our whole society. So it was taken to be by every one. We began by promptly and unanimously striking young Stavrogin's name off the list of club members. Then it was decided to send an. appeal in the name of the whole club to the governor, begging him at once (without waiting for the case to be formally tried in court) to use "the administrative power entrusted to him" to restrain this dangerous ruffian, "this duelling bully from the capital, and so protect the tranquillity of all the gentry of our town from injurious encroachments." It was added with angry resentment that" a law might be found to control even Mr. Stavrogin." This phrase was prepared by way of a thrust at the governor on account of Varvara Petrovna. They elaborated it with relish. As ill luck would have it, the governor was not in the town at the time. He had gone to a little distance to stand godfather to the child of a very charming lady, recently left a widow in an interesting condition. But it was known that he would soon be back. In the meanwhile they got up a regular ovation for the respected and insulted gentleman; people embraced and kissed him; the whole town called upon him. It was even proposed to give a subscription dinner in his honour, and they only gave up the idea at

his earnest request — reflecting possibly at last that the man had, after all, been pulled by the nose and that that was really nothing to congratulate him upon. Yet, how had it happened? How could it have happened? It is remarkable that no one in the whole town put down this savage act to madness. They must have been predisposed to expect such actions from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, even when he was sane. For my part I don't know to this day how to explain it, in spite of the event that quickly followed and apparently explained everything, and conciliated every one. I will add also that, four years later, in reply to a discreet question from me about the incident at the club, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch answered, frowning: "I wasn't quite well at the time." But there is no need to anticipate events.

The general outburst of hatred with which every one fell upon the "ruffian and duelling bully from the capital" also struck me as curious. They insisted on seeing an insolent design and deliberate intention to insult our whole society at once. The truth was no one liked the fellow, but, on the contrary, he had set every one against him — and one wonders how. Up to the last incident he had never quarrelled with anyone, nor insulted anyone, but was as courteous as a gentleman in a fashion-plate, if only the latter were able to speak. I imagine that he was hated for his pride. Even our ladies, who had begun by adoring him, railed against

him now, more loudly than the men. Varvara Petrovna was dreadfully overwhelmed. She confessed afterwards to Stepan Trofimovitch that she had had a foreboding of all this long before, that every day for the last six months she had been expecting “just something of that sort,” a remarkable admission on the part of his own mother. “It's begun!” she thought to herself with a shudder. The morning after the incident at the club she cautiously but firmly approached the subject with her son, but the poor woman was trembling all over in spite of her firmness. She had not slept all night and even went out early to Stepan Trofimovitch's lodgings to ask his advice, and shed tears there, a thing which she had never been known to do before anyone. She longed for “Nicolas” to say something to her, to deign to give some explanation. Nikolay, who was always so polite and respectful to his mother, listened to her for some time scowling, but very seriously. He suddenly got up without saying a word, kissed her hand and went away. That very evening, as though by design, he perpetrated another scandal. It was of a more harmless and ordinary character than the first. Yet, owing to the state of the public mind, it increased the outcry in the town.

Our friend Liputin turned up and called on Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch immediately after the latter's interview with his mother, and earnestly begged for the honour of his company at a little party he was giving for his wife's birthday that evening. Varvara Petrovna

had long watched with a pang at her heart her son's taste for such low company, but she had not dared to speak of it to him. He had made several acquaintances besides Liputin in the third rank of our society, and even in lower depths — he had a propensity for making such friends. He had never been in Liputin's house before, though he had met the man himself. He guessed that Liputin's invitation now was the consequence of the previous day's scandal, and that as a local liberal he was delighted at the scandal, genuinely believing that that was the proper way to treat stewards at the club, and that it was very well done. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled and promised to come.

A great number of guests had assembled. The company was not very presentable, but very sprightly. Liputin, vain and envious, only entertained visitors twice a year, but on those occasions he did it without stint. The most honoured of the invited guests, Stepan Trofimovitch, was prevented by illness from being present. Tea was handed, and there were refreshments and vodka in plenty. Cards were played at three tables, and while waiting for supper the young people got up a dance. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch led out Madame Liputin — a very pretty little woman who was dreadfully shy of him — took two turns round the room with her, sat down beside her, drew her into conversation and made her laugh. Noticing at last how pretty she was when she laughed, he suddenly, before

all the company, seized her round the waist and kissed her on the lips two or three times with great relish. The poor frightened lady fainted. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch took his hat and went up to the husband, who stood petrified in the middle of the general excitement. Looking at him he, too, became confused and muttering hurriedly “Don't be angry,” went away. Liputin ran after him in the entry, gave him his fur-coat with his own hands, and saw him down the stairs, bowing. But next day a rather amusing sequel followed this comparatively harmless prank — a sequel from which Liputin gained some credit, and of which he took the fullest possible advantage.

At ten o'clock in the morning Liputin's servant Agafya, an easy-mannered, lively, rosy-cheeked peasant woman of thirty, made her appearance at Stavrogin's house, with a message for Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. She insisted on seeing “his honour himself.” He had a very bad headache, but he went out. Varvara Petrovna succeeded in being present when the message was given.

“Sergay Vassilyevitch” (Liputin's name), Agafya rattled off briskly, “bade me first of all give you his respectful greetings and ask after your health, what sort of night your honour spent after yesterday's doings, and how your honour feels now after yesterday's doings?”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled.

“Give him my greetings and thank him, and tell

your master from me, Agafya, that he's the most sensible man in the town."

"And he told me to answer that," Agafya caught him up still more briskly, "that he knows that without your telling him, and wishes you the same."

"Really! But how could he tell what I should say to you?"

"I can't say in what way he could tell, but when *I* had set off and had gone right down the street, *I* heard something, and there he was, running after me without his cap. "I say, Agafya, if by any chance he says to you, '*Tell* your master that he has more sense than all the town,' you tell him at once, don't forget,' The master himself knows that very well, and wishes you the same.' "

III

At last the interview with the governor took place too. Our dear, mild, Ivan Ossipovitch had only just returned and only just had time to hear the angry complaint from the club. There was no doubt that something must be done, but he was troubled. The hospitable old man seemed also rather afraid of his young kinsman. He made up his mind, however, to induce him to apologise to the club and to his victim in satisfactory form, and, if required, by letter, and then to persuade him to leave us for a time, travelling, for

instance, to improve hie mind, in Italy, or in fact anywhere abroad. In the waiting-room in which on this occasion he received Nikolay Vsyevoloctoyitch (who had been at other times privileged as a relation to wander all over the house unchecked), Alyosha Telyatnikov, a clerk of refined manners, who was also a member of the governor's household, was sitting in a corner opening envelopes at a table, and in the next room, at the window nearest to the door, a stout and sturdy colonel, a former friend and colleague of the governor, was sitting alone reading the *Oolos,* paying no attention, of course, to what was taking place in the waiting-room; in fact, he had his back turned. Ivan Ossipovitch approached the subject in a roundabout way, almost in a "whisper, but kept getting a little muddled. Nikolay looked anything but cordial, not at all as a relation should. He was pale and sat looking down and continually moving his eyebrows as though trying to control acute pain.

"*You* have a kind heart and a generous one, Nicolas," the old man put in among other things, "you're a man of great culture, you've grown up in the highest circles, and here too your behaviour has hitherto been a model, which has been a great consolation to your mother, who is so precious to all of us. ... And now again everything has appeared in such an unaccountable light, so detrimental to all! I speak as a friend of your family, as an old man who loves you

sincerely and a relation, at whose words you cannot take offence. . . . Tell me, what drives you to such reckless proceedings so contrary to all accepted rules and habits? What can be the meaning of such acts which seem almost like outbreaks of delirium?"

Nikolay listened with vexation and impatience. All at once there was a gleam of something sly and mocking in his eyes.

"I'll tell you what drives me to it," he said sullenly, and looking round him he bent down to Ivan Ossipovitch's ear. The refined Alyosha Telyatnikov moved three steps farther away towards the window, and the colonel coughed over the *Qolos.* Poor Ivan Ossipovitch hurriedly and trustfully inclined his ear-; he was exceedingly curious. And then something utterly incredible, though on the other side only too unmistakable, took place. The old man suddenly felt that, instead of telling him some interesting secret, Nikolay had seized the upper part of his ear between his teeth and was nipping it rather hard. He shuddered, and breath failed him.

"Nicolas, this is beyond a joke!" he moaned mechanically in a voice not his own.

Alyosha and the colonel had not yet grasped the situation, besides they couldn't see, and fancied up to the end that the two were whispering together; and yet the old man's desperate face alarmed them. They looked at one another with wide-open eyes, not

knowing whether to rush to his assistance as agreed or to wait. Nikolay noticed this perhaps, and bit the harder.

"Nicolas! Nicolas!" his victim moaned again, "come . . . you've had your joke, that's enough!"

In another moment the poor governor would certainly have died of terror; but the monster had mercy on him, and let go his ear. The old man's deadly terror lasted for a full minute, and it was followed by a sort of fit. Within half an hour Nikolay was arrested and removed for the time to the guard-room, where he was confined in a special cell, with a special sentinel at the door. This decision was a harsh one, but our mild governor was so angry that he was prepared to take the responsibility even if he had to face Varvara Petrovna. To the general amazement, when this lady arrived at the governor's in haste and in nervous irritation to discuss the matter with him at once, she was refused admittance, whereupon, without getting out of the carriage, she returned home, unable to believe her senses.

And at last everything was explained! At two o'clock in the morning the prisoner, who had till then been calm and had even slept, suddenly became noisy, began furiously beating on the door with his fists,—with unnatural strength wrenched the iron grating off the door, broke the window, and cut his hands all over. When the officer on duty ran with a detachment of men

and the keys and ordered the cell to be opened that they might rush in and bind the maniac, it appeared that he was suffering from acute brain fever. He was taken home to his mother.

Everything was explained at once. All our three doctors gave it as their opinion that the patient might well have been in a delirious state for three days before, and that though he might have apparently been in possession of full consciousness and cunning, yet he might have been deprived of common sense and will, which was indeed borne out by the facts. So it turned out that Liputin had guessed the truth sooner than any one. Ivan Ossipovitch, who was a man of delicacy and feeling, was completely abashed. But what was striking was that he, too, had considered Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch capable of any mad action even when in the full possession of his faculties. At the club, too, people were ashamed and wondered how it was they had failed to "see the elephant" and had missed the only explanation of all these marvels: there were, of course, sceptics among them, but they could not long maintain their position.

Nikolay was in bed for more than two months. A famous doctor was summoned from Moscow for a consultation; the whole town called on Varvara Petrovna. She forgave them.— When in the spring Nikolay had completely recovered and assented without discussion to his mother's proposal that he should go

for a tour to Italy, she begged him further to pay visits of farewell; to all the neighbours, and so far as possible to apologise where necessary. Nikolay agreed with great alacrity. It became known at the club that he had had a most delicate explanation with Pyotr Pavlovitch Gaganov, at the house of the latter, who had been completely satisfied with his apology. As he went round to pay these calls Nikolay was very grave and even gloomy. Every one appeared to receive him sympathetically, but everybody seemed embarrassed and glad that he was going to Italy. Ivan Ossipovitch was positively tearful, but was, for some reason, unable to bring himself to embrace him, even at the final leave-taking. It is true that some of us retained the conviction that the scamp had simply been making fun of us, and that the illness was neither here nor there. He went to see Liputin too.

"Tell me," he said, "how could you guess beforehand what I should say about your sense and prime Agafya with an answer to it?"

"Why," laughed Liputin, "it was because I recognised that you were a clever man, and so I foresaw what your answer would be."

"Anyway, it was a remarkable coincidence. But, excuse me, did you consider me a sensible man and not insane when you sent Agafya?"

"For the cleverest and most rational, and *I* only pretended to believe that you were insane. . . . And you

guessed at once what was in my mind, and sent a testimonial to my wit through Agafya."

"Well, there you're a little mistaken. I really was . . . unwell . . ." muttered Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, frowning. "Bah!" he cried, "do you suppose I'm capable of attacking people when I'm in my senses? What object would there be in it?"

Liputin shrank together and didn't know what to answer. Nikolay turned pale or, at least, so it seemed to Liputin.

"You have a very peculiar way of looking at things, anyhow," Nikolay went on, "but as for Agafya, I understand, of course, that you simply sent her to be rude to me."

"I couldn't challenge you to a duel, could I?"

"Oh, no, of course! I seem to have heard that you're not fond of duels. ..."

"Why borrow from the French?" said Liputin, doubling up again.

"You're for nationalism, then?"

Liputin shrank into himself more than ever.

"Ba, ba! What do I see?" cried Nicolas, noticing a volume of Considerant in the most conspicuous place on the table. "You don't mean to say you're a Fourierist! I'm afraid you must be! And isn't this too borrowing from the French?" he laughed, tapping the book with his finger.

"No, that's not taken from the French," Liputin

cried with positive fury, jumping up from his chair. “That is taken from the universal language of humanity, not simply from the French. From the language of the universal social republic and harmony of mankind, let me tell you! Not simply from the French!”

“Foo! hang it all! There's no such language!” laughed Nikolay.

Sometimes a trifle will catch the attention and exclusively absorb it for a time. Most of what I have to tell of young Stavrogin will come later. But I will note now as a curious fact that of all the impressions made on him by his stay in our town, the one most sharply imprinted on his memory was the unsightly and almost abject figure of the little provincial official, the coarse and jealous family despot, the miserly money-lender who picked up the candle-ends and scraps left from dinner, and was at the same time a passionate believer in some visionary future “social harmony,” who at night gloated in ecstasies over fantastic pictures of a future phalanstery, in the approaching realisation of which, in Russia, and in our province, he believed as firmly *as* in his own existence. And that in the very place where he had saved up to buy himself a “little home,” where he had married for the second time, getting a dowry with his bride, where perhaps, for a hundred miles round there was not one man, himself included, who was the very least like a future member “of the universal human republic and social harmony.”

“God knows how these people come to exist!” Nikolay wondered, recalling sometimes the unlooked-for Fourierist.

IV

Our prince travelled for over three years, so that he was almost forgotten in the town. We learned from Stepan Trofimovitch that he had travelled all over Europe, that he had even been in Egypt and had visited Jerusalem, and then had joined some scientific expedition to Iceland, and he actually did go to Iceland. It was reported too that he had spent one winter attending lectures in a German university. He did not write often to his mother, twice a year, or even less, but Varvara Petrovna was not angry or offended at this. She accepted submissively and without repining the relations that had been established once for all between her son and herself. She fretted for her “Nicolas” and dreamed of him continually. She kept her dreams and lamentations to herself. She seemed to have become less intimate even with Stepan Trofimovitch. She was forming secret projects, and seemed to have become more careful about money than ever. She was more than ever given to saving money and being angry at Stepan Trofimovitch's losses at cards.

At last, in the April of this year, she received a letter from Paris from Praskovya Ivanovna Drozdov,

the widow of the general and the friend of Varvara Petrovna's childhood. Praskovya Ivanovna, whom Varvara Petrovna had not seen or corresponded with for eight years, wrote, informing her that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had become very intimate with them and a great friend of her only daughter, Liza, and that he was intending to accompany them to Switzerland, to Verney-Montreux, though in the household of Count K. (a very influential personage in Petersburg), who was now staying in Paris. He was received like a son of the family, so that he almost lived at the count's. The letter was brief, and the object of it was perfectly clear, though it contained only a plain statement of the above-mentioned facts without drawing any inferences from them. Varvara Petrovna did not pause long to consider; she made up her mind instantly, made her preparations, and taking with her her protegee, Dasha (Shatov's sister), she set off in the middle of April for Paris, and from there went on to Switzerland. She returned in July, alone, leaving Dasha with the Drozdovs. She brought us the news that the Drozdovs themselves had promised to arrive among us by the end of August.

The Drozdovs, too, were landowners of our province, but the official duties of General Ivan Ivanovitch Drozdov (who had been a friend of Varvara Petrovna's and a colleague of her husband's) had always prevented them from visiting their magnificent estate.

On the death of the general, which had taken place the year before, the inconsolable widow had gone abroad with her daughter, partly in order to try the grape-cure which she proposed to carry out at Verney-Montreux during the latter half of the summer. On their return to Russia they intended to settle in our province for good. She had a large house in the town which had stood empty for many years with the windows nailed up. They were wealthy people. Praskovya Ivanovna had been, in her first marriage, a Madame Tushin, and like her school-friend, Varvara Petrovna, was the daughter of a government contractor of the old school, and she too had been an heiress at her marriage. Tushin, a retired cavalry captain, was also a man of means, and of some ability. At his death he left a snug fortune to his only daughter Liza, a child of seven. Now that Lizaveta Nikolaevna was twenty-two her private fortune might confidently be reckoned at 200,000 roubles, to say nothing of the property — which was bound to come to her at the death of her mother, who had no children by her second marriage. Varvara Petrovna seemed to be very well satisfied with her expedition. In her own opinion she had succeeded in coming to a satisfactory understanding with Praskovya Ivanovna, and immediately on her arrival she confided everything to Stepan Trofimovitch. She was positively effusive with him as she had not been for a very long time.

"Hurrah!" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, and

snapped his fingers.

He was in a perfect rapture, especially as he had spent the whole time of his friend's absence in extreme dejection. On setting off she had not even taken leave of him properly, and had said nothing of her plan to "that old woman," dreading, perhaps, that he might chatter about it. She was cross with him at the time on account of a considerable gambling debt which she had suddenly discovered. But before she left Switzerland she had felt that on her return she must make up for it to her forsaken friend, especially as she had treated him very curtly for a long time past. Her abrupt and mysterious departure had made a profound and poignant impression on the timid heart of Stepan Trofimovitch, and to make matters worse he was beset with other difficulties at the same time. He was worried by a very considerable money obligation, which had weighed upon him for a long time and which he could never hope to meet without Varvara Petrovna's assistance. Moreover, in the May of this year, the term of office of our mild and gentle Ivan Ossipovitch came to an end. He was superseded under rather unpleasant circumstances. Then, while Varvara Petrovna was still away, there followed the arrival of our new governor, Andrey Antonovitch von Lembke, and with that a change began at once to be perceptible in the attitude of almost the whole of our provincial society towards Varvara Petrovna, and consequently towards Stepan

Trofimovitch. He had already had time anyway to make some disagreeable though valuable observations, and seemed very apprehensive alone without Varvara Petrovna. He had an agitating suspicion that he had already been mentioned to the governor as a dangerous man. He knew for a fact that some of our ladies meant to give up calling on Varvara Petrovna. Of our governor's wife (who was only expected to arrive in the autumn) it was reported that though she was, so it was heard, proud, she was a real aristocrat, and "not like that poor Varvara Petrovna." Everybody seemed to know for a fact, and in the greatest detail, that our governor's wife and Varvara Petrovna had met already in society and had parted enemies, so that the mere mention of Madame von Lembke's name would,' it was said, make a painful impression on Varvara Petrovna. The confident and triumphant air of Varvara Petrovna, the contemptuous indifference with which she heard of the opinions of our provincial ladies and the agitation in local society, revived the flagging spirits of Stepan Trofimovitch and cheered him up at once. With peculiar, gleefully-obsequious humour, he was beginning to describe the new governor's arrival.

"You are no doubt aware, *excellente amie,* " he said, jauntily and coquettishly drawling his words, "what is meant by a Russian administrator, speaking generally, and what is meant by a new Russian administrator, that is the newly-baked,

newly-established ... *ces interminables mots Russes!* But I don't think you can know in practice what is meant by administrative ardour, and what sort of thing that is."

"Administrative ardour? I don't know what that is."

"Well . . . *Vous savez chez nous . . . En un mot,* set the most insignificant nonentity to sell miserable tickets at a railway station, and the nonentity will at once feel privileged to look down on you like a Jupiter, *pour montrer son pouvoir* when you go to take a ticket. 'Now then,' he says, 'I shall show you my power' . . . and in them it comes to a genuine, administrative ardour. *En un mot,* I've read that some verger in one of our Russian churches abroad — *mais c'est ires curieux* — drove, literally drove a distinguished English family, *les dames charmantes,* out of the church before the beginning of the Lenten service . . . *vous savez ces chants et le livre de Job* ... on the simple pretext that 'foreigners are not allowed to loaf about a Russian church, and that they must come at the time fixed. . . .' And he sent them into fainting fits. ... That verger was suffering from an attack of administrative ardour, *et il a montre son pouvoir.* "

"Cut it short if you can, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"Mr. von Lembke is making a tour of the province now. *En un mot,* this Andrey Antonovitch, though he is a russified German and of the Orthodox

persuasion, and even — I will say that for him — a remarkably handsome man of about forty . . .”

“What makes you think he's a handsome man? He has eyes like a sheep's.”

“Precisely so. But in this I yield, of course, to the opinion of our ladies.”

“Let's get on, Stepan Trofimovitch, I beg you! By the way, you're wearing a red neck-tie. Is it long since you've taken to it?”

“I've . . . I've only put it on to-day.”

“And do you take your constitutional? Do you go for a four-mile walk every day as the doctor told you to?”

“N-not . . . always.”

“I knew you didn't! I felt sure of that when I was in Switzerland!” she cried irritably. “Now you must go not four but six miles a day! You've grown terribly slack, terribly, terribly! You're not simply getting old, you're getting decrepit. . . . You shocked me when I first saw you just now, in spite of your red tie, *quelle idee rouge!* Go on about Von Lembke if you've really something to tell me, and do finish some time, I entreat you, I'm tired.”

“*En un mot, I* only wanted to say that he is one of those administrators who begin to have power at forty, who, till they're forty, have been stagnating in insignificance and then suddenly come to the front through suddenly acquiring a wife, or some other

equally desperate means. . . . That is, he has gone away now . . . that is, I mean to say, it was at once whispered in both his ears that I am a corrupter of youth, and a hot-bed of provincial atheism. . . . He began making inquiries at once."

"Is that true?"

"I took steps about it, in fact. When he was 'informed' that you 'ruled the province,' *vous savez,* he allowed himself to use the expression that 'there shall be nothing of that sort in the future.' "

"Did he say that?"

"That 'there shall be nothing of the sort in future,' and, *avec cette morgue. . . .* His wife, Yulia Mihailovna, we shall behold at the end of August, she's coming straight from Petersburg."

"From abroad. We met there."

"*Vraiment?* "

"In Paris and in Switzerland. She's related to the Drozdovs."

"Related! What an extraordinary coincidence! They say she is ambitious and . . . supposed to have great connections."

"Nonsense! Connections indeed! She was an old maid without a farthing till she was five-and-forty. But now she's hooked her Von Lembke, and, of course, her whole object is to push him forward. They're both intriguers."

"And they say she's two years older than he is?"

“Five. Her mother used to wear out her skirts on my doorsteps in Moscow; she used to beg for an invitation to our balls as a favour when my husband was living. And this creature used to sit all night alone in a corner without dancing, with her turquoise fly on her forehead, so that simply from pity I used to have to send her her first partner at two o'clock in the morning. She was five-and-twenty then, and they used to rig her out in short skirts like a little girl. It was improper to have them about at last.”

“I seem to see that fly.”

“I tell you, as soon as I arrived I was in the thick of an intrigue. You read Madame Drozdov's letter, of course. What could be clearer? What did I find? That fool Praskovya herself — she always was a fool — looked at me as much as to ask why I'd come. You can fancy how surprised I was. I looked round, and there was that Lembke woman at her tricks, and that cousin of hers — old Drozdov's nephew — it was all clear. You may be sure I changed all that in a twinkling, and Praskovya is on my side again, but what an intrigue

“In which you came off victor, however. Bismarck!”

“Without being a Bismarck I'm equal to falseness and stupidity wherever I meet it. falseness, and Praskovya's folly. I don't know when I've met such a flabby woman, and what's more her legs are swollen, and she's a good-natured simpleton, too. What can be

more foolish than a good-natured simpleton?"

"A spiteful fool, *ma bonne amie,* a spiteful fool is still more foolish," Stepan Trofimovitch protested magnanimously.

"You're right, perhaps. Do you remember Liza?"

"*Charmante enfant!* "

"But she's not an *enfant* now, but a woman, and a woman of character. She's a generous, passionate creature, and what I like about her, she stands up to that confiding fool, her mother. There was almost a row over that cousin."

"Bah, and of course he's no relation of Lizaveta Nikolaevna's at all. . . . Has he designs on her?"

"You see, he's a young officer, not by any means talkative, modest in fact. I always want to be just. I fancy he is opposed to the intrigue himself, and isn't aiming at anything, and it was only the Von Lembke's tricks. He had a great respect for Nicolas. You understand, it all depends on Liza. But I left her on the best of terms with Nicolas, and he promised he would come to us in November. So it's only the Von Lembkev who is intriguing, and Praskovya is a blind woman. She suddenly tells me that all my suspicions are fancy. I told her to her face she was a fool. I am ready to repeat it at the day of judgment. And if it hadn't been for Nicolas begging me to leave it for a time, I wouldn't have come away without unmasking that false woman. She's been trying to ingratiate herself with Count K.

through Nicolas. She wants to come between mother and son. But Liza's on our side, and I came to an understanding with Praskovya. Do you know that Karmazinov is a relation of hers?"

"What? A relation of Madame von Lembke?"

"Yes, of hers. Distant."

"Karmazinov, the novelist?"

"Yes, the writer. Why does it surprise you? Of course he considers himself a great man. Stuck-up creature! She's coming here with him. Now she's making a fuss of him out there. She's got a notion of setting up a sort of literary society here. He's coming for a month, he wants to sell his last piece of property here. I very nearly met him in Switzerland, and was very anxious not to. Though I hope he will deign to recognise me. He wrote letters to me in the old days, he has been in my house. I should like you to dress better, Stepan Trofimovitch; you're growing more slovenly every day. . . . Oh, how you torment me! What are you reading now?"

"I ... I ..."

"I understand. The same as ever, friends and drinking, the club and cards, and the reputation of an atheist. I don't like that reputation, Stepan Trofimovitch; I don't care for you to be called an atheist, particularly now. I didn't care for it in old days, for it's all nothing but empty chatter. It must be said at last."

"*Mais, ma chere ...*"

"Listen, Stepan Trofimovitch, of course I'm ignorant compared with you on all learned subjects, but as I was travelling here I thought a great deal about you. I've come to one conclusion."

"What conclusion?"

"That you and I are not the wisest people in the world, but that there are people wiser than we are."

"Witty and apt. If there are people wiser than we are, then there are people more right than we are, and we may be mistaken, you mean? *Mais, ma bonne amie,* granted that I may make a mistake, yet have I not the common, human, eternal, supreme [right of freedom of conscience? I have the right not to be bigoted or superstitious if I don't wish to, and for that I shall naturally be hated by certain persons to the end of time. *El puis, comme on trouve toujours plus de moines que de raison,* and as I thoroughly agree with that . . ."

"What, what did you say?"

"I said, *on trouve, toujours plus de moines que de raison,* and as I thoroughly . . ."

"I'm sure that's not your saying. You must have taken it from somewhere."

"It was Pascal said that."

"Just as I thought . . .it's not your own. Why don't you ever say anything like that yourself, so shortly and to the point, instead of dragging things out to such a length? That's much, better than what you said just now

about administrative ardour. . .”

“*Ma foi, chere* . . . why? In the first place probably because I'm not a Pascal after all, *et puis* . . . secondly, we Russians never can say anything in our own language. . . . We never have said anything hitherto, at any rate. . . .”

“H'm! That's not true, perhaps. Anyway, you'd better make a note of such phrases, and remember them, you know, in case you have to talk. . . . Ach, Stephan Trofimovitch. I have come to talk to you seriously, quite seriously.”

“*Chere, chere amie!* ”

“Now that all these Von Lembkes and Karmazinovs . . . Oh, my goodness, how you have deteriorated! . . . Oh, my goodness, how you do torment me! . . . I should have liked these people to feel a respect for you, for they're not worth your little finger — but the way you behave! . . . What will they see? What shall I have to show them? Instead of nobly standing as an example, keeping up the tradition of the past, you surround yourself with a wretched rabble, you have picked up impossible habits, you've grown feeble, you can't do without wine and cards, you read nothing but Paul de Kock, and write nothing, while all of them write; all your time's wasted in gossip. How can you bring yourself to be friends with a wretched creature like your inseparable Liputin?

“Why is he *mine* and *inseparable 1* ” Stepan

Trofimovitch Protested timidly.

"Where is he now?" Varvara Petrovna went on, sharply and sternly.

"He ... he has an infinite respect for you, and he's gone to S—— k, to receive an inheritance left him by his mother."

"He seems to do nothing but get money. And how's Shatov? Is he just the same?"

"*Irascible, mais bon,* "

"I can't endure your Shatov. He's spiteful and he thinks too much of himself."

"How is Darya Pavlovna?"

"You mean Dasha? What made you think of her?" Varvara Petrovna looked at him inquisitively. "She's quite well. I left her with the Drozdovs. I heard something about your son in Switzerland. Nothing good."

"*Oh, c'est un histoire bien bete! Je vous attendais, ma bonne amie, pour vous raconter . .* ."

"Enough, Stepan Trofimovitch. Leave me in peace. I'm worn out. We shall have time to talk to our heart's content, especially of what's unpleasant. You've begun to splutter when you laugh, it's a sign of senility! And what a strange way of laughing you've taken to! ... Good Heavens, what a lot of bad habits you've fallen into! Karmazinov won't come and see you! And people are only too glad to make the most of anything as it is. . . . You've betrayed yourself completely now. Well,

come, that's enough, that's enough, I'm tired. You really might have mercy upon one!"

Stepan Trofimovitch "had mercy," but he withdrew in great perturbation.

V

Our friend certainly had fallen into not a few bad habits, especially of late. He had obviously and rapidly deteriorated; and it was true that he had become slovenly. He drank more and had become more tearful and nervous; and had grown too impressionable on the artistic side. His face had acquired a strange facility for changing with extraordinary quickness, from the most solemn expression, for instance, to the most absurd, and even foolish. He could not endure solitude, and was always craving for amusement. One had always to repeat to him some gossip, some local anecdote, and every day a new one. If no; one came to see him for a long time he wandered disconsolately about the rooms, walked to the window, puckering up his lips, heaved deep sighs, and almost fell to whimpering at last. He was always full of forebodings, was afraid of something unexpected and inevitable; he had become timorous; he began to pay great attention to his dreams.

He spent all that day and evening in great depression, he sent for me, was very much agitated, talked a long while, gave me a long account of things,

but all rather disconnected. Varvara Petrovna had known for a long time that he concealed nothing from me. It seemed to me at last that he was worried about something particular, and was perhaps unable to form a definite idea of it himself. As a rule when we met *tete-a-tete* and he began making long complaints to me, a bottle was almost always brought in after a little time, and things became much more comfortable. This time there was no wine, and he was evidently struggling all the while against the desire to send for it.

"And why is she always so cross?" he complained every minute, like a child. "Tows *les hommes de genie et de progres en Mussie etaient, sont, et seront toujours des* gamblers *et des* drunkards *qui boivent* in outbreaks . . . and I'm not such a gambler after all, and I'm not such a drunkard. She reproaches me for not writing anything. Strange idea! . . . She asks why I lie down? She says I ought to stand, 'an example and reproach.' *Mais, entre nous soit dit,* what is a man to do who is destined to stand as a 'reproach,' if not to lie down? Does she understand that?"

And at last it became clear to me what was the chief particular trouble which was worrying him so persistently at this time. Many times that evening he went to the looking-glass, and stood a long while before it. At last he turned from the looking-glass to me, and with a sort of strange despair, said: "*Mon cher, je suis un* broken-down man." Yes, certainly, up to that time,

up to that very day there was one thing only of which he had always felt confident in spite of the “new views,” and of the “change in Varvara Petrovna's ideas,” that was, the conviction that still he had a fascination for her feminine heart, not simply as an exile or a celebrated man of learning, but as a handsome man. For twenty years this soothing and flattering opinion had been rooted in his mind, and perhaps of all his convictions this was the hardest to part with. Had he any presentiment that evening of the colossal ordeal which was preparing for him in the immediate future?

VI

I will now enter upon the description of that almost forgotten incident with which my story properly speaking begins.

At last at the very end of August the Drozdovs returned. Their arrival made a considerable sensation in local society, and took place shortly before their relation, our new governor's wife, made her long-expected appearance. But of all these interesting events I will speak later. For the present I will confine myself to saying that Praskovya Ivanovna brought Varvara Petrovna, who was expecting her so impatiently, a most perplexing problem: Nikolay had parted from them in July, and, meeting Count K. on the

Rhine, had set off with him and his family for Petersburg. (N.B.— The Count's three daughters were all of marriageable age.)

"Lizaveta is so proud and obstinate that I could get nothing out of her," Praskovya Ivanovna said in conclusion. "But I saw for myself that something had happened between her and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. I don't know the reasons, but I fancy, my dear Varvara Petrovna, that you will have to ask your Darya Pavlovna for them. To my thinking Liza was offended. I'm glad. I can tell you that I've brought you back your favourite at last and handed her over to you; it's a weight off my mind."

These venomous words were uttered with remarkable irritability. It was evident that the "flabby" woman had prepared them and gloated beforehand over the effect they would produce. But Varvara Petrovna was not the woman to be disconcerted by sentimental effects and enigmas. She sternly demanded the most precise and satisfactory explanations. Praskovya Ivanovna immediately lowered her tone and even ended by dissolving into tears and expressions of the warmest friendship. This irritable but sentimental lady, like Stepan Trofimovitch, was for ever yearning for true friendship, and her chief complaint against her daughter Lizaveta Mkolaevna was just that "her daughter was not a friend to her."

But from all her explanations and outpourings

nothing certain could be gathered but that there actually had been some sort of quarrel between Liza and Nikolay, but of the nature of the quarrel Praskovya Ivanovna was obviously unable to form a definite idea. As for her imputations against Darya Pavlovna, she not only withdrew them completely in the end, but even particularly begged Varvara Petrovna to pay no attention to her words, because “they had been said in irritation.” In fact, it had all been left very far from clear — suspicious, indeed. According to her account the quarrel had arisen from Liza's “obstinate and ironical character.” " Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch is proud, too, and though he was very much in love, yet he could not endure sarcasm, and began to be sarcastic himself. Soon afterwards we made the acquaintance of a young man, the nephew, I believe, of your 'Professor' and, indeed, the surname's the same.”

“The son, not the nephew,” Varvara Petrovna corrected her.

Even in old days Praskovya Ivanovna had been always unable to recall Stepan Trofimovitch's name, and had always called him the “Professor.”

“Well, his son, then; so much the better. Of course, it's all the same to me. An ordinary young man, very lively and free in his manners, but nothing special in him. Well, then, Liza herself did wrong, she made friends with the young man with the idea of making Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch jealous. I don't see much

harm in that; it's the way of girls, quite usual, even charming in them. Only instead of being jealous Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made friends with the young man himself, just as though he saw nothing and didn't care. This made Liza furious. The young man soon went away (he was in a great hurry to get somewhere) and Liza took to picking quarrels with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at every opportunity. She noticed that he used sometimes to talk to Dasha; and, well, she got in such a frantic state that even my life wasn't worth living, my dear. The doctors have forbidden my being irritated, and I was so sick of their lake they make such a fuss about, it simply gave me toothache, I had such rheumatism. It's stated in print that the Lake of Geneva does give people the toothache. It's a feature of the place. Then Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch suddenly got a letter from the countess and he left us at once. He packed up in one day. They parted in a friendly way, and Liza became very cheerful and frivolous, and laughed a great deal seeing him off; only that was all put on. When he had gone she became very thoughtful, and she gave up speaking of him altogether and wouldn't let me mention his name. And I should advise you, dear Varvara Petrovna, not to approach the subject with Liza, you'll only do harm. But if you hold your tongue she'll begin to talk of it herself, and then you'll learn more. I believe they'll come together again, if only Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch doesn't put off coming,

as he promised."

"I'll write to him at once. If that's how it was, there was nothing in the quarrel; all nonsense! And I know Darya too well. It's nonsense!"

"I'm sorry for what I said about Dashenka, I did wrong. Their conversations were quite ordinary and they talked out loud, too. But it all upset me so much at the time, my dear. And Liza, I saw, got on with her again as affectionately as before. . . ."

That very day Varvara Petrovna wrote to Nikolay, and begged him to come, if only one month, earlier than the date he had fixed. But yet she still felt that there was something unexplained and obscure in the matter. She pondered over it all the evening and all night. Praskovya's opinion seemed to her too innocent and sentimental. "Praskovya has always been too sentimental from the old schooldays upwards," she reflected. "Nicolas is not the man to run away from a girl's taunts. There's some other reason for it, if there really has been a breach between them. That officer's here though, they've brought him with them. As a relation he lives in their house. And, as for Darya, Praskovya was in too much haste to apologise. She must have kept something to herself, which she wouldn't tell me."

By the morning Varvara Petrovna had matured a project for putting a stop once for all to one misunderstanding at least; a project amazing in its

unexpectedness. What was in her heart when she conceived it? It would be hard to decide and I will not undertake to explain beforehand all the incongruities of which it was made up. I simply confine myself as chronicler to recording events precisely as they happened, and it is not my fault if they seem incredible. Yet I must once more testify that by the morning there was not the least suspicion of Dasha left in Varvara Petrovna's mind, though in reality there never had been any — she had too much confidence in her. Besides, she could not admit the idea that "Nicolas" could be attracted by her Darya. Next morning when Darya Pavlovna was pouring out tea at the table Varvara Petrovna looked for a long while intently at her and, perhaps for the twentieth time since the previous day, repeated to herself: "It's all nonsense!"

All she noticed was that Dasha looked rather tired, and that she was even quieter and more apathetic than she used to be. After their morning tea, according to their invariable custom, they sat down to needlework. Varvara Petrovna demanded from her a full account of her impressions abroad, especially of nature, of the inhabitants, of the towns, the customs, their arts and commerce — of everything she had time to observe. She asked no questions about the Drozdovs or how she had got on with them. Dasha, sitting beside her at the work-table helping her with the embroidery, talked for half an hour in her even, monotonous, but

rather weak voice.

"Darya!" Varvara Petrovna interrupted suddenly, "is there nothing special you want to tell me?"

"No, nothing," said Dasha, after a moment's thought, and she glanced at Varvara Petrovna with her light-coloured eyes.

"Nothing on your soul, on your heart, or your conscience?"

"Nothing," Dasha repeated, quietly, but with a sort of sullen firmness.

"I knew there wasn't! Believe me, Darya, I shall never doubt you. Now sit still and listen. In front of me, on that chair. I want to see the whole of you. That's right. Listen, do you want to be married?"

Dasha responded with a long, inquiring, but not greatly astonished look.

"Stay, hold your tongue. In the first place there is a very great difference in age, but of course you know better than anyone what nonsense that is. You're a sensible girl, and there must be no mistakes in your life. Besides, he's still a handsome man. . . In short, Stepan Trofimovitch, for whom you have always had such a respect. Well?"

Dasha looked at her still more inquiringly, and this time not simply with surprise; she blushed perceptibly.

"Stay, hold your tongue, don't be in a hurry! Though you will have money under my will, yet when I

die, what will become of you, even if you have money? You'll be deceived and robbed of your money, you'll be lost in fact. But married to him you're the wife of a distinguished man. Look at him on the other hand. Though I've provided for him, if I die what will become of him I But I could trust him to you. Stay, I've not finished. He's frivolous, shilly-shally, cruel, egoistic, he has low habits. But mind you think highly of him, in the first place because there are many worse. I don't want to get you off my hands by marrying you to a rascal, you don't imagine anything of that sort, do you? And, above all, because I ask you, you'll think highly of him,"— She broke off suddenly and irritably. "Do you hear? Why won't you say something?"

Dasha still listened and did not speak.

"Stay, wait a little. He's an old woman, but you know, that's all the better for you. Besides, he's a pathetic old woman. He doesn't deserve to be loved by a woman at all, but he deserves to be loved for his helplessness, and you must love him for his helplessness. You understand me, don't you? Do you understand me?"

Dasha nodded her head affirmatively.

"I knew you would. I expected as much of you. He will love you because he ought, he ought; he ought to adore you." Varvara Petrovna almost shrieked with peculiar exasperation. "Besides, he will be in love with you without any ought about it. I know him. And

another thing, I shall always be here. You may be sure I shall always be here. He will complain of you, he'll begin to say things against you behind your back, he'll whisper things against you to any stray person he meets, he'll be for ever whining and whining; he'll write you letters from one room to another, two a day, but he won't be able to get on without you all the same, and that's the chief thing. Make him obey you. If you can't make him you'll be a fool. He'll want to hang himself and threaten, to — don't you believe it. It's nothing but nonsense. Don't believe it; but still keep a sharp look-out, you never can tell, and one day he may hang himself. It does happen with people like that. It's not through strength of will but through weakness that people hang themselves, and so never drive him to an extreme, that's the first rule in married life. Remember, too, that he's a poet. Listen, Dasha, there's no greater happiness than self-sacrifice. And besides, you'll be giving me great satisfaction and that's the chief thing. Don't think I've been talking nonsense. I understand what I'm saying. I'm an egoist, you be an egoist, too. Of course I'm not forcing you. It's entirely for you to decide. As you say, so it shall be. Well, what's the good of sitting like this. Speak!"

"I don't mind, Varvara Petrovna, if I really must be married," said Dasha firmly.

"Must? What are you hinting at?" Varvara Petrovna looked sternly and intently at her.

Dasha was silent, picking at her embroidery canvas with her needle.

"Though you're a clever girl, you're talking nonsense; though it is true that I have certainly set my heart on marrying you, yet it's not because it's necessary, but simply because the idea has occurred to me, and only to Stepan Trofimovitch. If it had not been for Stepan Trofimovitch, I should not have thought of marrying you yet, though you are twenty. . . . Well?"

"I'll do as you wish, Varvara Petrovna."

"Then you consent! Stay, be quiet. Why are you in such a hurry? I haven't finished. In my will I've left you fifteen thousand roubles. I'll give you that at once, on your wedding-day. You will give eight thousand of it to him; that is, not to him but to me. He has a debt of eight thousand. I'll pay it, but he must know that it is done with your money. You'll have seven thousand left in your hands. Never let him touch a farthing of it. Don't pay his debts ever. If once you pay them, you'll never be free of them. Besides, I shall always be here. You shall have twelve hundred roubles a year from me, with extras, fifteen hundred, besides board and lodging, which shall be at my expense, just as he has it now. Only you must set up your own servants. Your yearly allowance shall be paid to you all at once straight into your hands. But be kind, and sometimes give him something, and let his friends come to see him once a week, but if they come more often, turn them out. But I

shall be here, too. And if I die, your pension will go on till his death, do you hear, till *his* death, for it's his pension, not yours. And besides the seven thousand you'll have now, which you ought to keep untouched if you're not foolish, I'll leave you another eight thousand in my will. And you'll get nothing more than that from me, it's right that you should know it. Come, you consent, eh? Will you say something at last?"

"I have told you already, Varvara Petrovna."

"Remember that you're free to decide. As you like, so it shall be."

"Then, may I ask, Varvara Petrovna, has Stepan Trofimovitch said anything yet?"

"No, he hasn't said anything, he doesn't know . . . but he will speak directly."

She jumped up at once and threw on a black shawl. Dasha flushed a little again, and watched her with questioning eyes. Varvara Petrovna turned suddenly to her with a face flaming with anger.

"You're a fool!" She swooped down on her like a hawk. "An ungrateful fool! What's in your mind? Can you imagine that I'd compromise you, in any way, in the smallest degree. Why, he shall crawl on his knees to ask you, he must be dying of happiness, that's how it shall be arranged. Why, you know that I'd never let you suffer. Or do you suppose he'll take you for the sake of that eight thousand, and that I'm hurrying off to sell you? You're a fool, a fool! You're all ungrateful fools.

Give me my umbrella!”

And she flew off to walk by the wet brick pavements and the wooden planks to Stepan Trofimovitch's.

VII

It was true that she would never have let Dasha suffer; on the contrary, she considered now that she was acting as her benefactress. The most generous and legitimate indignation was glowing in her soul, when, as she put on her shawl, she caught fixed upon her the embarrassed and mistrustful eyes of her protegee. She had genuinely loved the girl from her childhood upwards. Praskovya Ivanovna had with justice called Darya Pavlovna her favourite. Long ago Varvara Petrovna had made up her mind once for all that “Darya's disposition was not like her brother's” (not, that is, like Ivan Shatov's), that she was quiet and gentle, and capable of great self-sacrifice; that she was distinguished by a power of devotion, unusual modesty, rare reasonableness, and, above all, by gratitude. Till that time Dasha had, to all appearances, completely justified her expectations.

“In that life there will be no mistakes,” said Varvara Petrovna when the girl was only twelve years old, and as it was characteristic of her to attach herself doggedly and passionately to any dream that fascinated

her, any new design, any idea that struck her as noble, she made up her mind at once to educate Dasha as though she were her own daughter. She at once set aside a sum of money for her, and sent for a governess, Miss Criggs, who lived with them until the girl was sixteen, but she was for some reason suddenly dismissed. Teachers came for her from the High School, among them a real Frenchman, who taught Dasha French. He, too, was suddenly dismissed, almost turned out of the house. A poor lady, a widow of good family, taught her to play the piano. Yet her chief tutor was Stepan Trofimovitch.

In reality he first discovered Dasha. He began teaching the quiet child even before Varvara Petrovna had begun to think about her. I repeat again, it was wonderful how children took to him. Lizaveta Nikolaevna Tushin had been taught by him from the age of eight till eleven (Stepan Trofimovitch took no fees, of course, for his lessons, and would not on any account have taken payment from the Drozdovs). But he fell in love with the charming child and used to tell her poems of a sort about the creation of the world, about the earth, and the history of humanity. His lectures about the primitive peoples and primitive man were more interesting than the Arabian Nights. Liza, who was ecstatic over these stories, used to mimic Stepan Trofimovitch very funnily at home. He heard of this and once peeped in on her unawares. Liza,

overcome with confusion, flung herself into his arms and shed tears; Stepan Trofimovitch wept too with delight. But Liza soon after went away, and only Dasha was left. When Dasha began to have other teachers, Stepan Trofimovitch gave up his lessons with her, and by degrees left off noticing her. Things went on like this for a long time. Once when she was seventeen he was struck by her prettiness. It happened at Varvara Petrovna's table. He began to talk to the young girl, was much pleased with her answers, and ended by offering to give her a serious and comprehensive course of lessons on the history of Russian literature. Varvara Petrovna approved, and thanked him for his excellent idea, and Dasha was delighted. Stepan Trofimovitch proceeded to make special preparations for the lectures, and at last they began. They began with the most ancient period. The first lecture went off enchantingly. Varvara Petrovna was present. When Stepan Trofimovitch had finished, and as he was going informed his pupil that the next time he would deal with "The Story of the Expedition of Igor," Varvara Petrovna suddenly got up and announced that there would be no more lessons. Stepan Trofimovitch winced, but said nothing, and Dasha flushed crimson. It put a stop to the scheme, however. This had happened just three years before Varvara Petrovna's unexpected fancy.

Poor Stepan Trofimovitch was sitting alone free

from all misgivings. Plunged in mournful reveries he had for some time been looking out of the window to see whether any of his friends were coining. But nobody would come. It was drizzling. It was turning cold, he would have to have the stove heated. He sighed. Suddenly a terrible apparition flashed upon his eyes: Varvara Petrovna in such weather and at such an unexpected hour to see him! And on foot! He was so astounded that he forgot to put on his coat, and received her as he was, in his everlasting pink-wadded dressing-jacket.

"*Ma bonne amie!* " he cried faintly, to greet her. "You're alone; I'm glad; I can't endure your friends. How you do smoke! Heavens, what an atmosphere! You haven't finished your morning tea and it's nearly twelve o'clock. It's your idea of bliss — disorder! You take pleasure in dirt. What's that torn paper on the floor? Nastasya, Nastasya! What is your Nastasya about? Open the window, the casement, the doors, fling everything wide open. And we'll go into the drawing-room. I've come to you on a matter of importance. And you sweep up, my good woman, for once in your life."

"They make such a muck!" Nastasya whined in a voice of plaintive exasperation.

"Well, you must sweep, sweep it up fifteen times a day! You've a wretched drawing-room" (when they had gone into the drawing-room). "Shut the door

properly. She'll be listening. You must have it repapered. Didn't I send a paperhanger to you with patterns? Why didn't you choose one? Sit down, and listen. Do sit down, I beg you. Where are you off to? Where are you off to I Where are you off to?

"I'll be back directly," Stepan Trofimovitch cried from the next room. "Here, I am again."

"Ah,- you've changed your coat." She scanned him mockingly. (He had flung his coat on over the dressing-jacket.) "Well, certainly that's more suited to our subject. Do sit down, I entreat you."

She told him everything at once, abruptly and impressively She hinted at the eight thousand of which he stood in such terrible need. She told him in detail of the dowry. Stepan Trofimovitch sat trembling, opening his eyes wider and wider. He heard it all, but he could not realise it clearly. He tried to speak, but his voice kept breaking. All he knew was that everything would be as she said, that to protest and refuse to agree would be useless, and that he was a married man irrevocably.

"*Mais, ma bonne amie!* . . . for the third time, and at my age . . . and to such a child." He brought out at last, *"Mais, c'est une enfant!* "

"A child who is twenty years old, thank God. Please don't roll your eyes, I entreat you, you're not on the stage. You're very clever and learned, but you know nothing at all about life. You will always want a nurse to look after you. I shall die, and what will become of

you? She will be a good nurse to you; she's a modest girl, strong-willed, reasonable; besides, I shall be here too, I shan't die directly. She's fond of home, she's an angel of gentleness. This happy thought came to me in Switzerland. Do you understand if I tell you myself that she is an angel of gentleness!" she screamed with sudden fury. "Your house is dirty, she will bring in order, cleanliness. Everything will shine like a mirror. Good gracious, do you expect me to go on my knees to you with such a treasure, to enumerate all the advantages, to court you! Why, you ought to be on your knees. . . . Oh, you shallow, shallow, faint-hearted man!"

"But . . . I'm an old man!"

"What do your fifty-three years matter! Fifty is the middle of life, not the end of it. You are a handsome man and you know it yourself. You know, too, what a respect she has for you. If I die, what will become of her? But married to you she'll be at peace, and I shall be at peace. You have renown, a name, a loving heart. You receive a pension which I look upon as an obligation. You will save her perhaps, you will save her! In any case you will be doing her an honour. You will form her for life, you will develop her heart, you will direct her ideas. How many people come to grief nowadays because their ideas are wrongly directed. By that time your book will be ready, and you will at once set people talking about you again."

“I am, in fact,” he muttered, at once flattered by Varvara Petrovna's adroit insinuations. “I was just preparing to sit down to my 'Tales from Spanish History.'”

“Well, there you are. It's just come right.”

“But . . . she? Have you spoken to her?”

“Don't worry about her. And there's no need for you to be inquisitive. Of course, you must ask her yourself, entreat her to do you the honour, you understand? But don't be uneasy. I shall be here. Besides, you love her."

Stepan Trofimovitch felt giddy. The walls were going round. There was one terrible idea underlying this to which he couldnot reconcile himself.

“*Excellente amie* ” his voice quivered suddenly. “I could never have conceived that you would make up your mind to give me in marriage to another . . . woman.”

“You're not a girl, Stepan Trofimovitch. Only girls are given in marriage. Yon are taking a wife,” Varvara Petrovna hissed malignantly.

“*Oui, j'ai pris un mot pour un autre. Mais c'est egal.* ” He gazed at her with a hopeless air.

“I see that *e'est egal,* ” she muttered contemptuously through her teeth. “Good heavens! Why he's going to faint. Nastasya, Nastasya, water!”

But water was not needed. He came to himself. Varvara Petrovna took up her umbrella.

"I see it's no use talking to you now. . . ."

"*Oui, oui, je suis incapable.* "

"Bat by to-morrow you'll have rested and thought it over. Stay at home. If anything happens let me know, even if it's at night. Don't write letters, I shan't read them. To-morrow I'll come again at this time alone, for a final answer, and I trust it will be satisfactory. Try to have nobody here and no untidiness, for the place isn't fit to be seen. Nastasya, Nastasya!"

The next day, of course, he consented, and, indeed, he could do nothing else. There was one circumstance . . .

VIII

Stepan Trofimovitch's estate, as we used to call it (which consisted of fifty souls, reckoning in the old fashion, and bordered on Skvoreshniki), was not really his at all, but his first wife's, and so belonged now to his son Pyotr Stepanovitch Verhovensky. Stepan Trofimovitch was simply his trustee, and so, when the nestling was full-fledged, he had given his father a formal authorisation to manage the estate. This transaction was a profitable one for the young man. He received as much as a thousand roubles a year by way of revenue from the estate, though under the new regime it could not have yielded more than five hundred, and possibly not that. God knows how such an

arrangement had arisen. The whole sum, however, was sent the young man by Varvara Petrovna, and Stepan Trofimovitch had nothing to do with a single rouble of it. On the other hand, the whole revenue from the land remained in his pocket, and he had, besides, completely ruined the estate, letting it to a mercenary rogue, and without the knowledge of Varvara Petrovna selling the timber which gave the estate its chief value. He had some time before he sold the woods bit by bit. It was worth at least eight thousand, yet he had only received five thousand for it. But he sometimes lost too much at the club, and was afraid to ask Varvara Petrovna for the money. She clenched her teeth when she heard at last of everything. And now, all at once, his son announced that he was coming himself to sell his property for what he could get for it, and commissioned his father to take steps promptly to arrange the sale. It was clear that Stepan Trofimovitch, being a generous and disinterested man, felt ashamed of his treatment of *ce cher enfant* (whom he had seen for the last time nine years before as a student in Petersburg). The estate might originally have been worth thirteen Or fourteen thousand. Now it was doubtful whether anyone would give five for it. No doubt Stepan Trofimovitch was fully entitled by the terms of the trust to sell the wood, and taking into account the incredibly large yearly revenue of a thousand roubles which had been sent punctually for so many years, he could have put up a

good defence of his management. But Stepan Trofimovitch was a generous man of exalted impulses. A wonderfully fine inspiration occurred to his mind: when Petrusha returned, to lay on the table before him the maximum price of fifteen thousand roubles without a hint at the sums that had been sent him hitherto, and warmly and with tears to press *ce cher fils* to his heart, and so to make an end of all accounts between them. He began cautiously and indirectly unfolding this picture before Varvara Petrovna. He hinted that this would add a peculiarly noble note to their friendship . . . to their "idea." This would set the parents of the last generation — and people of the last generation generally — in such a disinterested and magnanimous light in comparison with the new frivolous and socialistic younger generation. He said a great deal more, but Varvara Petrovna was obstinately silent. At last she informed him airily that she was prepared to buy their estate, and to pay for it the maximum price, that is, six or seven thousand (though four would have been a fair price for it). Of the remaining eight thousand which had vanished with the woods she said not a word.

This conversation took place a month before the match was proposed to- him. Stepan Trofimovitch was overwhelmed, and began to ponder. There might in the past have been a hope that his soft would not come, after all — an outsider, that is to say, might have hoped

so. Stepan Trofimovitch as a father would; have indignantly rejected the insinuation that he could entertain such a hope. Anyway queer rumours had hitherto been reaching us about Petrusha. To begin with, on completing his studies at the university six years before, he had hung about in Petersburg without getting work. Suddenly we got the news that he had taken part in issuing some anonymous manifesto and that he was implicated in the affair. Then he suddenly turned up abroad in Switzerland at Geneva — he had escaped, very likely.

"It's surprising to me," Stepan Trofimovitch commented, greatly disconcerted. "Petrusha, *c'est une si pauvre tete!* He's good, noble-hearted, very sensitive, and I was so delighted with him in Petersburg, comparing him with the young people of to-day. But *c'est un pauvre sire, tout de meme.. . .* And you know it all comes from that same half-bakedness, that sentimentality. They are fascinated, not by realism, but by the emotional ideal side of socialism, by the religious note in it, so to say, by the poetry of it ... second-hand, of course. And for me, for me, think what it means! I have so many enemies here and more still *there,* they'll put it down to the father's influence. Good God! Petrusha a revolutionist! What times we live in!"

Very soon, however, Petrusha sent his exact address from Switzerland for money to be sent him as

usual; so he. could not be exactly an exile. And now, after four years abroad, he was suddenly making his appearance again in his own country, and announced that he would arrive shortly, so there could be no charge against him. What was more, some one seemed to be interested in him and protecting him. He wrote now from the south of Russia, where he was busily engaged in some private but important business. All this was capital, but where was his father to get that other seven or eight thousand, to make up a suitable price for the estate? And what if there should be an outcry, and instead of that imposing picture it should come to a lawsuit? Something told Stepan Trofimovitch that the sensitive Petrusha would not relinquish anything that was to his interest. “Why is it — as I've noticed,” Stepan Trofimovitch whispered to me once, “why is it that all these desperate socialists and communists are at the same time such incredible skinflints, so avaricious, so keen over property, and, in fact, the more socialistic, the more extreme they are, the keener they are over property . . . why is it? Can that, too, come from sentimentalism?” I don't know whether there is any truth in this observation of Stepan Trofimovitch's. I only know that Petrusha had somehow got wind of the sale of the woods and the rest of it, and that Stepan Trofimovitch was aware of the fact. I happened, too, to read some of Petrusha's letters to his father. He wrote extremely rarely, once a year, or

even less often. Only recently, to inform him of his approaching visit, he had sent two letters, one almost immediately after the other. All his letters were short, dry, consisting only of instructions, and as the father and son had, since their meeting in Petersburg, adopted the fashionable “thou” and “thee,” Petrusha's letters had a striking resemblance to the missives that used to be sent by landowners of the old school from the town to their serfs whom they had left in charge of their estates. And now suddenly this eight thousand which would solve the difficulty would be wafted to him by Varvara Petrovna's proposition. And at the same time she made him distinctly feel that it never could be wafted to him from anywhere else. Of course Stepan Trofimovitch consented.

He sent for me directly she had gone and shut himself up for the whole day, admitting no one else. He cried, of course, talked well and talked a great deal, contradicted himself continually, made a casual pun, and was much pleased with it. Then he had a slight attack of his “summer cholera”— everything in fact followed the usual course. Then he brought out the portrait of his German bride, now twenty years deceased, and began plaintively appealing to her: “Will you forgive me?” In fact he seemed somehow distracted. Our grief led us to get a little drunk. He soon fell into a sweet sleep, however. Next morning he tied his cravat in masterly fashion, dressed with care, and

went frequently to look at himself in the glass. He sprinkled his handkerchief with scent, only a slight dash of it, however, and as soon as he saw Varvara Petrovna out of the window he hurriedly took another handkerchief and hid the scented one under the pillow.

"Excellent!" Varvara Petrovna approved, on receiving his consent. "In the first place you show a fine decision, and secondly you've listened to the voice of reason, to which you generally pay so little heed in your private affairs. There's no need of haste, however," she added, scanning the knot of his white tie, "for the present say nothing, and I will say nothing. It will soon be your birthday; I will come to see you with her. Give us tea in the evening, and please without wine or other refreshments, but I'll arrange it all myself. Invite your friends, but we'll make the list together. You can talk to her the day before, if necessary. And at your party we won't exactly announce it, or make an engagement of any sort, but only hint at it, and let people know without any sort of ceremony. And then the wedding a fortnight later, as far as possible without any fuss. . . . You two might even go away for a time after the wedding, to Moscow, for instance. I'll go with you, too, perhaps. . . The chief thing is, keep quiet till then.

Stepan Trofimovitch was surprised. He tried to falter that he could not do like that, that he must talk it over with his bride. But Varvara Petrovna flew at him

in exasperation.

"What for? In the first place it may perhaps come to nothing."

"Come to nothing!" muttered the bridegroom, utterly dumbfoundered.

"Yes. I'll see. . . . But everything shall be as I've told you, and don't be uneasy. I'll prepare her myself. There's really no need for you. Everything necessary shall be said and done, and there's no need for you to meddle. Why should you? In what character? Don't come and don't write letters. And not a sight or sound of you, I beg. I will be silent too."

She absolutely refused to explain herself, and went away, obviously upset. Stepan Trofimovitch's excessive readiness evidently impressed her. Alas! he was utterly unable to grasp his position, and the question had not yet presented itself to him from certain other points of view. On the contrary a new note was apparent in him, a sort of conquering and jaunty air. He swaggered.

"I do like that!" he exclaimed, standing before me, and flinging wide his arms. "Did you hear? She wants to drive me to refusing at last. Why, I may lose patience, too, and ... refuse! 'Sit still, there's no need for you to go to her.' But after all, why should I be married? Simply because she's taken an absurd fancy into her heart. But I'm a serious man, and I can refuse to submit to the idle whims of a giddy-woman! I have

duties to my son and . . , and to myself! I'm making a sacrifice. Does she realise that? I have agreed, perhaps, because I am weary of life and nothing matters to me. But she may exasperate me, and then it will matter. I shall resent it and refuse. *Et enftn, le ridicule* . . . what will they say at the club? What will . . . what will . . . Laputin say? 'Perhaps nothing will come of it′ — what a thing to say! That beats everything. That's really . . . what is one to say to that? . . . *Je suis un for fat, un Badinguet, un* man pushed to the wall. . . ."

And at the same time a sort of capricious complacency, something frivolous and playful, could be seen in the midst of all these plaintive exclamations. In the evening we drank too much again.

Chapter III.
The Sins of Others

I

ABOUT A WEEK had passed, and the position had begun to grow more complicated.

I may mention in passing that I suffered a great deal during that unhappy week, as I scarcely left the side of my affianced friend, in the capacity of his most intimate confidant. What weighed upon him most was the feeling of shame, though we saw no one all that

week, and sat indoors alone. But he was even ashamed before me, and so much so that the more he confided to me the more vexed he was with me for it. He was so morbidly apprehensive that he expected that every one knew about it already, the whole town, and was afraid to show himself, not only at the club, but even in his circle of friends. He positively would not go out to take his constitutional till well after dusk, when it was quite dark.

A week passed and he still did not know whether he were betrothed or not, and could not find out for a fact, however much he tried. He had not yet seen his future bride, and did not know whether she was to be his bride or not; did not, in fact, know whether there was anything serious in it at all. Varvara Petrovna, for some reason, resolutely refused to admit him to her presence. In answer to one of his first letters to her (and he wrote a great number of them) she begged him plainly to spare her all communications with him for a time, because she was very busy, and having a great deal of the utmost importance to communicate to him she was waiting for a more free moment to do so, and that she would let him know *in time* when he could come to see her. She declared she would send back his letters unopened, as they were "simple self-indulgence." I read that letter myself — he showed it me.

Yet all this harshness and indefiniteness were

nothing compared with his chief anxiety. That anxiety tormented him to the utmost and without ceasing. He grew thin and dispirited through it. It was something of which he was more ashamed than of anything else, and of which he would not on any account speak, even to me; on the contrary, he lied on occasion, and shuffled before me like a little boy; and at the same time he sent for me himself every day, could not stay two hours without me, needing me as much as air or water.

Such conduct rather wounded my vanity. I need hardly say that I had long ago privately guessed this great secret of his, and saw through it completely. It was my firmest conviction at the time that the revelation of this secret, this chief anxiety of Stepan Trofimovitch's would not have redounded to his credit, and, therefore, as I was still young, I was rather indignant at the coarseness of his feelings and the ugliness of some of his suspicions. In my warmth — and, I must confess, in my weariness of being his confidant — I perhaps blamed him too much. I was so cruel as to try and force him to confess it all to me himself, though I did recognise that it might be difficult to confess some things. He, too, saw through me; that is, he clearly perceived that I saw through him, and that I was angry with him indeed, and he was angry with me too for being angry with him and seeing through him. My irritation was perhaps petty and stupid; but the unrelieved solitude of two friends together is

sometimes extremely prejudicial to true friendship. From a certain point of view he had a very true understanding of some aspects of his position, and defined it, indeed, very subtly on those points about which he did not think it necessary to be secret.

"Oh, how different she was then!" he would sometimes say to me about Varvara Petrovna. "How different she was in the old days when we used to talk together. . . . Do you know that she could talk in those days! Can you believe that she had ideas in those days, original ideas! Now, everything has changed! She says all that's only old-fashioned twaddle. She despises the past. . . . Now she's like some shopman or cashier, she has grown hard-hearted, and she's always cross. . . ."

"Why is she cross now if you are carrying out her 'orders'?" I answered.

He looked at me subtly.

"*Cher ami;* if I had not agreed she would have been dreadfully angry, dread-ful-ly! But yet less than now that I have consented."

He was pleased with this saying of his, and we emptied a bottle between us that evening. But that was only for a moment, next day he was worse and more ill-humoured than ever.

But what I was most vexed with him for was that he could not bring himself to call on the Drozdovs, as he should have done on their arrival, to renew the acquaintance of which, so we heard they were

themselves desirous, since they kept asking about him. It was a source of daily distress to him. He talked of Lizaveta Nikolaevna with an ecstasy which I was at a loss to understand. No doubt he remembered in her the child whom he had once loved. But besides that, he imagined for some unknown reason that he would at once find in her company a solace for his present misery, and even the solution of his more serious doubts. He expected to meet in Lizaveta Nikolaevna an extraordinary being. And yet he did not go to see her though he meant to do so every day. The worst of it was that I was desperately anxious to be presented to her and to make her acquaintance, and I could look to no one but Stepan Trofimovitch to effect this. I was frequently meeting her, in the street of course, when she was out riding, wearing a riding-habit and mounted on a fine horse, and accompanied by her cousin, so-called, a handsome officer, the nephew of the late General Drozdov — and these meetings made an extraordinary impression on me at the time. My infatuation lasted only a moment, and I very soon afterwards recognised the impossibility of my dreams myself — but though it was a fleeting impression it was a very real one, and so it may well be imagined how indignant I was at the time with my poor friend for keeping so obstinately secluded.

All the members of our circle had been officially informed from the beginning that Stepan Trofimovitch

would see nobody for a time, and begged them to leave him quite alone. He insisted on sending round a circular notice to this effect, though I tried to dissuade him. I went round to every one at his request and told everybody that Varvara Petrovna had given "our old man" (as we all used to call Stepan Trofimovitch among ourselves) a special job, to arrange in order some correspondence lasting over many years; that he had shut himself up to do it and I was helping him. Liputin was the only one I did not have time to visit, and I kept putting it off — to tell the real truth I was afraid to go to him. I knew beforehand that he would not believe one word of my story, that he would certainly imagine that there was some secret at the bottom of it, which they were trying to hide from him alone, and as soon as I left him he would set to work to make inquiries and gossip all over the town. While I was picturing all this to myself I happened to run across him in the street. It turned out that he had heard all about it from our friends, whom I had only just informed. But, strange to say, instead of being inquisitive and asking questions about Stepan Trofimovitch, he interrupted me, when I began apologising for not having come to him before, and at once passed to other subjects. It is true that he had a great deal stored up to tell me. He was in a state of great excitement, and was delighted to have got hold of me for a listener. He began talking of the news of the

town, of the arrival of the governor's wife, “with new! topics of conversation,” of an opposition party already formed in the club, of how they were all in a hubbub over the new ideas, and how charmingly this suited him, and so on. He talked for a quarter of an hour and so amusingly that I could not tear myself away. Though I could not endure him, yet I must admit he had the gift of making one listen to him, especially when he was very angry at something. This man was, in my opinion, a regular spy from his very nature. At every moment he knew the very latest gossip and all the trifling incidents of our town, especially the unpleasant ones, and it was surprising to me how he took things to heart that were sometimes absolutely no concern of his. It always seemed to me that the leading feature of his character was envy. When I told Stepan Trofimovitch the same evening of my meeting Liputin that morning and our conversation, the latter to my amazement became greatly agitated, and asked me the wild question: “Does Liputin know or not?”

I began trying to prove that there was no possibility of his finding it out so soon, and that there was nobody from whom he could hear it. But Stepan Trofimovitch was not to be shaken. “Well, you may believe it or not,” he concluded unexpectedly at last, “but I'm convinced that he not only knows every detail of 'our' position, but that he knows something else besides, something neither you nor I know yet, and

perhaps never shall, or shall only know when it's too late, when there's no turning back! . . .”

I said nothing, but these words suggested a great deal. For five whole days after that we did not say one word about Liputin; it was clear to me that Stepan Trofimovitch greatly regretted having let his tongue run away with him, and having revealed such suspicions before me.

II

One morning, on the seventh or eighth day after Stepan Trofimovitch had consented to become “engaged,” about eleven o'clock, when I was hurrying as usual to my afflicted friend, I had an adventure on the way.

I met Karmazinov, “the great writer,” as Liputin called him. I had read Karmazinov from a child. His novels and tales were well known to the past and even to the present generation. I revelled in them; they were the great enjoyment of my childhood and youth. Afterwards I grew rather less enthusiastic over his work. I did not care so much for the novels with a purpose which he had been writing of late as for his first, early works, which were so full of spontaneous poetry, and his latest publications I had not . liked at all. Speaking generally, if I may venture to express my opinion on so delicate a subject, all these talented

gentlemen of the middling sort who are sometimes in their lifetime accepted almost as geniuses, pass out of memory quite suddenly and without a trace when they die, and what's more, it often happens that even during their lifetime, as soon as a new generation grows up and takes the place of the one in which they have flourished, they are forgotten and neglected by every one in an incredibly short time. This somehow happens among us quite suddenly, like the shifting of the scenes on the stage. Oh, it's not at all the same as with Pushkin, Gogol, Moliere, Voltaire, all those great men who really had a new original word to say! It's true, too, that these talented gentlemen of the middling sort in the decline of their venerable years usually write themselves out in the most pitiful way, though they don't observe the fact themselves. It happens not infrequently that a writer who has been for a long time credited with extraordinary profundity and expected to exercise a great and serious influence on the progress of society, betrays in the end such poverty, such insipidity in his fundamental ideas that no one regrets that he succeeded in writing himself out so soon. But the old grey-beards don't notice this, and are angry. Their vanity sometimes, especially towards the end of their career, reaches proportions that may well provoke wonder. God knows what they begin to take themselves for — for gods at least! People used to say about Karmazinov that his connections with aristocratic

society and powerful personages were dearer to him than his own soul, people used to say that on meeting you he would be cordial, that he would fascinate and enchant you with his open-heartedness, especially if you were of use to him in some way, and if you came to him with some preliminary recommendation. But that before any stray prince, any stray countess, anyone that he was afraid of, he would regard it as his sacred duty to forget your existence with the most insulting carelessness, like a chip of wood, like a fly, before you had even time to get out of his sight; he seriously considered this the best and most aristocratic style. In spite of the best of breeding and perfect knowledge of good manners he is, they say, vain to such an hysterical pitch that he cannot conceal his irritability as an author even in. those circles of society where little interest is taken in literature. If anyone were to surprise him by being indifferent, he would be morbidly chagrined, and try to revenge himself.

A year before, I had read an article of his in a review, written with an immense affectation of naive poetry, and psychology too. He described the wreck of some steamer on the English coast, of which he had been the witness, and how he had seen the drowning people saved, and the dead bodies brought ashore. All this rather long and verbose article was written solely with the object of self-display. One seemed to read between the lines: “Concentrate yourselves on me.

Behold what I was like at those moments. What are the sea, the storm, the rocks, the splinters of wrecked ships to you? I have described all that sufficiently to you with my mighty pen. Why look at that drowned woman with the dead child in her dead arms? Look rather at me, see how I was unable to bear that sight and turned away from it. Here I stood with my back to it; here I was horrified and could not bring myself to look; I blinked my eyes — isn't that interesting?" When I told Stepan Trofimovitch my opinion of Karmazinov's article he quite agreed with me.

When rumours had reached us of late that Karmazinov was coming to the neighbourhood I was, of course, very eager to see him, and, if possible, to make his acquaintance. I knew that this might be done through Stepan Trofimovitch, they had once been friends. And now I suddenly met him at the cross-roads. I knew him at once. He had been pointed out to me two or three days before when he drove past with the governor's wife. He was a short, stiff-looking old man, though not over fifty-five, with a rather red little face, with thick grey locks of hair clustering under his chimney-pot hat, and curling round his clean little pink ears. His clean little face was not altogether handsome with its thin, long, crafty-looking lips, with its rather fleshy nose, and its sharp, shrewd little eyes. He was dressed somewhat shabbily in a sort of cape such as would be worn in Switzerland or North Italy at

that time of year. But, at any rate, all the minor details of his costume, the little studs, and collar, the buttons, the tortoise-shell lorgnette on a narrow black ribbon, the signet-ring, were all such as are worn by persons of the most irreproachable good form. I am certain that in summer he must have worn light prunella shoes with mother-of-pearl buttons at the side. When we met he was standing still at the turning and looking about him, attentively. Noticing that I was looking at him with interest, he asked me in a sugary, though rather shrill voice:

"Allow me to ask, which is my nearest way to Bykovy Street?"

"To Bykovy Street? Oh, that's here, close by," I cried in great excitement. "Straight on along this street and the second turning to the left."

"Very much obliged to you."

A curse on that minute! I fancy I was shy, and looked cringing. He instantly noticed all that, and of course realised it all at once; that is, realised that I knew who he was, that I had read him and revered him from a child, and that I was shy and looked at him cringingly. He smiled, nodded again, and walked on as I had directed him. I don't know why I turned back to follow him; I don't know why I ran for ten paces beside him. He suddenly stood still again.

"And could you tell me where is- the nearest cab-stand?" he shouted out to me again.

It was a horrid shout! A horrid voice!

"A cab-stand? The nearest cab-stand is ... by the Cathedral; there are always cabs standing there," and I almost turned to run for a cab for him. I almost believe that that was what he expected me to do. Of course I checked myself at once, and stood still, but he had noticed my movement and was still watching me with the same horrid smile. Then something happened which I shall never forget.

He suddenly dropped a tiny bag, which he was holding in his left hand; though indeed it was not a bag, but rather a little box, or more probably some part of a pocket-book, or to be more accurate a little reticule, rather like an old-fashioned lady's reticule, though I really don't know what it was. I only know that I flew to pick it up.

I am convinced that I did not really pick it up, but my first motion was unmistakable. I could not conceal it, and, like a fool, I turned crimson. The cunning fellow at once got all that could be got out of the circumstance.

"Don't trouble, I'll pick it up," he pronounced charmingly; that is, when he was quite sure that I was not going to pick up the reticule, he picked it up as though forestalling me, nodded once more, and went his way, leaving me to look like a fool. It was as good as though I had picked it up myself. For five minutes I considered myself utterly disgraced for ever, but as I

reached Stepan Trofimovitch's house I suddenly burst out laughing; the meeting struck me as so amusing that I immediately resolved to entertain Stepan Trofimovitch with an account of it, and even to act the whole scene to him.

III

But this time to my surprise I found an extraordinary change in him. He pounced on me with a sort of avidity, it is true, as soon as I went in, and began listening to me, but with such a distracted air that at first he evidently did not take in my words. But as soon as I pronounced the name of Karmazinov he suddenly flew into a frenzy.

"Don't speak of him! Don't pronounce that name!" he exclaimed, almost in a fury. "Here, look, read it! Read it!"

He opened the drawer and threw on the table three small sheets of paper, covered with a hurried pencil scrawl, all from Varvara Petrovna. The first letter was dated the day before yesterday, the second had come yesterday, and the last that day, an hour before. Their contents were quite trivial, and all referred to Karmazinov and betrayed the vain and fussy uneasiness of Varvara Petrovna and her apprehension that Karmazinov might forget to pay her a visit. Here is the first one dating from two days before. (Probably

there had been one also three days before, and possibly another four days before as well.)

> "If he deigns to visit you to-day, not a word about me, I beg. Not the faintest hint. Don't speak of me, don't mention me.— V. S."

The letter of the day before:

> "If he decides to pay you a visit this morning, I think the most dignified thing would be not to receive him. That's what I think about it; I don't know what you think.— V. S."

To-day's, the last:

> "I feel sure that you're in a regular litter and clouds of tobacco smoke. I'm sending you Marya and Fomushka. They'll tidy you up in half an hour. And don't hinder them, but go and sit in the kitchen while they clear up. I'm sending you a Bokhara rug and two china vases. I've long been meaning to make you a present of them, and I'm sending you my Teniers, too, for a time.! You can put the vases in the window and hang the Teniers on the right under the portrait of

> Goethe; it will be more conspicuous there and it's always light there in the morning. If he does turn up at last, receive him with the utmost courtesy but try and talk of trifling matters, of some intellectual subject, and behave as though you had seen each other lately. Not a word about me. Perhaps I may look in on you in the evening.— V. S.
>
> "P.S.— If he does not come to-day he won't come at all."

I read and was amazed that he was in such excitement over such trifles. Looking at him inquiringly, I noticed that he had had time while I was reading to change the everlasting white tie he always wore, for a red one. His hat and stick lay on the table. He was pale, and his hands were positively trembling.

"I don't care a hang about her anxieties," he cried frantically, in response to my inquiring look. "*Je m'en fiche!* She has the face to be excited about Karmazinov, and she does not answer my letters. Here is my unopened letter which she sent me back yesterday, here on the table under the book, under *L'Homme qui rit.* What is it to me that she's wearing herself out over Nikolay! *Je m'en fiche, et je proclame ma liberte! Au diable le Karmazinov! Au diable la Lembke!* I've hidden the vases in the entry, and the Teniers in the chest of drawers, and I have demanded

that she is to see me at once. Do you hear. I've insisted! I've sent her just such a scrap of paper, a pencil scrawl, unsealed, by Nastasya, and I'm waiting. I want Darya Pavlovna to speak to me with her own lips, before the face of Heaven, or at least before you. *Vous me seconderez, n'est-ce pas, comme ami et timoin.* I don't want to have to blush, to lie, I don't want secrets, I won't have secrets in this matter. Let them confess everything to me openly, frankly, honourably and then . . . then perhaps I may surprise the whole generation by my magnanimity. . . . Am I a scoundrel or not, my dear sir?" he concluded suddenly, looking menacingly at me, as though I'd considered him a scoundrel.

I offered him a sip of water; I had never seen him like this before. All the while he was talking he kept running from one end of the room to the other, but he suddenly stood still before me in an extraordinary attitude.

"Can you suppose," he began again with hysterical haughtiness, looking me up and down, "can you imagine that I, Stepan Verhovensky, cannot find in myself the moral strength to take my bag — my beggar's bag — and laying it on my feeble shoulders to go out at the gate and vanish for ever, when honour and the great principle of independence demand it I It's not the first time that Stepan Verhovensky has had to repel despotism by moral force, even though it be the despotism of a crazy woman, that is, the most cruel and

insulting despotism which can exist on earth, although you have, I fancy, forgotten yourself so much as to laugh at my phrase, my dear sir! Oh, you don't believe that I can find the moral strength in myself to end my life as a tutor in a merchant's family, or to die of hunger in a ditch! Answer me, answer at once; do you believe it, or don't you believe it?"

But I was purposely silent. I even affected to hesitate to wound him by answering in the negative, but to be unable to answer affirmatively. In all this nervous excitement of his there was something which really did offend me, and not personally, oh, no! But ... I will explain later on. He positively turned pale.

"Perhaps you are bored with me, G—— v (this is my surname), and you would like . . . not to come and see me at all?" he said in that tone of pale composure which usually precedes some extraordinary outburst. I jumped up in alarm. At that moment Nastasya came in, and, without a word, handed Stepan Trofimovitch a piece of paper, on which something was written in pencil. He glanced at it and flung it to me. On the paper, in Varvara Petrovna's hand three words were written: "Stay at home."

Stepan Trofimovitch snatched up his hat and stick in silence and went quickly out of the room. Mechanically I followed him. Suddenly voices and sounds of rapid footsteps were heard in the passage. He stood still, as though thunder-struck.

“It's Liputin; I am lost!” he whispered, clutching at my arm.

At the same instant Liputin walked into the room.

IV

Why he should be lost owing to Liputin I did not know, and indeed I did not attach much significance to the words; I put it all down to his nerves. His terror, however, was remarkable, and I made up my mind to keep a careful watch on him.

The very appearance of Liputin as he came in assured us that he had on this occasion a special right to come in, in spite of the prohibition. He brought with him an unknown gentleman, who must have been a new arrival in the town. In reply to the senseless stare of my petrified friend, he called out immediately in a-loud voice:

“I'm bringing you a visitor, a special one! I make bold to intrude on your solitude. Mr. Kirillov, a very distinguished civil engineer. And what's more he knows your son, the much esteemed Pyotr Stepanovitch, very intimately; and he has a message from him. He's only just arrived.”

“The message is your own addition,” the visitor observed curtly. “There's no message at all. But I certainly do know Verhovensky. I left him in the X. province, ten days ahead of us.”

Stepan Trofimovitch mechanically offered his hand and motioned him to sit down. He looked at me he looked at Liputin, and then as though suddenly recollecting himself sat down himself, though he still kept his hat and stick in his hands without being aware of it.

“Bah, but you were going out yourself! I was told that you were quite knocked up with work.”

“Yes, I'm ill, and you see, I meant to go for a walk, I ...” Stepan Trofimovitch checked himself, quickly flung his hat and stick on the sofa and — turned crimson.

Meantime, I was hurriedly examining the visitor. He was a young man, about twenty-seven, decently dressed, well made, slender and dark, with a pale, rather muddy-coloured face and black lustreless eyes. He seemed rather thoughtful and absent-minded, spoke jerkily and ungrammatically, transposing words in rather a strange way, and getting muddled if he attempted a sentence of any length. Liputin was perfectly aware of Stepan Trofimovitch's alarm, and was obviously pleased at it. He sat down in a wicker chair which he dragged almost into the middle of the room, so as to be at an equal distance between his host and the visitor, who had installed themselves on sofas on opposite sides of the room. His sharp eyes darted inquisitively from one corner of the room to another.

“It's .... a long while since I've seen Petrusha. . . .

You met abroad?" Stepan Trofimovitch managed to mutter to the visitor.

"Both here and abroad."

"Alexey Nilitch has only just returned himself after living four years abroad," put in Liputin. "He has been travelling to perfect himself in his speciality and has come to us because he has good reasons to expect a job on the building of our railway bridge, and he's now waiting for an answer about it. He knows the Drozdovs and Lizaveta Nikolaevna, through Pyotr Stepanovitch."

The engineer sat, as it were, with a ruffled air, and listened with awkward impatience. It seemed to me that he was angry about something.

"He knows Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch too."

"Do you know Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch?" inquired Stepan Trofimovitch.

"I know him too."

"It's . . . it's a very long time since I've seen Petrusha, and ... I feel I have so little right to call myself a father . . . *c'est le mot* ; I . . . how did you leave him?"

"Oh, yes, I left him ... he comes himself," replied Mr. Kirillov, in haste to be rid of the question again. He certainly was angry.

"He's coming! At last I ... you see, it's very long since I've see Petrusha!" Stepan Trofimovitch could not get away from this phrase. "Now I expect my poor boy to whom . . . to whom I have been so much to blame!

That is, I mean to say, when I left him in Petersburg, I ... in short, I looked on him as a nonentity, *quelque chose dans ce genre.* He was a very nervous boy, you know, emotional, and . . . very timid. When he said his prayers going to bed he used to bow down to the ground, and make the sign of the cross on his pillow that he might not die in the night. . . . *Je m'en souviens. Enfin,* no artistic feeling whatever, not a sign of anything higher, of anything fundamental, no embryo of a future ideal . . . *c'etait comma un petit idiot,* but I'm afraid I am incoherent; excuse me . . . you came upon me . . .”

“You say seriously that he crossed his pillow?” the engineer asked suddenly with marked curiosity.

“Yes, he used to . . .”

“All right. I just asked. Go on.”

Stepan Trofimovitch looked interrogatively at Liputin.

“I'm very grateful to you for your visit. But I must confess I'm ... not in a condition . . . just now . . . But allow me to ask where you are lodging.”

“At Filipov's, in Bogoyavlensky Street.”

“Ach, that's where Shatov lives,” I observed involuntarily.

“Just so, in the very same house,” cried Liputin, “only Shatov lodges above, in the attic, while he's down below, at Captain Lebyadkin's. He knows Shatov too, and he knows Shatov's wife. He was very intimate with

her, abroad."

"*Comment!* Do you really know anything about that unhappy marriage *de ce pauvre ami* and that woman," cried Stepan Trofimovitch, carried away by sudden feeling. "You are the first man I've met who has known her personally; and if only ..."

"What nonsense!" the engineer snapped out, flushing all over. "How you add to things, Liputin! I've not seen Shatov's wife; I've only once seen her in the distance and not at all close... . I know Shatov. Why do you add things of all sorts?"

He turned round sharply on the sofa, clutched his hat, then laid it down again, and settling himself down once more as before, fixed his angry black eyes on Stepan Trofimovitch with a sort of defiance. I was at a loss to understand such strange irritability.

"Excuse me," Stepan Trofimovitch observed impressively. "I understand that it may be a very delicate subject. ..."——'

"No sort of delicate subject in it, and indeed it's shameful, and I didn't shout at you that it's nonsense, but at Liputin, because he adds things. Excuse me if you took it to yourself. I know Shatov, but I don't know his wife at all ... I don't know her at all!"

"I understand. I understand. And if I insisted, it's only because I'm very fond of our poor friend, *noire irascible ami,* and have always taken an interest in him. ... In my opinion that man changed his former,

possibly over-youthful but yet sound ideas, too abruptly. And now he says all sorts of things about *notre Sainte Russie* to such a degree that I've long explained this upheaval in his whole constitution, I can only call it that, to some violent shock in his family life, and, in fact, to his unsuccessful marriage. I, who know my poor Russia like the fingers on my hand, and have devoted my whole life to the Russian people, I can assure you that he does not know the Russian people, and what's more . . .”

“I don't know the Russian people at all, either, and I haven't time to study them,” the engineer snapped out again, and again he turned sharply on the sofa. Stepan Trofimovitch was pulled up in the middle of his speech.

“He is studying them, he is studying them,” interposed Liputin. “He has already begun the study of them, and is writing a very interesting article dealing with the causes of the increase of suicide in Russia, and, generally speaking, the causes that lead to the increase or decrease of suicide in society. He has reached amazing results.”

The engineer became dreadfully excited. “You have no right at all,” he muttered wrathfully. “I'm not writing an article. I'm not going to do silly things. I asked you confidentially, quite by chance. There's no article at all. I'm not publishing, and you haven't the right . . .” Liputin was obviously enjoying himself.

“I beg your pardon, perhaps I made a mistake in calling your literary work an article. He is only collecting observations, and the essence of the question, or, so to say, its moral aspect he is not touching at all. And, indeed, he rejects morality itself altogether, and holds with the last new principle of general destruction for the sake of ultimate good. He demands already more than a hundred million heads for the establishment of common sense in Europe; many more than they demanded at the last Peace Congress. Alexey Nilitch goes further than anyone in that sense.” The engineer listened with a pale and contemptuous smile. For half a minute every one was silent.

“All this is stupid, Liputin,” Mr. Kirillov observed at last, with a certain dignity. “If I by chance had said some things to you, and you caught them up again, as you like. But you have no right, for I never speak to anyone. I scorn to talk. . . . If one has a conviction then it's clear to me. . . . But you're doing foolishly. I don't argue about things when everything's settled. I can't bear arguing. I never want to argue. . . .”

“And perhaps you are very wise,” Stepan Trofimovitch could not resist saying.

“I apologise to you, but I am not angry with anyone here,” the visitor went on, speaking hotly and rapidly. " I have seen few people for four years. For four years I have talked little and have tried to see no one, for my own objects which do not concern anyone

else, for four years. Liputin found this out and is laughing. I understand and don't mind. I'm not ready to take offence, only annoyed at his liberty. And if I don't explain my ideas to you," he concluded unexpectedly, scanning us all with resolute eyes, "it's not at all that I'm afraid of your giving information to the government; that's not so; please do not imagine nonsense of that sort."

No one made any reply to these words. We only looked at each other. Even Liputin forgot to snigger.

"Gentlemen, I'm very sorry"— Stepan Trofimovitch got up resolutely from the sofa —" but I feel ill and upset. Excuse me."

"Ach, that's for us to go." Mr. Kirillov started, snatching up his cap. "It's a good thing you told us. I'm so forgetful."

He rose, and with a good-natured air went up to Stepan Trofimovitch, holding out his hand.

"I'm sorry you're not well, and I came,"

"I wish you every success among us," answered Stepan Trofimovitch, shaking hands with him heartily and without haste. 'I understand that, if as you say you have lived so long abroad, cutting yourself off from people for objects of your own and forgetting Russia, you must inevitably look with wonder on us who are Russians to the backbone, and we must feel the same about you. *Mais cela passera.* I'm only puzzled at one thing: you want to build our bridge and at the same

time you declare that you hold with the principle of universal destruction. They won't let you build our bridge."

"What! What's that you said? Ach, I say!" Kirillov cried, much struck, and he suddenly broke into the most frank and good-humoured laughter. For a moment his face took a quite childlike expression, which I thought suited him particularly. Liputin rubbed his hand with delight at Stepan Trofimovitch's witty remark. I kept wondering to myself why Stepan Trofimovitch was so frightened of Liputin, and why he had cried out "I am lost" when he heard him coming.

V

We were all standing in the doorway. It was the moment when hosts and guests hurriedly exchange the last and most cordial words, and then part to their mutual gratification.

"The reason he's so cross to-day," Liputin dropped all at once, as it were casually, when he was just going out of the room, "is because he had a disturbance to-day with Captain Lebyadkin over his sister. Captain Lebyadkin thrashes that precious sister of his, the mad girl, every day with a whip, a real Cossack whip, every morning and evening. So Alexey Nilibch has positively taken the lodge so as not to be present. Well, good-bye."

“A sister? An invalid? With a whip?” Stepan Trofimovitch cried out, as though he had suddenly been lashed with a whip himself. “What sister? What Lebyadkin?” All his former terror came back in an instant. “Lebyadkin! Oh, that's the retired captain; he used only to call himself a lieutenant before. ...”

“Oh, what is his rank to me? What sister? Good heavens! . . . You say Lebyadkin? But there used to be a Lebyadkin here. . . .”

“That's the very man. 'Our' Lebyadkin, at Virginsky's, you remember?”

“But he was caught with forged papers?”

“Well, now he's come back. He's been here almost three weeks and under the most peculiar circumstances.”

“Why, but he's a scoundrel?”

“As though no one could be a scoundrel among us,” Liputin grinned suddenly, his knavish little eyes seeming to peer into Stepan Trofimovitch's soul.

“Good heavens! I didn't mean that at all ... though I quite agree with you about that, with you particularly. But what then, what then? What did you mean by that? You certainly meant something by that.”

“Why, it's all so trivial. . . . This captain to all appearances went away from us at that time; not because of the forged papers, but simply to look for his sister, who was in hiding from him somewhere, it seems; well, and now he's brought her and that's the

whole story. Why do you seem frightened, Stepan Trofimovitch? I only tell this from his drunken chatter though, he doesn't speak of it himself when he's sober. He's an irritable man, and, so to speak, aesthetic in a military style; only he has bad taste. And this sister is lame as well as mad. She seems to have been seduced by some one, and Mr. Lebyadkin has, it seems, for many years received a yearly grant from the seducer by way of compensation for the wound to his honour, so it would seem at least from his chatter, though I believe it's only drunken talk. It's simply his brag. Besides, that sort of thing is done much cheaper. But that he has a sum of money is perfectly certain. Ten days ago he was walking barefoot, and now I've seen hundreds in his hands. His sister has fits of some sort every day, she shrieks and he 'keeps her in order' with the whip. You must inspire a woman with respect, he says. What I can't understand is how Shatov goes on living above him. Alexey Nilitch has only been three days with them. They were acquainted in Petersburg, and now he's taken the lodge to get away from the disturbance."

"Is this all true?" said Stepan Trofimovitch, addressing the engineer.

"You do gossip a lot, Liputin," the latter muttered wrathfully.

"Mysteries, secrets! Where have all these mysteries and secrets among us sprung from?" Stepan Trofimovitch could not refrain from exclaiming.

The engineer frowned, flushed red, shrugged his shoulders and went out of the room.

“Alexey Nilitch positively snatched the whip out of his hand, broke it and threw it out of the window, and they had a violent quarrel,” added Liputin.

“Why are you chattering, Liputin; it's stupid. What for?” Alexey Nilitch turned again instantly.

“Why be so modest and conceal the generous impulses of one's soul; that is, of your soul? I'm not speaking of my own.”

“How stupid it is ... and quite unnecessary. Lebyadkin's stupid and quite worthless — and no use to the cause, and . . . utterly mischievous. Why do you keep babbling all sorts of things? I'm going.”

“Oh, what a pity!” cried Liputin with a candid smile, “or I'd have amused you with another little story, Stepan Trofimovitch. I came, indeed, on purpose to tell you, though I dare say you've heard it already. Well, till another time, Alexey Nilitch is in such a hurry. Good-bye for the present. The story concerns Varvara Petrovna. She amused me the day before yesterday; she sent for me on purpose. It's simply killing. Good-bye.”

But at this Stepan Trofimovitch absolutely would not let him go. He seized him by the shoulders, turned him sharply back into the room, and sat him down in a chair. Liputin was positively scared.

“Why, to be sure,” he began, looking warily at Stepan Trofimovitch from his chair, “she suddenly sent

for me and asked me 'confidentially' my private opinion, whether Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch is mad or in his right mind. Isn't that astonishing?"

"You're out of your mind!" muttered Stepan Trofimovitch, and suddenly, as though he were beside himself: "Liputin, you know perfectly well that you only came here to tell me something insulting of that sort and . . . something worse!"

In a flash, I recalled his conjecture that Liputin knew not only more than we did about our affair, but something else which we should never know.

"Upon my word, Stepan Trofimovitch," muttered Liputin, seeming greatly alarmed, "upon my word . . ."

"Hold your tongue and begin! I beg you, Mr. Kirillov, to come back too, and be present. I earnestly beg you! Sit down, and you, Liputin, begin directly, simply and without any excuses."

"If I had only known it would upset you so much I wouldn't have begun at all. And of course I thought you knew all about it from Varvara Petrovna herself."

"You didn't think that at all. Begin, begin, I tell you."

"Only do me the favour to sit down yourself, or how can I sit here when you are running about before me in such excitement. I can't speak coherently."

Stepan Trofimovitch restrained himself and sank impressively into an easy chair. The engineer stared gloomily at the floor. Liputin looked at them with

intense enjoyment, “How am I to begin? . . . I'm too overwhelmed. . . .”

VI

The day before yesterday a servant was suddenly sent to me: 'You are asked to call at twelve o'clock,' said he. Can you fancy such a thing? I threw aside my work, and precisely at midday yesterday I was ringing at the bell. I was let into the drawing, room; I waited a minute — she came in; she made me sit down and sat down herself, opposite. I sat down, and I couldn't believe it; you know how she has always treated me. She began at once without beating about the bush, you know her way. 'You remember,' she said, 'that four years ago when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was ill he did some strange things which made all the town wonder till the position was explained. One of those actions concerned you personally. When Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch recovered he went at my request to call on you. I know that he talked to you several times before, too. Tell me openly and candidly what you . . . (she faltered a little at this point) what you thought of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch then . . . what was your view of him altogether . . . what idea you were able to form of him at that time . . . and, still have? '

“Here she was completely confused, so that she paused for a whole minute, and suddenly flushed. I was

alarmed. She began again — touchingly is not quite the word, it's not applicable to her — but in a very impressive tone:

"' I want you,' she said, 'to understand me clearly and without mistake. I've sent for you now because I look upon you as a keen-sighted and quick-witted man, qualified to make accurate observations.' (What compliments!) 'You'll understand too,' she said, 'that I am a mother appealing to you. . . . Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch has suffered some calamities and has passed through many changes of fortune in his life. All that,' she said, 'might well have affected the state of his mind. I'm not speaking of madness, of course,' she said, 'that's quite out of the question!' (This was uttered proudly and resolutely.) 'But there might be something strange, something peculiar, some turn of thought, a tendency to some particular way of looking at things.' (Those were her exact words, and I admired, Stepan Trofimovitch, the exactness with which Varvara Petrovna can put things. She's a lady of superior intellect!) '*I* have noticed in him, anyway,' she said,' a perpetual restlessness and a tendency to peculiar impulses. But I am a mother and you are an impartial spectator, and therefore qualified with your intelligence to form a more impartial opinion. I implore you, in fact' (yes, that word, 'implore' was uttered!), 'to tell me the whole truth, without mincing matters. And if you will give me your word never to forget that I have spoken to

you in confidence, you may reckon upon my always being ready to seize every opportunity in the future to show my gratitude.' Well, what do you say to that?"

"You have ... so amazed me . . ." faltered Stepan Trofimovitch, "that I don't believe you."

"Yes, observe, observe," cried Liputin, as though he had not heard Stepan Trofimovitch, "observe what must be her agitation and uneasiness if she stoops from her grandeur to appeal to a man like me, and even condescends to beg me to keep it secret. What do you call that? Hasn't she received some news of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, something unexpected?"

"I don't know ... of news of any sort ... I haven't seen her for some days, but . . . but I must say ..." lisped Stepan Trofimovitch, evidently hardly able to think clearly, "but I must say, Liputin, that if it was said to you in confidence, and here you're telling it before every one . . ."

"Absolutely in confidence! But God strike me dead if I . . . But as for telling it here . . . what does it matter *I* Are we strangers, even Alexey Nilitch?"

"I don't share that attitude. No doubt we three here will keep the secret, but I'm afraid of the fourth, you, and wouldn't trust you in anything. ..."

"What do you mean by that? Why it's more to my interest than anyone's, seeing I was promised eternal gratitude! What I wanted was to point out in this connection one extremely strange incident, rather to

say, psychological than simply strange. Yesterday evening, under the influence of my conversation with Varvara Petrovna — you can fancy yourself what an impression it made on me — I approached Alexey Nilitch with a discreet question: 'You knew Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch abroad,' said I, 'and used to know him before in Petersburg too. What do you think of his mind and his abilities?' said I. He answered laconically, as his way is, that he was a man of subtle intellect and sound judgment. 'And have you never noticed in the course of years,' said I, 'any turn of ideas or peculiar way of looking at things, or any, so to say, insanity?' In fact, I repeated Varvara Petrovna's own question. And would you believe it, Alexey Nilitch suddenly grew thoughtful, and scowled, just as he's doing now. 'Yes,' said he, 'I have sometimes thought there was something strange.' Take note, too, that if anything could have seemed strange even to Alexey Nilitch, it must really have been something, mustn't it?"

"Is that true?" said Stepan Trofimovitch, turning to Alexey Nilitch.

"I should prefer not to speak of it," answered Alexey Nilitch, suddenly raising his head, and looking at him with flashing eyes. "I wish to contest your right to do this, Liputin. You've no right to drag me into this. I did not give my whole opinion at all. Though I knew Nikolay Stavrogin in Petersburg that was long ago, and though I've met him since I know him very little. I beg

you to leave me out and . . . All this is something like scandal."

Liputin threw up his hands with an air of oppressed innocence.

"A scandal-monger! Why not say a spy while you're about it? It's all very well for you, Alexey Nilitch, to criticise when you stand aloof from everything. But you wouldn't believe it, Stepan Trofimovitch — take Captain Lebyadkin, he is stupid enough, one may say ... in fact, one's ashamed to say how stupid he is; there is a Russian comparison, to signify the degree of it; and do you know he considers himself injured by Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, though he is full of admiration for his wit. 'I'm amazed,' said he, 'at that man. He's a subtle serpent.' His own words. And I said to him (still under the influence of my conversation, and after I had spoken to Alexey Nilitch), 'What do you think, captain, is your subtle serpent mad or not?' Would you believe it, it was just as if I'd given him a sudden lash from behind. He simply leapt up from his seat. 'Yes,' said he, '. . . yes, only that,' he said, 'cannot affect . . .' 'Affect what?' He didn't finish. Yes, and then he fell to thinking so bitterly, thinking so much, that his drunkenness dropped off him. We were sitting in Filipov's restaurant. And it wasn't till half an hour later that he suddenly struck the table with his fist. 'Yes,' said he, 'maybe he's mad, but that can't affect it. . . .' Again he didn't say what it couldn't affect. Of course

I'm only giving you an extract of the conversation, but one can understand the sense of it. You may ask whom you like, they all have the same idea in their heads, though it never entered anyone's head before. 'Yes,' they say, 'he's mad; he's very clever, but perhaps he's mad too.' “

Stepan Trofimovitch sat pondering, and thought intently.

“And how does Lebyadkin know?”

“Do you mind inquiring about that of Alexey Nilitch, who has just called me a spy? I'm a spy, yet I don't know, but Alexey Nilitch knows all the ins and outs of it, and holds his tongue.”

“I know nothing about it, or hardly anything,” answered the engineer with the same irritation. “You make Lebyadkin drank to find out. You brought me here to find out and to make me say. And so you must be a spy.”

“I haven't made him drunk yet, and he's not worth the money either, with all his secrets. They are not worth that to me. I don't know what they are to you. On the contrary, he is scattering the money, though twelve days ago he begged fifteen kopecks of me, and it's he treats me to champagne, not I him. But you've given me an idea, and if there should be occasion I will make him drunk, just to get to the bottom of it and maybe I shall find out . . . all your little secrets,” Liputin snapped back spitefully.

Stepan Trofimovitch looked in bewilderment at the two disputants. Both were giving themselves away, and what's more, were not standing on ceremony. The thought crossed my mind that Liputin had brought this Alexey Nilitch to us with the simple object of drawing him into a conversation through a third person for purposes of his own — his favourite manoauvre.

"Alexey Nilitch knows Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch quite well," he went on, irritably, "only he conceals it. And as to your question about Captain Lebyadkin, he made his acquaintance before any of us did, six years ago in Petersburg, in that obscure, if one may so express it, epoch in the life of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, before he had dreamed of rejoicing our hearts by coming here. Our prince, one must conclude, surrounded himself with . rather a queer selection of acquaintances. It was at that time, it seems, that he made acquaintance with this gentleman here."

"Take care, Liputin. I warn you, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch meant to be here soon himself, and he knows how to defend himself."

"Why warn me? I am the first to cry out that he is a man of the most subtle and refined intelligence, and I quite reassured Varvara Petrovna yesterday on that score. 'It's his character,' I said to her, 'that I can't answer for.' Lebyadkin said the same thing yesterday: 'A lot of harm has come to me from his character,' he said. Stepan Trofimovitch, it's all very well for you to

cry out about slander and spying, and at the very time observe that you wring it all out of me, and with such immense curiosity too. Now, Varvara Petrovna went straight to the point yesterday. 'You have had a personal interest in the business,' she said, 'that's why I appeal to you.' I should say so! What need to look for motives when I've swallowed a personal insult from his excellency before the whole society of the place. I should think I have grounds to be interested, not merely for the sake of gossip. He shakes hands with you one day, and next day, for no earthly reason, he returns your hospitality by slapping you on the cheeks in the face of all decent society, if the fancy takes him, out of sheer wantonness. And what's more, the fair sex is everything for them, these butterflies and mettlesome-cocks! Grand gentlemen with little wings like the ancient cupids, lady-killing Petchorins! It's all very well for you, Stepan Trofimovitch, a confirmed bachelor, to talk like that, stick up for his excellency and call me a slanderer. But if you married a pretty young wife — as you're still such a fine fellow — then I dare say you'd bolt your door against our prince, and throw up barricades in your house! Why, if only that Mademoiselle Lebyadkin, who is thrashed with a whip, were not mad and bandy-legged, by Jove, I should fancy she was the victim of the passions of our general, and that it was from him that Captain Lebyadkin had suffered 'in his family dignity,' as he expresses it

himself. Only perhaps that is inconsistent with his refined taste, though, indeed, even that's no hindrance to him. Every berry is worth picking if only he's in the mood for it. You talk of slander, but I'm not crying this aloud though the whole town is ringing with it; I only listen and assent. That's not prohibited."

"The town's ringing with it? What's the town ringing with?"

"That is, Captain Lebyadkin is shouting for all the town to hear, and isn't that just the same as the market-place ringing with it? How am I to blame? I interest myself in it only among friends, for, after all, I consider myself among friends here." He looked at us with an innocent air. "Something's happened, only consider: they say his excellency has sent three hundred roubles from Switzerland by a most honourable young lady, and, so to say, modest orphan, whom I have the honour of knowing, to be handed over to Captain Lebyadkin. And Lebyadkin, a little later, was told as an absolute fact also by a very honourable and therefore trustworthy person, I won't say whom, that not three hundred but a thousand roubles had been sent! . . . And so, Lebyadkin keeps crying out' the young lady has grabbed seven hundred roubles belonging to me,' and he's almost ready to call in the police; he threatens to, anyway, and he's making an uproar all over the town."

"This is vile, vile of you!" cried the engineer, leaping up suddenly from his chair.

“But I say, you are yourself the honourable person who brought word to Lebyadkin from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch that a thousand roubles were sent, not three hundred. Why, the captain told me so himself when he was drunk.”

“It's . . . it's an unhappy misunderstanding. Some one's made a mistake and it's led to ... It's nonsense, and it's base of you.”

“But I'm ready to believe that it's nonsense, and I'm distressed at the story, for, take it as you will, a girl of an honourable reputation is implicated first over the seven hundred roubles, and secondly in unmistakable intimacy with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. For how much does it mean to his excellency to disgrace a girl of good character, or put to shame another man's wife, like that incident with me? If he comes across a generous-hearted man he'll force him to cover the sins of others under the shelter of his honourable name. That's just what I had to put up with, I'm speaking of myself. . . .”

“Be careful, Liputin.” Stepan Trofimovitch got up from his easy chair and turned pale.

“Don't believe it, don't believe it! Somebody has made a mistake and Lebyadkin's drunk ...” exclaimed the engineer in indescribable excitement. “It will all be explained, but I can't. . . . And I think it's low. . . . And that's enough, enough!”

He ran out of the room.

“What are you about? Why, I'm going with you!” cried Liputin, startled. He jumped up and ran after Alexey Nilitch.

VII

Stepan Trofimovitch stood a moment reflecting, looked at me as though he did not see me, took up his hat and stick and walked quietly out of the room. I followed him again, as before. As we went out of the gate, noticing that I was accompanying him, he said:

“Oh yes, you may serve as a witness . . . *de l'accident. Vous m'accompagnerez, riest-ce pas?* ”

“Stepan Trofimovitch, surely you're not going there again? Think what may come of it!”

With a pitiful and distracted smile, a smile of shame and utter despair, and at the same time of a sort of strange ecstasy, he whispered to me, standing still for an instant:

“I can't marry to cover 'another man's sins'!”

These words were just what I was expecting. At last that fatal sentence that he had kept hidden from me was uttered aloud, after a whole week of shuffling and pretence. I was positively enraged.

“And you, Stepan Verhovensky, with your luminous mind, your kind heart, can harbour such a dirty, such a low idea . . . and could before Liputin came!”

He looked at me, made no answer and walked on in the same direction. I did not want to be left behind. I wanted to give Varvara Petrovna my version. I could have forgiven him if he had simply with his womanish faint-heartedness believed Liputin, but now it was clear that he had thought of it all himself long before, and that Liputin had only confirmed his suspicions and poured oil on the flames. He had not hesitated to suspect the girl from the very first day, before he had any kind of grounds, even Liputin's words, to go upon. Varvara Petrovna's despotic behaviour he had explained to himself as due to her haste to cover up the aristocratic misdoings of her precious "Nicolas" by marrying the girl to an honourable man! I longed for him to be punished for it.

"*Oh, Dieu, qui est si grand et si ban!* Oh, who will comfort me!" he exclaimed, halting suddenly again, after walking a hundred paces.

"Come straight home and I'll make everything clear to you," I cried, turning him by force towards home.

"It's he! Stepan Trofimovitch, it's you? You?" A fresh, joyous young voice rang out like music behind us.

We had seen nothing, but a lady on horseback suddenly made her appearance beside us — Lizaveta Nikolaevna with her invariable companion. She pulled up her horse.

“Come here, come here quickly!” she called to us, loudly and merrily. “It's twelve years since I've seen him, and I know him, while he. . . . Do you really not know me?”

Stepan Trofimovitch clasped the hand held out to him and kissed it reverently. He gazed at her as though he were praying and could not utter a word.

“He knows me, and is glad! Mavriky Nikolaevitch, he's delighted to see me! Why is it you haven't been to see us all this fortnight? Auntie tried to persuade me you were ill and must not be disturbed; but I know Auntie tells lies. I kept stamping and swearing at you, but I had made up my mind, quite made up my mind, that you should come to me first, that was why I didn't send to you. Heavens, why he hasn't changed a bit!” She scrutinised him, bending down from the saddle. “He's absurdly unchanged. Oh, yes, he has wrinkles, a lot of wrinkles, round his eyes and on his cheeks some grey hair, but his eyes are just the same. And have I changed? Have I changed? Why don't you say something?”

I remembered at that moment the story that she had been almost ill when she was taken away to Petersburg at eleven years old, and that she had cried during her illness and asked for Stepan Trofimovitch.

“You ... I ...” he faltered now in a voice breaking with joy. “I was just crying out 'who will comfort me?' and I heard your voice. I look on it as a miracle *etje*

commence d croire. ”

“En Dieu! En Dieu qui est la-haut et qui est si grand et si bon? You see, I know all your lectures by heart. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, what faith he used to preach to me then, *en Dieu qui est si grand et si bon!* And do you remember your story of how Columbus discovered America, and they all cried out, 'Land! land!'? My nurse Alyona Frolovna says I was light-headed at night afterwards, and kept crying out 'land! land!' in my sleep. And do you remember how you told me the story of Prince Hamlet? And do you remember how you described to me how the poor emigrants were transported from Europe to America? And it was all untrue; I found out afterwards how they were transited. But what beautiful fibs he used to tell me then, Mavriky Nikolaevitch! They were better than the truth. Why do you look at Mavriky Nikolaevitch like that? He is the best and “best man on the face of the globe and you must like him just you do me! *Il fait tout ce que je veux.* But, dear Stepan Trofimovitch, you must be unhappy again, since you cry out in the middle of the street asking who will comfort you. Unhappy, aren't you? Aren't you?”

“Now I'm happy. . . .”

“Aunt is horrid to you?” she went on, without listening. “She's just the same as ever, cross, unjust, and always our precious aunt! And do you remember how you threw yourself into my arms in the garden and I

comforted you and cried — don't be afraid of Mavriky Nikolaevitch; he has known all about you, everything, for ever so long; you can weep on his shoulder as long as you like, and he'll stand there as long as you like! . . . Lift up your hat, take it off altogether for a minute, lift up your head, stand on tiptoe, I want to kiss you on the forehead as I kissed you for the last time when we parted. Do you see that young lady's admiring us out of the window? Come closer, closer! Heavens! How grey he is!"

And bending over in the saddle she kissed him on the forehead.

"Come, now to your home! I know where you live. I'll be with you directly, in a minute. I'll make you the first visit, you stubborn man, and then I must have you for a whole day at home. You can go and make ready for me."

And she galloped off with her cavalier. We returned. Stepan Trofimovitch sat down on the sofa and began to cry.

"*Dieu, Dieu.'* " he exclaimed, "*enftn une minute de bonheur!* "

Not more than ten minutes afterwards she reappeared according to her promise, escorted by her Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

"*Vous et le bonheur, vous arrivez en meme temps!* " He got up to meet her.

"Here's a nosegay for you; I rode just now to

Madame Chevalier's, she has flowers all the winter for name-days. Here's Mavriky Nikolaevitch, please make friends. I wanted to bring you a cake instead of a nosegay, but Mavriky Nikolaevitch declares that is not in the Russian spirit."

Mavriky Nikolaevitch was an artillery captain, a tall and handsome man of thirty-three, irreproachably correct in appearance, with an imposing and at first sight almost stern countenance, in spite of his wonderful and delicate kindness which no one could fail to perceive almost the first moment of making his acquaintance. He was taciturn, however, seemed very self-possessed and made no efforts to gain friends. Many of us said later that he was by no means clever; but this was not altogether just.

I won't attempt to describe the beauty of Lizaveta Nikolaevna. The whole town was talking of it, though some of our ladies and young girls indignantly differed on the subject. There were some among them who already detested her, and principally for her pride. The Drozdovs had scarcely begun to pay calls, which mortified them, though the real reason for the delay was Praskovya Ivanovna's invalid state. They detested her in the second place because she was a relative of the governor's wife, and thirdly because she rode out every day on horseback. We had never had young ladies who rode on horseback before; it was only natural that the appearance of Lizaveta Nikolaevna oh horseback and

her neglect to pay calls was bound to offend local society. Yet every one knew that riding was prescribed her by the doctor's orders, and they talked sarcastically of her illness. She really was ill. What struck me at first sight in her was her abnormal, nervous, incessant restlessness. Alas, the poor girl was very unhappy, and everything was explained later. To-day, recalling the past, I should not say she was such a beauty as she seemed to me then. Perhaps she was really not pretty at all. Tall, slim, but strong and supple, she struck one by the irregularities of the lines of her face. Her eyes were set somewhat like a Kalmuck's, slanting; she was pale and thin in the face with high cheek-bones, but there was something in the face that conquered and fascinated! There was something powerful in the ardent glance of her dark eyes. She always made her appearance "like a Conquering heroine, and to spread her conquests." She seemed proud and at times even arrogant. I don't know whether she succeeded in being kind, but I know that she wanted to, and made terrible efforts to force herself to be a little kind. There were, no doubt, many fine impulses and the very best elements in her character, but everything in her seemed perpetually seeking its balance and unable to find it; everything was in chaos, in agitation, in uneasiness. Perhaps the demands she made upon herself were too severe, and she was never able to find in herself the strength to satisfy them.

She sat on the sofa and looked round the room.

"Why do I always begin to feel sad at such moments; explain that mystery, you learned person? I've been thinking all my life that I should be goodness knows how pleased at seeing you and recalling everything, and here I somehow don't feel pleased at all, although I do love you. . . . Ach, heavens! He has my portrait on the wall! Give it here. I remember it! I remember it!"

An exquisite miniature in water-colour of Liza at twelve years old had been sent nine years before to Stepan Trofimovitch from Petersburg by the Drozdovs. He had kept it hanging on his wall ever since.

"Was I such a pretty child? Can that really have been my face?"

She stood up, and with the portrait in her hand looked in the looking-glass.

"Make haste, take it!" she cried, giving back the portrait. "Don't hang it up now, afterwards. I don't want to look at it."

She sat down on the sofa again. "One life is over and another is begun, then that one is over — a third begins, and so on, endlessly. All the ends are snipped off as it were with scissors. See what stale things I'm telling you. Yet how much truth there is in them!"

She looked at me, smiling; she had glanced at me several times already, but in his excitement Stepan Trofimovitch forgot: that he had promised to introduce

me.

"And why have you hung my portrait under those daggers? And why have you got so many daggers and sabres?"

He had as a fact hanging on the wall, I don't know why, two crossed daggers and above them a genuine Circassian sabre. As she asked this question she looked so directly at me that I wanted to answer, but hesitated to speak. Stepan Trofimovitch grasped the position at last and introduced me.

"I know, I know," she said, "I'm delighted to meet you. Mother has heard a great deal about you, too. Let me introduce you to Mavriky Nikolaevitch too, he's a splendid person. I had formed a funny notion of you already. You're Stepan Trofimovitch's confidant, aren't you?"

I turned rather red.

"Ach, forgive me, please. I used quite the wrong word: not funny at all, but only . . ." She was confused and blushed. " Why be ashamed though at your being a splendid person? Well, it's time we were going, Mavriky Nikolaevitch! Stepan Trofimovitch, you must be with us in half an hour. Mercy, what a lot we shall talk! Now I'm your confidante, and about everything, *everything,* you understand?"

Stepan Trofimovitch was alarmed at once.

"Oh, Mavriky Nikolaevitch knows everything, don't mind him!"

"What does he know?"

"Why, what do you mean?" she cried in astonishment. "Bah, why it's true then that they're hiding it! I wouldn't believe it! And they're hiding Dasha, too. Aunt wouldn't let me go in to see Dasha to-day. She says she's got a headache."

"But . . . but how did you find out?"

"My goodness, like every one else. That needs no cunning!"

"But does every one else . . .?"

"Why, of course. Mother, it's true, heard it first through Alyona Frolovna, my nurse; your Nastasya ran round to tell her. You told Nastasya, didn't you? She says you told her yourself."

"I ... I did once speak," Stepan Trofimovitch faltered, crimsoning all over, "but ... I only hinted . . . *j'etais si nerveux et malade, et puis* ..."

She laughed.

"And your confidant didn't happen to be at hand, and Nastasya turned up. Well that was enough! And the whole town's full of her cronies! Come, it doesn't matter, let them know; it's all the better. Make haste and come to us, we dine early. . . . Oh, I forgot," she added, sitting down again; "listen, what sort of person is Shatov?"

"Shatov? He's the brother of Darya Pavlovna."

"I know he's her brother! What a person you are, really," she interrupted impatiently. "I want to know

what he's like; what sort of man he is."

"*C'est un pense-creux d'ici. C'est le meilleur et le plus irascible l'homme, du monde.* "

"I've heard that he's rather queer. But that wasn't what I meant. I've heard that he knows three languages, one of them English, and can do literary work. In that case I've a lot of work for him. I want some one to help me and the sooner the better. Would he take the work or not? He's been recommended to me. ..."

"Oh, most certainly he will. *Et vous ferez un bienfait. . . .* "

"I'm not doing it as a *bienfait.* I need some one to help me."

"I know Shatov pretty well," I said, "and if you will trust me with a message to him I'll go to him this minute."

"Tell him to come to me at twelve o'clock to-morrow morning. Capital! Thank you. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, are you ready?"

They went away. I ran at once, of course, to Shatov.

"*Man ami!* " said Stepan Trofimovitch, overtaking me on the steps. "Be sure to be at my lodging at ten or eleven o'clock when I come back. Oh, I've acted very wrongly in my conduct to you and to every one."

VIII

I did not find Shatov at home. I ran round again, two hours later. He was still out. At last, at eight o'clock I went to him again, meaning to leave a note if I did not find him; again I failed to find him. His lodging was shut up, and he lived alone without a servant of any sort. I did think of knocking at Captain Lebyadkin's down below to ask about Shatov; but it was all shut up below, too, and there was no sound or light as though the place were empty. I passed by Lebyadkin's door with curiosity, remembering the stories I had heard that day. Finally, I made up my mind to come very early next morning: To tell the truth I did not put much confidence in the effect of a note. Shatov might take no notice of it; he was so obstinate and shy. Cursing my want of success, I was going out of the gate when all at once I stumbled on Mr. Kirillov. He was going into the house and he recognised me first. As he began questioning me of himself, I told him how things were, and that I had a note.

"Let us go in," said he, "I will do everything."

I remembered that Liputin had told us hp had taken the wooden lodge in the yard that morning. In the lodge, which was too large for him, a deaf old woman who waited upon him was living too. The owner of the house had moved into a new house in another street, where he kept a restaurant, and this old woman, a relation of his, I believe, was left behind to look after

everything in the old house. The rooms in the lodge were fairly clean, though the wall-papers were dirty. In the one we went into the furniture was of different sorts, picked up here and there, and all utterly worthless. There were two card-tables, a chest of drawers made of elder, a big deal table that must have come from some peasant hut or kitchen, chairs and a sofa with trellis-work back and hard leather cushions. In one corner there was an old-fashioned ikon, in front of which the old woman had lighted a lamp before we came in, and on the walls hung two dingy oil-paintings, one, a portrait of the Tsar Nikolas I, painted apparently between 1820 and 1830; the other the portrait of some bishop. Mr. Kirillov lighted a candle and took out of his trunk, which stood not yet unpacked in a corner, an envelope, sealing-wax, and a glass seal.

"Seal your note and address the envelope."

I would have objected that this was unnecessary, but he insisted. When I had addressed the envelope I took my cap.

"I was thinking you'd have tea," he said. "I have bought tea. Will you?"

I could not refuse. The old woman soon brought in the tea, that is, a very large tea-pot of boiling water, a little tea-pot full of strong tea, two large earthenware cups, coarsely decorated, a fancy loaf, and a whole deep saucer of lump sugar.

"I love tea at night," said he. "I walk much and

drink it till daybreak. Abroad tea at night is inconvenient."

"You go to bed at daybreak?"

"Always; for a long while. I eat little; always tea. Liputin's sly, but impatient."

I was surprised at his wanting to talk; I made up my mind to take advantage of the opportunity. "There were unpleasant misunderstandings this morning," I observed.

He scowled.

"That's foolishness; that's great nonsense. All this is nonsense because Lebyadkin is drunk. I did not tell Liputin, but only explained the nonsense, because he got it all wrong. Liputin has a great deal of fantasy, he built up a mountain out of nonsense. I trusted Liputin yesterday."

"And me to-day?" I said, laughing.

"But you see, you knew all about it already this morning; Liputin is weak or impatient, or malicious or ... he's envious."

The last word struck me.

"You've mentioned so many adjectives, however, that it would be strange if one didn't describe him."

"Or all at once."

"Yes, and that's what Liputin really is — he's a chaos. He was lying this morning when he said you were writing something, wasn't he?

"Why should he?" he said, scowling again and

staring at the floor.

I apologised, and began assuring him that I was not inquisitive. He flushed.

"He told the truth; I am writing. Only that's no matter."

We were silent for a minute. He suddenly smiled with the childlike smile I had noticed that morning.

"He invented that about heads himself out of a book, and told me first himself, and understands badly. But I only seek the causes why men dare not kill themselves; that's all. And it's all no matter."

"How do you mean they don't dare? Are there so few suicides?"

"Very few."

"Do you really think so?"

He made no answer, got up, and began walking to and fro lost in thought.

"What is it restrains people from suicide, do you think?" I asked.

He looked at me absent-mindedly, as though trying to remember what we were talking about.

"I . . . I don't know much yet. . . . Two prejudices restrain them, two things; only two, one very little, the other very big."

"What is the little thing?"

"Pain."

"Pain? Can that be of importance at such a moment?"

“Of the greatest. There are two sorts: those who kill themselves either from great sorrow or from spite, or being mad, or no matter what . . . they do it suddenly. They think little about the pain, but kill themselves suddenly. But some do it from reason — they think a great deal.”

“Why, are there people who do it from reason?”

“Very many. If it were not for superstition there would be more, very many, all.”

“What, all?”

He did not answer.

“But aren't there means of dying without pain?”

“Imagine”— he stopped before me —“ imagine a stone as big as a great house; it hangs and you are under it; if it falls on you, on your head, will it hurt you?”

“A stone as big as a house? Of course it would be fearful.”

“I speak not of the fear. Will it hurt?”

“A stone as big as a mountain, weighing millions of tons? Of course it wouldn't hurt.”

“But really stand there and while it hangs you will fear very much that it will hurt. The most learned man, the greatest doctor, all, all will be very much frightened. Every one will know that it won't hurt, and every one will be afraid that it will hurt.”

“Well, and the second cause, the big one?”

“The other world!”

“You mean punishment?”

“That's no matter. The other world; only the other world.”

“Are there no atheists, such as don't believe in the other world at all?”

Again he did not answer.

“You judge from yourself, perhaps.”

“Every one cannot judge except from himself,” he said, reddening. “There will be full freedom when it will be just the same to live or not to live. That's the goal for all.”

“The goal? But perhaps no one will care to live then?”

“No one,” he pronounced with decision.

“Man fears death because he loves life. That's how I understand it,” I observed, “and that's determined by nature.”

“That's abject; and that's where the deception comes in.” His eyes flashed. “Life is pain, life is terror, and man is unhappy. Now all is pain and terror. Now man loves life, because he loves pain and terror, and so they have done according. Life is given now for pain and terror, and that's the deception. Now man is not yet what he will be. There will be a new man, happy and proud. For whom it will be the same to live or not to live, he will be the new man. He who will conquer pain and terror will himself be a god. And this God will not be.”

“Then this God does exist according to you?”

“He does not exist, but He is. In the stone there is no pain, but in the fear of the stone is the pain. God is the pain of the fear of death. He who will conquer pain and terror will become himself a god. Then there will be a new life, a new man; everything will be new . . . then they will divide history into two parts: from the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God to . . .”

“To the gorilla?”

“... To the transformation of the earth, and of man physically. Man will be God, and will be transformed physically, and the world will be transformed and things will be transformed and thoughts and all feelings. What do you think: will man be changed physically then?”

“If it will be just the same living or not living, all will kill themselves, and perhaps that's what the change will be?”

“That's no matter. They will kill deception. Every one who wants the supreme freedom must dare to kill himself. He who dares to kill himself has found out the secret of the deception. There is no freedom beyond; that is all, and there is nothing beyond. He who dares kill himself is God. Now every one can do so that there shall be no God and shall be nothing. But no one has once done it yet.”

“There have been millions of suicides.”

“But always not for that; always with terror and

not for that object. Not to kill fear. He who kills himself only to kill fear will become a god at once."

"He won't have time, perhaps," I observed.

"That's no matter," he answered softly, with calm pride, almost disdain. "I'm sorry that you seem to be laughing," he added half a minute later.

"It seems strange to me that you were so irritable this morning and are now so calm, though you speak with warmth."

"This morning? It was funny this morning," he answered with a smile. "I don't like scolding, and I never laugh," he added mournfully.

"Yes, you don't spend your nights very cheerfully over your tea."

I got up and took my cap.

"You think not?" he smiled with some surprise. "Why? No, I ... I don't know." He was suddenly confused. "I know not how it is with the others, and I feel that I cannot do as others. Everybody thinks and then at once thinks of something else. I can't think of something else. I think all my life of one thing. God has tormented me all my life," he ended up suddenly with astonishing expansiveness.

"And tell me, if I may ask, why is it you speak Russian not quite correctly? Surely you haven't forgotten it after five years abroad?"

"Don't I speak correctly? I don't know. No, it's not because of abroad. I have talked like that all my life

. . . it's no matter to me."

"Another question, a more delicate one. I quite — believe you that you're disinclined to meet people and talk very little. Why have you talked to me now?"

"To you? This morning you sat so nicely and you . . . but it's all no matter . . . you are like my brother, very much, extremely," he added, flushing. "He has been dead seven years. He was older, very, very much."

"I suppose he had a great influence on your way of thinking?"

"N-no. He said little; he said nothing. I'll give your note."

He saw me to the gate with a lantern, to lock it after me. "Of course he's mad," I decided. In the gateway I met with another encounter.

IX

I had only just lifted my leg over the high barrier across the bottom of the gateway, when suddenly a strong hand clutched at my chest.

"Who's this?" roared a voice, "a friend or an enemy? Own up!"

"He's one of us; one of us!" Liputin's voice squealed near by. "It's Mr. G—— v, a young man of classical education, in touch with the highest society."

"I love him if he's in society, clas-si . . . that means he's high-ly ed-u-cated. The retired Captain

Ignat Lebyadkin, at the service of the world and his friends ... if they're true ones, if they're true ones, the scoundrels.”

Captain Lebyadkin, a stout, fleshy man over six feet in height, with curly hair and a red face, was so extremely drunk that he could scarcely stand up before me, and articulated with difficulty. I had seen him before, however, in the distance.

“And this one!” he roared again, noticing Kirillov, who was still standing with the lantern; he raised his fist, but let it fall again at once.

“I forgive you for your learning! Ignat Lebyadkin — high-ly ed-u-cated. . . .

'*A bomb of love with stinging smart*
Exploded in Ignaty's heart.
In anguish dire I weep again
The arm that at Sevastopol
I lost in bitter pain!'

Not that I ever was at Sevastopol, or ever lost my arm, but you know what rhyme is.” He pushed up to me with his ugly, tipsy face.

“Pie is in a hurry, he is going home!” Liputin

tried to persuade him. “He'll tell Lizaveta Nikolaevna to-morrow.”

“Lizaveta!” he yelled again. “Stay, don't go! A variation;

'*Among the Amazons a star*,
Upon her steed she flashes by,
And smiles upon me from afar,
The child of aris-to-cra-cy!

To a Starry Amazon.'

You know that's a hymn. It's a hymn, if you're not an ass! The duffers, they don't understand! Stay!”

He caught hold of my coat, though I pulled myself away with all my might.

“Tell her I'm a knight and the soul of honour, and as for that Dasha . . . I'd pick her up and chuck her out. . . . She's only a serf, she daren't ...”

At this point he fell down, for I pulled myself violently out of his hands and ran into the street. Liputin clung on to me.

“Alexey Nilitch will pick him up. Do you know what I've just found out from him?” he babbled in desperate haste. “Did you hear his verses? He's sealed

those verses to the 'Starry Amazon' in an envelope and is going to send them to-morrow to Lizaveta Nikolaevna, signed with his name in full. What a fellow!"

"I bet you suggested it to him yourself."

"You'll lose your bet," laughed Liputin. "He's in love, in love like a cat, and do you know it began with hatred. He hated Lizaveta Nikolaevna at first so much, for riding on horseback that he almost swore aloud at her in the street. Yes, he did abuse her! Only the day before yesterday he swore at her when she rode by — luckily she didn't hear. And, suddenly, to-day — poetry! Do you know he means to risk a proposal? Seriously! Seriously!"

"I wonder at you, Liputin; whenever there's anything nasty going on you're always on the spot taking a leading part in it," I said angrily.

"You're going rather far, Mr. G—— v. Isn't your poor little heart quaking, perhaps, in terror of a rival?"

"Wha-at!" I cried, standing still.

"Well, now to punish you I won't say anything more, and wouldn't you like to know though? Take this alone, that that lout is not a simple captain now but a landowner of our province, and rather an important one, too, for Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sold him all his estate the other day, formerly of two hundred serfs; and as God's above, I'm not lying. I've only just heard it, but it was from a most reliable source. And now you can

ferret it out for yourself; I'll say nothing more; good-bye."

X

Stepan Trofimovitch was awaiting me with hysterical impatience. It was an hour since he had returned. I found him in a state resembling intoxication; for the first five minutes at least I thought he was drunk. Alas, the visit to the Drozdovs had been the finishing-stroke.

"*Mon ami!* I have completely lost the thread . . . Lise . . . I love and respect that angel as before; just as before; but it seems to me they both asked me simply to find out something from me, that is more simply to get something out of me, and then to get rid of me. . . . That's how it is."

"You ought to be ashamed!" I couldn't help exclaiming. "My friend, now I am utterly alone. *Enfin, c'est ridicule.* Would you believe it, the place is positively packed with mysteries there too. They simply flew at me about those ears and noses, and some mysteries in Petersburg too. You know they hadn't heard till they came about the tricks Nicolas played here four years ago. 'You were here, you saw it, is it true that he is mad?' Where they got the idea I can't make out. Why is it that Praskovya is so anxious Nicolas should be mad? The woman will have it so, she

will. *Ce Maurice,* or what's his name, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, *brave homme tout de meme . . .* but can it be for his sake, and after she wrote herself from Paris to *cette pauvre amie? . . . Enfin,* this Praskovya, as *cette chere amie* calls her, is a type. She's Gogol's Madame Box, of immortal memory, only she's a spiteful Madame Box, a malignant Box, and in an immensely exaggerated form."

"That's making her out a regular packing-case if it's an exaggerated form."

"Well, perhaps it's the opposite; it's all the same, only don't interrupt me, for I'm all in a whirl. They are all at loggerheads, except Lise, she keeps on with her 'Auntie, auntie!' but Lise's sly, and there's something behind it too. Secrets. She has quarrelled with the old lady. *Cette pauvre* auntie tyrannises over every one it's true, and then there's the governor's wife, and the rudeness of local society, and Karmazinov's 'rudeness'; and then this idea of madness, *ce Lipoutine, ce que je ne comprends pas . . .* and . . . and they say she's been putting vinegar on her head, and here are we with our complaints and letters. . . . Oh, how I have tormented her and at such a time! *Je suis un ingrat!* Only imagine, I come back and find a letter from her; read it, read it! Oh, how ungrateful it was of me!"

He gave me a letter he had just received from Varvara Petrovna. She seemed to have repented of her "stay at home." The letter was amiable but decided in

tone, and brief. She invited Stepan Trofimovitch to come to her the day after to-morrow, which was Sunday, at twelve o'clock, and advised him to bring one of his friends with him. (My name was mentioned in parenthesis). She promised on her side to invite Shatov, as the brother of Darya Pavlovna. "You can obtain a final answer from her: will that be enough for you? Is this the formality you were so anxious for?"

"Observe that irritable phrase about formality. Poor thing, poor thing, the friend of my whole life! I confess the sudden determination of my whole future almost crushed me. ... I confess I still had hopes, but now *tout est dit. I* know now that all is over. *C'est terrible!* Oh, that that Sunday would never come and everything would go on in the old way. You would have gone on coming and I'd have gone on here. . . ."

"You've been upset by all those nasty things Liputin said, those slanders."

"My dear, you have touched on another sore spot with your friendly finger. Such friendly fingers are generally merciless and sometimes unreasonable; *pardon,* you may riot believe it, but I'd almost forgotten all that, all that nastiness, not that I forgot it, indeed, but in my foolishness I tried all the while I was with Lise to be happy and persuaded myself I was happy. But now . . . Oh, now I'm thinking of that generous, humane woman, so long-suffering with my contemptible failings — not that she's been altogether

long-suffering, but what have I been with my horrid, worthless character! I'm a capricious child, with all the egoism of a child and none of the innocence. For the last twenty years she's been looking after me like a nurse, *cette pauvre* auntie, as Lise so charmingly calls her. . . . And now, after twenty years, the child clamours to be married, sending letter after letter, while her head's in a vinegar-compress and . . . now he's got it — on Sunday I shall be a married man, that's no joke. . . . And why did I keep insisting myself, what did I write those letters for? Oh, I forgot. Lise idolizes Darya Pavlovna, she says so anyway; she says of her '*c'est un ange,* only rather a reserved one.' They both advised me, even Praskovya. . . . Praskovya didn't advise me though. Oh, what venom lies concealed in that 'Box'! And Lise didn't exactly advise me: 'What do you want to get married for,' she said, 'your intellectual pleasures ought to be enough for you.' She laughed. I forgive her for laughing, for there's an ache in her own heart. You can't get on without a woman though, they said to me. The infirmities of age are coming upon you, and she will tuck you up, or whatever it is. ... *Ma foi,* I've been thinking myself all this time I've been sitting with you that Providence was sending her to me in the decline of my stormy years and that she would tuck me up, or whatever they call it ... *enfin,* she'll be handy for the housekeeping. See what a litter there is, look how everything's lying about. I said it must be cleared up

this morning, and look at the book on the floor! *La pauvre amie* was always angry at the untidiness here. . . . Ah, now I shall no longer hear her voice! *Vingt ans!* And it seems they've had anonymous letters. Only fancy, it's said that Nicolas has sold Lebyadkin his property. *C'est un monstre; et enfin* what is Lebyadkin? Lise listens, and listens, ooh, how she listens! I forgave her laughing. I saw her face as she listened, and *ce Maurice* ... I shouldn't care to be in his shoes now, *brave homme tout de meme,* but rather shy; but never mind him. . . .”

He paused. He was tired and upset, and sat with drooping head, staring at the floor with his tired eyes. I took advantage of the interval to tell him of my visit to Filipov's house, and curtly and dryly expressed my opinion that Lebyadkin's sister (whom I had never seen) really might have been somehow Victimised by Nicolas at some time during that mysterious period of his life, as Liputin had called it, and that it was very possible that Lebyadkin received sums of money from Nicolas for some reason, but that was all. As for the scandal about Darya Pavlovna, that was all nonsense, all that brute Liputin's misrepresentations, that this was anyway what Alexey Nilitch warmly maintained, and we had no grounds for disbelieving him. Stepan Trofimovitch listened to my assurances with an absent air, as though they did not concern him. I mentioned by the way my conversation with Kirillov, and added that

he might be mad.

"He's not mad, but one of those shallow-minded people," he mumbled listlessly. "*Ces gens-il supposent la nature et la societe humaine autres que Dieu ne les a faites et qu'elles ne sont reellement.* People try to make up to them, but Stepan Verhovensky does not, anyway. I saw them that time in Petersburg *avec cette chere amie* (oh, how I used to wound her then), and I wasn't afraid of their abuse or even of their praise. I'm not afraid now either. *Mais parlous d'autre chose.* ... I believe I have done dreadful things. Only fancy, I sent a letter yesterday to Darya Pavlovna and . . . how I curse myself for it!"

"What did you write about?"

"Oh, my friend, believe me, it was all done in' a noble spirit. I let her know that I had written to Nicolas five days before, also in a noble spirit."

"I understand now!" I cried with heat. "And what right had you to couple their names like that?"

"But, *mon cher,* don't crush me completely, don't shout at me; as it is I'm utterly squashed like ... a black-beetle. And, after all, I thought it was all so honourable. Suppose that something really happened . . . *en Suisse* ... or was beginning. I was bound to question their hearts beforehand that I . . *enfin,* that I might not constrain their hearts, and be a stumbling-block in their paths. I acted simply from honourable feeling."

"Oh, heavens! What a stupid thing you've done!" I cried involuntarily.

"Yes, yes," he assented with positive eagerness. "You have never said anything more just, *c'etait bete, mais que faire? Tout est dit.* I shall marry her just the same even if it be to cover 'another's sins.' So there was no object in writing, was there?"

"You're at that idea again!"

"Oh, you won't frighten me with your shouts now. You see a different Stepan Verhovensky before you now. The man I was is buried. *Enfin, tout est dit.* And why do you cry out? Simply because you're not getting married, and you won't have to wear a certain decoration on your head. Does that shock you again? My poor friend, you don't know woman, while I have done nothing but study her. 'If you want to conquer the world, conquer yourself — the one good thing that another romantic like you, my bride's brother, Shatov, has succeeded in saying. I would gladly borrow from him his phrase. Well, here I am ready to conquer myself, and I'm getting married. And what am I conquering by way of the whole world? Oh, my friend, marriage is the moral death of every proud soul, of all independence. Married life will corrupt me, it will sap my energy, my courage in the service of the cause. Children will come, probably not my own either — certainly not my own: a wise man is not afraid to face the truth. Liputin proposed this morning putting up

barricades to keep out Nicolas; Liputin's a fool. A woman would deceive the all-seeing eye itself. *Le bon Dieu* knew what He was in for when He was creating woman, but I'm sure that she meddled in it herself and forced Him to create her such as she is ... and with such attributes: for who would have incurred so much trouble for nothing? I know Nastasya may be angry with me for free-thinking, but . . . *enfin, taut est dit.* "

He wouldn't have been himself if he could have dispensed with the cheap gibing free-thought which was in vogue in his day. Now, at any rate, he comforted himself with a gibe, but not for long.

"Oh, if that day after to-morrow, that Sunday, might never come!" he exclaimed suddenly, this time in utter despair. "Why could not this one week be without a Sunday — *si le miracle exists?* What would it be to Providence to blot out one Sunday from the calendar? If only to prove His power to the atheists *et que tout soit dit!* Oh, how I loved her! Twenty years, these twenty years, and she has never understood me!"

"But of whom are you talking? Even I don't understand you!" I asked, wondering.

"*Vingt ans!* And she has not once understood me; oh, it's cruel! And can she really believe that I am marrying from fear, from poverty? Oh, the shame of it! Oh, Auntie, Auntie, I do it for you! . . . Oh, let her know, that Auntie, that she is the one woman I have adored for twenty years! She must learn this, it must be

so, if not they will need force to drag me under *ce qu'on appelle le* wedding-crown."

It was the first time I had heard this confession, and so vigorously uttered. I won't conceal the fact that I was terribly tempted to laugh. I was wrong.

"He is the only one left me now, the only one, my one hope!" he cried suddenly, clasping his hands as though struck by a new idea. "Only he, my poor boy, can save me now, and, oh, why doesn't he come! Oh, my son, oh, my Petrusha. . . . And though I do not deserve the name of father, but rather that of tiger, yet . . . *Laissez-moi, mon ami,* I'll lie down a little, to collect my ideas. I am so tired, so tired. And I think it's time you were in bed. *Voyez vous,* it's twelve o'clock. . . ."

Chapter IV.
The Cripple

I

SHATOV WAS NOT PERVERSE but acted on my note, and called at midday on Lizaveta Nikolaevna. We went in almost together; I was also going to make my first call. They were all, that is Liza, her mother, and Mavriky Nikolaevitch, sitting in the big drawing-room, arguing. The mother was asking Liza to

play some waltz on the piano, and as soon as Liza began to play the piece asked for, declared it was not the right one. Mavriky Nikolaevitch in the simplicity of his heart took Liza's part, maintaining that it was the right waltz. The elder lady was so angry that she began to cry. She was ill and walked with difficulty. Her legs were swollen, and for the last few days she had been continually fractious, quarrelling with every one, though she always stood rather in awe of Liza. They were pleased to see us. Liza flushed with pleasure, and saying "*merci* " to me, on Shatov's account of course, went to meet him, looking at him with interest.

Shatov stopped awkwardly in the doorway. Thanking him for coming she led him up to her mother.

"This is Mr. Shatov, of whom I have told you, and this is Mr. G—— v, a great friend of mine and of Stepan Trofimovitch's. Mavriky Nikolaevitch made his acquaintance yesterday, too."

"And which is the professor?"

"There's no professor at all, maman."

"But there is. You said yourself that there'd be a professor. It's this one, probably." She disdainfully indicated Shatov.

"I didn't tell you that there'd be a professor. Mr. G—— v is in the service, and Mr. Shatov is a former student."

"A student or professor, they all come from the university just the same. You only want to argue. But

the Swiss one had moustaches and a beard."

"It's the son of Stepan Trofimovitch that maman always calls the professor," said Liza, and she took Shatov away to the sofa at the other end of the drawing-room.

"When her legs swell, she's always like this, you understand she's ill," she whispered to Shatov, still with the same marked curiosity, scrutinising him, especially his shock of hair.

"Are you an officer?" the old lady inquired of me. Liza had mercilessly abandoned me to her.

"N-no.— I'm in the service. . . ."

"Mr. G—— v is a great friend of Stepan Trofimovitch's," Liza chimed in immediately.

"Are you in Stepan Trofimovitch's service? Yes, and he's a professor, too, isn't he?"

"Ah, maman, you must dream at night of professors," cried Liza with annoyance.

"I see too many when I'm awake. But you always will contradict your mother. Were you here four years ago when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was in the neighbourhood?"

I answered that I was.

"And there was some Englishman with you?"

"No, there was not."

Liza laughed.

"Well, you see there was no Englishman, so it must have been idle gossip. And Varvara Petrovna and

Stepan Trofimovitch both tell lies. And they all tell lies."

"Auntie and Stepan Trofimovitch yesterday thought there was a resemblance between Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and Prince Harry in Shakespeare's *Henry IV,* and in answer to that maman says that there was no Englishman here," Liza explained to us.

"If Harry wasn't here, there was no Englishman. It was no one else but Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at his tricks."

"I assure you that maman's doing it on purpose," Liza thought necessary to explain to Shatov. "She's really heard of Shakespeare. I read her the first act of *Othello* myself. But she's in great pain now. Maman, listen, it's striking twelve, it's time you took your medicine."

"The doctor's come," a maid-servant announced at the door.

The old lady got up and began calling her dog: "Zemirka, Zemirka, you come with me at least."

Zemirka, a horrid little old dog, instead of obeying, crept under the sofa where Liza was sitting.

"Don't you want to? Then I don't want you. Good-bye, my good sir, I don't know your name or your father's," she said, addressing me.

"Anton Lavrentyevitch . . ."

"Well, it doesn't matter, with me it goes in at one ear and out of the other. Don't you come with me,

Mavriky Nikolaevitch, it was Zemirka I called. Thank God I can still walk without help and to-morrow I shall go for a drive."

She walked angrily out of the drawing-room.

"Anton Lavrentyevitch, will you talk meanwhile to Mavriky Nikolaevitch; I assure you you'll both be gainers by getting to know one another better," said Liza, and she gave a friendly smile to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who beamed all over as she looked at him. There was no help for it, I remained to talk to Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

II

Lizaveta Nikolaevna's business with Shatov turned out, to my surprise, to be really only concerned with literature. I had imagined, I don't know why, that she had asked him to come with some other object. We, Mavriky Nikolaevitch and I that is, seeing that they were talking aloud and not trying to hide anything from us, began to listen, and at last they asked our advice. It turned out that Lizaveta Nikolaevna was thinking of bringing out a book which she thought would be of use, but being quite inexperienced she needed some one to help her. The earnestness with which she began to explain her plan to Shatov quite surprised me.

"She must be one of the new people," I thought. "She has not been to Switzerland for nothing."

Shatov listened with attention, his eyes fixed on the ground, showing not the slightest surprise that a giddy young lady in society should take up work that seemed so out of keeping with her.

Her literary scheme was as follows. Numbers of papers and journals are published in the capitals and the provinces of Russia, and every day a number of events are reported in them. The year passes, the newspapers are everywhere folded up and put away in cupboards, or are torn up and become litter, or are used for making parcels or wrapping things. Numbers of these facts make an impression and are remembered by the public, but in the course of years they are forgotten. Many people would like to look them up, but it is a labour for them to embark upon this sea of paper, often knowing nothing of the day or place or even year in which the incident occurred. Yet if all the facts for a whole year were brought together into one book, on a definite plan, and with a definite object, under headings with references, arranged according to months and days, such a compilation might reflect the characteristics of Russian life for the whole year, even though the facts published are only a small fraction of the events that take place.

"Instead of a number of newspapers there would be a few fat books, that's all," observed Shatov.

But Lizaveta Nikolaevna clung to her idea, in spite of the difficulty of carrying it out and her inability

to describe it. “It ought to be one book, and not even a very thick one,” she maintained. But even if it were thick it would be clear, for the great point would be the plan and the character of the presentation of facts. Of course not all would be collected and reprinted. . The decrees and acts of government, local regulations, laws — all such facts, however important, might be altogether omitted from the proposed publication. They could leave out a great deal and confine themselves to a selection of events more or less characteristic of the moral life of the people, of the personal character of the Russian people at the present moment. Of course everything might be put in: strange incidents, fires, public subscriptions, anything good or bad, every speech or word, perhaps even floodings of the rivers, perhaps even some government decrees, but only such things to be selected as are characteristic of the period; everything would be put in with a certain view, a special significance and intention, with an idea which would illuminate the facts looked at in the aggregate, as a whole. And finally the book ought to be interesting even for light reading, apart from its value as a work of reference. It would be, so to say, a presentation of the spiritual, moral, inner life of Russia for a whole year.

“We want every one to buy it, we want it to be a book that will be found on every table,” Liza declared. “I understand that all lies in the plan, and that's why I apply to you,” she concluded. She grew very warm

over it, and although her explanation was obscure and incomplete, Shatov began to understand.

"So it would amount to something with a political tendency, a selection of facts with a special tendency," he muttered, still not raising his head.

"Not at all, we must not select with a particular bias, and we ought not to have any political tendency in it. Nothing but impartiality — that will be the only tendency."

"But a tendency would be no harm," said Shatov, with a slight movement, "and one can hardly avoid it if there is any selection at all. The very selection of facts will suggest how they are to be understood. Your idea is not a bad one."

"Then such a book is possible?" cried Liza delightedly.

"We must look into it and consider. It's an immense undertaking. One can't work it out on the spur of the moment. We need experience. And when we do publish the book I doubt whether we shall find out how to do it. Possibly after many trials; but the thought is alluring. It's a useful idea."

He raised his eyes at last, and they were positively sparkling with pleasure, he was so interested.

"Was it your own idea?" he asked Liza, in a friendly and, as it were, bashful way.

"The idea's no trouble, you know, it's the plan is the trouble," Liza smiled. "I understand very little. I am

not very clever, and I only pursue what is clear to me, myself. . . ."

"Pursue?"

"Perhaps that's not the right word?" Liza inquired quickly.

"The word is all right; I meant nothing."

"I thought while I was abroad that even I might be of some use. I have money of my own lying idle. Why shouldn't I— even I— work for the common cause? Besides, the idea somehow occurred to me all at once of itself. I didn't invent it at all, and was delighted with it. But I saw at once that I couldn't get on without some one to help, because I am not competent to do anything of myself. My helper, of course, would be the co-editor of the book. We would go halves. You would give the plan and the work. Mine would be the original idea and the means for publishing it. Would the book pay its expenses, do you think?"

"If we hit on a good plan the book will go."

"I warn you that I am not doing it for profit; but I am very anxious that the book should circulate and should be very proud of making a profit."

"Well, but how do I come in?"

"Why, I invite you to be my fellow-worker, to go halves. You will think out the plan."

"How do you know that I am capable of thinking out the plan?"

"People have talked about you to me, and here

I've heard

... I know that you are very clever and . . . are working for the cause . . . and think a great deal. Pyotr Stepanovitch Verhovensky spoke about you in Switzerland," she added hurriedly. "He's a very clever man, isn't he?"

Shatov stole a fleeting, momentary glance at her, but dropped his eyes again.

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch told me a great deal about you, too."

Shatov suddenly turned red.

"But here are the newspapers." Liza hurriedly picked up from a chair a bundle of newspapers that lay tied up ready. "I've tried to mark the facts here for selection, to sort them, and I have put the papers together . . . you will see."

Shatov took the bundle.

"Take them home and look at them. Where do you live?"

"In Bogoyavlensky Street, Filipov's house."

"I know. I think it's there, too, I've been told, a captain lives, beside you, Mr. Lebyadkin," said Liza in the same hurried manner.

Shatov sat for a full minute with the bundle in his outstretched hand, making no answer and staring at the floor.

"You'd better find some one else for these jobs. I shouldn't suit you at all," he brought out at last,

dropping his voice in an awfully strange way, almost to a whisper.

Liza flushed crimson.

"What jobs are you speaking of? Mavriky Nikolaevitch," she cried, "please bring that letter here."

I too followed Mavriky Nikolaevitch to the table, "Look at this," she turned suddenly to me, unfolding the letter in great excitement. "Have you ever seen anything like it. Please read it aloud. I want Mr. Shatov to hear it too."

With no little astonishment I read aloud the following missive:

"To the.
Perfection, Miss Tushin.
"Gracious Lady
"Lizaveta Nikolaevna!

"Oh, she's a sweet
queen, Lizaveta Tushin!
When on side-saddle
she gallops by,
And in the breeze her
fair tresses fly!
Or when with her
mother in church she bows
low
And on devout faces a

red flush doth flow!
Then for the joys of
lawful wedlock I aspire,
And follow her and
her mother with tears of
desire.

"Composed by an unlearned man in the midst of a discussion.

"Gracious Lady!

"I pity myself above all men that I did not lose my arm at Sevastopol, not having been there at all, but served all the campaign delivering paltry provisions, which I look on as a degradation. You are a goddess of antiquity, and I am nothing, but have had a glimpse of infinity. Look on it as a poem and no more, for, after all, poetry is nonsense and justifies what would be considered impudence in prose. Can the sun be angry with the infusoria if the latter composes verses to her from the drop of water, where there is a multitude of them if you look through the microscope? Even the club for promoting humanity to the larger animals in tip-top society in Petersburg, winch rightly feels compassion for dogs and horses, despises the brief infusoria

making no reference to it whatever, because it is not big enough. I'm not big enough either. The idea of marriage might seem droll, but soon I shall have property worth two hundred souls through a misanthropist whom you ought to despise. I can tell a lot and I can undertake to produce documents that would mean Siberia. Don't despise my proposal. A letter from an infusoria is of course in verse.

"Captain Lebyadkin your most humble friend
And he has time no end."

"That was written by a man in a drunken condition, a worthless fellow," I cried indignantly. "I know him."

"That letter I received yesterday," Liza began to explain, flushing and speaking hurriedly. "I saw myself, at once, that it came from some foolish creature, and I haven't yet shown it to maman, for fear of upsetting her more. But if he is going to keep on like that, I don't know how to act. Mavriky Nikolaevitch wants to go out and forbid him to do it. As I have looked upon you as a colleague," she turned to Shatov, "and as you live there, I wanted to question you so as to judge what more is to be expected of him."

"He's a drunkard and a worthless fellow," Shatov

muttered with apparent reluctance.

"Is he always so stupid?"

"No, he's not stupid at all when he's not drunk."

"I used to know a general who wrote verses exactly like that," I observed, laughing.

"One can see from the letter that he is clever enough for his own purposes," Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had till then been silent, put in unexpectedly.

"He lives with some sister?" Liza queried.

"Yes, with his sister."

"They say he tyrannises over her, is that true?"

Shatov looked at Liza again, scowled, and muttering, "What business is it of mine?" moved towards the door.

"Ah, stay!" cried Liza, in a flutter. "Where are you going? We have so much still to talk over. . . ."

"What is there to talk over? I'll let you know to-morrow."

"Why, the most important thing of all — the printing-press! Do believe me that I am not in jest, that I really want to work in good earnest!" Liza assured him in growing agitation. "If we decide to publish it, where is it to be printed? You know it's a most important question, for we shan't go to Moscow for it, and the printing-press here is out of the question for such a publication. I made up my mind long ago to set up a printing-press of my own, in your name perhaps — and I know maman will allow it so long as it is in

your name. . . .”

“How do you know that I could be a printer?” Shatov asked sullenly.

“Why, Pyotr Stepanovitch told me of you in Switzerland, and referred me to you as one who knows the business and able to set up a printing-press. He even meant to give me a note to you from himself, but I forgot it.”

Shatov's face changed, as I recollect now. He stood for a few seconds longer, then went out of the room.

Liza was angry.

“Does he always go out like that?” she asked, turning to me.

I was just shrugging my shoulders when Shatov suddenly came back, went straight up to the table and put down the roll of papers he had taken.

“I'm not going to be your helper, I haven't the time. . . .”

“Why? Why? I think you are angry!” Liza asked him in a grieved and imploring voice.

The sound of her voice seemed to strike him; for some moments he looked at her intently, as though trying to penetrate to her very soul.

“No matter,” he muttered, softly, “I don't want to. . . .”

And he went away altogether.

Liza was completely overwhelmed, quite

disproportionately in fact, so it seemed to me.

"Wonderfully queer man," Mavriky Nikolaevitch observed aloud.

III

He certainly was queer, but in all this there was a very great deal not clear to me. There was something underlying it all? I simply did not believe in this publication; then that stupid letter, in which there was an offer, only too barefaced, to give information and produce "documents," though they were all silent about that, and talked of something quite different; finally that printing-press and Shatov's sudden exit, just because they spoke of a printing-press. All this led me to imagine that something had happened before I came in of which I knew nothing; and, consequently, that it was no business of mine and that I was in the way. And, indeed, it was time to take leave, I had stayed long enough for the first call. I went up to say good-bye to Lizaveta Nikolaevna.

She seemed to have forgotten that I was in the room, and was still standing in the same place by the table with her head bowed, plunged in thought, gazing fixedly at one spot on the carpet.

"Ah, you, too, are going, good-bye," she murmured in an ordinary friendly tone. "Give my greetings to Stepan Trofimovitch, and persuade him to

come and see me as soon as he can. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, Anton Lavrentyevitch is going. Excuse maman's not being able to come out and say good-bye to you. ...”

I went out and had reached the bottom of the stairs when a footman suddenly overtook me at the street door.

“My lady begs you to come back. . . .”

“The mistress, or Lizaveta Nikolaevna?”

“The young lady.”

I found Liza not in the big room where we had been sitting, but in the reception-room next to it. The door between it and the drawing-room, where Mavriky Nikolaevitch was left alone, was closed.

Liza smiled to me but was pale. She was standing in the middle of the room in evident indecision, visibly struggling with herself; but she suddenly took me by the hand, and led me quickly to the window.

“I want to see *her* at once,” she whispered, bending upon me a burning, passionate, impatient glance, which would not admit a hint of opposition. " I must see her with my own eyes, and I beg you to help me.”

She was in a perfect frenzy, and — in despair.

“Who is it you want to see, Lizaveta Nikolaevna?” I inquired in dismay.

“That Lebyadkin's sister, that lame girl. ... Is it true that she's lame?”

I was astounded.

"I have never seen her, but I've heard that she's lame. I heard it yesterday," I said with hurried readiness, and also in a whisper.

"I must see her, absolutely. Could you arrange it to-day?"

I felt dreadfully sorry for her.

"That's utterly impossible, and, besides, I should not know at all how to set about it," I began persuading her. "I'll go to Shatov. . . ."

"If you don't arrange it by to-morrow I'll go to her by myself, alone, for Mavriky Nikolaevitch has refused. I rest all my hopes on you and I've no one else; I spoke stupidly to Shatov. . . . I'm sure that you are perfectly honest and perhaps ready to do anything for me, only arrange it."

I felt a passionate desire to help her in every way.

"This is what I'll do," I said, after a moment's thought. "I'll go myself to-day and will see her for sure, *for sure. I* will manage so as to see her. I give you my word of honour. Only let me confide in Shatov."

"Tell him that I do desire it, and that I can't wait any longer, but that I wasn't deceiving him just now. He went away perhaps because he's very honest and he didn't like my seeming to deceive him. I wasn't deceiving him, I really do want to edit books and found a printing-press. . . ."

"He is honest, very honest," I assented warmly.

"If it's not arranged by to-morrow, though, I shall go myself whatever happens, and even if every one were to know."

"I can't be with you before three o'clock to-morrow," I observed, after a moment's deliberation.

"At three o'clock then. Then it was true what I imagined yesterday at Stepan Trofimovitch's, that you —-are rather devoted to me?" she said with a smile, hurriedly pressing my hand to say good-bye, and hurrying back to the forsaken Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

I went out weighed down by my promise, and unable to understand what had happened. I had seen a woman in real despair, not hesitating to compromise herself by confiding in a man she hardly knew. Her womanly smile at a moment so terrible for her and her hint that she had noticed my feelings the day before sent a pang to my heart; but I felt sorry for her, very sorry — that was all! Her secrets became at once something sacred for me, and if anyone had begun to reveal them to me now, I think I should have covered my ears, and should have refused to hear anything more. I only had a presentiment of something . . . yet I was utterly at a loss to see how I could do anything. What's more I did not even yet understand exactly what I had to arrange; an interview, but what sort of an interview? And how could I bring them together? My only hope was Shatov, though I could be sure that he wouldn't help me in any way. But all the same, I

hurried to him.

IV

I did not find him at home till past seven o'clock that evening. To my surprise he had visitors with him — Alexey Nilitch, and another gentleman I hardly knew, one Shigalov, the brother of Virginsky's wife.

This gentleman must, I think, have been staying about two months in the town; I don't know where he came from. I had only heard that he had written some sort of article in a progressive Petersburg magazine. Virginsky had introduced me casually to him in the street. I had never in my life seen in a man's face so much despondency, gloom, and moroseness. He looked as though he were expecting the destruction of the world, and not at some indefinite time in accordance with prophecies, which might never be fulfilled, but quite definitely, as though it were to be the day after to-morrow at twenty-five minutes past ten. We hardly said a word to one another on that occasion, but had simply shaken hands like two conspirators. I was most struck by his ears, which were of unnatural size, long, broad, and thick, sticking out in a peculiar way. His gestures were slow and awkward.

If Liputin had imagined that a phalanstery might be established in our province, this gentleman certainly knew the day and the hour when it would be founded.

He made a sinister impression on me. I was the more surprised at finding him here, as Shatov was not fond of visitors.

I could hear from the stairs that they were talking very loud, all three at once, and I fancy they were disputing; but as soon as I went in, they all ceased speaking. They were arguing, standing up, but now they all suddenly sat down, so that I had to sit down too. There was a stupid silence that was not broken for fully three minutes. Though Shigalov knew me, he affected not to know me, probably not from hostile feelings, but for no particular reason. Alexey Nilitch and I bowed to one another in silence, and for some reason did not shake hands. Shigalov began at last looking at me sternly and frowningly, with the most naive assurance that I should immediately get up and go away. At last Shatov got up from his chair and the others jumped up at once. They went out without saying good-bye. Shigalov only said in the doorway to Shatov, who was seeing him out:

"Remember that you are bound to give an explanation."

"Hang your explanation, and who the devil am I bound to?" said Shatov. He showed them out and fastened the door with the latch.

"Snipes!" he said, looking at me, with a sort of wry smile.

His face looked angry, and it seemed strange to

me that he spoke first. When I had been to see him before (which was not often) it had usually happened that he sat scowling in a corner, answered ill-humouredly and only completely thawed and began to talk with pleasure after a considerable time. Even so, when he was saying good-bye he always scowled, and let one out as though he were getting rid of a personal enemy.

"I had tea yesterday with that Alexey Nilitch," I observed. "I think he's mad on atheism."

"Russian atheism has never gone further than making a joke," growled Shatov, putting up a new candle in place of an end that had burnt out.

"No, this one doesn't seem to me a joker, I think he doesn't know how to talk, let alone trying to make jokes."

"Men made of paper! It all comes from flunkeyism of thought," Shatov observed calmly, sitting down on a chair in the corner, and pressing the palms of both hands on his knees.

"There's hatred in it, too," he went on, after a minute's pause. "They'd be the first to be terribly unhappy if Russia could be suddenly reformed, even to suit their own ideas, and became extraordinarily prosperous and happy. They'd have no one to hate then, no one to curse, nothing to find fault with. There is nothing in it but an immense animal hatred for Russia which has eaten into their organism. . . . And it isn't a

case of tears unseen by the world under cover of a smile! There has never been a falser word said in Russia than about those unseen tears," he cried, almost with fury.

"Goodness only knows what you're saying," I laughed.

"Oh, you're a 'moderate liberal,'" said Shatov, smiling too. "Do you know," he went on suddenly, "I may have been talking nonsense about the 'flunkeyism of thought.' You will say to me no doubt directly, 'it's you who are the son of a flunkey, but I'm not a flunkey.' "

"I wasn't dreaming of such a thing. . . . What are you saying!"

"You need not apologise. I'm not afraid of you. Once I was only the son of a flunkey, but now I've become a flunkey myself, like you. Our Russian liberal is a flunkey before everything, and is only looking for some one whose boots he can clean."

"What boots? What allegory is this?"

"Allegory, indeed! You are laughing, I see. . . . Stepan Trofimovitch said truly that I lie under a stone, crushed but not killed, and do nothing but wriggle. It was a good comparison of his."

"Stepan Trofimovitch declares that you are mad over the Germans," I laughed. "We've borrowed something from them anyway."

"We took twenty kopecks, but we gave up a

hundred roubles of our own."

We were silent a minute.

"He got that sore lying in America."

"Who? What sore?"

"I mean Kirillov. I spent four months with him lying on the floor of a hut."

"Why, have you been in America?" I asked, surprised. "You never told me about it."

"What is there to tell? The year before last we spent our last farthing, three of us, going to America in an emigrant steamer, to test the life of the American workman on ourselves, and to verify by *personal* experiment the state of a man in the hardest social conditions. That was our object in going there."

"Good Lord!" I laughed. "You'd much better have gone somewhere in our province at harvest-time if you wanted to 'make a personal experiment' instead of bolting to America."

"We hired ourselves out as workmen to an exploiter; there were six of us Russians working for him — students, even landowners coming from their estates, some officers, too, and all with the same grand object. Well, so we worked, sweated, wore ourselves out; Kirillov and I were exhausted at last; fell ill — went away — we couldn't stand it. Our employer cheated us when he paid us off; instead of thirty dollars, as he had agreed, he paid me eight and Kirillov fifteen; he beat us, too, more than once. So then we were left

without work, Kirillov and I, and we spent four months lying on the floor in that little town. He thought of one thing and I thought of another."

"You don't mean to say your employer beat you? In America? How you must have sworn at him!"

"Not a bit of it. On the contrary, Kirillov and I made up our minds from the first that we Russians were like little children beside the Americans, and that one must be born in America, or at least live for many years with Americans to be on a level with them. And do you know, if we were asked a dollar for a thing worth a farthing, we used to pay it with pleasure, in fact with enthusiasm. We approved of everything: spiritualism, lynch-law, revolvers, tramps. Once when we were travelling a fellow slipped his hand into my pocket, took my brush, and began brushing his hair with it. Kirillov and I only looked at one another, and made up our minds that that was the right thing and that we liked it very much. . . ."

"The strange thing is that with us all this is not only in the brain but is carried out in practice," I observed.

"Men made of paper," Shatov repeated.

"But to cross the ocean in an emigrant steamer, though, to go .to an unknown country, even to make a personal experiment and all that — by Jove . . . there really is a large-hearted staunchness about it. ... But how did you get out of it?"

“I wrote to a man in Europe and he sent me a hundred roubles.”

As Shatov talked he looked doggedly at the ground as he always did, even when he was excited. At this point he suddenly raised his head.

“Do you want to know the man's name?”

“Who was it?”

“Nikolay Stavrogin.”

He got up suddenly, turned to his limewood writing-table and began searching for something on it. There was a vague, though well-authenticated rumour among us that Shatov's wife had at one time had a liaison with Nikolay Stavrogin, in Paris, and just about two years ago, that is when Shatov was in America. It is true that this was long after his wife had left him in Geneva.

“If so, what possesses him now to bring his name forward and to lay stress on it?” I thought.

“I haven't paid him back yet,” he said, turning suddenly to me again, and looking at me intently he sat down in the same place as before in the corner, and asked abruptly, in quite a different voice:

“You have come no doubt with some object. What do you want?”

I told him everything immediately, in its exact historical order, and added that though I had time to think it over coolly after the first excitement was over, I was more puzzled than ever. I saw that it meant