

RUDIN

By Ivan Turgenev

*Translated from the
Russian By Constance
Garnett*

I

IT was a quiet summer morning. The sun stood already pretty high in the clear sky but the fields were still sparkling with dew; a fresh breeze blew fragrantly from the scarce awakened valleys and in the forest, still damp and hushed, the birds were merrily carolling their morning song. On the ridge of a swelling upland, which was covered from base to summit with blossoming rye, a little village was to be seen. Along a narrow by-road to this little village a young woman was walking in a white muslin gown, and a round straw hat, with a parasol in her hand. A page boy followed her some distance behind.

She moved without haste and as though she were enjoying the walk. The high nodding rye all round her moved in long softly rustling waves, taking here a shade of silvery green and there a ripple of red; the

larks were trilling overhead. The young woman had come from her own estate, which was not more than a mile from the village to which she was turning her steps. Her name was Alexandra Pavlovna Lipin. She was a widow, childless, and fairly well off, and lived with her brother, a retired cavalry officer, Sergei Pavlitch Volintsev. He was unmarried and looked after her property.

Alexandra Pavlovna reached the village and, stopping at the last hut, a very old and low one, she called up the boy and told him to go in and ask after the health of its mistress. He quickly came back accompanied by a decrepit old peasant with a white beard.

'Well, how is she?' asked Alexandra Pavlovna.

'Well, she is still alive,' began the old man.

'Can I go in?'

'Of course; yes.'

Alexandra Pavlovna went into the hut. It was narrow, stifling, and smoky inside. Some one stirred and began to moan on the stove which formed the bed. Alexandra Pavlovna looked round and discerned in the half darkness the yellow wrinkled face of the old woman tied up in a checked handkerchief. Covered to the very throat with a heavy overcoat she was breathing with difficulty, and her wasted hands were twitching.

Alexandra Pavlovna went close up to the old woman and laid her fingers on her forehead; it was

burning hot.

'How do you feel, Matrona?' she inquired, bending over the bed.

'Oh, oh!' groaned the old woman, trying to make her out, 'bad, very bad, my dear! My last hour has come, my darling!'

'God is merciful, Matrona; perhaps you will be better soon. Did you take the medicine I sent you?'

The old woman groaned painfully, and did not answer. She had hardly heard the question.

'She has taken it,' said the old man who was standing at the door.

Alexandra Pavlovna turned to him.

'Is there no one with her but you?' she inquired.

'There is the girl—her granddaughter, but she always keeps away. She won't sit with her; she's such a gad-about. To give the old woman a drink of water is too much trouble for her. And I am old; what use can I be?'

'Shouldn't she be taken to me—to the hospital?'

'No. Why take her to the hospital? She would die just the same. She has lived her life; it's God's will now seemingly. She will never get up again. How could she go to the hospital? If they tried to lift her up, she would die.'

'Oh!' moaned the sick woman, 'my pretty lady, don't abandon my little orphan; our master is far away, but you——'

She could not go on, she had spent all her strength in saying so much.

'Do not worry yourself,' replied Alexandra Pavlovna, 'everything shall be done. Here is some tea and sugar I have brought you. If you can fancy it you must drink some. Have you a samovar, I wonder?' she added, looking at the old man.

'A samovar? We haven't a samovar, but we could get one.'

'Then get one, or I will send you one. And tell your granddaughter not to leave her like this. Tell her it's shameful.'

The old man made no answer but took the parcel of tea and sugar with both hands.

'Well, good-bye, Matrona!' said Alexandra Pavlovna, 'I will come and see you again; and you must not lose heart but take your medicine regularly.'

The old woman raised her head and drew herself a little towards Alexandra Pavlovna.

'Give me your little hand, dear lady,' she muttered.

Alexandra Pavlovna did not give her hand; she bent over her and kissed her on the forehead.

'Take care, now,' she said to the old man as she went out, 'and give her the medicine without fail, as it is written down, and give her some tea to drink.'

Again the old man made no reply, but only bowed.

Alexandra Pavlovna breathed more freely when she came out into the fresh air. She put up her parasol and was about to start homewards, when suddenly there appeared round the corner of a little hut a man about thirty, driving a low racing droshky and wearing an old overcoat of grey linen, and a foraging cap of the same. Catching sight of Alexandra Pavlovna he at once stopped his horse and turned round towards her. His broad and colourless face with its small light grey eyes and almost white moustache seemed all in the same tone of colour as his clothes.

'Good-morning!' he began, with a lazy smile; 'what are you doing here, if I may ask?'

'I have been visiting a sick woman... And where have you come from, Mihailo Mihailitch?'

The man addressed as Mihailo Mihailitch looked into her eyes and smiled again.

'You do well,' he said, 'to visit the sick, but wouldn't it be better for you to take her into the hospital?'

'She is too weak; impossible to move her.'

'But don't you intend to give up your hospital?'

'Give it up? Why?'

'Oh, I thought so.'

'What a strange notion! What put such an idea into your head?'

'Oh, you are always with Madame Lasunsky now, you know, and seem to be under her influence. And in

her words—hospitals, schools, and all that sort of things, are mere waste of time—useless fads. Philanthropy ought to be entirely personal, and education too, all that is the soul's work... that's how she expresses herself, I believe. From whom did she pick up that opinion I should like to know?'

Alexandra Pavlovna laughed.

'Darya Mihailovna is a clever woman, I like and esteem her very much; but she may make mistakes, and I don't put faith in everything she says.'

'And it's a very good thing you don't,' rejoined Mihailo Mihailitch, who all the while remained sitting in his droshky, 'for she doesn't put much faith in what she says herself. I'm very glad I met you.'

'Why?'

'That's a nice question! As though it wasn't always delightful to meet you? To-day you look as bright and fresh as this morning.'

Alexandra Pavlovna laughed again.

'What are you laughing at?'

'What, indeed! If you could see with what a cold and indifferent face you brought out your compliment! I wonder you didn't yawn over the last word!'

'A cold face.... You always want fire; but fire is of no use at all. It flares and smokes and goes out.'

'And warms,'... put in Alexandra Pavlovna.

'Yes... and burns.'

'Well, what if it does burn! That's no great harm

either! It's better anyway than——'

'Well, we shall see what you will say when you do get nicely burnt one day,' Mihailo Mihailitch interrupted her in a tone of vexation and made a cut at the horse with the reins, 'Good-bye.'

'Mihailo Mihailitch, stop a minute!' cried Alexandra Pavlovna, 'when are you coming to see us?'

'To-morrow; my greetings to your brother.'

And the droshky rolled away.

Alexandra Pavlovna looked after Mihailo Mihailitch.

'What a sack!' she thought. Sitting huddled up and covered with dust, his cap on the back of his head and tufts of flaxen hair straggling from beneath it, he looked strikingly like a huge sack of flour.

Alexandra Pavlovna turned tranquilly back along the path homewards. She was walking with downcast eyes. The tramp of a horse near made her stop and raise her head.... Her brother had come on horseback to meet her; beside him was walking a young man of medium height, wearing a light open coat, a light tie, and a light grey hat, and carrying a cane in his hand. He had been smiling for a long time at Alexandra Pavlovna, even though he saw that she was absorbed in thought and noticing nothing, and when she stopped he went up to her and in a tone of delight, almost of emotion, cried:

'Good-morning, Alexandra Pavlovna, good-morning!'

'Ah! Konstantin Diomiditch! good-morning!' she replied. 'You have come from Darya Mihailovna?'

'Precisely so, precisely so,' rejoined the young man with a radiant face, 'from Darya Mihailovna. Darya Mihailovna sent me to you; I preferred to walk.... It's such a glorious morning, and the distance is only three miles. When I arrived, you were not at home. Your brother told me you had gone to Semenovka; and he was just going out to the fields; so you see I walked with him to meet you. Yes, yes. How very delightful!'

The young man spoke Russian accurately and grammatically but with a foreign accent, though it was difficult to determine exactly what accent it was. In his features there was something Asiatic. His long hook nose, his large expressionless prominent eyes, his thick red lips, and retreating forehead, and his jet black hair,—everything about him suggested an Oriental extraction; but the young man gave his surname as Pandalevsky and spoke of Odessa as his birthplace, though he was brought up somewhere in White Russia at the expense of a rich and benevolent widow.



Another widow had obtained a government post for him. Middle-aged ladies were generally ready to befriend Konstantin Diomiditch; he knew well how to court them and was successful in coming across them. He was at this very time living with a rich lady, a

landowner, Darya Mihailovna Lasunsky, in a position between that of a guest and of a dependant. He was very polite and obliging, full of sensibility and secretly given to sensuality, he had a pleasant voice, played well on the piano, and had the habit of gazing intently into the eyes of any one he was speaking to. He dressed very neatly, and wore his clothes a very long time, shaved his broad chin carefully, and arranged his hair curl by curl.

Alexandra Pavlovna heard his speech to the end and turned to her brother.

'I keep meeting people to-day; I have just been talking to Lezhnyov.'

'Oh, Lezhnyov! was he driving somewhere?'

'Yes, and fancy; he was in a racing droshky, and dressed in a kind of linen sack, all covered with dust.... What a queer creature he is!'

'Perhaps so; but he's a capital fellow.'

'Who? Mr. Lezhnyov?' inquired Pandalevsky, as though he were surprised.

'Yes, Mihailo Mihailitch Lezhnyov,' replied Volintsev. 'Well, good-bye; it's time I was off to the field; they are sowing your buckwheat. Mr. Pandalevsky will escort you home.' And Volintsev rode off at a trot.

'With the greatest of pleasure!' cried Konstantin Diomiditch, offering Alexandra Pavlovna his arm.

She took it and they both turned along the path to

her house.

Walking with Alexandra Pavlovna on his arm seemed to afford Konstantin Diomiditch great delight; he moved with little steps, smiling, and his Oriental eyes were even be-dimmed by a slight moisture, though this indeed was no rare occurrence with them; it did not mean much for Konstantin Diomiditch to be moved and dissolve into tears. And who would not have been pleased to have on his arm a pretty, young and graceful woman? Of Alexandra Pavlovna the whole of her district was unanimous in declaring that she was charming, and the district was not wrong. Her straight, ever so slightly tilted nose would have been enough alone to drive any man out of his senses, to say nothing of her velvety dark eyes, her golden brown hair, the dimples in her smoothly curved cheeks, and her other beauties. But best of all was the sweet expression of her face; confiding, good and gentle, it touched and attracted at the same time. Alexandra Pavlovna had the glance and the smile of a child; other ladies found her a little simple.... Could one wish for anything more?

'Darya Mihailovna sent you to me, did you say?' she asked Pandalevsky.

'Yes; she sent me,' he answered, pronouncing the letter *s* like the English *th*. 'She particularly wishes and told me to beg you very urgently to be so good as to dine with her to-day. She is expecting a new guest whom she particularly wishes you to meet.'

'Who is it?'

'A certain Muffel, a baron, a gentleman of the bed-chamber from Petersburg. Darya Mihailovna made his acquaintance lately at the Prince Garin's, and speaks of him in high terms as an agreeable and cultivated young man. His Excellency the baron is interested, too, in literature, or more strictly speaking——ah! what an exquisite butterfly! pray look at it!——more strictly speaking, in political economy. He has written an essay on some very interesting question, and wants to submit it to Darya Mihailovna's criticism.'

'An article on political economy?'

'From the literary point of view, Alexandra Pavlovna, from the literary point of view. You are well aware, I suppose, that in that line Darya Mihailovna is an authority. Zhukovsky used to ask her advice, and my benefactor, who lives at Odessa, that benevolent old man, Roxolan Mediarovitch Ksandrika——No doubt you know the name of that eminent man?'

'No; I have never heard of him.'

'You never heard of such a man? surprising! I was going to say that Roxolan Mediarovitch always had the very highest opinion of Darya Mihailovna's knowledge of Russian!

'Is this baron a pedant then?' asked Alexandra Pavlovna.

'Not in the very least. Darya Mihailovna says, on the contrary, that you see that he belongs to the best

society at once. He spoke of Beethoven with such eloquence that even the old prince was quite delighted by it. That, I own, I should like to have heard; you know that is in my line. Allow me to offer you this lovely wild-flower.'

Alexandra Pavlovna took the flower, and when she had walked a few steps farther, let it drop on the path. They were not more than two hundred paces from her house. It had been recently built and whitewashed, and looked out hospitably with its wide light windows from the thick foliage of the old limes and maples.

'So what message do you give me for Darya Mihailovna?' began Pandalevsky, slightly hurt at the fate of the flower he had given her. 'Will you come to dinner? She invites your brother too.'

'Yes; we will come, most certainly. And how is Natasha?'

'Natalya Alexyevna is well, I am glad to say. But we have already passed the road that turns off to Darya Mihailovna's. Allow me to bid you good-bye.'

Alexandra Pavlovna stopped. 'But won't you come in?' she said in a hesitating voice.

'I should like to, indeed, but I am afraid it is late. Darya Mihailovna wishes to hear a new etude of Thalberg's, so I must practise and have it ready. Besides, I am doubtful, I must confess, whether my visit could afford you any pleasure.'

'Oh, no! why?'

Pandalevsky sighed and dropped his eyes expressively.

'Good-bye, Alexandra Pavlovna!' he said after a slight pause; then he bowed and turned back.

Alexandra Pavlovna turned round and went home.

Konstantin Diomiditch, too, walked homewards. All softness had vanished at once from his face; a self-confident, almost hard expression came into it. Even his walk was changed; his steps were longer and he trod more heavily. He had walked about two miles, carelessly swinging his cane, when all at once he began to smile again: he saw by the roadside a young, rather pretty peasant girl, who was driving some calves out of an oat-field. Konstantin Diomiditch approached the girl as warily as a cat, and began to speak to her. She said nothing at first, only blushed and laughed, but at last she hid her face in her sleeve, turned away, and muttered:

'Go away, sir; upon my word...'

Konstantin Diomiditch shook his finger at her and told her to bring him some cornflowers.

'What do you want with cornflowers?—to make a wreath?' replied the girl; 'come now, go along then.'

'Stop a minute, my pretty little dear,' Konstantin Diomiditch was beginning.

'There now, go along,' the girl interrupted him, 'there are the young gentlemen coming.'

Konstantin Diomiditch looked round. There really were Vanya and Petya, Darya Mihailovna's sons, running along the road; after them walked their tutor, Bassistoff, a young man of two-and-twenty, who had only just left college. Bassistoff was a well-grown youth, with a simple face, a large nose, thick lips, and small pig's eyes, plain and awkward, but kind, good, and upright. He dressed untidily and wore his hair long—not from affectation, but from laziness; he liked eating and he liked sleeping, but he also liked a good book, and an earnest conversation, and he hated Pandalevsky from the depths of his soul.

Darya Mihailovna's children worshipped Bassistoff, and yet were not in the least afraid of him; he was on a friendly footing with all the rest of the household, a fact which was not altogether pleasing to its mistress, though she was fond of declaring that for her social prejudices did not exist.

'Good-morning, my dears,' began Konstantin Diomiditch, 'how early you have come for your walk to-day! But I,' he added, turning to Bassistoff, 'have been out a long while already; it's my passion—to enjoy nature.'

'We saw how you were enjoying nature,' muttered Bassistoff.

'You are a materialist, God knows what you are imagining! I know you.' When Pandalevsky spoke to Bassistoff or people like him, he grew slightly irritated,

and pronounced the letter *s* quite clearly, even with a slight hiss.

'Why, were you asking your way of that girl, am I to suppose?' said Bassistoff, shifting his eyes to right and to left.

He felt that Pandalevsky was looking him straight in the face, and this fact was exceedingly unpleasant to him. 'I repeat, a materialist and nothing more.'

'You certainly prefer to see only the prosaic side in everything.'

'Boys!' cried Bassistoff suddenly, 'do you see that willow at the corner? let's see who can get to it first. One! two! three! and away!'

The boys set off at full speed to the willow. Bassistoff rushed after them.

'What a lout!' thought Pandalevsky, 'he is spoiling those boys. A perfect peasant!'

And looking with satisfaction at his own neat and elegant figure, Konstantin Diomiditch struck his coat-sleeve twice with his open hand, pulled up his collar, and went on his way. When he had reached his own room, he put on an old dressing-gown and sat down with an anxious face to the piano.

II

Darya Mihailovna's house was regarded as almost the first in the whole province. It was a huge stone mansion, built after designs of Rastrelli in the taste of last century, and in a commanding position on the summit of a hill, at whose base flowed one of the principal rivers of central Russia. Darya Mihailovna herself was a wealthy and distinguished lady, the widow of a privy councillor. Pandalevsky said of her, that she knew all Europe and all Europe knew her! However, Europe knew her very little; even at Petersburg she had not played a very prominent part; but on the other hand at Moscow every one knew her and visited her. She belonged to the highest society, and was spoken of as a rather eccentric woman, not wholly good-natured, but excessively clever. In her youth she had been very pretty. Poets had written verses to her, young men had been in love with her, distinguished men had paid her homage. But twenty-five or thirty years had passed since those days and not a trace of her former charms remained. Every one who saw her now for the first time was impelled to ask himself, if this woman—skinny, sharp-nosed, and yellow-faced, though still not old in years—could once have been a beauty, if she was really the same woman who had been the inspiration of poets.... And every one

marvelled inwardly at the mutability of earthly things. It is true that Pandalevsky discovered that Darya Mihailovna had preserved her magnificent eyes in a marvellous way; but we have seen that Pandalevsky also maintained that all Europe knew her.

Darya Mihailovna went every summer to her country place with her children (she had three: a daughter of seventeen, Natalya, and two sons of nine and ten years old). She kept open house in the country, that is, she received men, especially unmarried ones; provincial ladies she could not endure. But what of the treatment she received from those ladies in return?

Darya Mihailovna, according to them, was a haughty, immoral, and insufferable tyrant, and above all—she permitted herself such liberties in conversation, it was shocking! Darya Mihailovna certainly did not care to stand on ceremony in the country, and in the unconstrained frankness of her manners there was perceptible a slight shade of the contempt of the lioness of the capital for the petty and obscure creatures who surrounded her. She had a careless, and even a sarcastic manner with her own set; but the shade of contempt was not there.

By the way, reader, have you observed that a person who is exceptionally nonchalant with his inferiors, is never nonchalant with persons of a higher rank? Why is that? But such questions lead to nothing.

When Konstantin Diomiditch, having at last

learnt by heart the *etude* of Thalberg, went down from his bright and cheerful room to the drawing-room, he already found the whole household assembled. The salon was already beginning. The lady of the house was reposing on a wide couch, her feet gathered up under her, and a new French pamphlet in her hand; at the window behind a tambour frame, sat on one side the daughter of Darya Mihailovna, on the other, Mlle. Boncourt, the governess, a dry old maiden lady of sixty, with a false front of black curls under a parti-coloured cap and cotton wool in her ears; in the corner near the door was huddled Bassistoff reading a paper, near him were Petya and Vanya playing draughts, and leaning by the stove, his hands clasped behind his back, was a gentleman of low stature, with a swarthy face covered with bristling grey hair, and fiery black eyes—a certain African Semenitch Pigasov.



This Pigasov was a strange person. Full of acerbity against everything and every one—especially against women—he was railing from morning to night, sometimes very aptly, sometimes rather stupidly, but always with gusto. His ill-humour almost approached

puerility; his laugh, the sound of his voice, his whole being seemed steeped in venom. Darya Mihailovna gave Pigasov a cordial reception; he amused her with his sallies. They were certainly absurd enough. He took delight in perpetual exaggeration. For example, if he were told of any disaster, that a village had been struck by lightning, or that a mill had been carried away by floods, or that a peasant had cut his hand with an axe, he invariably asked with concentrated bitterness, 'And what's her name?' meaning, what is the name of the woman responsible for this calamity, for according to his convictions, a woman was the cause of every misfortune, if you only looked deep enough into the matter. He once threw himself on his knees before a lady he hardly knew at all, who had been effusive in her hospitality to him and began tearfully, but with wrath written on his face, to entreat her to have compassion on him, saying that he had done her no harm and never would come to see her for the future. Once a horse had bolted with one of Darya Mihailovna's maids, thrown her into a ditch and almost killed her. From that time Pigasov never spoke of that horse except as the 'good, good horse,' and he even came to regard the hill and the ditch as specially picturesque spots. Pigasov had failed in life and had adopted this whimsical craze. He came of poor parents. His father had filled various petty posts, and could scarcely read and write, and did not trouble himself about his son's education; he fed and

clothed him and nothing more. His mother spoiled him, but she died early. Pigasov educated himself, sent himself to the district school and then to the gymnasium, taught himself French, German, and even Latin, and, leaving the gymnasiums with an excellent certificate, went to Dorpat, where he maintained a perpetual struggle with poverty, but succeeded in completing his three years' course. Pigasov's abilities did not rise above the level of mediocrity; patience and perseverance were his strong points, but the most powerful sentiment in him was ambition, the desire to get into good society, not to be inferior to others in spite of fortune. He had studied diligently and gone to the Dorpat University from ambition. Poverty exasperated him, and made him watchful and cunning. He expressed himself with originality; from his youth he had adopted a special kind of stinging and exasperated eloquence. His ideas did not rise above the common level; but his way of speaking made him seem not only a clever, but even a very clever, man. Having taken his degree as candidate, Pigasov decided to devote himself to the scholastic profession; he understood that in any other career he could not possibly be the equal of his associates. He tried to select them from a higher rank and knew how to gain their good graces; even by flattery, though he was always abusing them. But to do this he had not, to speak plainly, enough raw material. Having educated

himself through no love for study, Pigasov knew very little thoroughly. He broke down miserably in the public disputation, while another student who had shared the same room with him, and who was constantly the subject of his ridicule, a man of very limited ability who had received a careful and solid education, gained a complete triumph. Pigasov was infuriated by this failure, he threw all his books and manuscripts into the fire and went into a government office. At first he did not get on badly, he made a fair official, not very active, extremely self-confident and bold, however; but he wanted to make his way more quickly, he made a false step, got into trouble, and was obliged to retire from the service. He spent three years on the property he had bought himself and suddenly married a wealthy half-educated woman who was captivated by his unceremonious and sarcastic manners. But Pigasov's character had become so soured and irritable that family life was unendurable to him. After living with him a few years, his wife went off secretly to Moscow and sold her estate to an enterprising speculator; Pigasov had only just finished building a house on it. Utterly crushed by this last blow, Pigasov began a lawsuit with his wife, but gained nothing by it. After this he lived in solitude, and went to see his neighbours, whom he abused behind their backs and even to their faces, and who welcomed him with a kind of constrained half-laugh, though he did not inspire

them with any serious dread. He never took a book in his hand. He had about a hundred serfs; his peasants were not badly off.

'Ah! *Constantin*,' said Darya Mihailovna, when Pandalevsky came into the drawing-room, 'is *Alexandrine* coming?'

'Alexandra Pavlovna asked me to thank you, and they will be extremely delighted,' replied Konstantin Diomiditch, bowing affably in all directions, and running his plump white hand with its triangular cut nails through his faultlessly arranged hair.

'And is Volintsev coming too?'

'Yes.'

'So, according to you, African Semenitch,' continued Darya Mihailovna, turning to Pigasov, 'all young ladies are affected?'

Pigasov's mouth twitched, and he plucked nervously at his elbow.

'I say,' he began in a measured voice—in his most violent moods of exasperation he always spoke slowly and precisely. 'I say that young ladies, in general—of present company, of course, I say nothing.'

'But that does not prevent your thinking of them,' put in Darya Mihailovna.

'I say nothing of them,' repeated Pigasov. 'All young ladies, in general, are affected to the most extreme point—affected in the expression of their feelings. If a young lady is frightened, for instance, or

pleased with anything, or distressed, she is certain first to throw her person into some such elegant attitude (and Pigasov threw his figure into an unbecoming pose and spread out his hands) and then she shrieks—ah! or she laughs or cries. I did once though (and here Pigasov smiled complacently) succeed in eliciting a genuine, unaffected expression of emotion from a remarkably affected young lady!

'How did you do that?'

Pigasov's eyes sparkled.

'I poked her in the side with an aspen stake, from behind. She did shriek, and I said to her, "Bravo, bravo! that's the voice of nature, that was a genuine shriek! Always do like that for the future!"'

Every one in the room laughed.

'What nonsense you talk, African Semenitch,' cried Darya Mihailovna. 'Am I to believe that you would poke a girl in the side with a stake!'

'Yes, indeed, with a stake, a very big stake, like those that are used in the defence of a fort.'

'*Mais c'est un horreur ce que vous dites la, Monsieur*,' cried Mlle. Boncourt, looking angrily at the boys, who were in fits of laughter.

'Oh, you mustn't believe him,' said Darya Mihailovna. 'Don't you know him?'

But the offended French lady could not be pacified for a long while, and kept muttering something to herself.

'You need not believe me,' continued Pigasov coolly, 'but I assure you I told the simple truth. Who should know if not I? After that perhaps you won't believe that our neighbour, Madame Tchepuz, Elena Antonovna, told me herself, mind *herself*, that she had murdered her nephew?'

'What an invention!'

'Wait a minute, wait a minute! Listen and judge for yourselves. Mind, I don't want to slander her, I even like her as far as one can like a woman. She hasn't a single book in her house except a calendar, and she can't read except aloud, and that exercise throws her into a violent perspiration, and she complains then that her eyes feel bursting out of her head.... In short, she's a capital woman, and her servant girls grow fat. Why should I slander her?'

'You see,' observed Darya Mihailovna, 'African Semenitch has got on his hobbyhorse, now he will not be off it to-night.'

'My hobby! But women have three at least, which they are never off, except, perhaps, when they're asleep.'

'What three hobbies are those?'

'Reproof, reproach, recrimination.'

'Do you know, African Semenitch,' began Darya Mihailovna, 'you cannot be so bitter against women for nothing. Some woman or other must have——'

'Done me an injury, you mean?' Pigasov

interrupted.

Darya Mihailovna was rather embarrassed; she remembered Pigasov's unlucky marriage, and only nodded.

'One woman certainly did me an injury,' said Pigasov, 'though she was a good, very good one.'

'Who was that?'

'My mother,' said Pigasov, dropping his voice.

'Your mother? What injury could she have done you?'

'She brought me into the world.'

Darya Mihailovna frowned.

'Our conversation,' she said, 'seems to have taken a gloomy turn. *Constantin*, play us Thalberg's new *etude*. I daresay the music will soothe African Semenitch. Orpheus soothed savage beasts.'

Konstantin Diomiditch took his seat at the piano, and played the *etude* very fairly well. Natalya Alexyevna at first listened attentively, then she bent over her work again.

'*Merci, c'est charmant*,' observed Darya Mihailovna, 'I love Thalberg. *Il est si distingue*. What are you thinking of, African Semenitch?'

'I thought,' began African Semenitch slowly, 'that there are three kinds of egoists; the egoists who live themselves and let others live; the egoists who live themselves and don't let others live; and the egoists who don't live themselves and don't let others live.'

Women, for the most part, belong to the third class.'

'That's polite! I am very much astonished at one thing, African Semenitch; your confidence in your convictions; of course you can never be mistaken.'

'Who says so? I make mistakes; a man, too, may be mistaken. But do you know the difference between a man's mistakes and a woman's? Don't you know? Well, here it is; a man may say, for example, that twice two makes not four, but five, or three and a half; but a woman will say that twice two makes a wax candle.'

'I fancy I've heard you say that before. But allow me to ask what connection had your idea of the three kinds of egoists with the music you have just been hearing?'

'None at all, but I did not listen to the music.'

'Well, "incurable I see you are, and that is all about it,"' answered Darya Mihailovna, slightly altering Griboyedov's line. 'What do you like, since you don't care for music? Literature?'

'I like literature, only not our contemporary literature.'

'Why?'

'I'll tell you why. I crossed the Oka lately in a ferry boat with a gentleman. The ferry got fixed in a narrow place; they had to drag the carriages ashore by hand. This gentleman had a very heavy coach. While the ferrymen were straining themselves to drag the coach on to the bank, the gentleman groaned so,

standing in the ferry, that one felt quite sorry for him.... Well, I thought, here's a fresh illustration of the system of division of labour! That's just like our modern literature; other people do the work, and it does the groaning.'

Darya Mihailovna smiled.

'And that is called expressing contemporary life,' continued Pigasov indefatigably, 'profound sympathy with the social question and so on. ... Oh, how I hate those grand words!'

'Well, the women you attack so—they at least don't use grand words.'

Pigasov shrugged his shoulders.

'They don't use them because they don't understand them.'

Darya Mihailovna flushed slightly.

'You are beginning to be impertinent, African Semenitch!' she remarked with a forced smile.

There was complete stillness in the room.

'Where is Zolotonosha?' asked one of the boys suddenly of Bassistoff.

'In the province of Poltava, my dear boy,' replied Pigasov, 'in the centre of Little Russia.' (He was glad of an opportunity of changing the conversation.) 'We were talking of literature,' he continued, 'if I had money to spare, I would at once become a Little Russian poet.'

'What next? a fine poet you would make!' retorted Darya Mihailovna. 'Do you know Little Russian?'

'Not a bit; but it isn't necessary.'

'Not necessary?'

'Oh no, it's not necessary. You need only take a sheet of paper and write at the top "A Ballad," then begin like this, "Heigho, alack, my destiny!" or "the Cossack Nalivaiko was sitting on a hill and then on the mountain, under the green tree the birds are singing, grae, voropae, gop, gop!" or something of that kind. And the thing's done. Print it and publish it. The Little Russian will read it, drop his head into his hands and infallibly burst into tears—he is such a sensitive soul!'

'Good heavens!' cried Bassistoff. 'What are you saying? It's too absurd for anything. I have lived in Little Russia, I love it and know the language... "grae, grae, voropae" is absolute nonsense.'

'It may be, but the Little Russian will weep all the same. You speak of the "language."... But is there a Little Russian language? Is it a language, in your opinion? an independent language? I would pound my best friend in a mortar before I'd agree to that.'

Bassistoff was about to retort.

'Leave him alone!' said Darya Mihailovna, 'you know that you will hear nothing but paradoxes from him.'

Pigasov smiled ironically. A footman came in and announced the arrival of Alexandra Pavlovna and her brother.

Darya Mihailovna rose to meet her guests.

'How do you do, Alexandrine?' she began, going up to her, 'how good of you to come!... How are you, Sergei Pavlitch?'

Volintsev shook hands with Darya Mihailovna and went up to Natalya Alexyevna.

'But how about that baron, your new acquaintance, is he coming to-day?' asked Pigasov.

'Yes, he is coming.'

'He is a great philosopher, they say; he is just brimming over with Hegel, I suppose?'

Darya Mihailovna made no reply, and making Alexandra Pavlovna sit down on the sofa, established herself near her.

'Philosophies,' continued Pigasov, 'are elevated points of view! That's another abomination of mine; these elevated points of view. And what can one see from above? Upon my soul, if you want to buy a horse, you don't look at it from a steeple!'

'This baron was going to bring you an essay?' said Alexandra Pavlovna.

'Yes, an essay,' replied Darya Mihailovna, with exaggerated carelessness, 'on the relation of commerce to manufactures in Russia. ... But don't be afraid; we will not read it here.... I did not invite you for that. *Le baron est aussi aimable que savant*. And he speaks Russian beautifully! *C'est un vrai torrent... il vous entraine!*

'He speaks Russian so beautifully,' grumbled

Pigasov, 'that he deserves a eulogy in French.'

'You may grumble as you please, African Semenitch.... It's in keeping with your ruffled locks.... I wonder, though, why he does not come. Do you know what, *messieurs et mesdames* ' added Darya Mihailovna, looking round, 'we will go into the garden. There is still nearly an hour to dinner-time and the weather is glorious.'

All the company rose and went into the garden.

Darya Mihailovna's garden stretched right down to the river. There were many alleys of old lime-trees in it, full of sunlight and shade and fragrance and glimpses of emerald green at the ends of the walks, and many arbours of acacias and lilacs.

Volintsev turned into the thickest part of the garden with Natalya and Mlle. Boncourt. He walked beside Natalya in silence. Mlle. Boncourt followed a little behind.

'What have you been doing to-day?' asked Volintsev at last, pulling the ends of his handsome dark brown moustache.

In features he resembled his sister strikingly; but there was less movement and life in his expression, and his soft beautiful eyes had a melancholy look.

'Oh! nothing,' answered Natalya, 'I have been listening to Pigasov's sarcasms, I have done some embroidery on canvas, and I've been reading.'

'And what have you been reading?'

'Oh! I read—a history of the Crusades,' said Natalya, with some hesitation.

Volintsev looked at her.

'Ah!' he ejaculated at last, 'that must be interesting.'

He picked a twig and began to twirl it in the air. They walked another twenty paces.

'What is this baron whom your mother has made acquaintance with?' began Volintsev again.

'A Gentleman of the Bedchamber, a new arrival; *maman* speaks very highly of him.'

'Your mother is quick to take fancies to people.'

'That shows that her heart is still young,' observed Natalya.

'Yes. I shall soon bring you your mare. She is almost quite broken in now. I want to teach her to gallop, and I shall manage it soon.'

'*Merci* !... But I'm quite ashamed. You are breaking her in yourself ... and they say it's so hard!'

'To give you the least pleasure, you know, Natalya Alexyevna, I am ready... I... not in such trifles——'

Volintsev grew confused.

Natalya looked at him with friendly encouragement, and again said '*merci* !'

'You know,' continued Sergei Pavlitch after a long pause, 'that not such things.... But why am I saying this? you know everything, of course.'

At that instant a bell rang in the house.

'Ah! *la cloche du diner* !' cried Mlle. Boncourt, '*retrons* .'

'*Quel dommage* ,' thought the old French lady to herself as she mounted the balcony steps behind Volintsev and Natalya, '*quel dommage que ce charmant garcon ait si peu de ressources dans la conversation* ,' which may be translated, 'you are a good fellow, my dear boy, but rather a fool.'

The baron did not arrive to dinner. They waited half-an-hour for him. Conversation flagged at the table. Sergei Pavlitch did nothing but gaze at Natalya, near whom he was sitting, and zealously filled up her glass with water. Pandalevsky tried in vain to entertain his neighbour, Alexandra Pavlovna; he was bubbling over with sweetness, but she hardly refrained from yawning.

Bassistoff was rolling up pellets of bread and thinking of nothing at all; even Pigasov was silent, and when Darya Mihailovna remarked to him that he had not been very polite to-day, he replied crossly, 'When am I polite? that's not in my line;' and smiling grimly he added, 'have a little patience; I am only kvas, you know, *du simple* Russian kvas; but your Gentleman of the Bedchamber——'

'Bravo!' cried Darya Mihailovna, 'Pigasov is jealous, he is jealous already!'

But Pigasov made her no rejoinder, and only gave her a rather cross look.

Seven o'clock struck, and they were all assembled again in the drawing-room.

'He is not coming, clearly,' said Darya Mihailovna.

But, behold, the rumble of a carriage was heard: a small tarantass drove into the court, and a few instants later a footman entered the drawing-room and gave Darya Mihailovna a note on a silver salver. She glanced through it, and turning to the footman asked:

'But where is the gentleman who brought this letter?'

'He is sitting in the carriage. Shall I ask him to come up?'

'Ask him to do so.'

The man went out.

'Fancy, how vexatious!' continued Darya Mihailovna, 'the baron has received a summons to return at once to Petersburg. He has sent me his essay by a certain Mr. Rudin, a friend of his. The baron wanted to introduce him to me—he speaks very highly of him. But how vexatious it is! I had hoped the baron would stay here for some time.'

'Dmitri Nikolaitch Rudin,' announced the servant.

III

A man of about thirty-five entered, of a tall, somewhat stooping figure, with crisp curly hair and swarthy complexion, an irregular but expressive and intelligent face, a liquid brilliance in his quick, dark blue eyes, a straight, broad nose, and well-curved lips. His clothes were not new, and were somewhat small, as though he had outgrown them.

He walked quickly up to Darya Mihailovna, and with a slight bow told her that he had long wished to have the honour of an introduction to her, and that his friend the baron greatly regretted that he could not take leave of her in person.

The thin sound of Rudin's voice seemed out of keeping with his tall figure and broad chest.

'Pray be seated... very delighted,' murmured Darya Mihailovna, and, after introducing him to the rest of the company, she asked him whether he belonged to those parts or was a visitor.

'My estate is in the T—— province,' replied Rudin, holding his hat on his knees. 'I have not been here long. I came on business and stayed for a while in your district town.'

'With whom?'

'With the doctor. He was an old chum of mine at the university.'

'Ah! the doctor. He is highly spoken of. He is skilful in his work, they say. But have you known the baron long?'

'I met him last winter in Moscow, and I have just been spending about a week with him.'

'He is a very clever man, the baron.'

'Yes.'

Darya Mihailovna sniffed at her little crushed-up handkerchief steeped in *eau de cologne* .

'Are you in the government service?' she asked.

'Who? I?'

'Yes.'

'No. I have retired.'

There followed a brief pause. The general conversation was resumed.

'If you will allow me to be inquisitive,' began Pigasov, turning to Rudin, 'do you know the contents of the essay which his excellency the baron has sent?'

'Yes, I do.'

'This essay deals with the relations to commerce—or no, of manufactures to commerce in our country.... That was your expression, I think, Darya Mihailovna?'

'Yes, it deals with'... began Darya Mihailovna, pressing her hand to her forehead.

'I am, of course, a poor judge of such matters,' continued Pigasov, 'but I must confess that to me even the title of the essay seems excessively (how could I put

it delicately?) excessively obscure and complicated.'

'Why does it seem so to you?'

Pigasov smiled and looked across at Darya Mihailovna.

'Why, is it clear to you?' he said, turning his foxy face again towards Rudin.

'To me? Yes.'

'H'm. No doubt you must know better.'

'Does your head ache?' Alexandra Pavlovna inquired of Darya Mihailovna.

'No. It is only my—*c'est nerveux*.'

'Allow me to inquire,' Pigasov was beginning again in his nasal tones, 'your friend, his excellency Baron Muffel—I think that's his name?'

'Precisely.'

'Does his excellency Baron Muffel make a special study of political economy, or does he only devote to that interesting subject the hours of leisure left over from his social amusements and his official duties?'

Rudin looked steadily at Pigasov.

'The baron is an amateur on this subject,' he replied, growing rather red, 'but in his essay there is much that is interesting and just.'

'I am not able to dispute it with you; I have not read the essay. But I venture to ask—the work of your friend Baron Muffel is no doubt founded more upon general propositions than upon facts?'

'It contains both facts and propositions founded

upon the facts.'

'Yes, yes. I must tell you that, in my opinion—and I've a right to give my opinion, on occasion; I spent three years at Dorpat... all these, so-called general propositions, hypotheses, these systems—excuse me, I am a provincial, I speak the truth bluntly—are absolutely worthless. All that's only theorising—only good for misleading people. Give us facts, sir, and that's enough!'

'Really!' retorted Rudin, 'why, but ought not one to give the significance of the facts?'

'General propositions,' continued Pigasov, 'they're my abomination, these general propositions, theories, conclusions. All that's based on so-called convictions; every one is talking about his convictions, and attaches importance to them, prides himself on them. Ah!'

And Pigasov shook his fist in the air. Pandalevsky laughed.

'Capital!' put in Rudin, 'it follows that there is no such thing as conviction according to you?'

'No, it doesn't exist.'

'Is that your conviction?'

'Yes.'

'How do you say that there are none then? Here you have one at the very first turn.'

All in the room smiled and looked at one another.

'One minute, one minute, but——,' Pigasov was beginning.

But Darya Mihailovna clapped her hands crying, 'Bravo, bravo, Pigasov's beaten!' and she gently took Rudin's hat from his hand.

'Defer your delight a little, madam; there's plenty of time!' Pigasov began with annoyance. 'It's not sufficient to say a witty word, with a show of superiority; you must prove, refute. We had wandered from the subject of our discussion.'

'With your permission,' remarked Rudin, coolly, 'the matter is very simple. You do not believe in the value of general propositions—you do not believe in convictions?'

'I don't believe in them, I don't believe in anything!'

'Very good. You are a sceptic.'

'I see no necessity for using such a learned word. However——'

'Don't interrupt!' interposed Darya Mihailovna.

'At him, good dog!' Pandalevsky said to himself at the same instant, and smiled all over.

'That word expresses my meaning,' pursued Rudin. 'You understand it; why not make use of it? You don't believe in anything. Why do you believe in facts?'

'Why? That's good! Facts are matters of experience, every one knows what facts are. I judge of them by experience, by my own senses.'

'But may not your senses deceive you? Your senses tell you that the sun goes round the earth,... but