The Short Stories of Leo Tolstoy - Part 1

Leo Tolstoy

2012

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The Raid; A Volunteer's Story

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

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

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

Chapter 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

‘Where to?’ I asked.

‘To M. The forces are to assemble there.’

‘And from there I suppose they will go into action?’

‘I expect so.’

‘In what direction? What do you think?’

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

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

‘It proves nothing at all.’

‘How is that?’ I .asked with surprise.

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

‘Can I go with you?’ I asked after a pause.

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

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

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

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

‘All that does not interest me,’ I replied.

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

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

‘Was he brave?’ I asked.

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

‘Then he must have been brave/ said I.

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

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

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

I wished to explain my idea to the captain.

'Yes,' said I, 'it seems to me that in every danger there is a choice, and a choice made under the influence of a sense of duty is courage, but a choice made under the influence of a base motive is cowardice. Therefore a man who risks his life from vanity, curiosity, or greed, cannot be called brave; while on the other hand he who avoids a danger from honest consideration for his family, or simply from conviction, cannot be called a coward.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

I promised to carry out her instructions carefully.

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

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

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

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

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

These simple words expressed much love and sadness.

'Why do you serve here?' I asked.

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

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

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

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

'And does the double pay suffice?' interjected the captain. 'Look at our officers! Have any of them a brass farthing? They all go on tick at the sutler's, and are all up to their ears in debt. You say "living as I do". ... Do you really think that living as I do I have anything over out of my salary? Not a farthing! You don't yet know what prices are like here; everything is three times dearer. . . .' The captain lived economically, did not play cards, rarely went carousing, and smoked the cheapest tobacco (which for some reason he called home-grown tobacco). I had liked him before — he had one of those simple, calm, Russian faces which are easy and pleasant to look straight in the eyes — and after this talk I felt a sincere regard for him.

Chapter 2

Next morning at four o'clock the captain came for me. He wore an old threadbare coat without epaulettes, wide Caucasian trousers, a white sheepskin cap the wool of

which had grown yellow and limp, and had a shabby Asiatic sword strapped round his shoulder. The small white horse he rode ambled along with short strides, hanging its head down and swinging its thin tail. Although the worthy captain's figure was not very martial or even good-looking, it expressed such equanimity towards everything around him that it involuntarily inspired respect.

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

The battalion was some five hundred yards ahead of us and looked like a dense, oscillating, black mass. It was only possible to guess that it was an infantry battalion by the bayonets which looked like needles standing close together, and by the sound of the soldiers' songs which occasionally reached us, the beating of a drum, and the delightful voice of the Sixth Company's second tenor, which had often charmed me at the fort. The road lay along the middle of a deep and broad ravine by the side of a stream which had overflowed its banks. Flocks of wild pigeons whirled above it, now alighting on the rocky banks, now turning in the air in rapid circles and vanishing out of sight. The sun was not yet visible, but the crest of the right side of the ravine was just beginning to be lit up. The grey and whitish rock, the yellowish-green moss, the dew-covered bushes of Christ's Thorn, dogberry, and dwarf elm, appeared extraordinarily distinct and salient in the golden morning light, but the other side and the valley, wrapped in thick mist which floated in uneven layers, were damp and gloomy and presented an indefinite mingling of colours: pale purple, almost black, dark green, and white. Right in front of us, strikingly distinct against the dark-blue horizon, rose the bright, dead-white masses of the snowy mountains, with their shadows and outlines fantastic and yet exquisite in every detail. Crickets, grasshoppers, and thousands of other insects, awoke in the tall grasses and filled the air with their clear and ceaseless sounds: it was as if innumerable tiny bells were ringing inside our very ears. The air was full of the scent of water, grass, and mist: the scent of a lovely early summer morning. The captain struck a light and lit his pipe, and the smell of his cheap tobacco and of the tinder seemed to me extraordinarily pleasant

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

We had nearly overtaken the battalion when we heard the thud of a horse galloping behind us, and that same moment a good-looking youth in an officer's uniform and white sheepskin cap galloped past us. He smiled in passing, nodded to the captain, and flourished his whip. I only had time to notice that he sat his horse and held his reins with peculiar grace, that he had beautiful black eyes, a fine nose, and only the first indications of a moustache. What specially pleased me about him was that he could

not repress a smile when he noticed our admiration. This smile alone showed him to be very young.

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

'Who is he?' I replied.

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

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

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

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

The captain remained silent for a minute or two.

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

Chapter 3

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

With the mounted Tartars, about two hundred yards ahead of the infantry, rode a tall handsome lieutenant in Asiatic costume on a large white horse. He was known in the regiment as a desperate daredevil who would spit the truth out at anybody. He wore a black tunic trimmed with gold braid, leggings to match, soft closely fitting gold-braided oriental shoes, a yellow coat and a tall sheepskin cap pushed back from his forehead. Fastened to the silver strap that lay across his chest and back, he carried a powder-flask, and a pistol behind him. Another pistol and a silver-mounted dagger hung from his girdle, and above these a sword in a red leather sheath, and a musket in a black cover, were slung over his shoulder. By his clothing, by the way he sat his

horse, by his general bearing, in fact by his every movement, one could see that he tried to resemble a Tartar. He even spoke to the Tartars with whom he was riding in a language I did not know, and from the bewildered and amused looks with which they glanced at one another I surmised that they did not understand him either. He was one of our young officers, dare-devil braves who shape their lives on the model of Lermontov's and Marlinsky's heroes. These officers see the Caucasus only through the prism of such books as A Hero of our Time, and Mullah-Nur1, and are guided in their actions not by their own inclinations but by the examples of their models.

1 Novels by the above-mentioned authors. The lieutenant, for instance, may perhaps have liked the company of well-bred women and men of rank: generals, colonels, and aides-de-camp (it is even my conviction that he liked such society very much, for he was exceedingly ambitious), but he considered it his imperative duty to turn his roughest side to all important men, though he was strictly moderate in his rudeness to them; and when any lady came to the fort he considered it his duty to walk before her window with his bosom friends, in a red shirt and with slippers on his bare feet, and shout and swear at the top of his voice. But all this he did not so much with the intention of offending her as to let her see what beautiful white feet he had, and how easy it would be to fall in love with him should he desire it. Or he would often go with two or three friendly Tartars to the hills at night to lie in ambush by the roadside to watch for passing hostile Tartars and kill them: and though his heart told him more than once that there was nothing valiant in this, he considered himself bound to cause suffering to people with whom he affected to be disillusioned and whom he chose to hate and despise. He always carried two things: a large icon hanging round his neck, and a dagger which he wore over his shirt even when in bed. He sincerely believed that he had enemies. To persuade himself that he must avenge himself on someone and wash away some insult with blood was his greatest enjoyment. He was convinced that hatred, vengeance, and contempt for the human race were the noblest and most poetic of emotions. But his mistress (a Circassian of course) whom I happened to meet subsequently, used to say that he was the kindest and mildest of men, and that every evening he wrote down his dismal thoughts in his diary, as well as his accounts on ruled paper, and prayed to God on his knees. And how much he suffered merely to appear in his own eyes what he wished to be! For his comrades and the soldiers could never see him as he wished to appear. Once on one of his nocturnal expeditions on the road with his bosom friends he happened to wound a hostile Chechen with a bullet in the leg, and took him prisoner. After that the Chechen lived for seven weeks with the lieutenant, who attended to him and nursed him as he would have nursed his dearest friend, and when the Chechen recovered he gave him presents and set him free. After that, during one of our expeditions when the lieutenant was retreating with the soldiers of the cordon and firing to keep back the foe, .he heard someone among the enemy call him by name, and the man he had wounded rode forward and made signs to the lieutenant to do the same. The lieutenant rode up to his friend and pressed his hand. The hillsmen stood some way back and did not fire, but scarcely had the lieutenant

turned his horse to return before several men shot at him and a bullet grazed the small of his back. Another time, at night, when a fire had broken out in the fort and two companies of soldiers were putting it out, I myself saw how the tall figure of a man mounted on a black horse and lit up by the red glow of the fire suddenly appeared among the crowd and, pushing through, rode up to the very flames. When quite close the lieutenant jumped from his horse and rushed into the house, one side of which was burning. Five minutes later he came out with singed hair and scorched elbow, carrying in his bosom two pigeons he had rescued from the flames.

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

Chapter 4

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

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

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

Among these officers was the young ensign who had overtaken us in the morning. He was very amusing: his eyes shone, he spoke rather thickly, and he wished to kiss and declare his love to everyone. Poor boy! He did not know that he might appear funny in such a situation, that the frankness and tenderness with which he assailed every one predisposed them not to the affection he so longed for, but to ridicule; nor did he know that when, quite heated, he at last threw himself down on the cloak and rested on his elbow with his thick black hair thrown back, he looked uncommonly charming.

[In a word, everyone was cheerful, except perhaps one officer who, sitting under his company's cart, had lost the horse he was riding to another officer at cards and

had agreed to hand it over when they reached head-quarters. He was vainly trying to induce the other to play again, offering to stake a casket which everyone could confirm he had bought for thirty rubles from a Jew, but which — merely because he was in difficulties — he was now willing to stake for fifteen. His opponent looked casually into the distance and persistently remained silent, till at last he remarked that he was terribly anxious to have a doze.

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

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

Chapter 5

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

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

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

I found my acquaintance on the ground floor of the general's house. I had scarcely had time to explain my wish to him and to get his reply that it could easily be fulfilled, when the pretty little brougham I had noticed outside rattled past the window we were sitting at. A tall, well-built man in an infantry major's uniform and epaulettes got out and entered the house.

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

'Who is it?' I asked.

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

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

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

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

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

'Vous savez que j'ai fait voeu de comhattre les infideles; prenez donc garde de la devenir.'2

1 'Good evening, Countess.'

z 'You know I have sworn to fight the infidels (the unfaithful), so beware of becoming one.' A laugh replied from inside the carriage,

'Adieu donc, cher general.'1

'Nont au revoir? said the general, ascending the steps of the porch. 'N'oubliez pas, que je m'invite pour la soiree de demain.'

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

'There again,' I thought as I walked home, 'is a man who possesses all that Russians strive after: rank, riches, distinction; and this man, the day before an engagement the

outcome of which is known only to God, jokes with a pretty woman and promises to have tea with her next day, just as if they had met at a ball!'

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

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

1 'Good-bye then, dear general.'

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

Chapter 6

The troops were to start at ten in the evening. At half-past eight I mounted and rode to the general's, but thinking that he and his adjutant were busy I tied my horse to the fence and sat down on an earth-bank intending to catch the general when he came out.

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

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

I will not say in what meditations I was absorbed:

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

[Hastily mounting my horse I set out to overtake the detachment.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who will doubt that in the war of the Russians against the mountain-tribes, justice — resulting from a feeling of self-preservation — is on our side? Were it not for this war, what would secure the neighbouring rich and cultured Russian territories from robbery, murder, and raids by wild and warlike tribes? But consider two private persons. On whose side is the feeling of self-preservation and consequently of justice? Is it on the side of this ragamuffin — some Djenni or other — who hearing of the approach of the Russians snatches down his old gun from the wall, puts three or four charges (which he will only reluctantly discharge) in his pouch and runs to meet the giaours, and on seeing that the Russians still advance, approaching the fields he has sown which they will tread down and his hut which they will burn, and the ravine where his mother, his wife, and his children have hidden themselves, shaking with fear — seeing that he will be deprived of all that constitutes his happiness — in impotent anger and with a cry of despair tears off his tattered jacket, flings down his gun, and drawing his sheepskin cap over his eyes sings his death-song and flings himself headlong onto the Russian bayonets with only a dagger in his hand? Is justice on his side or on that of this officer on the general's staff who is singing French chansonettes so well just as he rides past us? He has a family in Russia, relations, friends, serfs, and obligations towards them, but has no reason or desire to be at enmity with the hillsmen, and has come to the Caucasus just by chance and to show his courage. Or is it on the side of my acquaintance the adjutant, who only wishes to obtain a captaincy and a comfortable position as soon as possible and for that reason has become the hillsmen's enemy? Or is. it on the side of this young German who, with a strong German accent, is demanding a linstock from the artillerymen? What devil has brought him from his fatherland and set him down in this distant region? Why should this Saxon, Kaspar Lavrentich, mix himself up in our blood-thirsty conflict with these turbulent neighbours?]

Chapter 7

We had been riding for more than two hours. I was beginning to shiver and feel drowsy. Through the gloom I still seemed to see the same indefinite forms; a little way in front the same black wall and the moving spots. Close in front of me I could see the crupper of a white horse which swung its tail and threw its hind legs wide apart, the

back of a white Circassian coat on which could be discerned a musket in a black case, and the glimmering butt of a pistol in an embroidered holster; the glow of a cigarette lit up a fair moustache, a beaver collar and a hand in a chamois glove. Every now and then I leant over my horse's neck, shutting my eyes and forgetting myself for a few minutes, then startled by the familiar tramping and rustling I glanced round, and felt as if I were standing still and the black wall in front was moving towards me, or that it had stopped and I should in a moment ride into it. At one such moment the rumbling which increased and seemed to approach, and the cause of which I could not guess, struck me forcibly: it was the sound of water. We were entering a deep gorge and approaching a mountain-stream that was overflowing its banks.1 The rumbling increased, the damp grass became thicker and taller and the bushes closer, while the horizon gradually narrowed. Now and then bright lights appeared here

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

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

'Don't you know?' he replied.

'No.'

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

'Why are they doing that?'

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

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

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

'Then Shamyl1 too is preparing for action?' I asked.

'No,' he answered, shaking his head, 'Shamyl won't go into action; Shamyl will send his naibs2 and he himself will look on through a telescope from above.'

'Does he live far away?'

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

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

'I have. Our people have all been.'

'Have you seen Shamyl?'

'Such as we don't see Shamyl! There are a hundred, three hundred, a thousand murids3 all round him, and Shamyl is in the centre,' he said, with an expression of servile admiration.

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

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

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

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

Suddenly a little way in front of us several lights flashed through the darkness; at the same moment some bullets flew whizzing past amid the surrounding silence [and sharp abrupt firing could be heard and loud cries, as piercing as cries of despair but expressing instead of fear such a passion of brutal audacity and rage that one could not but shudder at hearing it.] It was the enemy's advanced picket. The Tartars who composed it whooped, fired at random, and then ran in different directions.

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

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

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

Chapter 8

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

As soon as the crossing was accomplished the general's face suddenly assumed a meditative and serious look and he turned his horse and, followed by the cavalry, rode

at a trot down a broad glade which opened out before us in the midst of the forest. A cordon of mounted Cossacks was scattered along the skirts of the forest.

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

'Your Excellency, shall we order the cavalry to charge?' he says, raising his hand to his cap. 'The enemy's colours1 are in sight,' and he points with his whip to some mounted Tartars in front of whom ride two men on white horses with bits of blue and red stuff fastened to poles in their hands.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Et surtout en bonne compagne,'4 replies the general with a pleasant smile.

The major bows.

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

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

2 'What a charming view.'

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

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

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

'Yes, frighten them a bit!' carelessly replies the general, lighting a cigar.

The battery takes up its position and the firing begins. The earth groans under the shots, the discharges flash out incessantly, and smoke, through which it is scarcely possible to distinguish the artillerymen moving round their guns, veils your sight.

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

The spectacle was truly magnificent. The one thing that spoilt the general impression for me — who took no part in the affair and was unaccustomed to it — was that this movement and the animation and the shouting appeared unnecessary. The comparison involuntarily suggested itself to me of a man swinging his arms vigorously to cut the air with an axe.

Chapter 9

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

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

The troops were drawn up outside the gates.

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

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

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

The battalion with which I had come from Fort N. was also in the aoul. The captain sat on the roof of a hut and sent thin whiffs of cheap tobacco smoke through his short

pipe with such an expression of indifference on his face that on seeing him I forgot that I was in a hostile aoul and felt quite at home.

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

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

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

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

'Where the others have gone,' someone remarked.

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

'Are you not afraid of the Russians?'

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

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

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

[A bugler who had vodka and provisions was sent for. The captain's calmness and equanimity involuntarily produced an effect on me. We ate roasted pheasant and chatted, without at all reflecting that the owners of that hut had not merely no desire to see us there but could hardly have imagined our existence.]

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

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

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

A sound of something like a child's cry came from there, and the words:

'Stop . . . don't hack it. . . you'll be seen . . . Have you a knife, Evstigneich . . . Lend me a knife. . . .'

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 10

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

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

The captain took off his cap and piously crossed himself, some of the older soldiers did the same. From the wood were heard war-cries and the words 'lay giaour', 'Urus! iay' Sharp short rifle-shots, following one another fast, whizzed on both sides of us. Our men answered silently with a running fire, and only now and then remarks like the following were made in the ranks: 'See where he1 fires from! It's all right for him inside the wood. We ought to use cannon,' and so forth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They all disappeared into the wood. . . .

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

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

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

‘And you?’ I asked. ‘Are you afraid?’

‘What do you expect?’

Chapter 11

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 12

It was late in the day when the detachment, formed into a broad column and singing, approached the Fort.

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

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

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

1852

Recollections of a Billiard-marker

Translated by Nathan Dole 1887

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

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

Everybody knows it's our business to score. You don't get a chance to get a bite of anything, and you don't get to bed till two o'clock o' nights, but you're always being screamed at to bring the balls.

I was keeping tally ; and I look, and see a new barin comes in at the door. He gazed and gazed, and then sat down on the divan. Very good!

"Now, who can that be?" thinks I to myself. "He must be somebody."

His dress was neat, — neat as a pin, — checkered tricot pants, stylish little short coat, plush vest, and gold chain and all sorts of trinkets dangling from it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"All right."

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

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

"With pleasure," says he.

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

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

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

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

"Nekhliudof," says he.

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

"Yes," says the other.

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

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

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

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

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

"Will you play with me?"

"Certainly, sir," says I.

I place the balls.

"Shall we play for odds?"

"What do you mean,— 'play for odds'?"

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

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

"Go ahead," says he.

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

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

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

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

"Ah, what a chance! ah, what a shot!"

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

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

"Splendid! Do it again," they cried, "once more."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You make it three rubles or nothing," says I.

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

He turned rather red.

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

"No," says he, "there's no small stuff here."

He took three rubles from his purse.

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

"Thank you, sir, most kindly."

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

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

Such sharpers prowl around.

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

And he went out.

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

Very good. Nekhliudof came a second time, a third time; he began to come frequently. He would come morning and evening. He learned to play French carom and pyramid

pool, — everything, in fact. He became less bashful, got acquainted with everybody, and played tolerably well. Of course, being a young man of a good family, with money, everybody liked him. The only exception was the "tall visitor"; he quarreled with him.

And the whole thing grew out of a trifle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then the other one says: —

" You ought to apologize."

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

And he turned away to look after his ball.

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

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

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

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

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

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

After much talk, Nekhliudof says: —

"Let him give me satisfaction; he has insulted me."

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

"If you aren't willing to give me satisfaction, then you are no gentleman."

And, saying this, he almost cried.

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

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

"Go," says the former; "for God's sake make him listen to reason."...

The prince went. The big man says: —

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

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

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

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

"No one," says he.

"What do you mean, 'no one'!"

"Why should I?" says Nekhliudof.

"How so, why should you?"

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

"You don't say so! It is incredible!"

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

"What, never?" they asked.

"Never!"

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

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

"Come," says the prince, "come with me now."

"No; not for anything," was his answer.

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

They went out.

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

"Congratulate the barin," they shout.

"What on?" I ask.

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

"I have the honor," says I, "to congratulate you."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In this way he used often to come to us. Once he came with the prince, and the mustached man who was the prince’s crony; the gentlemen always called him “Fedotka.”He had prominent cheek-bones, and was homely enough, to be sure; but he used to dress neatly and drove in a carriage. Why did the gentlemen like him so well? I really could not tell.

“Fedotka! Fedotka!” they’d call, and ask him to eat and to drink, and they’d spend their money paying up for him; but he was a thoroughgoing beat. If ever he lost, he would be sure not to pay; but if he won, you bet he wouldn’t fail to collect his money. Often, too, he came to grief; yet there he was, walking arm in arm with the prince.

“You are lost without me,” he would say to the prince.

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

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

“All right,” says the other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“All right,” says Nekhliudof.

Once more Fedotka won the game.

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

“Yes.”

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

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

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

“Enough!” says he, “hold on.”

My! they keep increasing the stake.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“No,” says the other.

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

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

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

"Well," he would say, "do I play well?"

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

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

"Let's play for a bottle of champagne."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I won eighty rubles of him.

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

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

"All right," says I.

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

"All right," says I.

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

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

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

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

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

"Either play, or don't play!" says he.

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

I really wanted to lose. I allowed him forty points in advance. He stood fifty-two to my thirty-six. He began to cut the yellow one, and missed eighteen points; and I was standing just at the turning-point. I made a stroke so as to knock the ball off of the billiard-table. No so luck would have it. Do what I might, he even missed the doublet. I had won again.

"Listen," says he. "Piotr," — he did not call me Petrushka then,— "I can't pay you the whole on the spot. In a couple of months I can pay three thousand even, if it were necessary."

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

"Very good, sir," says I.

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

"Piotr," says he, "let 's try it again, double or quit."

And he almost burst into tears.

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

"Oh, let us play, I beg of you."

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

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

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

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

"Why," says he, "you are playing badly on purpose."

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

"That won't do any good, sir."

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

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

So I put up my cue, and went off.

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

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

The prince caught sight of him.

"Come," says he, "let's have a game."

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

"Nonsense! come along."

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

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

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

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

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

"By God," says he, "I can't give it to you; but come back on Thursday."

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

"Well," says I, "is he at home?"

"He hasn't got up yet," I was told.

"Very good, I will wait."

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

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

"'Why wouldn't you go, sir, and visit your aunt? They are feeling bad because you haven't been for so long.'

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

money on hand. When the master is away, of course, the overseer is more than the master. What does he care? He only cares to stuff his own pockets.

"A few days ago a couple of peasants brought complaints from the whole estate. 'He has wasted all the property,' they say. What do you think? he pondered over the complaints, and gave the peasants ten rubles apiece. Says he, 'I'll be there very soon. I shall have some money, and I will settle all accounts when I come,' says he.

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

And the old man almost wept.

Nekhliudof woke up about eleven, and called me in.

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

I shut the door.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ ll right.”

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

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

“Well,” says he, “where ‘s the wine?”

Simon hurried out, brought in the roast.

“Let us have the wine,” says he.

Simon makes no reply.

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

Simon hurried out.

“The landlord,” says he, “wants to speak to you.”

Nekhliudof turned scarlet. He sprang up from the table.

“What’s the need of calling me?”

The landlord is standing at the door.

Says he, “I can’t trust you any more, unless you settle my little bill.”

“Well, didn’t I tell you that I would pay the first of the month?”

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

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

And he hurried back.

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

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

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

“Simon, hurry up!”

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

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

He was pale as a sheet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He has gone," said some one.

"Where has he gone? What message did he leave?"

"He didn't leave any; he just took to his carriage, and went off."

"That's a fine way of entertaining a man!" says he.

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

"Now, let us have a game," says he.

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

We played one game.

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

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

"It 's all ready, sir," says I.

"Very good."

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

"Look and see if my carriage has come yet."

It was on a Friday, during carnival time, and so there weren't any of the customers on hand; they were all at some ball. I went to see about the carriage, and just as I was going out of the door, "Petrushka! Petrushka!" he shouted, as if something suddenly frightened him.

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

"Did you call me, sir?" says I.

He made no reply.

"What do you want?" says I.

He says nothing.

"Oh, yes!" says he. "Let 's have another game."

Then, says he:

"Haven't I learned to play pretty well?"

He had just won the game. " Yes," says I.

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

He himself walked up and down the room.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"...My recollections are pleasant.

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

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

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

"I said to myself, Now I will use my whole strength of will; and yet I could not do it. When I happened to be alone, I felt awkward and timid. When I was with others, I no longer heard the inward voice; and I fell all the time lower and lower.

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

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

The Wood-felling; A Cadet's Story

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

Chapter 1

IN the middle of the winter of 185-a division of one battery was on service with the detachment operating in that part of the Terek Territory1 called the Great Chechnya. On the evening of February 14, knowing that the platoon which I in the absence of any officer was commanding, was to join a column told off to fell wood next day, and having given and received the necessary orders, I retired to my tent earlier than usual. As I had not contracted the bad habit of warming my tent with hot charcoal, I lay down without undressing on my bed, which was supported on stakes driven into the ground, drew my fur cap over my eyes, tucked myself up in my sheepskin cloak, and fell into that peculiar, heavy, and deep sleep which comes at times of anxiety and when one is awaiting danger. The expectation of the next day's affair had this effect on me.

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

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

1 The Terek Territory lies to the north-east of the Caucasian Mountains. The Great and Little Chechnya are districts in the southern part of it.

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

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

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

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

'Who is it?'

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

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

'Where was he?' I asked Antonov.

'Asleep in the "park".'

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

'Oh, no.'

'Then how is it he fell asleep?'

'I can't make out.'

For about three hours we moved slowly on in silence and darkness over some unploughed fields bare of snow and over low bushes that crackled under the wheels of the gun-carriages. At last, after we had crossed a shallow but extremely rapid stream, we were stopped, and we heard the abrupt reports of vintovkas1 in the direction of the vanguard.

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

1 The vintduka was a long Asiatic rifle used by the Circassians (Cherkeses). When firing, they rested the barrel on a support formed by two thin spiked sticks tied at the top by a strap.

with their bright bayonets, their bags, their ramrods, and the kettles they carried on their backs.

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

Company, which covered us, piled their muskets, and a battalion with axes and muskets went to the forest.

Before five minutes were over fires were crackling and smoking in all directions. The soldiers dispersed, blew the fires and stirred them with hands and feet, dragged logs and branches, while the forest resounded with the unceasing noise of hundreds of axes and the crashing of falling trees.

The artillery, with a certain rivalry of the infantry, heaped their pile high, and though it was already burning so that one could hardly come within two paces of it and thick black smoke was rising through the frozen branches, which the soldiers pressed down into the fire (and from which drops fell sizzling into the flames), and though the charcoal was glowing beneath and the grass was scorched all around, the soldiers were not satisfied, but kept throwing great logs on to the pile, feeding it with dry grass beneath and heaping it higher and higher.

When I came up to the fire to smoke a cigarette, Velenchuk, always officious, but to-day feeling guilty and bustling about more than any one, in a fit of zeal snatched a piece of charcoal from the fire with his bare hand and, after tossing it from hand to hand a couple of times, dropped it on the ground.

'Light a twig and hold it up,' said a soldier.

'No, better get a linstock, lad,' said another.

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

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

Chapter 2

In Russia there are three predominant types of soldier under which the men of all our forces — whether line, guards, infantry, cavalry, artillery, army of the Caucasus, or what not — may be classified.

These principal types, including many sub-divisions and combinations, are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

though often inopportunely zealous, and also exceedingly honest. I say exceedingly honest, because an incident had occurred the year before which made this characteristic quality of his very evident. It must be remembered that almost every soldier knows a trade. The most usual trades are tailoring and boot-making. Velenchuk taught himself the former, and judging from the fact that even Michael Dorofeich, the sergeant-major, ordered clothes from him, he must have attained some proficiency at his craft. Last year, in camp, Velenchuk undertook to make a fine cloth coat for Michael Dorofeich; but that very night after he had cut out the coat and measured out the trimmings

and put them all under his pillow in the tent, a misfortune befell him: the cloth that had cost seven rubles, disappeared during the night! Velenchuk, with tears in his eyes, trembling white lips and suppressed sobs, informed the sergeant-major of the occurrence. Michael Dorofeich was enraged. In the first moment of irritation he threatened the tailor; but afterwards, being a man with means and kindly, he just waved his hand and did not demand from Velenchuk payment of the value of the cloth. In spite of all the fuss made by the fussy Velenchuk, in spite of all the tears he shed when telling of his mishap, the thief was not found. A strong suspicion fell on the viciously reckless soldier Chernov, who slept in the same tent; but there were no positive proofs. The diplomatically domineering Michael Dorofeich, being a man with means and having some little business transactions with the master-at-arms and the caterer of the mess (the aristocracy of the battery), very soon forgot all about the loss of his mufti coat. Not so Velenchuk. He did not forget his misfortune. The soldiers said they feared at the time that he might commit suicide or run away into the mountains, so great was the effect of his mishap upon him. He neither ate nor drank and could not even work, but was continually crying. When three days had passed he appeared, quite pale, before Michael Dorofeich, took with trembling fingers a gold coin from under his cuff and gave it him. 'Heaven's my witness, Michael Dorofeich, that it's all I have, and even that I borrowed from Zhdanov/ said he, sobbing again; 'and the other two rubles I swear I will also return as soon as I have earned them. He' (whom 'he' meant Velenchuk did not himself know) 'has made me appear like a rascal before you. He — with his loathsome, viper soul — he takes the last morsel from his brother soldier, after I have served for fifteen years. . . .' To the honour of Michael Dorofeich be it said, he did not take the remaining two rubles, though Velenchuk brought them to him two months later.

Chapter 3

Besides Velenchuk, five other soldiers of my platoon sat warming themselves by our fire.

In the best place, on a butt with his back to the wind, sat Maksimov, the gun-sergeant of the platoon, smoking a pipe. The habit of commanding and the consciousness of his dignity were betrayed by the pose, the look, and by every movement of this man, not to mention his nankeen-covered sheepskin coat and the butt he was sitting on, which latter is an emblem of power at a halting-place.

When I came up he turned his head towards me without removing his eyes from the fire, and his look, following the direction his head had taken, only fell on me some time later. Maksimov was not a serf but a peasant-yeoman; he had some money, had qualified to take a class in the school-brigade, and had stuffed his head with erudition. He was awfully rich and awfully learned, so the soldiers said. I remember how once when we were practising plunging fire with a quadrant, he explained to the soldiers gathered

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

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

The soldiers used to say that he would have been made a gun-sergeant long ago but for his character. And his character really was very peculiar. No one could have been calmer, gentler, or more accurate than he was when sober; but when he had a fit of drinking he became quite another man; he would not submit to authority, fought, brawled, and became a perfectly good-for-nothing soldier. Only the week before this, during the Carnival, he had had a drinking-bout, and in spite of all threats, persuasions, and being tied to a cannon, he went on drinking and brawling up to the first day of Lent. During the whole of Lent, though the division had been ordered not to fast, he fed on dried bread, and during the first week would not even drink the regulation cup of vodka. But one had to see his sturdy thick-set figure, as of wrought iron, on its stumpy bandy legs, and his shiny moustached visage when in a tipsy mood he took the balaldyka in his sinewy hands and looking carelessly round played Lady, or walked down the street with his cloak thrown loosely over his shoulders, his medals dangling, his hands in the pockets of his blue nankeen trousers, and a look on his countenance of soldierly pride and of contempt for all that was not of the artillery — one had to see all this in order to understand how impossible it was for him at such a moment to abstain from fighting an orderly, a Cossack, an infantry-man, a peasant (in fact, anyone not of the artillery) who was rude to him or happened merely to be in his way. He fought and rioted not so much for his own pleasure as to maintain the spirit of soldiership in general, of which he felt himself to be the representative.

The third soldier, who sat on his heels smoking a clay pipe, was the artillery driver Chikin. He had an ear-ring in one of his ears, bristling little moustaches, and the physiognomy of a bird. 'Dear old Chikin,' as the soldiers called him, was a wit. During the bitterest frost, or up to his knees in mud, or after going two days without food, on the march, on parade, or at drill, the 'dear fellow' was always and everywhere making

faces, twisting his legs about, or cracking jokes that convulsed the whole platoon with laughter. At every halting-place, and in the camp, there was always a circle of young soldiers collected round Chikin, who played Filka1 with them, told them stories about the cunning soldier and the English milord, personated a Tartar or a German, or simply made remarks of his own at which everyone roared with laughter. It is true that his reputation as a wit

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

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

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

The same Maksimov who was now gun-sergeant told me that ten years ago, when he first came as a recruit and drank all he had with the old soldiers who were in the habit of drinking, Zhdanov, noticing his unfortunate position, called him up, severely reprimanded him for his conduct and even beat him, delivered a lecture on how one should live in the army, and sent him away after giving him a shirt (which Maksimov lacked) and half-a-ruble in money. 'He made a man of me,' Maksimov always used to say with respect and gratitude. He also helped Velenchuk (whom he had taken under his protection since he was a recruit) at the time of his misfortune. When the coat was stolen he helped him as he had helped many and many another during the twenty-five years of his service.

One could not hope to find a man in the service who knew his work more thoroughly or was a better or more conscientious soldier than he; but he was too meek and

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

Chapter 4

'I'll be blowed! I've gone and forgot my pipe. Here's a go, lads!' repeated Velenchuk.

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

Of course everybody burst out laughing.

'Forgot your pipe, indeed!' interrupted Maksimov without heeding die general mirth, and beating the tobacco out of his pipe into the palm of his left hand with the proud air of a superior; 'where did you vanish to — eh, Velenchuk?'

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

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

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

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

'It's quite wonderful, lads,' Velenchuk went on after a moment's silence, scratching his head and addressing no one in particular; 'really quite wonderful, lads! Here have 1 been serving for the last sixteen years and such a tiling never happened to me. When we were ordered to appear for muster I was all right, but at the "park", there it suddenly clutches hold of me, and clutches and clutches, and down it throws me, down on the ground and no more ado — and I did not myself know how I fell asleep, lads! That must have been the trances,' he concluded. 'True enough, I hardly managed to wake you,' said Antonov as he pulled on his boot. 'I had to push and push just as if you'd been a log!'

'Fancy now,' said Velenchuk, 'if I'd been drunk now! . . .'

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

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

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

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

'How should I administrate it? In course they asked me how we live,' Chikin began rapidly with the air of a man recounting something he had repeated several times before. ' "We live well, old fellow," says I. "Provisions in plenty we get: morning and night a cup of chokelad for every soldier lad, and at noon barley broth before us is set, such as gentlefolks get, and instead of vodka we get a pint of Modera wine from Devirier, such as costs forty-four — with the bottle ten more!" '

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

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

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

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

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

' "Then", says I, "there's also the Mopingers,' " continued Chikin, making his cap slip onto his forehead with a movement of his head: ' "These others are little twins, so big ... all in pairs," says I, "they run about hand in hand at such a rate," says I, "that you couldn't catch 'em on a horse!"— "Then how's it, lad," they say, "how's them Mopingers, be they born hand in hand?" ' He said this in a hoarse bass, pretending to imitate a peasant. ' "Yes," says I, "he's naturally like that. Tear their hands apart

and they'll bleed just like a Chinaman: take a Chinaman's cap off and it'll bleed."—"And tell us, lad, how do they fight?" — -"That's how," says I, "they catch you and rip your belly up and wind your bowels round your arm, and wind and wind. They go on winding and you go on laughing till your breath all goes."'

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

Chapter 5

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

Beyond the felled wood a good-sized plain now opened in front of us. The black or milky-white or purple smoke of the fires expanded and fantastic shapes of white mist-clouds floated above the plain. An occasional group of mounted Tartars appeared far in the distance before us and at rare intervals the reports of our rifles1 and of their vintoukas and cannon were to be heard.

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

The commander of the 8th Company of Chasseurs, that formed our support, came up to our guns, pointed to three Tartars2 on horseback skirting the

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

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

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

'And there are three more riding at the outskirt of the forest,' said Ant6nov, who had astonishingly sharp eyesight, coming up to us, and hiding behind his back the pipe

he had been smoking. 'There, the one in front has taken his gun out of its case. They can be seen distinctly, y'r honor!'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Are we to point the gun?' suddenly asked Ant6nov in an abrupt bass with a look as if of gloomy anger.

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

I had hardly given the order before the shell was charged and rammed in and Ant6nov, leaning against the cheek of the gun-carriage and holding two of his thick fingers to the base-ring, was directing the movement of the tail of the gun. 'Right, left — a bit to the left, a wee bit — more — more — right!' he said, stepping from the gun with a look of pride.

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

'By Heavens, it will shoot over,' remarked Velenchuk, clicking his tongue, though he was only looking over Ant6nov's shoulder and therefore had no grounds for this supposition. 'By Heavens it will shoot over; it will hit that there tree, my lads!'

I gave the order: 'Two.'

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

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

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

Chapter 6

Leaving the soldiers to discuss how the Tartars galloped off when they saw the shell, why they had been riding there, and whether there were many of them in the forest, I went and sat down with the company commander under a tree a few steps off to wait while the cutlets he had invited me to share were being warmed up. The company commander, Bolkhov, was one of the officers nicknamed 'bonjourists' in the regiment. He was a man of some means, had formerly served in the Guards, and spoke French. But in spite of all this his comrades liked him. He was clever enough, and had tact enough, to wear a coat of Petersburg make, to eat a good dinner, and to speak French, without too much offending his fellow officers. After talking about the weather, the military operations, our mutual acquaintances among the officers, and having assured ourselves of the satisfactory state of each other's ideas by questions and answers and the views expressed, we involuntarily passed to more intimate conversation. And when people belonging to the same circle meet in the Caucasus a very evident, even if unspoken, question arises: 'Why are you here?' and it was to this silent question of mine that, as it seemed to me, my companion wished to reply.

'When will this expedition end?' he said lazily. 'It is so dull.'

'I don't think it dull,' said I. 'It's much worse on the staff.'

'Oh, it's ten thousand times worse on the staff,' he said irascibly. 'No, I mean when will the whole thing end?' In the distance a puff of bluish smoke expanded and rose, blown about by the wind. When I had understood that this was a shot fired at us by the enemy, all before my eyes at the moment assumed a sort of new and majestic character. The piles of arms, the smoke of the fires, the blue sky, the green gun-carriages, Nikolayev's sunburnt, moustached face — all seemed telling me that the ball that had already emerged from the smoke and was at that moment flying through space might be directed straight at my breast.

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

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

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

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

'Yes, I will.'

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

‘Ugh! the damned thing!’ just then remarked Ant6nov behind us, as he spat over his shoulder with vexation, ‘just missed my legs!’

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

Chapter 7

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not one of the soldiers who were loading said a word, only the young recruit muttered something that sounded like 'Dear me! he's bleeding', and Antonov, frowning, gave an angry grunt; but it was clear that the thought of death passed through the soul of each. All set to work very actively and the gun was loaded in a moment, but the ammunition-bearer bringing the case-shot went two or three steps round the spot where Velenchuk still lay groaning.

Chapter 8

Everyone who has been in action undoubtedly knows that strange and though illogical yet powerful feeling of aversion for the spot where some one has been killed

or wounded. It was evident that for a moment my men gave way to this feeling when Velenchuk had to

be taken to the cart that came up to fetch him. Zhdanov came up angrily to the wounded man and, taking him under the arms, lifted him without heeding his loud screams. 'Now then, what are you standing there for? take hold!' he shouted, and about ten assistants, some of them superfluous, immediately surrounded Velenchuk. But hardly had they moved him when he began screaming and struggling terribly.

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

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

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

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

The wounded man lay at the bottom of the cart holding on to the sides with both hands. His broad healthy face had completely changed during those few moments; he seemed to have grown thinner and years older, his lips were thin and pale and pressed together with an evident strain. The hasty and dull expression of his glance was replaced by a kind of bright clear radiance, and on the bloody forehead and nose already lay the impress of death. Though the least movement caused him excruciating pain, he nevertheless asked to have a small chirez1 with money taken from his left leg.

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

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

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

The cart was starting, but he stopped it.

T was making a cloak for Lieutenant Sulimovsky. He gave me two rubles. I bought buttons for one and a half, and half a ruble is in my bag with the buttons. Please let him have it.'

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

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

Chapter 9

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

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

'Where were you going?' I asked.

'To the camp.'

'Why?'

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

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

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

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

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

3rd battalion of the K-Regiment and the platoon

of the 4th Battery to remain there till next day.

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

Chapter 10

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

1 The 'Tartars', being Mohammedans, made a point of not letting the bodies of their slain fall into the hands of the 'unbelievers', but removed them and buried them as heroes. The capture of three bodies therefore indicates the vigour of the attack and the demoralization of the enemy. huts of branches and maize straw, and begun boiling their buckwheat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inside the hut B61khov was sitting on a dry mantle, with unbuttoned coat and no cap. A samovar stood boiling by his side and on a drum were light refreshments. A bayonet holding a candle was stuck into the ground.

'What do you think of it?' he asked, looking proudly round his cosy establishment. It really was so nice inside the hut that at tea I quite forgot the damp, the darkness, and Velenchuk's wound. We talked of Moscow and of things that had not the least relation to the war or to the Caucasus.

After a moment of silence such as sometimes occurs in the most animated conversation, B61khov looked at me with a smile.

T think our conversation this morning struck you as being very strange,' he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 11

Just then we heard the voice of the commander of the battalion outside, addressing Bolkhov.

‘Who is with you, Nicholas Fedorovich?’

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

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

‘What were you talking about, Nicholas Fedorovich?’

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

But just then Kirsanov noticed me, a cadet, and to impress me with his importance he paid no attention to B61khov’s reply, but looked at the drum and said— ‘Are you tired, Nicholas Fedorovich?’

‘No, you see we-’ Bolkhov began.

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

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

The adjutant of the battalion was a young ensign recently promoted from being a cadet, a modest, quiet lad with a bashful and kindly-pleasant face. I had met him at Bolkhov's before. The lad would often come there, bow, sit down in a corner, and remain silent for hours making cigarettes and smoking them; then he would rise, bow, and go away. He was the type of a poor Russian nobleman's son who had chosen the military career as the only one possible to him with his education, and who esteemed his position as an officer above everything else in the world — a simple-minded and lovable type notwithstanding the comical appurtenances inseparable from it: the tobacco-pouch, dressing-gown, guitar, and little moustache-brush we are accustomed to associate with it. It was told of him in the regiment that he bragged about being just but strict with his orderly, and that he used to say, 'I punish seldom, but when I am compelled to do it it's no joke,' but that when his tipsy orderly robbed him outrageously and even began to insult him, he, the master, took him to the guard-house and ordered everything to be prepared for a flogging, but was so upset at the sight of the preparations that he could only say, 'There now, you

see, I could-' and becoming quite disconcerted,

ran home in great confusion and was henceforth afraid to look his man Chernov in the eyes. His comrades gave the simple-minded boy no rest but teased him continually about this episode, and more than once I heard how he defended himself, and blushing to the tips of his ears assured them that it was not true, but just the contrary. The third visitor, Captain Trosenko, was a thoroughgoing old Caucasian — that is, a man for whom the company he commanded had become his family; the fortress where the staff was, his home; and the soldiers' singing his only pleasure in life. He was a man for whom everything unconnected with the Caucasus was contemptible and scarcely worthy of being considered probable, and everything connected with the Caucasus was divided into two halves: ours and not ours. The first he loved, the second he hated with all the power of his soul; but above all he was a man of steeled, calm courage, wonderfully kind in his behaviour to his comrades and subordinates and desperately frank and even rude to aides-de-camp and 'bonjourists', for whom for some reason he had a great dislike. On entering the hut he nearly caved the roof in with his head, then suddenly sank down and sat on the ground.

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

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

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

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

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

'I serve because in the first place, as you know, it is everyone's duty to serve... What?' he then added, though no one had spoken. 'I had a letter from Russia yesterday,

Nicholas Fedorovich,' he continued, evidently wishing to change the subject; 'they write that... they ask such strange questions.' 'What questions?' asked Bolkhov.

The major began laughing.

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

'Dear me!' said B61khov, with a smile.

'Yes, you know, it is nice in Russia,' continued the major, just as if his sentences flowed naturally from one another. 'When I was in Tamb6v in '52 they received me everywhere as if I had been some emperor's aide-de-camp. Will you believe it that at a ball at the Governor's, when I came in, you know . . . well, they received me very well. The General's wife herself, you know, talked to me and asked me about the Caucasus, and everybody was ... so that I hardly knew. . . . They examined my gold sabre as if it were some curiosity; they asked for what I had received the sabre, for what the Anna, for what the Vladimir ... so I just told them...What? That's what the Caucasus is good for, Nicholas Fedorovich!' he continued without waiting for any reply:— 'There they think very well of us Caucasians. You know a young man that's a staff-officer and has an Anna and a Vladimir . . . that counts for a good deal in Russia...What?'

'And you, no doubt, piled it on a bit, Abram Ilych?' said B61khov.

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

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

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

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

'But you, Daddy, have been more than ten years in the Caucasus,' said Bolkhov, 'and you remember what Ermolov1 said? . .. And Abram Ilych has been only six.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

‘Well, yes, but what do you expect. . . . What?’

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

‘Are you there, Abram Ilych? The officer on duly is looking for you.’

‘Come in, Kraft!’ said Bolkhov.

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

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

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

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

Chapter 12

My surmise was at once confirmed. Captain Kraft asked for vodka, calling it a ‘warmer’, croaked horribly, and throwing back his head emptied the glass.

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

‘Have you been round the lines?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Have the ambuscades been placed?’

‘Yes, sir.’

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

'Yes, sir.'

The major screwed up his eyes in profound contemplation.

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

'They are already boiling it, sir.'

'All right! you may go, sir.'

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

'Certainly.'

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

'Oh yes, that is even too much.'

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

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

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

'I'll tell you something,' Trosenko remarked. 'Reckon what way you like and you'll find we might as well put our teeth away on a shelf, and yet here we are all alive, drinking tea, smoking tobacco, and drinking vodka. When you've served as long as I have,' he went on, turning to the ensign, 'you'll have also learned how to live. Why, gentlemen, do you know how he treats the orderlies?'

And Trosenko, dying with laughter, told us the whole story about the ensign and his orderly, though we had all heard it hundreds of times.

'Why do you look so like a rose, old chap?' continued he, addressing the ensign, who blushed, perspired, and smiled, so that it was pitiful to see him. 'Never mind, old chap! I was just like you once and now look what a fine fellow I am. You let a young fellow straight from Russia in here — haven't we seen them? — and he gets spasms or rheumatism or something; and here am I settled here, and it's my house and my bed and all, d'you see?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the major, who had in all probability heard the story more than once, suddenly looked at the speaker with such dim, dull eyes that Kraft turned away from him and addressed me and Bolkhov, looking alternately at one and the other. But he did not give a single glance at Trosenko during the whole of his narration.

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

'A scarp?' suggested B61khov.

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

'Another scarp, perhaps,' I suggested.

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

'A river, perhaps,' said Bolkhov.

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

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

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

Chapter 13

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

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

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

When I began to speak I felt that my voice sounded strange, and I discerned the same frame of mind reflected in the faces of all the soldiers sitting near me. I thought that before I joined them they had been talking about their wounded comrade, but it had not been so at all. Chikin had been telling them about receiving supplies at Tiflis and about the scamps there.

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

and drums; on the contrary he needs quiet, order, and an absence of any affectation. In a Russian, a real Russian, soldier you will never find any bragging, swagger, or desire to befog or excite himself in time of danger; on the contrary, modesty, simplicity and a capacity for seeing in peril something quite else than the danger, are the distinctive features of his character. I have seen a soldier wounded in the leg, who in the first instant thought only of the hole in his new sheepskin cloak; and an artillery outrider who, creeping from beneath a horse that was killed under him, began unbuckling the girths to save the saddle. Who does not remember the incident at the siege of Gergebel when the fuse of a loaded bomb caught fire in the laboratory and an artillery sergeant ordered two soldiers to take the bomb and run to throw it into the ditch, and how the soldiers did not run to the nearest spot by the colonel's tent, which stood over the ditch, but took it farther on so as not to wake the gentlemen asleep in the tent and were consequently both blown to pieces? I remember also how, in the expedition of 1852, something led a young soldier while in action to say he thought the platoon would never escape, and how the whole platoon angrily attacked him for such evil words which they did not like even to repeat. And now, when the thought of Velenchuk must have been in the mind of each one and when we might expect Tartars to steal up at any moment and fire a volley at us, everyone listened to Chikin's sprightly stories and no one referred either to the day's action, or to the present danger, or to the wounded man; as if it had all happened goodness knows how long ago or had never happened at all. But it seemed to me that their faces were rather sterner than usual, that they did not listen to Chikin so very attentively, and that even Chikin himself felt he was not being listened to, but talked for the sake of talking.

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

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

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

'No, he's dead.'

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

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

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

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

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

'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive

us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one.'

'We had a man in '45 who was wounded in the same , place,' said Antanov when we had put on our caps and again sat down by the fire. 'We carried him about with us on a gun for two days — do you remember Shevchenko, Zhdanov ? — and then we just left him there under a tree.'

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

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

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

'I suppose it's about Dargo1 you are telling, comrade,' said the infantry soldier to Ant6nov.

'Yes, about Dargo in '45,' Ant6nov replied.

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

'Yes, all sorts of things happened there,' he remarked.

'Why did you leave him behind?' I asked Antonov.

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

'The mud was worst under the Indeysky2 Mountain,' remarked one of the soldiers.

'Yes, it was there he got more worse! So we considered it with Anoshenka — he was an old artillery sergeant. "Now really he can't live and he's asking for God's sake to be left behind; let us leave him here." So we decided. There was a tree, such a

1 Dargo, in the T6rek Territory, was the head-quarters of Shamyl until 1845.

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

'And was he a good soldier?'

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

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

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

And he left us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

‘Haven’t you ever written?’ I asked.

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

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

Antonov began to sing ‘The Birch-Tree’.

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

Zhdanov at first sat quite motionless with eyes fixed on the glimmering embers, and his face, lit up by the reddish light, seemed very gloomy; then his jaws below his ears began to move faster and faster, and at last he rose, and spreading out his cloak, lay down in the shadow behind the fire. Either it was his tossing and groaning as he settled down to sleep, or it may have been the effect of Velenchuk’s death and of the dull weather, but it really seemed to me that he was crying.

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

‘Second watch! Makatyuk and Zhdanov!’ cried Maksimov.

Antonov stopped singing. Zhdanov rose, sighed, stepped across the log, and went slowly towards the guns.

15 June 1855.

The Sevastopol Sketches

Translated by Frank D. Millet 1887

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

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

Sevastopol in December 1854

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

On the north side the activity of day is beginning gradually to replace the quiet of night: here some soldiers with clanking muskets pass to relieve the guard, there a doctor is already hurrying to the hospital, and there a soldier, having crept out of his dug-out, washes his weather-beaten face with icy water and then turning to the reddening horizon says his prayers, rapidly crossing himself: a creaking Tartar cart drawn by camels crawls past on its way to the cemetery to bury the blood-stained dead with which it is loaded almost to the top. As you approach the harbour you are struck by the peculiar smell of coal-smoke, manure, dampness, and meat. Thousands of different objects are lying in heaps by the harbour: firewood, meat, gabions, sacks of flour, iron, and so on. Soldiers of various regiments, some carrying bags and muskets and others empty-handed, are crowded together here, smoking, quarrelling, and hauling heavy loads onto the steamer which lies close to the wharf, its funnel smoking. Private boats crowded with all sorts of people — soldiers, sailors, merchants, and women — keep arriving at the landing stage or leaving it. 'To the Grafskaya, your Honour? Please to get in!' two or three old salts offer you their services, getting out of their boats.

You choose the one nearest to you, step across the half-decayed carcass of a bay horse that lies in the mud close to the boat, and pass on towards the rudder. You push off from the landing stage, and around you is the sea, now glittering in the morning sunshine. In front of you the old sailor in his camel-hair coat, and a flaxen-haired boy, silently and steadily ply the oars. You gaze at the enormous striped ships scattered far and wide over the bay, at the ships' boats that move about over the sparkling azure like small black dots, at the opposite bank where the handsome light-coloured buildings of the town are lit up by the rosy rays of the morning sun, at the foaming white line by the breakwater and around the sunken vessels, the black tops of whose masts here and there stand mournfully out of the water, at the enemy's fleet looming on the crystal horizon of the sea, and at the foaming and bubbling wash of the oars. You listen to the

steady sound of voices that reaches you across the water, and to the majestic sound of firing from Sevastopol which as it seems to you is growing more intense.

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

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

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

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

1 The vessel, the Constantine.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes, disenchantment certainly awaits you on entering Sevastopol for the first time. You will look in vain in any of these faces for signs of disquiet, perplexity, or even of enthusiasm, determination, or readiness for death — there is nothing of the kind. What you see are ordinary people quietly occupied with ordinary activities, so that perhaps you may reproach yourself for having felt undue enthusiasm and may doubt the justice of the ideas you had formed of the heroism of the defenders of Sevastopol, based on the tales and descriptions and sights and sounds seen and heard from the North Side. But before yielding to such doubts go to the bastions and see the defenders of Sevastopol at the very place of the defence, or better still go straight into that building opposite which was once the Sevastopol Assembly Rooms and in the portico of which stand soldiers with stretchers. There you will see the defenders of Sevastopol and will see terrible and lamentable, solemn and amusing, but astounding and soul-elevating sights.

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

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

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

Is it long since you were wounded?'

'Well, it's over five weeks now, your Honour.'

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

'And how did it happen that you were wounded?'

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

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

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

'And afterwards?'

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

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

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

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

He is a fair-haired man with a puffy pale face. He is lying on his back with his left arm thrown back in a position that indicates cruel suffering. His hoarse breathing comes with difficulty through his parched, open mouth; his leaden blue eyes are rolled upwards, and what remains of his bandaged right arm is thrust out from under his tumbled blanket. The oppressive smell of mortified flesh assails you yet more strongly, and the feverish inner heat in all the sufferer's limbs seems to penetrate you also.

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

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

'How do you feel?' you ask him.

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

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

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

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

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

'Amputated?'

'Yes, cut off above the knee.'

Now, if your nerves are strong, go in at the door to the left; it is there they bandage and operate. There you will see doctors with pale, gloomy faces, and arms red with blood up to the elbows, busy at a bed on which a wounded man lies under chloroform. His eyes are open and he utters, as if in delirium, incoherent but sometimes simple and pathetic words. The doctors are engaged on the horrible but beneficent work of amputation. You will see the sharp curved knife enter the healthy white flesh; you will see the wounded man come back to life with terrible, heart-rending screams and curses. You will see the doctor's assistant toss the amputated arm into a corner and in the same room you will see another wounded man on a stretcher watching the operation, and writhing and groaning not so much from physical pain as from the mental torture of anticipation. You will see ghastly sights that will rend your soul; you will see war not with its orderly beautiful and brilliant ranks, its music and beating drums, its waving banners, its generals on prancing horses, but war in its real aspect of blood, suffering, and death. . . .

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

'What matters the death and suffering of so insignificant a worm as I, compared to so many deaths, so much suffering?' But the sight of the clear sky, the brilliant sun, the beautiful town, the open church, and the soldiers moving in all directions, will soon bring your spirit back to its normal state of frivolity, its petty cares and absorption in the present. You may meet the funeral procession of an officer as it leaves the church, the pink coffin accompanied by waving banners and music, and the sound of firing from the bastions may reach your ears. But these things will not bring back your former thoughts. The funeral will seem a very beautiful military pageant, the sounds very

beautiful warlike sounds; and neither to these sights nor these sounds will you attach the clear and personal sense of suffering and death that came to you in the hospital.

Passing the church and the barricade you enter that part of the town where everyday life is most active. On both sides of the street hang the signboards1 of shops and restaurants. Tradesmen, women with bonnets or kerchiefs on their heads, dandified officers — everything speaks of the firmness, self-confidence, and security of the inhabitants.

If you care to hear the conversation of army and navy officers, enter the restaurant on the right. There you are sure to hear them talk about last night, about Fanny, about the affair of the

1 Among a population largely illiterate, the signboards were usually pictorial. The bakers showed loaves and rolls, the bootmakers boots and shoes, and so on. 24th,1 about how dear and badly served the cutlets are, and how such and such of their comrades have been killed.

'Things were confoundedly bad at our place today!' a fair beardless little naval officer with a green knitted scarf round his neck says in a bass voice.

'Where was that?' asks another.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Called by the English the 'Flagstaff Bastion'.

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

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

whiz past you to the right and left, and you will perhaps consider whether you had not better walk inside the trench which runs parallel to the road; but the trench is full of such yellow liquid stinking mud, more than knee deep, that you are sure to choose the road, especially as everybody does so. After walking a couple of hundred yards you come to a muddy place much cut up, surrounded by gabions, cellars, platforms, and dug-outs, and on which large cast-iron cannon are mounted and cannon-balls lie piled in orderly heaps. It all seems placed without any plan, aim, connexion, or order. Here a group of sailors are sitting in the battery; here in the middle of the open space, half sunk in mud, lies a shattered cannon; and there a foot-soldier is crossing the battery, drawing his feet with difficulty out of the sticky mud. Everywhere, on all sides and all about, you see fragments of bombs, unexploded bombs, cannon balls, and various traces of an encampment, all sunk in the liquid, sticky mud. You think you hear the thud of a cannon-ball not far off and you seem to hear the different sounds of bullets all around, some humming like bees, some whistling, and some rapidly flying past with a shrill screech like the string of some instrument. You hear the dreadful boom of a shot that sends a shock all through you and seems most terrible.

'So this is the Fourth Bastion! This is that terrible, truly dreadful spot!' So you think, experiencing a slight feeling of pride and a strong feeling of suppressed fear. But you are mistaken, this is not the Fourth Bastion yet. This is only Yaz6novsky Redoubt — comparatively a very safe and not at all dreadful place. To get to the Fourth Bastion you must turn to the right along that narrow trench where a foot-soldier has just passed, stooping down. In this trench you may again meet men with stretchers and perhaps a sailor or a soldier with a spade. You will see the mouths of mines, dug-outs into which only two men can crawl, and there you will see the Cossacks of the Black Sea battalions changing their boots, eating, smoking their pipes, and in short Jiving. And again you will see the same stinking mud, the traces of camp life and cast-iron refuse of every shape and form. When you have gone some three hundred steps more you will come out at another battery — a flat space with many holes, surrounded with gabions filled with earth, and cannons on platforms, and the whole walled in with earthworks. Here you will perhaps see four or five soldiers playing cards under shelter of the breastworks, and a naval officer, noticing that you are a stranger and inquisitive, will be pleased to show you his 'household' and everything that can interest you. This officer sits on a cannon rolling a yellow cigarette so composedly, walks from one embrasure to another so quietly, talks to you so calmly and with such an absence of affectation, that in spite of the bullets whizzing around you oftener than before you yourself grow cooler, question him carefully and listen to his stories. He will tell you (but only if you ask) about the bombardment on the 5th of October; will tell you that only one gun of his battery remained usable and only eight gunners of the crew were left, and that nevertheless he fired all his guns next morning, the 6th. He will tell you how a bomb dropped into one of the dug-outs and knocked over eleven sailors; from an embrasure he will show you the enemy's batteries and trenches which are here not more than seventy-five to eighty-five yards distant. I am afraid though, that when you

lean out of the embrasure to have a look at the enemy the whiz of the flying bullets will hinder you from seeing anything, but if you do see anything you will be much surprised to find that this whitish stone wall — which is so near you and from which puffs of white smoke keep bursting — is the enemy: he, as the soldiers and sailors say.

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

Suddenly the most fearful roar strikes not only your ears but your whole being and makes you shudder all over. It is followed by the whistle of the departing ball, and a thick cloud of powder-smoke envelops you, the platform, and the black moving figures of the sailors. You will hear various comments made by the sailors concerning this shot of ours and you will notice their animation, the evidences of a feeling you had not perhaps expected: the feeling of animosity and thirst for vengeance which lies hidden in each man's soul. You will hear joyful exclamations: 'It's gone right into the embrasure! It's killed two, I think... There, they're carrying them off!' 'And now he's riled and will send one this way,' some one remarks; and really, soon after, you will see before you a flash and some smoke; the sentinel standing on the breastwork will call out 'Ca-n-non!', and then a ball will whiz past you and bury itself in the earth, throwing out a circle of stones and mud. The commander of the battery will be irritated by this shot and will give orders to fire another and another cannon, the enemy will reply in like manner, and you will experience interesting sensations and see interesting sights. The sentinel will again call 'Cannon!' and you will have the same sound and shock, and the mud will be splashed around as before. Or he will call out 'Mortar!' and you will hear the regular and rather pleasant whistle — which it is difficult to connect with the thought of anything dreadful — of a bomb; you will hear this whistle coming nearer and faster towards you, then you will see a black ball, feel the shock as it strikes the ground, and will hear the ringing explosion. The bomb will fly apart into whizzing and shrieking fragments, stones will rattle in the air, and you will be bespattered with mud.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is only now that the tales of the early days of the siege of Sevastopol are no longer beautiful historical legends for you, but have become realities: the tales of the time when it was not fortified, when there was no army to defend it, when it seemed a physical impossibility to retain it and yet there was not the slightest idea of abandoning it to the enemy — of the time when Kornilov, that hero worthy of ancient Greece, making his round of the troops, said, 'Lads, we will die, but will not surrender Sevastopol!'

and our Russians, incapable of phrase-making, replied, ‘We will die! Hurrah!’ You will clearly recognize in the men you have just seen those heroes who gladly prepared for death and whose spirits did not flag during those dismal days, but rose.

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

Sevastopol, 25 April o.s. 1855.

Sevastopol in May 1855

Chapter 1

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

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

Chapter 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From these recollections Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov involuntarily passed to dreams and hopes. 'How surprised and pleased Natasha will be,' he thought as he passed along a narrow side-street, 'when she reads in the Invalide of my being the

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

Ill

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

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

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

But why is Lieutenant-Captain Mikhaylov afraid and unable to muster courage to approach them? 'Supposing they don't return my greeting,' he thinks, 'or merely bow and go on talking among themselves as if I were not there, or simply walk away and leave me standing among the aristocrats?' The word aristocrats (in the sense of the highest and most select circle of any class) has lately gained great popularity in Russia, where one would think it ought not to exist. It has made its way to every part of the country, and into every grade of society which can be reached by vanity — and to what

conditions of time and circumstance does this pitiful propensity not penetrate? You find it among merchants, officials, clerks, officers — in Saratov, Mamadishi, Vinnitza, in fact wherever men are to be found. And since there are many men, and consequently much vanity, in the besieged town of Sevastopol, aristocrats are to be found here too, though death hangs over everyone, be he aristocrat or not.

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

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

Twice the lieutenant-captain passed irresolutely by the group of his aristocrats, but drawing near them for the third time he made an effort and walked up to them. The group consisted of four officers: Adjutant Kalugin, Mikhaylov's acquaintance, Adjutant Prince Galtsin who was rather an aristocrat even for Kalugin himself, Lieutenant-Colonel Neferdov, one of the so-called two hundred and twenty-two' society men, who being on the retired list re-entered the army for this war, and Cavalry-Captain Praskrikhin, also of the 'two hundred and twenty-two'. Luckily for Mikhaylov, Kalugin was in splendid spirits (the General had just spoken to him in a very confidential manner, and Prince Gals tin who had arrived from Petersburg was staying with him), so he did not think it beneath his dignity to shake hands with Mikhaylov, which was more than Praskukhin did though he had often met Mikhaylov on the bastion, had more than once drunk his wine and vodka, and even owed him twelve and a half rubles lost at cards. Not being yet well acquainted with Prince Galtsin he did not like to appear to be acquainted with a mere lieutenant-captain of infantry. So he only bowed slightly.

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

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

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

He wanted to say that it was not his turn but as the Commander of the 8th Company was ill and only the ensign was left in the company, he felt it his duty to go in place

of Lieutenant Nepshisetski and would therefore be at the bastion that evening. But Kalugin did not hear him out.

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

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

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

Tine girl that, with the red kerchief. You know her, don't you, Captain?'

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

'Come, let's have a good look at her.'

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

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

from T-and his gloomy forebodings at the thought

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

Chapter 4

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

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

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

The lieutenant-captain forgot that it was not the first time he had felt this presentiment: that in a greater or lesser degree he had it whenever he was going to the bastion, and he did not know that before going into action everyone has such forebodings more or less strongly. Having calmed himself by appealing to his sense of duty — which was highly developed and very strong — the lieutenant-captain sat down at the table and began writing a farewell letter to his father. Ten minutes later, having finished his letter, he rose from the table his eyes wet with tears, and repeating mentally all the prayers he knew he began to dress. His rather tipsy and rude servant lazily handed him his new cloak — the old one which the lieutenant-captain usually wore at the bastion not being mended.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recalling where he was about to go Mikhaylov felt ashamed.

‘But you know, Nikita, you would try anyone’s patience!’ he said mildly. ‘That letter to my father on the table you may leave where it is. Don’t touch it,9 he added reddening.

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

But at the porch, when the lieutenant-captain said, ‘Good-bye, Nikita,’ Nikita burst into forced sobs and rushed to kiss his master’s hand, saying, ‘Good-bye, sir,’ in a broken voice. A sailor’s widow who was also standing in the porch could not, as a woman, help joining in this tender scene, and began wiping her eyes on her dirty sleeve, saying something about people who, though they were gentlefolk, took such sufferings upon themselves while she, poor woman, was left a widow. And she told the tipsy Nikita for the hundredth time about her sorrows; how her husband had been killed in the first bondbarment, and how her hut had been shattered (the one she lived in now was not her own) and so on. After his master was gone Nikita lit his pipe, asked the landlady’s little girl to get some vodka, very soon left off crying, and even had a quarrel with the old woman about a pail he said she had smashed for him.

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

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

Chapter 5

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

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

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

1 'I tell you, at one time it was only the only thing talked of in Petersburg.' Galtsin, laughing as he jumped up from the piano-stool and sat down near Kalugin on the window-sill,1 'a capital joke. I know all about it.'

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

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

'What of Maslovski?'

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

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

'Oh yes, long ago.'

'Is he still fussing about with his gipsy?'

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

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

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

'Serve the prince,' said Kalugin.

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

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

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

and no end to it — would be intolerable. And to have dirt and discomfort added to it —

'But our infantry officers live at the bastions with their men in the bomb-proofs and eat the soldiers' soup', said Kalugin, 'what of them?'

'What of them? Well, though it's true they don't change their shirts for ten days at a time, they are heroes all the same — wonderful fellows.'

Just then an infantry officer entered the room.

'I ... I have orders . . . may I see the Gen ... his Excellency? I have come with a message from General N.,' he said with a timid bow.

Kalugin rose and without returning the officer's greeting asked with an offensive, affected, official smile if he would not have the goodness to wait; and without asking him to sit down or taking any further notice of him he turned to Galtsin and began talking French, so that the poor officer left alone in the middle of the room did not in the least know what to do with himself.

'It is a matter of the utmost urgency, sir,' he said after a short silence.

'Ah! Well then, please come with me,' said Kalugin, putting on his cloak and accompanying the officer to the door.

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

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

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

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

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

Praskukhin and Neferdov left to go to their appointed posts.

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

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

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

'But I say, they're banging away at the lodgements! Oho! I wonder if that's ours or his? . . . Now it's burst,' said they as they lounged on the window-sill looking at the fiery trails of the bombs crossing one another in the air, at flashes that for a moment

lit up the dark sky, at puffs of white smoke, and listened to the more and more rapid reports of the firing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

‘Really? You think I need not go, eh?’

At that moment, from the direction in which these gentlemen were looking, amid the boom of the cannon came the terrible rattle of musketry, and thousands of little fires flaming up in quick succession flashed all along the line.

‘There! Now it’s the real thing!’ said Kalugin. 6I can’t keep cool when I hear the noise of muskets. It seems to seize one’s very soul, you know. There’s an hurrah!’ he added, listening intently to the distant and prolonged roar of hundreds of voices— ‘Ah — ah — ah’ — which came from the bastions.

‘Whose hurrah was it? Theirs or ours?’

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

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

‘Where are you from?’

‘From the bastion. I want the General.’

‘Come along. Well, what’s happened?’

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

‘Well, have we retired?’ asked Kalugin.

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

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

Five minutes later Kalugin was already on his Cossack horse (again in the semi-Cossack manner which I have noticed that all adjutants, for some reason, seem to consider the proper thing), and rode off at a trot towards the bastion to deliver some orders and await the final result of the affair. Prince Galtsin, under the influence of

that oppressive excitement usually produced in a spectator by proximity to an action in which he is not engaged, went out, and began aimlessly pacing up and down the street.

Chapter 6

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

1 Rifles, except some clumsy stutzers, had not been introduced into the Russian army, but were used by the besiegers, who had a still greater advantage in artillery. It is characteristic of Tolst6y that, occupied with men rather than mechanics, he does not in these sketches dwell on this disparity of equipment. wounded man, the steps and voices of stretcher-bearers, or the words of some frightened women who had come out onto their porches to watch the cannonade.

Among the spectators were our friend Nikita, the old sailor's widow with whom he had again made friends, and her ten-year-old daughter.

'O Lord God! Holy Mary, Mother of God!' said the old woman, sighing as she looked at the bombs that kept flying across from side to side like balls of fire; 'What horrors! What horrors! Ah, ah! Oh, oh! Even at the first bondbarment it wasn't like that. Look now where the cursed thing has burst just over our house in the suburb.'

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

'And where, where, is master now?' drawled Nikita, who was not quite sober yet. 'Oh! You don't know how I love that master of mine! I love him so that if he were killed in a sinful way, which God forbid, then would you believe it, granny, after that I myself don't know what I wouldn't do to myself! I don't! . . . My master is that sort, there's only one word for it. Would I change him for such as them there, playing cards? What are they? Ugh! There's only one word for it!' concluded Nikita, pointing to the lighted window of his master's room to which, in the absence of the lieutenant-captain, Cadet Zhvadchevski had invited Sub-Lieutenants Ugrovich and Nepshisetski — the latter suffering from face-ache — and where he was having a spree in honour of a medal he had received.

'Look at the stars! Look how they're rolling!' the little girl broke the silence that followed Nikita's words as she stood gazing at the sky. 'There's another rolled down. What is it a sign of, mother?'

'They'll smash up our hut altogether,' said the old woman with a sigh, leaving her daughter unanswered. 'As we went there to-day with uncle, mother,' the little girl continued in a sing-song tone, becoming loquacious, 'there was such a b — i — g

cannon-ball inside the room close to the cupboard. Must have smashed in through the passage and right into the room! Such a big one — you couldn't lift it.'

'Those who had husbands and money all moved away,' said the old woman, 'and there's the hut, all that was left me, and that's been smashed. Just look at him blazing away! The fiend!... O Lord! O Lord!'

'And just as we were going out, comes a bomb flying, and goes and bur-sts and co-o-vers us with dust. A bit of it nearly hit me and uncle.'

Chapter 7

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

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

But at this point in the story Galtsin interrupted him.

'You are from the bastion?'

'Yes, your Honour.'

'Well, what happened? Tell me.'

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

'Overpowered? . . . But you repulsed them?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Ah, your Honour,' began a soldier from a stretcher which had just come up to them, 'how could we help giving it up when he had killed almost all our men? If we'd had the strength we wouldn't have given it up, not on any account. But as it was, what

could we do? I stuck one, and then something hits me. Oh, oh-h! Steady, lads, steady! Oh, oh!' groaned the wounded man.

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

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

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

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

'I am wounded, your Honour.'

'Wounded? How?'

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

'And whose is this other gun?'

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

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

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

Chapter 8

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

sufferers. One doctor sat at a table near the door and at the moment Galtsin came in was already entering No. 532.

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

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

'Perforatio capitis!'

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

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

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

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

Chapter 9

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

'Zobkin! Zobkin! Wait a bit!'

'Well, what is it?'

'Where are you from?'

'The lodgements.'

'How are things there — hot?'

'Oh, awful!'

And the orderly galloped on.

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

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

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

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

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

1 'You are wounded?'

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

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

After ascending the hill he turned to the left, and a few steps farther on found himself quite alone. A splinter of a bomb whizzed near him and fell into the trench. Another bomb rose in front of him and seemed flying straight at him. He suddenly felt frightened, ran a few steps at full speed, and lay down flat. When the bomb burst a considerable distance off he felt exceedingly vexed with himself and rose, looking round to see if anyone had noticed his downfall, but no one was near.

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

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

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

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

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

'I walked very fast, your Excellency!'

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

Kalugin drank a glass of wine and lit a cigarette. The action was over, only a fierce cannonade still continued from both sides. In the bomb-proof sat General N — , the Commander of the bastion, and some six other officers among whom was Praskukhin. They were discussing various details of the action. Sitting in this comfortable room with blue wall-paper, a sofa, a bed, a table with papers on it, a wall-clock with a lamp burning before it, and an icon1 — looking at these signs of habitation, at the beams more than two feet thick that formed the ceiling, and listening to the shots that sounded faint here in the shelter, Kalugin could not understand how he had twice allowed himself to be overcome by such unpardonable weakness. He was angry with himself and wished for danger in order to test his nerve once more.

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

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

'All the same, let us go and see.'

The captain frowned and gave an angry grunt.

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

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

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

Kalugin did not realize that whereas he had spent some fifty hours all in all at different times on the bastions, the captain had lived there for six months. Kalugin was still actuated by vanity, the wish to shine, the hope of rewards, of gaining a reputation, and the charm of running risks. But the captain had already lived through all that: at first he had felt vain, had shown off his courage, had been foolhardy, had hoped for rewards and reputation and had even gained them, but now all these incentives had lost their power over him and he saw things differently. He fulfilled his duty exactly, but quite understanding how much the chances of life were against him after six months at the bastion, he no longer ran risks without serious need, and so the young lieutenant who had joined the battery a week ago and was now showing it to Kalugin, with whom

he vied in uselessly leaning out of the embrasures and climbing out on the banquette, seemed ten times braver than the captain. Returning to the shelter after examining the battery, Kalugin in the dark came upon the General, who accompanied by his staff officers was going to the watch-tower.

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

‘Yes, sir.’

And Praskukhin started at full speed towards the lodgements.

The firing was now becoming less frequent.

Chapter 10

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

‘It is, your Honour.’

‘Where is the Commander?’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Nothing much. It seems that the affair is over.'

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

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

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

And really about twenty minutes later the General and the officers who were with him returned. Among them was Cadet Baron Pesth but not Praskukhin. The lodgements had been retaken and occupied by us.

After receiving a full account of the affair Kalugin, accompanied by Pesth, left the bomb-proof shelter.

Chapter 11

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

'Oh, it was awful! Just fancy-'

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Mind lads! Show them what you're made of! Don't fire, but give it them with the bayonet — the dogs! — when I cry "Hurrah!" Altogether,mind, that's the thing! We'll let them see who we are. We won't disgrace ourselves, eh lads? For our father the Tsar!'

'What's your company-commander's name?' asked Pesth of a cadet lying near him. 'How brave he is!'

'Yes he always is, in action,' answered the cadet. 'His name is Lisinkovski.'

Just then a flame suddenly flashed up right in front of the company, who were deafened by a resounding crash. High up in the air stones and splinters clattered. (Some fifty seconds later a stone fell from above and severed a soldier's leg.) It was a

bomb fired from an elevated stand, and the fact that it reached the company showed that the French had noticed the column.

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

After that the first company got up, then the second. They were ordered to fix bayonets and the battalion advanced. Pesth was in such a fright that he could not in the least make out how long it lasted, where he went, or who was who. He went on as if he were drunk. But suddenly a million fires flashed from all sides, and something whistled and clattered. He shouted and ran somewhere, because everyone shouted and ran. Then he stumbled and fell over something. It was the company-commander, who had been wounded at the head of his company, and who taking the cadet for a Frenchman had seized him by the leg. Then when Pesth had freed his leg and got up, someone else ran against him from behind in the dark and nearly knocked him down again. 'Run him through!' someone else shouted. 'Why are you stopping?' Then someone seized a bayonet and stuck it into something soft. 'Ah Dieu!' came a dreadful, piercing voice and Pesth only then understood that he had bayoneted a Frenchman. A cold sweat Covered his whole body, he trembled as in a fever and threw down his musket. But this lasted only a moment; the thought immediately entered his head that he was a hero. He again seized his musket, and shouting 'Hurrah!' ran with the crowd away from the dead Frenchman. Having run twenty paces he came to a trench. Some of our men were there with the battalion-commander.

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

'You're a fine fellow, Baron!'

Chapter 12

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

'Impossible!'

'It is true. I saw him myself.'

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

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

It was with extraordinary pleasure that Kalugin found himself safe at home again, and having put on his night-shirt and got into bed he gave Galtsin all the details of

the affair, telling them very naturally from a point of view where those details showed what a capable and brave officer he, Kalugin, was (which it seems to me it was hardly necessary to allude to, since everybody knew it and had no right or reason to question it, except perhaps the deceased Captain Praskukhin who, though he had considered it an honour to walk arm in arm with Kalugin, had privately told a friend only yesterday that though Kalugin was a first-rate fellow, yet, 'between you and me, he was awfully disinclined to go to the bastions').

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

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

'Lie down!' shouted someone.

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

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

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

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

He had been slightly wounded in the head by a stone. His first feeling was one almost of regret: he had prepared himself so well and so calmly to go there that the return to reality, with its bombs, stretchers, and blood, seemed unpleasant. The second feeling

was unconscious joy at being alive, and the third a wish to get away from the bastion as quickly as possible. The drummer tied a handkerchief round his commander's head and taking his arm led him towards the ambulance station.

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

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

And he turned back.

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

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

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

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

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

'How could we, under such a fire?'

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

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

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

Michael Ivanych did not answer.

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

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

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

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

Having convinced himself that Praskukhin was dead he dragged himself back panting, holding the bandage that had slipped on his head, which was beginning to ache very badly. When he overtook the battalion it was already at the foot of the hill and almost beyond the range of the shots. I say ‘almost’, for a stray bomb reached even here now and then.

‘To-morrow I had better go and be entered at the ambulance station,’ thought the lieutenant-captain, while a medical assistant, who had turned up, was bandaging his head.

Chapter 14

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

Chapter 15

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

Kalugin was walking arm in arm with Prince Galtsin and a colonel near the pavilion and talking of last night’s affair. The main theme of their conversation, as usual in such cases, was not the affair itself, but the part each of the speakers had taken in it. Their faces and the tone of their voices were serious, almost sorrowful, as if the losses of the night had touched and saddened them all. But to tell the truth, as none of them

had lost any one very dear to him, this sorrowful expression was only an official one they considered it their duty to exhibit.

Kalugin and the colonel in fact, though they were first-rate fellows, were ready to see such an affair every day if they could gain a gold sword and be made major-general each time. It is all very well to call some conqueror a monster because he destroys millions to gratify his ambition, but go and ask any Ensign Petrushev or Sub-Lieutenant Antanov on their conscience, and you will find that everyone of us is a little Napoleon, a petty monster ready to start a battle and kill a hundred men merely to get an extra medal or one-third additional pay.

'No, I beg your pardon,' said the colonel. 'It began first on the left side. I was there myself.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Est-ce que le pavilion est baisse deja?'1 asked Prince Galtsin, glancing at the lieutenant-captain's cap and not addressing anyone in particular.

1 'Is the flag (of truce) lowered already?' 'Non, pas encore,'1 answered Mikhaylov, wishing to show that he understood and spoke French.

'Do you mean to say the truce still continues?' said Galtsin, politely addressing him in Russian and thereby (so it seemed to the lieutenant-captain) suggesting: 'It must no doubt be difficult for you to have to speak French, so hadn't we better simply . .and with that the adjutants went away. The lieutenant-captain again felt exceedingly lonely, just as he had done the day before. After bowing to various people — some of whom he did not wish and some of whom he did not venture to join — he sat down near the Kazarski monument and smoked a cigarette.

Baron Pesth also turned up on the boulevard. He mentioned that he had been at the parley and had spoken to the French officers. According to his account one of them had said to him: 'S'il n'avait pas fait clair encore pendant me demi-heure, les ambuscades auraient eti reprises,'2 and he replied, 'Monsieur, je ne dis pas non, pour ne pas vous dormer un dementi,'3 and he told how pat it had come out, and so on.

But though he had been at the parley he had not really managed to say anything in particular, though he much wished to speak with the French ('for it's awfully jolly to speak to those fellows'). He had paced up and down the line for a long time asking the Frenchmen near him: (De quel rigiment etes-vous'4 and had got his answer and nothing

more. When he went too far beyond the line, the French sentry, not suspecting that 'that soldier' knew French, abused him in the third person singular: 'II vient regarder nos travaux, ce sacre— '5 in consequence of which Cadet

1 'No, not yet.'

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

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

4 'What regiment do you belong to?'

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

On the boulevard was Captain Zobov talking very loud, and Captain Obzhogov, the artillery captain who never curried favour with anyone, was there too, in a dishevelled condition, and also the cadet who was always fortunate in his love affairs, and all the same people as yesterday, with the same motives as always. Only Praskukhin, Neferdov, and a few more were missing, and hardly anyone now remembered or thought of them, though there had not yet been time for their bodies to be washed, laid out, and put into the ground.

Chapter 16

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

Listen to what these people are saying.

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

'Eh sussy, poor quah se waso lie?'1

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

'Eh voo de la guard?'3

1 'And what is this tied bird for?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 ‘And where did you buy this?’

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

4 ‘Pretty.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

And here, in the midst of a group of French officers, one of our young cavalry officers is gushing. They are talking about some Count Sazonov, ‘que fai beaucoup connu, monsieur,’ says a French officer with only one epaulette— ‘c’est un de ces vrais comtes russes, comme nous les aimons.’4

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

‘C’est ca, monsieur, c’ est lui. Oh ! que je voudrais le voir, ce cher comte. Si vous le voyez, je vous prie bien de lui faire mes compliments — Capitaine Latour,’6 he said, bowing.

‘N’est-ce pas terrible la triste besogne que nous faisons? Ca chauffait cette nuit, n’est-ce pas?’9 said the cavalry

1 ‘They are not handsome, these d — Russians.’

2 ‘What are they laughing about?’

3 ‘Don’t leave your ranks. To your places, damn it!’

4 ‘Whom I knew very intimately, monsieur. He is one of those real Russian counts of whom we are so fond.’

5 ‘I am acquainted with a Sazonov, but he is not a Count, as far as I know — a small dark man, of about your age.’

6 ‘Just so, monsieur, that is he. Oh, how I should like to meet the dear count. If you should see him, please be so kind as to give him my compliments — Captain Latour.’

7 ‘Isn’t it terrible, this sad duty we are engaged in? It was warm work last night, wasn’t it?’ officer, wishing to maintain the conversation and pointing to the corpses.

‘ Oh, monsieur, c’est affreux! Mais quels gaillards vos soldats, quels gaillards! C’est unplaisir que de se battre avec des gaillards comme eux.’1

‘Il faut avouer que les votres ne se mouchent pas du pied non plus,’2 said the cavalry officer, bowing and imagining himself very agreeable.

But enough.

Let us rather look at this ten-year-old boy in an old cap (probably his father’s), with shoes on his stockingless feet and nankeen trousers held up by one brace. At the very beginning of the truce he came over the entrenchments, and has been walking about the valley ever since, looking with dull curiosity at the French and at the corpses that lie on the ground and gathering the blue flowers with which the valley is strewn. Returning home with a large bunch of flowers he holds his nose to escape the smell that is borne towards him by the wind, and stopping near a heap of corpses gazes for a long time at a terrible headless body that lies nearest to him. After standing there some time he draws nearer and touches with his foot the stiff outstretched arm of the corpse. The arm trembles a little. He touches it again more boldly; it moves and falls back to its old position. The boy gives a sudden scream, hides his face in his flowers, and runs towards the fortifications as fast as his legs can carry him.

Yes, there are white flags on the bastions and the trenches but the flowery valley is covered with dead bodies. The glorious sun is sinking towards the blue sea, and the undulating blue sea glitters in the golden

1 ‘Ah, monsieur, it is terrible! But what fine fellows your men are, what fine fellows! It is a pleasure to fight with such fellows!’

2 ‘It must be admitted that yours are no fools either.’ (Literally, ‘don’t wipe their noses with their feet’.) light. Thousands of people crowd together, look at, speak to, and smile at one another. And these people — Christians professing the one great law of love and self-sacrifice — on seeing what they have done do not at once fall repentant

on their knees before Him who has given them life and laid in the soul of each a fear of death and a love of the good and the beautiful, and do not embrace like brothers with tears of joy and gladness.

The white flags are lowered, the engines of death and suffering are sounding again, innocent blood is flowing and the air is filled with moans and curses.

There, I have said what I wished to say this time. But I am seized by an oppressive doubt. Perhaps I ought to have left it unsaid. What I have said perhaps belongs to that class of evil truths that lie unconsciously hidden in the soul of each man and should not be uttered lest they become harmful, as the dregs in a bottle must not be disturbed for fear of spoiling the wine. . . .

Where in this tale is the evil that should be avoided, and where the good that should be imitated? Who is the villain and who the hero of the story? All are good and all are bad.

Not Kalugin, with his brilliant courage — bravoure de gentilhomme — and the vanity that influences all his actions, not Praskukhin, the empty harmless fellow (though he fell in battle for faith, throne, and fatherland), not Mikhaylov with his shyness, nor Pesth, a child without firm principles or convictions, can be either the villain or the hero of the tale.

The hero of my tale — whom I love with all the power of my soul, whom I have tried to portray in all his beauty, who has been, is, and will be beautiful — is Truth.

Sevastopol in August 1855

Chapter 1

Towards the end of August, through the hot thick dust of the rocky and hilly highway between Duvankal and Bakhchisariy, an officer's vehicle was slowly toiling towards Sevastopol (that peculiar kind of vehicle you never meet anywhere else — something between a Jewish britzka, a Russian cart, and a basket).

In the front of the trap, pulling at the reins, squatted an orderly in a nankeen coat and wearing a cap, now quite limp, that had once belonged to an officer: behind, on bundles and bales covered with a soldier's overcoat, sat an infantry officer in a summer cloak. The officer, as far as one could judge while he was sitting, was not tall but very broad and massive, not across the shoulders so much as from back to chest. His neck and the back of his head were much developed and very solid. He had no waist, and yet his body did not appear to be stout in that part: on the contrary he was rather lean, especially in the face, which was burnt to an unwholesome yellow. He would have been good-looking had it not been for a certain puffiness and the broad soft wrinkles, not due to age, that blurred the outlines of his features, making them seem larger and giving the face a general look of coarseness and lack of freshness. His small eyes were hazel, with a daring and even insolent expression: he had very thick but not wide moustaches the ends of which were bitten off, and his chin and especially his jaws were covered with an exceedingly strong, thick, black stubble of two days' growth.

This officer had been wounded in the head by a bomb splinter on 10 May2 and still wore a bandage,

1 The last posting-station north of Sevastopol.

2 There were a series of desperate night conflicts on the 9 to 11 May o.s. (21 to 23 May n.s.) but having felt well again for the past week, he had left the hospital at Simferopol and was now on his way to rejoin his regiment stationed somewhere in the direction of the firing — but whether in Sevastopol itself, on the North Side, or at Inkerman, no one had yet been able to tell him for certain. The sound of frequent firing, especially at times when no hills intercepted it and the wind carried it this way, was already very distinct and seemed quite near. Now an explosion shook the air and made one start involuntarily, now less violent sounds followed one another in quick succession like the roll of drums, broken now and then by a startling boom, and now again all these sounds mingled into a kind of rolling crash, like peals of thunder when a storm is raging in all its fury and rain has just begun to fall in torrents. Everyone

was remarking (and one could moreover hear for oneself) that a terrific bombardment was going on. The officer kept telling his orderly to drive faster; he seemed in a hurry to get to his destination. They met a train of Russian peasant-carts that had taken provisions to Sevastopol and were now returning laden with sick and wounded soldiers in grey uniforms, sailors in black cloaks, volunteers with red fezes on their heads, and bearded militiamen. The officer's trap had to stand still in the thick motionless cloud of dust raised by this train of carts and, frowning and blinking at the dust that filled his eyes, he sat looking at the faces of the sick and wounded as they drove past.

'There's a soldier of our company — that one who is so weak!' said the orderly, turning to his master and pointing to a cart laden with wounded men which had just come up to them.

A bearded Russian in a felt hat sat sideways in the front of the cart plaiting the lash of a whip, the handle of which he held to his side with his elbow. Behind him in the cart five or six soldiers were being jolted along, some lying and some sitting in different positions. One with a bandaged arm and his cloak thrown loosely over his very dirty shirt, though he looked pale and thin, sat upright in the middle of the cart and raised his hand as if to salute the officer, but probably remembering that he was wounded, pretended that he only meant to scratch his head. Beside him on the bottom of the cart lay a man of whom all that was visible was his two hands holding on to the sides of the cart and his lifted knees swaying to and fro like rags. A third, whose face was swollen and who had a soldier's cap stuck on the top of his bandaged head, sat on the side of the cart with his legs hanging down over the wheel, and, resting his elbows on his knees, seemed to be dozing. The officer addressed him: 'Dolzhnikov!' he cried.

'Here!' answered the soldier, opening his eyes and taking off his cap and speaking in such a deep and abrupt bass that it sounded as if twenty soldiers had shouted all together.

'When were you wounded, lad?'

The soldier's leaden eyes with their swollen lids brightened. He had evidently recognized his officer.

'Good-day, your honour!' said he in the same abrupt bass.

'Where is your regiment stationed now?'

'In Sevastopol. We were going to move on Wednesday, your honour!'

'Where to?'

'Don't know, your honour — to the North Side, maybe. . . . Now they're firing right across, your honour!' he added in a long-drawn tone, replacing his cap. 'Mostly bombs — they reach us right across the bay. He's giving it us awful hot now . . .'

What the soldier said further could not be heard, but the expression of his face and his pose showed that his words, spoken with the bitterness of one suffering, were not reassuring.

The officer in the trap, Lieutenant Kozeltsov, was not an ordinary type of man. He was not one of those who live and act this way or that because others live and act so: he did what he chose, and others followed his example and felt sure it was right.

He was by nature endowed with many minor gifts: he sang well, played the guitar, talked to the point, and wrote very easily (especially official papers — a knack for writing which he had acquired when he was adjutant of his battalion), but his most remarkable characteristic was his ambitious energy, which though chiefly founded on those same minor talents was in itself a marked and striking feature. He had ambition of a kind most frequently found among men and especially in military circles, and this had become so much a part of his life that he could imagine no other course than to lead or to perish. Ambition was at the root of his innermost impulses and even in his private thoughts he liked to put himself first when he compared himself with others.

'It's likely I should pay attention to the chatter of a private!' he muttered, with a feeling of heaviness and apathy at heart and a certain dimness of thought left by the sight of the convoy of wounded men and the words of the soldier, enforced as they were by the sounds of the cannonade.

'Funny fellow, that soldier! Now then, Nikolaev, get on! . . . Are you asleep?' he added rather fretfully as he arranged the skirt of his cloak.

Nikolaev jerked the reins, clicked his tongue, and the trap rolled on at a trot.

'We'll only stop just to feed the horse, and then go on at once, to-night,' said the officer.

Chapter 2

When he was entering what was left of a street of ruined stone Tartar houses in Duvanka, Lieutenant Kozelts6v was stopped by a convoy of bombs and cannon-balls on its way to Sevastopol, that blocked the road.

Two infantrymen sat on the stones of a ruined wall amid a cloud of dust, eating a water-melon and some bread.

'Going far, comrade?' asked one of them, with his mouth full of bread, as another soldier with a little bag on his back stopped beside them.

'Going to join our regiment,' answered the soldier, looking past the water-melon and readjusting his bag. 'We've been nearly three weeks in the province looking for hay for our company, and now we've all been recalled, but we don't know where the regiment is. Some say it crossed to the Korabelnaya last week. Perhaps you have heard, friends?'

'In the town, mate. It's quartered in the town,' muttered the other, an old convoy soldier who was digging a clasp-knife into an unripe, whitish watermelon. 'We only left there this afternoon. [It's so awful there, mate, you'd better not go, but fall down here somewhere among the hay and lie there for a day or two!]'

'What do you mean, friend?'

'Why, can't you hear? They're firing from all sides to-day, there's not a place left whole. As for the likes of us as has been killed — there's no counting 'em!' And making an expressive gesture with his hand, the speaker set his cap straight.

The soldier who had stopped shook his head thoughtfully and clicked his tongue, then he took a pipe out of the leg of his boot, and not filling it but merely loosening the scorched tobacco in it, he lit a bit of tinder at the pipe of one of the others. Then he raised his cap and said:

'One can't get away from God, friends! Good-bye.' And straightening his bag with a jerk he went his way.

'It would be far better to wait!' the man who was digging into the water-melon said with conviction. 'It can't be helped!' muttered the newcomer, as he squeezed between the wheels of the crowded carts. ['It seems I too must buy a water-melon for my supper. Just think what people are saying!']

Ill

The post-station was full of people when Kozeltsov drove up. The first one he met in the porch was a very thin young man, the superintendent, bickering with two officers who were following him.

'It's not only three days you'll have to wait but maybe ten. . . . Even generals have to wait, my good sir!' said the superintendent, evidently wishing to hurt the travellers' feelings. 'I can't hitch myself to a cart for you, can I?'

'Then don't give horses to anyone, if you have none! Why did you give them to that lackey with the baggage?' shouted the elder of the officers, who had a tumbler of tea in his hand.

'Just consider a moment, Mr. Superintendent,' said the other, a very young officer, hesitatingly. 'We are not going for our own pleasure. You see, we are evidently wanted there, since we have been summoned. I shall really have to report it to the general. It will never do, you know. ... It seems you don't respect an officer's position.'

But the elder man interrupted him crossly. 'You always spoil everything! You only hinder me . . . a man has to know how to speak to these people. There you see, he has lost all respect... Horses, I say, this very minute!'

'Willingly, my dear sir, but where am I to get them from?'

The superintendent was silent for a few minutes. Then he suddenly flared up and waving his arms began:

'I know it all very well, my dear sir, and fully understand it, but what am I to do? You give me but' (a ray of hope showed itself on the faces of the officers) . . . 'let me but hold out to the end of the month, and I'll stay here no longer. I'd rather go to the Malakhov Hill than remain here, I swear I would! Let them do what they please. There's not a single sound vehicle left in the whole place, and it's the third day the horses haven't had a wisp of hay.' And the superintendent disappeared through the gate.

Kozeltsov entered the room together with the officers.

'Well,' said the elder calmly to the younger, though the moment before he had seemed quite beside himself, 'we've been three months on the road already and can wait a bit longer. No matter, we'll get there soon enough!'

The dirty, smoky room was so full of officers and trunks that Kozeltsov had some difficulty in finding a seat on the window-sill. While observing the faces and listening to the conversation of the others he began rolling himself a cigarette. To the right of the door sat the principal group round a crooked, greasy table on which stood two samovars with verdigris showing on them here and there, and with sugar spread on various bits of paper. A young officer who had not yet grown a moustache, in a new, quilted Caucasian coat which had certainly been made out of a woman's dressing-gown, was filling a teapot, and there were four other equally young officers in different parts of the room. One of them lay asleep on the sofa with a fur coat of some kind rolled up under his head; another was standing at the table cutting up some roast mutton for a one-armed officer who sat there. Two officers, one in an adjutant's cloak, the other in infantry uniform made of fine cloth and with a satchel across his shoulders, were sitting by the stove, and from the way they looked at the others and the manner in which the one with the satchel smoked his cigar, it was plain that they were not officers of the line and were glad they were not. Their manner did not show contempt so much as a certain calm self-satisfaction founded partly on money and partly on intimacy with generals — a consciousness of superiority extending even to a desire to conceal it. Then there was a thick-lipped young doctor and an artillery officer who looked like a German — these were sitting on the sofa almost on the feet of the sleeping officer, counting money. There were also several orderlies, some dozing, others near the door busy with bundles and portmanteaux. Among all these people Kozeltsov did not recognize a single acquaintance, but he listened with interest to their conversation. He liked the young officers who, as he at once concluded from their appearance, had come straight from the Cadet College; they reminded him of the fact that his brother, who was coming straight from the College too, ought to reach one of the batteries in Sevastopol in a few days' time. But he did not like the officer with the satchel, whose face he had seen somewhere before — everything about him seemed insolent and repellent. 'We'll put him down if he ventures to say anything!' he thought, and he even moved from the window to the stove and sat down there. Belonging to a line regiment and being a good officer, he had a general dislike for those 'on the Staff', and such he at once recognized these officers to be.

Chapter 4

'I say, isn't it an awful nuisance that being so near we can't get there?' said one of the young officers. 'There may be an action to-day and we shan't be in it.'

The high-pitched voice and the fresh rosy spots which appeared on his face betrayed the charming youthful bashfulness of one in constant fear of not saying the right thing. The officer who had lost an arm looked at him with a smile.

'You'll get there soon enough, believe me,' he said.

The young officer looked respectfully at the crippled man, whose emaciated face suddenly lit up with a smile, and then silently turned his attention to making his tea. And really the face, the attitude, and especially the empty sleeve of the officer expressed a kind of calm indifference that seemed to say in reply to every word and action: 'Yes, all that is admirable, but I know it all, and can do it all if only I wish to.'

'Well, and how shall we decide it?' the young officer began again, turning to his comrade in the Caucasian coat. 'Shall we stay the night here or go on with our own horse?'

His comrade decided to stay.

'Just fancy, Captain,' continued the one who was making the tea, addressing the one-armed officer and handing him a knife he had dropped, 'we are told that horses were awfully dear in Sevastopol, so we two bought one together in Simferopol.'

'I expect they made you pay a stiff price.'

'I really don't know, Captain. We paid ninety rubles for it with the trap. Is that very much?' he said, turning to the company in general, including Kozeltsov, who was looking at him.

'It's not much if it's a young horse,' said Kozeltsov.

'You think not? . . . And we were told it was too much. Only it limps a bit, but that will pass. We were told it's strong.'

'What Cadet College were you at?' asked Kozelts6v, who wished to get news of his brother.

'We are now from the Nobles' Regiment. There are six of us and we are all going to Sevastopol — by our own desire,' said the talkative young officer. 'Only we don't know where our battery is. Some say it is Sevastopol, but those fellows there say it's in Odessa.' 'Couldn't you have found out in Simferopol?' asked Kozeltsov.

'They didn't know. . . . Only think, one of our comrades went to the Chancellery there and got nothing but rudeness. Just think how unpleasant! Would you like a ready-made cigarette?' he said to the one-armed officer who was trying to get out his cigar-case.

He attended to this officer's wants with a kind of servile enthusiasm.

'And are you from Sevastopol too?' he continued. 'How wonderful it is! How all of us in Petersburg used to think about you all and all our heroes!' he said, addressing Kozeltsov with respect and kindly affection.

'Well then, you may find that you have to go back?' asked the lieutenant.

'That's just what we are afraid of. Just fancy, when we had bought the horse and got all we needed — a coffee-pot with a spirit-lamp and other necessary little things — we had no money left at all,' he said in a low tone, glancing at his comrade, 'so that if we have to return we don't at all know how we are to manage.'

'Didn't you receive your travelling allowance, then?' asked Kozeltsov.

'No,' answered the young officer in a whisper, 'they promised to give it us here.'

'Have you the certificate?'

'I know that a certificate is the principal thing, but when I was in Moscow, a senator — he's my uncle and I was at his house — told me they would give it to me here, or else he would have given it me himself. But will they give me one in Sevastopol?'

'Certainly they will.'

'Yes, I think so too,' said the lad in a tone which showed that, having asked the same question at some thirty other post-stations and having everywhere received different answers, he did not now quite believe anyone.

Chapter 5

(Previously suppressed by the Censor)

['How can they help giving it?' suddenly remarked the officer who had quarrelled with the station-master on the porch and had now approached the speakers, addressing himself partly to the staff-officers who were sitting near by, as to listeners more worthy of attention. 'Why, I myself wanted to join the active army just as these gentlemen do. I even gave up a splendid post and asked to be sent right into Sevastopol. And they gave me nothing but a hundred and thirty-six rubles for post-horses from Petersburg and I have already spent more than a hundred and fifty rubles of my own money. Only think of it! It's only eight hundred versts and this is the third month we have been on the way. I have been travelling with these gentlemen here for two months. A good thing I had money of my own, but suppose I hadn't had any?'

'The third month? Is it possible?' someone asked.

'Yes, and what can one do?' the speaker continued. 'You see if I had not wanted to go I would not have volunteered and left a good post, so I haven't been stopping at places on the road because I was afraid. ... It was just impossible. For instance I lived a fortnight in Perekop, and the station-master wouldn't even speak to me. . . . "Go when you like; here are a whole pile of requisition forms for couriers alone."... It must be my fate. . . . You see I want — but it's just my fate. It's not because there's a bombardment going on, but it evidently makes no difference whether one hurries or not — and yet how I should like. . . .'

The officer was at such pains to explain his delays and seemed so keen to vindicate himself that it involuntarily occurred to one that he was afraid. This was still more evident when he began to ask where his regiment was, and whether it was dangerous there. He even grew pale and his voice faltered when the one-armed officer, who belonged to the same regiment, told him that during those last two days they had lost seventeen officers.

In fact this officer was just then a thorough coward, though six months previously he had been very different. A change had come over him which many others experienced both before and after him. He had had an excellent and quiet post in one of our provincial towns in which there is a Cadet College, but reading in the papers and in

private letters of the heroic deeds performed at Sevastopol by his former comrades, he was suddenly inspired by ambition and still more by patriotic heroism.

He sacrificed much to this feeling: his well-established position, his little home with its comfortable furniture painstakingly acquired by five years' effort, his acquaintances, and his hopes of making a good marriage. He threw all this up, and in February already had volunteered for active service, dreaming of deathless honours and of a general's epaulettes. Two months after he had sent in his application he received an official inquiry whether he would require assistance from the government. He replied in the negative, and continued to wait patiently for an appointment, though his patriotic ardour had had time to cool considerably during those eight weeks. After another two months he received an inquiry as to whether he belonged to a Freemasons' Lodge,[1] and other similar questions, and having replied in the negative, he at last, in the fifth month, received his appointment. But all that time his friends, and still more that subconscious feeling which always awakens

1 A number of Freemasons were involved in the Decembrist mutiny in 1825, when Nicholas I ascended the throne. He was consequently very suspicious of that organization, which at the time of the Crimean War was prohibited in Russia. The inquiry made would therefore be offensive to a loyal and patriotic volunteer. at any change in one's position, had had time to convince him that he was committing an act of extreme folly by entering the active army. And when he found himself alone, with a dry throat and his face covered with dust, at the first post-station — where he met a courier from Sevastopol who told him of the horrors of the war, and where he had to spend twelve hours waiting for relay horses — he quite repented of his thoughtlessness, reflecting with vague horror on what awaited him, and without realizing it continued on his way as to a sacrifice. This feeling constantly increased during his three months' travelling from station to station, at which he always had to wait and where he met officers returning from Sevastopol with dreadful stories, and at last this poor officer — from being a hero prepared for desperate deeds, as in the provincial town he had imagined himself to be — arrived in Djanka a wretched coward, and having a month ago come across some young fellows from the Cadet College, he tried to travel as slowly as possible, considering these days to be his last on earth, and at every station put up his bed, unpacked his canteen, played preference, looked through the station complaint-book for amusement, and felt glad when horses were not to be had.

Had he gone at once from home to the bastions he would really have been a hero, but now he would have to go through much moral suffering before he could become such a calm, patient man, facing toil and danger, as Russian officers generally are. But it would by this time have been difficult to reawaken enthusiasm in him.]

Chapter 6

'Who ordered soup?' demanded the landlady, a rather dirty, fat woman of about forty, as she came into the room with a tureen of cabbage-soup.

The conversation immediately stopped, and every-one in the room fixed his eyes on the landlady. One officer even winked to another with a glance at her.

'Oh, Kozeltsov ordered it/ said the young officer.

'We must wake him up... Get up for dinner!' he said,

going up to the sofa and shaking the sleeper's shoulder. A lad of about seventeen, with merry black eyes and very rosy cheeks, jumped up energetically and stepped into the middle of the room rubbing his eyes.

'Oh, I beg your pardon,' he said to the doctor, whom he had knocked against in rising.

Lieutenant Kozeltsov at once recognized his brother and went up to him.

'Don't you know me?' he asked with a smile.

'Ah-h-h!' cried the younger Kozeltsov. 'This is wonderful!' And he began kissing his brother.

They kissed three times, but hesitated before the third kiss, as if the thought, 'Why has it to be just three times?' had struck them both.

'Well, I am glad!' said the elder, looking into his brother's face. 'Come out into the porch and let's have a chat.'

'Yes, come along. I don't want any soup. You eat it, Federson,' he said to his comrade.

'But you wanted something to eat.'

'I don't want anything now.'

Out on the porch the younger one kept asking his brother: 'Well, and how are you? Tell me how things are!' and saying how glad he was to see him, but he did not tell him anything about himself.

When five minutes had passed and they had paused for a moment, the elder brother asked why the younger had not entered the Guards as everyone had expected him to do.

['Oh, yes!' the younger replied, blushing at the very recollection, 'that upsets me terribly. I never expected such a thing could happen. Just imagine, at the very end of the term three of us went to have a smoke — you remember that little room by the hall-porter's lodge? It must have been there in your time — but just imagine, that beast of a hall-porter saw us and ran to tell the officer on duty (though we had tipped that porter several times) and the officer crept up on tiptoe. As soon as we noticed him the others threw away their cigarettes and bolted out by the side door — you know — but I hadn't the chance. The officer was very nasty to me, and of course I answered him back. Well, he told the Inspector, and there was a row. Because of that, you see, they didn't give me full marks for conduct, though for everything else my marks were excellent, except for mechanics, for which I got twelve. And so they wouldn't let me

enter the Guards. They promised to transfer me later . . . but I no longer wanted it, and applied to be sent to the front.'

'Dear me!'

'Really, I tell you seriously, I was so disgusted with everything that] I wanted to get to Sevastopol as quickly as possible. And you see, if things turn out well here one can get on quicker than in the Guards. There it takes ten years to become a colonel, but here in two years Todleben from a lieutenant-colonel has become a general. And if one gets killed — well, it can't be helped.'

'So that's the sort of stuff you are made of!' said his brother, with a smile.

'But the chief thing, you know,' said the younger brother, smiling and blushing as if he were going to say something very shameful— 'the chief thing was that I felt rather ashamed to be living in Petersburg while here men are dying for the Fatherland. And besides, I wanted to be with you,' he added, still more shyly.

The other did not look at him. 'What a funny fellow you are!' he said, taking out his cigarette-case. 'Only the pity is that we shan't be together.'

'I say, tell me quite frankly: is it very dreadful at the bastions?' asked the younger suddenly. 'It seems dreadful at first but one gets used to it. You'll see for yourself.'

'Yes . . . and another thing: Do you think they will take Sevastopol? I don't think they will. I'm certain they won't.'

'Heaven only knows.'

'It's so provoking... Just think what a misfortune! Do you know, we've had a whole bundle of things stolen on the way and my shako was inside so that I am in a terrible position. Whatever shall I appear in? [You know we have new shakos now, and in general there are many changes, all improvements. I can tell you all about it. I have been everywhere in Moscow.']

The younger Kozeltsov, Vladimir, was very like his brother Michael, but it was the likeness of an opening rosebud to a withered dog-rose. He had the same fair hair as his brother, but it was thick and curled about his temples, and a little tuft of it grew down the delicate white nape of his neck — a sign of luck according to the nurses. The delicate white skin of his face did not always show colour, but the full young blood rushing to it betrayed his every emotion. His eyes were like his brother's, but more open and brighter, and seemed especially so because a slight moisture often made them glisten. Soft, fair down was beginning to appear on his cheeks and above the red lips, on which a shy smile often played disclosing his white and glistening teeth. Straight, broad-shouldered, the uniform over his red Russian shirt unbuttoned — as he stood there before his brother, cigarette in hand, leaning against the banisters of the porch, his face and attitude expressing naive joy, he was such a charming, handsome boy that one could not help wishing to look at him. He was very pleased to see his brother, and looked at him with respect and pride, imagining him to be a hero; but in some respects, namely, in what in society is considered good form (being able to speak good French, knowing how to behave in the presence of people of high position, dancing, and so on) he was rather ashamed of his brother, looked down on him, and even hoped

if possible to educate him. All his views were still those he had acquired in Petersburg, particularly in the house of a lady who liked good-looking lads and had got him to spend his holidays at her house; and at a senator's house in Moscow, where he had once danced at a grand ball.

Chapter 7

Having talked almost their fill, and reached that stage which often comes when two people find that though they are fond of one another they have little in common, the brothers remained silent for some time.

'Well then, collect your things and let us be off!' said the elder.

The younger suddenly blushed and became confused.

'Do we go straight to Sevastopol?' he asked after a moment's silence.

'Well of course. You haven't got much luggage, I suppose. We'll get it all in.'

'All right! Let's start at once,' said the younger with a sigh, and went towards the room.

But he stopped in the passage without opening the door, hung his head sorrowfully and began thinking.

'Now, at once, straight to Sevastopol. . . into that hell. . . terrible! Ah well, never mind. It had to be sooner or later. And now at least I'll have my brother with me. . . .'

In fact, only now, at the thought that after getting into the trap there would be nothing more to detain him and that he would not alight again before reaching Sevastopol, did he clearly realize the danger he had been seeking, and he grew confused and frightened at the mere thought of the nearness of that danger. Having mastered himself as well as he could, he went into the room; but a quarter of an hour passed and he did not return to his brother, so the latter at last opened the door to call him. The younger Kozeltsov, in the attitude of a guilty schoolboy, was talking to an officer. When his brother opened the door he seemed quite disconcerted.

'Yes, yes, I'm just coming!' he cried, waving his hand to prevent his brother coming in. 'Please wait for me there.'

A few minutes later he came out and went up to his brother with a sigh. 'Just fancy,' he said, 'it turns out that I can't go with you, after all!'

'What? What nonsense !'

'I'll tell you the whole truth, Misha . . . none of us have any money left and we are all in debt to that lieutenant-captain whom you saw in there. It's such a shame!'

The elder brother frowned, and remained silent for some time.

'Do you owe much?' he asked at last, looking at his brother from under his brows.

'Much? No, not very much, but I feel terribly ashamed. He paid for me at three post-stations, and the sugar was always his, so that I don't... Yes, and we played preference . . . and I lost a little to him.'

‘That’s bad, Volodya! Now what would you have done if you hadn’t met me?’ the elder remarked sternly without looking at him.

‘Well, you see, I thought I’d pay when I got my travelling allowance in Sevastopol. I could do that, couldn’t I? ... So I’d better drive on with him to-morrow.’

The elder brother drew out his purse and with slightly trembling fingers produced two ten-ruble notes and one of three rubles.

‘There’s the money I have,’ he said. ‘How much do you owe?’ Kozeltsov did not speak quite truly when he made it appear as if this were all the money-he had. He had four gold coins sewn into his cuff in case of special need, but he had resolved not to touch them.

As it turned out the younger Kozeltsov owed only eight rubles, including the sugar and the preference, his brother gave them to him, merely remarking that it would never do to go playing preference when one had no money.

‘How high did you play?’

The younger did not reply. The question seemed to suggest a doubt of his honour.

Vexed with himself, ashamed of having done anything that could give rise to such suspicions, and hurt at such offensive words from the brother he so loved, his impressionable nature suffered so keenly that he did not answer. Feeling that he could not suppress the sobs that were gathering in his throat he took the money without looking at it and returned to his comrades.

Chapter 8

Nikolaev, who had fortified himself in Duvanka with two cups of vodka1 sold by a soldier he had met on the bridge, kept pulling at the reins, and the trap bumped along the stony road that leads by the Belbek2 to Sevastopol. The two brothers, their legs touching as they jolted along, sat in obstinate silence though they never ceased to think about each other.

‘Why did he say that?’ thought the younger. ‘Couldn’t he have left it unsaid? Just as if he thought me a thief! And I believe he’s still angry, so that we have gone apart for good. And yet how fine it would have been for us to be together in Sevastopol! Two brothers, friends with one another, fighting the enemy

1 Vodka is a spirit distilled from rye. It is the commonest form of strong drink in Russia.

2 The Belbek is a river. side by side: one, the elder, not highly educated but a brave warrior, and the other young but . . . also a fine fellow... In a week’s time I would have proved to everybody that I am not so very young! I shall leave off blushing and my face will look manly; my moustaches, too, will have grown by that time — not very big but quite sufficiently,’ and he pulled at the short down that showed at the corners of his mouth. ‘Perhaps when we get there to-day we may go straight into action, he and I together. And I’m certain he is very brave and steadfast — a man who says little, but

does more than others. I wonder whether he is pushing me to the very edge of the trap on purpose? I expect he knows I am uncomfortable but pretends he doesn't notice me.' Pressing close to the edge of the trap for fear of his brother's noticing his discomfort, he continued his meditations: 'Well then, we shall get there to-day, and then perhaps straight to the bastion — I with the guns and my brother with his company, both together. Suddenly the French will fall upon us. I shall fire and fire. I shall kill quite a lot of them, but they will still keep coming straight at me. I can no longer fire and of course there is no escape for me, but suddenly my brother rushes to the front with his sword drawn and I seize a musket, and we run on with the soldiers. The French attack my brother: I run forward, kill one Frenchman, then another, and save my brother. I am wounded in the arm,I seize the gun in the other hand and still run on. Then my brother falls at my side, shot dead by a bullet. I stop for a moment, bend sadly over him, draw myself up and cry: "Follow me, we will avenge him! I loved my brother more than anything on earth," I shall say. "I have lost him. Let us avenge him, let us annihilate the foe or let us all die here!" They will all rush after me shouting. Then all the French army, with Pelissier himself, will advance. We shall slaughter them, but at last I shall be wounded a second and a third time and shall fall down dying. Then they will all rush to me and Gorchakov himself will come and ask if I want anything. I shall say that I want nothing — only to be laid near my brother: that I wish to die beside him. They will carry me and lay me down by the blood-stained corpse of my brother. I shall raise myself, and say only, "Yes, you did not know how to value two men who really loved the Fatherland: now they have both fallen. May God forgive you!" . . . and then I'll die.'

Who knows how much of these dreams will come true?

'I say, have you ever been in a hand-to-hand fight?' he suddenly asked, having quite forgotten that he was not going to speak to his brother.

'No, never,' answered the elder. 'We lost two thousand men from the regiment, but it was all at the trenches, and I was wounded while doing my work there. War is not carried on at all in the way you imagine, Volodya.'

The pet name Volodya touched the younger brother. He longed to put matters right with the elder, who had no idea that he had given offence.

'You are not angry with me, Misha?' he asked after a minute's pause.

'Angry? What for?'

'Oh, nothing . . . only because of what happened . . . it's nothing.'

'Not at all,' answered the other, turning towards him and slapping him on the knee.

'Then forgive me if I have pained you, Misha!' And the younger brother turned away to hide the tears that suddenly filled his eyes.

Chapter 9

'Can this be Sevastopol already?' asked the younger brother when they reached the top of the hill.

Spread out before them they saw the Roadstead with the masts of the ships, the sea with the enemy's fleet in the distance, the white shore-batteries, the barracks, the aqueducts, the docks, the buildings of the town, and the white and purple clouds of smoke that, rising continually from the yellow hills surrounding the town, floated in the blue sky lit up by the rosy rays of the sun, which was reflected brilliantly in the sea towards whose dark horizon it was already sinking.

Volodya looked without the slightest trepidation at the dreadful place that had so long been in his mind. He even gazed with concentrated attention at this really splendid and unique sight, feeling aesthetic pleasure and an heroic sense of satisfaction at the thought that in another half-hour he would be there, and he continued gazing until they came to the commissariat of his brother's regiment, on the North Side, where they had to ascertain the exact location of the regiment and of the battery.

The officer in charge of the commissariat lived near the so-called 'new town' (a number of wooden sheds constructed by the sailors' families) in a tent connected With a good-sized shed constructed of green oak branches that had not yet had time to dry completely.

The brothers found the officer seated at a dirty table on which stood a tumbler of cold tea, a tray with a vodka bottle, and bits of dry caviare and bread. He was wearing a dirty yellowish shirt, and, with the aid of a big abacus, was counting an enormous pile of bank-notes. But before speaking of the personality of this officer and of his conversation, we must examine the interior of the shed more attentively and see something of his occupations and way of living. His newly built shed was as big, as strongly wattled, and as conveniently arranged with tables and seats made of turf, as though it were built for a general or the commander of a regiment. To keep the dry leaves from falling in, the top and sides were lined with three carpets, which though hideous were new and must have cost money. On the iron bedstead, beside which a most striking carpet was fastened to the wall (the pattern of which represented a lady on horseback), lay a bright red plush coverlet, a torn and dirty leather pillow, and an overcoat lined with racoon fur. On the table was a looking-glass in a silver frame, an exceedingly dirty silver-backed hairbrush, a broken horn comb full of greasy hair, a silver candlestick, a bottle of liqueur with an enormous red and gold label, a gold watch with a portrait of Peter I, two gold rings, a box of some kind of capsules, a crust of bread, and a scattered pack of old cards. Bottles, full and empty, were stowed away under the bed. This officer was in charge of the regimental commissariat and the forage for the horses. With him lived his great friend, the commissioner employed on contracts. When the brothers entered, the latter was asleep in the tent while the commissariat officer was making up the regimental accounts for the month. He had a very handsome and military appearance: tall, with large moustaches and a portly

figure. What was unpleasant about him was merely that his white face was so puffy as almost to hide his small grey eyes (as if he were filled with porter), and his extreme lack of cleanliness, from his thin greasy hair to his big bare feet thrust into ermine-lined slippers of some kind.

'What a heap of money!' said the elder Kozeltsov on entering the shed, as he fixed his eyes eagerly on the pile of banknotes. 'If only you'd lend me half, Vasili Mikhaylovich!'

The commissariat officer shrank back when he saw his visitor, as if caught stealing, and gathering up the money bowed without rising.

'Oh, if it were mine! But it's Government money, my dear fellow. . . . And who is that with you?' he asked, placing the money in a cash-box that stood near him and looking at Volodya. •It's my brother, straight from the training college. We've come to learn from you where our regiment is stationed.'

'Take a seat, gentlemen. Won't you have something to drink? A glass of porter perhaps?' he said, and without taking any further notice of his visitors he rose and went out into the tent.

'I don't mind if I do, Vasili Mikhaylovich.'

Volodya was struck by the grandeur of the commissariat officer, his off-hand manner, and the respect with which his brother addressed him.

'I expect this is one of their best officers, whom they all respect — probably simple-minded but hospitable and brave,' he thought as he sat down modestly and shyly on the sofa.

'Then where is our regiment stationed?' shouted the elder brother across to the tent.

'What?'

The question was repeated.

'Seifert was here this morning. He says the regiment has gone over to the Fifth Bastion.'

'Is that certain?'

'If I say so of course it's certain. Still, the devil only knows if he told the truth! It wouldn't take much to make him tell a lie either. Well, will you have some porter?' said the commissariat officer, still speaking from the tent.

'Well, yes, I think I will,' said Kozeltsov.

'And you, Osip Ignatevich, will you have some?' continued the voice from the tent, apparently addressing the sleeping contractor. 'Wake up, it's past four!'

'Why do you bother me? I'm not asleep,' answered a thin voice lazily, pronouncing the Is and rs with a pleasant lisp.

'Well, get up, it's dull without you,' and the commissariat officer came out to his visitors.

'A bottle of Simfer6pol porter!' he cried. The orderly entered the shed with an expression of pride as it seemed to Volodya, and in getting the porter from under the seat he even jostled Volodya.

[‘Yes, sir,’ said the commissariat officer, filling the glasses. ‘We have a new commander of the regiment now. Money is needed to get all that is required.’

‘Well, this one is quite a special type of the new generation,’ remarked Kozeltsov, politely raising his glass.

‘Yes, of a new generation! He’ll be just as close-fisted as the battalion-commander was. How he used to shout when he was in command! But now he sings a different tune.’

‘Can’t be helped, old fellow. It just is so.’

The younger brother understood nothing of what was being said, but vaguely felt that his brother was not expressing what he thought, and spoke in that way only because he was drinking the commissariat officer’s porter.]

The bottle of porter was already emptied and the conversation had continued for some time in the same strain, when the flap of the tent opened and out stepped a rather short, fresh-looking man in a blue satin dressing-gown with tassels and a cap with a red band and a cockade. He came in twisting his little black moustaches, looking somewhere in the direction of one of the carpets, and answered the greetings of the officers with a scarcely perceptible movement of the shoulders.

‘I think I’ll have a glass too,’ he said, sitting down to the table.

‘Have you come from Petersburg, young man?’ he remarked, addressing Vol6dya in a friendly manner.

‘Yes, sir, and I’m going to Sevastopol’

‘At your own request?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Now why do you do it, gentlemen? I don’t under-stand it,’ remarked the commissioner. ‘I’d be ready to walk to Petersburg on foot, I think, if they’d let me go. My God, I’m sick of this damned life!’

‘What have you to complain of?’ asked the elder Kozeltsov— ‘As if you weren’t well enough off here!’

The contractor gave him a look and turned away.

‘The danger, privations, lack of everything,’ he continued, addressing Volodya. ‘Whatever induces you to do it? I don’t at all understand you, gentlemen. If you got any profit out of it — but no! Now would it be pleasant, at your age, to be crippled for life?’

‘Some want to make a profit and others serve for honour,’ said the elder Kozeltsov crossly, again intervening in the conversation.

‘Where does the honour come in if you’ve nothing to eat?’ said the contractor, laughing disdainfully and addressing the commissariat officer, who also laughed. ‘Wind up and let’s have the tune from Lucia j he added, pointing to a musical box. T like it.’

‘What sort of a fellow is that Vasili Mikhaylovich?’ asked Volodya when he and his brother had left the shed and were driving to Sevastopol in the dusk of the evening.

‘So-so, but terribly stingy! [You know he gets at least three hundred rubles a month, but lives like a pig, as you saw.] But that contractor I can’t bear to look at. I’ll give

him a thrashing some day! [Why, that rascal carried off some twelve thousand rubles from Turkey. . . .'

And Kozeltsov began to enlarge on the subject of usury, rather (to tell the truth) with the bitterness of one who condemns it not because it is an evil, but because he is vexed that there are people who take advantage of it.]

Chapter 10

It was almost night when they reached Sevastopol. Driving towards the large bridge across the Roadstead Volodya was not exactly dispirited, but his heart was heavy. All he saw and heard was so different from his past, still recent, experience: the large, light examination hall with its parquet floor, the jolly, friendly voices and laughter of his comrades, the new uniform, the beloved Tsar he had been accustomed to see for the past seven years, and who at parting from them with tears in his eyes had called them his children — all he saw now was so little like his beautiful, radiant, high-souled dreams.

'Well, here we are,' said the elder brother when they reached the Michael Battery and dismounted from their trap. 'If they let us cross the bridge we will go at once to the Nicholas Barracks. You can stay there till the morning, and I'll go to the regiment and find out where your battery is and come for you to-morrow.'

'Oh,why? Let's go together,' said Volodya. 'I'll go to the bastion with you. It doesn't matter. One must get used to it sooner or later. If you go, so can I.'

'Better not.'

'Yes, please! I shall at least find out how. . . .'

'My advice is don't go . . . however— '

The sky was clear and dark. The stars, the flash of the guns and the continual flare of the bombs already showed up brightly in the darkness, and the large white building of the battery and the entry to the bridge1 loomed out. The air was shaken every

1 This pontoon bridge was erected during the summer of 1855. At first it was feared that the water was too rough in the Roadstead for a secure bridge to be built, but it served its purpose, and later on even stood the strain put upon it by the retreat of the Russian army to the North Side. second by a quick succession of artillery shots and explosions which became ever louder and more distinct. Through this roar, and as if answering it, came the dull murmur of the Roadstead. A slight breeze blew in from the sea and the air smelt moist. The brothers reached the bridge. A recruit, awkwardly striking his gun against his hand, called out, 'Who goes there?'

'Soldier!'

'No one's allowed to pass!'

'How is that? We must.'

'Ask the officer.'

The officer, who was sitting on an anchor dozing, rose and ordered that they should be allowed to pass.

'You may go there, but not back.'

'Where are you driving, all of a heap?' he shouted to the regimental wagons which, laden high with gabions, were crowding the entrance.

As the brothers were descending to the first pontoon, they came upon some soldiers going the other way and talking loudly.

'If he's had his outfit money his account is squared — that's so.'

'Ah, lads,' said another, 'when one gets to the North Side one sees light again. It's a different air altogether.'

'Is it though?' said the first. 'Why, only the other day a damned ball flew over and tore two soldiers' legs off for them, even there. . . .'

Waiting for the trap the brothers after crossing the first pontoon stopped on the second, which was washed here and there by the waves. The wind which seemed gentle on land was strong and gusty here; the bridge swayed and the waves broke noisily against beams, anchors, and ropes, and washed over the boards. To the right, divided from the light blue-grey starry horizon by a smooth, endless black line, was the sea, dark, misty, and with a hostile sullen roar. Far off in the distance gleamed the lights of the enemy's fleet. To the left loomed the black hulk of one of our ships, against whose sides the waves beat audibly. A steamer too was visible moving quickly and noisily from the North Side. The flash of a bomb exploding near the steamer lit up for a moment the gabions piled high on its deck, two men standing on the paddle-box, and the white foam and splash of the greenish waves cut by the vessel. On the edge of the bridge, his feet dangling in the water, a man in his shirt sat chopping something on the pontoon. In front, above Sevastopol, similar flashes were seen, and the terrible sounds became louder and louder. A wave flowing in from the sea washed over the right side of the bridge and wetted Volodya's boots, and two soldiers passed by him splashing their feet through the water. Suddenly something came crashing down which lit up the bridge ahead of them, a cart driving over it, and a horseman, and fragments of a bomb fell whistling and splashing into the water.

'Ah, Michael Semenich!'1 said the rider, stopping his horse in front of the elder Kozeltsov. 'Have you recovered?'

'As you see. And where is fate taking you?'

'To the North Side for cartridges. You see I'm taking the place of the regimental adjutant to-day. . . . We're expecting an attack from hour to hour.'

'And where is Martsov?'

1 In addressing anyone in Russian, it is usual to employ the Christian name and patronymic: i.e. to the Christian name (in this case Michael) the father's Christian name is joined (in this case Semen) with the termination vich (o-vich or e-vich) which means 'son of'. The termination is often shortened to ich, and colloquially toych. Surnames are less used than in English, for the patronymic is suitable for all circumstances of life — both for speaking to and of any one — except that people on very intimate

terms use only the Christian name, or a pet name. 'His leg was torn off yesterday while he was sleeping in his room in town. . . . Did you know him?'

'Is it true that the regiment is at the Fifth Bastion now?'

'Yes, we have replaced the M — regiment. You'd better call at the Ambulance, you'll find some of our fellows there — they'll show you the way.'

'And my lodgings in the Morskaya Street, are they safe?'

'Safe, my dear fellow! They've long since been shattered by bombs. You won't know Sevastopol again. Not a woman left, not a restaurant, no music! The last brothel left yesterday. It's melancholy enough now. Good-bye!'

And the officer trotted away.

Terrible fear suddenly overcame Volodya. He felt as if a ball or a bomb-splinter would come the next moment and hit him straight on the head. The damp darkness, all these sounds, especially the murmur of the splashing water — all seemed to tell him to go no farther, that no good awaited him here, that he would never again set foot on this side of the bay, that he should turn back at once and run somewhere as far as possible from this dreadful place of death. 'But perhaps it is too late, it is already decided now,' thought he shuddering, partly at that thought and partly because the water had soaked through his boots and was making his feet wet.

He sighed deeply and moved a few steps away from his brother.

'O Lord! Shall I really be killed — just I? Lord, have mercy on me!' he whispered, and made the sign of the cross.

'Well, Volodya, come on!' said the elder brother when the trap had driven on to the bridge. 'Did you see the bomb?'

On the bridge they met carts loaded with wounded men, with gabions, and one with furniture driven by a woman. No one stopped them at the farther side.

Keeping instinctively under the wall of the Nicholas Battery and listening to the bombs that here were bursting overhead, and to the howling of the falling fragments, the brothers came silently to that part of the battery where the icon hangs. Here they heard that the Fifth Light Artillery, to which Volodya was appointed, was stationed at the Korabelnaya1 and they decided that Volodya, in spite of the danger, should spend the night with his elder brother at the Fifth Bastion and go from there to his battery next morning. After turning into a corridor and stepping across the legs of the soldiers who lay sleeping all along the wall of the battery they at last reached the Ambulance Station.

Chapter 11

On entering the first room, full of beds on which lay wounded men and permeated by a horribly disgusting hospital smell, they met two Sisters of Mercy just going out.

One, a woman of fifty, with black eyes and a stern expression, was carrying bandages and lint and giving orders to a young lad, a medical assistant, who was following her.

The other, a very pretty girl of about twenty whose pale, delicate, fair face looked from under her white cap with a peculiarly sweet helplessness, was walking by the side of the older woman with her hands in her apron pockets, and seemed afraid of being left behind.

Kozeltsov asked them if they knew where Martsov was, whose leg had been torn off the day before.

1 The Korabelnaya was a suburb of Sevastopol lying to the east of the South Bay and to the south of the Roadstead. Like the 'North Side' it was connected with Sevastopol by a floating bridge. (See map.) 'He is of the P — regiment, I think?' asked the elder. 'Is he a relation of yours?'

'No, just a comrade.'

'Take them to him,' she said to the young sister in French. 'It is this way,' and she herself went up to one of the patients, followed by the assistant.

'Come along, what are you looking at?' said Kozeltsov to Vol6dya, who stood with raised eyebrows and a look of suffering on his face, unable to tear his eyes from the wounded. 'Come now!'

Volodya followed his brother but still kept looking back and repeating unconsciously, 'O, my God! My God!'

'I suppose he has not been here long?' the sister remarked to Kozeltsov, indicating Volodya, who followed them along the corridor with exclamations and sighs.

'He has only just come.'

The pretty sister looked as Vol6dya and suddenly began to cry.

'My God! My God! When will it all end?' she said in a despairing voice.

They entered the officers' ward. Martsov was lying on his back, his sinewy arms bare to the elbow thrown back behind his head, and on his yellow face the expression of one who has clenched his teeth to prevent himself from screaming with pain. His sound leg with a stocking on showed from under the blanket and one could see the toes moving spasmodically.

'Well, how are you?' asked the sister, raising his slightly bald head with her slender delicate fingers (on one of which Volodya noticed a gold ring) and arranging his pillow.

'In pain of course!' he answered angrily. 'That'll do — the pillow's all right!' and the toes in the stocking moved still faster. 'How d'you do? What's your name?' . . . 'Excuse me,' he added, when Kozeltsov had told him. 'Ah yes, I beg your pardon. One forgets everything here. Why, we lived together,' he remarked without any sign of pleasure, and looked inquiringly at Volodya.

'This is my brother, arrived to-day from Petersburg.'

'H'm! And I have got my discharge!' said the wounded man, frowning. 'Oh, how it hurts! If only it would be over quicker!'

He drew up his leg and, moving his toes still more rapidly, covered his face with his hands.

'He must be left alone,' said the sister in a whisper while tears filled her eyes. 'He is very ill.'

While still on the North Side the brothers had agreed to go to the Fifth Bastion together, but as they passed out of the Nicholas Battery it was as if they had agreed not to run unnecessary risks and for each to go his own way.

'But how will you find it, Volodya?' said the elder. 'Look here! Nikolaev shall take you to the Korabelnaya and I'll go on alone and come to you tomorrow.'

Nothing more was said at this last parting between the brothers.

Chapter 12

The thunder of the cannonade continued with unabated violence. Ekaterina Street, down which Vol6dya walked followed by the silent Nikolaev, was quiet and deserted. All he could distinguish in the dark was the broad street with its large white houses, many of them in ruins, and the stone pavement along which he was walking. Now and then he met soldiers and officers. As he was passing by the left side of the Admiralty Building, a bright light inside showed him the acacias planted along the side-walk of the streets with green stakes to support them and sickly, dusty leaves. He distinctly heard his own footsteps and those of Nikolaev, who followed him breathing heavily. He was not thinking of anything: the pretty Sister of Mercy, Martsov's foot with the toes moving in the stocking, the darkness, the bombs, and different images of death, floated dimly before his imagination. His whole young impressionable soul was weighed down and crushed by a sense of loneliness and of the general indifference shown to his fate in these dangerous surroundings. T shall be killed, I shall suffer, endure torments, and no one will shed a tear!' And all this instead of the heroic life abounding in energy and sympathy of which he had had such glorious dreams. The bombs whistled and burst nearer and nearer. Nikolaev sighed more and more often, but did not speak. As they were crossing the bridge that led to the Korabelnaya he saw a whistling something fall and disappear into the water near by, lighting the purple waves to a flaming red for a second and then come splashing up again.

'Just look! Not quenched!' said Nikolaev in a hoarse voice.

'No,' answered Volodya in an involuntarily high-pitched plaintive tone which surprised him.

They met wounded men carried on stretchers and more carts loaded with gabions. In the Korabelnaya they met a regiment, and men on horseback rode past. One of these was an officer followed by a Cossack. He was riding at a trot, but seeing Volodya he reined up his horse, looked in his face, turned away, and rode on, touching his horse with the whip.

'Alone, alone! No one cares whether I live or not,' thought the lad, and felt inclined to cry in real earnest.

Having gone up the hill past a high white wall he came into a street of small shattered houses, continually lit up by the bombs. A dishevelled, tipsy woman, coming

out of a gate with a sailor, knocked up against Volodya. 'Because if he'sh an on'ble man,' she muttered— 'pardon y'r exshensh offisher!'

The poor lad's heart ached more and more. On the dark horizon the lightnings flashed oftener and oftener and the bombs whistled and exploded more and more frequently around them. Nikolaev sighed and suddenly began to speak in what seemed to Volodya a lifeless tone.

'There now, and we were in such a hurry to leave home! "We must go! We must go!" Fine place to hurry to! [Wise gentlemen when they are the least bit wounded lie up quietly in 'orspital. It's so nice, what better can you want?]'

'Well, but if my brother had recovered his health,' answered Volodya, hoping by conversation to disperse the dreadful feeling that had seized him.

'Health indeed! Where's his health, when he's quite ill? Even them as is really well had best lie in 'orspital these times. Not much pleasure to be got. All you get is a leg or an arm carried off. It's done before you know where you are! It's horrible enough even here in the town, but what's it like at the baksions! You say all the prayers you know when you're going there. See how the beastly thing twangs past you!' he added, listening to the buzzing of a flying fragment.

'Now,' he continued, 'I'm to show y'r honour the way. Our business is o' course to obey orders: what's ordered has to be done. But the trap's been left with some private or other, and the bundle's untied. . . . "Go, go!" but if something's lost, why Nikolaev answers for it!'

A few more steps brought them to a square. Nikolaev did not speak but kept sighing. Then he said suddenly:

'There, y'r honour, there's where your antillaries stationed. Ask the sentinel, he'll show you.' A few steps farther on Volodya no longer heard Nikolaev sighing behind him. He suddenly felt himself utterly and finally deserted. This sense of loneliness, face to face as it seemed to him with death, pressed like a heavy, cold stone on his heart. He stopped in the middle of the square, glanced round to see if anyone was looking, seized his head and thought with horror:

'O Lord, am I really a vile, miserable coward . . . when it's for my Fatherland, for the Tsar for whom I used to long to die? Yes! I am a miserable, wretched being!' And Volodya, filled with despair and disappointed at himself, asked the sentinel the way to the house of the commander of the battery and went where he was directed.

Chapter 13

The commander of the battery lived in a small two-storied house with an entrance from the yard, which the sentinel pointed out. The faint light of a candle shone through a window patched up with paper. An orderly, who sat on the steps smoking his pipe, went in to inform the commander of the battery of Voldya's arrival and then showed him into the room. In the room, under a broken mirror between two windows, was a

table littered with official papers; there were also several chairs and an iron bedstead with clean bedding, with a small rug beside it.

Just beside the door stood a handsome sergeant-major with large moustaches, wearing side-arms, and with a cross and an Hungarian medal1 on his uniform. A staff-officer, a short man of about forty in a thin old cloak and with a swollen cheek tied round with a bandage, was pacing up and down the room.

I have the honour to report myself, Ensign Kozeltsov, secundus, ordered to join the Fifth Light

1 That is, a medal granted for service in the suppression of the Hungarian rising in 1849, when Nicholas I helped Austria to suppress the insurgent Hungarians. Artillery,' said Volodya on entering the room, repeating the sentence he had been taught.

The commander answered his greeting dryly and without shaking hands asked him to take a seat.

Vol6dya sat down shyly on a chair by the writing table, and began playing with a pair of scissors his hand happened to fall on. The commander, with his hands at his back and with drooping head, continued to pace the room in silence as if trying to remember something, only now and then glancing at the hand that was playing with the scissors.

The commander of the battery was rather stout, with a large bald patch on his head, thick moustaches hanging straight down over his mouth, and pleasant hazel eyes. His hands were plump, well-shaped, and clean, his small feet were much turned out and he trod with firmness in a way that indicated that he was not a diffident man.

'Yes,' he said, stopping opposite the sergeant-major, 'the ammunition horses must have an extra peck beginning from to-morrow. They are getting very thin. Don't you think so?'

'Well, we can manage an extra peck, your honour! Oats are a bit cheaper now,' answered the sergeant-major, standing at attention but moving his fingers, which evidently liked to aid his conversation by gestures. 'Then our forage-master, Frantchuk, sent me a note from the convoy yesterday that we must be sure, your Excellency, to buy axles there. They say they can be got cheap. Will you give the order?'

'Well, let him buy them — he has the money,' said the commander, and again began to pace the room. 'And where are your things?' he suddenly asked, stopping short in front of Volodya.

Poor Volodya was so oppressed by the thought that he was a coward, that he saw contempt for himself as a miserable craven in every look and every word. He felt as if the commander of the battery had already discerned his secret, and was chaffing him. He was abashed, and replied that his things were at the Grafskaya and that his brother had promised to send them on next day.

The commander did not stop to hear him out, but turning to the sergeant-major asked, 'Where could we put the ensign up?'

'The ensign, sir?5 said the sergeant-major, making Vol6dya still more confused by casting a rapid glance at him which seemed to ask: 'What sort of an ensign is he?'

'Why, downstairs, your Excellency. We can put his honour up in the lieutenant-captain's room,' he continued after a moment's thought. 'The lieutenant-captain is at the baksion at present, so there's his bed empty.'

'Well then, if you don't mind for the present,' said the commander. 'I should think you are tired, and we'll make better arrangements to-morrow.'

Volodya rose and bowed.

'Would you like a glass of tea?' said the commander of the battery when Volodya had nearly reached the door. 'The samovar can be lit.'

Volodya bowed and went out. The colonel's orderly showed him downstairs into a bare, dirty room, where all sorts of rubbish was lying about and a man in a pink shirt and covered with a thick coat lay asleep on a bed without sheets or blankets. Volodya took him for a soldier.

'Peter Nikolaevich!' said the orderly, shaking the sleeper by the shoulder. 'The ensign will sleep here. . . . This is our cadet,' he added, turning to Volodya.

'Oh, please don't let me disturb you!' said VolOdya, but the cadet, a tall, solid young man with a handsome but very stupid face, rose from the bed, threw the cloak over his shoulders, and evidently not yet quite awake, left the room saying: 'Never mind, I'll lie down in the yard.'

Chapter 14

Left alone with his thoughts Volodya's first feeling was one of fear at the disordered and cheerless state of his own soul. He longed to fall asleep, to forget all that surrounded him and especially himself. Putting out the candle, he took off his cloak and lay down on the bed, drawing the cloak over his head to shut out the darkness, of which he had been afraid from childhood. But suddenly the thought occurred to him that now, immediately, a bomb would crash through the roof and kill him, and he began listening. Just above his head he heard the steps of the commander of the battery.

'If it does come,' he thought, 'it will first kill those upstairs and then me — anyway not me alone.' This thought comforted him a little and he was about to fall asleep.

'But supposing that suddenly, to-night, Sevastopol is taken and the French break in here? What shall I defend myself with?' He rose and paced up and down the room. The fear of real danger drove away the fanciful fear of the darkness. A saddle and a samovar were the only hard things in the room.

'What a wretch I am — a coward, a despicable coward!' he thought again, and once more the oppressive feeling of contempt and even disgust for himself came over him. He lay down again and tried not to think. Then, under the influence of the unceasing noise which made the panes rattle in the one window of the room, the impressions of the day rose in his imagination, reminding him of danger. Now he seemed to see wounds and blood, then bombs and splinters flying into the room, then the pretty Sister of Mercy bandaging his wounds and crying over him as he lay dying, then his

mother seeing him off in the little country town and praying fervently with tears in her eyes before the wonder-working icon — and again sleep seemed impossible. But suddenly the thought of God Almighty, who can do anything and hears every prayer, came clearly into his mind. He knelt down, crossed himself, and folded his hands as he had been taught to do when a child. This attitude suddenly brought back to him an old, long-forgotten sense of comfort.

'If I must die, if I must cease to exist, then do it, Lord,' he thought, 'do it quickly, but if courage is needed and firmness, which I lack, grant them to me! Deliver me from the shame and disgrace which are more than I can bear, and teach me what I must do to fulfil Thy Will.'

The frightened, cramped, childish soul suddenly matured, brightened, and became aware of new, bright, and broad horizons. He thought and felt many things during the short time this state continued, but soon fell into a sweet untroubled slumber, amid the continued booming of the cannonade and rattle of the window-panes.

O Lord Almighty! Thou alone hast heard and knowest the simple yet burning and desperate prayers of ignorance, of confused repentance, prayers for bodily health and for spiritual enlightenment, that have risen to Thee from this dreadful place of death: from the general who, an instant after his mind has been absorbed by the Order of St. George upon his neck, feels with trepidation the nearness of Thy presence — to the private soldier prostrate on the bare floor of the Nicholas Battery, who prays for the future reward he dimly expects for all his sufferings.

Chapter 15

The elder Kozeltsov happening to meet a soldier of his regiment in the street went with him straight to the Fifth Bastion.

'Keep to the wall, your honour!' said the soldier. 'Why?'

'It's dangerous, your honour. There it is, flying over us!' said the soldier, listening to the sound of a ball that whistled past and fell on the hard ground on the other side of the road.

[Without heeding the soldier's words Kozeltsov went boldly down the middle of the road.]

Here were still the same streets, the same or even more frequent firing, the same sounds, the same groans from the wounded one met on the way, and the same batteries, breastworks, and trenches, as when he was in Sevastopol in the spring; but somehow it all seemed more melancholy now and yet more vigorous. There were more holes in the houses, there were no lights in any of the windows except those of Kustchin's house (a hospital), not a woman was to be seen, and the place no longer bore its former customary character and air of unconcern, but seemed burdened with heavy suspense and weariness.

But here is the last trench and the voice of a soldier of the P — regiment who has recognized his former company-commander, and there stands the third battalion, pressing against the wall in the darkness, now and then lit up for an instant by the firing, and sounds are heard, subdued talking and the clatter of muskets.

'Where is the commander of the regiment?' asked Kozeltsov.

'In the naval officers' casemate, your honour,' answers an obliging soldier. 'Let me show you the way.'

Passing from trench to trench, the soldier led the way to a cutting in the trench. A sailor sat there smoking a pipe. Behind him was a door through a chink in which a light shone.

'Can I go in?'

'I'll announce you at once,' and the sailor went in at the door. Two voices were heard talking inside.

'If Prussia remains neutral,' said one voice, 'Austria will too. . . .'

'What does Austria matter?' said the other, 'when the Slavonic lands. . . . Well, ask him in.'

Kozeltsov had never been in this casemate and was struck by its elegance. It had a parquet floor and a screen in front of the door, two beds stood against the walls, and in a corner of the room there was a large icon — the Mother of God with an embossed gilt cover — with a pink lamp alight before it. A naval officer, fully dressed, was lying asleep on one of the beds. On the other, before a table on which stood two uncorked bottles of wine, sat the speakers — the new regimental commander and his adjutant. Though Kozeltsov was far from being a coward and was not at all guilty of any offence either against the government or the regimental commander, still he felt abashed in the presence of his former comrade the colonel, so proudly did that colonel rise and give him his attention.

[And the adjutant who was sitting there also made Kozelts6v feel abashed by his pose and look, that seemed to say: 'I am only a friend of your regimental commander's. You have not come to present yourself to me, and I can't and don't wish to demand any deference from you.']

'How strange!' thought Kolzeltsov as he looked at his commander, 'It's only seven weeks since he took the command, and yet all his surroundings — his dress, manner, and looks — already indicate the power a regimental commander has: [a power based not so much on his age, seniority, or military worth, as on his wealth as a regimental commander.] It isn't long since this same Batrishchev used to hobnob with us, wore one and the same dark cotton print shirt a whole week, ate rissoles and curd dumplings every day, never asking any one to share them — but look at him now! [A fine linen shirt showing from under his wide-sleeved cloth coat, a ten-ruble cigar in his hand, a six-ruble bottle of claret on the table — all bought at incredible prices through the quartermaster at Simferopol — and] in his eyes that look of the cold pride of a wealthy aristocrat, which says: though as a regimental commander of the new school I am your comrade [don't forget that your pay is sixty rubles once in four months, while tens of

thousands pass through my hands, and] believe me I know very well that you'd give half your life to be in my place!'

'You have been under treatment a long time,' said the colonel, with a cold look at Kozeltsov.

'I have been ill, Colonel. The wound is not thoroughly closed even now.'

'Then it's a pity you've come,' said the colonel, looking suspiciously at the officer's solid figure. 'But still, you are capable of taking duty?'

'Certainly sir, I am.'

'I am very glad to hear it. Then you'll take over from Ensign Zaytsev the Ninth Company that you had before. You will receive your orders at once.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Be so good as to send the regimental adjutant to me when you go.' The commander finished with a slight bow, thereby intimating that the audience was at an end.

On leaving the casemate Kozelts6v muttered something to himself several times, and shrugged his shoulders as if he were hurt, or uncomfortable, or provoked — and provoked not with the colonel (he had no ground to be so) but with himself, and he felt dissatisfied with everything around him.

[Discipline and the subordination that goes with it, like every legalized relationship, is pleasant only when it rests on a mutual consciousness of its necessity, and of a superiority in experience, military worth, or simply on a moral superiority recognized by the inferior. But if the discipline is founded on arbitrary or pecuniary considerations, as is often the case among us, it always turns into pretentiousness on the one side and into suppressed envy and irritation on the other, and instead of a useful influence uniting the mass into one whole it produces a quite opposite effect. A man who does not feel that he can inspire respect by his own worth, instinctively fears intimacy with his subordinates and tries by ostentation to keep criticism at a distance. The subordinates, seeing only this external side which is offensive to themselves, suppose (often unjustly) that there is nothing good behind it.]

Chapter 16

Before going to join his fellow officers Kozeltsov went to greet the men of his company and to see where it was stationed. The breastworks of gabions, the plan of the trenches, the cannon he passed, and even the fragments and bombs he stumbled over on the way, all lit up incessantly by the flashes of the firing, were quite familiar to him. All this had vividly impressed itself on his memory three months before, when he had spent two consecutive weeks at this bastion. Though there was much that was dreadful in the recollection, a certain charm of old times was mingled with it and he recognized all the familiar places and objects with pleasure, as if the fortnight spent there had been an agreeable one. His company was stationed against the wall of defence on the side towards the Sixth Bastion.

Kozeltsov entered a long bomb-proof, quite open on the entrance side, where he was told he would find the Ninth Company. There was literally no room to set one's foot in the whole shelter: it was crowded with soldiers from the very entrance. At one side burned a crooked tallow candle which a soldier, lying on the ground, held over the book another was reading from, spelling out the words. Through the smoky atmosphere of the place, in the dim light near the candle, heads were visible, raised eagerly to listen to the reader. The book was a primer, and on entering the bomb-proof Kozeltsov heard the following:

'Prayer af-ter les-sons. We Thank Thee, O Cre-a-tor. . . .'

'Snuff the candle!' said a voice. 'It's a fine book.'

'God . . . is' . . . continued the reader.

When Kozeltsov asked for the sergeant-major the reader stopped and the soldiers began moving, coughing and blowing their noses, as is usual after a restrained silence. The sergeant-major, buttoning his uniform, rose not far from the reader's group, and stepping over and onto the legs of those who could not get out of his way for lack of room, came up to the officer.

'Good evening, friend! Is this the whole of our company?'

'We wish your honour health. Welcome back, your honour!' answered the sergeant-major with a cheerful and friendly look at Kozeltsov. 'How is your health getting on, your honour? Thank God you're better! We have missed you.'

It was easy to see that Kozeltsov was liked by his company.

Far back in the bomb-proof voices were heard saying: 'Our old company-commander has come back!' 'Him that was wounded.' 'Kozeltsov.' 'Michael Semenich,' and so on. Some men even moved nearer to him, and the drummer greeted him.

'How do you do, Obantchrik?' said Kozeltsov. 'Still whole ? Good evening, lads!' he added, raising his voice.

The answer, 'Wish your honour health!' resounded through the casemate.

'How are you getting on, lads?'

'Badly, your honour. The French are getting the better of us. They give it us hot from behind their 'trenchments, but don't come out into the open.' 'Perhaps it will be my luck to see them coming out into the open, lads,' said Kozeltsov. 'It won't be the first time . . . you and I will give them a thrashing.'

'We'll do our best, your honour,' several voices replied.

'Yes, he's really brave!' said a voice.

'Awfully brave!' said the drummer to another soldier, not loud but so as to be heard, and as if justifying the commander's words to himself and proving that there was nothing boastful or unlikely in what he had said.

From the soldiers, Kozeltsov went to join his fellow officers in the Defence Barracks.

Chapter 17

In the large caserne there was a crowd of naval, artillery, and infantry officers. Some slept, others talked, sitting on a chest of some kind and on the carriage of a garrison gun, but the largest and noisiest group sat on two Cossack cloaks spread out on the floor beyond the arch, and were drinking porter and playing cards.

'Ah, Kozeltsov! Kozeltsov! ... So you've come! That's good. . . . You're a brick. . . . How's your wound?' It was evident that he was liked here also, and that his return gave pleasure.

When he had shaken hands with those he knew, Kozeltsov joined the noisy group of officers playing cards. With some of them he was acquainted. A thin, dark, handsome man, with a long thin nose and large moustaches which joined his whiskers, was keeping the bank and dealt the cards with thin white fingers on one of which he wore a large seal-ring with a crest. He dealt straight ahead and carelessly, being evidently excited about something, and only trying to appear at ease. On his right lay a grey-haired major leaning on his elbows who with affected coolness kept staking half-rubles and paying at once. On his left squatted an officer with a red perspiring face, smiling unnaturally and joking. When his cards lost he kept fumbling with one hand in his empty trouser pocket. He was playing high, but evidently no longer for ready money, and it was this that upset the handsome dark man. A bald, thin, pale officer with a huge nose and mouth paced the room with a large bundle of paper money in his hand and continually staked va-banque for ready money and won. Kozeltsov drank a glass of vodka and sat down with the players.

'Stake something, Michael Semenich!' said the banker. 'You must have brought back heaps of money.'

'Where should I get money? On the contrary, what I had I've spent in the town.'

'Never! . . . You've surely cleared someone out in Simferopol!'

'I've really very little,' said Koseltsov, but evidently not wishing to be believed he unbuttoned his uniform and took up an old pack of cards.

'Well, suppose I have a try! Who knows what the devil may do for one? Even a mosquito, you know, wins his battles sometimes. But I must have a drink to keep up my courage.'

And having drunk another glass of vodka and some porter he soon lost his last three rubles.

A hundred and fifty rubles were noted down against the perspiring little officer.

'No, I've no luck,' he said, carelessly preparing another card.

'I'll trouble you to hand up the money,' said the banker, ceasing to deal the cards for a moment and looking at him..

'Allow me to send it to-morrow,' replied the other, rising and fumbling with renewed vigour in his empty pocket.

The banker cleared his throat loudly, and angrily throwing the cards right and left finished the deal. 'But this won't do. I give up the bank. This won't do, Zakhar Ivanich,' he repeated. 'We were playing for cash, not on credit.'

'What? Don't you trust me? It's really too ridiculous!'

'Who am I to receive from?' muttered the major, who was quite drunk by this time and had won some eight rubles. 'I have paid up more than twenty rubles and when I win I get nothing.'

'What am I to pay with,' said the banker, 'when there's no money on the board?'

'That's not my business,' shouted the major, rising. 'I'm playing with you, with honest people, and not with him.'

The perspiring officer suddenly flared up:

'I shall pay to-morrow, I tell you. How dare you insult me?'

T shall say what I please! Honest people don't behave like that. So there!' shouted the major.

'That's enough, Fedor Fedorich!' said everybody, trying to pacify him.

But let us hasten to drop the curtain on this scene. To-morrow or to-day, perhaps, each of these men will cheerfully and proudly go to face death, and die steadfastly and calmly; but the only relief in these inhuman conditions, horrible even to the coldest imagination and from which there is no hope of escape, is to forget and to suppress consciousness. Deep in each soul is a noble spark capable of making its possessor a hero, but it wearies of burning brightly — till a fateful moment comes when it will flash into flame and illumine great deeds.

Chapter 18

The bombardment continued with equal vigour the next day. At about eleven o'clock Volodya Kozeltsov was sitting among the officers of his battery whom he was already beginning to get used to. He was examining the new faces, observing, asking questions, and talking. The modest conversation, with some pretension to knowledge, of these artillery officers inspired him with respect and pleased him, and on the other hand, Volodya's bashful and innocent good looks inclined the officers in his favour. The senior of the battery, a captain, a short man with reddish hair standing up in a tuft above his forehead and brushed smooth on his temples, brought up in the old artillery traditions, a ladies' man with pretensions to scientific knowledge, questioned Volodya about what he knew of artillery and new inventions, joked in a friendly manner about his youth and his pretty face, and in general treated him like a son — and this pleased Volodya very much. Sub-lieutenant Dyadenko, a young officer who spoke with an Ukrainian accent and who wore a torn cloak and had dishevelled hair — though he talked loudly, snatched every opportunity to begin a hot dispute, and was abrupt in his movements — nevertheless seemed attractive to Vol6dya, for he could not help seeing that a very kind heart and much that was good lay beneath this rough exterior. Dyadenko kept

offering to be of use to Volodya, and demonstrating to him that none of the guns in Sevastopol were placed according to rule.

The only one Volodya did not like was Lieutenant Tchernovitski with his arched eyebrows, though he was the most polite of them all, and wore a coat which was clean enough and neatly patched if not very new, and though he displayed a gold chain over his satin waistcoat. He kept asking what the Emperor and the Minister of War were doing, and told him with unnatural rapture of feats of valour performed in Sevastopol, regretted [the ill-advised arrangements that were being made, and] that there were so few real patriots, and in general displayed much knowledge, intelligence, and noble feeling; but for some reason it all seemed unnatural and unpleasant. Volodya noticed in particular that the other officers hardly spoke to Tchernovitski. Cadet Vlang, whom Volodya had disturbed the night before, was also there. He did not speak, but sitting modestly in a corner laughed when there was anything funny, helped to recall anything that was forgotten, handed the vodka bottle, and made cigarettes for all the officers. Whether it was the modest, courteous manner of Volodya, who treated him as an officer and did not order him about as if he were a boy, or whether Volodya's attractive appearance charmed Vlanga (as the soldiers called him, giving a feminine form to his name), at any rate he did not take his large kindly eyes from the new officer, foresaw and anticipated his wants, and was all the time in a state of enamoured ecstasy which of course the officers noticed and made fun of.

Before dinner the lieutenant-captain was relieved from the bastion and joined them. Lieutenant-Captain Kraut was a fair-haired, handsome, vivacious officer with big sandy moustaches and whiskers. He spoke Russian excellently, but too accurately and elegantly for a Russian. In the service and in his life he was just the same as in his speech: he served admirably, was a first-rate comrade, most reliable in money matters, but as a man he seemed to lack something just because everything about him was so satisfactory. Like all Russo-Germans, in strange contradistinction to the idealist German-Germans, he was praktisch in the extreme.

'Here he comes — our hero I' said the captain, as Kraut entered the room swinging his arms and jingling his spurs. 'What will you take, Friedrich Christianich, tea or vodka?'

'I have already ordered some tea,' answered Kraut, 'but meanwhile I do not mind taking a drop of vodka as a refreshment for my soul... Very pleased to make your acquaintance. I hope you will favour me with your company and your friendship,' he added, turning to Volodya, who rose and bowed to him. 'Lieutenant-Captain Kraut. ... The master-gunner at our bastion told me yesterday that you had arrived.'

'I am very grateful to you for your bed: I slept on it.'

'But were you comfortable? One of the legs is broken; no one has time to mend it in this state of siege, it has to be propped up.'

'Well, what luck have you had on duty?' asked Dyadenko.

'Oh, all right; only Skvortsov was hit, and yesterday we had to mend a gun-carriage — the cheek was blown to shivers.'

He rose and began to walk up and down. It was evident that he was under the influence of that pleasant feeling men experience who have just left a post of danger.

'Well, Dmitri Gavrilich,' he said, shaking the captain by his knee, 'how are you getting on? What of your recommendation? Is it still silent?'

'There's no news as yet.'

'And there won't be any,' began Dyadenko. 'I told you so before.'

'Why won't there be?'

'Because the report was not written properly.'

'Ah, you wrangler! You wrangler!' said Kraut, smiling merrily. 'A real obstinate Ukrainian! There now, just to spite you you'll get a lieutenancy.'

'No I shan't!'

'Vlang, get me my pipe and fill it,' said Kraut, turning to the cadet, who rose at once and readily ran for the pipe.

Kraut brightened them all up: he talked of the bombardment, asked what had been going on in his absence, and spoke to everybody.

Chapter 19

Well, have you established yourself satisfactorily among us?' Kraut asked Volodya. 'Excuse me, what is your name and patronymic? You know that's our custom in the artillery. . . . Have you a horse?'

'No,' said Volodya, 'I don't know what I'm to do. I was telling the captain ... I have no horse nor any money until I get my forage-money and travelling expenses paid. I thought meanwhile of asking the commander of the battery to let me have a horse, but I'm afraid he'll refuse.'

'Apollon Sergeich . . .?' and Kraut made a sound with his lips expressive of strong doubt, and looking at the captain added, 'Hardly!'

'Well, if he does refuse there'll be no harm done,' said the captain. 'To tell you the truth, a horse is not much wanted here. Still, it's worth trying. I will ask him to-day.'

'How little you know him,' Dyidenko put in: 'he might refuse anything else, but not that. . . . Will you bet?'

'Oh, we know you can't help contradicting!'

'I contradict because I know. He's close in other matters, but he'll give a horse because he gains nothing by refusing.'

'Gains nothing when oats are eight rubles?' said Kraut. 'The gain is not having to keep an extra horse.'

'You ask for Skvorets, Vladimir Semenich,' said Vlang, returning with Kraut's pipe. 'He's a capital horse.'

'Off which you fell into a ditch in Soroki, eh, Vlanga?' remarked the lieutenant-captain.

‘What does it matter if oats are eight rubles, when in his estimates they figure at ten and a half?1 That’s

1 Referring to the custom of charging the government more than the actual price of supplies, and thereby where the gain comes in,’ said Dyadenko, continuing to argue.

‘Well naturally you can’t expect him to keep nothing. When you’re commander of a battery I daresay you won’t let a man have a horse to ride into town.’

‘When I’m commander of a battery my horses will get four measures each and I shan’t make an income, no fear!’

.’We shall see if we live . . said the lieutenant-captain. ‘You’ll act in just the same way — and so will he,’ pointing to Vol6dya.

‘Why do you think that he too would wish to make a profit?’ said Tcheraovitski to Kraut. ‘He may have private means, then why should he want to make a profit?’

‘Oh no, I . . . excuse me, Captain,’ said Volodya, blushing up to his ears, ‘but I should think such a thing dishonourable.’

‘Dear me! What a severe fellow he is!’ said Kraut.

‘No, I only mean that I think that if the money is not mine I ought not to take it.’

‘But I’ll tell you something, young man,’ began the lieutenant-captain in a more serious tone. ‘Do you know that if you are commanding a battery you have to conduct things properly, and that’s enough. The commander of a battery doesn’t interfere with the soldiers’ supplies: that’s always been the custom in the artillery. If you are a bad manager you will have no surplus. But you have to spend over and above what’s in the estimates: for shoeing-that’s one’ (he bent down one finger), ‘and for medicine — that’s two’ (and he bent down another finger), ‘for office expenses — that’s three: then for off-horses one has to pay up to five hundred rubles my dear fellow — that’s four: you have to supply the soldiers with new

making an income which was supposed to go for the benefit of the regiment, but part of which frequently remained unaccounted for. collars, spend a good bit on charcoal for the samovars, and keep open table for the officers. If you are in command of a battery you must live decently: you must have a carriage and a fur coat, and one thing and another. ... It’s quite plain!’

‘And above all,’ interrupted the captain, who had been silent all the time, ‘look here, Vladimir Semenich — imagine a man like myself say, serving for twenty years with a pay of first two hundred, then three hundred rubles a year. Can one refuse him a crust of bread in his old age, after all his service?’

‘Ah, what’s the good of talking,’ began the lieutenant-captain again. ‘Don’t be in a hurry to judge, but live and serve.’

Volodya felt horribly confused and ashamed of what he had so thoughtlessly said. He muttered something, and then listened in silence while Dyadenko began very irritably to dispute and to argue the contrary of what had been said. The dispute was interrupted by the colonel’s orderly who came to call them to dinner.

‘Ask Apollon Sergeich to give us some wine to-day,’ said Tchernovitski to the captain, buttoning his uniform. ‘Why is he so stingy? If we get killed, it will all be wasted.’

'Ask him yourself.'

'Oh no, you're the senior officer. We must observe order in everything.'

Chapter 20

In the room where Volodya had presented himself to the colonel the evening before, the table had been moved away from the wall and covered with a dirty table-cloth. To-day the commander of the battery shook hands with him and asked him for the Petersburg news, and about his journey.

'Well, gentlemen, who takes vodka? Please help
yourselves —— Ensigns don't take any,' he added with
a smile. Altogether he did not seem at all as stern as the night before; on the contrary he seemed a kind and hospitable host and an elder comrade among fellow officers. But in spite of it all, the officers from the old captain down to Ensign Dyadenko showed him great respect, if only by the way they addressed him, politely looking him straight in the eyes, and by the timid way they came up one by one to the side-table to drink their glass of vodka.

The dinner consisted of Polish cutlets with mustard, dumplings with butter that was not very fresh, and a large tureen of cabbage-soup in which floated pieces of fat beef with an enormous quantity of pepper and bay-leaves. There were no napkins, the spoons were of tin or wood, there were only two tumblers, and there was only water on the table, in a bottle with a broken neck; but the meal was not dull and the conversation never flagged. At first they talked about the battle of Inkerman, in which the battery had taken part, and each gave his own impressions of it and reasons for our reverse, but all were silent as soon as the commander spoke. Then the conversation naturally passed to the insufficient calibre of our field-guns, and to the subject of the new lighter guns, which gave Volodya an opportunity to show his knowledge of artillery. But the conversation never touched on the present terrible condition of Sevastopol: it was as if each man had thought so much on this subject that he did not wish to speak of it. Nor to Volodya's great surprise and regret was there any mention at all of the duties of the service he would have to perform. It was as if he had come to Sevastopol solely to discuss lighter guns and to dine with the commander of the battery. During dinner a bomb fell near the house they were in. The floor and walls shook as if from an earthquake, and the windows were darkened by the powder smoke.

'You didn't see that sort of thing in Petersburg, I fancy, but here we get many such surprises,' said the commander of the battery. 'Vlang, go and see where it burst.'

Vlang went out to see, and reported that it had fallen in the square, and no more was said about the bomb.

Just before dinner ended, a little old man, the battery clerk, came into the room with three sealed envelopes and handed them to the commander: 'This one is very important: a Cossack has just brought it from the Chief of the Artillery.'

The officers all watched with eager impatience as the commander with practised fingers broke the seal and drew out the very important paper. ‘What can it be?’ each one asked himself. It might be an order to retire from Sevastopol to recuperate, or the whole battery might be ordered to the bastions.

‘Again!’ said the commander, angrily throwing the paper on the table.

‘What is it, Apollon Sergeich?’ asked the senior officer.

‘They order an officer and men to some mortar-battery or other. ... As it is I have only four officers, and not enough men for the gun detachments,’ grumbled the commander of the battery, ‘and here they are taking more away. . . . However, gentlemen, some one will have to go,’ he said after a short silence, ‘the order is, to be at the outposts at seven. Send the sergeant-major to me. Well, who will go? Decide, gentlemen.’

There’s your man — he’s not been anywhere yet,’ said Tchernovitski, pointing to Vol6dya.

The commander of the battery did not answer.

‘Yes, I should like to go,’ said Volodya, feeling a cold sweat break out on his back and neck.

‘No, why should he?’ interrupted the captain. ‘Of course no one would refuse, but one need not offer oneself either: if Apoll6n Sergeich leaves it to us, let us cast lots as we did last time.’ All agreed. Kraut cut up some paper, rolled up the pieces, and threw them into a cap. The captain joked and on this occasion even ventured to ask the colonel for some wine — to keep up their courage, as he said. Dyadenko sat looking grim, something made Volodya smile. Tchernovitski declared he was sure to draw it. Kraut was perfectly calm. Volodya was allowed to draw first. He took a roll of paper a bit longer than the others but then decided to change it, and taking a thinner and shorter one unrolled it and read, ‘Go.’

‘It’s I,’ he said with a sigh.

‘Well, God be with you! You’ll get your baptism of fire at once,’ said the commander, looking at the ensign’s perturbed face with a kindly smile. ‘But make haste and get ready, and to make it more cheerful for you, Vlang shall go with you as gun-sergeant.’

Chapter 21

Vlang was extremely pleased with his appointment, ran off quickly to get ready, and when dressed came to help Volodya, trying to persuade him to take with him a bed, a fur coat, some back numbers of Fatherland Records, the coffee-pot with the spirit lamp, and other unnecessary things. The captain advised Volodya to read up in the Handbook (Bezak’s Artillery Officer’s Handbook) about firing mortars, and especially to copy out the tables in it. Volodya set to work at once and noticed to his surprise and joy that his fear of the danger and even greater fear that he was a coward, though it still troubled him a little, was far from what it had been the night before. This was partly the effect of daylight and activity, but was chiefly due to the fact that fear, like

every strong feeling, cannot long continue with the same intensity. In short he had already had time to live through the worst of it. At about seven o'clock, just as the sun began to disappear behind the Nicholas Barracks, the sergeant-major came and announced that the men were ready and waiting.

'I have given Vlanga the list, your honour will please receive it from him/ said he.

About twenty artillerymen, with side-arms only, stood behind the corner of the house. Volodya and the cadet walked up to them. 'Shall I make them a little speech or simply say "Good-day lads," or say nothing at all?' he thought. 'But why not say "Good-day lads", it is even right that I should,' and he cried boldly with his ringing voice, 'Good-day lads!' The soldiers answered gaily. The fresh young voice sounded pleasantly in the ears of each. Vol6dya went briskly in front of the soldiers, and though his heart beat as fast as if he had run full-speed for miles his step was light and his face cheerful. As they approached the Malakhov Redoubt and mounted the hill he noticed that Vlang, who kept close to him all the time and had seemed so brave before leaving the house, was continually dodging and stooping, as if all the bombs and cannon-balls, which whistled past very frequently here, were flying straight at him. Some of the soldiers did the same, and in general most of the faces expressed uneasiness if not exactly alarm. These circumstances emboldened Volodya and completely comforted him.

'So here am I too on the Malakhov mound, which I fancied a thousand times more terrible. And I get along without bowing to the balls, and am even much less frightened than die others. So I am no coward,' he thought with pleasure, and even with a certain self-complacent rapture.

This feeling however was quickly shaken by a sight he came upon in the twilight at the Kornilov Battery while looking for the commander of the bastion. Four sailors stood by the breastwork holding by its arms and legs the blood-stained corpse of a man without boots or coat and swinging it before heaving it over. (On the second day of this bombardment it was found impossible in some parts to clear away the corpses from the bastions, and they were therefore thrown out into the ditch so as not to be in the way at the batteries.) Volodya felt stunned for a moment when he saw the body bump on the top of the breastwork and then roll down into the ditch, but luckily for him the commander of the bastion met him just then and gave him his orders and a guide to show him the way to the battery and to the bomb-proof assigned to his men. We will not speak of all die dangers and disenchantments our hero lived through that evening: how — instead of the firing he was used to on the Volkov field amid conditions of perfect exactitude and order which he had expected to meet with here also — he found two damaged mortars, one with its muzzle battered in by a ball, the other standing on the splinters of its shattered platform; how he could not get workmen before the morning to mend the platform; how not a single charge was of the weight specified in the Handbook; how two of the men under him were wounded, and how he was twenty times within a hair's-breadth of death. Fortunately a gigantic gunner, a seaman who had served with the mortars since the commencement of the siege, had

been appointed to assist Volodya, and convinced him of the possibility of using the mortars. By the light of a lantern this gunner showed him all over the battery as he might have shown him over his own kitchen-garden, and undertook to have everything right by the morning. The bomb-proof to which his guide led him was an oblong hole dug in the rocky ground, twenty-five cubic yards in size and covered with oak beams two and a half feet thick. He and all his soldiers installed themselves in it.

As soon as he discovered the little door, not three feet high, Vlang rushed in headlong before anyone else, and at the risk of breaking his limbs against the stone bottom squeezed into the farthest corner and remained there. Volodya, when all the soldiers had settled on the ground along the walls and some had lit their pipes, made up his own bed in a corner, lit a candle, and after lighting a cigarette, lay down.

The reports of continuous firing could be heard overhead but not very distinctly, except from one cannon which stood quite close and shook the bombproof with its thunder. In the bomb-proof all was quiet, except when one or other of the soldiers, still rather shy in the presence of the new officer, spoke, asking a neighbour to move a little or to give him a light for his pipe, when a rat scratched somewhere among the stones, or when Vlang, who had not yet recovered and was still looking wildly around him, heaved a deep sigh.

Volodya, on his bed in this quiet corner crammed with people and lighted by a solitary candle, experienced a sensation of cosiness such as he had felt as a child when, playing hide-and-seek, he used to creep into a cupboard or under his mother's skirt and sit listening in breathless silence, afraid of the dark yet conscious of enjoyment. It felt rather uncanny, yet his spirits were high.

Chapter 22

After ten minutes or so the soldiers grew bolder and began to talk. The more important ones — two noncommissioned officers: an old grey-haired one with every possible medal and cross except the St. George, and a young one, a Cantonist,1 who was smoking cigarettes he had rolled himself — settled nearest to the light and to the officer's bed. The drummer had as usual assumed the duty of waiting upon the officer. The bombardiers and those who had medals came

1 The Cantonists, under serfdom, which still prevailed at the time of the Crimean War, were the sons of soldiers, condemned by law and heredity to be soldiers also. next, and farther off, in the shadow nearer the entrance, sat the humbler folk. It was these last who started a conversation, caused by the noise a man made who came tumbling hurriedly into the bombproof.

'Hullo, old fellow! Why don't you stay outside? Don't the lasses play merrily enough out there?' said a voice.

'They're playing such tunes as we never hear in our village,' laughingly replied the man who had just run in.

‘Ah, Vasin don’t like bombs — that he don’t!’ said some one in the aristocratic corner.

‘If it was necessary, that would be a different matter,’ replied Vasin slowly, and when he spoke all the others were silent. ‘On the 24th we were at least firing, but why grumble at me now? The authorities won’t thank the likes of us for getting killed uselessly.’

At these words everyone laughed.

‘There’s Melnikov — he’s out there now, I fancy,’ said someone.

‘Go and send Melnikov in here,’ said the old sergeant, ‘or else he really will get killed uselessly.’

‘Who is Melnikov?’ asked Volodya.

‘Oh, he’s a poor silly soldier of ours, your honour. He’s just afraid of nothing, and he’s walking about outside now. You should have a look at him, he’s just like a bear.’

‘He knows a charm,’ came Vasin’s long-drawn accents from the other corner,

Melnikov entered the bomb-proof. He was stout (an extremely rare thing among soldiers), red-haired and red-faced, with an enormous bulging forehead and prominent pale-blue eyes.

‘Aren’t you afraid of the bombs?’ asked Volodya.

‘What’s there to be afraid of in them bombs?’ answered Melnikov, wriggling and scratching himself. ‘They won’t kill me with a bomb, I know.’ ‘So you’d like to live here?’

“Course I should. It’s jolly here,’ he said and burst out laughing.

‘Oh, then they should take you for a sortie! Shall I speak to the general about it?’ said Volodya, though he did not know a single general in the place.

‘Like, indeed! ‘Course I should!’ And Melnikov hid behind the others.

‘Let’s have a game of “noses” lads! Who has the cards?’ his voice was heard to say hurriedly.

And soon the game had started in the far corner: laughter could be heard, and noses being smacked and trumps declared. The drummer having heated the samovar for him, Volodya drank some tea, treated the non-commissioned officers to some, and, wishing to gain popularity, joked and talked with them and felt very pleased at the respect paid him. The soldiers, seeing that the gentleman gave himself no airs, became talkative too. One of them explained that the siege of Sevastopol would not last much longer, because a reliable fellow in the fleet had told him that Constantine, the Tsar’s brother, was coming with the ‘merican fleet to help us, and also that there would soon be an agreement not to fire for a fortnight, but to have a rest, and that if anyone did fire, he’d have to pay a fine of seventy-five kopeks for each shot. Vasin, who was a small man with whiskers and large kind eyes, as Volodya had already noticed, related, first amid general silence and then amid roars of laughter, how he had gone home on leave and at first everyone was glad to see him, but then his father had begun sending him to work while the forester-lieutenant sent a horse and trap to fetch his wife! All this amused Volodya very much. He not only felt no fear or annoyance because of

the overcrowding and bad air in the bomb-proof, but on the contrary felt exceedingly bright and contented.

Many of the soldiers were already snoring. Vlang bad also stretched himself out on the floor, and the old sergeant having spread his cloak on the ground was crossing himself and muttering prayers before going to sleep, when Vol6dya felt moved to go out of the bomb-proof and see what was happening outside.

'Draw in your legs!' the soldiers called to one another as soon as he rose, and the legs were drawn in to make room for him.

Vlang, who had seemed to be asleep, suddenly raised his head and seized Volodya by the skirts of his cloak.

'Don't go! Don't go — how can you?' he began in a tearfully persuasive voice. 'You don't know what it's like. Cannon-balls are falling all the time out there. It's better in here.'

But in spite of Vlang's entreaties Volodya made his way out of the bomb-proof and sat down on the threshold, where Melnikov was already sitting making his feet comfortable.

The air was pure and fresh, especially after that of the bomb-proof, and the night was clear and calm. Mingling with the booming of the cannon could be heard the rumbling of the wheels of carts bringing gabions, and voices of men at work in the powder-vault. High overhead stretched the starry sky, across which the fiery trails of the bombs ran incessantly. On the left was another bomb-proof, through the three-foot opening of which the legs and backs of the sailors who lived there could be seen and their voices heard. In front was the roof of the powder-vault, past which flitted the figures of stooping men, while on the top of it, under the bullets and bombs that kept flying past, was a tall figure in a black cloak with its hands in its pockets, treading down the earth the others carried up in sacks. Many a bomb flew past and exploded very near the vault. The soldiers who were carrying the earth stooped and stepped aside, but the black figure continued calmly to stamp the earth down with its feet and remained on the spot in the same position.

'Who is that black fellow there?' said Volodya to Melnikov.

'Can't say. I'll go and see.'

'No, don't. There's no need.'

But Melnikov rose without heeding him, approached the black figure, and for a long time stood beside it just as indifferent and immovable.

'That's the powder-master, your honour!' he said when he returned. "The vault has been knocked in by a bomb, so the infantry are carrying earth there.'

Now and then a bomb seemed to fly straight at the door of the bomb-proof. Then Vol6dya pressed behind the corner, but soon crept out again looking up to see if another was coming that way. Though Vlang from inside the bomb-proof again and again entreated him to come in, Vol6dya sat at the threshold for about three hours, finding a kind of pleasure in tempting fate and watching the flying bombs. By the end

of the evening he knew how many guns were firing, from which positions, and where their shots fell.

Chapter 23

The next morning, 27 August, Volodya, fresh and vigorous after ten hours' sleep, stepped across the threshold of the bomb-proof. Vlang too came out, but at the first sound of a bullet rushed wildly back to the entrance, pushing his way through the crowd with his head amid the general laughter of the soldiers, most of whom had also come out into the fresh air.

Vlang, the old sergeant, and a few others only came out into the trench at rare intervals, but the rest could not be kept inside: they all crept out of the stuffy bomb-proof into the fresh morning air and in spite of the firing, which continued as violently as on the day before, settled themselves — some by the threshold of the bomb-proof and some under the breastwork. Melnikov had been strolling about from battery to battery since early dawn, looking calmly upwards.

Near the threshold sat two old soldiers and one young curly-haired one, a Jew transferred to the battery from an infantry regiment. This latter had picked up one of the bullets that were lying about, and after flattening it out on a stone with the fragment of a bomb, was now carving out a cross like the Order of St. George. The others sat talking and watching his work. The cross was really turning out very well.

T say,' said one of them, 'if we stay here much longer we shall all have served our time and get discharged when there's peace.'

'You're right. Why I had only four years left to serve, and I've been five months already in Sevastopol.'

'That won't be reckoned specially towards our discharge, it seems,' said another.

At that moment a cannon-ball flew over the heads of the speakers and fell a couple of feet from Melnikov, who was coming towards them through the trench.

'That one nearly killed Melnikov,' said one of them.

'It won't kill me,' said Melnikov.

'Then I present you with this cross for your courage,' said the young soldier, giving him the cross he had made.

'. . . No, my lad, a month's service here counts as a year for everything — that was said in the proclamation,' continued one of the soldiers.

'You may say what you like, but when we have peace we're sure to have an Imperial review at Warsaw, and then if we don't all get our discharge we shall be put on the permanent reserve.'

Just then a shrieking, glancing rifle-bullet flew just over the speakers' heads and struck a stone. 'Look out, or you'll be getting your discharge in full before to-night,' said one of the soldiers.

They all laughed.

And not only before night, but before two hours had passed, two of them had got their discharge in full and five more were wounded, but the rest went on joking just the same.

By the morning the two mortars had really been put into such a condition that they could be fired, and at ten o'clock Volodya called out his company and marched with it to the battery, in accordance with the order he had received from the commander of the bastion.

Not a trace of the fear noticeable the day before remained among the men as soon as they were actively engaged. Only Vlang could not master himself, but hid and ducked in the same old way, and Vasin lost some of his composure, fidgetted, and kept dodging. Volodya was in ecstasies, the thought of danger never entered his head. Joy at fulfilling his duty, at finding that not only was he no coward but that he was even quite brave, the sense of commanding and being in the presence of twenty men who were he knew watching him with curiosity, made him quite valiant. He was even vain of his courage and showed off before the soldiers, climbing out onto the banquette and unfastening his cloak on purpose to be more conspicuous. The commander of the bastion making the round of his 'household' as he expressed it, accustomed as he had grown during the last eight months to courage of all kinds, could not help admiring this handsome lad, with Ins coat unbuttoned showing a red shirt fitting close to his delicate white neck, who with flushed face and shining eyes clapped his hands, gave the order, 'One — two!' in ringing tones, and ran gaily onto the breastwork to see where his bombs were falling. At half-past eleven the firing slackened on both sides, and at twelve o'clock precisely the storming of the Malakhov Redoubt, and of the Second, Third (the Redan), and Fifth Bastions, began.

Chapter 24

On the North Side of the Roadstead, towards midday, two sailors were standing on the telegraph hill between Inkerman and the Northern entrenchment: one of them, an officer, was looking at Sevastopol through the telescope fixed there. Another officer with a Cossack had just ridden up to the signal-post.

The sun shone brightly high above the Roadstead, and with its warm bright light played on the stationary vessels, the flapping sails, and the rowing boats. A light wind scarcely swayed the withering leaves of the oak-scrub near the telegraph post, filled the sails of the boats, and ruffled the waves. Sevastopol, still the same, with its unfinished church, its column, its quay, its boulevard showing green on the hill, and the elegant building of its library; with its little azure creeks bristling with masts, the picturesque arches of its aqueducts, and with clouds of blue powder-smoke now and then lit up by red flashes from the guns — this same beautiful, festive, proud Sevastopol, surrounded on one side by yellow smoking hills and on the other by the bright blue sea playing in the sunlight — could still be seen on the opposite side of the Roadstead. Above the

rim of the sea, along which spread a streak of black smoke from a steamer, drifted long white clouds that portended rain. Along the whole line of entrenchments, especially on the hills to the left, compressed puffs of thick white smoke continually appeared several at a time, accompanied by flashes that sometimes gleamed like lightning even in the noontide light; and these puffs grew larger and assumed various shapes, rising and seeming darker against the sky. They started now here now there from the hills, from the enemy's batteries, from the town, and high up in the sky. The noise of the reports never ceased, and mingling with one another they shook the air.

Towards noon the cloudlets of smoke showed less and less often and the air was less shaken by the booming.

"There now, the Second Bastion doesn't reply at all!' said the mounted hussar officer. 'It's absolutely knocked to bits. It's terrible!'

'Yes, and the Malakhov hardly fires one shot for three of theirs,' replied the man who was looking through the telescope. 'It makes me mad that ours are silent. They are firing straight into the Kornilov Battery and it doesn't reply at all.'

'But look here, I told you they always stop bombarding at noon. And it's the same to-day. We'd better go to lunch ... they'll be waiting for us as it is. . . . There's nothing to look at now.'

'Wait a bit! Don't bother me!' said the man in possession of the telescope, looking eagerly at Sevastopol.

'What is it? What?'

'A movement in the trenches — dense columns advancing.'

'Yes, one can see it with the naked eye,' said the sailor. 'They are advancing in columns. We must give the alarm.'

'Look! Look! They have left the trenches.'

And one could really see with the naked eye what seemed like dark spots coming down the hill, across the ravine from the French batteries towards our bastions. In front of these spots, dark streaks could already be seen near our lines. From our bastions white cloudlets of firing burst out at different points as if crossing one another. The wind brought a sound of small-arm firing, like rain pelting against window-panes. The dark streaks were moving nearer and nearer right amid the smoke. The sounds of firing grew louder and louder and merged into a prolonged rumbling peal. The smoke, rising more and more often, spread rapidly along the lines and at last merged into one light-purple cloud curling and uncurling, amid which here and there flashes just flickered and dark dots appeared: all the separate sounds blended into one thundering crash.

'An assault!' said the officer, growing pale and letting the sailor have the telescope.

Cossacks galloped down the road, officers on horseback passed by, and the commander-in-chief in a carriage accompanied by his suite. On every face there was an expression of painful agitation and expectancy.

'They can't have taken it!' cried the mounted officer.

'By God, a standard! Look! Look!' said the officer, panting and moving away from the telescope— 'A French standard on the Malakhov!'

'Impossible!'

Chapter 25

The elder Kozeltsov, who had found time that night to win back his money and to lose it all again, including the gold pieces sewn in his cuff, was lying towards morning in a heavy, unhealthy, and deep sleep in the Defence Barracks of the Fifth Bastion, when a desperate cry arose, repeated by many voices —

'The alarm!'

'Why are you sleeping, Michael Semenich? We are attacked!' shouted someone.

'It must be a hoax,' he said, opening his eyes incredulously.

Then he saw an officer running from one corner of the barracks to the other without any apparent reason and with such a pale face that he realized it all. The thought that they might take him for a coward who did not wish to be with his company at a critical moment upset him terribly, and he rushed full speed to join it. The artillery firing had ceased, but the clatter of musketry was at its height. The bullets did not whistle as single ones do but came in swarms like a flock of autumn birds flying overhead.

The whole place where his battalion had been stationed the day before was hidden in smoke, and enemy shouts and exclamations could be heard. As he went he met crowds of wounded and unwounded soldiers. Having run another thirty paces he saw his own company pressed to the wall.

"The Schwartz Redoubt is taken!' said a young officer, whose teeth were chattering. 'All is lost!'

'Nonsense!' said Kozeltsov angrily, and [wishing to rouse himself by a gesture] he drew his blunt little iron sword and cried:

'Forward, lads! Hurrah!'

His voice sounded loud and clear and roused Kozeltsov himself. He ran forward along the traverse, and about fifty soldiers ran shouting after him. From the traverse he ran out into the open ground. The bullets fell just like hailstones. Two hit him, but where, and what they had done — bruised him or wounded him — he had no time to determine. Before him through the smoke he could already see blue coats and red trousers, and hear shouts that were not Russian. One Frenchman stood on the breastwork waving his cap and shouting something. Kozeltsov felt sure he would be killed, and this increased his courage. He ran on and on. Several soldiers outran him, others appeared from somewhere else and also ran. The blue uniforms were always at the same distance from him, running back to their trenches, but there were dead and wounded on the ground under his feet. When he had run to the outer ditch, everything became blurred in Kozeltsov's eyes and he felt a pain in his chest.

Half an hour later he was lying on a stretcher near the Nicholas Barracks and knew that he was wounded, but felt hardly any pain. He only wished for something cool to drink, and to lie more comfortably.

A plump little doctor with large black whiskers came up to him and unbuttoned his cloak. Kozeltsov looked over his chin to see the doctor's face and what he was doing to his wound, but he still felt no pain. The doctor covered the wound with the shirt, wiped his fingers on the skirt of his cloak and silently, without looking at the wounded man, passed on to another patient. Kozeltsov unconsciously watched what was going on around him and, remembering what had happened at the Fifth Bastion with exceedingly joyful self-satisfaction, felt that he had performed his duty well — that for the first time in the whole of his service he had acted as well as it was possible to act, and that he had nothing to reproach himself with. The doctor, bandaging another man, pointed to Kozeltsov and said something to a priest with a large red beard, who stood near by with a cross.

'Am I dying?' asked Kozeltsov when the priest approached him.

The priest did not reply, but said a prayer and held a cross to the wounded man's lips.

Death did not frighten Kozeltsov. He took the cross with his weak hands, pressed it to his lips, and began to weep.

'Were the French driven back?' he asked the priest firmly.

'The victory is ours at all points,' answered the latter to console the wounded man, concealing from him the fact that a French standard was already waving from the Malakhov Redoubt.

'Thank God!' exclaimed the dying man, not feeling the tears that ran down his cheeks, [and experiencing inexpressible delight at the consciousness of having performed an heroic deed.]

The thought of his brother flashed through his brain. 'God grant him as good a fate!' thought he.

Chapter 26

But a different fate awaited Volodya. He was listening to a tale Vasin was telling when he heard the cry 'The French are coming!' The blood suddenly rushed to his heart and he felt his cheeks grow cold and pale. He remained immovable for a moment, but glancing round saw the soldiers fastening their uniforms and crawling out one after the other fairly coolly. One of them — Melnikov probably — even joked, saying, 'Take them some bread and salt.'1

Volodya, and Vlang who followed him like a shadow, climbed out of the bomb-proof and ran to the battery. There was no artillery firing at all from either side. The coolness of the soldiers did less to rouse Volodya than the pitiful cowardice of the cadet. 'Can I possibly be like him?' he thought, and ran gaily to the breastwork where his mortars stood. He could plainly see the French running straight towards him across the open ground, and crowds of them moving in the nearer trenches, their bayonets glittering

in the sunshine. One short, broad-shouldered fellow in a Zouave uniform was running in front, sword in hand, jumping across the pits.

'Fire case-shot!' cried Volodya, running back from the banquette, but-the soldiers had already arranged matters without him and the metallic ring of the discharged case-shot whistled over his head first from one mortar and then from the other. 'One — Two!' ordered Vol6dya, running the distance between the two mortars and quite forgetting the danger. From one side and near at hand was heard the clatter of the musketry of our supports, and excited cries.

Suddenly a wild cry of despair arose on the left. 'They're behind us! Behind us!' repeated several voices. Volodya looked round. About twenty French-

1 It is a Russian custom to offer bread and salt to new arrivals. men appeared behind him. One of them, a handsome man with a black beard, was in front of the rest, but having run up to within ten paces of the battery he stopped, fired point-blank at Volodya, and then again started running towards him. For a moment Volodya stood petrified, unable to believe his eyes. When he recovered and glanced round he saw French uniforms on the breastwork before him; two Frenchmen were even spiking a cannon some ten paces from him. No one was near but Melnikov, who had fallen at his side killed by a bullet, and Vlang, who had seized a linstock and was rushing forward with a furious look on his face, rolling his eyes and shouting.

'Follow me, Vladimir Semenich! . . . Follow me!' he cried in a desperate voice, brandishing his linstock at the Frenchmen who had appeared from behind. The furious figure of the cadet perplexed them. Vlang hit the front one on the head, the others involuntarily hesitated, and he ran to the trench where our infantry lay firing at the French, continually looking back and shouting desperately, 'Come with me, Vladimir Semenich! Why are you stopping? Run!' Having jumped in, he climbed out again to see what his adored ensign was doing. Something in a cloak lay prostrate where Volodya had stood, and that whole place was occupied by Frenchmen firing at our men.

Chapter 27

Vlang found his battery at the second line of defence. Of the twenty soldiers belonging to the mortar battery only eight were left.

Towards rune in the evening Vlang crossed over with the battery to the North Side on a steamer crowded with soldiers, cannon, horses, and wounded men. There was no firing anywhere. The stars shone as brightly in the sky as they had done the night before, but the sea was rocked by a strong wind. On the First and Second Bastions flames kept bursting up along the ground, explosions rent the air and lit up strange dark objects and the stones flying in the air around them. Something was burning near the docks and the red glare was reflected on the water. The bridge thronged with people was illuminated by a fire at the Nicholas Battery. A large flame seemed to stand above the water on the distant little headland of the Alexander Battery, lighting up

from below the clouds of smoke that hung above it, and quiet, bold lights gleamed over the sea, as they had done yesterday, from the distant enemy fleet, and the fresh wind raised waves in the Roadstead. By the glaring light of the conflagration one could see the masts of our sinking ships as they slowly descended deeper and deeper into the water. There was no talking on board, only words of command given by the captain, the snorting and stamping of the horses on the vessel, and the moaning of the wounded, could be heard above the steam and the regular swish of the parting waters. Vlang, who had had nothing to eat all day, took a piece of bread from his pocket and began munching it, but suddenly remembering Volodya he began to sob so loud that the soldiers near him heard it.

'Look! He's eating bread and yet he's sobbing, is our Vlanga!' said Vasin.

'That's queer!' said another.

'Look! Our barrack's been set on fire too,' he continued with a sigh. 'What a lot of the likes of us perished there; and now the Frenchmen have got it for nothing.'

'At all events we have got off alive, thank God!' said Vasin.

'All the same, it's a shame.'

'Where's the shame? D'you think they'll get a chance of amusing themselves there? See if ours don't .retake it. No matter how many of the likes of us are lost; if the Emperor gives the word, as sure as there's a God we'll take it back. You don't suppose we'll leave it like that? No fear! There, take the bare walls... The 'trenchments are all blown up... Yes, I daresay.-... He's stuck his flag on the mound, but he's not shoved himself into the town. . . . You wait a bit! The real reckoning will come yet — only wait a bit!' he concluded, admonishing the French.

'Of course it will!' said another with conviction.

Along the whole line of the Sevastopol bastions — which for so many months had been seething with such extraordinary life and energy, for so many months had seen heroes relieved by death as they fell one after another, and for so many months had aroused the fear, the hatred, and at last the admiration of the enemy — no one was now to be seen: all was dead, ghastly, terrible. But it was not silent: destruction was still going on. Everywhere on the ground, blasted and strewn around by fresh explosions, lay shattered gun-carriages crushing the corpses of foes and Russians alike, cast-iron cannons thrown with terrific force into holes and half-buried in the earth and silenced for ever, bombs, cannon-balls and more dead bodies; then holes and splintered beams of what had been bomb-proofs, and again silent corpses in grey or blue uniforms. All this still shuddered again and again, and was lit up by the lurid flames of the explosions that continued to shake the air.

The enemy saw that something incomprehensible was happening in awe-inspiring Sevastopol. The explosions and the deathly stillness on the bastions made them shudder, but under the influence of the strong and firm resistance of that day they did not yet dare to believe that their unflinching foe had disappeared, and they awaited the end of the gloomy night silently, motionless and anxious.

The Sevastopol army, surging and spreading like the sea on a rough dark night, its whole mass anxiously palpitating, slowly swayed through the thick darkness by the bridge over the Roadstead and onto the North Side, away from the place where it was leaving so many brave comrades, from the place saturated with its blood, the place it had held for eleven months against a far stronger foe, but which it was now ordered to abandon without a struggle.

The first effect this command had on every Russian was one of oppressive bewilderment. The next feeling was a fear of pursuit. The men felt helpless as soon as they had left the places where they were accustomed to fight, and crowded anxiously together in the darkness at the entrance to the bridge which was rocked by the strong wind. With bayonets clashing, regiments, vehicles, and militia crowded together and pressed forward to the bay. While mounted officers pushed through with orders, the inhabitants wept, orderlies carrying forbidden luggage entreated, and artillery with rattling wheels hurried to get away. Notwithstanding the diversion resulting from their various and bustling occupations, the instinct of self-preservation and the desire to get away as quickly as possible from this dreadful place of death was present in the soul of each. It was present in the mortally wounded soldier who lay among the five hundred other wounded men on the pavement of the Pavlov Quay praying to God for death; in the militiaman pushing with all his might among the dense crowd to make way for a general who was riding past; in the general who conducted the crossing, firmly restraining the impetuosity of the soldiers; in the sailor who, having got among a moving battalion, was squeezed by the swaying crowd till he could scarcely breathe; in the wounded officer whom four soldiers had been carrying on a stretcher, but stopped by the throng had put down on the ground near the Nicholas Battery; in the artilleryman who having served with the same gun for sixteen years was now, in obedience to an officer's order quite incomprehensible to him, with the help of his comrades pushing that gun down the steep bank into the Roadstead, and in the sailors of the fleet who, having just scuttled their ships, were briskly rowing away from them in the long-boats. On reaching the North Side and leaving the bridge almost every man took off his cap and crossed himself. But behind this feeling of self-preservation there was another, a deeper feeling, sad and gnawing, akin to remorse, shame, and anger. Almost every soldier looking back at the abandoned town from the North Side, sighed with inexpressible bitterness in his heart and made a menacing gesture towards the enemy.

The Snowstorm

Translated by Robert Nisbet Bain 1901

Chapter 1

At seven o'clock in the evening, after drinking tea I departed from a post-station, the name of which I don't remember, but I recollect it was somewhere in the military district of the Don, near Novochirkask. It was already dark when, wrapped up in my furs, I sat down with Alec in the sledge. In the shelter of the post-station it seemed warm and still. Although there was no snow above us, not a single tiny star was visible above our heads, and the sky appeared to be extraordinarily low and black in comparison with the pure snowy plain stretching out before us.

We had scarce passed the dark figures of the mills — one of which was clumsily waving one of its huge wings — and got clear of the station when I observed that the road was heavier and more obstructed, and the wind began to blow upon my left side more violently and beat upon the flank, tail, and mane of the horse and regularly raise and carry away the snow torn up by the curved shafts of the sledge and the hoofs of the horses. The little sledge-bell began to be silent, a current of cold air began to flow from some opening into my sleeve and down my back, and the advice of the inspector not to go at all, lest I should wander about the whole night and be frozen to death on the road, at once occurred to me.

"Haven't we lost our way?" I said to the driver; and receiving no answer, I repeated the question in a still plainer form: " Do you think we shall reach the post-station, driver, or shall we lose our way?"

"God knows!" he replied, without turning his head, "it's only human to go astray, and the road is nowhere visible, my little master!"

"Will you tell me whether you think we shall get to the post-station or not?" I continued to ask. "Shall we get there, I say?"

"We ought to get there," said the driver, and he murmured something else which I could not quite catch because of the wind.

I didn't want to turn back, but to wander about all night in the frost and snow in the absolutely barren steppe as this part of the military district of the Don really is, was also not a very pleasant prospect to contemplate. Moreover, although I was unable to examine him very well in the darkness, my driver, somehow or other, did not please me, nor did he inspire me with confidence. He sat squarely instead of sideways; his body was too big; his voice had too much of a drawl; his hat, somehow or other, was not a driver's hat — it was too big and bulgy; he did not urge on the horses as he should have done; he held the reins in both hands as a lacquey does who sits on the box behind the coachman and, above all, I did not believe in him because his ears were tied round with a cloth. In a word, I did not like the look of him, and that serious hunched back of his bobbing up and down before me boded no good.

"In my opinion it would be better to turn back," said Alec; "it is no joke to get lost."

“My little master, you see what sort of driving it is: no road to be seen, and your eyes all bunged up!” growled the driver.

We hadn’t gone a quarter of an hour when the driver stopped the horses, gave the reins to Alec, clumsily disengaged his legs from their sitting position and, trampling over the snow in his big boots, went to try and find the road.

“I say, where are you?” I cried, “have we gone astray, or what?”

But the driver did not answer, me and turning his face in the opposite direction to that in which the wind was blowing — it had cut him in the very eyes — went away from the sledge.

“Well, what is it?” I asked when he had turned back again.

“Nothing at all,” said he with sudden impatience and anger, as if it was my fault that he had lost the road, and slowly thrusting his big boots into the front part of the sledge again, he slowly grasped the reins together with his frozen mittens.

“What shall we do?” I asked when we had again moved forward.

“Do? Why, go whither God allows us!” And on we went at the same jig-trot, obviously across country, sometimes over snow piled op bushels high, sometimes over brittle, naked ice.

Notwithstanding the cold, the snow on our collars thawed very quickly ; the snow drift below increased continually, and fine dry flakes began to fall from above.

It was plain we were going God only knew whither, for after going along for another quarter of an hour we did not see a angle verst post.

“What do you think, eh?” I said again to the driver; “do you think we shall get to the station?”

“To which station? We may get back, if the horses take it into their heads to try, they’ll take us right enough, but as to reaching the other station, scarcely, we might perish, that’s all.”

“Then turn back by all means,” said I, “at any rate. . .”

“Turn the horses round, do you mean?”

“Yes, turn ’em round!”

The driver let go the reins. The horses began to run more quickly, and although I observed that we had turned round, yet the wind had changed too, and soon, through the snow the windmills were visible. The driver took heart again and began to be loquacious.

“The Anudiuses got into the drifts and turned back just in the same way when they came from this station,” said he, “and passed the night by the haystacks; they only got in by morning. They were only too thankful for the shelter of the haystacks; they might have easily frozen to death. It was cold, and one of them did have his legs frostbitten, so that he died of it three weeks later.”

“But now you see it is not so cold, and it has grown quieter; might not we drive on now, eh?”

“It’s fairly warm, warm, oh yes! and the snow’s coming down. Now we’ll turn back, as it seems easier going and the snow comes down thicker. You might drive if you had

a courier, but you'll do it at your own risk. Are you joking? Why, you'd be frozen! And what should I say who am responsible for your honour?"

Chapter 2

Just then there was a sound of little bells behind us, the bells of some troika, a three-horse sledge, which was rapidly overtaking us.

"That is a courier's bell," said my driver; "there's one such courier at every post-station."

And, indeed, the little bell of the front troika, the sound of which was now plainly borne to us by the wind, was an extraordinarily welcome sound to hear: a pure, musical, sonorous, and slightly droning sound. As I afterwards ascertained, it was a hunter's arrangement of three little bells — one big one in the centre and two little ones adjusted to tierce. The sound of this tierce and the droning quinte, resounding through the air, was extraordinarily penetrating and strangely pleasant in that vast and voiceless steppe.

"The post is in haste," said my driver when the foremost of the three horses was level with us.

"What sort of a road, eh? Can one get through?" cried he to the hindmost driver; but the fellow only shouted to his horses and didn't answer him.

The sound of the little bells quickly died away on the wind as soon as the post-car had passed us.

My driver must now have felt a bit ashamed, I fancy.

"We'll go on, sir," said he; "these people have gone on before us and have left a fresh track, which we can now follow."

I agreed, and again we turned towards the wind and crawled along a bit through the deep snow. I kept a side-long glance upon the road so as to see that we did not wander away from the track made by the sledge. For two versts the track was plainly visible, after that the only thing observable was a very slight unevenness under the curved sides of the sledge, and I began to look straight in front of me. The third verst pole we could still make out, but the fourth we could not find at all. As before, we were driving both against and with the wind, both left and right, and at last it got to such a pass that the driver said we had deviated to the right. I said we had gone to the left, while Alec proved that we were absolutely going back again. Once more we stopped for a while, the driver extricated his big feet and crawled out to find the road; but it was all in vain. I also made up my mind to get out for once and see for myself whether that was not the road which I saw glimmering indistinctly; but scarcely had I taken six steps forward, with the utmost difficulty, against the wind and persuaded myself that everywhere were the selfsame uniform white layers of snow and that the road existed only in my imagination — than I no longer saw the sledge.

"Driver! Alec!" I cried, but my voice! — well I felt that the wind snatched it right out of my mouth and carried it in the twinkling of an eye away from me. I have a very distinct recollection of the loud, penetrating, and even desperate voice with which I once more yelled: "Driver!" when he was only two good paces distant from me. His black figure, whip in hand, and with his large hat perched on one side, suddenly grew up in front of me. He led me to the sledge.

"Still warm, thank goodness!" said he, "but it's bad if the frost does catch you, my little master!" said he.

"Let the horses go; we must go back," said I, taking, my seat on the sledge. " I suppose you can guide them, driver?"

"I must guide them."

He threw aside the reins, struck the saddle of the thill horse thrice with his whip and again we went on somewhither for a bit. We went along for about half an hour. Suddenly we again heard in front of us the, to me, familiar little hunting-bell and two more besides; but this time they were coming towards us. It was the same three troikas returning to the post-station after delivering the mails, with the fresh horses fastened on behind. The couriers troika, with its three powerful horses with the hunting bells came rapidly forward. A single driver sat on the box, shouting lustily. Behind, in the middle of the empty sledge, sat a couple of drivers. I could hear their loud and merry discourse. One of them was smoking a pipe, and the sparks, kindled by the wind, lit up part of his face.

As I looked at them I began to be ashamed that I had been afraid to go on, and my driver must have experienced much the same sensation, for we said with one voice: "Let us go after them."

Chapter 3

The hindmost troikas had not yet passed when my driver turned clumsily and struck the attached horses with the sledge shafts. One of the troika team thereupon fell heavily, tearing away the traces and plunging to one side.

"You cock-eyed devil, don't you see where you're going, driving over people like that? Devil take you!" began one of the drivers in a hoarse, quavering voice.

He was smallish and an old fellow, as far as I could judge from his voice and his position. He had been sitting in the hinder troika, but now leaped quickly out of the sledge and ran to the horses, never ceasing the whole time to curse my driver in the most coarse and cruel manner.

But the horses would not be pacified. The driver ran after them, and in a minute both horses and driver had vanished in the white mist of the snowstorm.

"Vas-il-y! bring the chestnut hither, we shall never get them else," his voice still resounded.

One of the drivers, a very tall man, got out of the sledge, silently detached his three horses," saddled and bridled one of them, and, crunching the snow beneath him, disappeared in the direction of his comrade. We, with the two other horses, went after the courier's troika, which, ringing its bell, set off in front at full gallop; we just let ourselves go without troubling any more about the road,

"A pretty way of catching them !" said my driver, alluding to the other driver, who had gone off after the horses; "he'll never catch' em, and he's leading the spare horse to a place he'll never get him out of again."

Ever since my driver had begun to go back, he had become in better spirits and more inclined to be talkative, which I, of course, did not fail to take advantage of as, so far, I had no desire to sleep. I began to ask him all about himself and whence he came, and soon found out that he was a fellow countryman, hailing from Tula country, being a small proprietor in the village of Kirpechny; that their land was of very little good to them and had quite ceased to produce grain since the cholera visitation; that there were two brothers at home, while a third had enlisted as a soldier; that the supply of bread would not hold out till Christmas, and they had to hire themselves out to make more money; that the younger brother was master in the house because he was married, while my friend was a widower; that an artel, or society of drivers, went forth from their village every year; that though he was not a coachman by profession he served at the post-station in order to be of some help to his brother; that he lived here, thank God, on 120 paper roubles a year, of which he sent a hundred home to his family, and that he had a pretty good time of it, but that couriers were veritable beasts, and that the people he had to do with here were always cursing him.

"That driver, for instance, why should he curse me? my little master! Did I overturn his horses on purpose? Why, I wouldn't do any harm to anyone! And why should he go scurrying after them? They would be sure to come back of their own accord. And now, he'll only make the horses starve to death besides coming to grief himself" repeated the God-fearing little muzhik.

"But what is that black thing yonder?" said I, observing some black objects just in front of us.

"A train of wagons! — a nice way of going along, I must say," continued he when we had come abreast with the huge wagons covered with mats, going one after another on wheels. "Look! not a soul to be seen; they are all asleep. The horse is the wisest of them all. He knows very well what he is about. Nothing in the world will make him miss the road. We too will go alongside of them and then we shall be all right," added he, "and know where we are going."

It really was a curious sight. There were those huge wagons covered with snow from the matting atop to the wheels below, moving along absolutely alone. Only in the front corner the snow-covered mat was raised a couple of inches for a moment as our little bells resounded close to the wagons and a hat popped up. The big piebald horse, with outstretched neck and straining back, deliberately proceeded along the absolutely

hidden road, monotonously shaking his shaggy head beneath the whitening shaft and pricking up one snow-covered ear as we came abreast of him.

After we had gone on for another half-hour the driver again turned to me.

"What do you think, sir; we are going nicely along now, eh?"

"I don't know," I replied.

"Before, the wind was anyhow, but now we are going right in the midst of the storm. No, we shall not get there; we too have lost our way," he concluded with the utmost calmness.

Evidently, although a great coward, and afraid of his own shadow, he had become quite tranquil as soon as there were a good many of us together and he was not obliged to be our guide and responsible for us. With the utmost sang froid he criticised the mistakes of the driver in front of us as if it had anything whatever to do with him. I observed indeed that now and then the troika in front was sometimes in profile, from my point of view, to the left and sometimes to the right, and it also seemed to me as if we were encircling a very limited space. However, it might have been an optical delusion, as also the circumstance that, occasionally, it seemed to me as if the troika in front was climbing up a mountain, or going along a declivity, or under the brow of a hill, whereas the steppe was everywhere uniformly level.

After we had proceeded for some time longer I observed, or so it seemed to me, far away, on the very horizon, a long, black, moving strip of something; but in a moment it became quite plain to me that this was the very same train of wagons which we had overtaken and outstripped. Just the same creaking wheels, some of them no longer turning, enveloped in snow; just the same people asleep beneath their mats, and just the same leading piebald horse, with steaming, distended nostrils, smelling out the road and pricking up his ears.

"Look, we have gone round and round and are coming out by this train of wagons again!" said my driver in a sulky tone. "The courier's horses are good ones, though he drives them villainously, but ours are so-so and always stopping, just as if we had been driving all night long."

He coughed a bit.

"Shall we turn off somewhere, sir, for our sins?"

"Why? We are bound to arrive somewhere as it is."

"Arrive somewhere! We shall have to make a night of it in the steppe: that's what we shall do. How it is snowing, my little master!"

Although it did seem strange to me that the driver in front of us, who had obviously lost his road and had no idea of the direction in which he was going, took no trouble to find it again, but continued to drive at full tilt, cheerily shouting to his horses, I did not want to separate from him all the same.

"Follow after them!" I said.

The driver went on, but he drove along even more unwillingly than before and no longer conversed with me.

Chapter 4

The snowstorm was growing more and more violent. The flakes descended fine and dry, apparently it was freezing hard. My nose and cheeks grew numb with cold, currents of cold air penetrated my furs more and more frequently and it was necessary to huddle up in them more closely. Occasionally the sledge bumped up against a bare, ice-clad hummock, from which it scattered the snow in every direction.

As I had travelled some score or so of versts without a night's rest, notwithstanding the fact that I was very much interested in the issue of our wanderings, I involuntarily shut my eyes and dozed off. All at once, when I opened my eyes again, I was struck by what seemed to me in the first moment a bright light illuminating the white plain; the horizon had considerably widened, the low, black sky had suddenly disappeared; in every direction were visible white oblique lines of falling snow; the figures of the troika people in front appeared more plainly, and when I looked upwards it seemed to me for the first moment as if the clouds had parted and that only the falling snow covered the sky. Whilst I had been slumbering the moon had arisen and threw her cold and clear light through the scattered clouds and falling snow. The one thing I saw clearly was my sledge, the horses, the driver, and the three troikas going on in front: the first troika, the courier's, on the box of which one of the drivers was still sitting urging his horses on at a good round pace; the second, in which sat the two other drivers, who had thrown the reins aside and made themselves a shelter against the wind out of their armyaks never ceasing to smoke their pipes the whole time, as was clear from the sparks proceeding from that quarter, and the third troika, in which nobody was visible — presumably the driver was sleeping in the middle of it. Before I went to sleep, however, the leading driver had at rare intervals stopped his horses and tried to find the way. Then, every time we stopped, the howling of the wind became more audible and the enormous quantity of snow suspended in the air more strikingly visible. I now saw by the light of the moon, half obscured by the snowstorm, the small, squat figure of the driver, with the big whip in his hand, with which he flicked at the snow in front of him, moving backwards and forwards in the bright mist and coming back again to the sledge, leaping sideways on to the box seat, and amidst the monotonous whistling of the wind the alert, sonorous ringing and clanging of the little bells was audible once more. Every time the driver in front leaped out to look for the road or the verst posts one could hear the brisk, self-confident voice of one of the drivers shouting to the driver in front:

"Do you hear, Ignashka! take the road to the left! You'll find more shelter to the right!" Or, "Why are you going round and round like a fool? Go by the snow; take the lee of it, and you'll come out all right!" Or, "A little more to the right, a little more to the right, my brother! Don't you see there's something black yonder — some sign-post or other?" Or, "Where are you going? Where are you going? Loose the piebald nag and go on in front and he'll guide you to the road straight away. It'll be much better if you do that!"

This selfsame person, who was so fond of giving advice, not only did not loose the side-horse and go over the snow to look for the road, but did not even so much as thrust his nose from out of his arrnyak, and when Ignashka, the driver in front, in reply to one of his counsels, shouted to him to go in front himself if he knew where to go so well, the counsellor replied that if he had been travelling with courier's horses he would have gone on and led them to the right road straight away, "but our horses cannot go on in front in snow-drifts, not such nags as these, anyway."

"Then you can hold your jaw!" replied Ignashka, cheerily whistling to his horses.

The other driver, sitting in the same sledge with the counsellor, said not a word to Ignashka, and in fact did not interfere at all, although he was not asleep either, at least I assumed as much from the fact that his pipe continued unextinguished, and also from the circumstance that whenever we stopped I heard his measured, uninterrupted narration. He was telling some tale or other. Only when Ignashka suddenly halted for the sixth or seventh time, this other driver plainly became very angry at being interrupted by such leisurely procedure, and he shouted at him:

"What! stopping again! You want to find the road, eh? It's a snowstorm we're in, and there's an end of it! Why, even a land-surveyor wouldn't be able to find the road now. Go on as long as the horses can drag us! Never fear; we shan't freeze to death! Go on, I say!"

"Never fear, indeed! Last year a postilion was frozen to death!" observed my driver.

The driver of the third troika did not wake the whole time, only once, during a stoppage, the counsellor shouted:

"Philip! I say, Philip!" and receiving no answer observed: "I wonder if he's frozen? You might go and see, Ignashka!"

Ignashka, who hastened to do everyone's bidding, went to the sledge and began to shake the sleeper.

"Why, he's drunk as drunk — like a log!" said he, "I say! you! are you frozen?" he said, shaking him violently.

The sleeper babbled something or other and cursed him.

"He's alive, all right, my brother!" said Ignashka; and again he ran forward and again we went on, and so quickly indeed, this time, that the little brown side horse attached to my troika, constantly lashed up from behind, more than once broke into a clumsy gallop.

Chapter 5

I think it must have been almost midnight when we were joined by the little old man and Vas-il-y, who had been in pursuit of the stampeded horses. They had found the horses and pursued and overtaken us; but how they had done so in the dark, blinding snowstorm, in the midst of the barren steppe, has always remained unintelligible to me. The little old man, moving his elbows and legs, rode up at a gallop on the brown horse.

The two other horses were attached to the collar: in the snowstorm it was impossible to leave the horses to themselves. On coming up to his, the old fellow began attacking my driver again.

"Look here, you cock-eyed devil, really if . . ."

"Hie, Uncle Matvich!" shouted the tale-teller from the second sledge, "alive, eh? Crawl in here I" But the old man did not answer him, but went on with his cursing. When it appeared to him that he had cursed enough, he did go to the second sledge.

"Caught 'em all?" they said to him from that quarter.

"Of course! Why not?"

And his diminutive figure, on the trot, with the upper part of his body bobbing up and down on the back of the horse, after leaping out on to the snow, ran forward without stopping behind the sledge, and scrambled in to where they were, with his legs sticking up in the air as he forced his way through the orifice. Tall Vas-il-y, as before, took his seat in silence on the box seat in the foremost sledge alongside Ignashka, whom he helped to look for the road.

"You see what a curser he is, my little master!" murmured my driver.

We went along for some time after this, without stopping, over the white wilderness, in the cold, trans-parent, and quivering light of the snowstorm. Every time I opened my eyes, there in front of me was the selfsame clumsy hat and back, covered with snow; there, too, was the selfsame low shaft-bow, beneath which, between the tightly drawn leather reins, and always the same distance off, the head of the brown horse with the black mane deliberately bending in the direction of the wind, moved slowly up and down. Behind its back one could also see, to the right, the bay side-horse, with its tail tied up into a bunch, occasionally bumping against the front board of the sledge. Look down — and there was the selfsame snow thumping against the sides of the sledge, which the wind stubbornly lifted and carried off in one direction. In front, always at the same distance, the leading troika ran steadily along; on the right and on the left everything was white and twinkling. In vain the eye sought for some new object: not a post, not a rick, not a fence — nothing at all was visible. Everywhere everything was white, white and mobile; sometimes the horizon seemed incomprehensibly far off, sometimes compressed within two paces distance in every direction. Sometimes a high white wall would grow up suddenly on the right and run alongside the sledge, then it would as suddenly disappear and grow up in front only to run further and further off and again disappear. If you looked up it would appear quite light the first instant, and you would seem to see little stars through the mist; but the little stars vanished from your view ever higher and higher, and all you saw was the snow, which fell past your eyes on to your face and into the collar of your furs; the sky was identically bright everywhere, identically white, colourless, uniform, and constantly mobile. The wind seemed to be perpetually shifting. Now it blew right against you and blinded your eyes, now it blew teasingly sideways and flung the collar of your fur coat over your head and mockingly flapped it in your face, now it would howl from behind through some unprotected crevice. Audible throughout was the faint,

miserable crunching of hoofs and sledge-boards over the snow and the expiring tinkle of the little bells when we passed over deep snow. Only very rarely, when we drove against the wind, and over naked, frozen, stony ground, did the energetic whistling of Ignaty and the thrilling sound of the little bell with the resonant, droning quinte come flying, plainly audible, towards us, and then these sounds would immediately and pleasantly disturb the melancholy character of the wilderness, subsequently falling into a monotonous melody persisting with intolerable fidelity always on one and the same motif, which I involuntarily imagined to myself as I listened to them. One of my feet presently began to grow numb, and when I turned about a bit in order the better to shelter it, the snow which had accumulated on my collar and hat plunged down my neck and made me shiver; but, on the whole, I was still warm enough in my well-warmed furs, and a feeling of drowsiness came over me.

Chapter 6

Recollections and ideas alternated with the most strenuous rapidity in my imagination.

The counsellor also kept on bawling out of the second sledge — I wondered what sort of a yokel he might be. No doubt a rufus, well set up, with short legs, I thought to myself, something in the style of Theodor Filipovich, our old waiter. And then I saw before me the staircase of our big house, and four of the men-servants in linen suits, walking heavily and dragging the pianoforte out of one of the wings. Theodor Filipovich, with the sleeves of his nankeen surtout turned up, and carrying a pedal, was running on in front, unloosening the bars and bolts, and there he stood, tugging away at a napkin, bustling about, insinuating himself between their legs and making a mess of everything, never ceasing all the time to screech with a funny voice:

“This way, this way, you fellows in front! Like this, tail up, up, up, up, I say, carry it through the door! Like this! “

“We can manage it; leave us alone, Theodor Filipovich!” timidly observed the gardener, clinging to the balustrade, all red with the exertion and supporting one corner of the grand-piano with all his remaining strength.

But Theodor Filipovich would not be quiet.

“What an idea?” I thought as I deliberated about it. Does he fancy he is useful, indispensable, or is he simply glad because God has given him the self-confident, convincing eloquence which he dispenses with such sweet satisfaction? It must be so.” And then I saw somewhere or other a pond, a lot of tired men-servants up to their knees in water dragging a fishing-net, and there again was Theodor Filipovich with a watering-can, running along the bank and shouting at them, but only very rarely approaching the water’s edge in order to touch with his hands some golden carp and pour away the dirty water and fill his can with fresh. And then it was midday in the month of July. I was walking along somewhere, over some quite newly mown garden grass, beneath the

burning, perpendicular rays of the sun; I was still very young; there was something I lacked, something I very much wanted. I was going to a pond, to my favourite spot, between beds of wild eglantine and an avenue of birch trees, and I lay down to sleep. I remember the feeling with which I lay down: I looked through the pretty, prickly branches of the eglantine at the black, dry hummocks of earth and at the translucent, bright-blue mirror of the pond. It was a sort of feeling of narve self-satisfaction and melancholy. Everything around me was so exceedingly beautiful, and this beauty had such a strong effect upon me that it seemed to me as if I also were good, and the only vexatious thing was that nobody admired me. It was hot; I tried to sleep in order to get some rest, but the flies, the intolerable flies, gave me no respite even here, and they began to collect around me, and doggedly, thickly, like so many little pebbles, they darted about from my temples to my arms. The bees were humming not far from me, in the sun-burnt patches of the grass, and yellow-winged butterflies, as if wearied by the sultriness, were flitting from blade to blade of grass. I looked up: it pained my eyes — the sun shone too strongly through the bright leaves of the thick-foliaged birch tree loftily, but very gently, rocking its branches above my head, and it seemed hotter than ever. I covered my face with a pocket handkerchief. I felt oppressed, and the flies regularly stuck to my arms, on which a light sweat burst forth. The sparrows were busy in the dog-rose hedges. One of them hopped along the ground a few yards from me, pretended once or twice to be pecking the ground energetically, and making the tiny twigs crackle beneath his feet and chirping merrily, flew out of the bosque; another sparrow also perched upon the ground, trimmed his tail, glanced around him, and then, like a dart, flew chirping after the first sparrow. The blows of the mangling stick on the wet linen were audible from the pond, and the sound of these blows was borne downwards and carried along the surface of the pond. Audible also were the laughter, talking, and splashing of the bathers. The breeze shook noisily the summits of those birches that were further from me; nearer at hand I heard it begin to flutter the grass, and now the leaves of the dog-rose bosque fell a-quivering and rustled upon their branches, and now, raising the corner of the handkerchief and tickling my perspiring face, the fresh current of air careered right up to me. Through the opening made by the lifted 'kerchief flew a fly and buzzed terror-stricken round my moist mouth. An odd piece of dried twig insinuated itself under my back. No, lying down was impossible. Suppose I went and had a refreshing bath. But at that very moment I hear quite close to the bosque hastening footsteps and a terrified female voice saying:

"Alas Batyushka! What is to be done? There's not a man in sight!"

"What is it? what is it?" I ask, running out into the sun to the maid-servant who ran past me crying and wailing. She only looked round at me, waved her hands and ran on further. And now there appears old Martha, who is seventy years of age, holding a handkerchief in her hand which she had torn from her head, bounding along and dragging one leg after her in a woollen stocking and hastening to the pond. Two little girls were also running, holding each other by the hand, and a boy of ten, in his father's surtout, holding on to the skirt of one of them, hastened on behind.

"What's the matter?" I asked them.

"A muzhik has been drowned."

"Where?"

"In the pond."

"One of our people, eh?"

"No, a vagabond."

Ivan, the coachman, shuffling with his big slippers over the mown grass, and the fat messenger Yakov, breathing with difficulty, were also running to the pool, and I ran after them.

I remember the feeling within me, which said to me: "Go ahead! throw yourself into the pond and drag out the muzhik; save him and they'll all admire you so," which was what I desired above all.

"Where is he? where is he?" I inquired of the crowd of house-servants collected round the shores of the pond.

"There he is, right at the bottom, over yonder, near to the bathing-place," said a washerwoman, placing her wet linen on a drying pole. "I saw him go under, and then he appeared somewhere else, and then he disappeared, and then he came up again once more; and how he shrieked, 'I'm sinking, Batyushka!' and down below he went again, and only bubbles came up after him; and as soon as I saw that a muzhik was drowning I cried out, 'Batyushka, there's a muzhik drowning!'"

And the washerwoman, throwing the yoke-beam over her shoulder, waddled along the narrow path away from the pond.

"It is a sin and a shame!" said Yakov Ivanov, the steward, with a despairing voice; "what a to-do the County Court will make about it! There will be no end to it!"

At last a muzhik, with a scythe in his hand, forced his way through the crowd of women, children and old men, elbowing each other on the shore, and hanging his scythe on the branch of a cytisus, very deliberately began to pull off his boots.

"Where was it? Where was he drowned?" I kept on asking, wishing to pitch myself in there and do something or other out of the way.

But they only pointed out to me the smooth surface of the pond, which was rarely ruffled by a passing breeze. It was incomprehensible to me how he could have got drowned; the water, as smooth, beautiful, and indifferent as ever, stood above him, glistening like gold in the midday sun, and it seemed to me as if I could do nothing and astonish nobody, especially as I swam but awkwardly; but the muzhik had already drawn his shirt over his head and flung himself into the water straight away. They all kept looking at him with confidence and intense expectation; but when he had got up to his shoulders in the water the muzhik deliberately turned back again and put on his shirt: he did not know how to swim.

People came running together; the crowd grew denser and denser; the old women held on to each other, but none rendered the slightest assistance. Those who had only just arrived at once began to give advice, made a fuss, and their faces wore an expression of fear and despair; of those who had been there sometime already, some

becoming tired of standing, sat down on the grass, and others turned back and went away. Old Matrena inquired of her daughter whether she had closed the door of the stove; the little boy in his father's surtout violently flung stones into the water.

But now, barking loudly and looking back doubtfully, Trezerka, the dog of Theodor Filipovich, came running down the hill, and presently the form of Theodor himself, also running down the hill and bawling something or other, emerged from behind the dog-rose hedge.

"What's up?" he cried, taking off his surtout as he came along, "A man drowned and all of you stand gaping here! Give me a rope!"

They all gazed upon Theodor Filipovich with hope and terror, while he, resting one hand on the shoulder of one of the house-servants, worked off the boot on his right leg with the toe of his left foot.

"Over yonder, where the crowd is, on the right side of the willow, that's the spot, Theodor Filipovich, just there," someone said to him.

"I know," he answered, and frowning, no doubt in response to the indications of shamefacedness visible in the mob of women, he took off his shirt and little cross, which latter he gave to the gardener's little boy, who stood before him in a cringing attitude, and energetically strutting over the mown grass, drew near to the pond.

Trezerka, who, in doubt as to the meaning of the rapid movements of his master, had stopped close to the crowd and, sitting down on the bank, snapped off several blades of grass, now looked inquiringly at him, and suddenly, with a joyful yelp, plunged into the water with his master. During the first moment nothing was visible except foam and water drops, which flew right over to where we stood; but presently Theodor Filipovich, gracefully waving his arms and rhythmically raising and lowering his back, was seen swimming briskly towards the shore. Trezerka too, snorting and choking, was also coming rapidly back, shaking himself in the midst of the crowd and rolling on his back on the shore to dry himself. At the selfsame moment when Theodor Filipovich swam up to the shore two coachmen came running up to the willow with a net wound round a pole. Theodor Filipovich, for some reason or other, lifted up his hands, sneezed once, twice, thrice, each time spurting a jet of water out of his mouth, shaking his hair neatly and making no answer to the questions which showered down upon him from all sides. At last he emerged on to the bank and, as far as I could make out, he was occupying himself solely with the proper adjustment of the net. They drew out the net, but at the bottom of it there was nothing but mud and a few little carp swimming about in it. Just as the net was being dragged in a second time I arrived on that side of the pond.

The only sounds audible were the voice of Theodor Filipovich distributing commands, the splashing in the water of the net-rope, and groans of horror.

"Now, then, put some heart into it and pull all together!" cried the voice of Theodor Filipovich.

"There's something this time! it drags heavily, my brethren!" cried a voice.

But now the net, in which two or three carp were floundering, all wet, and crushing the grass beneath it, was dragged ashore. And then dimly seen through the thin agitated layer of turbid water, something white was apparent in the extended net. A groan of horror, not loud but penetratingly audible in the death-like silence, ran through the crowd.

"Put a little more heart into it; drag it on to the dry ground!" sounded the authoritative voice of Theodor Filipovich; and the doomed man was dragged by main force over the cropped stalks of the burdocks and thistles right up to the willow tree.

And now I see before me my dear old aunt in her white dress; I see her fringed lilac sunshade so utterly out of place in this picture of death so horrible from its very simplicity, and I see her face ready at that very instant to burst into tears. I remember the expression of disenchantment in her face at the idea that these drag-nets were altogether useless, and I remember the sick, sorrowing feeling I experienced when she said to me with the naive egoism of love: "Let us go, my friend! Ah! how horrible it is! And you to go and bathe and swim all alone as you do, too!"

I remember how bright and sultry the sun was; how it burnt up the dry, crumbling earth beneath our feet; how it played on the surface of the pond; how gigantic carp were hurrying and scurrying near the banks; how the smoothness of the centre of the pond was disturbed by shoals of fishes; how high in the sky a vulture was wheeling right above some ducks, who, quacking and splashing, were making for the middle of the pond through the reeds; how threatening, white, curly clouds were collecting on the horizon; how the mud, dragged ashore by the net, was gradually being trampled into the ground; and how, walking along the dyke, I again heard the stroke of a paddle resounding over the pond.

But this paddle was now ringing just as if the sound of the paddles was blending together into a tierce; and this sound tormented and wearied me all the more because I knew that this paddle was a bell and Theodor Filipovich could not make it keep quiet. And this paddle, like an instrument of torture, was pressing my leg, which was freezing, and I awoke.

It seemed to me as if I had been awakened by a sudden jolt and by two voices speaking close beside me.

"Hillo! Ignat! Ignat, I say!" cried the voice of my driver, "take a passenger ! It's all one to you, and it's no use my trying to keep up. Take one, I say!"

The voice of Ignat answered close beside me:

"Why should I be responsible for a passenger? You've got half a stoop yet, haven't you?"

"Half a stoop, indeed ! There's a quarter of a stoop, already!"

"A quarter of a stoop! What an idea!" screeched the other voice. "Fancy plaguing a horse for the sake of a quarter of a stoop!"

I opened my eyes. Always the same unendurable, quivering snow blizzard in one's eyes, and the selfsame drivers and horses, but close beside me I saw a sledge. My driver had caught up Ignat, and we had been going on side by side for some timie.

Notwithstanding that the voice from the other sledges had advised my driver not to take in less weight than a half stoop, Ignat had suddenly stopped the troika.

"Let us change about then! A good job for you! Put in a quarter stoop, as we shall arrive to-morrow. How much do you make it, eh?"

My driver, with unusual vivacity, leaped out into the snow, bowed down before me, and begged me to transfer myself to Ignat. I was quite willing to do so, but it was clear that the God-fearing little muzhik was so satisfied with the new arrangement that he must needs pour forth his joy and gratitude on some one or other; he bowed down before me and thanked me and Alec and Ignashka.

"Well, there you are now, thank God. And I tell you what it is, my little master, we have been wandering about half the night, without knowing whither. That chap there will bring us in all right, my little master, and my horses are done up already."

And he transferred my things with energetic officiousness.

While they were transferring the things I, following the direction of the wind, which carried me along, as it were, went to the second sledge. The sledge, especially on that side on which the armyak was hung up over the heads of the two drivers, was a quarter covered with snow, but behind the armyak it was quiet and comfortable. The little old man was lying there with his legs stretched wide apart, and the tale-teller was going on with his tale: "At the very time when the general, in the King's name, you know, came, you know, to Mary in the dungeon, at that very time Mary said to him: General, I have no need of you and I cannot love you and, you know, you cannot be my lover, but my lover is the Prince himself.

"At that very time," he was going on, but perceiving me, he was silent for a moment and began to puff away at his pipe.

"What, sir, come to listen to the tale too?" said the other, whom I have called the Counsellor.

"You are having a rare fine time of it," said I. "It passes the time anyhow and prevents one from brooding."

"But tell me, do you know where we are now?"

This question did not appear to please the drivers.

"Where? Who can make that out? We may be going right away to the Calmucks," answered the Counsellor.

"But what shall we do then?"

"Do? We must go on, and perhaps we shall get through," said he surlily.

"And what if we don't get through, and the horses stop in the snow? What then?"

"What then? Why, nothing."

"We might be frozen."

"It's possible, certainly, for we cannot see any ricks, which means that we're going right into the Calmuck country. The first thing to do is to look at the snow."

"And aren't you at all afraid of being frozen?" asked the old man, with a tremulous voice.

Notwithstanding that he was making merry with me, it was plain that he was all of a tremble to the very last bone.

"Well, it's pretty cold," I said.

"Alas, for you, sir! If you were only like me; no, no, run along, that will make you warm."

"First of all, we ought to show him how to run after the sledge," said the Counsellor.

Chapter 7

"Ready if you please," bawled Alec to me from the sledge in front.

The snowstorm was so violent that only with the utmost exertion, bending right forward and grasping with both hands the folds of my mantle, was I able to traverse the few yards which separated me from the sledge, through the shifting snow, which the wind carried away from under my very feet. My former driver was already on his knees in the midst of the empty sledge, but seeing me, he took off his large hat, whereupon the wind furiously lifted his long locks on high, and he began asking me for vodka. He evidently didn't expect to get it, for he was not a bit offended at my refusal. He even thanked me, put on his hat, and said to me: " Well, God be with you, sir, and seizing the reins and smacking his lips, he departed from us immediately afterwards, Ignashka meanwhile waving his arms with all his might and shouting at his horses. Again the crunching of hoofs and the jangling of the little sledge bells superseded the whining of the wind, which was particularly audible whenever we stopped short.

For a quarter of an hour after the transfer I did not sleep, and amused myself by studying the figures of the new driver and the horses. Ignashka had all the ways of a young man; he was perpetually springing up, waving his arms, with his whip dangling over the horses, shouting at them, shifting from one foot to the other, bending forward from time to time, and readjusting the reins of the thill horse, which had a tendency perpetually to shift to the right. He was not big, but well put together apparently. Above his short pelisse he wore an ungirdled artnyak, the collar of which was almost entirely thrown back, leaving the neck quite bare; his boots were not of felt but of leather, and his hat, which he was incessantly doffing and setting right, was a smallish one. In all his movements was observable not merely energy, but, as it seemed to me, the longing to stimulate this energy. But the further we went and the more frequently he pulled himself together, and bounded on to the box-seat and fidgeted about with his feet and conversed with me and Alec, the more it seemed to me that at the bottom of his soul he was sore afraid. And the reason was this: his horses were good, but at every step the road became more and more difficult, and it was obvious that the horses were running unwillingly; already it was necessary to whip them up a bit, and the thill horse, a good, big, shaggy beast, had stumbled once or twice, although, immediately afterwards, terror-stricken, it tore on ahead again, bowing its shaggy head almost lower than the very sledge bell. The right-hand-side horse, which I watched involuntarily,

together with the long leather cluster of the reins, jolting and plunging on the field-side, was visibly breaking away from the traces and required a touch of the whip, but, as is the way with good horses, even when excited, as if sorry for his weakness, he angrily lowered and raised his head, again readjusting the bridle. It was really terrible to see how the snowstorm and the cold were increasing; how the horses were getting weaker. The road was become worse and worse, and we absolutely did not know where we were or whither we were going. We were no longer sure of reaching, I will not say a posting station, but even a place of refuge — and it was ridiculous and terrible to hear how the sledge-bell kept on tinkling so unconcernedly and merrily, and how Ignashka boisterously and bravely shouted at the horses as if we were rolling away to church on a hard-frozen, sunny, rustic road at midday on the "Feast of the Epiphany," and especially terrible it was to think that we were driving continually and driving rapidly nobody knew whither, right away from the place where we were. Ignashka began to sing some song or other, in a villainous falsetto indeed, but so sonorously and with such long pauses, during which he fell a-whistling, that it was strange to feel timid while you listened to him.

"Hie, hie! What a throat you've got, Ignat!" sounded the voice of the Counsellor; "do stop for a bit."

"What?"

"Sto-o-o-op!"

Ignat stopped. Again all was silent, and the wind howled and whined, and the whirling snow began to fall more thickly into the sledge. The Counsellor came to us.

"Well, what is it?"

"What, indeed! Whither are we going?"

"Who knows!"

"Our feet are frozen, eh! why are you clapping your hands?"

"We are quite benumbed."

"And as for you," this to Ignat, "just turn out and stir your stumps and see if there isn't a Calmuck encampment about here: it will warm up your feet a bit!"

"All right! hold the horses. Now for it."

And Ignat ran off in the direction indicated.

"One always ought to look out and pick one's way, you'll find it's all right; and, besides, there's such a thing as foolish driving," said the Counsellor to me. "Just see how the horses are steaming."

All this time Ignat was gone, and this lasted so long that I was beginning to be afraid that he would lose himself altogether. The Counsellor, in the calmest, most self-confident tone of voice, explained to me how people ought to act in a snowstorm; he said that the best thing of all was to outspan the horse and let her go right on, God only knows where, or sometimes it was possible to see and go by the stars, and he added that if he had gone on before as a pioneer, we should long ago have reached the station.

"Well, how is it?" he asked Ignat, who could now be seen returning, walking with the utmost difficulty, being up to his knees in snow.

"Yes, it's there right enough. I can make out a Calmuck encampment," answered Ignat, puffing and blowing, "but which it is I don't know. We ought, my brother, to be going straight towards the Prolgovsky Manor House. We ought to go more to the left"

"But why this delay? It must be those encampments of ours which are behind the post-station!" exclaimed the Counsellor. "But I say it is not !"

"What I've seen I know: it'll be what I say and not the Tomushenko lot. We must keep going more to the right all along. We shall be out on the great bridge presently; it is only eight versts off."

"But I say it is not I tell you I've just seen it" answered Ignat angrily.

"Ah, my brother, and you a driver too!"

"Driver be hanged! Go yourself! "

"Why should I go when I know already?"

It was plain that Ignat was very angry. Without answering, he leaped upon the box-seat and drove on further.

"You see how your feet grow numb if you don't warm them a bit," he said to Alec, continuing to hug his arms more and more frequently and wipe and shake off the snow which kept pouring into the leg of his boot.

I had a frightful desire to go to sleep.

Chapter 8

"Can it be possible that I am already freezing to death?" I thought in the midst of my slumbers. Freezing to death always begins during slumber, they say. Why, it would be better to be drowned than to freeze and let myself be drawn out in a net, yet 'tis all one whether I drown or freeze if only this stick — it seems to be a stick — were not beating against my back and I could lose consciousness.

And for a second or so I did lose consciousness.

"Yet, how will all this end?" I suddenly said within my mind, opening my eyes for a moment and glancing at the white expanse; "how will all this end if we do not find the ricks and the horses stop, which will happen pretty soon? We shall all be frozen." I confess that although a little afraid, the wish that something extraordinary, something tragical, might happen to us was stronger within me than my tiny bit of fear. It seemed to me that it would not be half bad if, by the morning, the horses were to drag us into some distant, unknown village half frozen; or, better still, some of us perhaps might be frozen to death outright. And in this mood a vision presented itself before me, with extraordinary rapidity and vividness. The horses stopped; the snow heaps grew bigger, and bigger, and now only the shaft-bow and the ears of the horses were visible; but suddenly Ignashka appeared on the surface with his troika and drove past us. We implored him with shrieks and yells to take us, but our cries were carried away

by the wind, and there were no voices at all. Ignashka smoked slightly; shouted at his horses; whistled a bit, and vanished from our eyes into some deep abyss of drifted snow. Then the little old man leaped to the surface and began waving his arms, and wanted to spring off, but could not move from the spot; my old driver, with the large hat, flung himself upon him, dragged him to the ground, and trampled him in the snow. "You old sorcerer," he shrieked, "you curser; we'll sink or swim together." But the little old man burrowed in the snow drift with his head; he was not so much a little old man as a hare, and he slipped away from us. All the dogs came leaping after him. The counsellor, who was Theodor Filipovich, said that we should all sit round in a circle, and that it didn't matter a bit if the snow covered us, it would make us warm. And, indeed, we were very warm and comfortable, only we wanted something to drink. I got a case bottle, served out rum and sugar to them all, and drank myself with great satisfaction. The tale-teller was telling some tale about the rainbow — and above us, indeed, was a ceiling of snow and rainbow. "And now let each of us take his apartment in the snow and go to sleep," said I. The snow was warm and soft like fur. I made a room for myself, and was about to go into it, but Theodor Filipovich, who saw some money in my case bottle, said: "Stop, give me the money; it's all one if we die!" and caught me by the leg. I gave him the money, merely asking them to let me out; but they would not believe it was all the money I had, and wanted to kill me. I caught the arm of the old man and, with unspeakable delight, began to kiss it. The arm of the little old man was fresh and smooth. At first he tore it away from me, but afterwards he let me have it, and even began caressing me with the other arm. But Theodor Filipovich drew near and threatened me. I ran into my room, but it was not a room, but a long white corridor, and something held me by the leg. I tore myself away, but in the hands of him who held me remained my clothing and part of my skin; but I only felt cold and bashful, and all the more bashful because my aunt, with her sunshade, and with her homoeopathic pharmacopoeia under her arm, was coming towards me with the drowned man. They were laughing, and did not understand the signs I was making to them. I threw myself into the sledge, and my feet were dragging along the snow; but the little old man pursued me, waving his arms. The little old man was already close to me when I heard two little bells, and knew that I was safe if I could get to them. The little bells sounded more and more violently, but the little old man caught me up, and fell like a beast on my face, so that the bells were scarce audible. I again seized his arm and began to kiss it, but the little old man was not the little, old man, but the man who had been drowned, and he cried out: "Stop, Ignashka, these are the Akhmetkin ricks, I think; go and see!"

This was too terrible; far better to wake up! I opened my eyes. The wind had flapped my face with the corner of Alec's mantle; my knee was uncovered; we were going over a bare, frozen crest of snow, and the tierce of the little bells was very faintly audible in the air, along with the jangling quinte.

I looked to see where the rick was, but instead of the ricks, I saw with my wide-open eyes a house with a balcony and the crenelated wall of a fortress. It interested me very

little to look at this house and fortress; my chief desire was to see again the white corridor along which I had run to hear the sound of the church bell, and to kiss the hand of the old man. I again closed my eyes and went to sleep.

Chapter 9

I slept deeply; but the tierce of the bell was audible the whole time, and there appeared to me in my dreams, sometimes in the shape of a dog, which barked and fell upon me; and sometimes as an organ, in which I was one of the pipes; sometimes the shape of French verses which I was composing. Sometimes it seemed to me as if this tierce was some instrument of torture continually squeezing my right heel. This was so violent that I woke, and opened my eyes, rubbing my foot. It was beginning to be frost-bitten. The night was just the same as before — bright. The selfsame sort of movement was jolting me and the sledge; the selfsame Ignashka was sitting on the box-seat and shuffling about with his feet; the selfsame side horse, distending its neck and scarce lifting its feet, was trotting along over the deep snow; the little tassel of the harness was jumping up and down, and lashing the belly of the horse. The head of the thill horse, with dishevelled mane, the distended and loosening harness attached to the shaft-bow, was gently rocking up and down. But all this, far more than before, was covered, was loaded with snow. The snow came whirling down from in front, and sideways, was beginning to cover up the sledge-boards; the legs of the horses were up to their knees in snow, and the snow was pouring down from above upon our collars and hats. The wind was now from the right, and now from the left, and played with our collars, with the flap of Ignashka's armyak, and with the mane of the thill horse, and howled above the shaft-bow and in the shafts.

It had become frightfully cold; and scarcely had I wriggled myself free of my collar, than the frozen, dry snow, whirling along, fell full upon my eyelashes, nose, mouth, and flopped down my neck. All round about everything was white, bright, and snowy; there was nothing to be seen anywhere but turbid light and snow. I became seriously alarmed. Aleshka was asleep at my feet in the very bottom of the sledge, the whole of his back was covered by a thick layer of snow. Ignashka I did not see; he was tugging at the reins, shouting to the horses, and shuffling with his feet perpetually. The little bell sounded as strangely as ever. The horses kept snorting, yet on they ran, stumbling more and more frequently, and somewhat more softly. Ignashka again leaped up, waved his sleeves, and began singing his song in a thin, tense voice. Without finishing it he stopped the troika, threw the reins on to the upper part of the sledge, and dismounted. The wind was howling furiously, the snow, pouring down as if from a sieve, covered the skirt of his pelisse. I looked around, the third troika was no longer behind us, it had stopped somewhere. Round the second troika, which was visible through a snowy mist, I could see how the little old man was hopping about from foot to foot. Ignashka

took three steps away from the sledge, sat down in the snow, ungirded himself, and set about taking off his shoes.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"I must change my boots, my feet are quite frozen," he answered, continuing what he was doing.

It had made me cold merely to wriggle my neck free of my collar. I could not bear to look on and see him do this. I sat stiff and upright, looking at the side horse which, drawing back its feet, began wearily, like a sick thing, twitching its tucked-up tail all covered with snow. The jolt which Ignat had given to the sledge, when he leaped upon the sledge-ledge, had awakened me.

"I say, where are we now?" I asked; "shall we ever get anywhere?"

"Be easy, we shall manage it," he answered; "the great thing is to keep the feet warm. That's why I've changed my boots."

And off he started. The little bell sounded, the sledge again began to swing along, and the wind whistled beneath the curved sides of the sledge. And once more we set off swimming in a limitless sea of snow.

Chapter 10

I slept soundly. When Alec, knocking me with his foot, awoke me, and I opened my eyes, it was already morning. It appeared to me to be colder than in the night. No snow was coming down from above; but a strong, dry wind continued to carry the snow-dust across the plain and especially beneath the hoofs of the horses and the sledge-curves. The sky, to the right, in the east, was heavy and of a dark bluish colour; but bright, orange-red, strips were becoming more and more plainly distinguishable in it. Above our heads, from behind the fugitive, white, faintly tinted clouds, a pale blue was revealing itself; to the left, the masses of cloud were bright, light, and mobile. All around, as far as the eye could reach, lay white, deep snow, distributed in heaps and layers. In one direction could be seen a greyish heap, over which a fine, dry, snowy dust was doggedly flying. Not a single trace of a sledge, or a human being, or an animal was anywhere visible. The outlines and colours of the back of the driver and the horses showed out clearly, and even sharply, against the white background. The rim of Ignashka's dark blue hat, his collar, his hair, and even his boots were white. The sledges were completely covered. The whole right part of the head of the dark grey thill horse and his forelock were covered with snow; my side horse was enwrapped in it up to the knees, and his sweating body was all plastered with snowy festoons on the right side. The tassel was still bobbing up and down as before, beating time to some unimaginable motifs and the side horse was running along just as before, only she had sunk lower in the snow, from which she raised and disengaged her body from time to time. It was plain from her dejected ears what she must be suffering. Only a single new object riveted our attention, and this was a verst post, from which the snow

was being strewn on the ground, around which the wind had piled a whole hillock of snow to the right, and was still tearing up and casting the scattering snow from one side to the other. I was amazed that we had been driving along the whole night with single horses for twenty hours, not knowing whither, and without stopping, and yet had managed somehow to arrive. Our little bell was sounding more merrily than ever. Ignat wrapped himself up tighter, and kept shouting at the horses; behind us neighed the horses and jingled the bells of the troika of the little old man and the counsellor; but the sleeper must have parted from us in the steppe. After going along for another half verst we came upon the recent track of a sledge and troika, lightly powdered with snow, and, at rare intervals, pink patches of the blood of a horse which, as we could see, had been cruelly whipped.

"That is Philip. It is plain that he has got in before us!" said Ignashka.

But there stood a little house with a signboard alone on the road, in the midst of the snow, which reached almost up to the roof and windows. Near the inn stood a troika of three grey horses, crisp with sweat, with disengaged feet and dejected heads. Around the door the snow had been cleared away, and there stood a shovel, but from the roof the howling wind was still sweeping and whirling the snow.

From out of the door, at the sound of our bells, emerged a big, good-looking, rod-faced driver with a glass of wine in his hand, shouting something. Ignashka turned to me and asked permission to stop. Then for the first time I saw his face.

Chapter 11

His face was not darkish, dry, and straight-nosed, as I had expected, judging from his hair and physique. It was a round, merry, absolutely sun-burnt face, with a large mouth and brightly shining, round blue eyes. His cheeks and neck were as red as rubbed rags; his eyebrows, long eye-lashes, and the hair symmetrically covering the lower part of his face, were clotted with snow and quite white. It was only half a verst to the station, and we stopped.

"Only be as quick as you can," I said.

"In one moment," answered Ignashka, and leaping from the box-seat, he ran to Philip.

"Give it here, my brother," taking off his glove and pitching it in the snow along with his whip, and, throwing back his head, he swallowed the proffered dram of vodka at a single gulp.

The innkeeper, most probably a discharged Cossack, came out of the door with a demi-stoop in his hand.

"Who's to have it?" said he.

Tall Vas-il-y, a leanish, red-bearded muzhik, with a goatee beard, and the counsellor, a stout, white eye-browed fellow, with a thick white beard framing his red face, both came up and had a glass or two. The little old man would also have liked to have

joined the group of drinkers, but he was not invited to have a dram, and he went to his horses, which were tied up behind the troika, and began to stroke them on the back and buttocks. The little old man was just as I had imagined him, a thin, little fellow with a wrinkled, bluish face, a sparse beard, a sharp nose, and stumpy yellow teeth. He wore a driver's hat, which was quite new, but his meagre litttle demi-pelisse, threadbare, stained with tar and torn at the shoulder and sides, did not cover his knees, and his hempen lower garment was stuffed into his huge felt boots. He was all bent and wrinkled, and his face and knees were quivering; he was busying himself about the sledge, with the obvious endeavour of getting warm.

"Hillo, Matvich! why don't you have a half pint? fine thing for making you warm!" said the counsellor.

Matvich persisted in what he was doing. He put the harness of his horses to rights, put the low shaft right also and came to me.

"Look here, sir!" said he, taking his hat from off his grey hairs and bowing low, "all night long we've been wandering about with you, seeking the road; if only now you would stand a half pint. Yes, indeed, little father, your excellency! And there's nothing like that for warming one," he added with an obsequious smile.

I gave him a quarter-rouble. The innkeeper brought out a half-pint and handed it to the little old man. He drew off the whip-glove and extended a small, dark, crooked and slightly bluish hand towards the glass; but his thumb, which looked like 'some one else's, refused to obey him; he could not hold the glass, and, spilling the vodka, cast it upon the snow.

All the drivers began to laugh.

"Just look, Matvich is so frost-bitten that he cannot hold his wine."

But Matvich was very angry that the wine was spilled. However, they filled him another glass and poured it into his mouth. Immediately he became very lively and merry, ran into the inn, lighted his pipe, began to simper, and show his worn, yellow teeth, and uttered an oath at every word. After drinking a final dram, the drivers dispersed to their various troikas and we proceeded. The snow was just as white and glaring as ever, so that it stung the eye that gazed at it. The orange and reddish strips of cloud, mounting higher and higher, and growing ever brighter and brighter, spread over the sky; even the red sphere of the sun appeared on the horizon in the midst of dove-coloured clouds, the azure of the sky grew ever more dazzling and deeper. On the road, near the posting station, the track was clear, precise, and yellowish; here and there were holes; in the frozen, compressed air there was a sensation of pleasant lightness and freshness. My troika ran very swiftly. The head of the thill horse and her neck, with the mane spread widely over the shaft-bow, bobbed rapidly up and down, almost in one place; beneath sounded the pleasant bells whose tongues no longer beat, but rubbed against their sides. The good side horses, tugging together at the congealed and crooked reins, energetically bounded forward; the tassels kept bumping away beneath their very bellies and hindmost harness. Occasionally the side horse would stumble into one of the holes in the dilapidated road, and, with its eyes full of snow-dust, would

struggle briskly out of it again. Ignashka now shouted to his horses in a merry tenor; the dry frost crackled beneath the sides of the sledges; from behind us came the solemnly sonorous sounds of two sledge-bells and the drunken shouting of the drivers. I glanced back, the grey, shaggy side horses, extending their necks, and breathing methodically, with curving bits, were bounding over the snow. Philip shaking his whip, was adjusting his hat; the little old man, with drawn up legs, was lying at full length, just as before, in the middle sledge.

In two minutes the sledge began to grate upon the well-swept boards of the approach to the posting-station, and Ignashka turned towards me his snowcovered, merry, weather-beaten face.

"We've arrived, you see, sir!" said he.

Two Hussars

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1905

Early in the nineteenth century, when there were as yet no railways or macadamized roads, no gaslight, no stearine candles, no low couches with sprung cushions, no unvarnished furniture, no disillusioned youths with eye glasses, no liberalizing women philosophers, nor any charming dames aux camelias of whom there are so many in our times, in those naive days, when leaving Moscow for Petersburg in a coach or carriage provided with a kitchenful of home-made provisions one traveled for eight days along a soft, dusty or muddy road and believed in chopped cutlets, sledge-bells, and plain rolls; when in the long autumn evenings the tallow candles, around which family groups of twenty or thirty people gathered, had to be snuffed; when ball-rooms were illuminated by candelabra with wax or spermaceti candles, when furniture was arranged symmetrically, when our fathers were still young and proved it not only by the absence of wrinkles and grey hair but by fighting duels for the sake of a woman and rushing from the opposite corner of a room to pick up a bit of handkerchief purposely or accidentally dropped; when our mothers wore short-waisted dresses and enormous sleeves and decided family affairs by drawing lots, when the charming dames aux camelias hid from the light of day-in those naïve days of Masonic lodges, Martinists, and Tugenbudns, the days of Miloradoviches and Davydovs and Pushkins-a meeting of landed proprietors was held in the Government town of K — , and the nobility elections were being concluded.

Chapter 1

"Well, never mind, the saloon will do," said a young officer in a fur cloak and hussar's cap, who had just got out of a post-sledge and was entering the best hotel in the town of K — .

"The assembly, your Excellency, is enormous," said the boots, who had already managed to learn from the orderly that the hussar's name was Count Turbin, and therefore addressed him as "your Excellency."

"The proprietress of Afremovo with her daughters has said she is leaving this evening, so No. 11 will be at your disposal as soon as they go," continued the boots, stepping softly before the count along the passage and continually looking round.

In the general saloon at a little table under the dingy full-length portrait of the Emperor Alexander the First, several men, probably belonging to the local nobility, sat drinking champagne, while at another side of the room sat some travelers-tradesmen in blue, fur-lined cloaks.

Entering the room and calling in Blucher, a gigantic grey mastiff he had brought with him, the count threw off his cloak, the collar of which was still covered with hoar-frost, called for vodka, sat down at the table in his blue-satin Cossack jacket, and entered into conversation with the gentlemen there.

The handsome open countenance of the newcomer immediately predisposed them in his favour and they offered him a glass of champagne. The count first drank a glass of vodka and then ordered another bottle of champagne to treat his new acquaintances. The sledge-driver came in to ask for a tip.

“Sashka!” shouted the count. “Give him something!”

The driver went out with Sashka but came back again with the money in his hand.

“Look here, y’r ‘xcelence, haven’t I done my very best for y’r honour? Didn’t you promise me half a ruble, and he’s only given me a quarter!”

“Give him a ruble, Sashka.”

Sashka cast down his eyes and looked at the driver’s feet.

“He’s had enough!” he said, in a bass voice. “And besides, I have no more money.”

The count drew from his pocket-book the two five-ruble notes which were all it contained and gave one of them to the driver, who kissed his hand and went off.

“I’ve run it pretty close!” said the count. “These are my last five rubles.”

“Real hussar fashion, Count,” said one of the nobles who from his moustache, voice, and a certain energetic freedom about his legs, was evidently a retired cavalryman. “Are you staying here some time, Count?”

“I must get some money. I shouldn’t have stayed here at all but for that. And there are no rooms to be had, devil take them, in this accursed pub.”

“Permit me, Count,” said the cavalryman. “Will you not join me? My room in No. 7 . . . If you do not mind just for the night. And then you’ll stay a couple of days with us? It happens that the *Marechal de la Noblesse* is giving a ball tonight. You would make him very happy by going.”

“Yes, Count, do stay,” said another, a handsome young man. “You have surely no reason to hurry away! You know this only comes once in three years-the elections, I mean. You should at least have a look at our young ladies, Count!”

“Sashka, get my clean linen ready. I am going to the bath,” said the count, rising, “and from there perhaps I may look in at the Marshal’s.”

Then, having called the waiter and whispered something to him to which the latter replied with a smile, “That can all be arranged,” he went out.

“So I’ll order my trunk to be taken to your room, old fellow,” shouted the count from the passage.

“Please do, I shall be most happy,” replied the cavalryman, running to the door. “No. 7-don’t forget.”

When the count’s footsteps could no longer be heard the cavalryman returned to his place and sitting close to one of the group-a government official-and looking him straight in the face with smiling eyes, said: “It is the very man, you know!”

“No!”

“I tell you it is! It is the very same duellist hussar-the famous Turbin. He knew me-I bet you anything he knew me. Why, he and I went on the spree for three weeks without a break when I was at Lebedyani for remounts. There was one thing he and I did together. . . . He’s a fine fellow, eh?”

"A splendid fellow. And so pleasant in his manner! Doesn't show a grain of-what d'you call it?" answered the handsome young man. "How quickly we became intimate. . . . He's not more than twenty-five, is he?"

"Oh no, that's what he looks but he is more than that. One has to get to know him, you know. Who abducted Migunova? He. It was he who killed Sablin. It was he who dropped Matnev out of the window by his legs. It was he who won three hundred thousand rubles from Prince Nestorov. He is a regular dare-devil, you know: a gambler, a duellist, a seducer, but a jewel of an hussar-a real jewel. The rumors that are afloat about us are nothing to the reality-if anyone knew what a true hussar is! Ah yes, those were times!"

And the cavalryman told his interlocutor of such a spree with the count in Lebedyani as not only never had, but never even could have, taken place.

It could not have done so, first because he had never seen the count till that day and had left the army two years before the count entered it; and secondly because the cavalryman had never really served in the cavalry at all but had for four years been the humblest of cadets in the Belevski regiment and retired as soon as ever he became ensign. But ten years ago he had inherited some money and had really been in Lebedyani where he squandered seven hundred rubles with some officers who were there buying remounts. He had even gone so far as to have an uhlan uniform made with orange facings, meaning to enter an uhlan regiment. This desire to enter the cavalry, and the three weeks spent with the remount officers at Lebedyani, remained the brightest and happiest memories of his life, so he transformed the desire first into a reality and then into a reminiscence and came to believe firmly in his past as a cavalry officer-all of which did not prevent his being, as to gentleness and honesty, a most worthy man.

"Yes, those who have never served in the cavalry will never understand us fellows."

He sat astride a chair and thrusting out his lower jaw began to speak in a bass voice. "You ride at the head of your squadron, not a horse but the devil incarnate prancing about under you, and you just sit in devil-may-care style. The squadron commander rides up to review: 'Lieutenant,' he says. 'We can't get on without you-please lead the squadron to parade.' 'All right,' you say, and there you are: you turn round, shout to your moustached fellows. . . . . Ah, devil take it, those were times!"

The count returned from the bath-house very red and with wet hair, and went straight to No. 7, where the cavalryman was already sitting in his dressing-gown smoking a pipe and considering with pleasure, and not without some apprehension, the happiness that had befallen him of sharing a room with the celebrated Turbin. "Now suppose," he thought, "that he suddenly takes me, strips me naked, drives me to the town gates, and sets me in the snow, or . . . tars me, or simply . . . . But no," he consoled himself, "He wouldn't do that to a comrade."

"Sashka, feed Blucher!" shouted the count.

Sashka, who had taken a tumbler of vodka to refresh himself after the journey and was decidedly tipsy, came in.

“What, already! You’ve been drinking, you rascal! . . . Feed Blucher!”

“He won’t starve anyway: see how sleek he is!” answered Sashka, stroking the dog.

“Silence! Be off and feed him!”

“You want the dog to be fed, but when a man drinks a glass you reproach him.”

““Hey! I’ll thrash you!” shouted the count in a voice that made the window-panes rattle and even frightened the cavalryman a bit.

“You should ask if Sashka has had a bite today! Yes, beat me if you think more of a dog than of a man,” muttered Sashka.

But here he received such a terrible blow in the face from the count’s fist that he fell, knocked his head against the partition, and clutching his nose fled from the room and fell on a settee in the passage.

“He’s knocked my teeth out,” grunted Sashka, wiping his bleeding nose with one hand while with the other he scratched the back of Blucher, who was licking himself. “He’s knocked my teeth out, Bluchy, but still he’s my count and I’d go through fire for him-I would! Because he-is my count. Do you understand, Bluchy? Want your dinner, eh?”

After lying still for a while he rose, fed the dog and then, almost sobered, went in to wait on his count and to offer him some tea.

“I shall really feel hurt,” the cavalryman was saying meekly, as he stood before the count who was lying on the other’s bed with his legs up against the partition. “You see I also am an old army man and, if I may say so, a comrade. Why should you borrow from anyone else when I shall be delighted to lend you a couple of hundred rubles? I haven’t got them just now-only a hundred rubles-but I’ll get the rest today. You would really hurt my feelings, Count.”

“Thank you, old man,” said the count, instantly discerning what kind of relations had to be established between them, and slapping the cavalryman on the shoulder. “Thanks! Well then, we’ll go to the ball if it must be so. But what are we to do now? Tell me what you have in your town. What pretty girls? What men fit for a spree? What gaming?”

The cavalryman explained that there would be an abundance of pretty creatures at the ball, that Kolkov, who had been re-elected captain of police, was the best hand at a spree, only he lacked the true hussar go-otherwise he was a good sort of chap, that the Ilyushin gipsy chorus had been singing in the town since the elections began, Streshka leading, and that everybody meant to go to hear them after leaving the marshal’s that evening.

“And there’s a devilish lot of card-playing too,” he went on. Lukhnov plays. He has money and is staying here to break his journey, and Ilyin, an uhlan cornet who has room No. 8, has lost a lot. They have already begun in his room. They play every evening. And what a fine fellow that Ilyin is! I tell you, Count, he’s not mean-he’ll let his last shirt go.”

“Well then, let us go to his room. Let’s see what sort of people they are,” said the count.

"Yes do-pray do. They'll be devilish glad."

Chapter 2

The uhlan cornet, Ilyin, had not long been awake. The evening before he had sat down to cards at eight o'clock and had lost pretty steadily for fifteen hours on end-till eleven in the morning. He had lost a considerable sum but did not know exactly how much, because he had about three thousand rubles of his own, and fifteen thousand of Crown money which had long since got mixed up with his own, and he feared to count lest his fears that some of the Crown money was already gone should be confirmed. It was nearly noon when he fell asleep and he had slept that heavy dreamless sleep which only very young men sleep after a heavy loss. Waking at six o'clock (just when Count Turbin arrived at the hotel), and seeing the floor all around strewn with cards and bits of chalk, and the chalk-marked tables in the middle of the room, he recalled with horror last night's play, and the last card-a knave on which he lost five hundred rubles; but not yet quite convinced of the reality of all this, he drew his money from under the pillow and began to count it. He recognized some notes which had passed from hand to hand several times with "corners" and "transports" and he recalled the whole course of the game. He had none of his own three thousand rubles left, and some two thousand five hundred of the government money was also gone.

Ilyin had been playing for four nights running.

He had come from Moscow where the crown money had been entrusted to him and at K — had been detained by the superintendent of the post-house on the pretext that there were no horses, but really because the superintendent had an agreement with the hotel-keeper to detain all travellers for a day. The uhlan, a bright young lad who had just received three thousand rubles from his parents in Moscow for his equipment on entering his regiment, was glad to spend a few days in the town of K — during the elections and hoped to enjoy himself thoroughly. He knew one of the landed gentry there who had a family, and he was thinking of looking them up and flirting with the daughters, when the cavalryman turned up to make his acquaintance. Without any evil intention the cavalryman introduced him that same evening, in the general saloon or common room of the hotel, to his acquaintances, Lukhnov and other gamblers. And ever since then the uhlan had been playing cards, not asking at the post-station for horses, much less going to visit his acquaintance the landed proprietor, and not even leaving his room for four days on end.

Having dressed and drunk tea he went to the window. He felt that he would like to go for a stroll to get rid of the recollections that haunted him, and he put on his cloak and went out into the street. The sun was already hidden behind the white houses with the red roofs and it was getting dusk. It was warm for winter. Large wet snowflakes were falling slowly into the muddy street. Suddenly at the thought that he had slept all through the day now ending, a feeling of intolerable sadness overcame him.

“This day, now past, can never be recovered,” he thought.

“I have ruined my youth!” he suddenly said to himself, not because he really thought he had ruined his youth-he did not even think about it-but because the phrase happened to occcur to him.

“And what am I to do now?” thought he. “Borrow from someone and go away?” A lady passed him along the pavement. “There’s a stupid woman,” thought he for some reason. “There’s no one to borrow from . . . I have ruined my youth!” He came to the bazaar. A tradesman in a fox-fur cloak stood at the door of his shop touting for customers. “If I had not withdrawn that eight I should have recovered my losses.” An old beggar-woman followed him whimpering. “There’s no one to borrow from.” A man drove past in a bearskin cloak; a policeman was standing at his post. “What unusual thing could I do? Fire at them? No, it’s dull . . . I have ruined my youth! . . . Ah, if only I could drive in a troyka: Gee-up, beauties! . . . I’ll go back. Lukhnov will come soon, and we’ll play.”

He returned to the hotel and again counted his money. No, he had made no mistake the first time: there were still two thousand five hundred rubles of Crown money missing. I’ll stake twenty-five rubles, than make a ‘corner’ . . . seven-fold it, fifteen-fold thirty, sixty . . . three thousand rubles. Then I’ll buy the horse-collars and be off. He won’t let me, the rascal! I have ruined my youth!”

That is what was going on in the uhlan’s head when Lukhnov actually entered the room.

“Have you been up long, Michael Vasilich?” asked Lukhnov, slowly removing the gold spectacles from his skinny nose and carefully wiping them with a red silk handkerchief.

“No, I’ve only just got up-I slept uncommonly well.”

“Some hussar or other has arrived. He has put up with Zavalshevski-had you heard?”

“No, I hadn’t. But how is it no one else is here yet?”

“They must have gone to Pryakhin’s. They’ll be here directly.”

And sure enough a little later there came into the room a garrison officer who always accompanied Lukhnov, a Greek merchant with an enormous brown hooked nose and sunken black eyes, and a fat puffy landowner, the proprietor of a distillery, who played whole nights, always staking “simples” of half a ruble each. Everybody wished to begin playing as soon as possible, but the principal gamesters, especially Lukhnov who was telling about a robbery in Moscow in an exceedingly calm manner, did not refer to the subject.

“Just fancy,” he said, “a city like Moscow, the historic capital, a metropolis, and men dressed up as devils go about there with crooks, frighten stupid people, and rob the passers-by-and that’s the end of it! What are the police about? That’s the question.”

The uhlan listened attentively to the story about the robbers, but when a pause came he rose and quietly ordered cards to be brought. The fat landowner was the first to speak out.

“Well, gentlemen, why lose precious time? If we mean business let’s begin.”

“Yes, you walked off with a pile of half-rubles last night soyou like it,” said the Greek.

"I think we might start," said the garrison officer.

Ilyin looked at Lukhnov. Lukhnov looking him in the eye quietly continued his story about robbers dressed up like devils with claws.

"Will you keep the bank?" asked the uhlan.

"Isn't it too early?"

"Belov!" shouted the uhlan, blushing for some unknown reason, "bring me some dinner-I haven't had anything to eat yet, gentlemen-and a bottle of champagne and some cards."

At this moment the count and Zavalshevski entered the room. It turned out that Turbin and Ilyin belonged to the same division. They took to one another at once, clinked glasses, drank champagne together, and were on intimate terms in five minutes. The count seemed to like Ilyin very much; he looked smilingly at him and teased him about his youth.

"There's an uhlan of the right sort!" he said. "What moustaches! Dear me, what moustaches!"

Even what little down there was on Ilyin's lip was quite white.

"I suppose you are going to play?" said the count. "Well, I wish you luck, Ilyin! I should think you are a master at it," he added with a smile.

"Yes, they mean to start," said Lukhnov, tearing open a bundle of a dozen packs of cards, "and you'll joint in too, Count, won't you?"

"No, not today. I should clear you all out if I did. When I begin 'cornering' in earnest the bank begins to crack! But I have nothing to play with-I was cleaned out at a station near Volochok. I met some infantry fellow there with rings on his fingers-a sharper I should think-and he plucked me clean."

"Why, did you stay at that station long?" asked Ilyin.

"I sat there for twenty-two hours. I shan't forget that accursed station! And the superintendent won't forget me either . . . "

"How's that?"

"I drive up, you know; out rushes the superintendent looking a regular brigand. 'No horses!' says he. Now I must tell you that it's my rule, if there are no horses I don't take off my fur cloak but go into the superintendent's own room-not into the public room but into his private room-and I have all the doors and windows opened on the ground that it's smoky. Well, that's just what I did there. You remember what frosts we had last month? About twenty degrees! Footnote: Reaumur = thirteen below zero Fahrenheit. The superintendent began to argue; I punched his head. There was an old woman there, and girls and other women; they kicked up a row, snatched up their pots and pans, and were rushing off to the village. . . . I went to the door and said, 'Let me have horses and I'll be off. If not, no one shall go out: I'll freeze you all.'"

"That's an infernally good plan!" said the puffy squire, rolling with laughter. "It's the way they freeze out cockroaches . . . "

"But I didn't watch carefully enough and the superintendent got away with the women. Only one old woman remained in pawn on the top of the stove; she kept

sneezing and saying prayers. Afterwards we began negotiating: the superintendent came and from a distance began persuading me to let the old woman go, but I set Blucher at him a bit. Blucher's splendid at tackling superintendents! But still the rascal didn't let me have horses until the next morning. Meanwhile that infantry fellow came along. I joined him in another room, and we began to play. You have seen Blucher? . . . Blucher! . . . " and he gave a whistle.

Blucher rushed in, and the players condescendingly paid some attention to him though it was evident that they wished to attend to quite other matters.

"But why don't you play, gentlemen? Please don't let me prevent you. I am a chatterbox, you see," said Turbin. "Play is play whether one likes it or not."

Chapter 3

Lukhnov drew two candles nearer to him, took out a large brown pocket-book full of paper money, and slowly, as if performing some rite, opened it on the table, took out two one-hundred rubles notes and placed them under the cards.

"Two hundred for the bank, the same as yesterday," said he, adjusting his spectacles and opening a pack of cards.

"Very well," said Ilyin, continuing his conversation with Turbin without looking at Lukhnov.

The game started. Lukhnov dealt the cards with machine-like precision, stopping now and then and deliberately jotting something down, or looking sternly over his spectacles and saying in low tones, "Pass up!" The fat landowner spoke louder than anyone else, audibly deliberating with himself and wetting his plump fingers when he turned down the corner of a card. The garrison officer silently and neatly noted the amount of his stake on his card and bent down small corners under the table. The Greek sat beside the banker, watching the game attentively with his sunken black eyes, and seemed to be waiting for something. Zavalshevski, standing by the table, would suddenly begin to fidget all over, take a red or blue bank-note Footnote: Five-ruble notes were blue and ten-ruble notes red. out of his trouser pocket, lay a card on it, slap it with his palm, and say, "Little seven, pull me through!" Then he would bite his moustache, shift from foot to foot, and keep fidgeting till his card was dealt. Ilyin sat eating veal and pickled cucumbers, which were placed beside him on the horse hair sofa, and hastily wiping his hands on his coat laid down one card after another. Turbin, who at first was sitting on the sofa, quickly saw how matters stood. Lukhnov did not look at or speak to Ilyin, only now and then his spectacles would turn for a moment towards the latter's hand, but most of Ilyin's cards lost.

"There now, I'd like to beat that card," said Lukhnov of a card the fat landowner, who was staking half-rubles, had put down.

"You beat Ilyin's, never mind me!" remarked the squire.

And indeed Ilyin's cards lost more often than any of the others. He would tear up the losing card nervously under the table and choose another with trembling fingers. Turbin rose from the sofa and asked the Greek to let him sit by the banker. The Greek moved to another place; the count took his chair and began watching Lukhnov's hands attentively, not taking his eyes off them.

"Ilyin!" he suddenly said in his usual voice, which quiet unintentionally drowned all the others. "Why do you keep to a routine? You don't know how to play."

"It's all the same how one plays."

"But you're sure to lose that way. Let me play for you."

"No, please excuse me. I always do it myself. Play for yourself if you like."

"I said I should not play for myself, but I should like to play for you. I am vexed that you are losing."

"I suppose it's my fate."

The count was silent, but leaning on his elbows he again gazed intently at the banker's hands.

"Abominable!" he suddenly said in a loud, long-drawn tone.

Lukhnov glanced at him.

"Abominable, quite abominable!" he repeated still louder, looking straight into Lukhnov's eyes.

The game continued.

"It is not right!" Turbin remarked again, just as Lukhnov beat a heavily backed card of Ilyin's.

"What is it you don't like, Count?" inquired the banker with polite indifference.

"This!-that you let Ilyin win his simples and beat his corners. That's what's bad."

Lukhnov made a slight movement with his brows and shoulders, expressing the advisability of submitting to fate in everything, and continued to play.

"Blucher!" shouted the count, rising and whistling to the dog. "At him!" he added quickly.

Blucher, bumping his back against the sofa as he leapt from under it and nearly upsetting the garrison officer, ran to his master and growled, looking around at everyone and moving his tail as if asking, "Who is misbehaving here, eh?"

Lukhnov put down his cards and moved his chair to one side.

"One can't play like that," he said. "I hate dogs. What kind of a game is it when you bring a whole pack of hounds in here?"

"Especially a dog like that. I believe they are called 'leeches,'" chimed in the garrison officer.

"Well, are we going to play or not, Michael Vasilich?" said Lukhnov to their host.

"Please don't interfere with us, Count," said Ilyin, turning to Turbin.

"Come here a minute," said Turbin, taking Ilyin's arm and going behind the partition with him.

The count's words, spoken in his usual tone, were distinctly audible from there. His voice always carried across three rooms.

"Are you daft, eh? Don't you see that that gentleman in spectacles is a sharper of the first water?"

"Come now, enough! What are you saying?"

"No enough about it! Stop playing, I tell you. It's nothing to me. Another time I'd pluck you myself, but somehow I'm sorry to see you fleeced. And maybe you have Crown money too?"

"No . . . why do you imagine such things?"

"Ah, my lad, I've been that way myself so I know all those sharpers' tricks. I tell you the one in spectacles is a sharper. Stop playing! I ask you as a comrade."

"Well then, I'll only finish this one deal."

"I know what 'one deal' means. Well, we'll see."

They went back. In that one deal Ilyin put down so many cards and so many of them were beaten that he lost a large amount.

Turbin put his hands in the middle of the table "Now stop it! Come along."

"No, I can't. Leave me alone, do!" said Ilyin, irritably shuffling some bent cards without looking at Turbin.

"Well, go to the devil! Go on losing for certain, if that pleases you. It's time for me to be off. Let's go to the Marshal's, Savalshevski."

They went out. All remained silent and Lukhnov dealt no more cards until the sound of their steps and of Blucher's claws on the passage floor had died away.

"What a devil of a fellow!" said the landowner, laughing.

"Well, he won't interfere now," remarked the garrison officer hastily, and still in a whisper.

And the play continued.

Chapter 4

The band, composed of some of the marshal's serfs standing in the pantry-which had been cleared out for the occasion-with their coat-sleeves turned up already, had at a given signal struck up the old polonaise, "Alexander, 'Lizabeth," and under the bright soft light of the wax-candles a Governor-general of Catherine's days, with a star on his breast, arm-in-arm with the marshal's skinny wife, and the rest of the local grandees with their partners, had begun slowly gliding over the parquet floor of the large dancing-room in various combinations and variations, when Zavalshevski entered, wearing stockings and pumps and a blue swallow-tail coat with an immense and padded collar, and exhaling a strong smell of the frangipane with which the facings of his coat, his handkerchief, and his moustaches, were abundantly sprinkled. The handsome hussar who came with him wore tight-fitting light-blue riding-breeches and a gold-embroidered scarlet on which a Vladimir cross and an 1812 medal were fastened. The count was not tall but remarkably well built. His clear blue and exceedingly brilliant eyes, and thick, closely curling, dark-brown hair, gave a remarkable character to his beauty. His arrival

at the ball was expected, for the handsome young man who had seen him at the hotel had already prepared the Marshal for it. Various impressions had been produced by the news, for the most part not altogether pleasant.

"It's not unlikely that this youngster will hold us up to ridicule," was the opinion of the men and of the older women. "What if he should run away with me?" was more or less in the minds of the younger ladies, married or unmarried.

As soon as the polonaise was over and the couples after bowing to one another had separated-the women into one group and the men into another-Zavalshevski, proud and happy, introduced the count to their hostess.

The marshal's wife, feeling an inner trepidation lest this hussar should treat her in some scandalous manner before everybody, turned away haughtily and contemptuously as she said, "Very pleased, I hope you will dance," and then gave him a distrustful look that said, "Now, if you offend a woman it will show me that you are a perfect villain." The count however soon conquered her prejudices by his amiability, attentive manner, and handsome gay appearance, so that five minutes later the expression on the face of the Marshal's wife told the company: "I know how to manage such gentlemen. He immediately understood with whom he had to deal, and now he'll be charming to me for the rest of the evening." Moreover at that moment the governor of the town, who had known the count's father, came up to him and very affably took him aside for a talk, which still further calmed the provincial public and raised the count in its estimation. After that Zavalshevski introduced the count to his sister, a plump young widow whose large black eyes had not left the count from the moment he entered. The count asked her to dance the waltz the band had just commenced, and the general prejudice was finally dispersed by the masterly way in which he danced.

"What a splendid dancer!" said a fat landed proprietress, watching his legs in their blue riding-breeches as they flitted across the room, and mentally counting "one, two, three-one, two, three-splendid!"

"There he goes-jig, jig, jig," said another, a visitor in the town whom local society did not consider genteel. "How does he manage not to entangle his spurs? Wonderfully clever!"

The count's artistic dancing eclipsed the three best dancers of the province: the tall fair-haired adjutant of the governor, noted for the rapidity with which he danced and for holding his partner very close to him; the cavalryman, famous for the graceful swaying motion with which he waltzed and for the frequent but light tapping of his heels; and a civilian, of whom everybody said that thought he was not very intellectual he was a first-rate dancer and the soul of every ball. In fact, from its very commencement this civilian would ask all the ladies in turn to dance, in the order in which they were sitting, and never stopped for a moment except occasionally to wipe the perspiration from his weary but cheerful face with a very wet cambric handkerchief. The count eclipsed them all and danced with the three principal ladies: the tall one, rich, handsome, stupid; the one of middle height, thin and not very pretty but splendidly dressed; and the little one, who was plain but very clever. He danced with others too-

with all the pretty ones, and there were many of these-but it was Zavalshevski's sister, the little widow, who pleased him best. With her he danced a quadrille, and *ecossaise*, and a mazurka. When they were sitting down during the quadrille he began paying her many compliments; comparing her to Venus and Diana, to a rose, and to some other flower. But all these compliments only made the widow bend her white neck, lower her eyes and look at her white muslin dress, or pass her fan from hand to hand. But when she said "Don't, you're only joking, Count," and other words to that effect, there was a note of such naïve simplicity and amusing silliness in her slightly guttural voice that looking at her it really seemed that this was not a woman but a flower, and not a rose, but some gorgeous scentless rosy-white wild flower that had grown all alone out of a snowdrift in some very remote land.

This combination of naivete and unconventionality with her fresh beauty created such a peculiar impression on the count that several times during the intervals of conversation, when gazing silently into her eyes or at the beautiful outline of her neck and arms, the desire to seize her in his arms and cover her with kisses assailed him with such force that he had to make a serious effort to resist it. The widow noticed with pleasure the effect she was producing, yet something in the count's behaviour began to frighten and excite her, though the young hussar, despite his insinuating amiability, was respectful to a degree that in our days would be considered cloying. He ran to fetch almond-milk for her, picked up her handkerchief, snatched a chair from the hands of a scrofulous young squire who danced attendance onher to hand it her more quickly, and so forth.

When he noticed that the society attentions of the day had little effect on the lady he tried to amuse her by telling her funny stories and assured her that he was ready to stand on his head, to crow like a cock, to jump out of the window or plunge into the water through a hole in the ice, if she ordered him to do so. This proved quite a success. The widow brightened up and burst into peals of laughter, showing her lovely white teeth, and was quite satisfied with her cavalier. The count liked her more and more every minute, so that by the end of the quadrille he was seriously in love with her.

When, after the quadrille, her eighteen-year-old adorer of long standing came up to the widow (he was the same scrofulous young man from whom Turbin had snatched the chair-a son of the richest local landed proprietor and not yet in government service) she received him with extreme coolness and did not show one-tenth of the confusion she had experienced with the count.

"Well, you are a fine fellow!" she said, looking all the time at Turbin's back and unconsciously considering how many yards of gold cord it had taken to embroider his whole jacket. "You are a good one! You promised to call and fetch me for a drive and bring me some comfits."

"I did come, Anna Fedorovna, but you had already gone, and I left some of the very best comfits for you," said the young man, who-despite his tallness-spoke in a very high-pitched voice.

“You always find excuses! . . . I don’t want your bon-bons. Please don’t imagine-”

“I see, Anna Fedorovna, that you have changed towards me and I know why. But it’s not right,” he added, evidently unable to finish his speech because a strong inward agitation caused his lips to quiver in a very strange and rapid manner.

Anna Fedorovna did not listen to him but continued to follow Turbin with her eyes.

The master of the house, the stout, toothless, stately old marshal, came up to the count, took him by the arm, and invited him into the study for a smoke and a drink. As soon as Turbin left the room Anna Fedorovna felt that there was absolutely nothing to do there and went out into the dressing-room arm-in-arm with a friend of hers, a bony, elderly, maiden lady.

“Well, is he nice?” asked the maiden lady.

“Only he bothers so!” Anna Fedorovna replied walking up to the mirror and looking at herself.

Her face brightened, her eyes laughed, she even blushed, and suddenly imitating the ballet-dancers she had seen during the elections, she twirled round on one foot, then laughed her guttural but pleasant laugh and even bent her knees and gave a jump.

“Just fancy, what a man! He actually asked me for a keepsake,” she said to her friend, “but he will get no-o-o-thing.” She sang the last word and held up one finger in her kid glove which reached to her elbow.

In the study, where the marshal had taken Turbin, stood bottles of different sorts of vodka, liqueurs, champagne, and *zakuska* snacks. The nobility, walking about or sitting in a cloud of tobacco smoke, were talking about the elections.

“When the whole worshipful society of our nobility has honoured him by their choice,” said the newly elected Captain of Police who had already imbibed freely, “he should on no account transgress in the face of the whole society-he ought never . . . “

The count’s entrance interrupted the conversation. Everybody wished to be introduced to him, and the Captain of Police especially kept pressing the count’s hand between his own for a long time and repeatedly asked him not to refuse to accompany him to the new restaurant where he was going to treat the gentlemen after the ball, and where the gipsies were going to sing. The count promised to come without fail, and drank some glasses of champagne with him.

“But why are you not dancing, gentlemen?” said the count, as he was about to leave the room.

“We are not dancers,” replied the Captain of Police, laughing. “Wine is more in our line, Count. . . . And besides, I have seen all those young ladies grow up, Count! But I can walk through an *ecossaise* now and then, Count . . . I can do it, Count.”

“Then come and walk through one now,” said Turbin. “It will brighten us up before going to hear the gipsies.”

“Very well, gentlemen! Let’s come and gratify our host.”

And three or four of the noblemen who had been drinking in the study since the commencement of the ball, put on gloves of black kid or knitted silk and with red faces

were just about to follow the count into the ball-room when they were stopped by the scrofulous young man who, pale and hardly able to restrain his tears, accosted Turbin.

"You think that because you are a count you can jostle people about as if you were in the market-place," he said, breathing with difficulty, "but that is impolite . . . "

And again, do what he would, his quivering lips checked the flow of his words.

"What?" cried Turbin, suddenly frowning. "What? . . . You brat!" he cried, seizing him by the arms and squeezing them so that the blood rushed to the young man's head not so much from vexation as from fear. "What? Do you want to fight? I am at your service!"

Hardly had Turbin released the arms he had been squeezing so hard than two nobles caught hold of them and dragged the young man towards the back door.

"What! Are you out of your mind? You must be tipsy! Suppose we were to tell your papa! What's the matter with you?" they said to him.

"No, I'm not tipsy, but he jostles one and does not apologize. He's a swine, that's what he is!" squealed the young man, now quite in tears.

But they did not listen to him and someone took him home.

On the other side the Captain of Police and Zavalshevski were exhorting Turbin: "Never mind him, Count, he's only a child. He still gets whipped, he's only sixteen. . . . What can have happened to him? What bee has stung him? And his father such a respectable man-and our candidate."

"Well, let him go to the devil if he does not wish . . . "

And the count returned to the ball-room and danced the *ecossaise* with the pretty widow as gaily as before, laughed with all his heart as he watched the steps performed by the gentlemen who had come with him out of the study, and burst into peals of laughter than rang across the room when the Captain of Police slipped and measured his full length in the midst of the dancers.

Chapter 5

While the count was in the study Anna Fedorovna had approached her brother, and supposing that she ought to pretend to be very little interested in the count, began by asking: "Who is that hussar who was dancing with me? Can you tell me, brother?"

The cavalryman explained to his sister as well as he could what a great man the hussar was and told her at the same time that the count was only stopping in the town because his money had been stolen on the way, and that he himself had lent him a hundred rubles, but that that was not enough, so that perhaps "sister" would lend another couple of hundred. Only Zavalshevski asked her on no account to mention the matter to anyone-especially not to the count. Anna Fedorovna promised to send her brother the money that very day and to keep the affair secret, but somehow during the *ecossaise* she felt a great longing in herself to offer the count as much money as

he wanted. She took a long time making up her mind, and blushed, but at last with a great effort broached the subject as follows.

"My brother tells me that a misfortune befell you on the road, Count, and that you have no money by you. If you need any, won't you take it from me? I should be so glad."

But having said this, Anna Fedorovna suddenly felt frightened of something and blushed. All gaiety instantly left the count's face.

"Your brother is a fool!" he said abruptly. "You know when a man insults another man they fight; but when a woman insults a man, what does he do then-do you know?"

Poor Anna Fedorovna's neck and ears grew red with confusion. She lowered her eyes and said nothing.

"He kisses the woman in public," said the count in a low voice, leaning towards her ear. "Allow me at least to kiss your little hand," he added in a whisper after a prolonged silence, taking pity on his partner's confusion.

"But not now!" said Anna Fedorovna, with a deep sigh.

"When then? I am leaving early tomorrow and you owe it me."

"Well then it's impossible," said Anna Fedorovna with a smile.

"Only allow me a chance to meet you tonight to kiss your hand. I shall not fail to find an opportunity."

"How can you find it?"

"That is not your business. In order to see you everything is possible. . . . It's agreed?"

"Agreed."

The *ecossaise* ended. After that they danced a mazurka and the count was quite wonderful: catching handkerchiefs, kneeling on one knee, striking his spurs together in a quite special Warsaw manner, so that all the old people left their game of boston and flocked into the ball-room to see, and the cavalryman, their best dancer, confessed himself eclipsed. Then they had supper after which they danced the "Grandfather," and the ball began to break up. The count never took his eyes off the little widow. It was not pretence when he said he was ready to jump through a hole in the ice for her sake. Whether it was whim, or love, or obstinacy, all his mental powers that even ing were concentrated on the one desire-to meet and love her. As soon as he noticed that Anna Fedorovna was taking leave of her hostess he ran out to the footmen's room, and thence-without his fur cloak-into the courtyard to the place where the carriages stood.

"Anna Fedorovna Zaytseva's carriage!" he shouted.

A high four-seated closed carriage with lamps burning moved from its place and approached the porch.

"Stop!" he called to the coachman and plunging knee-deep into the snow ran to the carriage.

"What do you want?" said the coachman.

"I want to get into the carriage," replied the count, opening the door and trying to get in while the carriage was moving. "Stop, I tell you, you fool!"

"Stop, Vaska!" shouted the coachman to the postilion and pulled up the horses. "What are you getting into other people's carriages for? This carriage belongs to my mistress, to Anna Fedorovna, and not to your honour."

"Shut up, you blockhead! Here's a ruble for you; get down and close the door," said the count. But as the coachman did not stir he lifted the steps himself and, lowering the window, managed somehow to close the door. In the carriage, as in all old carriages, especially in those in which yellow galloon is used, there was a musty odour something like the smell of decayed and burnt bristles. The count's legs were wet with snow up to the knees and felt very cold in his thin boots and riding-breeches; in fact the winter cold penetrated his whole body. The coachman grumbled on the box and seemed to be preparing to get down. But the count neither heard nor felt anything. His face was aflame and his heart beat fast. In his nervous tension he seized the yellow window strap and leant out of the side window, and all his being merged into one feeling of expectation.

This expectancy did not last long. Someone called from the porch: "Zaytseva's carriage!" The coachman shook the reins, the body of the carriage swayed on its high springs, and the illuminated windows of the house ran one after another past the carriage windows.

"Mind, fellow," said the count to the coachman, putting his head out of the front window, "if you tell the footman I'm here, I'll thrash you, but hold your tongue and you shall have another ten rubles."

Hardly had he time to close the window before the body of the carriage shook more violently and then stopped. He pressed close into the corner, held his breath, and even shut his eyes, so terrified was he lest anything should balk his passionate expectation. The door opened, the carriage steps fell noisily one after the other, he heard the rustle of a woman's dress, a smell of frangipane perfume filled the musty carriage, quick little feet ran up the carriage steps, and Anna Fedorovna, brushing the count's leg with the skirt of her cloak which had come open, sank silently onto the seat behind him breathing heavily.

Whether she saw him or not no one could tell, not even Anna Fedorovna herself, but when he took her hand and said, "Well, now I will kiss your little hand," she showed very little fear, gave no reply, but yielded her arm to him, which he covered much higher than the top of her glove with kisses. The carriage started.

"Say something! Art thou angry?" he said.

She silently pressed into her corner, but suddenly something caused her to burst into tears and of her own accord she let her head fall on his breast.

Chapter 6

The newly elected Captain of Police and his guests the cavalryman and other nobles had long been listening to the gipsies and drinking in the new restaurant when the

count, wearing a blue cloth cloak lined with bearskin which had belonged to Anna Fedorovna's late husband, joined them.

"Sure, your excellency, we have been awaiting you impatiently!" said a dark cross-eyed gipsy, showing his white teeth, as he met the count at the very entrance and rushed to help him off with his cloak. "We have not seen you since the fair at Lebedyani . . . Steshka is quite pining away for you."

Steshka, a young, graceful little gipsy with a brick-red glow on her brown face and deep, sparkling black eyes shaded by long lashes, also ran out to meet him.

"Ah, little Count! Dearest! Jewel! This is a joy!" she murmured between her teeth, smiling merrily.

Ilyushka himself ran out to greet him, pretending to be very glad to see him. The old women, matrons, and maids jumped from their places and surrounded the guest, some claiming him as a fellow godfather, some as brother by baptism.

Turbin kissed all the young gipsy girls on their lips; the old women and the men kissed him on his shoulder or hand. The noblemen were also glad of their visitor's arrival, especially as the carousal, having reached its zenith, was beginning to flag, and everyone was beginning to feel satiated. The wine having lost its stimulating effect on the nerves merely weighed on the stomach. Each one had already let off his store of swagger, and they were getting tired of one another; the songs had all been sung and had got mixed in everyone's head, leaving a noisy, dissolute impression behind. No matter what strange or dashing thing anyone did, it began to occur to everyone that there was nothing agreeable or funny in it. The Captain of Police who lay in a shocking state on the floor at the feet of an old woman, began wriggling his legs and shouting: "Champagne . . . The Count's come! . . . Champagne! . . . He's come . . . now then, champagne! . . . I'll have a champagne bath and bathe in it! Noble gentlemen! . . . I love the society of our brave old nobility . . . Steshka, sing 'The Pathway'."

The cavalryman was also rather tipsy, but in another way. He sat on a sofa in the corner very close to a tall handsome gipsy girl, Lyubasha; and feeling this eyes misty with drink he kept blinking and shaking his head and, repeating the same words over and over again in a whisper, besought the gypsy to fly with him somewhere. Lyubasha, smiling and listening as if what he said were very amusing and yet rather sad, glanced occasionally at her husband-the cross-eyed Sashka who was standing behind the chair opposite her-and in reply to the cavalryman's declarations of love, stooped and whispering his he ear asked him to buy her some scent and ribbons on the quiet so that the others should not notice.

"Hurrah!" cried the cavalryman when the count entered.

The handsome young man was pacing up and down the room with laboriously steady steps and a careworn expression on his face, warbling an air from *Il Seraglio.*

An elderly paterfamilias, who had been tempted by the persistent entreaties of the nobles to come and hear the gipsies, as they said that without him the thing would be worthless and it would be better not to go at all, was lying on a sofa where he had sunk as soon as he arrived, and no one was taking any notice of him. Some official or

other who was also there had taken off his swallow-tail coat and was sitting up on the table, feet and all, ruffling his hair, and thereby showing that he was very much on the spree. As soon as the count entered, this official unbuttoned the collar of his shirt and got still farther onto the table. In general, on Turbin's arrival the carousal revived.

The gipsy girls, who had been wandering about the room, again gathered and sat down in a circle. The count took Steshka, the leading singer, on his knee, and ordered more champagne.

Ilyushka came and stood in front of Steshka with his guitar, and the "dance" commenced-that is, the gipsy songs, "When you go along the Street," "O Hussars!," "Do you hear, do you know?," and so on in a definite order. Steshka sang admirably. The flexible sonorous contralto that flowed from her very chest, her smiles while singing, her laughing passionate eyes, and her foot that moved involuntarily in measure with the song, her wild shriek at the commencement of the chorus-all touched some powerful but rarely-reached chord. It was evident that she lived only in the song she was singing. Ilyushka accompanied her on the guitar-his back, legs, smile, and whole being expressing sympathy with the song-and eagerly watching her, raised and lowered his head as attentive and engrossed as though he heard the song for the first time. Then the last melodious note he suddenly drew himself up and, as if feeling himself superior to everyone in the world, proudly and resolutely threw up his guitar with his foot, twirled it about, stamped, tossed back his hair, and looked round at the choir with a frown. His whole body from neck to heels began dancing in every muscle-and twenty energetic, powerful voices each trying to chime in more strongly and more strangely than the rest, rang through the air. The old women bobbed up and down on their chairs waving their handkerchiefs, showing their teeth, can vying with one another in their harmonious and measured shouts. The basses with strained necks and heads bent to one side boomed while standing behind the chairs.

When Steska took a high note Ilyushka brought his guitar closer to her as if wishing to help her, and the handsome young man screamed with rapture, saying that now they were beginning the *bemols*.

When a dance was struck up and Dunyasha, advancing with quivering shoulders and bosom, twirled round in front of the count and glided onwards, Turbin leapt up, threw off his jacket, and in his red shirt stepped jauntily with her in precise and measured step, accomplishing such things with his legs that the gipsies smiled with approval and glanced at one another.

The Captain of Police sat down like a Turk, beat his breast with his fist and cried "Vivat!" and then, having caught hold of the count's leg, began to tell him that of two thousand rubles he now had only five hundred left, but that he could do anything he liked if only the count would allow it. The elderly paterfamilias awoke and wished to go away but was not allowed to do so. The handsome young man began persuading a gipsy to waltz with him. The cavalryman, wishing to show off his intimacy with the count, rose and embraced Turbin. "Ah, my dear fellow," he said, "why didst thou leave

us, eh?" The count was silent, evidently thinking of something else. "Where did you go to? Ah, you rogue of a count, I know where you went to!"

For some reason this familiarity displeased Turbin. Without a smile he looked silently into the cavalryman's face and suddenly launched at him such a terrible and rude abuse that the cavalryman was pained and for a while could not make up his mind whether to take the offence as a joke or seriously. At last he decided to take it as a joke, smiled, and went back to his gipsy, assuring her that he would certainly marry her after Easter. They sang another song and another, danced again, and "hailed the guests," and everyone continued to imagine that he was enjoying it. There was no end to the champagne. The count drank a great deal. His eyes seemed to grow moist, but he was not unsteady. He danced even better than before, spoke firmly, even joined in the chorus extremely well, and chimed in when Steshka sang "Friendship's Tender Emotions." In the midst of a dance the landlord came in to ask the guests to return to their homes as it was getting on for three in the morning.

The count seized the landlord by the scruff of his neck and ordered him to dance the Russian dance. The landlord refused. The count snatched up a bottle of champagne and having stood the landlord on his head and had him held in that position, amidst general laughter, slowly emptied the bottle over him.

It was beginning to dawn. Everyone looked pale and exhausted except the count.

"Well, I must be starting for Moscow," said he, suddenly rising. "Come along, all of you! Come and see me off . . . and we'll have some tea together."

All agreed except the paterfamilias (who was left behind asleep), and crowding into the three large sledges that stood at the door, they all drove off to the hote.

Chapter 7

"Get horses ready!" cried the count as he entered the saloon of his hotel, followed by the guests and gipsies. "Sashka!-not gipsy Sashka but my Sashka-tell the superintendent I'll thrash him if he gives me bad horses. And get us some tea. Zavalshevski, look after the tea: I'm going to have a look at Ilyin and see how he's getting on . . . " added Turbin and went along the passage towards the uhlan's room.

Ilyin had just finished playing and having lost his last kopek was lying face downwards on the sofa, pulling one hair after another from its torn horsehair cover, putting them in his mouth, biting them in two and spitting them out again.

Two tallow candles, one of which had burnt down to the paper in the socket, stood on the card-strewn table and feebly wrestled with the morning light that crept in through the window. There were no ideas in Ilyin's head: a dense mist of gambling passion shrouded all his faculties; he did not even feel penitent. He made one attempt to think of what he should do now: how being penniless he could get away, how he could repay the fifteen thousand rubles of Crown money, what his regimental commander would say, what his mother and his comrades would say, and he felt such terror and

disgust with himself that wishing to forget himself he rose and began pacing up and down the room trying to step only where the floor-boards joined, and began, once more, vividly to recall every slightest detail of the course of play. He vividly imagined how he had begun to win back his money, how he withdrew a nine and placed the king of spades over two thousand rubles. A queen was dealt to the right, an ace to the left, then the king of diamonds to the right and all was lost; but if, say, a six had been dealt to the right and the king of diamonds to the left, he would have won everything back, would have played once more double or quits, would have won fifteen thousand rubles, and would then have bought himself an ambler from his regimental commander and another pair of horses besides, and a phaeton. Well, and what then? Well, it would have been a splendid, splendid thing!

And he lay down on the sofa again and began chewing the horse-hair.

"Why are they singing in No. 7?" thought he. "There must be a spree on at Turbin's. Shall I go in and have a good drink?"

At this moment the count entered.

"Well, old fellow, cleaned out, are you? Eh?" cried he.

"I'll pretend to be asleep," thought Ilyin, "or else I shall have to speak to him, and I want to sleep."

Turbin, however, came up and stroked his head.

"Well, my dear friend, cleaned out-lost everything? Tell me."

Ilyin gave no answer.

The count pulled his arm.

"I have lost. But what is that to you?" muttered Ilyin in a sleepy, indifferent, discontented voice, without changing his position.

"Everything?"

"Well-yes. What of it? Everything. What is it to you?"

"Listen. Tell me the truth as to a comrade," said the count, inclined to tenderness by the influence of the wine he had drunk and continuing to stroke Ilyin's hair. "I have really taken a liking to you. Tell me the truth. If you have lost Crown money I'll get you out of your scrape: it will soon be too late. . . . Had you Crown money?"

Ilyin jumped up from the sofa.

"Well then, if you wish me to tell you, don't speak to me, because . . . please don't speak to me. . . . To shoot myself is the only thing!" said Ilyin, with real despair, and his head fell on his hands and he burst into tears, though but a moment before he had been calmly thinking about amblers.

"What pretty girlishness! Where's the man who has not done the like? It's not such a calamity; perhaps we can mend it. Wait for me here."

The count left the room.

"Where is Squire Lukhnov's room?" he asked the boots.

The boots offered to show him the way. In spite of the valet's remark that his master had only just returned and was undressing, the count went in. Lukhnov was sitting at a table in his dressing-gown counting several packets of paper money that

lay before him. A bottle of Rhine wine, of which he was very fond, stood on the table. After winning he permitted himself that pleasure. Lukhnov looked coldly and sternly through his spectacles at the count as though not recognizing him.

"You don't recognize me, I think?" said the count, resolutely stepping up to the table.

"Lukhnov made a gesture of recognition, and said, "What is it you want?"

"I should like to play with you," said Turbin, sitting down on the sofa.

"Now?"

"Yes."

"Another time with pleasure, Count! But now I am tired and am going to bed. Won't you have a glass of wine? It is famous wine."

"But I want to play a little-now."

"I don't intend to play any more tonight. Perhaps some of the other gentlemen will, but I won't. You must please excuse me, Count."

"Then you won't?"

"Lukhnov shrugged his shoulders to express his regret at his inability to comply with the count's desire.

"Not on any account?"

The same shrug.

"But I particularly request it. . . . Well, will you play?"

Silence.

"Will you play?" the count asked again. "Mind!"

The same silence and a rapid glance over the spectacles at the count's face which was beginning to frown.

"Will you play?" shouted the count very loud, striking the table with his hand so that the bottle toppled over and the wine was spilt. "You know you did not win fairly. . . . Will you play? I ask you for the third time."

"I said I would not. This is really strange, Count! And it is not at all proper to come and hold a knife to a man's throat," remarked Lukhnov, not raising his eyes. A momentary silence followed during which the count's face grew paler and paler. Suddenly a terrible blow on the head stupefied Lukhnov. He fell on the sofa trying to seize the money and uttered such a piercingly despairing cry as no one could have expected from so calm and imposing a person. Turbin gathered up what money lay on the table, pushed aside the servant who ran in to his master's assistance, and left the room with rapid strides.

"If you want satisfaction I am at your service! I shall be in my room for another half-hour," said the count, returning to Lukhnov's door.

"Thief! Robber! I'll have the law on you . . . " was all that was audible from the room.

Ilyin, who had paid no attention to the count's promise to help him, still lay as before on the sofa in his room choking with tears of despair. Consciousness of what had really happened, which the count's caresses and sympathy had evoked from behind

the strange tangle of feelings, thoughts, and memories filling his soul, did not leave him. His youth, rich with hope, his honour, the respect of society, his dreams of love and friendship-all were utterly lost. The source of his tears began to run dry, a too passive feeling of hopelessness overcame him more and more, and thoughts of suicide, no longer arousing revulsion or horror, claimed his attention with increasing frequency. Just then the count's firm footsteps were heard.

In Turbin's face traces of anger could still be seen, his hands shook a little, but his eyes beamed with kindly merriment and self-satisfaction.

"Here you are, it's won back!" he said, throwing several bundles of paper money on the table. "See if it's all there and then make haste and come into the saloon. I am just leaving," he added, as though not noticing the joy and gratitude and extreme agitation on Ilyin's face, and whistling a gipsy song he left the room.

Chapter 8

Sashka, with a sash tied round his waist, announced that the horses were ready but insisted that the count's cloak, which, he said, with its fur collar was worth three hundred rubles, should be recovered, and the shabby blue one returned to the rascal who had changed it for the count's at the Marshal's; but Turbin told him there was no need to look for the cloak, and went to his room to change his clothes.

The cavalryman kept hiccoughing as he sat silent beside his gipsy girl. The Captain of Police called for vodka and invited everyone to come at once and have breakfast with him, promising that his wife would certainly dance with the gipsies. The handsome young man was profoundly explaining to Ilyushka that there is more soulfulness in pianoforte music and that it is not possible to play *bemols* on a guitar. The official sat in a corner sadly drinking his tea and in the daylight seemed ashamed of his debauchery. The gipsies were disputing among themselves in their own tongue as to "hailing the guests" again, which Steshka opposed, saying that the *baroray* (in gipsy language, count or prince or, more literally, "great gentleman") would be angry. In general the last embers of the debauch were dying down in everyone.

"Well, one farewell song, and then off home!" said the count, entering the parlour in travelling dress, fresh, merry, and handsomer than ever.

The gipsies again formed their circle and were just ready to begin when Ilyin entered with a packet of paper money in his hand and took the count aside.

"I had only fifteen thousand rubles of Crown money and you have given me sixteen thousand three hundred," he said, "so this is yours."

"That's a good thing. Give it here!"

Ilyin gave him the money and, looking timidly at the count, opened his lips to say something, but only blushed till tears came into his eyes and seizing the count's hand began to press it.

"you be off! . . . Ilyushka! Here's some money for you, but you must accompany me out of the town with songs!" and he threw onto the guitar the thirteen hundred rubles Ilyin had brought him. But the count quite forgot to repay the hundred rubles he had borrowed of the cavalryman the day before.

It was already ten o'clock in the morning. The sun had risen above the roofs of the houses. People were moving about in the streets. The tradesmen had long since opened their shops. Noblemen and officials were driving through the streets and ladies were shopping in the bazaar, when the whole gipsy band, with the Captain of Police, the cavalryman, the handsome young man, Ilyin, and the count in the blue bearskin cloak came out into the hotel porch.

It was a sunny day and a thaw had set in. The large post-sledges, each drawn by three horses with their tails tied up tight, drove up to the porch splashing through the mud and the whole lively party took their places. The count, Ilyin, Steshka, and Ilyushka, with Sashka the count's orderly, got into the first sledge. Blucher was beside himself and wagged his tail, barking at the shaft-horse. The other gentlemen got into the two other sledges with the rest of the gipsy men and women. The troykas got abreast as they left the hotel and the gipsies struck up in chorus. The troykas with their songs and bells-forcing every vehicle they met right onto the pavements-dashed through the whole town right to the town gates.

The tradesmen and passers-by who did not know them, and especially those who did, were not a little astonished when they saw the noblemen driving through the streets in broad daylight with gipsy girls and tipsy gipsy men, singing.

When they had passed the town gates the troykas stopped and everyone began bidding the count farewell.

Ilyin, who had drunk a good deal at the leave-taking and had himself been driving the sledge all the way, suddenly became very sad, begged the count to stay another day, and, when he found that this was not possible, rushed quite unexpectedly at his new friend, kissed him, and promised with tears to try to exchange into the hussar regiment the count was serving in as soon as he got back. The count was particularly gay; he tumbled the cavalryman, who had become very familiar in the morning, into a snowdrift, set Blucher at the Captain of Police, took Steshka in his arms and wished to carry her off to Moscow, and finally jumped into his sledge and made Blucher, who wanted to stand up in the middle, sit down by his side. Sashka jumped on the box after having again asked the cavalryman to recover the count's cloak from *them* and to send it on. The count cried, "Go!," took off his cap, waved it over his head, and whistled to the horses like a post-boy. The troykas drove off in their different directions.

A monotonous snow-covered plain stretched far in front with a dirty yellowish road winding through it. The bright sunshine-playfully sparkling on the thawing snow which was coated with a transparent crust of ice-was pleasantly warm to one's face and back. Steam rose thickly from the sweating horses. The bell tinkled merrily. A peasant, with a loaded sledge that kept gliding to the side of the road, got hurriedly out of the way, jerking his rope reins and plashing with his wet bast shoes as he ran along the

thawing road. A fat red-faced peasant woman, with a baby wrapped in the bosom of her sheepskin cloak, sat in another laden sledge, urging on a thin-tailed, jaded white horse with the ends of the reins. The count suddenly thought of Anna Fedorovna.

"Turn back!" he shouted.

The driver did not at once understand.

"Turn back! Back to town! Be quick!"

The troyka passed the town gates once more, and drove briskly up to the wooden porch of Anna Fedorovna's house. The count ran quickly up the steps, passed through the vestibule and the drawing-room, and having found the widow still asleep, took her in his arms, lifted her out of bed, kissed her sleepy eyes, and ran quickly back. Anna Fedorovna, only half awake, licked her lips and asked, "What has happened?" The count jumped into his sledge, shouted to the driver, and with no further delay and without even a thought of Lukhnov, or the widow, or Steshka, but only of what awaited him in Moscow, left the town of K — forever.

Chapter 9

More than twenty years had gone by. Much water had flowed away, many people had died, many been born, many had grown up or grown old; still more ideas had been born and had died, much that was old and beautiful and much that was old and bad had perished; much that was beautiful and new had grown up and still more that was immature, monstrous, and new, had come into God's world.

Count Fedor Turbin had been killed long ago in a duel by some foreigner he had horse-whipped in the street. His son, physically as like him as one drop of water to another, was a handsome young man already twenty-three years old and serving in the Horse Guards. But morally the young Turbin did not in the least resemble his father. There was not a shade of the impetuous, passionate, and, to speak frankly, depraved propensities of the past age. Together with his intelligence, culture, and the gifted nature he had inherited a love of propriety and the comforts of life; a practical way of looking at men and affairs, reasonableness, and prudence were his distinguishing characteristics. The young count had got on well in the service and at twenty-three was already a lieutenant. At the commencement of the war he made up his mind that he would be more likely to secure promotion if he exchanged into the active army, and so he entered an hussar regiment as captain and was soon in command of a squadron.

In May 1848 Footnote: Tolstoy seems here to antedate Russians intervention in the Hungarian insurrection. The Russian army did not enter Hungary till May 1849 and the war lasted till the end of September of that year. the S — hussar regiment was marching to the campaign through the province of K — and the very squadron young Count Turbin commanded had to spend the night in the village of Morozovka, Anna Fedorovna's estate.

Ann Fedorovna was still living but was already so far from young that she did not even consider herself young, which means a good deal for a woman. She had grown very fat, which is said to make a woman look younger, but deep soft wrinkles were apparent on her white plumpness. She never went to town now, it was an effort for her even to get into her carriage, but she was still just as kind-hearted and as silly as ever (now that her beauty no longer biases one, the truth may be told). With her lived her twenty-three-year-old daughter Lisa, a Russian country belle, and her brother-our acquaintance the cavalryman-who had good-naturedly squandered the whole of his small fortune and had found a home for his old age with Anna Fedorovna. His hair was quite grey and his upper lip had fallen in, but the moustache above it was still carefully blackened. His back was bent, and not only his forehead and cheeks but even his nose and neck were wrinkled, yet in the movements of his feeble crooked legs the manner of a cavalryman was still perceptible.

The family and household sat in the small drawing-room of the old house, with an open door leading out onto the verandah, and open windows overlooking the ancient star-shaped garden with its lime trees. Grey-haired Anna Fedorovna, wearing a lilac jacket, sat on the sofa laying out cards on a round mahogany table. Her old brother in his clean white trousers and a blue coat had settled himself by the window and was plaiting a cord out of white cotton with the aid of a wooden fork-a pastime his niece had taught him and which he liked very much, as he could no longer do anything and his eyes were too weak for newspaper reading, his favourite occupation. Pimochka, Anna Fedorovna's ward, sat by him learning a lesson-Lisa helping her and at the same time making a goat's-wool stocking for her uncle with wooden knitting needles. The last rays of the setting sun, as usual at that hour, shone through the lime-tree avenue and threw slanting gleams on the farthest window and the what-not standing near it. It was so quiet in the garden and the room that one could hear the swift flutter of a swallow's wings outside the window and Anna Fedorovna's soft sigh or the old man's slight groan as he crossed his legs.

"How do they go? Show me, Lisa! I always forget," said Anna Fedorovna, at a standstill in laying out her cards for patience.

Without stopping her work Lisa went to her mother and glanced at the cards.

"Ah, you've muddled them all, mamma dear!" she said, rearranging them. "That's the way they should go. And what you are trying your fortune about will still come true," she added, withdrawing a card so that it was not noticed.

"Ah yes, you always deceive me and say it has come out."

"No, really, it means . . . you'll succeed. It has come out."

"All right, all right, you sly puss! But isn't it time we had tea?"

"I have ordered the samovar to be lit. I'll see to it at once. Do you want to have it here? . . . Be quick and finish your lesson Pimochka, and let's have a run."

And Lisa went to the door.

"Lisa, Lizzie!" said her uncle, looking intently at his fork. "I think I've dropped a stitch again-pick it up for me, there's a dear."

"Directly, directly. But I must give out a loaf of sugar to be broken up."

And really, three minutes later she ran back, went to her uncle and pinched his ear.

"That's for dropping your stitches!" she said, laughing, and you haven't done your task!"

"Well, well, never mind, never mind. Put it right-there's a little knot or something."

Lisa took the fork, drew a pin out of her tippet-which thereupon the breeze coming in at the door blew slightly open-and managing somehow to pick up the stitch with the pin pulled two loops through, and returned the fork to her uncle.

"Now give me a kiss for it," she said, holding out her rosy cheek to him and pinning up her tippet. "You shall have rum with your tea today. It's Friday, you know."

And she again went into the tea-room.

"Come here and look, uncle, the hussars are coming!" she called from there in her clear voice.

Anna Fedorovna came with her brother into the tea-room, the windows of which overlooked the village, to see the hussars. Very little was visible from the windows-only a crowd moving in a cloud of dust.

"It's a pity we have so little room, sister, and that the wing is not yet finished," said the old man to Anna Fedorovna. "We might have invited the officers. Hussar officers are such splendid, gay young fellows, you know. It would have been good to see something of them."

"Why of course, I should have been only too glad, brother; but you know yourself we have no room. There's my bedroom, Lisa's room, the drawing-room, and this room of yours, and that's all. Really now, where could we put them? The village elder's hut has been cleaned up for them: Michael Matveev says its quite clean now."

"And we could have chosen a bridegroom for you from among them, Lizzie-a fine hussar!"

"I don't want an hussar; I'd rather have an uhlan. Weren't you in the uhlans, uncle? . . . I don't want to have anything to do with these hussars. They are all said to be desperate fellows." And Lisa blushed a little but again laughed her musical laugh.

"Here comes Ustyushka running; we must ask her what she has seen," she added.

Anna Fedorovna told her to call Ustyushka.

"It's not in you to keep to your work, you must needs run off to see the soldiers," said Anna Fedorovna. "Well, where have the officers put up?"

"In Eromkin's house, mistress. There are two of them, such handsome ones. One's a count, they say!"

"And what's his name?"

"Dazarov or Turbinov. . . . . I'm sorry-I've forgotten."

"What a fool; can't so much as tell us anything. You might at least have found out the name."

"Well, I'll run back."

“Yes, I know you’re first-rate at that sort of thing. . . . No, let Daniel go. Tell him to go and ask whether the officers want anything, brother. One ought to show them some politeness after all. Say the mistress sent to inquire.”

The old people again sat down in the tea-room and Lisa went to the servants’ room to put into a box the sugar that had been broken up. Ustyushka was there telling about the hussars.

“Darling miss, what a handsome man that count is!” she said. “A regular cherubim with black eyebrows. There now, if you had a bridegroom like that you would be a couple of the right sort.”

The other maids smiled approvingly; the old nurse sighed as she sat knitting at a window and even whispered a prayer, drawing in her breath.

“So you liked the hussars very much?” said Lisa. “And you’re a good one at telling what you’ve seen. Go, please, and bring some of the cranberry juice, Ustyushka, to give the hussars something sour to drink.”

And Lisa, laughing, went out with the sugar basin in her hands.

“I should really like to have seen what that hussar is like,” she thought, “brown or fair? And he would have been glad to make our acquaintance I should think. . . . And if he goes away he’ll never know that I was here and thought about him. And how many such have already passed me by? Who sees me here except uncle and Ustyushka? Whichever way I do my hair, whatever sleeves I put on, no one looks at me with pleasure,” she thought with a sigh as she looked at her plump white arm. “I suppose he is tall, with large eyes, and certainly small black moustaches. . . . Here am I, more than twenty-two, and no one has fallen in love with me except pock-marked Ivan Ipatich, and four years ago I was even prettier. . . . And so my girlhood has passed without gladdening anyone. Oh, poor, poor country lass that I am!”

Her mother’s voice, calling her to pour out tea, roused the country lass from this momentary mation. She lifted her head with a start and went into the tea-room.

The best results are often obtained accidentally, and the more one tries the worse things turn out. In the country, people rarely try to educate their children and therefore unwittingly usually give them an excellent education. This was particularly so in Lisa’s case. Anna Fedorovna, with her limited intellect and careless temperament, gave Lisa no education-did not teach her music or that very useful French language-but having accidentally borne a healthy pretty child by her deceased husband she gave her little daughter over to a wet-nurse and a dry-nurse, fed her, dressed her in cotton prints and goat-skin shoes, sent her out to walk and gather mushrooms and wild berries, engaged a student from the seminary to teach her reading, writing, and arithmetic, and when sixteen years had passed she casually found in Lisa a friend, an ever-kind-hearted, ever-cheerful soul, and an active housekeeper. Anna Fedorovna, being kind-hearted, always had some children to bring up-either serf children or foundlings. Lisa began looking after them when she was ten years old: teaching them, dressing them, taking them to church, and checking them when they played too man pranks. Later on the decrepit kindly uncle, who had to be tended like a child, appeared on the scene. Then

the servants and peasants came to the young lady with various requests and with their ailments, which latter she treated with elderberry, peppermint, and camphorated spirits. Then there was the household management which all fell on her shoulders of itself. Then an unsatisfied longing for love awoke and found its outlet only in Nature and religion. And Lisa accidentally grew into an active, good-natured, cheerful, self-reliant, pure, and deeply religious woman. It is true that she suffered a little from vanity when she saw neighbours standing by her in church wearing fashionable bonnets brought from K — , and sometimes she was vexed to tears by her old mother's whims and grumbling. She had dreams of love, too, in most absurd and sometimes crude forms, but these were dispersed by her useful activity which had grown into a necessity, and at the age of twenty-two there was not one spot or sting of remorse in the clear calm soul of the physically and morally beautifully developed maiden. Lisa was of medium height, plump rather than thin; her eyes were hazel, not large, and had slight shadows on the lower lids; and she had a long light-brown plait of hair. She walked with big steps and with a slight sway-a "duck's waddle" as the saying is. Her face, when she was occupied and not agitated by anything in particular, seemed to say to everyone who looked into it: "It is a joy to live in the world when one has someone to love and a clear conscience." Even in moments of vexation, perplexity, alarm, or sorrow, in spite of herself there shone-through the tear in her eye, her frownning left eyebrow, and her compressed lips-a kind straightforward spirit unspoilt by the intellect; it shone in the dimples of her cheeks, in the corners of her mouth, and in her beaming eyes accustomed to smile and to rejoice in life.

Chapter 10

The air was still hot though the sun was setting when the squadron entered Morozovka. In front of them along the dusty village street trotted a brindled cow separated from its herd, looking around and now and then stopping and lowing, but never suspecting that all she had to do was to turn aside. The peasants-old men, women, and children-the servants from the manor-house, crowded on both sides of the street and eagerly watched the hussars as the latter rode through a thick cloud of dust, curbing their horses which occasionally stamped and snorted. On the right of the squadron were two officers who sat their fine black horses carelessly. One was Count Turbin, the commander, the other a very young man recently promoted from cadet, whose name was Polozov.

An hussar in a white linen jacket came out of the best of the huts, raised his cap, and went up to the officers.

"Where are the quarters assigned us?"

"For your Excellency?" answered the quartermaster-sergeant, with a start of his whole body. "The village elder's hut has been cleaned out. I wanted to get quarters

at the manor-house, but they say there is no room there. The proprietress is such a vixen."

"All right!" said the count, dismounting and stretching his legs as he reached the village elder's hut. "And has my phaeton arrived?"

"It has deigned to arrive, your Excellency!" answered the quartermaster-sergeant, pointing with his cap to the leather body of a carriage visible through the gateway and rushing forward to the entrance of the hut, which was thronged with members of the peasant family collected to look at the officer. He even pushed one old woman over as he briskly opened the door of the freshly cleaned hut and stepped aside to let the count pass.

The hut was fairly large and roomy but not very clean. The German valet, dressed like a gentleman, stood inside sorting the linen in a portmanteau after having set up an iron bedstead and made the bed.

"Faugh, what filthy lodgings!" said the count with vexation. "Couldn't you have found anything better at some gentleman's house, Dyadenko?"

"If your Excellency desires it I will try at the manor-house," answered the quartermaster-sergeant, "but it isn't up to much-doesn't look much better than a hut."

"Never mind now. Go away."

And the count lay down on the bed and threw his arms behind his head.

"Johann!" he called to his valet. "You've made a lump in the middle again! How is it you can't make a bed properly?"

Johann came up to put it right.

"No, never mind now. But where is my dressing-gown?" said the count in a dissatisfied tone.

The valet handed him the dressing-gown. Before putting it on the count examined the front.

"I thought so, that spot is not cleaned off. Could anyone be a worse servant than you?" he added, pulling the dressing-gown out of the valet's hands and putting it on. "Tell me, do you do it on purpose? . . . Is the tea ready?"

"I have not had time," said Johann.

"Fool!"

After that the count took up the French novel placed ready for him and read for some time in silence: Johann went out into the passage to prepare the samovar. The count was obviously in a bad temper, probably caused by fatigue, a dusty face, tight clothing, and an empty stomach.

"Johann!" he cried again, "bring me the account for those ten rubles. What did you buy in the town?"

He looked over the account handed him, and made some dissatisfied remarks about the dearness of the things purchased.

"Serve rum with my tea."

"I didn't buy any rum," said Johann.

"That's good! . . . How many times have I told you to have rum?"

"I hadn't enough money."

"Then why didn't Polozov buy some? You should have got some from his man."

"Cornet Polozov? I don't know. He bought the tea and the sugar."

"Idiot! . . . Get out! . . . You are the only man who knows how to make me lose my patience. . . . You know that on a march I always have rum with my tea."

"Here are two letters for you from the staff," said the valet.

The count opened his letters and began reading them without rising. The cornet, having quartered the squadron, came in with a merry face.

"Well, how is it, Turbin? It seems very nice here. But I must confess I'm tired. It was hot."

"Very nice! . . . A filthy stinking hut, and thanks to your lordship no rum; your blockhead didn't buy any, nor did this one. You might at least have mentioned it."

And he continued to read his letter. When he had finished he rolled it into a ball and threw it on the floor.

In the passage the cornet was meanwhile saying to his orderly in a whisper: "Why didn't you buy any rum? You had money enough, you know."

"But why should we buy everything? As it is I pay for everything, while his German does nothing but smoke his pipe."

It was evident that the count's second letter was not unpleasant, for he smiled as he read it.

"Who is it from?" asked Polozov, returning to the room and beginning to arrange a sleeping-place for himself on some boards by the oven.

"From Mina," answered the count gaily, handing him the letter, "Do you want to see it? What a delightful woman she is! . . . Really she's much better than our young ladies. . . . Just see how much feeling and wit there is in that letter. Only one thing is bad-she's asking for money."

"Yes, that's bad," said the cornet.

"It's true I promised her some, but then this campaign came on, and besides. . . However if I remain in command of the squadron another three months I'll send her some. It's worth it, really; such a charming creature, eh?" said he, watching the expression on Polozov's face as he read the letter.

"Dreadfully ungrammatical, but very nice, and it seems as if she really loves you," said the cornet.

"H'm . . . I should think so! It's only women of that kind who love sincerely when once they do love."

"And who was the other letter from?" asked the cornet, handing back the one he had read.

"Oh, that . . . there's a man, a nasty beast who won from me at cards, and he's reminding me of it for the third time. . . . I can't let him have it at present. . . . A stupid letter!" said the count, evidently vexed at the recollection.

After this both officers were silent for a while. The cornet, who was evidently under the count's influence, glanced now and then at the handsome though clouded coun-

tenance of Turbin-who was looking fixedly through the window-and drank his tea in silence, not venturing to start a conversation.

"But d'you know, it may turn out capitally," said the count, suddenly turning to Polozov with a shake of his head. "Supposing we get promotions by seniority this year and take part in an action besides, I may get ahead of my own captains in the Guards."

The conversation was still on the same topic and they were drinking their second tumblers of tea when old Daniel entered and delivered Anna Fedorovna's message.

"And I was also to inquire if you are not Count Fedor Ivanych Turbin's son?" added Daniel on his own account, having learnt the count's name and remembering the deceased count's sojourn in the town of K — . "Our mistress, Anna Fedorovna, was very well acquainted with him."

"He was my father. And tell your mistress I am very much obliged to her. We want nothing but say we told you to ask whether we could not have a cleaner room somewhere-in the manor-house or anywhere."

"Now, why did you do that?" asked Polozov when Daniel had gone. "What does it matter? Just for one night-what does it matter? And they will be inconveniencing themselves."

"What an idea! I think we've had our share of smoky huts! . . . It's easy to see you're not a practical man. Why not seize the opportunity when we can, and live like human beings for at least one night? And on the contrary they will be very pleased to have us. . . . The worst of it is, if this lady really knew my father . . . " continued the count with a smile which displayed his glistening white teeth. "I always have to feel ashamed of my departed papa. There is always some scandalous story or other, or some debt he has left. That's why I hate meeting these acquaintances of my father's. However, that was the way in those days," he added, growing serious.

"Did I ever tell you," said Polozov, "I once met an uhlan brigade-commander, Ilyin? He was very anxious to meet you. He is awfully fond of your father."

"That Ilyin is an awful good-for-nothing, I believe. But the worst of it is that these good people, who assure me that they knew my father in order to make my acquaintance, while pretending to be very pleasant, relate such tales about my father as make me ashamed to listen. It is true-I don't deceive myself, but look at things dispassionately-that he had too ardent a nature and sometimes did things that were not nice. However, that was the way in those times. In our days he might have turned out a very successful man, for to do him justice he had extraordinary capacities."

A quarter of an hour later the servant came back with a request from the proprietress that they would be so good as to spend the night at her house.

Chapter 11

Having heard that the hussar officer was the son of Count fedor Turbin, Anna Fedorovna was all in a flutter.

"Oh, dear me! The darling boy! . . . Daniel, run quickly and say your mistress asks them to her house!" she began, jumping up and hurrying with quick steps to the servants' room. "Lizzie! Ustyushka! . . . Your room must be got ready, Lisa, you can move into your uncle's room. And you, brother, you won't mind sleeping in the drawing-room, will you? It's only for one night."

"I don't mind, sister. I can sleep on the floor."

"He must be handsome if he's like his father. Only to have a look at him, the darling. . . . You must have a good look at him, Lisa! The father *was* handsome. . . . Where are you taking that table to? Leave it here," said Anna Fedorovna, bustling about. "Bring two beds-take one from the foreman's-and get the crystal candlestick, the one my brother gave me on my birthday-it's on the what-not-and put a stearine candle in it."

At last everything was ready. In spite of her mother's interference Lisa arranged the room for the two officers her own way. She took out clean bed-clothes scented with mignonette, made the beds, had candles and a bottle of water placed on a small table near by, fumigated the servants' room with scented paper, and moved her own little bed into her uncle's room. Anna Fedorovna quieted down a little, settled in her own place, and even took up the cards again, but instead of laying them out she leaned her plump elbow on the table and grew thoughtful.

"Ah, time, time, how it flies!" she whispered to herself. "Is it so long ago? It is as if I could see him now. Ah, he was a madcap!. . ." and tears came into her eyes. "And now there's Lizzie . . . but still, she's not what I was at her age-she's a nice girl but she's not like that . . ."

"Lisa, you should put on your *mousseline-de-laine* dress for the evening."

"Why, mother, you are not going to ask them in to see us? Better not," said Lisa, unable to master her excitement at the thought of meeting the officers. "Better not, mamma!"

And really her desire to see them was less strong than her fear of the agitating joy she imagined awaited her.

"Maybe they themselves will wish to make our acquaintance, Lizzie!" said Anna Fedorovna, stroking her head and thinking, "No, her hair is not what mine was at her age. . . . Oh, Lizzie, how I should like you to . . ." And she ready did very earnestly desire something for her daughter. But she could not imagine a marriage with the count, and she could not desire for her daughter relations such as she had had with the father; but still she did desire something very much. She may have longed to relive in the soul of her daughter what she had experienced with him who was dead.

The old cavalryman was also somewhat excited by the arrival of the count. He locked himself into his room and emerged a quarter of an hour later in a Hungarian jacket and pale-blue trousers, and entered the room prepared for the visitors with the bashfully pleased expression of a girl who puts on a ball-dress for the first time in her life.

“I’ll have a look at the hussars of today, sister! The late count was indeed a true hussar. “I’ll see, I’ll see!”

The officers had already reached the room assigned to them through the back entrance.

“There, you see! Isn’t this better than that hut with the cockroaches?” said the count, lying down as he was, in his dusty boots, on the bed that had been prepared for him.

“Of course it’s better; but still, to be indebted to the proprietress ... “

“Oh, what nonsense! One must be practical in all things. They’re awfully pleased, I’m sure . . . Eh, you there!” he cried. “Ask for something to hang over this window, or it will be draughty in the night.”

At this moment the old man came in to make the officers’ acquaintance. Of course, though he did it with a slight blush, he did not omit to say that he and the old count had been comrades, that he had enjoyed the count’s favour, and he even added that he had more than once been under obligations to the deceased. What obligations he referred to, whether it was the count’s omission to repay the hundred rubles he had borrowed, or his throwing him into a snow-heap, or swearing at him, the old man quite omitted to explain. The young count was very polite to the old cavalryman and thanked him for the night’s lodging.

“You must excuse us if it is not luxurious, Count,” (he very nearly said “your Excellency,” so unaccustomed had he become to conversing with important persons), “my sister’s house is so small. But we’ll hang something up there directly and it will be all right,” added the old man, and on the plea of seeing about a curtain, but mainly because he was in a hurry to give an account of the officers, he bowed and left the room.

The pretty Ustyushka came in with her mistress’s shawl to cover the window, and besides, the mistress had told her to ask if the gentlemen would not like some tea.

The pleasant surrounds seemed to have a good influence on the count’s spirits. He smiled merrily, joked with Ustyushka in such a way that she even called him a scamp, asked whether her young lady was pretty, and in answer to her question whether they would have any tea he said she might bring them some tea, but the chief thing was that, their own supper not being ready yet, perhaps they might have some vodka and something to eat, and some sherry if there was any.

The uncle was in raptures over the young count’s politeness and praised the new generation of officers to the skies, saying that the present men were incomparable superior to the former generation.

Anna Fedorovna did not agree-no one could be superior to Count Fedor Ivanych Turbin-and at last she grew seriously angry and drily remarked, “The one who has last stroked you, brother, is always the best. . . . Of course people are cleverer nowadays, but Count Fedor Ivanych danced the *ecossaise* in such a way and was so amiable that everybody lost their heads about him, though he paid attention to no one but me. So you see, there were good people in the old days too.”

Here came the news of the demand for vodka, light refreshments, and sherry.

"There now, brother, you never do the right thing; you should have ordered supper," began Anna Fedorovna. "Lisa, see to it, dear!"

Lisa ran to the larder to get some pickled mushrooms and fresh butter, and the cook was ordered to make rissoles.

"But how about sherry? Have you any left, brother?"

"No, sister, I never had any."

"How's that? Why, what is it you take with your tea?"

"That's rum, Anna Fedorovna."

"Isn't it all the same? Give me some of that-it's all the same. But wouldn't it after all be best to ask them in here, brother? You know all about it-I don't think they would take offence."

The cavalryman declared he would warrant that the count was too good-natured to refuse and that he would certainly fetch them. Anna Fedorovna went and put on a silk dress and a new cap for some reason, but Lisa was so busy that she had no time to change her pink gingham dress with the wide sleeves. Besides, she was terribly excited; she felt as if something wonderful was awaiting her and as if a low black cloud hung over her soul. It seemed to her that this handsome hussar count must be a perfectly new, incomprehensible, but beautiful being. His character, his habits, his speech must all be so unusual, so different from anything she had ever met. All he thinks or says must be wise and right; all he does must be honourable; his whole appearance must be beautiful. She never doubted that. Had he asked not merely for refreshments and sherry but for a bath of sage-brandy and perfume, she would not have been surprised and would not have blamed him but would have been firmly convinced that it was right and necessary.

The count at once agreed when the cavalryman informed them of his sister's wish. He brushed his hair, put on his uniform, and took his cigar-case.

"Come along," he said to Polozov.

"Really it would be better not to go," answered the cornet. "Ils feront des frais pour nous recevoir." Footnote: They will be putting themselves to expense on our account.

"Nonsense, they will be only too happy! Besides, I have made some inquiries: there is a pretty daughter. . . . Come along!" said the count, speaking in French.

"Je vous en prie, messieurs!" Footnote: If you please, gentlemen. said the cavalryman, merely to make the officers feel that he also knew French and had understood what they had said.

Chapter 12

Lisa, afraid to look at the officers, blushed and cast down her eyes and pretended to be busy filling the teapot when they entered the room. Anna Fedorovna on the contrary jumped up hurriedly, bowed, and not taking her eyes off the count, began

talking to him-now saying how unusually like his father he was, now introducing her daughter to him, now offering him tea, jam, or home-made sweetmeats. No one paid any attention to the cornet because of his modest appearance, and he was very glad of it, for he was, as far as propriety allowed, gazing at Lisa and minutely examining her beauty which evidently took him by surprise. The uncle, listening to his sister's conversation with the count, awaited, with the words ready on his lips, an opportunity to narrate his cavalry reminiscences. During tea the count lit a cigar and Lisa found it difficult to prevent herself from coughing. He was very talkative and amiable, at first slipping his stories into the intervals of Anna Fedorovna's ever-flowing speech, but at last monopolizing the conversation. One thing struck his hearers as strange; in his stories he often used words not considered improper in the society he belonged to, but which here sounded rather too bold and somewhat frightened Anna Fedorovna and made Lisa blush to her ears, but the count did not notice it and remained calmly natural and amiable.

Lisa silently filled the tumblers, which she did not give into the visitors' hands but placed on the table near them, not having quite recovered from her excitement, and she listened eagerly to the count's remarks. His stories, which were not very deep, and the hesitation in his speech gradually calmed her. She did not hear from him the very clever things she had expected, nor did she see that elegance in everything which she had vaguely expected to find in him. At the third glass of tea, after her bashful eyes had once met his and he had not looked down but had continued to look at her too quietly and with a slight smile, she even felt rather inimically disposed towards him and soon found that not only was there nothing especial about him but that he was in no wise different from other people she had met, that there was no need to be afraid of him though his nails were long and clean, and there was not even any special beauty in him. Lisa suddenly relinquished her dream, not without some inward pain, and grew calmer, and only the gaze of the taciturn cornet which she felt fixed upon her, disquieted her.

"Perhaps it's not this one, but that one!" she thought.

Chapter 13

After tea the old lady asked the visitors into the drawing-room and again sat down in her old place.

"But wouldn't you like to rest, Count?" she asked, and after receiving an answer in the negative continued, "What can I do to entertain our dear guests? Do you play cards, Count? There now, brother, you should arrange something; arrange a set-"

"But you yourself play *preference*," answered the cavalryman. "Why not all play? Will you play, Count? And you too?"

The officers expressed their readiness to do whatever their kind hosts desired.

Lisa brought her old pack of cards which she used for divining when her mother's swollen face would get well, whether her uncle would return the same day when he went to town, whether a neighbour would call today, and so on. These cards, though she had used them for a couple of months, were cleaner than those Anna Fedorovna used to tell fortunes.

"But perhaps you won't play for small stakes?" inquired the uncle. "Anna Fedorovna and I play for half-kopeks. . . . And even so she wins all our money."

"Oh, any stakes you like-I shall be delighted," replied the count.

"Well then, one-kopek 'assignats' just for once, in honour of our dear visitors! Let them beat me, an old woman!" said Anna Fedorovna, settling down in her armchair and arranging her mantilla. "And perhaps I'll win a ruble or so from them," thought she, having developed a slight passion for cards in her old age.

"If you like, I'll teach you to play with 'tables' and *misere*," said the count. "It is capital."

Everyone liked the new Petersburg way. The uncle was even sure he knew it; it was just the same as "boston" used to be, only he had forgotten it a bit. But Anna Fedorovna could not understand it at all and failed to understand it for so long that at last, with a smile and nod of approval, she felt herself obliged to assert that now she understood it and that all was quite clear to her. There was not a little laughter during the game when Anna Fedorovna, holding ace and king blank, declared *misere* and was left with six tricks. She even became confused and began to smile shyly and hurriedly explain that she had not got quite used to the new way. But they scored against her all the same, especially as the count, being used to playing a careful game for high stakes, was cautious, skillfully played through his opponents' hands, and refused to understand the shoves the cornet gave him under the table with his foot or the mistakes the latter made when they were partners.

Lisa brought more sweets, three kinds of jam, and some specially prepared apples that had been kept since last season and stood behind her mother's back watching the game and occasionally looking at the officers and especially at the count's white hands with their rosy well-kept nails which threw the cards and took up the tricks in so practised, assured, and elegant a manner.

Again Anna Fedorovna, rather irritably outbidding the others, declared seven tricks, made only four, and was fined accordingly, and having very clumsily noted down, on her brother's demand, the points she had lost, became quite confused and fluttered.

"Never mind, mamma, you'll win it back!" smilingly remarked Lisa, wishing to help her mother out of the ridiculous situation. "Let uncle make a forfeit, and then he'll be caught."

"If you would only help me, Lisa dear!" said Anna Fedorovna, with a frightened glance at her daughter. "I don't know how this is ... "

"But I don't know this way either," Lisa answered, mentally reckoning up her mother's losses. "You will lose a lot that way, mamma! There will be nothing left for Pimochka's new dress," she added in just.

“Yes, this way one may easily lose ten silver rubles,” said the cornet looking at Lisa and anxious to enter into conversation with her.

“Aren’t we playing for assignats?” said Anna Fedorovna, looking round at them all.

“I don’t know how we are playing, but I can’t reckon in assignats,” said the count. “What is it? I mean, what are assignats?”

“Why nowadays nobody counts in assignats any longer,” remarked the uncle, who had played very cautiously and had been winning.

The old lady ordered some sparkling home-made wine to be brought, drank two glasses, became very red, and seemed to resign herself to any fate. A lock of her grey hair escaped from under her cap and she did not even put it right. No doubt it seemed to her as if she had lost millions and it was all up with her. The cornet touched the count with his foot more and more often. The count scored down the old lady’s losses. At last the game ended, and in spite of Anna Fedorovna’s attempts to add to her score by pretending to make mistakes in adding it up, in spite of her horror at the amount of her losses, it turned out at last that she had lost 920 points. “That’s nine assignats?” she asked several times and did not comprehend the full extent of her loss until her brother told her, to her horror, that she had lost more than thirty-two assignats and that she must certainly pay.

The count did not even add up his winnings but rose immediately the game was over, went over to the window at which Lisa was arranging the

- zakushka* and turning pickled mushrooms out of a jar onto a plate for

supper, and there quite quietly and simply did what the cornet had all that evening so longed, but failed, to do-entered into conversation with her about the weather.

Meanwhile the cornet was in a very unpleasant position. In the absence of the count, and more especially of Lisa, who had been keeping her in good humour, Anna Fedorovna became frankly angry.

“Really, it’s too bad that we should win from you like this,” said Polozov in order to say something. “It is a real shame!”

“Well, of course, if you go and invent some kind of ‘tables’ and ‘*miseres*’ and I don’t know how to play them. ... Well then, how much does it come to in assignats?” she asked.

“Thirty-two rubles, thirty-two and a quarter,” repeated the cavalryman, who under the influence of his success was in a playful mood. “Hand over the money, sister; pay up!”

“I’ll pay it all, but you won’t catch me again. No! ... I shall not win this back as long as I live.”

And Anna Fedorovna went off to her room, hurriedly swaying from side to side, and came back bringing nine assignats. It was only on the old man’s insistent demand that she eventually paid the whole amount.

Polozov was seized with fear lest Anna Fedorovna should scold him if he spoke to her. He silently and quietly left her and joined the count and Lisa who were talking at the open window.

On the table spread for supper stood two tallow candles. Now and then the soft fresh breath of the May night caused the flames to flicker. Outside the window, which opened onto the garden, it was also light but it was a quite different light. The moon, which was almost full and already losing its golden tinge, floated above the tops of the tall lindens and more and more lit up the thin white clouds which veiled it at intervals. Frogs were croaking loudly by the pond, the surface of which, silvered in one place by the moon, was visible through the avenue. Some little birds fluttered slightly or lightly hopped from bough to bough in a sweet-scented lilac-bush whose dewy branches occasionally swayed gently close to the window.

"What wonderful weather!" the count said as he approached Lisa and sat down on the low window-sill. "I suppose you walk a good deal?"

"Yes," said Lisa, not feeling the least shyness in speaking with the count. "In the morning about seven o'clock I look after what hs to be attended to on the estate and take my mother's ward, Pimochka, with me for a walk."

"It is pleasant to live in the country!" said the count, putting his eye-glass to his eye and looking now at the garden, now at Lisa. "And don't you ever go out at night, by moonlight?"

"No. But two years ago uncle and I used to walk every moonlight night. He was troubled with a strange complaint-insomnia. When there was a full moon he could not fall asleep. His little room-that one-looks straight out into the garden, the window is low but the moon shines straight into it."

"That's strange: I thought that was your room," said the count.

"No. I only sleep there tonight. You have my room."

"Is it possible? Dear me, I shall never forgive myself for having disturbed you in such a way!" said the count, letting the monocle fall from his eye in proof of the sincerity of his feelings. "If I had known that I was troubling you ... "

"It's no trouble! On the contrary I am very glad: uncle's is such a charming room, so bright, and the window is so low. I shall sit there till I fall asleep, or else I shall climb out into the garden and walk about a bit before going to bed."

"What a splendid girl!" thought the count, replacing his eyeglass and looking at her and trying to touch her foot with his own while pretending to seat himself more comfortably on the window-sill. "And how cleverly she has let me know that I may see her in the garden at the window if I like!" Lisa even lost much of her charm in his eyes-the conquest seemed too easy.

"And how delightful it must be," he said, looking thoughtfully at the dark avenue of trees, "to spend a night like this in the garden with a beloved one."

Lisa was embarrassed by these words and by the repeated, seemingly accidental touch of his foot. Anxious to hide her confusion she said without thinking, "Yes, it is nice to walk in the moonlight." She was beginning to feel rather uncomfortable. She had tied up the jar out of which she had taken the mushrooms and was going away from the window, when the cornet joined them and she felt a wish to see what kind of man he was.

"What a lovely night!" he said.

"Why, they talk of nothing but the weather," thought Lisa.

"What a wonderful view!" continued the cornet. "But I suppose you are tired of it," he added, having a curious propensity to say rather unpleasant things to people he liked very much.

"Why do you think so? The same kind of food or the same dress one may get tired of, but not of a beautiful garden if one is fond of walking-especially when the moon is still higher. From uncle's window the whole pond can be seen. I shall look at it tonight."

"But I don't think you have any nightingales?" said the count, much dissatisfied that the cornet had come and prevented his ascertaining more definitely the terms of the rendezvous.

"No, but there always were until last year when some sportsman caught one, and this year one began to sing beautifully only last week but the police-officer came here and his carriage-bells frightened it away. Two years ago uncle and I used to sit in the covered alley and listen to them for two hours or more at a time."

"What is this chatterbox telling you?" said her uncle, coming up to them. "Won't you come and have something to eat?"

After supper, during which the count by praising the food and by his appetite has somewhat dispelled the hostess's ill humour, the officers said good-night and went into their room. The count shook hands with the uncle and to Anna Fedorovna's surprise shook her hand also without kissing it, and even shook Lisa's, looking straight into her eyes the while and slightly smiling his pleasant smile. This look again abashed the girl.

"He is very good-looking," she thought, "but he thinks too much of himself."

Chapter 14

"I say, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" said Polozov when they were in their room. "I purposely tried to lose and kept touching you under the table. Aren't you ashamed? The old lady was quite upset, you know."

The count laughed very heartily.

"She was awfully funny, that old lady. ... How offended she was! ... "

And he again began laughing so merrily that even Johann, who stood in front of him, cast down his eyes and turned away with a slight smile.

"And with the son of a friend of the family! Ha-ha-ha! ... " the count continued to laugh.

"No, really it was too bad. I was quite sorry for her," said the cornet.

"What nonsense! How young you still are! Why, did you wish me to lose? Why should one lose? I used to lose before I knew how to play! Ten rubles may come in

useful, my dear fellow. You must look at life practically or you'll always be left in the lurch."

Polozov was silenced; besides, he wished to be quiet and to think about Lisa, who seemed to him an unusually pure and beautiful creature. He undressed and lay down in the soft clean bed prepared for him.

"What nonsense all this military honour and glory is!" he thought, looking at the window curtained by the shawl through which the white moonbeams stole in. "It would be happiness to live in a quiet nook with a dear, wise, simple-hearted wife-yes, that is true and lasting happiness!"

But for some reason he did not communicate these reflections to his friend and did not even refer to the country lass, though he was convinced that the count too was thinking of her.

"Why don't you undress?" he asked the count who was walking up and down the room.

"I don't feel sleepy yet, somehow. You can put out the candle if you like. I shall lie down as I am."

And he continued to pace up and down.

"Don't feel sleepy yet somehow," repeated Polozov, who after this last evening felt more dissatisfied than ever with the count's influence over him and was inclined to rebel against it. "I can imagine," he thought, addressing himself mentally to Turbin, "what is now passing through that well-brushed head of yours! I saw how you admired her. But you are not capable of understanding such a simple honest creature: you want a Mina and a colonel's epaulettes. ... I really must ask him how he liked her."

And Polozov turned towards him-but changed his mind. He felt he would not be able to hold his own with the count, if the latter's opinion of Lisa were what he supposed it to be, and that he would even be unable to avoid agreeing with him, so accustomed was he to bow to the count's influence, which he felt more and more every day to be oppressive and unjust.

"Where are you going?" he asked, when the count put on his cap and went to the door.

"I'm going to see if things are all right in the stables."

"Strange!" thought the cornet, but put out the candle and turned over on his other side, trying to drive away the absurdly jealous and hostile thoughts that crowded into his head concerning his former friend.

Anna Fedorovna meanwhile, having as usual kissed her brother, daughter, and ward and made the sign of the cross over each of them, had also retired to her room. It was long since the old lady had experienced so many strong impressions in one day and she could not even pray quietly: she could not rid herself of the sad and vivid memories of the deceased count and of the young dandy who had plundered her so unmercifully. However, she undressed as usual, drank half a tumbler of *kvas* that stood ready for her on a little table by her bed, and lay down. Her favourite cat crept softly into the room.

Anna Fedorovna called her up and began to stroke her and listen to her purring but could not fall asleep.

"It's the cat that keeps me awake," she thought and drove her away. The cat fell softly on the floor and gently moving her bushy tail leapt onto the stove. And now the maid, who always slept in Anna Fedorovna's room, came and spread the piece of felt that served her for a mattress, put out the candle, and lit the lamp before the icon. At last the maid began to snore, but still sleep would not come to soothe Anna Fedorovna's excited imagination. When she closed her eyes the hussar's face appeared to her, and she seemed to see it in the room in various guises when she opened her eyes and by the dim light of the lamp looked at the chest of drawers, the table, or a white dress that was hanging up. Now she felt very hot on the feather bed, now her watch ticked unbearably on the little table, and the maid snored unendurably through her nose. She woke her up and told her not to snore. Again thoughts of her daughter, of the old count and the young one, and of the

- preference*, became curiously mixed in her head. Now she saw herself

waltzing with the old count, saw her own round white shoulders, felt someone's kisses on them, and then saw her daughter in the arms of the young count. Ustyushka again began to snore.

"No, people are not the same nowadays. The other one was ready to leap into the fire for me-and not without cause. But this one is sleeping like a fool, no fear, glad to have won-no love-making about him. ... How the other one said on his knees, 'What do you wish me to do? I'll kill myself on the spot, or do anything you like!' And he would have killed himself had I told him to."

Suddenly she heard a patter of bare feet in the passage and Lisa, with a shawl thrown over, ran in pale and trembling and almost fell onto her mother's bed.

After saying good-night to her mother that evening Lisa had gone alone to the room her uncle generally slept in. She put on a white dressing-jacket and covered her long thick plait with a kerchief, extinguished the candle, opened the window, and sat down on a chair, drawing her feet up and fixing her pensive eyes on the pond now all glittering in the silvery light.

All her accustomed occupations and interests suddenly appeared to her in a new light: her capricious old mother, uncritical love for whom had become part of her soul; her decrepit but amiable old uncle; the domestic and village serfs who worshipped their young mistress; the milch cows and the calves, and all this Nature which had died and been renewed so many times and amid which she had grown up loving and beloved-all this that had given such light and pleasant tranquillity to her soul suddenly seemed unsatisfactory; it seemed dull and unnecessary. It was as if someone had said to her: "Little fool, little fool, for twenty years you have been trifling, serving someone without knowing why, and without knowing what life and happiness are!" As she gazed into the depths of the moonlit, motionless garden she thought this more intensely, far more intensely, than ever before. And what caused these thoughts? Not any sudden love for the count as one might have supposed. On the contrary, she did not like him. She could

have been interested in the cornet more easily, but he was plain, poor fellow, and silent. She kept involuntarily forgetting him and recalling the image of the count with anger and annoyance. "No, that's not it," she said to herself. Her ideal had been so beautiful. It was an ideal that could have been loved on such a night amid this nature without impairing its beauty-an ideal never abridged to fit it to some coarse reality.

Formerly, solitude and the absence of anyone who might have attracted her attention had caused the power of love, which Providence has given impartially to each of us, to rest intact and tranquil in her bosom, and now she had lived too long in the melancholy happiness of feeling within her the presence of this something, and of now and again opening the secret chalice of her heart to contemplate its riches, to be able to lavish its contents thoughtlessly on anyone. God grant she may enjoy to her grave this chary bliss! Who knows whether it be not the best and strongest, and whether it is not the only true and possible happiness?

"O Lord my God," she thought, "can it be that I have lost my youth and happiness in vain and that it will never be ... never be? Can that be true?" And she looked into the depths of the sky lit up by the moon and covered by light fleecy clouds that, veiling the stars, crept nearer to the moon. "If that highest white cloudlet touches the moon it will be a sign that it is true," thought she. The mist-like smoky strip ran across the bottom half of the bright disk and little by little the light on the grass, on the tops of the limes, and on the pond, grew dimmer and the black shadows of the trees grew less distinct. As if to harmonize with the gloomy shadows that spread over the world outside, a light wind ran through the leaves and brought to the window the odour of dewy leaves, of moist earth, and of blooming lilacs.

"But it is not true," she consoled herself. "There now, if the nightingale sings tonight it will be a sign that what I'm thinking is all nonsense, and that I need not despair," thought she. And she sat a long while in silence waiting for something, while again all became bright and full of life and again and again the cloudlets ran across the moon making everything dim. She was beginning to fall asleep as she sat by the window, when the quivering trills of a nightingale came ringing from below across the pond and awoke her. The country maiden opened her eyes. And once more her soul was renewed with fresh joy by its mysterious union with Nature which spread out so calmly and brightly before her. She leant on both arms. A sweet, languid sensation of sadness oppressed her heart, and tears of pure wide-spreading love, thirsting to be satisfied-good comforting tears-filled her eyes. She folded her arms on the window-sill and laid her head on them. Her favourite prayer rose to her mind and she fell asleep with her eyes still moist.

The touch of someone's hand aroused her. She awoke. But the touch was light and pleasant. The hand pressed hers more closely. Suddenly she became alive to reality, screamed, jumped up, and trying to persuade herself that she had not recognized the count who was standing under the window bathed in the moonlight, she ran out of the room. ...

Chapter 15

And it really was the count. When he heard the girl's cry and a husky sound from the watchman behind the fence, who had been roused by that cry, he rushed headlong across the wet dewy grass into the depths of the garden feeling like a detected thief. "Fool that I am!" he repeated unconsciously, "I frightened her. I ought to have aroused her gently by speaking to her. Awkward brute that I am!" He stopped and listened: the watchman came into the garden through the gateway, dragging his stick along the sandy path. It was necessary to hide and the count went down by the pond. The frogs made him start as they plumped from beneath his feet into the water. Though his boots were wet through, he squatted down and began to recall all that he had done: how he had climbed the fence, looked for her window, and at last espied a white shadow; how, listening to the faintest rustle, he had several times approached the window and gone back again; how at one moment he felt sure she was waiting, vexed at his tardiness, and the next, that it was impossible she should so readily agreed to a rendezvous; how at last, persuading himself that it was only the bashfulness of a country-bred girl that made her pretend to be asleep, he went up resolutely and distinctly saw how she sat but then for some reason ran away again and only after severely taunting himself for cowardice boldly drew near to her and touched her hand.

The watchman again made a husky sound and the gate creaked as he left the garden. The girl's window was slammed to and a shutter fastened from inside. This was very provoking. The count would have given a good deal for a chance to begin all over again; he would not have acted so stupidly now. ... "And she is a wonderful girl-so fresh-quite charming! And I have let her slip through my fingers. ... Awkward fool that I am!" He did not want to sleep now and went at random, with the firm tread of one who has been crossed, along the covered lime-tree avenue.

And here the night brought to him all its peaceful gifts of soothing sadness and the need of love. The straight pale beams of the moon threw spots of light through the thick foliage of the limes onto the clay path, where a few blades of grass grew or a dead branch lay here and there. The light falling on one side of a bent bough made it seem as if covered with white moss. The silvered leaves whispered now and then. There were no lights in the house and all was silent; the voice of the nightingale alone seemed to fill the bright, still, limitless space. "O God, what a night! What a wonderful night!" thought the count, inhaling the fragrant freshness of the garden. "Yet I feel a kind of regret-as if I were discontented with myself and with others, discontented with life generally. A splendid, sweet girl! Perhaps she was really hurt. ... " Here his dreams became mixed: he imagined himself in this garden with the country-bred girl in various extraordinary situations. Then the role of the girl was taken by his beloved Mina. "Eh, what a fool I was! I ought simply to have caught her round the waist and kissed her." And regretting that he had not done so, the count returned to his room.

The cornet was still awake. He at once turned in his bed and faced the count.

"Not asleep yet?" asked the count.

"No."

"Shall I tell you what has happened?"

"Well?"

"No, I'd better not, or ... all right, I'll tell you-draw in your legs."

And the count, having mentally abandoned the intrigue that had miscarried, sat down on his comrade's bed with an animated smile.

"Would you believe it, that young lady gave me a rendezvous!"

"What are you saying?" cried Polozov, jumping out of bed.

"No, but listen."

"But how? When? It's impossible!"

"Why, while you were adding up after we had played *preference*, she told me she would be at the window in the night and that one could get in at the window. There, you see what it is to be practical! While you were calculating with the old woman, I arranged that little matter. Why, you heard her say in your presence that she would sit by the window tonight and look at the pond."

"Yes, but she didn't mean anything of the kind."

"Well, that's just what I can't make out: did she say it intentionally or not? Maybe she didn't really wish to agree so suddenly, but it looked very like it. It turned out horribly. I quiet played the fool," he added, smiling contemptuously at himself.

"What do you mean? Where have you been?"

The count, omitting his manifold irresolute approaches, related everything as it had happened.

"I spoilt it myself: I ought to have been bolder. She screamed and ran from the window."

"So she screamed and ran away," said the cornet, smiling uneasily in answer to the count's smile, which for such a long time had had so strong an influence over him.

"Yes, but it's time to go to sleep."

The cornet again turned his back to the door and lay silent for about ten minutes. Heaven knows what went on in his soul, but when he turned again, his face bore an expression of suffering and resolve.

"Count Turbin!" he said abruptly.

"Are you delirious?" quietly replied the count. "What is it, Cornet Polozov?"

"Count Turbin, you are a scoundrel!" cried Polozov and again jumped out of bed.

Chapter 16

The squadron left next day. The two officers did not see their hosts again and did not bid them farewell. Neither did they speak to one another. They intended to fight a duel at the first halting-place. But Captain Schulz, a good comrade and splendid horseman, beloved by everyone in the regiment and chosen by the count to act as his second, managed to settle the affair so well that not only did they not fight but no

one in the regiment knew anything about the matter, and Turbin and Polozov, though no longer on the old friendly footing, still continued to speak in familiar terms to one another and to meet at dinners and card-parties.

Lucerne

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole 1905

FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS OF PRINCE NEKHLIUDOF

July 20, 1857.

Yesterday evening I arrived at Lucerne, and put up at the best inn there, the Schweitzerhof. "Lucerne, the chief city of the canton, situated on the shore of the Vierwaldstatter See," says Murray, "is one of the most romantic places of Switzerland: here cross three important highways, and it is only an hour's distance by steamboat to Mount Righi, from which is obtained one of the most magnificent views in the world."

Whether that be true or no, other guides say the same thing, and consequently at Lucerne there are throngs of travelers of all nationalities, especially the English.

The magnificent five-storied building of the Hotel Schweitzerhof is situated on the quay, at the very edge of the lake, where in olden times there used to be the crooked covered wooden bridge with chapels on the corners and pictures on the roof. Now, thanks to the tremendous inroad of Englishmen, with their necessities, their tastes, and their money, they have torn down the old bridge, and in its place erected a granite quay, straight as a stick. On the quay they have built straight, quadrangular five-storied houses; in front of the houses they have set out two rows of lindens and provided them with supports, and between the lindens is the usual supply of green benches.

This is the promenade; and here back and forth stroll the Englishwomen in their Swiss straw hats, and the Englishmen in simple and comfortable attire, and rejoice in their work. Possibly these quays and houses and lindens and Englishmen would be excellent in their way anywhere else, but here they seem discordant amid this strangely magnificent, and at the same time indescribably harmonious and smiling nature.

As soon as I went up to my room, and opened the window facing the lake, the beauty of the sheet of water, of the mountains, and of the sky, at the first moment literally dazzled and overwhelmed me. I experienced an inward unrest, and the necessity of expressing in some manner the feelings that suddenly filled my soul to overflowing. I felt a desire to embrace, powerfully to embrace, some one, to tickle him, or to pinch him; in short to do to him and to myself something extraordinary.

It was seven o'clock in the evening. The rain had been falling all day, but now it had cleared.

The lake, iridescent as melted sulphur, and dotted with boats, which left behind them vanishing trails, spread out before my windows smooth, motionless as it were, between the variegated green shores. Farther away it was contracted between two monstrous headlands, and, darkling, set itself against and disappeared behind a confused pile of mountains, clouds, and glaciers. In the foreground stretched a panorama of moist, fresh green shores, with reeds, meadows, gardens, and villas. Farther away, the dark green wooded heights, crowned with the ruins of feudal castles; in the background, the rolling, pale lilac-colored vista of mountains, with fantastic peaks built up of crags and pallid snow-capped summits. And everything was bathed in a fresh, transparent azure atmosphere, and kindled by the warm rays of the setting sun, bursting forth through the riven skies.

Not on the lake or on the mountains or in the skies was there a single completed line, a single unmixed color, a single moment of repose; everywhere motion, irregularity, fantasy, endless conglomeration and variety of shades and lines; and above all, a calm, a softness, a unity, and the inevitability of beauty.

And here amid this indeterminate, kaleidoscopic, unfettered loveliness, before my very window, stretched stupidly, compelling the gaze, the white line of the quay, the lindens with their supports, and the green seats, — miserable, tasteless creations of human ingenuity, not subordinated, like the distant villas and ruins, to the general harmony of the beautiful scene, but on the contrary brutally opposed to it...

Constantly, though against my will, my eyes were attracted to that horribly straight line of the quay; and mentally I should have liked to get rid of it, to demolish it like a black spot which should disfigure the nose beneath one's eye.

But the quay with the sauntering Englishmen remained where it was, and I involuntarily tried to find a point of view where it would be out of my sight. I succeeded in finding such a view; and till dinner was ready I took delight, alone by myself in this incomplete and therefore the more enjoyable feeling of oppression that one experiences in the solitary contemplation of natural beauty.

About half-past seven I was called to dinner. Two long tables, accommodating at least a hundred persons, were spread in the great, magnificently decorated dining-room on the first floor. The silent gathering of the guests lasted three minutes, — the rustle of women's gowns, the soft steps, the softly spoken words addressed to the courtly and elegant waiters. And all the places were occupied by ladies and gentlemen dressed elegantly, even richly, and for the most part in perfect taste.

As is apt to be the case in Switzerland, the majority of the guests were English, and this gave the ruling characteristics of the common table: that is, a strict decorum regarded as an obligation, a reserve founded not in pride but in the absence of any necessity for social relationship, and finally a uniform sense of satisfaction felt by each in the comfortable and agreeable gratification of his wants.

On all sides gleamed the whitest laces, the whitest collars, the whitest teeth, — natural and artificial, — the whitest complexions and hands. But the faces, many of which were very handsome, bore the expression merely of individual prosperity, and absolute absence of interest in all that surrounded them unless it bore directly on their own individual selves; and the white hands, glittering with rings or protected by mitts, moved only for the purpose of straightening collars, cutting meat, or filling wine-glasses; no soul-felt emotion was betrayed in these actions.

Occasionally members of some one family would exchange remarks in subdued voices, about the excellence of such and such a dish or wine, or about the beauty of the view from Mount Righi.

Individual tourists, whether men or women, sat beside one another in silence, and did not even seem to see one another. If it happened occasionally that, out of this five-score human beings, two spoke to each other, the topic of their conversation was certain to be the weather, or the ascent of the Righi.

Knives and forks scarcely rattled on the plates, so perfect was the observance of propriety; and no one dared to convey peas and vegetables to the mouth otherwise than on the fork. The waiters, involuntarily subdued by the universal silence, asked in a whisper what wine you would be pleased to order.

Such dinners always depress me: I dislike them, and before they are over I become blue. It always seems to me as if I had done something wrong; just as when I was a boy I was set upon a chair in consequence of some naughtiness and bidden ironically, "Now rest a little while, my dear young fellow." And all the time my young blood was pulsing through my veins, and in the other room I could hear the merry shouts of my brothers.

I used to try to rebel against this feeling of being choked down, which I experienced at such dinners, but in vain. All these dead-and-alive faces have an irresistible influence over me, and I myself become also as one dead. I have no desires, I have no thoughts; I do not even observe.

At first I attempted to enter into conversation with my neighbors; but I got no response beyond the phrases which had probably been repeated in that place a hundred thousand times, a hundred thousand times by the same persons.

And yet these people were by no means all stupid and feelingless; but evidently many of them, though they seemed so dead, led self-centered lives, just as I did, and in many cases far more complicated and interesting ones than my own. Why, then, should they deprive themselves of one of the greatest enjoyments of life, — the enjoyment that comes from the intercourse of man with man?

How different it used to be in our pension at Paris, where twenty of us, belonging to as many different nationalities, professions, and individualities, met together at a common table, and, under the influence of the Gallic sociability, found the keenest zest!

There, immediately, from one end of the table to the other, the conversation, sandwiched with witticisms and puns, though often in a broken speech, became general. There every one, without being solicitous for the proprieties, said whatever came into his head. There we had our own philosopher, our own disputant, our own bel esprit, our own butt, — all common property.

There, immediately after dinner, we would move the table to one side, and, without paying too much attention to rhythm, take to dancing the polka on the dusty carpet, and often keep it up till evening. There, though we were rather flirtatious, and not overwise or dignified, still we were human beings.

And the Spanish countess with romantic proclivities, and the Italian abbate, who insisted on declaiming from the "Divine Comedy" after dinner, and the American doctor who had the entrée into the Tuileries, and the young dramatic author with his long hair, and the pianist who, according to her own account, had composed the best polka in existence, and the unhappy widow who was a beauty, and wore three rings on every finger, — all of us enjoyed this society, which, though somewhat superficial, was

human and pleasant. And we each carried away from it hearty recollections of the others, superficial or serious, as the case might be.

But at these English table-d'hote dinners, as I look at all these laces, ribbons, jewels, pomaded locks, and silken gowns, I often think how many living women would be happy, and would make others happy, with these adornments.

Strange to think how many friends and lovers — most fortunate friends and lovers — are, perhaps, sitting side by side without knowing it! And God knows why they never come to this knowledge, and never give each other this happiness, which they might so easily give, and which they so long for.

I began to feel depressed, as usual, after such a dinner; and, without waiting for dessert, I sallied out in the most gloomy frame of mind for a constitutional through the city. My melancholy frame of mind was not relieved, but was rather confirmed, by the narrow, muddy streets without lanterns, the shuttered shops, the encounters with drunken workmen, and with women hastening after water, or in bonnets, glancing around them as they glided down the alleys or along the walls.

It was perfectly dark in the streets when I returned to the hotel without casting a glance about me, or having an idea in my head. I hoped that sleep would put an end to my melancholy. I experienced that horrible spiritual chill, loneliness, and heaviness, which sometimes, without any reason, beset those who are just arrived in any new place.

Looking down at my feet, I walked along the quay to the Schweitzerhof, when suddenly my ear was struck by the strains of a peculiar but thoroughly agreeable and sweet music.

These strains had an immediately enlivening effect on me. It was as if a bright, cheerful light had poured into my soul. I felt contented, gay. My slumbering attention was awakened again to all surrounding objects; and the beauty of the night and the lake, to which, till then, I had been indifferent, suddenly came over me with quickening force like something new.

I involuntarily took in at a glance the dark sky with gray clouds flecking its deep blue, now lighted by the rising moon, the glassy, dark green lake, with its surface reflecting the lighted windows, and far away the snowy mountains; and I heard the croaking of the frogs over on the Froschenburg shore, and the dewy fresh call of the quail.

Directly in front of me, in the spot whence the sounds of music had first come, and which still especially attracted my attention, I saw, amid the semi-darkness on the street, a throng of people standing in a semicircle, and in front of the crowd, at a little distance, a small man in dark clothes.

Behind the throng and the man, there stood out harmouniously against the blue, ragged sky, gray and blue, the black tops of a few Lombardy poplars in some garden, and, rising majestically on high, the two stern spires that stand on the towers of the ancient cathedral.

I drew nearer, and the strains became more distinct. At some distance I could clearly distinguish the full accords of a guitar, sweetly swelling in the evening air, and several voices, which, while taking turns with one another, did not sing any definite theme, but gave suggestions of one in places wherever the melody was most pronounced.

The theme was in somewhat the nature of a mazurka, sweet and graceful. The voices sounded now near at hand, now far distant; now a bass was heard, now a tenor, now a falsetto such as the Tyrolese warblers are wont to sing.

It was not a song, but the graceful, masterly sketch of a song. I could not comprehend what it was, but it was beautiful.

Those voluptuous, soft chords of the guitar, that sweet, gentle melody, that solitary figure of the man in black, amid the fantastic environment of the dark lake, the gleaming moon, and the twin spires of the cathedral rising in majestic silence, and the black tops of the poplars, — all was strange and perfectly beautiful, or at least seemed so to me.

All the confused, arbitrary impressions of life suddenly became full of meaning and beauty. It seemed to me as if a fresh fragrant flower had sprung up in my soul. In place of the weariness, dullness, and indifference toward everything in the world, which I had been feeling the moment before, I experienced a necessity for love, a fullness of hope, and an unbounded enjoyment of life.

"What does thou desire, what doest thou long for?" an inner voice seemed to say. "Here it is. Thou art surrounded on all sides by beauty and poetry. Breathe it in, in full, deep draughts, as long as thou hast strength. Enjoy it to the full extent of thy capacity 'T is all thine, all blessed!" ...

I drew nearer. The little man was, as it seemed, a traveling Tyrolese. He stood before the windows of the hotel, one leg advanced, his head thrown back; and, as he thrummed on the guitar, he sang his graceful song in all those different voices.

I immediately felt an affection for this man, and a gratefulness for the change which he had brought about in me.

The singer, as far as I was able to judge, was dressed in an old black coat. He had short black hair, and he wore a civilian's hat which was no longer new. There was nothing artistic in his attire, but his clever and youthfully gay motions and pose, together with his diminutive stature, formed a pleasing and at the same time pathetic spectacle.

On the steps, in the windows, and on the balconies of the brilliantly lighted hotel, stood ladies handsomely decorated and attired, gentlemen with polished collars, porters and lackeys in gold-embroidered liveries; in the street, in the semicircle of the crowd, and farther along on the sidewalk, among the lindens, were gathered groups of well-dressed waiters, cooks in white caps and aprons, and young girls wandering about with arms about each others' waists.

All, it seemed, were under the influence of the same feeling as I myself experienced. All stood in silence around the singer, and listened attentively. Silence reigned, except in the pauses of the song, when there came from far away across the waters the regular

click of a hammer, and from the Froschenburg shore rang in fascinating, monotone the voices of the frogs, interrupted by the mellow, monotonous call of the quail.

The little man in the darkness, in the midst of the street, poured out his heart like a nighingale, in couplet after couplet, song after song. Though I had come close to him, his singing continued to give me greater and greater gratification.

His voice, which was of great power, was extremely pleasant and tender; the taste and feeling for rhythm which he displayed in the control of it were extraordinary, and proved that he had great natural gifts.

After he sung each couplet, he invariably repeated the theme in variation, and it was evident that all his graceful variations came to him at the instant, spontaneously.

Among the crowd, and above on the Schweitzerhof, and near by on the boulevard, were heard frequent murmurs of approval, though generally the most respectful silence reigned.

The balconies and the windows kept filling more and more with handsomely dressed men and women leaning on their elbows, and picturesquely illuminated by the lights in the house.

Promenaders came to a halt, and in the darkness on the quay stood men and women in little groups. Near me, at some distance from the common crowd, stood an aristocratic cook and lackey, smoking their cigars. The cook was forcibly impressed by the music, and at every high falsetto note enthusiastically nodded his head to the lackey, and nudged him with his elbow with an expression of astonishment which seemed to say, "How he sings! hey?"

The lackey, by whose undissimulated smile I could mark the depth of feeling he experienced, replied to the cook's nudges by shrugging his shoulders, as if to show that it was hard enough for him to be made enthusiastic, and that he had heard much better music.

In one of the pauses of his song, while the minstrel was clearing his throat, I asked the lackey who he was, and if he often came there.

"Twice in the summer he comes here," replied the lackey. "He is from Aargau; he gets his livelihood by begging."

"Tell me, do many like him come round here?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," replied the lackey, not comprehending the full force of what I asked; but immediately after, recollecting himself, he added, "Oh, no. This one is the only one I ever heard here. No one else."

At this moment the little man had finished his first song, was briskly twanging his guitar, and said something in his German patois, which I could not understand, but which brought forth a hearty round of laughter from the surrounding throng.

"What was that he said?" I asked.

"He said his throat is dried up, he would like some wine," replied the lackey, who was standing near me.

"What? is he rather fond of the glass?"

"Yes, all that sort of people are," replied the lackey, smiling and pointing at the minstrel.

The minstrel took off his cap, and swinging his guitar went toward the hotel. Raising his head, he addressed the ladies and gentlemen standing by the windows and on the balconies, saying in a half-Italian, half-German accent, and with the same intonation as jugglers use in speaking to their audiences: —

"Messieurs et mesdames, si vous croyez que je gagne quelque chose, vous vous trompez: je ne suis qu'un pauvre tiaple."

He stood in silence a moment, but as no one gave him anything, he once more took up his guitar, and said: —

"A présent, messieurs et mesdames, je vous chanterai l'air du Righi."

His hotel audience made no response, but stood in expectation of the coming song. Below on the street a laugh went round, probably in part because he had expressed himself so strangely, and in part because no one had given him anything.

I gave him a few centimes, which he deftly changed from one hand to the other, and bestowed them in his vest-pocket; and then, replacing his cap, began once more to sing; it was the graceful, sweet Tyrolese melody which he had called *l'air du Righi.

This song, which formed the last on his programme, was even better than the preceding, and from all sides in the wondering throng were heard sounds of approbation.

He finished. Again he swung his guitar, took off his cap, held it out in front of him, went two or three steps nearer to the windows, and again repeated his stock phrase: "Messieurs et mesdames, si vous croyez que je gagne quelque chose," which he evidently considered to be very shrewd and witty; but in his voice and motions I perceived now a certain irresolution and childish timidity which were especially touching in a person of such diminutive stature.

This elegant public, still picturesquely grouped in the lighted windows and on the balconies, were shining in their rich attire; a few conversed in soberly discreet tones, apparently about the singer who was standing there below them with outstretched hand; others gazed down with attentive curiosity on the little black figure; on one balcony could be heard a young girl's merry, ringing laughter.

In the crowd below the talk and laughter kept growing louder and louder.

The singer for the third time repeated his phrase, but in a still weaker voice, and did not even end the sentence; and again he stretched his hand with his cap, but instantly drew it back. Again, not one of those brilliantly dressed scores of people standing to listen to him threw him a penny.

The crowd laughed heartlessly.

The little singer, so it seemed to me, shrunk more into himself, took his guitar into his other hand, lifted his cap, and said: —

"Messieurs et mesdames, je vous remercie, et je vous souhais une bonne nuit."

Then he put on his hat.

The crowd cackled with laughter and satisfaction. The handsome ladies and gentlemen, clamly exchanging remarks, withdrew gradually from the balconies. On the

boulevard the promenading began once more. The street, which had been still during the singing, assumed its wonted liveliness; a few men, however, stood at some distance, and, without approaching the singer, looked at him and laughed.

I heard the little man muttering something between his teeth, as he turned away; and I saw him, apparently growing more and more diminutive, start toward the city with brisk steps. The promenaders, who had been looking at him, followed him at some distance, still making merry at his expense. ...

My mind was in a whirl; I could not comprehend what it all meant; and still standing in the same place, I gazed abstractedly into the darkness after the little man, who was fast disappearing, as he went with ever increasing swiftness with long strides into the city, followed by the merrymaking promenaders.

I was overmastered by a feeling of pain, of bitterness, and, above all, of shame for the little man, for the crowd, for myself, as if it were I who had asked for money and received none; as if it were I who had been turned to ridicule.

Without looking any longer, feeling my heart oppressed, I also hurried with long strides toward the entrance of the Schweitzerhof. I could not explain the feeling that overmastered me; only there was something like a stone, from which I could not free myself, weighing down my soul and oppressing me.

At the stately, well-lighted entrance I met the Swiss, who politely made way for me. An English family was also at the door. A portly, handsome, tall gentleman, with black side-whiskers, in a black hat, and with a plaid on one arm, while in his hand he carried a costly cane, came out slowly, and full of importance. Leaning on his arm was a lady, who wore a raw silk gown and a bonnet with bright ribbons and the most charming laces. With them was a pretty, fresh-looking young lady, in a graceful Swiss hat, with a feather, à la mousquetaire; from under it escaped long, light yellow curls, softly encircling her fair face. In front of them skipped a buxom girl of ten, with round, white knees which showed from under her thin embroideries. "What a lovely night!" the lady was saying in a sweet, happy voice, as I passed them.

"Oh, yes," growled the Englishman, lazily; and it was evident that he found it so enjoyable to be alive in the world, that it was too much trouble even to speak.

And it seemed as if all of them alike found it so comfortable and easy, so light and free, to be alive in the world, their faces and motions expressed such perfect indifference to the lives of every one else, and such absolute confidence, that it was to them that the Swiss made way, and bowed so profoundly, and that when they returned they would find clean, comfortable beds and rooms, and that all this was bound to be, and was their indefeasible right, that I could not help contrasting them with the wandering minstrel, who, weary, perhaps hungry, full of shame, was retreating before the laughing crowd. Tnd then, suddenly, I comprehended what it was that oppressed my heart with such a load of heaviness, and I felt an indescribable anger against these people.

Twice I walked up and down past the Englishman, and each time, without turning out for him, my elbow punched him, which gave me a feeling of indescribable sat-

isfaction; and then, darting down the steps, I hastened through the darkness in the direction taken by the little man on his way to the city.

Overtaking three men, walking together, I asked them where the singer was; they laughed, and pointed straight ahead. There he was, walking alone with brisk steps; no one was with him; all the time, as it seemed to me, he was indulging in bitter monologue.

I caught up with him, and proposed to him to go somewhere with me and drink a bottle of wine. He kept on with his rapid walk, and looked at me indignantly; but when it dawned on him what I meant, he halted.

"Well, I will not refuse, if you are so kind," said he; "here is a little café, we can go in there. It's very ordinary," he added, pointing to a drinking-salon that was still open.

His expression "very ordinary" involuntarily suggested to my mind the idea of not going to a very ordinary café, but to go to the Schweitzerhof, where those who had been listening to him were. Notwithstanding the fact that several times he showed a sort of timid disquietude at the idea of going to the Schweitzerhof, declaring that it was too fashionable for him there, still I insisted on carrying out my purpose; andhe, already pretending the he was not in the least abashed, and gayly swinging his guitar, went back with me across the quay.

A few loiterers who had happened along as I was talking with the minstrel, and had stopped to hear what I had to say, now, after arguing among themselves, followed us to the very entrance of the hotel, evidently expecting from the Tyrolese some further demonstration.

I ordered a bottle of wine of a waiter whom I met in the hall. The waiter smiled and looked at us, and went by without answering. The head waiter, to whom I addressed myself with the same order, listened to me and, measuring the minstrel's modest little figure from head to foot, sternly ordered the waiter to take us to the room at the left.

The room at the left was a bar-room for simple people. In the corner of this room a hunchbacked maid was washing dishes. The whole furniture consisted of bare wooden tables and benches.

The waiter who came to serve us looked at us with a supercilious smile, thrust his hands in his pockets, and exchanged some remarks with the humpbacked dishwasher. He evidently tried to give us to understand that he felt himself immeasurably higher than the minstrel, both in dignity and social position, so that he considered it not only an indignity, but actually ridiculous, that he was called on to serve us.

"Do you wish vin ordinaire?" he asked, with a knowing look, winking toward my companion and switching his napkin from one hand to the other.

"Champagne, and your very best," said I, endeavoring to assume my haughtiest and most imposing appearance.

But neither my champagne, nor my endeavor to look haughty and imposing, had the least effect on the servant; he smiled incredulously, loitered a moment or two gazing at us, took time enough to glance at his gold watch, and with leisurely steps, as if going out for a walk, left the room.

Soon he returned with the wine, bringing two other waiters with him. These two sat down near the dishwasher, and gazed at us with amused attention and a bland smile, just as parents gaze at their children when they are gently playing. Only the hump-backed dishwasher, it seemed to me, did not look at us scornfully but sympathetically.

Though it was trying and awkward to lunch with the minstrel, and to play the entertainer, under thefire of all these waiters' eyes, I tried to do my duty with as little constraint as possible. In the lighted room I could see him better. He was a small but symmetrically built and muscular man, though almost a dwarf in stature; he had bristly black hair, teary big black eyes, bushy eyebrows, and a thoroughly pleasant, attractively shaped mouth. He had little side-whiskers, his hair was short, his attire was very simple and mean. He was not over-clean, was ragged and sunburnt, and in general had the look of a laboring-man. He was far more like a poor tradesman than an artist.

Only in his ever humid and brilliant eyes, and in his firm mouth, was there any sign of originality or genius. By his face it might be conjectured that his age was between twenty-five and forty; in reality, he was thirty-seven.

Here is what he related to me, with good-natured readiness and evident sincerity, of his life. He was a native of Aargau. In early childhood he had lost father and mother; other relatives he had none. He had never owned any property. He had been apprenticed to a carpenter; but twenty-two years previously one of his arms had been attacked by caries, which had prevented him from ever working again.

From childhood he had been fond of singing, and he began to be a singer. Occasionally strangers had given him money. With this he had learned his profession, bought his guitar, and now for eighteen years he had been wandering about through Switzerland and Italy, singing before hotels. His whole luggage consisted of his guitar, and a little purse in which, at the present time, there was only a franc and a half. That would have to suffice for supper and lodgings this night.

Every year now for eighteen years he had made the round of the best and most popular resorts of Switzerland, — Zurich, Lucerne, Interlaken, Chamounix, etc.; by the way of the St. Bernard he would go down into Italy, and return over the St. Gotthard, or through Savoy. Just at present it was rather hard for him to walk, as he had caught a cold, causing him to suffer from some trouble in his legs, — he called it Gliederzucht, or rheumatism, — which grew more severe from year to yyear; and, moreover, his voice and eyes had grown weaker. Nevertheless, he was on his way to Interlaken, Aix-les-Bains, and thence over the little St. Bernard to Italy, which he was very fond of. It was evident that on the whole he was well content with his life.

When I asked him why he returned home, if he had any relatives there, or a house and land, his mouth parted in a gay smile, and he replied, "Oui, le sucre est bon, il est doux pour les enfants!" and he winked at the servants.

I did not catch his meaning, but the group of servants burst out laughing.

"No, I have nothing of the sort, but still I should always want to go back," he explained to me. "I go home because there is always a something that draws one to one's native place."

And once more he repeated with a shrewd, self-satisfied smile, his phrase, "Oui, le sucre est bon," and then laughed good-naturedly.

The servants were very much amused, and laughed heartily; only the hunchbacked dish-washer looked earnestly from her big kindly eyes at the little man, and picked up his cap for him, when, as we talked, he once knocked it off the bench. I have noticed that wandering minstrels, acrobats, even jugglers, delight in calling themselves artists, and several times I hinted to my comrade that he was an artist; but he did not at all accept this designation, but with perfect simplicity looked on his work as a means of existence.

When I asked him if he had not himself written the songs which he sang, he showed great surprise at such a strange question, and replied that the words of whatever he sang were all of old Tyrolese origin.

"But how about that song of the Righi? I think that cannot be very ancient," I suggested.

"Oh, that was composed about fifteen years ago. There was a German in Basle; he was a clever man; it was he who composed it. A splendid song. You see he composed it especially for travelers."

And he began to repeat the words of the Righi song, which he liked so well, translated them into French as he went along.

"If you wish to go to Righi, You will not need shoes to Wegis (For you go that far by steamboat), But from Wegis take a stout staff, Also on your arm a maiden; Drink a glass of wine on starting, Only do not drink too freely, For if you desire to drink here, You must earn the right to, first."

"Oh! a splendid song!" he exclaimed, as he finished. The servants, evidently, also found the song much to their mind, because they came up closer to us.

"Yes, but who was it composed the music?" I asked.

"Oh, no one at all; you know you must have something new when you are going to sing for strangers."

When the ice was brought, and I had given my comrade a glass of champagne, he seemed somewhat ill at ease, and, glancing at the servants, he turned and twisted on the bench.

We touched our glasses to the health of all artists; he drank half a glass, then he seemed to be collecting his ideas, and knit his brows in deep thought.

"It is long since I have tasted such wine, je ne vous dis que ça. In Italy the vino d'Asti is excellent, but this is still better. Ah! Italy; it is splendid to be there!" he added.

"Yes, there they know how to appreciate music and artists," said I, trying to bring him round to the evening's mischance before the Schweitzerhof.

"No," he replied. "There, as far as music is concerned, I cannot give anybody satisfaction. The Italians are themselves musicians, — none like them in the world; but I know only Tyrolese songs. They are something of a novelty to them, though."

"Well, you find rather more generous gentlemen there, don't you?" I went on to say, anxious to make him share in my resentment against the guests of the Schweitzerhof. "There it would not be possible to find a big hotel frequented by rich people, where, out of a hundred listening to an artist's singing, not one would give him anything."

My question utterly failed of the effect that I expected. It did not enter his head to be indignant with them; on the contrary, he saw in my remark an implied slur on his talent which had failed of its reward, and he hastened to set himself right before me. "It is not every time that you get anything," he remarked; "sometimes one isn't in good voice, or you are tired; now today I have been walking ten hours, and singing almost all the time. That is hard. And these important aristocrats do not always care to listen to Tyrolese songs."

"But still, how can they help giving?" I insisted. He did not comprehend my remark.

"That's nothing," he said; "but here the principal thing is, on est tres serré pour la police that's what's the trouble. Here, according to these republican laws, you are not allowed to sing; but in Italy you can go wherever you please, no one says a word. Here, if they want to let you, they let you; but if they don't want to, then they can throw you into jail."

"What? That's incredible!"

"Yes, it is true. If you have been wanred once, and are found singing again, they may put you in jail. I was kept there three months once," he said, smiling as if that were one of his pleasantest recollections.

"Oh! that is terrible!" I exclaimed. "What was the reason?"

"That was in consequence of one of the new laws of the republic," he went on to explain, growing animated. "They cannot comprehend here that a poor fellow must earn his living somehow. If I were not a cripple, I would work. But what harm do I do to any one in the world by my singing? What does it mean? The rich can live as they wish, but un pauvre tiaple like myself can't live at all. What does it mean by laws of the republic? If that is the way they run, then we don't want a republic. Isn't that so, my dear sir? We don't want a republic, but we want ... we simply want ... we want" ... he hesitated a little, ... "we want natural laws."

I filled up his glass.

"You are not drinking," I said.

He took the glass in his hand, and bowed to me.

"I know what you wish," he said, blinking his eyes at me, and threatening me with his finger. "You wish to make me drunk, so as to see what you can get out of me; but no, you shan't have that gratification."

"Why should I make you drunk?" I inquired. "All I wished was to give you a pleasure."

He seemed really sorry that he had offended me by interpreting my insistence so harshly. He grew confused, stood up, and touched my elbow.

“No, no,” said he, looking at me with a beseeching expression in his moist eyes. “I was only joking.”

And immediately after he made use of some horribly uncultivated slang expression, intended to signify that I was, nevertheless, a fine young man.

“Je ne vous dis que ça,” he said in conclusion.

In this fashion the minstrel and I continued to drink and converse; and the waiters continued to stare at us unceremoniously, and, as it seemed, to ridicule us.

In spite of the interest which our conversation aroused in me, I could not avoid taking notice of their behavior; and I confess I began to grow more and more angry.

One of the waiters arose, came up to the little man, and, looking at the top of his head, began to smile. I was already full of wrath against the inmates of the hotel, and had not yet had a chance to pour it out on any one; and now I confess I was in the highest degree irritated by this audience of waiters.

The Swiss, not removing his hat, came into the room, and sat down near me, leaning his elbows on the table. This last circumstance, which was so insulting to my dignity or my vainglory, completely enraged me, and gave an outlet for all the wrath which the whole evening long had been boiling within me. Why had he so humbly bowed when he had met me before, and now, because I was sitting with the traveling minstrel, did he come and take his place near me so rudely? I was entirely overmastered by that boiling, angry indignation which I enjoy in myself, which I sometimes endeavor to stimulate when it comes over me, because it has an exhilarating effect on me, and gives me, if only for a short time, a certain extraordinary flexibility, energy, and strength in all my physical and moral faculties.

I leaped to my feet.

“Whom are you laughing at?” I screamed at the waiter; and I felt my face turn pale, and my lips involuntarily set together.

“I am not laughing, I only ... “ replied the waiter, moving away from me.

“Yes, you are; you are laughing at this gentleman. And what right have you to come, and to take a seat here, when there are guests? Don’t you dare to sit down!” The Swiss, muttering something, got up and turned to the door.

“What right have you to make sport of this gentleman, and to sit down by him, when he is a guest, and you are a waiter? Why didn’t you laugh at me this evening at dinner, and come and sit down beside me? Because he is meanly dressed, and sings in the streets? Is that the reason? and because I have better clothes? He is poor, but he is a thousand times better than you are; that I am sure of, because he has never insulted any one, but you have insulted him.”

“I didn’t mean anything,” replied my enemy, the waiter. “Did I disturb him by sitting doen?”

The waiter did not understand me, and my German was wasted on him. The rude Swiss was about to take the waiter’s part; but I fell upon him so impetuously that the Swiss pretended not to understand me, and waved his hand.

The hunchbacked dish-washer, either because she perceived my wrathful state, and feared a scandal, or possibly because she shared my views, took my part, and, trying to force her way between me and the porter, told him to hold his tongue, saying that I was right, but at the same time urging me to calm myself.

"Der Herr hat Recht; Sie haben Recht," she said over and over again. The minstrel's face presented a most pitiable, terrified expression; and evidently he did not understand why I was angry, and what I wanted; and he urged me to let him go away as soon as possible.

But the eloquence of wrath burned within me more and more. I understood it all, — the throng that had made merry at his expense, andhis auditors who had not given him anything; and not for all the world would I have held my peace.

I believe that, if the waiters and the Swiss had not been so submissive, I should have taken delight in having a brush with them, or striking the defenseless English girl on the head with a stick. If at that moment I had been at Sevastopol, I should have taken delight in devoting myself to slaughtering and killing in the English trench.

"And why did you take this gentleman and me into this room, and not into the other? What?" I thundered at the swiss, seizing him by the arm so that he could not escape from me. "What right had you to judge by his appearance that this gentleman must be served in this room, and not in that? Have not all guests who pay equal rights in hotels? Not only in a republic, but in all the world! Your scurvy republic! ... Equality, indeed! You would not dare to take an Englishman into this room, not even those Englishmen who have heard this gentleman free of cost; that is, who have stolen from him, each one of them, the few centimes which ought to have been given to him. How did you dare to take us to this room?"

"That room is closed," said the porter.

"No," I cried, "that isn't true; it isn't closed."

"Then you know best."

"I know ... I know that you are lying."

The Swiss turned his back on me.

"Eh! What is to be said?" he muttered.

"What is to be said?" I cried. "Now conduct us instantly into that room!"

In spite of the dish-washer's warning, and the entreaties of the minstrel, who would have preferred to go home, I insisted on seeing the head waiter, and went with my guest into the big dining-room. The head waiter, hearing my angry voice, and seeing my menacing face, avoided a quarrel, and, with contemptuous servility, said that I might go wherever I pleased. I could not prove to the Swiss that he had lied, because he had hastened out of sight before I went into the hall.

The dining-room was, in fact, open and lighted; and at one of the tables sat an Englishman and a lady, eating their supper. Although we were shown to a special table, I took the dirty minstrel to the very one where the Englishman was, and bade the waiter bring to us there the unfinished bottle.

The two guests at first looked with surprised, then with angry, eyes at the little man, who, more dead than alive, was sitting near me. They talked together in a low tone; then the lady pushed back her plate, her silk dress rustled, and both of them left the room. Through the glass doors I saw the Englishman saying something in an angry voice to the waiter, and pointing with his hand in our direction. The waiter put his head through the door, and looked at us. I waited with pleasurable anticipation for some one to come and order us out, for then I could have found a full outlet for all my indignation. But fortunately, thought at the time I felt injured, we were left in peace. The minstrel, who before had fought shy of the wine, now eagerly drank all that was left in the bottle, so that he might make his escape as quickly as possible.

He, however, expressed his gratitude with deep feeling, as it seemed to me, for his entertainment. His teary eyes grew still more humid and brilliant, and he made use of a most strange and complicated phrase of gratitude. But still very pleasant to me was the sentence in which he said that if everygocy treated artists as I had been doing, it would be very good, and ended by wishing me all manner of happiness. We went out into the hall together. There stood the servants, and my enemy the Swiss apparently airing his grievances against me before them. All of them, I thought, looked at me as if I were a man who had lost his wits. I treated the little man exactly like an equal, before all that audience of servants; and then, with all the respect that I was able to express in my behavior, I took off my hat, and pressed his hand with its dry and hardened fingers.

The servants pretended not to pay the slightest attention to me. Only one of them indulged in a sarcastic laugh. As soon as the minstrel had bowed himself out, and disappeared in the darkness, I went up-stairs to my room, intending to sleep off all these impressions and the foolish, childish anger which had come upon me so unexpectedly. But, finding that I was too much excited to sleep, I once more went down into the street with the intention of walking until I should have recovered my equanimity, and, I must confess, with the secret hope that I might accidentally come across the porter or the waiter or the Englishman, and show them all their rudeness, and, most of all, their unfairness. But beyond the Swiss, who when he saw me turned his back, I met no one; and I began to promenade in absolute solitude back and forth along the quay.

"This is an example of the strange fate of poetry," said I to myself, having grown a little calmer. "All love it, all are in search of it; it is the only thing in life that men love and seek, and yet no one recognizes its power, no one prizes this best treasure of the world, and those who give it to men are not rewarded. Ask any one you please, ask all these guests of the schweitzerhof, what is the most precious treasure in the world, and all, or ninety-nine out of a hundred, putting on a sardonic expression, will say that the best thing in the world is money.

"'Maybe, though, this does not please you, or coincide with your elevated ideas,' it will be urged; 'but what is to be done if human life is so constituted that money alone is capable of giving a man happiness? I cannot force my mind not to see the world as it is,' it will be added, 'that is, to see the truth.'

"Pitiable is your intellect, pitiable the happiness which you desire! And you yourselves, unhappy creatures, not knowing what you desire, ... why have you all left your fatherland, your relatives, your money-making trades and occupations, and come to this little Swiss city of Lucerne? Why did you all this evening gather on the balconies, and in respectful silence listen to the little beggar's song? And if he had been willing to sing longer, you would have been silent and listened longer. What! could money, even millions of it, have driven you all from your country, and brought you all together in this little nook of Lucerne? Could money have gathered you all on the balconies to stand for half an hour silent and motionless? No! One thing compels you to do it, and will forever have a stronger influence than all the other impulses of life: the longing for poetry which you know, which you do not realize, but feel, always will feel as long as you have any human sensibilities. The word 'poetry' is a mockery to you; you make use of it as a sort of ridiculous reproach; you regard the love for poetry as something meant for children and silly girls, and you make sport of them for it. For yourselves you must have something more definite.

"But children look upon life in a healthy way; they recognize and love what man ought to love, and what gives happiness. But life has so deceived and perverted you, that you ridicule the only thing that you really love, and you seek for what you hate and for what gives you unhappiness.

"You are so perverted that you did not perceive what obligations you were under to the poor Tyrolese who rendered you a pure delight; but at the same time you feel needlessly obliged to humiliate yourselves before some lord, which gives you neither pleasure nor profit, but rather causes you to sacrifice your comfort and convenience. What absurdity! what incomprehensible lack of reason!

"But it was not this that made the most powerful impression on me this evening. This blindness to all that gives happiness, this unconsciousness of poetic enjoyment, I can almost comprehend, or at least I have become wonted to it, since I have almost everywhere met with it in the course of my life; the harsh, unconscious churlishness of the crowd was no novelty to me; whatever those who argue in favor of popular sentiment may say, the throng is a conglomeration of very possibly good people, but of people who touch each other only on their coarse animal sides, and express only the seakness and harshness of human nature. But how was it that you, children of a free, humane people, you christians, you simply as human beings, repaid with coldness and ridicule the poor beggar who gave you a pure enjoyment? But no, in your country there are asylums for beggars. There are no beggars, there must be none; and there must be no feelings of sympathy, since that would be a confession that beggary existed.

"But he labored, he gave you enjoyment, he besought you to give him something of your superfluity in payment for his labor of which you took advantage. But you looked on him with a cool smile as on one of the curiosities in your lofty brilliant palaces; and though there were a hundred of you, favored with happiness and wealth, not one man or one woman among you gave him a sou. Abashed he went away from you, and the thoughtless throng, laughing, followed and ridiculed not you, but him,

because you were cold, harsh, and dishonorable; because you robbed him in receiving the entertainment which he have you; for this you jeered him.

"On the 19th of July, 1857, in Lucerne, before the Schweitzerhof Hotel, in which were lodging very opulent people, a wandering beggar minstrel sang for half an hour his songs, and played his guitar. About a hundred people listened to him. The minstrel thrice asked all to give him something. No one person gave him a thing, and many made sport of him.

"This is not an invention, but an actual fact, as those who desire can find out for themselves by consulting the papers for the list of those who were at the schweitzerhof on the 19th of July.

"This is an event which the historians of our time ought to describe in letters of inextinguishable flame. This even is more significant and more serious, and fraught with far deeper meaning, than the facts that are printed in newspapers and histories. That the English have killed several thousand Chinese because the Chinese would not sell them anything for money while their land is overflowing with ringing coins; that the French have killed several thousand Kabyles because the wheat grows well in Africa, and because constant war is essential for the drill of an army; that the Turkish ambassador in Naples must not be a Jew; and that the Emperor Napoleon walks about in Plombières, and gives his people the express assurance that he rules only in direct accordance with the will of the people, — all these are words which darken or reveal something long known. But the episode that took place in Lucerne on the 19th of July seems to me something entirely novel and strange, and it is connected not with the everlastingly ugly side of human nature, but with a well-known epoch in the development of society. This fact is not for the history of human activities, but for the history of progress and civilization.

"Why is it that this inhuman fact, impossible in any German, French, or Italian country, is quite possible here where civilization, freedom, and equality are carried to the highest degree of development, where there are gathered together the most civilized travelers from the most civilized nations? Why is it that these people who, in their palaces, their meetings, and their societies, labor warmly for the condition of the celibate Chinese in India, about the spread of Christianity and culture in Africa, about the formation of societies for attaining all perfection, — why is it that they should not find in their souls the simple, primitive feeling of human sympathy? Has such a feeling entirely disappeared, and has its place been taken by vainglory, ambition, and cupidity, governing these men in their palaces, meetings, and societie4s? Has the spreading of that reasonable, egotistical association of people, which we call civilization, destroyed and rendered nugatory the desire for instinctive and loving association? And is this that boasted equality for which so much innocent blood has been shed, and so many crimes have been perpetrated? Is it possible that nations, like children, can be made happy by the mere sound of the word 'equality'?

"Equality before the law? Does the whole life of a people revolve within the sphere of law? Only the thousandth part of it is subject to the law; the rest lies outside of it, in the sphere of the customs and intuitions of society.

"But in society the lackey is better dressed than the minstrel, and insults him with impunity. I am better dressed than the lackey, and insult him with impunity. The Swiss considers me higher, but the minstrel lower, than himself; when I made the minstrel my companion, he felt that he was on an equality with us both, and behaved rudely. I was impudent to the Swiss, and the Swiss acknowledged that he was inferior to me. The waiter was impudent to the minstrel, and the minstrel accepted the fact that he was inferior to the waiter.

"And is that government free, even though men seriously call it free, where a single citizen can be thrown into prison, because, without harming any one, without interfering with any one, he does the only thing he can to prevent himself from dying of starvation?

"A wretched, pitiable creature is man with his craving for positive solutions, thrown into this everlastingly tossing, limitless ocean of good and evil, of facts, of combinations and contradictions. For centuries men have been struggling and laboring to put the good on one side, the evil on the other. Centuries will pass, and no matter how much the unprejudiced mind may strive to decide where the balance lies between the good and the evil, the scales will refuse to tip the beam, and there will always be equal quantities of the good and the evil on each scale.

"If only man would learn to form judgments, and not indulge in rash and arbitrary thoughts, and not to make reply to questions that are propounded merely to remain forever unanswered! If only he would learn that; every thought is both a lie and a truth!-a lie from the one-sidedness and inability of man to recognize all truth; and true because it expresses one side of mortal endeavor. There are divisions in this everlastingly tumultuous, endless, endlessly confused chaos of the good and the evil. They have drawn imaginary lines over this ocean, and they contend that the ocean is really thus divided.

"But are there not millions of other possible subdivisions from absolutely different standpoints, in other planes? Certainly these novel subdivisions will be made in centuries to come, just as millions of different ones have been made in centuries past.

"Civilization is good, barbarism is evil; freedom, good, slavery, evil. Now this imaginary knowledge annihilates the instinctive, beatific, primitive craving for the good which is in human nature. And who will explain to me what is freedom, what is despotism, what is civilization, what is barbarism?

"Where are the boundaries that separate them? And whose soul possesses so absolute a standard of good and evil as to measure these fleeting, complicated facts? Whose intellect is so great as to comprehend and weigh all the facts in the irretrievable past? And who can find any circumstance in which good and evil do not exist together? And because I know that I see more of one than of the other, is it not because my

standpoint is wrong? And who has the ability to separate himself so absolutely from life, even for a moment, as to look upon it independently from above?

"One, only one infallible Guide we have, — the universal Spirit which penetrates all collectively and as units, which has endowed each of us with the craving for the right; the Spirit which commands the tree to grow toward the sun, which commands the flower in autumn-tide to scatter its seed, and which commands each one of us unconsciously to draw closer together. And this one unerring, inspiring voice rings out louder than the noisy, hasty development of civilization.

"Who is the greater man, and who the greater barbarian, — that lord, who, seeing the minstrel's well-worn clothes, angrily left the table, who gave him not the millionth part of his possessions in payment of his labor, and now lazily sitting in his brilliant, comfortable room, calmly expresses his opinion about the events that are happening in China, and justifies the massacres that have been done there; or the little minstrel, who, risking imprisonment, with a franc in his pocket, and doint no harm to any one, has been going about for a score of years, up hill and down dale, rejoicing men's hearts with his songs, though they have jeered at him, and almost cast him out of the pale of humanity; and who, in weariness and cold and shame, has gone off to sleep, no one knows where, on his filthy straw?"

At this moment, from the city, through the dead silence of the night, far, far away, I caught the sound of the little man's guitar and his voice.

"No," something involuntarily said to me, "you have no right to commiserate the little man, or to blame the lord for his well-being. Who can weigh the inner happiness which is found in the soul of each of these men? There he stands somewhere in the muddy road, and gazes at the brilliant moonlit sky, and gayly sings amid the smiling, fragrant night; in his soul there is no reproach, no anger, no regret. And who knows what is transpiring now in the hearts of all these men within those opulent, brilliant rooms? Who knows if they all have as much unencumbered, sweet delight in life, and as much satisfaction with the world, as dwells in the soul of that little man?

"Endless are the mercy and wisdom of Him who has permitted and formed all these contradictions. Only to thee, miserable little worm of the dust, audaciously, lawlessly attempting to fathom His laws, His designs, — only to thee do they seem like contradictions.

"Full of love He looks down from His bright, immeasurable height, and rejoices in the endless harmony in which you all move in endless contradictions. In thy pride thou hast thought thyself able to separate thyself from the laws of the universe. No, thou also, with thy petty, ridiculous anger against the waiters, — thou also hast disturbed the harmonious craving for the eternal and the infinite." ...

Albert

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1935

Chapter 1

Five wealthy young men had come, after two in the morning, to amuse themselves at a small Petersburg party.

Much champagne had been drunk, most of the men were very young, the girls were pretty, the piano and violin indefatigably played one polka after another, and dancing and noise went on unceasingly: yet for some reason it was dull and awkward, and, as often happens, everybody felt that it was all unnecessary and was not the thing.

Several times they tried to get things going, but forced merriment was worse even than boredom.

One of the five young men, more dissatisfied than the others with himself, with the others, and with the whole evening, rose with a feeling of disgust, found his had, and went out quietly, intending to go home.

There was no one in the ante-room, but in the adjoining room he heard two voices disputing. The young man stopped to listen.

"You can't, there are guests there," said a woman's voice.

"Let me in, please. I'm all right!" a man's weak voice entreated.

"No, I won't let you in without Madame's permission," said the woman. "Where are you going? Ah! What a man you are!"

The door burst open and a strange figure of a man appeared on the threshold. The servant on seeing a visitor no longer protested, and the strange figure, bowing timidly, entered the room, swaying on his bent legs. He was of medium height, with a narrow, stooping back, and long tangled hair. He wore a short overcoat, and narrow torn trousers over a pair of rough uncleaned boots. A necktie, twisted into a cord, was fastened round his long white neck. A dirty shirt showed from under his coat and hung over his thin hands.

Yet despite the extreme emaciation of his body, his face was white and delicate, and freshness and colour played on his cheeks above his scanty black beard and whiskers. His unkempt hair, thrown back, revealed a rather low and extremely clear forehead. His dark languid eyes looked softly, imploringly, and yet with dignity, before him. Their expression corresponded alluringly with that of the fresh lips, curved at the corners, which showed from under his thin moustache.

Having advanced a few steps he stopped, turned to the young man, and smiled. He seemed to smile with difficulty, but when the smile lit up his face the young man-without knowing why-smiled too.

"Who is that?" he whispered to the servant, when the strange figure had passed into the room from which came the sounds of a dance.

"A crazy musician from the theatre," replied the maid. "He comes sometimes to see the mistress."

"Where have you been, Delesov?" someone just then called out, and the young man, who was named Delesov, returned to the ballroom.

The musician was standing at the door and, looking at the dancers, showed by his smile, his look, and the tapping of his foot, the satisfaction the spectacle afforded him.

"Come in and dance yourself," said one of the visitors to him. The musician bowed and looked inquiringly at the hostess.

"Go, go ... Why not, when the gentlemen ask you to?" she said.

The thin, weak limbs of the musician suddenly came into active motion, and winking, smiling, and twitching, he began to prance awkwardly and heavily about the room. In the middle of the quadrille a merry officer, who danced very vivaciously and well, accidentally bumped into the musician with his back. The latter's weak and weary legs did not maintain their balance and after a few stumbling steps aside, he fell full length on the floor. Notwithstanding the dull thud produced by his fall, at first nearly everyone burst out laughing. But the musician did not get up. The visitors grew silent and even the piano ceased. Delesov and the hostess were the first to run up to the fallen man. He was lying on his elbow, staring with dull eyes at the floor. When they lifted him and seated him on a chair, he brushed the hair back from his forehead with a quick movement of his bony hand and began to smile without answering their questions.

"Mr. Albert! Mr. Albert!" said the hostess. "Have you hurt yourself? Where? There now, I said you ought not to dance. He is so weak," she continued, addressing her guests, "-he can hardly walk. How could he dance?"

"Who is he?" they asked her.

"A poor man-an artist. A very good fellow, but pitiable, as you see."

She said this unembarrassed by the presence of the musician. He suddenly came to himself and, as if afraid of something, shrank into a heap and pushed those around him away.

"It's all nothing!" he suddenly said, rising from his chair with an obvious effort.

And to show that he was not at all hurt he went into the middle of the room and tried to jump about, but staggered and would have fallen down again had someone not supported him.

Everyone felt awkward, and looking at him they all became silent.

The musician's eyes again grew dim, and evidently oblivious of everyone he began rubbing his knee with his hand. Suddenly he raised his head, advanced a trembling leg, threw back his hair with the same heedless movement as before, and going up to the violinist took his violin from him.

"It's nothing!" he said once more, flourishing the violin. "Gentlemen, let's have some music!"

"What a strange person!" the visitors remarked to one another.

"Perhaps a fine talent is perishing in this unfortunate creature," said one of the guests.

"Yes, he's pitiable, pitiable!" said a third.

"What a beautiful face! ... There is something extraordinary about him," said Delesov. "Let us see ... "

Chapter 2

Albert meanwhile, paying no attention to anyone, pressed the violin to his shoulder and paced slowly up and down by the piano tuning it. His lips took on an impassive expression, his eyes could not be seen, but his narrow bony back, his long white neck, his crooked legs and shaggy black head, presented a queer-but for some reason not at all ridiculous-spectacle. Having tuned the violin he briskly struck a chord, and throwing back his head turned to the pianist who was preparing to accompany him.

"Melancolie G-dur!" he said, addressing the pianist with a gesture of command. Then, as if begging forgiveness for that gesture, he smiled meekly, and glanced around at the audience with that same smile. Having pushed back his hair with the hand in which he held the bow, he stopped at the corner of the piano, and with a smooth and easy movement drew the bow across the strings. A clear melodious sound was borne through the room and complete silence ensued.

After that first note the theme flowed freely and elegantly, suddenly illumining the inner world of every listener with an unexpectedly clear and tranquilizing light. Not one false or exaggerated sound impaired the acquiescence of the listeners: the notes were all clear, elegant, and significant. Everyone silently followed their development with tremulous expectation. From the state of dullness, noisy distraction and mental torpor in which they had been, these people were suddenly and imperceptibly carried into another quite different world that they had forgotten.

Now a calm contemplation of the past arose in their souls, now an impassioned memory of some past happiness, now a boundless desire for power and splendour, now a feeling of resignation, of unsatisfied love and sadness. Sounds now tenderly sad, now vehemently despairing, mingled freely, flowing and flowing one after the other so elegantly, so strongly, and so unconsciously, that the sounds themselves were not noticed, but there flowed of itself into the soul a beautiful torrent of poetry, long familiar but only now expressed. At each note Albert grew taller and taller. He was far from appearing misshapen or strange. Pressing the violin with his chin and listening to his notes with an expression of passionate attention, he convulsively moved his feet. Now he straightened himself to his full height, now he strenuously bent his back. His left arm seemed to have become set in the bent position to which he had strained it and only the bony fingers moved convulsively: the right arm moved smoothly, elegantly, and almost imperceptibly. His face shone with uninterrupted, ecstatic joy; his eyes burnt with a bright, dry brilliance, his nostrils expanded, his red lips opened with delight.

Sometimes his head bent closer to the violin, his eyes closed, and his face, half covered by his hair, lit up with a smile of mild rapture. Sometimes he drew himself up rapidly, advancing one foot, and his clear brow and the beaming look he cast round

the room gleamed with pride, dignity, and a consciousness of power. Once the pianist blundered and struck a wrong chord. Physical suffering was apparent in the whole face and figure of the musician. He paused for an instant and stamping his foot with an expression of childish anger, cried: “Moll, ce moll!” The Pianist recovered himself. Albert closed his eyes, smiled, and again forgetting himself, the others, and the whole world, gave himself up rapturously to his task.

All who were in the room preserved a submissive silence while Albert was playing, and seemed to live and breathe only in his music.

The merry officer sat motionless on a chair by a window, directing a lifeless gaze upon the floor and breathing slowly and heavily. The girls sat in complete silence along the walls, and only occasionally threw approving and bewildered glances at one another. The hostess’s fat smiling face expanded with pleasure. The pianist riveted his eyes on Albert’s face and, with a fear of blundering which expressed itself in his whole taut figure, tried to keep up with him. One of the visitors who had drunk more than the others lay prone on the sofa, trying not to move for fear of betraying his agitation. Delesov experienced an unaccustomed sensation. It was as if a cold circle, now expanding, now contracting, held his head in a vice. The roots of his hair became sensitive, cold shivers ran up his spine, something rising higher and higher in his throat pricked his nose and palate as if with fine needles, and tears involuntarily wetted his cheeks. He shook himself, tried to restrain them and wipe them unperceived, but others rose and ran down his cheeks. By some strange concatenation of impressions the first sounds of Albert’s violin carried Delesov back to his early youth. Now no longer very young, tired of life and exhausted, he suddenly felt himself a self-satisfied, good-looking, blissfully foolish and unconsciously happy lad of seventeen.

He remembered his first love-for his cousin in a little pink dress;; remembered his first declaration of love made in a linden avenue; remembered the warmth and incomprehensible delight of a spontaneous kiss, and the magic and undivined mystery of the Nature that then surrounded him. In the memories that returned to him she shone out amid a mist of vague hopes, uncomprehended desires, and questioning faith in the possibility of impossible happiness. All the unappreciated moments of that time arose before him one after another, not as insignificant moments of a fleeting present, but as arrested, growing, reproachful images of the past. He contemplated them with joy, and wept-wept not because the time was past that he might have spent better (if he had it again he would not have undertaken to employ it better), but merely because it was past and would never return. Memories rose up of themselves, and Albert’s violin repeated again and again: “For you that time of vigour, love, and happiness has passed for ever, and will not return. Weep for it, shed all your tears, die weeping for that time-that is the best happiness left for you.”

Towards the end of the last variation Albert’s face grew red, his eyes burnt and glowed, and large drops of perspiration ran down his cheeks. The veins of his forehead swelled up, his whole body came more and more into motion, his pale lips no longer closed, and his whole figure expressed ecstatic eagerness for enjoyment.

Passionately swaying his whole body and tossing back his hair he lowered the violin, and with a smile of proud dignity and happiness surveyed the audience. Then his back sagged, his head hung down, his lips closed, his eyes grew dim, and he timidly glanced round as if ashamed of himself, and made his way stumblingly into the other room.

Chapter 3

Something strange occurred with everyone present and something strange was felt in the dead silence that followed Albert's playing. It was as if each would have liked to express what all this meant, but was unable to do so. What did it mean-this bright hot room, brilliant women, the dawn in the windows, excitement in the blood, and the pure impression left by sounds that had flowed past? But no one even tried to say what it all meant: on the contrary everyone, unable to dwell in those regions which the new impression had revealed to them, rebelled against it.

"He really plays well, you know!" said the officer.

"Wonderfully!" replied Delesov, stealthily wiping his cheek with his sleeve.

"However, it's time for us to be going," said the man who was lying on the sofa, having somewhat recovered. "We must give him something. Let's make a collection."

Meanwhile Albert sat alone on a sofa in the next room. Leaning his elbows on his bony knees he stroked his face and ruffled his hair with his moist and dirty hands, smiling happily to himself.

They made a good collection, which Delesov offered to hand to Albert.

Moreover it had occurred to Delesov, on whom the music had made an unusual and powerful impression, to be of use to this man. It occurred to him to take him home, dress him, get him a place somewhere, and in general rescue him for his sordid condition.

"Well, are you tired?" he asked, coming up to him.

Albert smiled.

"You have real talent. You ought to study music seriously and give public performances."

"I'd like to have something to drink," said Albert, as if just awake.

Delesov brought some wine, and the musician eagerly drank two glasses.

"What excellent wine!" he said.

"What a delightful thing that Melancolie is!" said Delesov.

"Oh, yes, yes!" replied Albert with a smile-"but excuse me: I don't know with whom I have the honour of speaking, maybe you are a count, or a prince: could you, perhaps, lend me a little money?" He paused a little "I have nothing ... I am a poor man. I couldn't pay it back."

Delesov flushed: he felt awkward, and hastily handed the musician the money that had been collected.

“Thank you very much!” said Albert, seizing the money. “Now let’s have some music. I’ll play for you as much as you like-only let me have a drink of something, a drink...” he added rising.

Delesov brought him some more wine and asked him to sit beside him.

“Excuse me if I am frank with you,” he said, “your talent interests me so much. It seems to me you are not in good circumstances.”

Albert looked now at Delesov and now at his hostess who had entered the room.

“Allow me to offer you my services,” continued Delesov. “If you are in need of anything I should be glad if you would stay with me for a time. I am living alone and could perhaps be of use to you.”

Albert smiled and made no reply.

“Why don’t you thank him?” said the hostess. “Of course it is a godsend for you. Only I should not advise you to,” she continued, turning to Delesov and shaking her head disapprovingly.

“I am very grateful to you!” said Albert, pressing Delesov’s hand with his own moist ones-”Only let us have some music now, please.”

But the other visitors were preparing to leave, and despite Albert’s endeavours to persuade them to stay they went out into the hall. Albert took leave of the hostess, put on his shabby broad-brimmed hat and old summer cloak, which was his only winter clothing, and went out into the porch with Delesov.

When Delesov had seated himself with his new acquaintance in his carriage, and became aware of the unpleasant odour of drunkenness and uncleanness which emanated so strongly from the musician, he began to repent of his action and blamed himself for childish softheartedness and imprudence. Besides, everything Albert said was so stupid and trivial, and the fresh air suddenly made him so disgustingly drunk that Delesov was repelled. “What am I to do with him?” he thought.

When they had driven for a quarter of an hour Albert grew silent, his hat fell down at his feet, and he himself tumbled into a corner of the carriage and began to snore. The wheels continued to creak monotonously over the frozen snow; the feeble light of dawn hardly penetrated the frozen windows.

Delesov turned and looked at his companion. The long body covered by the cloak lay lifelessly beside him. The long head with its big black nose seemed to sway on that body, but looking closer Delesov saw that what he had taken for nose and face was hair, and that the real face hung lower. He stooped and was able to distinguish Albert’s features. Then the beauty of the forehead and calmly closed lips struck him again.

Under the influence of tired nerves, restlessness from lack of sleep at that hour of the morning, and of the music he had heard, Delesov, looking at that face, let himself again be carried back to the blissful world into which he had glanced that night; he again recalled the happy and magnanimous days of his youth and no longer repented of what he had done. At that moment he was sincerely and warmly attached to Albert, and firmly resolved to be of use to him.

Chapter 4

Next morning when he was awakened to go to his office, Delesov with a feeling of unpleasant surprise saw around him his old screen, his old valet, and his watch lying on the small side-table. “But what did I expect to see if not what is always around me?” he asked himself. Then he remembered the musician’s black eyes and happy smile, the motif of Melancolie, and all the strange experiences of the previous night passed through his mind.

He had no time however to consider whether he had acted well or badly by taking the musician into his house. While dressing he mapped out the day, took his papers, gave the necessary household orders, and hurriedly put on his overcoat and overshoes.

Passing the dining-room door he looked in. Albert, after tossing about, had sunk his face in the pillow, and lay in his dirty ragged shirt, dead asleep on the leather sofa where he had been deposited unconscious the night before. “There’s something wrong!” thought Delesov involuntarily.

“Please go to Boryuzovski and ask him to lend me a violin for a couple of days,” he said to his manservant. “When he wakes up, give him coffee and let him have some underclothing and old clothes of mine. In general, make him comfortable-please!”

On returning late in the evening Delesov was surprised not to find Albert.

“Where is he?” he asked his man.

“He went away immediately after dinner,” replied the servant. “He took the violin and went away. He promised to be back in an hour, but he’s not here yet.”

“Tut, tut! How provoking!” muttered Delesov. “Why did you let him go, Zakhar?”

Zakhar was a Petersburg valet who had been in Delesov’s service for eight years. Delesov, being a lonely bachelor, could not help confiding his ntentions to him, and liked to know his opinions about all his undertakings.

“How could I dare not to let him?” Zakhar replied, toying with the fob of his watch. “If you had told me to keep him in I might have amused him at home. But you only spoke to me about clothes.”

“Pshaw! How provoking! Well, and what was he doing here without me?”

Zakhar smiled.

“One can well call him an ‘artist’, sir. Note: In addition to its proper meaning, the word “artist” was used in Russian to denote a thief, or a man dextrous at anything, good or bad. As soon as he woke he asked for Madeira, and then he amused himself with the cook and with the neighbours manservant. He is so funny. However, he is good-natured. I gave him tea and brought him dinner. He would not eat anything himself, but kept inviting me to do so. But when it comes to playing the violin, even Izler has few artists like him. One may well befriend such a man. When he played Down the Little Mother Volga to us it was as if a man were weeping. It was too beautiful. Even the servants from all the flats came to our back entrance to hear him.”

“Well, and did you get him dressed?” his master interrupted him.

"Of course. I gave him a night-shirt of yours and put my own paletot on him. A man like that is worth helping-he really is a dear fellow!" Zakhar smiled.

"He kept asking me what your rank is, whether you have influential acquaintances, and how many serfs you own."

"Well, all right, but now he must be found, and in future don't let him have anything to drink, or it'll be worse for him."

"That's true," Zakhar interjected. "He is evidently feeble; our old master had a clerk like that..."

But Delesov who had long known the story of the clerk who took hopelessly to drink, did not let Zakhar finish, and telling him to get everything ready for the night, sent him out to find Albert and bring him back.

He then went to bed and put out the light, but could not fall asleep for a long time, thinking about Albert. "Though it may seem strange to many of my acquaintances," he thought, "yet one so seldom does anything for others that one ought to thank God when such an opportunity presents itself, and I will not miss it. I will do anything-positively anything in my power-to help him. He may not be mad at all, but only under the influence of drink. It won't cost me very much. Where there's enough for one there's enough for two. Let him live with me awhile, then we'll find him a place or arrange a concert for him and pull him out of the shallows, and then see what happens."

He experienced a pleasant feeling of self-satisfaction after this reflection. "Really I'm not altogether a bed fellow," he thought. "Not at all bad even-when I compare myself with others."

He was already falling asleep when the sound of opening doors and of footsteps in the hall roused him.

"Well, I'll be stricter with him," he thought, "that will be best; and I must do it."

He rang.

"Have you brought him back?" he asked when Zakhar entered.

"A pitiable man, sir," said Zakhar, shaking his head significantly and closing his eyes.

"Is he drunk?"

"He is very weak."

"And has he the violin?"

"I've brought it back. The lady gave it me."

"Well, please don't let him in here now. Put him to bed, and tomorrow be sure not to let him leave the house on any account."

But before Zakhar was out of the room Albert entered it

Chapter 5

"Do you want to sleep already?" asked Albert with a smile. "And I have been at Anna Ivanovna's and had a very pleasant evening. We had music, and laughed, and

there was delightful company. Let me have a glass of something," he added, taking hold of a water-bottle that stood on a little table, "-but not water."

Albert was just the same as he had been the previous evening: the same beautiful smile in his eyes and on his lips, the same bright inspired forehead, and the same feeble limbs. Zakhar's paletot fitted him well, and the clean wide unstarched collar of the nightshirt encircled his thin white neck picturesquely, giving him a particularly childlike and innocent look. He sat down on Delesov's bed and looked at him silently with a happy and grateful smile. Delesov looked into his eyes, and again suddenly felt himself captivated by that smile. He no longer wanted to sleep, he forgot that it was his duty to be stern: on the contrary he wished to make merry, to hear music, and to chat amicably with Albert till morning. He told Zakhar to bring a bottle of wine, some cigarettes, and the violin.

"There, that's splendid!" said Albert. "It's still early, and we'll have some music. I'll play for you as much as you like."

Zakhar, with evident pleasure, brought a bottle of Lafitte, two tumblers, some mild cigarettes such as Albert smoked, and the violin. But instead of going to bed as his master told him to, he himself lit a cigar and sat down in the adjoining room.

"Let us have a talk," said Delesov to the musician, who was about to take up the violin.

Albert submissively sat down on the bed and again smiled joyfully.

"Oh yes!" said he, suddenly striking his forehead with his hand and assuming an anxiously inquisitive expression. (A change of expression always preceded anything he was about to say.) "Allow me to ask-" he made a slight pause-"that gentleman who was there with you last night-you called him N-, isn't he the son of the celebrated N-?"

"His own son," Delesov answered, not at all understanding how that could interest Albert.

"Exactly!" said Albert with a self-satisfied smile. "I noticed at once something particularly aristocratic in his manner. I love aristocrats: there is something particularly beautiful and elegant in an aristocrat. And that officer who dances so well?" he asked. "I liked him very much too: he is so merry and so fine. Isn't he Adjutant N.N.?"

"Which one?" asked Delesov.

"The one who bumped against me when we were dancing. He must be an excellent fellow."

"No, he's a shallow fellow," Delesov replied.

"Oh, no!" Albert warmly defended him. "There is something very, very pleasant about him. He is a capital musician," he added. "He played something there out of an opera. It's a long time since I took such a liking to anyone."

"Yes, he plays well, but I don't like his playing," said Delesov, wishing to get his companion to talk about music. "He does not understand classical music-Donizetti and Bellini, you know, are not music. You think so too, no doubt?"

"Oh, no, no, excuse me!" began Albert with a gentle, pleading look. "The old music is music, and the new music is music. There are extraordinary beauties in the

new music too. Sonnambula, and the finale of Lucia, and Chopin, and Robert! Note: Sonnambula, opera by Bellini, produced in 1831. Lucia di Lammermoor, opera by Donizetti, produced in 1835. Robert the Devil, opera by Meyerbeer, produced in 1831; or possibly the allusion may be to Roberto Devereux, by Donizetti. I often think-" he paused, evidently collecting his thoughts-"that if Beethoven were alive he would weep with joy listening to Sonnambula for the first time when Viardot and Rubini were here. Note: Pauline Viardot-Garcia, the celebrated operatic singer with whom Turgenev had a close friendship for many years. Rubini, an Italian tenor who had great success in Russia in the 'forties of the last century. It was like this ... " he said, and his eyes glistened as he made a gesture with both arms as though tearing something out of his breast. "A little more and it would have been impossible to bear it."

"And what do you think of the opera at the present time?" asked Delesov.

"Bosio is good, very good," Note: Angidina Bosio, an Italian singer, who was in Petersburg in 1856-9. he said, "extraordinarily exquisite, but she does not touch one here," pointing to his sunken chest. "A singer needs passion, and she has none. She gives pleasure but does not torment."

"How about Lablache?" Note: Luigi Lablache. He was regarded as the chief basso of modern times.

"I heard him in Paris in the Barbier de Seville. He was unique then, but now he is old: he cannot be an artist, he is old."

"Well, what if he is old? He is still good in morceaux d'ensemble," said Delesov, who was in the habit of saying that of Lablache.

"How 'what if he is old?'" rejoined Albert severely. "He should not be old. An artist should not be old. Much is needed for art, but above all, fire!" said he with glittering eyes and stretching both arms upwards.

And a terrible inner fire really seemed to burn in his whole body.

"O my God!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Don't you know Petrov, the artist?"

"No, I don't," Delesov replied, smiling.

"How I should like you to make his acquaintance! You would enjoy talks with him. How well he understands art, too! I used often to meet him at Anna Ivanovna's, but now she is angry with him for some reason. I should very much like you to know him. He has great talent, great talent!"

"Does he paint now?" Delesov asked.

"I don't know, I think not, but he was an Academy artist. What ideas he has! It's wonderful when he talks sometimes. Oh, Petrov has great talent, only he leads a very gay life ... that's a pity," Albert added with a smile. After that he got off the bed, took the violin, and began tuning it.

"Is it long since you were at the opera?" Delesov asked.

Albert looked round and sighed.

"Ah, I can't go there any more!" he said. "I will tell you!" And clutching his head he again sat down beside Delesov and muttered almost in a whisper: "I can't go there. I can't play there-I have nothing-nothing! No clothes, no home, no violin. It is a miserable

life! A miserable life!" he repeated several times. And why should I go there? What for? No need!" he said, smiling. "Ah! Don Juan ... "

He struck his head with his hand.

"Then let us go there together sometime," said Delesov.

Without answering, Albert jumped up, seized the violin, and began playing the finale of the first act of Don Juan, telling the story of the opera in his own words.

Delesov felt the hair stir on his head as Albert played the voice of the dying commandant.

"No!" said Albert, putting down the violin. "I cannot play today. I have had too much to drink."

But after that he went up to the table, filled a tumbler with wine, drank it at a gulp, and again sat down on Delesov's bed.

Delesov looked at Albert, not taking his eyes off him. Occasionally Albert smiled, and so did Delesov. They were both silent; but their looks and smiles created more and more affectionate relations between them. Delesov felt himself growing fonder of the man, and experienced an incomprehensible joy.

"Have you ever been in love?" he suddenly asked.

Albert thought for a few seconds, and then a sad smile lit up his face. He leaned over to Delesov and looked attentively in his eyes.

"Why have you asked me that?" he whispered. "I will tell you everything, because I like you," he continued, after looking at him for a while and then glancing round. "I won't deceive you, but will tell you everything from the beginning, just as it happened." He stopped, his eyes wild and strangely fixed. "You know that my mind is weak," he suddenly said. "Yes, yes," he went on. "Anna Ivanovna is sure to have told you. She tells everybody that I am mad! That is not true; she says it as a joke, she is a kindly woman, and I have really not been quite well for some time."

He stopped again and gazed with fixed wide-open eyes at the dark doorway. "You asked whether I have been in love? ... Yes, I have been in love," he whispered, lifting his brows. "It happened long ago, when I still had my job in the theatre. I used to play second violin at the Opera, and she used to have the lower-tier box next the stage, on the left."

He got up and leaned over to Delesov's ear.

"No, why should I name her?" he said. "You no doubt know her-everybody knows her. I kept silent and only looked at her; I knew I was a poor artist, and she an aristocratic lady. I knew that very well. I only looked at her and planned nothing..."

Albert reflected, trying to remember.

How it happened I don't remember; but I was once called in to accompany her on the violin. ... but what was I, a poor artist?" he said, shaking his head and smiling. "But no, I can't tell it..." he added, clutching head. "How happy I was!"

"Yes? And did you often go to her house?" Delesov asked.

"Once! Once only...but it was my own fault. I was mad! I was a poor artist, and she an aristocratic lady. I ought not to have said anything to her. But I went mad and

acted like a fool. Since then all has been over for me. Petrov told the truth, that it would have been better for me to have seen her only at the theatre..."

"What was it you did?" asked Delesov.

"Ah, wait! Wait! I can't speak of that!"

With his face hidden in his hands he remained silent for some time.

"I came late to the orchestra. Petrov and I had been drinking that evening, and I was distracted. She was sitting in her box talking to a general. I don't know who that general was. She sat at the very edge of the box, with her arm on the ledge; she had on a white dress and pearls round her neck. She talked to him and looked at me. She looked at me twice. Her hair was done like this. I was not playing, but stood near the basses and looked at her. Then for the first time I felt strange. She smiled at the general and looked at me. I felt she was speaking about me, and I suddenly saw that I was not in the orchestra, but in the box beside her and holding her arm, just there... How was that?" Albert asked after a short silence.

"That was vivid imagination," said Delesov.

"No, no! ... but I don't know how to tell it," Albert replied, frowning. "Even then I was poor and had no lodging, and when I went to the theatre I sometimes stayed the night there."

"What, at the theatre? In that dark, empty place?"

"Oh, I am not afraid of such nonsense. Wait a bit... When they had all gone away I would go to the box where she had been sitting and sleep there. That was my one delight. What nights I spent there! But once it began again. Many things appeared to me in the night, but I can't tell you much." Albert glanced at Delesov with downcast eyes. "What was it?" he asked.

"It is strange!" said Delesov.

"No, wait, wait!" he continued, whispering in Delesov's ear. "I kissed her hand, wept there beside her, and talked much with her. I inhaled the scent of her perfume and heard her voice. She told me much in one night. Then I took my violin and played softly; and I played splendidly. But I felt frightened. I am not afraid of those foolish things and don't believe in them, but I was afraid for my head," he said, touching his forehead with an amiable smile. "I was frightened for my poor wits. It seemed to me that something had happened to my head. Perhaps it's nothing. What do you think?"

Both were silent for some minutes.

"Und wenn die Wolken sie verhullen Die Sonne bleibt doch ewig klar." "And even if the clouds do hide it,The sun remains for ever clear."

Albert sand with a soft smile. "Is not that so?" he added.

"Ich auch habe gelebt und genossen..." "I, too, have lived and enjoyed."

"Ah, how well old Petrov would have explained it all to you!"

Delesov looked silently and in terror at the pale and agitated face of his companion."Do you know the "Juristen-Waltzer?" Albert suddenly exclaimed, and without awaiting an answer he jumped up, seized the violin, and began to play the merry waltz

tune, forgetting himself completely, and evidently imagining that a whole orchestra was playing with him. He smiled, swayed, shifted his feet, and played superbly.

"Eh! Enough of merrymaking!" he said when he had finished, and flourished the violin.

"I am going," he said, after sitting silently for a while-"won't you come with me?"

"Where to?" Delesov asked in surprise.

"Let's go to Anna Ivanovna's again. It's gay there-noise, people, music!"

At first Delesov almost consented, but bethinking himself he tried to persuade Albert not to go that night.

"Only for a moment."

"No, really, you'd better not!"

Albert sighed and put down the violin.

"So, I must stay here?"

And looking again at the table (there was no wine left) he said goodnight and left the room.

Delesov rang.

"See that you don't let Mr. Albert go anywhere without my permission," he said to Zakhar.

Chapter 6

The next day was a holiday.

Delesov was already awake and sitting in his drawing-room drinking coffee and reading a book. Albert had not yet stirred in the next room.

Zakhar cautiously opened the door and looked into the dining-room.

"Would you believe it, sir? He is asleep on the bare sofa! He wouldn't have anything spread on it, really. Like a little child. Truly an artist."

Towards noon groaning and coughing were heard through the door.

Zakhar again went into the dining-room, and Delesov could hear his kindly voice and Albert's weak, entreating one.

"Well?" he asked, when Zakhar returned.

"He's fretting, sir, won't wash, and seems gloomy. He keeps asking for a drink."

"No. Having taken this matter up I must show character," said Delesov to himself.

He ordered that no wine should be given to Albert and resumed his book, but involuntarily listened to what was going on in the dining-room. There was no sound of movement there and an occasional deep cough and spitting was all that could be heard. Two hours passed. Having dressed, Delesov decided to look in at his visitor before going out. Albert was sitting motionless at the window, his head resting on his hand. He looked round. His face was yellow, wrinkled, and not merely sad but profoundly miserable. He tried to smile by way of greeting, but his face took on a still more sorrowful expression. He seemed ready to cry. He rose with difficulty and bowed.

"If I might just have a glass of simple vodka!" he said with a look of entreaty. "I am so weak-please!"

"Coffee will do you more good. Have some of that instead."

Albert's face suddenly lost its childlike expression; he looked coldly, dim-eyed, out of the window, and sank feebly onto his chair.

"Or would you like some lunch?"

"No thank you, I have no appetite."

"If you wish to play the violin you will not disturb me," said Delesov, laying the violin on the table.

Albert looked at the violin with a contemptuous smile.

"No," he said. "I am too weak, I can't play," and he pushed the instrument away from him.

After that, whatever Delesov might say, offering to go for a walk with him, and to the theatre in the evening, he only bowed humbly and remained stubbornly silent. Delesov went out, paid several calls, dined with friends, and before going to the theatre returned home to change and to see what the musician was doing. Albert was sitting in the dark hall, leaning his head in his hands and looking at the heated stove. He was neatly dressed, washed, and his hair was brushed; but his eyes were dim and lifeless, and his whole figure expressed weakness and exhaustion even more than in the morning.

"Have you dined, Mr. Albert?" asked Delesov.

Albert made an affirmative gesture with his head and, after a frightened look at Delesov, lowered his eyes. Delesov felt uncomfortable.

"I spoke to the director of the theatre about you today," he said, also lowering his eyes. "He will be very glad to receive you if you will let him hear you." "Thank you, I cannot play!" muttered Albert under his breath, and went into his room, shutting the door behind him very softly.

A few minutes later the door-knob was turned just as gently, and he came out of the room with the violin. With a rapid and hostile glance at Delesov he placed the violin on a chair and disappeared again.

Delesov shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"What more am I to do? In what am I to blame?" he thought.

* * *

"Well, how is the musician?" was his first question when he returned home late that evening.

"Bad!" said Zakhar, briefly and clearly. "He has been sighing and coughing and says nothing, except that he started begging for vodka four or five times. At last I gave him one glass-or else we might finish him off, sir. Just like the clerk ... "

"Has he not played the violin?"

"Didn't even touch it. I took it to him a couple of times, but he just took it up gently and brought it out again," Zakhar answered with a smile. "So your orders are not to give him any drink?"

"No, we'll wait another day and see what happens. And what's he doing now?" "He has locked himself up in the drawing-room."

Delesov went into his study and chose several French books and a German Bible. "Put these books in his room tomorrow, and see that you don't let him out," he said to Zakhar.

Next morning Zakhar informed his master that the musician had not slept all night: he had paced up and down the rooms, and had been into the pantry, trying to open the cupboard and the door, but he (Zakhar) had taken care to lock everything up. He said that while he pretended to be asleep he had heard Albert in the dark muttering something to himself and waving his arms about.

Albert grew gloomier and more taciturn every day. He seemed to be afraid of Delesov, and when their eyes met his face expressed sickly fear. He did not touch the books or the violin, and did not reply to questions put to him. On the third day of the musician's stay Delesov returned home late, tired and upset. He had been driving about all day attending to a matter that had promised to be very simple and easy but, as often happens, in spite of strenuous efforts he had been quite unable to advance a single step with it. Besides that he had called in at his club and had lost at whist. He was in bad spirits.

"Well, let him go his way!" he said to Zakhar, who told him of Albert's sad plight. "Tomorrow I'll get a definite answer out of him, whether he wants to stay here and follow my advice, or not. If not, he needn't! It seems to me that I have done all I could."

"There now, try doing good to people!" he thought to himself. "I put myself out for him, I keep that dirty creature in my house, so that I can't receive a visitor in the morning. I bustle and run about, and he looks on me as if I were a villain who for his own pleasure has locked him up in a cage. And above all, he won't take a single step to help himself. They are all like that." (The "they" referred to people in general, and especially to those with whom he had had business that day.) "And what is the matter with him now? What is he thinking about and pining for? Pining for the debauchery from which I have dragged him? For the humiliation in which he was? For the destitution from which I have saved him? Evidently he has fallen so low that it hurts him to see a decent life ..."

"No, it was a childish act," Delesov concluded. "How can I improve others, when God knows whether I can manage myself?" He thought of letting Albert go at once, but after a little reflection put it off till the next day.

During the night he was roused by the sound of a table falling in the hall, and the sound of voices and footsteps. He lit a candle and listened in surprise.

"Wait a bit. I'll tell my master," Zakhar was saying; Albert's voice muttered something incoherently and heatedly.

Delesov jumped up and ran into the hall with the candle.

Zakhar stood against the front door in his night attire, and Albert, with his hat and cloak on, was pushing him aside and shouting in a tearful voice:

“You can’t keep me here! I have a passport Note: To be free to go from place to place it was necessary to have a properly stamped passport from the police., and have taken nothing of yours. You may search me. I shall go to the chief of police!...”

“Excuse me, sir!” Zakhar said, addressing his master while continuing to guard the door with his back. “He got up during the night, found the key in my overcoat pocket, and drank a whole decanter of liqueur vodka. Is that right? And now he wants to go away. You ordered me not to let him out, so I dare not let him go.”

On seeing Delesov Albert made for Zakhar still more excitedly.

“No one dare hold me! No one has a right to!” he shouted, raising his voice more and more.

“Step aside, Zakhar!” said Delesov. I can’t and don’t want to keep you, but I advise you to stay till the morning,” he said to Albert.

“No one can keep me! I’ll go to the chief of police!” Albert cried louder and louder, addressing himself to Zakhar alone and not looking at Delesov.

“Help!” he suddenly screamed in a furious voice.

“What are you screaming like that for? Nobody is keeping you!” said Zakhar, opening the door.

Albert stopped shouting. “You didn’t succeed, did you? Wanted to do for me-did you!” he muttered to himself, putting on his galoshes. Without taking leave, and continuing to mutter incoherently, he went out. Zakhar held a light for him as far as the gate, and then came back.

“Well, God be thanked, sir!” he said to his master. “Who knows what might happen? As it is I must count the silver plate...”

Delesov merely shook his head and did not reply. He vividly recalled the first two evenings he had spent with the musician, and recalled the last sad days which by his fault Albert had spent there, and above all he recalled that sweet, mixed feeling of surprise, affection and pity, which that strange man had aroused in him at first sight, and he felt sorry for him. “And what will become of him now?” he thought. Without money, without warm clothing, alone in the middle of the night...” He was about to send Zakhar after him, but it was too late.

“Is it cold outside?” he inquired.

“A hard frost, sir,” replied Zakhar. “I forgot to inform you, but we shall have to buy more wood for fuel before the spring.”

“How is that? You said that we should have some left over.”

Chapter 7

It was indeed cold outside, but Albert, heated by the liquor he had drunk and by the dispute, did not feel it. On reaching the street he looked round and rubbed his hands joyfully.

The street was empty, but the long row of lamps still burned with ruddy light; the sky was clear and starry. "There now!" he said, addressing the lighted window of Delesov's lodging, thrusting his hands into his trouser pockets under his cape, and stooping forward. He went with heavy, uncertain steps down the street to the right. He felt an unusual weight in his legs and stomach, something made a noise in his head, and some invisible force was throwing him from side to side, but he still went on in the direction of Anna Ivanovna's house.

Strange, incoherent thoughts passed through his mind. Now he remembered his last altercation with Zakhar, then for some reason the sea and his first arrival in Russia by steamboat, then a happy night he had passed with a friend in a small shop he was passing, then suddenly a familiar motif began singing itself in his imagination, and he remembered the object of his passion and the dreadful night in the theatre.

Despite their incoherence all these memories presented themselves so clearly to his mind that, closing his eyes, he did not know which was the more real: what he was doing, or what he was thinking. He did not realize or feel how his legs were moving, how he swayed and bumped against the wall, how he looked around him, or passed from street to street. He realized and felt only the things that, intermingling and fantastically following one another, rose in his imagination.

Passing along the Little Morskaya Street, Albert stumbled and fell. Coming to his senses for a moment he saw an immense and splendid building before him and went on. In the sky no stars, nor moon, nor dawn, were visible, nor were there any street lamps, but everything was clearly outlined. In the windows of the building that towered at the end of the street lights were shining, but those lights quivered like reflections. The building stood out nearer and nearer and clearer and clearer before him. But the lights disappeared directly he entered the wide portals. All was dark within. Solitary footsteps resounded under the vaulted ceiling, and some shadows slit rapidly away as he approached.

"Why have I come here?" thought he; but some irresistible force drew him on into the depths of the immense hall. There was some kind of platform, around which some small people stood silently.

"Who is going to speak?" asked Albert. No one replied, except that someone pointed to the platform. A tall thin man with bristly hair and wearing a parti-coloured dressing-gown was already standing there, and Albert immediately recognized his friend Petrov.

"How strange that he should be here!" thought he.

"No, brothers!" Petrov was saying, pointing to someone. "You did not understand a man living among you; you have not understood him! He is not a mercenary artist, not a mechanical performer, not a lunatic or a lost man. He is a genius-a great musical genius who has perisheed among you unnoticed and unappreciated!"

Albert at once understood of whom his friend was speaking, but not wishing to embarrass him he modestly lowered his head.

"The holy fire that we all serve has consumed him like a blade of straw!" the voice went on, "but he has fulfilled all that God implanted in him and should therefore be

called a great man. You could despise, torment, humiliate him," the voice continued, growing louder and louder-"but he was, is, and will be, immeasurably higher than you all. He is happy, he is kind. He loves or despises all alike, but serves only that which was implanted in him from above. He loves but one thing-beauty, the one indubitable blessing in the world. Yes, such is the man! Fall prostrate before him, all of you! On your knees!" he cried aloud.

But another voice came mildly from the opposite corner of the hall: "I do not wish to bow my knees before him," said the voice, which Albert immediately recognized as Delesov's. "Wherein is he great? Why should we bow before him? Did he behave honourably and justly? Has he been of any use to society? Don't we know how he borrowed money and did not return it, and how he carried away his fellow-artist's violin and pawned it? ..."

("Oh God, how does he know all that?" thought Albert, hanging his head still lower.)

"Do we not know how he flattered the most insignificant people, flattered them for the sake of money?" Delesov continued-"Don't we know how he was expelled from the theatre? And how Anna Ivanovna wanted to send him to the police?"

("O God! That is all true, but defend me, Thou who alone knowest why I did it!" muttered Albert.)

"Cease, for shame!" Petrov's voice began again. "What right have you to accuse him? Have you lived his life? Have you experienced his rapture? ("True, true!" whispered Albert.)

"Art is the highest manifestation of power in man. It is given to a few of the elect, and raises the chosen one to such a height as turns the head and makes it difficult for him to remain sane. In Art, as in every struggle, there are heroes who have devoted themselves entirely to its service and have perished without having reached the goal."

Petrov stopped, and Albert raised his head and cried out: "True, true!" but his voice died away without a sound.

"It does not concern you," said the artist Petrov, turning to him severely. "Yes, humiliate and despise him," he continued, "but yet he is the best and happiest of you all."

Albert, who had listened to these words with rapture in his soul, could not restrain himself, and went up to his friend wishing to kiss him.

"Go away! I do not know you!" Petrov said, "Go your way, or you won't get there."

"Just see how the drink's got hold of you! You won't get there," shouted a policeman at the crossroad.

Albert stopped, collected his strength and, trying not to stagger, turned into the side street.

Only a few more steps were left to Anna Ivanovna's door. From the hall of her house the light fell on the snow in the courtyard, and sledges and carriages stood at the gate.

Holding onto the banister with his numbed hands, he ran up the steps and rang. The sleepy face of a maid appeared in the opening of the doorway, and she looked angrily at Albert.

"You can't!" she cried. "The orders are not to let you in," and she lammed the door to.

The sound of music and of women's voices reached the steps. Albert sat down, leaned his head against the wall, and closed his eyes. Immediately a throng of disconnected but kindred visions beset him with renewed force, engulfed him in their waves, and bore him away into the free and beautiful realm of dreams.

"Yes, he was the best and happiest!" ran involuntarily through his imagination.

The sounds of a polka came through the door. These sounds also told him that he was the best and happiest. The bells in the nearest church rang out for early service, and these bells also said:

"Yes, he is the best and happiest!" ...

"I will go back to the hall," thought Albert. "Petrov must tell me much more."

But there was no one in the hall now, and instead of the artist Petrov, Albert himself stood on the platform and played on the violin all that the voice had said before. But the violin was of strange construction; it was made of glass and it had to be held in both hands and slowly pressed to the breast to make it produce sounds. The sounds were the most delicate and delightful Albert had ever heard. The closer he pressed the violin to his breast the more joyful and tender he felt. The louder the sounds grew the faster the shadows dispersed and the brighter the walls of the hall were lit up by transparent light. But it was necessary to play the violin very warily so as not to break it. He played the glass instrument very carefully and well. He played such things as he felt no one would ever hear again.

He was beginning to grow tired when another distant, muffled sound distracted his attention. It was the sound of a bell, but it spoke words:

"Yes," said the bell, droning somewhere high up and far away, "he seems to you pitiful, you despise him, yet he is the best and happiest of men! No one will ever again play that instrument."

These familiar words suddenly seemed so wise, so new, and so true to Albert that he stopped playing and, trying not to move, raised his arms and eyes to heaven. He felt that he was beautiful and happy. Although there was no one else in the hall he expanded his chest and stood on the platform with head proudly erect so that all might see him.

Suddenly someone's hand lightly touched his shoulder; he turned and saw a woman in the faint light. She looked at him sadly and shook her head deprecatingly. He immediately realized that what he was doing was bad, and felt ashamed of himself.

"Whither?" he asked her.

She again gave him a long fixed look and sadly inclined her head. It was she-none other than she whom he loved, and her garments were the same; on her full white neck a string of pearls, and her superb arms bare to above the elbow. She took his hand and led him out of the hall.

"The exit is on the other side," said Albert, but without replying she smiled and led him out.

At the threshold of the hall Albert saw the moon and some water. But the water was not below as it usually is, nor was the moon a white circle in one place up above as it usually is. Moon and water were together and everywhere-above, below, at the sides, and all around them both. Albert threw himself with her into the moon and the water, and realized that he could now embrace her, whom he loved more than anything in the world. He embraced her and felt unutterable happiness.

"Is this not a dream?" he asked himself. But no! It was more than reality: it was reality and recollection combined. Then he felt that the unutterable bliss he had at that moment enjoyed had passed and would never return.

"What am I weeping for?" he asked her.

She looked at him silently and sadly. Albert understood what she meant by that.

"But how can it be, since I am alive?" he muttered.

Without replying or moving she looked straight before her.

"This is terrible! How can I explain to her that I am alive?" he thought with horror. "O Lord! I am alive, do understand me!" he whispered.

"He is the best and happiest!" a voice was saying.

But something was pressing more and more heavily on Albert. Whether it was the moon and the water, her embraces, or his tears, he did not know, but he felt he would not be able to say all that was necessary, and that soon all would be over.

Two visitors, leaving Anna Ivanovna's house, stumbled over Albert, who lay stretched out on the threshold. One of them went back and called the hostess.

"Why, this is inhuman!" he said. "You might let a man freeze like that!"

"Ah, that is Albert! I'm sick to death of him!" replied the hostess.

"Annushka, lay him down somewhere in a room," she said to the maid.

"But I am alive-why bury me?" muttered Albert, as they carried him insensible into the room.

Three Deaths

Translated by E. R. DuMont 1899

Chapter 1

It was autumn.

Along the highway came two equipages at a brisk pace. In the first carriage sat two women. One was a lady, thin and pale; the other, her maid, with a brilliant red complexion, and plump. Her short, dry locks escaped from under a faded cap; her red hand, in a torn glove, put them back with a jerk. Her full bosom, incased in a tapestry shawl, breathed of health; her keen black eyes now gazed through the window at the fields hurrying by them, now rested on her mistress, now peered solicitously into the corners of the coach. Before the maid's face swung the lady's bonnet on the rack; on her knees lay a puppy; her feet were raised by packages lying on the floor, and could almost be heard drumming upon them above the noise of the creaking of the springs and the rattling of the windows. The lady, with her hands resting in her lap and her eyes shut, feebly swayed on the cushions which supported her back, and, slightly frowning, tried to suppress her cough.She wore a white nightcap, and a blue neckerchief twisted around her delicate pale neck. A straight line, disappearing under the cap, parted her perfectly smooth blond hair, which was pomaded; and there was a dry deathly appearance about the whiteness of the skin, in this wide parting. The withered and rather sallow skin was loosely drawn over her delicate and pretty features, and there was a hectic flush on the cheeks and cheekbones. Her lips were dry and restless, her thin eyelashes had lost their curve, and a cloth traveling capote made straight folds over her sunken chest. Although her eyes were closed, her face gave the impression of weariness, irascibility, and habitual suffering. The lackey, leaning back, was napping on the coachbox. The yamshchik, or hired driver, shouting in a clear voice, urged on his four powerful and sweaty horses, occasionally looking back at the other driver, who was shouting just behind them in an open barouche. The tires of the wheels, in their even and rapid course, left wide parallel tracks on the limy mud of the highway.The sky was gray and cold, a moist mist was falling over the fields and the road. It was suffocating in the carriage, and smelt of eau-de-Cologne and dust. The invalid leaned back her head, and slowly opened her eyes. Her great eyes were brilliant, and of a beautiful dark color."Again!" said she, nervously, pushing away with her beautiful attenuated hand the end of her maid's cloak, which occasionally hit against herleg. Her mouth contracted painfully. Matriosha raised her cloak in both hands, lifting herself up on her strong legs, and then sat down again, farther away. Her fresh face was suffused with a brilliant scarlet.The invalid's beautiful dark eyes eagerly followed the maid's motions; and then with both hands she took hold of the seat, and did her best to raise herself a little higher, but her strength was not sufficient.Again her mouth became contracted, and her whole face took on an expression of unavailing, angry irony."If you would only help me ... ah! It's not necessary. I can do it myself.

Only have the goodness not to put those pillows behind me. ... On the whole, you had better not touch them, if you don't understand!"The lady closed her eyes, and then again, quickly raising the lids, gazed at her maid. Matriosha looked at her, and gnawed her red lower lip. A heavy sigh escaped from the sick woman's breast; but the sigh was not ended, but was merged in a fit of coughing. She scowled, and turned her face away, clutching her chest with both hands. When the coughing fit was over, she once more shut her eyes, and continued to sit motionless. The coach and the barouche rolled into a village. Matriosha drew her fat hand from under her shawl, and made the sign of the cross."What is this?" demanded the lady."A post-station, madame."“Why did you cross yourself, I should like to know?" "The church, madame."The invalid lady looked out of the window, and began slowly to cross herself, gazing with all her eyes at the great village church, in front of which her carriage was now passing. The two vehicles came to a stop together at the post-house. The sick woman's husband and the doctor dismounted from the barouche, and came to the coach."How are you feeling?" asked the doctor, taking her pulse. "Well, my dear, aren't you fatigued?" asked the husband in French. "Wouldn't you like to get out?" Matriosha, gathering up the bundles, squeezed herself into the corner, so as not to interfere with the conversation."No matter, it's all the same thing," replied the invalid. "I will not get out."The husband, after standing there a little, went into the post-house. Matriosha, jumping from the coach, tiptoed across the muddy road into the enclosure."If I am miserable, there is no reason why the rest of you should not have breakfast," said the sick woman, smiling faintly to the doctor, who was standing by her window. "It makes no difference to them how I am," she remarked to herself as the doctor, turning from her with slow step, started to run up the steps of the station-house. "They are well, and it's all the same to them. O my God!" How now, Eduard Ivanovitch?" said the husband, as he met the doctor, and rubbing his hands with a gay smile. "I have ordered my traveling-case brought; what do you say to that?" "That's worth while," replied the doctor."Well, now, how about her?" asked the husband, with a sigh, lowering his voice and raising his brows. "I have told you that she cannot reach Moscow, much less Italy, especially in such weather." "What is to be done, then? Oh! My God! My God!"The husband covered his eyes with his hand. ... "Give it here," he added, addressing his man, who came bringing the traveling-case."You'll have to stop somewhere on the route," replied the doctor, shrugging his shoulders."But tell me, what can I do?" rejoined the husband. "I have employed every argument to keep her from going; I have spoken to her of our means, and of our children whom we should have to leave behind, and of my business. She would not hear a word. She has made her plans for living abroad, as if she were well. But if I should tell her what her real condition is, it would kill her."“Well, she is a dead woman now; you may as well know it, Vasili Dmitritch. A person cannot live without lungs, and there is no way of making lungs grow again. It is melancholy, it is hard, but what is to be done about it? It is my business and yours to make her last days as easy as possible. The confessor is the person needed here."“Oh, my God! Now just perceive how I am situated, in speaking to her of her last will. Let come whatever may, yet I

cannot speak of that. And yet you know how good she is.” “Try at least to persuade her to wait until the roads are frozen,” said the doctor, shaking his head significantly; “something might happen during the journey.” ... “Aksiusha, oh, Aksiusha!” cried the superintendent’s daughter, throwing a cloak over her head, and tiptoeing down the muddy back steps. “Come along. Let us have a look at the Shirkinskaya lady; the say she’s got lung trouble, and they’re taking her abroad. I never saw how any one looked in consumption.”Aksiusha jumped down from the door-sill; and the two girls, hand in hand, hurried out of the gates. Shortening their steps, they walked by the coach, and stared in at the lowered window. The invalid bent her head toward them; but, when she saw their inquisitiveness, she frowned and turned away.”Oh, de-e-ar!” said the superintendent’s daughter, vigorously shaking her head. ... “How wonderfully pretty she used to be, and how she has changed! It is terrible! Did you see? Did you see, Aksiusha?”“Yes, andhow thin she is!” assented Aksiusha. “Let us go by and look again; we’ll make believe we are going to the well. Did you see, she turned away from us; still I got a good view of her. Isn’t it too bad, Masha?”“Yes, but what terrible mud!” replied Masha, and both of them started to run back within the gates.”It’s evident that I have become a fright,” thought the sick woman. ... “But we must hurry, hurry, and get abroad, and there I shall soon get well.”“Well, and how are you, my dear?” inquired the husband, coming to the coach with still a morsel of something in his mouth. “Always one and the same question,” thought the sick woman, “and he’s even eating!”“It’s no consequence,” she murmured, between her teeth.”Do you know, my dear, I am afraid that this journey in such weather will only make you worse. Edouard Ivanovitch says the same thing. Hadn’t we better turn back?” She maintained an angry silence. “Maybe the weather will improve, the roads will become good, and that would be better for you; then at least we could start all together.” “Pardon me. If I had not listened to you so long, I should at this moment be at Berlin and have entirely recovered.”“What’s to be done, my angel? It was impossible, as you know. But now if you would wait a month, you would be ever so much better; I could finish up my business, and we could take the children with us.” ...”The children are well, and I am not.”“But just see here, my love, if in this weather you should grow worse on the road ... At least we should be at home.”“What is the use of being at home? ... Die at home?” replied the invalid, peevishly.But the word die evidently startled her, and she turned on her husband a supplicating and inquiring look. He dropped his eyes, and said nothing.The sick woman’s mouth suddenly contracted in a childish fashion, and the tears sprang to her eyes. Her husband covered his face with his handkerchief, and silently turned from the coach.”No, I will go,” cried the invalid; and, lifting her eyes to the sky, she clasped her hands, and began to whisper incoherent words. “My God! Why must it be?” she said, and the tears flowed more violently.She prayed long and fervently, but still there was just the same sense of constriction and pain in her chest, just the same gray melancholy in the sky and the fields and the road; just the same autumnal mist, neither thicker nor more tenuous, but ever the same it in its monotony, falling on the

muddy highway, on the roofs, on the carriage, and on the sheepskin coats of the drivers, who were talking in strong, gay voices, as they were oiling and adjusting the carriage.

Chapter 2

The coach was ready, but the driver loitered. He had gone into the drivers' room izba. In the izba it was warm, close, dark, and suffocating, smelling of human occupation, of cooking bread, of cabbage, and of sheepskin garments.Several drivers were in the room; the cook was engaged near the oven, on top of which lay a sick man wrapped up in his sheepskins."Uncle Khveodor! Hey! Uncle Khveodor," called a young man, the driver, in a tulup, and with his knout in his belt, coming into the room, and addressing the sick man. "What do you want, rattlepate? What are you calling to Fyedka for?" asked one of the drivers. "There's your carriage waiting for you." "I want to borrow his boots. Mine are worn out," replied the young fellow, tossing back his curls and straightening his mittensin his belt. "Why? Is he asleep? Say, Uncle Khvodor!" he insisted, going to the oven."What is it?" a weak voice was heard saying, and an emaciated face was lifted up from the oven. A broad, gaunt hand, bloodless and covered with hairs, pulled up his overcoat over the dirty shirt that covered his bony shoulder. "Give me something to drink, brother; what is it you want?"The young fellow handed him a small dish of water."I say, Fyedya," said he, hesitating, "I reckon you won't want your new boots now; let me have them? Probably you won't need them any more." The sick man, dropping his weary head down to the lacquered bowl, and dipping his thin, hanging mustache into the brown water, drank feebly and eagerly.His tangled beard was unclean; his sunken, clouded eyes were with difficulty raised to the young man's face. When he had finished drinking, he tried to raise his hand to wipe his wet lips, but his strength failed him, and he wiped them on the sleeve of his overcoat. Silently, and breathing with difficulty through his nose, he looked straight into the young man's eyes, and tried to collect his strength. "Maybe you have promised them to some one else?" said the young driver. "If that's so, all right. The worst of it is, it is wet outside, and I have to go out to my work, and so I said to myself, 'I reckon I'll ask Fyedka for his boots; I reckon he won't be needing them.' But may you will need them, — just say." ... Something began to bubble up and rumble in the sick man's chest; he bent over, and began to strangle, with a cough that rattled in his throat."Now I should like to know where he would need them?" unexpectedly snapped out the cook, angrily addressing the whole hovel. "This is the second month that he has not crept down from the oven. Just see how he is all broken up! And you can hear how it must hurt him inside. Where would he need boots? They would not think of burying him in new ones! And it was time long ago, God pardon me the sin of saying so. Just see how he chokes! He ought to be taken from this room to another, or somewhere. They say there's hospitals in the city; but what's you going to do? He takes up the whole room, and that's too much. There isn't any room at all. And yet you are expected to keep neat." "Hey! Seryoha, come along, take

your place, the people are waiting," cried the head man of the station, coming to the door. Seryoha started to go without waiting for his reply, but the sick man during his cough intimated by his eyes that he was going to speak."You take the boots, Seryoha," said he, conquering the cough, and getting his breath a little. "Only, do you hear, buy me a stone when I am dead," he added hoarsely."Thank you, uncle; then I will take them, and as for the stone, — yei-yei! — I will buy you one."There, children, you are witnesses," the sick man was able to articulate, and then once more he bent over and began to choke."All right, we have heard," said one of the drivers. "But run, Seryoha, or else the starosta will be after you again. You know Lady Shirkinskaya is sick."Seryoha quickly pulled off his ragged, unwieldy boots, and flung them under the bench. Uncle Feodor's new ones fitted his feet exactly, and the yung driver could not keep his eyes off them as he went to the carriage. "Ek! What splendid boots! Here's some grease," called another driver with the grease-pot in his hand, as Seryoha mounted to his box and gathered up the reins. "Get them for nothing?" "So you're jealous, are you?" cried Seryoha, lifting up and tucking around his legs the tails of his overcoat. "Of with you, my darlings," he cried to the horses, cracking his knout; and the coach and barouche, with their occupants, trunks, and other belongings, were hidden in the thick autumnal mist, and rapidly whirled away over the wet road.The sick driver remained on the oven in the stifling hovel, and, not being able to throw off the phlegm, by a supreme effort turned over on the other side, and stopped coughing. Till evening there was a continual coming and going, and eating of meals in the room, and the sick man was not noticed. Before night came on, the cook climbed up on the oven, and got the ssheepskin coat from the farther side of his legs."Don't be angry with me, Nastasya," exclaimed the sick man. "I shall soon leave your room.""All right, all right, it's of no consequence," muttered the woman. "But what is the matter with you, uncle? Tell me." "All my inwards are gnawed out. God knows what it is!""And I don't doubt your gullet hurts you when you cough so!""It hurts me all over. My death is at hand, that's what it is. Okh! Okh! Okh!" groaned the sick man. "Mow cover up your legs this way," said Nastasya, comfortably arranging the overcoat so that it would cover him, and then getting down from the oven. During the night the room was faintly lighted by a single taper. Nastasya and a dozen drivers were sleeping, snoring loudly, on the floor and the benches. Only the sick man feebly hawked and coughed, and tossed on the oven.In the morning no sound was heard from him."I saw something wonderful in my sleep," said the cook, as she stretched herself in the early twilight the next morning. "I seemed to see Uncle Khveodor get down from the oven and go out to cut wood. 'Look here,' says he, 'I'm going to help you, Nastya;' and I says to him, 'How can you split wood?' but he seizes the hatchet, and begins to cut so fast, so fast that nothing but chips fly. 'Why,' sais I, 'haven't you been sick?'-'No,' says he, 'I am well,' and he kind of lifted up the ax, and I was scared; and I screamed and woke up. He can't be dead, can he? — Uncle Khveodor! Hey, uncle!"Feodor did not move."Now he can't be dead, can he? Go and see," said one of the drivers, who had just waked up. The emaciated hand, covered with reddish hair, that hung down from the oven, was cold and pale. "Go tell

the superintendent; it seems he is dead," said the driver. Feodor had no relatives. He was a stranger. On the next day they buried him in the new burying-ground behind the grove; and Nastasya for many days had to tell everybody of the vision which she had seen, and how she had been the first to discover that Uncle Feodor was dead.

Chapter 3

Spring had come. Along the wet streets of the city swift streamlets ran purling between heaps of dung-covered ice; bright were the colors of people's dresses and the tones of their voices, as they hurried along. In the walled gardens, the buds on the trees were burgeoning, and the fresh breeze swayed their branches with a soft gentle murmur. Everywhere transparent drops were forming and falling. ... The sparrows chattered incoherently, and fluttered about on their little wings. On the sunny side, on the walls, houses, and trees, all was full of life and brilliancy. The sky, and the earth, and the heart of man overflowed with youth and joy. In front of a great seigniorial mansion, in one of the principal streets, fresh straw had been laid down; in the house lay that same moribund invalid whom we saw hastening abroad. Near the closed doors of her room stood the sick lady's husband, and a lady well along in years. On a divan sat the confessor, with cast-down eyes, holding something wrapped up under his stole. In one corner, in a Voltaire easy-chair, reclined an old lady, the sick woman's mother, weeping violently. Near her stood the maid, holding a clean handkerchief, ready for the old lady's use when she should ask for it. Another maid was rubbing the old lady's temples, and blowing on her gray head underneath her cap. "Well, Christ be with you, my dear," said the husband to the elderly lady who was standing with him near the door: "she has such confidence in you; you know how to talk with her; go and speak with her a little while, my darling, please go!" He was about to open the door for her; but his cousin held him back, putting her handkerchief several times to her eyes, and shaking her head. "There, now she will not see that I have been weeping," said she, and, opening the door herself, went to the invalid. The husband was in the greatest excitement, and seemed quite beside himself. He started to go over to the old mother, but, after taking a few steps, he turned around, walked the length of the room, and approached the priest.The priest looked at him, raised his brows toward heaven, and sighed. The thick gray beard also was lifted and fell again."My God! My God!" said the husband."What can you do?" exclaimed the confessor, sighing and again lifting up his brows and beard, and letting them drop."And the old mother there!" exclaimed the husband almost in despair. "She will not be able to endure it. You see, she loved her so, she loved her so, that she ... I don't know. You might try, father, to calm her a little, and persuade her to go away."The confessor arose and went over to the old lady."It is true, no one can appreciate a mother's heart," said he, "but God is compassionate."

The old lady's face was suddenly convulsed, and a hysterical sob shook her frame."God is compassionate," repeated the priest, when she had grown a little calmer.

"I will tell you, in my parish there was a sick man, and much worse than Marya Dmitrievna, and he, though he was only a shopkeeper, was cured in a very short time, by means of herbs. And this very same shopkeeper is now in Moscow. I have told Vasili Dmitrievitch about him; it might be tried, you know. At all events, it would satisfy the invalid. With God, all things are possible.""No, she won't get well," persisted the old lady. "Why should God have taken her, and not me?"And again the hysterical sobbing overcame her, so violently that she fainted away. The invalid's husband hid his face in his hands, and rushed from the room.In the corridor the first person whom he met was a six-year-old boy, who was chasing his little sister with all his might and main."Do you bid me take the children to their mamasha?" inquired the nurse."No, she does not like to see them. They distract her."The lad stopped for a moment, and, after looking eagerly into his father's face, he cut a dido with his leg, and with merry shouts ran on."I'm playing whe's a horse, papasha," cried the little fellow, pointing to his sister. Meantime, in the next room, the cousin had taken her seat near the sick woman, and was skilfully bringing the conversation by degrees round so as to prepare her for the thought of death. The doctor stood by the window, mixing some draught.The invalid, in a white capote, all surrounded by cushions, was sitting up in bed, and gazed silently at her cousin."Ah, my dear!" she exclaimed, unexpectedly interrupting her, "don't try to prepare me; don't treat me like a little child! I am a Christian woman. I know all about it. I know that I have not long to live; I know that if my husband had heeded me sooner, I should have been in Italy, and possibly, yes probably, should have been well by this time. They all told him so. But what is to be done? It's as God saw fit. We all of us have sinned, I know that; but I hope in the mercy of God, that all will be pardoned, ought to be pardoned. I am trying to sound my own heart. I also have committed many sins, my love. But how much I have suffered in atonement! I have tried to bear my sufferings patiently." ... "Then shall I have the confessor come in, my love? It will be all the easier for you, after you have been absolved," said the cousin.The sick woman dropped her head in token of assent. "O God! Pardon me, a sinner," she whispered.The cousin went out, and beckoned to the confessor. "She is an angel," she said to the husband, with tears in her eyes. The husband wept. The priest went into the sick room; the old lady still remained unconscious, and in the room beyond all was perfectly quiet. At the end of five minutes the confessor came out, and, taking off his stole, arranged his hair."Thanks be to the Lord, she is calmer now," said he. "She wishes to see you."The cousin and the husband went to the sick room. The invalid, gently weeping, was gazing at the images. "I congratulate you, my love," said the husband."Thank you. How well I feel now! What ineffable joy I experience!" said the sick woman, and a faint smile played over her thin lips. "How merciful God is! Is He not? He is merciful and omnipotent!"And again with an eager prayer she turned her tearful eyes toward the holy images.Then suddenly something seemed to occur to her mind. She beckoned to her husband."You are never willing to do what I desire," said she, in a weak and querulous voice.The husband, stretching his neck, listened to her submissively."What is it, my love?""How many times I have told you that these

doctors don't know anything! There are simple women doctors; they make cures. That's what the good father said. ... A shopkeeper ... Send for him." ..."For whom, my love?" "Good heavens! You can never understand me." And the dying woman frowned, and closed her eyes. The doctor came to her, and took her hand. Her pulse was evidently growing feebler and feebler. He made a sign to the husband. The sick woman remarked this gesture, and looked around in fright. The cousin turned away to hide her tears. "Don't weep, don't torment yourselves on my account," said the invalid. "That takes away from me my last comfort.""You are an angel!" exclaimed the cousin, kissing her hand."No, kiss me here. They only kiss the hands of those who are dead. My God! My God!" That same evening the sick woman was a corpse, and the corpse in the coffin lay in the parlor of the great mansion. In the immense room, the doors of which were closed, sat the clerk, and with a monstrous voice read the Psalms of David through his nose. The bright glare from the wax candles in the lofty silver candelabra fell on the white brow of the dead, on the heavy waxen hands, on the stiff folds of the cerement which brought out into awful relief the knees and the feet.The clerk, not varying his tones, continued to read on steadily, and in the silence of the chamber of death his words rang out and died away. Occasionally from distant rooms came the voice of children and their romping. "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust."Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the fact of the earth. "The glor of the Lord shall endure forever." ... The face of the dead was stern and majestic. But there was no motion either on the pure cold brow, or the firmly closed lips. She was all attention! But did she perhaps now understand these majestic words?

Chapter 4

At the end of a month, over the grave of the dead a stone chapel was erected. Over the driver's there was as yet no stone, and only the fresh green grass sprouted over the mound which served as the sole record of the past existence of a man.

"It will be a sin and a shame, Seryoha," said the cook at the station-house one day, "if you don't buy a gravestone for Khveodor. You kept saying, 'it's winter, winter,' but now why don't you keep your word? I heard it all. He has already come back once to ask why you don't do it; if you don't buy him one, he will come again, he will choke you." "Well, now, have I denied it?" urged Seryoha. "I am going to buy him a stone, as I said I would. I can get one for a ruble and a half. I have not forgotten about it; I'll have to get it. As soon as I happen to be in town, then I'll buy him one.""You ought at least to put up a cross, that's what you ought to do," said an old driver. It isn't right at all. You're wearing those boots now." "Yes. But where could I get him a cross? You wouldn't want to make one out of an old piece of stick, would you?""What is that you say? Make one out of an old piece of stick? No; take your ax, go out to the wood a little earlier than usual, and you can hew him out one. Take a little ash tree, and you

can make one. You can have a covered cross. If you go then, you won't have to give the watchman a little drink of vodka. One doesn't want to give vodka for every trifle. Now, yesterday I broke my axletree, and I go and hew out a new one of green wood. No one said a word." Early the next morning, almost before dawn, Seryoha took his ax, and went to the wood.Over all things hung a cold, dead veil of falling mist, as yet untouched by the rays of the sun.The east gradually grew brighter, reflecting its pale light over the vault of heaven still covered by light clouds. Not a single grass-blade below, now a single leaf on the topmost branches of the tree-top, waved. Only from time to time could be heard the sound of fluttering wings in the thicket, or a rustling on the ground broke in on the silence of the forest. Suddenly a strange sound, foreign to this nature, resounded and died away at the edge of the forest. Again the noise sounded, and was monotonously repeated again and again, at the foot of one of the ancient, immovable trees. A tree-top began to shake in an extraordinary manner; the juicy leaves whispered something; and the warbler, sitting on one of the branches, flew off a couple of times with a shrill cry, and wagging its tail, finally perched on another tree. The ax rang more and more frequently; the white chips, full of sap, were scattered upon the dewy grass, and a slight cracking was heard beneath the blows. The tree trembled with all its body, leaned over, and quickly straightened itself, shuddering with fear on its base. For an instant all was still, then once more the tree bent over; a crash was heard in its trunk; and, tearing the thicket, and dragging down the branches, it plunged toward the damp earth. The noise of the ax and of footsteps ceased. The warbler uttered a cry, and flew higher. The branch which she grazed with her wings shook for an instant, and then came to rest like all the others their foliage. The trees, more joyously than ever, extended their motionless branches over the new space that had been made in their midst. The first sunbeams, breaking through the cloud, gleamed in the sky, and shone along the earth and heavens. The mist, in billows, began to float along the hollows; the dew, gleaming, played on the green foliage; translucent white clouds hurried along their azure path. The birds hopped about in the thicket, and, as if beside themselves, voiced their happiness; the juicy leaves joyfully and contentedly whispered on the tree-tops; and the branches of the living trees slowly and majestically waved over the dead and fallen tree.

Polikushka

OR
The Lot of a Wicked Court Servant.
Translated by Benjamin R Tucker 1890

Chapter 1

Polikey was a court man — one of the staff of servants belonging to the court household of a boyarinia (lady of the nobility).

He held a very insignificant position on the estate, and lived in a rather poor, small house with his wife and children.

The house was built by the deceased nobleman whose widow he still continued to serve, and may be described as follows: The four walls surrounding the one izba (room) were built of stone, and the interior was ten yards square. A Russian stove stood in the centre, around which was a free passage. Each corner was fenced off as a separate inclosure to the extent of several feet, and the one nearest to the door (the smallest of all) was known as "Polikey's corner." Elsewhere in the room stood the bed (with quilt, sheet, and cotton pillows), the cradle (with a baby lying therein), and the three-legged table, on which the meals were prepared and the family washing was done. At the latter also Polikey was at work on the preparation of some materials for use in his profession — that of an amateur veterinary surgeon. A calf, some hens, the family clothes and household utensils, together with seven persons, filled the little home to the utmost of its capacity. It would indeed have been almost impossible for them to move around had it not been for the convenience of the stove, on which some of them slept at night, and which served as a table in the day-time.

It seemed hard to realize how so many persons managed to live in such close quarters.

Polikey's wife, Akulina, did the washing, spun and wove, bleached her linen, cooked and baked, and found time also to quarrel and gossip with her neighbors.

The monthly allowance of food which they received from the noblewoman's house was amply sufficient for the whole family, and there was always enough meal left to make mash for the cow. Their fuel they got free, and likewise the food for the cattle. In addition they were given a small piece of land on which to raise vegetables. They had a cow, a calf, and a number of chickens to care for.

Polikey was employed in the stables to take care of two stallions, and, when necessary, to bleed the horses and cattle and clean their hoofs.

In his treatment of the animals he used syringes, plasters, and various other remedies and appliances of his own invention. For these services he received whatever provisions were required by his family, and a certain sum of money — all of which would have been sufficient to enable them to live comfortably and even happily, if their hearts had not been filled with the shadow of a great sorrow.

This shadow darkened the lives of the entire family.

Polikey, while young, was employed in a horse-breeding establishment in a neighboring village. The head stableman was a notorious horse-thief, known far and wide as a great rogue, who, for his many misdeeds, was finally exiled to Siberia. Under his instruction Polikey underwent a course of training, and, being but a boy, was easily induced to perform many evil deeds. He became so expert in the various kinds of wickedness practiced by his teacher that, though he many times would gladly have abandoned his evil ways, he could not, owing to the great hold these early-formed habits had upon him. His father and mother died when he was but a child, and he had no one to point out to him the paths of virtue.

In addition to his other numerous shortcomings, Polikey was fond of strong drink. He also had a habit of appropriating other people's property, when the opportunity offered of his doing so without being seen. Collar-straps, padlocks, perch-bolts, and things even of greater value belonging to others found their way with remarkable rapidity and in great quantities to Polikey's home. He did not, however, keep such things for his own use, but sold them whenever he could find a purchaser. His payment consisted chiefly of whiskey, though sometimes he received cash.

This sort of employment, as his neighbors said, was both light and profitable; it required neither education nor labor. It had one drawback, however, which was calculated to reconcile his victims to their losses: Though he could for a time have all his needs supplied without expending either labor or money, there was always the possibility of his methods being discovered; and this result was sure to be followed by a long term of imprisonment. This impending danger made life a burden for Polikey and his family.

Such a setback indeed very nearly happened to Polikey early in his career. He married while still young, and God gave him much happiness. His wife, who was a shepherd's daughter, was a strong, intelligent, hard-working woman. She bore him many children, each of whom was said to be better than the preceding one.

Polikey still continued to steal, but once was caught with some small articles belonging to others in his possession. Among them was a pair of leather reins, the property of another peasant, who beat him severely and reported him to his mistress.

From that time on Polikey was an object of suspicion, and he was twice again detected in similar escapades. By this time the people began to abuse him, and the clerk of the court threatened to recruit him into the army as a soldier (which is regarded by the peasants as a great punishment and disgrace). His noble mistress severely reprimanded him; his wife wept from grief for his downfall, and everything went from bad to worse.

Polikey, notwithstanding his weakness, was a good-natured sort of man, but his love of strong drink had so overcome every moral instinct that at times he was scarcely responsible for his actions. This habit he vainly endeavored to overcome. It often happened that when he returned home intoxicated, his wife, losing all patience, roundly cursed him and cruelly beat him. At times he would cry like a child, and bemoan his

fate, saying: “Unfortunate man that I am, what shall I do? LET MY EYES BURST INTO PIECES if I do not forever give up the vile habit! I will not again touch vodki.”

In spite of all his promises of reform, but a short period (perhaps a month) would elapse when Polikey would again mysteriously disappear from his home and be lost for several days on a spree.

“From what source does he get the money he spends so freely?” the neighbors inquired of each other, as they sadly shook their heads.

One of his most unfortunate exploits in the matter of stealing was in connection with a clock which belonged to the estate of his mistress. The clock stood in the private office of the noblewoman, and was so old as to have outlived its usefulness, and was simply kept as an heirloom. It so happened that Polikey went into the office one day when no one was present but himself, and, seeing the old clock, it seemed to possess a peculiar fascination for him, and he speedily transferred it to his person. He carried it to a town not far from the village, where he very readily found a purchaser.

As if purposely to secure his punishment, it happened that the storekeeper to whom he sold it proved to be a relative of one of the court servants, and who, when he visited his friend on the next holiday, related all about his purchase of the clock.

An investigation was immediately instituted, and all the details of Polikey’s transaction were brought to light and reported to his noble mistress. He was called into her presence, and, when confronted with the story of the theft, broke down and confessed all. He fell on his knees before the noblewoman and plead with her for mercy. The kind-hearted lady lectured him about God, the salvation of his soul, and his future life. She talked to him also about the misery and disgrace he brought upon his family, and altogether so worked upon his feelings that he cried like a child. In conclusion his kind mistress said: “I will forgive you this time on the condition that you promise faithfully to reform, and never again to take what does not belong to you.”

Polikey, still weeping, replied: “I will never steal again in all my life, and if I break my promise may the earth open and swallow me up, and let my body be burned with red-hot irons!”

Polikey returned to his home, and throwing himself on the oven spent the entire day weeping and repeating the promise made to his mistress.

From that time on he was not again caught stealing, but his life became extremely sad, for he was regarded with suspicion by every one and pointed to as a thief.

When the time came round for securing recruits for the army, all the peasants singled out Polikey as the first to be taken. The superintendent was especially anxious to get rid of him, and went to his mistress to induce her to have him sent away. The kind-hearted and merciful woman, remembering the peasant’s repentance, refused to grant the superintendent’s request, and told him he must take some other man in his stead.

Chapter 2

One evening Polikey was sitting on his bed beside the table, preparing some medicine for the cattle, when suddenly the door was thrown wide open, and Aksiutka, a young girl from the court, rushed in. Almost out of breath, she said: "My mistress has ordered you, Polikey Illitch son of Ilia, to come up to the court at once!"

The girl was standing and still breathing heavily from her late exertion as she continued: "Egor Mikhailovitch, the superintendent, has been to see our lady about having you drafted into the army, and, Polikey Illitch, your name was mentioned among others. Our lady has sent me to tell you to come up to the court immediately."

As soon as Aksiutka had delivered her message she left the room in the same abrupt manner in which she had entered.

Akulina, without saying a word, got up and brought her husband's boots to him. They were poor, worn-out things which some soldier had given him, and his wife did not glance at him as she handed them to him.

"Are you going to change your shirt, Illitch?" she asked, at last.

"No," replied Polikey.

Akulina did not once look at him all the time he was putting on his boots and preparing to go to the court. Perhaps, after all, it was better that she did not do so. His face was very pale and his lips trembled. He slowly combed his hair and was about to depart without saying a word, when his wife stopped him to arrange the ribbon on his shirt, and, after toying a little with his coat, she put his hat on for him and he left the little home.

Polikey's next-door neighbors were a joiner and his wife. A thin partition only separated the two families, and each could hear what the other said and did. Soon after Polikey's departure a woman was heard to say: "Well, Polikey Illitch, so your mistress has sent for you!"

The voice was that of the joiner's wife on the other side of the partition. Akulina and the woman had quarrelled that morning about some trifling thing done by one of Polikey's children, and it afforded her the greatest pleasure to learn that her neighbor had been summoned into the presence of his noble mistress. She looked upon such a circumstance as a bad omen. She continued talking to herself and said: "Perhaps she wants to send him to the town to make some purchases for her household. I did not suppose she would select such a faithful man as you are to perform such a service for her. If it should prove that she DOES want to send you to the next town, just buy me a quarter-pound of tea. Will you, Polikey Illitch?"

Poor Akulina, on hearing the joiner's wife talking so unkindly of her husband, could hardly suppress the tears, and, the tirade continuing, she at last became angry, and wished she could in some way punish her.

Forgetting her neighbor's unkindness, her thoughts soon turned in another direction, and glancing at her sleeping children she said to herself that they might soon be orphans and she herself a soldier's widow. This thought greatly distressed her, and burying her

face in her hands she seated herself on the bed, where several of her progeny were fast asleep. Presently a little voice interrupted her meditations by crying out, "Mamushka little mother, you are crushing me," and the child pulled her nightdress from under her mother's arms.

Akulina, with her head still resting on her hands, said: "Perhaps it would be better if we all should die. I only seem to have brought you into the world to suffer sorrow and misery."

Unable longer to control her grief, she burst into violent weeping, which served to increase the amusement of the joiner's wife, who had not forgotten the morning's squabble, and she laughed loudly at her neighbor's woe.

Chapter 3

About half an hour had passed when the youngest child began to cry and Akulina arose to feed it. She had by this time ceased to weep, and after feeding the infant she again fell into her old position, with her face buried in her hands. She was very pale, but this only increased her beauty. After a time she raised her head, and staring at the burning candle she began to question herself as to why she had married, and as to the reason that the Czar required so many soldiers.

Presently she heard steps outside, and knew that her husband was returning. She hurriedly wiped away the last traces of her tears as she arose to let him pass into the centre of the room.

Polikey made his appearance with a look of triumph on his face, threw his hat on the bed, and hastily removed his coat; but not a word did he utter.

Akulina, unable to restrain her impatience, asked, "Well, what did she want with you?"

"Pshaw!" he replied, "it is very well known that Polikushka is considered the worst man in the village; but when it comes to business of importance, who is selected then? Why, Polikushka, of course."

"What kind of business?" Akulina timidly inquired.

But Polikey was in no hurry to answer her question. He lighted his pipe with a very imposing air, and spit several times on the floor before he replied.

Still retaining his pompous manner, he said, "She has ordered me to go to a certain merchant in the town and collect a considerable sum of money."

"You to collect money?" questioned Akulina.

Polikey only shook his head and smiled significantly, saying:

"'You,' the mistress said to me, 'are a man resting under a grave suspicion — a man who is considered unsafe to trust in any capacity; but I have faith in you, and will intrust you with this important business of mine in preference to any one else.'"

Polikey related all this in a loud voice, so that his neighbor might hear what he had to say.

"'You promised me to reform,' my noble mistress said to me, 'and I will be the first to show you how much faith I have in your promise. I want you to ride into town, and, going to the principal merchant there, collect a sum of money from him and bring it to me.' I said to my mistress: 'Everything you order shall be done. I will only too gladly obey your slightest wish.'

"Then my mistress said: 'Do you understand, Polikey, that your future lot depends upon the faithful performance of this duty I impose upon you?' I replied: 'Yes, I understand everything, and feel that I will succeed in performing acceptably any task which you may impose upon me. I have been accused of every kind of evil deed that it is possible to charge a man with, but I have never done anything seriously wrong against you, your honor.' In this way I talked to our mistress until I succeeded in convincing her that my repentance was sincere, and she became greatly softened toward me, saying, 'If you are successful I will give you the first place at the court.'"

"And how much money are you to collect?" inquired Akulina.

"Fifteen hundred rubles," carelessly answered Polikey.

Akulina sadly shook her head as she asked, "When are you to start?"

"She ordered me to leave here to-morrow," Polikey replied. "'Take any horse you please,' she said. 'Come to the office, and I will see you there and wish you God-speed on your journey.'"

"Glory to Thee, O Lord!" said Akulina, as she arose and made the sign of the cross. "God, I am sure, will bless you, Illitch," she added, in a whisper, so that the people on the other side of the partition could not hear what she said, all the while holding on to his sleeve. "Illitch," she cried at last, excitedly, "for God's sake promise me that you will not touch a drop of vodki. Take an oath before God, and kiss the cross, so that I may be sure that you will not break your promise!"

Polikey replied in most contemptuous tones: "Do you think I will dare to touch vodki when I shall have such a large sum of money in my care?"

"Akulina, have a clean shirt ready for the morning," were his parting words for the night.

So Polikey and his wife went to sleep in a happy frame of mind and full of bright dreams for the future.

Chapter 4

Very early the next morning, almost before the stars had hidden themselves from view, there was seen standing before Polikey's home a low wagon, the same in which the superintendent himself used to ride; and harnessed to it was a large-boned, dark-brown mare, called for some unknown reason by the name of Baraban (drum). Aniutka, Polikey's eldest daughter, in spite of the heavy rain and the cold wind which was blowing, stood outside barefooted and held (not without some fear) the reins in ore

hand, while with the other she endeavored to keep her green and yellow overcoat wound around her body, and also to hold Polikey's sheepskin coat.

In the house there were the greatest noise and confusion. The morning was still so dark that the little daylight there was failed to penetrate through the broken panes of glass, the window being stuffed in many places with rags and paper to exclude the cold air.

Akulina ceased from her cooking for a while and helped to get Polikey ready for the journey. Most of the children were still in bed, very likely as a protection against the cold, for Akulina had taken away the big overcoat which usually covered them and had substituted a shawl of her own. Polikey's shirt was all ready, nice and clean, but his shoes badly needed repairing, and this fact caused his devoted wife much anxiety. She took from her own feet the thick woollen stockings she was wearing, and gave them to Polikey. She then began to repair his shoes, patching up the holes so as to protect his feet from dampness.

While this was going on he was sitting on the side of the bed with his feet dangling over the edge, and trying to turn the sash which confined his coat at the waist. He was anxious to look as clean as possible, and he declared his sash looked like a dirty rope.

One of his daughters, enveloped in a sheepskin coat, was sent to a neighbor's house to borrow a hat.

Within Polikey's home the greatest confusion reigned, for the court servants were constantly arriving with innumerable small orders which they wished Polikey to execute for them in town. One wanted needles, another tea, another tobacco, and last came the joiner's wife, who by this time had prepared her samovar, and, anxious to make up the quarrel of the previous day, brought the traveller a cup of tea.

Neighbor Nikita refused the loan of the hat, so the old one had to be patched up for the occasion. This occupied some time, as there were many holes in it.

Finally Polikey was all ready, and jumping on the wagon started on his journey, after first making the sign of the cross.

At the last moment his little boy, Mishka, ran to the door, begging to be given a short ride; and then his little daughter, Mashka, appeared on the scene and pleaded that she, too, might have a ride, declaring that she would be quite warm enough without furs.

Polikey stopped the horse on hearing the children, and Akulina placed them in the wagon, together with two others belonging to a neighbor — all anxious to have a short ride.

As Akulina helped the little ones into the wagon she took occasion to remind Polikey of the solemn promise he had made her not to touch a drop of vodki during the journey.

Polikey drove the children as far as the blacksmith's place, where he let them out of the wagon, telling them they must return home. He then arranged his clothing, and, setting his hat firmly on his head, started his horse on a trot.

The two children, Mishka and Mashka, both barefooted, started running at such a rapid pace that a strange dog from another village, seeing them flying over the road, dropped his tail between his legs and ran home squealing.

The weather was very cold, a sharp cutting wind blowing continuously; but this did not disturb Polikey, whose mind was engrossed with pleasant thoughts. As he rode through the wintry blasts he kept repeating to himself: "So I am the man they wanted to send to Siberia, and whom they threatened to enroll as a soldier — the same man whom every one abused, and said he was lazy, and who was pointed out as a thief and given the meanest work on the estate to do! Now I am going to receive a large sum of money, for which my mistress is sending me because she trusts me. I am also riding in the same wagon that the superintendent himself uses when he is riding as a representative of the court. I have the same harness, leather horse-collar, reins, and all the other gear."

Polikey, filled with pride at thought of the mission with which he had been intrusted, drew himself up with an air of pride, and, fixing his old hat more firmly on his head, buttoned his coat tightly about him and urged his horse to greater speed.

"Just to think," he continued; "I shall have in my possession three thousand half-rubles the peasant manner of speaking of money so as to make it appear a larger sum than it really is, and will carry them in my bosom. If I wished to I might run away to Odessa instead of taking the money to my mistress. But no; I will not do that. I will surely carry the money straight to the one who has been kind enough to trust me."

When Polikey reached the first kabak (tavern) he found that from long habit the mare was naturally turning her head toward it; but he would not allow her to stop, though money had been given him to purchase both food and drink. Striking the animal a sharp blow with the whip, he passed by the tavern. The performance was repeated when he reached the next kabak, which looked very inviting; but he resolutely set his face against entering, and passed on.

About noon he arrived at his destination, and getting down from the wagon approached the gate of the merchant's house where the servants of the court always stopped. Opening it he led the mare through, and (after unharnessing her) fed her. This done, he next entered the house and had dinner with the merchant's workingman, and to them he related what an important mission he had been sent on, making himself very amusing by the pompous air which he assumed. Dinner over, he carried a letter to the merchant which the noblewoman had given him to deliver.

The merchant, knowing thoroughly the reputation which Polikey bore, felt doubtful of trusting him with so much money, and somewhat anxiously inquired if he really had received orders to carry so many rubles.

Polikey tried to appear offended at this question, but did not succeed, and he only smiled.

The merchant, after reading the letter a second time and being convinced that all was right, gave Polikey the money, which he put in his bosom for safe-keeping.

On his way to the house he did not once stop at any of the shops he passed. The clothing establishments possessed no attractions for him, and after he had safely passed them all he stood for a moment, feeling very pleased that he had been able to withstand temptation, and then went on his way.

"I have money enough to buy up everything," he said; "but I will not do so."

The numerous commissions which he had received compelled him to go to the bazaar. There he bought only what had been ordered, but he could not resist the temptation to ask the price of a very handsome sheep-skin coat which attracted his attention. The merchant to whom he spoke looked at Polikey and smiled, not believing that he had sufficient money to purchase such an expensive coat. But Polikey, pointing to his breast, said that he could buy out the whole shop if he wished to. He thereupon ordered the shop-keeper to take his measure. He tried the coat on and looked himself over carefully, testing the quality and blowing upon the hair to see that none of it came out. Finally, heaving a deep sigh, he took it off.

"The price is too high," he said. "If you could let me have it for fifteen rubles— "

But the merchant cut him short by snatching the coat from him and throwing it angrily to one side.

Polikey left the bazaar and returned to the merchant's house in high spirits.

After supper he went out and fed the mare, and prepared everything for the night. Returning to the house he got up on the stove to rest, and while there he took out the envelope which contained the money and looked long and earnestly at it. He could not read, but asked one of those present to tell him what the writing on the envelope meant. It was simply the address and the announcement that it contained fifteen hundred rubles.

The envelope was made of common paper and was sealed with dark-brown sealing wax. There was one large seal in the centre and four smaller ones at the corners. Polikey continued to examine it carefully, even inserting his finger till he touched the crisp notes. He appeared to take a childish delight in having so much money in his possession.

Having finished his examination, he put the envelope inside the lining of his old battered hat, and placing both under his head he went to sleep; but during the night he frequently awoke and always felt to know if the money was safe. Each time that he found that it was safe he rejoiced at the thought that he, Polikey, abused and regarded by every one as a thief, was intrusted with the care of such a large sum of money, and also that he was about to return with it quite as safely as the superintendent himself could have done.

Chapter 5

Before dawn the next morning Polikey was up, and after harnessing the mare and looking in his hat to see that the money was all right, he started on his return journey.

Many times on the way Polikey took off his hat to see that the money was safe. Once he said to himself, "I think that perhaps it would be better if I should put it in my bosom." This would necessitate the untying of his sash, so he decided to keep it still in his hat, or until he should have made half the journey, when he would be compelled to stop to feed his horse and to rest.

He said to himself: "The lining is not sewn in very strongly and the envelope might fall out, so I think I had better not take off my hat until I reach home."

The money was safe — at least, so it seemed to him — and he began to think how grateful his mistress would be to him, and in his excited imagination he saw the five rubles he was so sure of receiving.

Once more he examined the hat to see that the money was safe, and finding everything all right he put on his hat and pulled it well down over his ears, smiling all the while at his own thoughts.

Akulina had carefully sewed all the holes in the hat, but it burst out in other places owing to Polikey's removing it so often.

In the darkness he did not notice the new rents, and tried to push the envelope further under the lining, and in doing so pushed one corner of it through the plush.

The sun was getting high in the heavens, and Polikey having slept but little the previous night and feeling its warm rays fell fast asleep, after first pressing his hat more firmly on his head. By this action he forced the envelope still further through the plush, and as he rode along his head bobbed up and down.

Polikey did not awake till he arrived near his own house, and his first act was to put his hand to his head to learn if his hat was all right. Finding that it was in its place, he did not think it necessary to examine it and see that the money was safe. Touching the mare gently with the whip she started into a trot, and as he rode along he arranged in his own mind how much he was to receive. With the air of a man already holding a high position at the court, he looked around him with an expression of lofty scorn on his face.

As he neared his house he could see before him the one room which constituted their humble home, and the joiner's wife next door carrying her rolls of linen. He saw also the office of the court and his mistress's house, where he hoped he would be able presently to prove that he was an honest, trustworthy man.

He reasoned with himself that any person can be abused by lying tongues, but when his mistress would see him she would say: "Well done, Polikey; you have shown that you can be honest. Here are three — it may be five — perhaps ten — rubles for you;" and also she would order tea for him, and might treat him to vodki — who knows?

The latter thought gave him great pleasure, as he was feeling very cold.

Speaking aloud he said: "What a happy holy-day we can have with ten rubles! Having so much money, I could pay Nikita the four rubles fifty kopecks which I owe him, and yet have some left to buy shoes for the children."

When near the house Polikey began to arrange his clothes, smoothing down his fur collar, re-tying his sash, and stroking his hair. To do the latter he had to take off his

hat, and when doing so felt in the lining for the envelope. Quicker and quicker he ran his hand around the lining, and not finding the money used both hands, first one and then the other. But the envelope was not to be found.

Polikey was by this time greatly distressed, and his face was white with fear as he passed his hand through the crown of his old hat. Polikey stopped the mare and began a diligent search through the wagon and its contents. Not finding the precious envelope, he felt in all his pockets — BUT THE MONEY COULD NOT BE FOUND!

Wildly clutching at his hair, he exclaimed: "Batiushka! What will I do now? What will become of me?" At the same time he realized that he was near his neighbors' house and could be seen by them; so he turned the mare around, and, pulling his hat down securely upon his head, he rode quickly back in search of his lost treasure.

Chapter 6

The whole day passed without any one in the village of Pokrovski having seen anything of Polikey. During the afternoon his mistress inquired many times as to his whereabouts, and sent Aksiutka frequently to Akulina, who each time sent back word that Polikey had not yet returned, saying also that perhaps the merchant had kept him, or that something had happened to the mare.

His poor wife felt a heavy load upon her heart, and was scarcely able to do her housework and put everything in order for the next day (which was to be a holy-day). The children also anxiously awaited their father's appearance, and, though for different reasons, could hardly restrain their impatience. The noblewoman and Akulina were concerned only in regard to Polikey himself, while the children were interested most in what he would bring them from the town.

The only news received by the villagers during the day concerning Polikey was to the effect that neighboring peasants had seen him running up and down the road and asking every one he met if he or she had found an envelope.

One of them had seen him also walking by the side of his tired-out horse. "I thought," said he, "that the man was drunk, and had not fed his horse for two days — the animal looked so exhausted."

Unable to sleep, and with her heart palpitating at every sound, Akulina lay awake all night vainly awaiting Polikey's return. When the cock crowed the third time she was obliged to get up to attend to the fire. Day was just dawning and the church-bells had begun to ring. Soon all the children were also up, but there was still no tidings of the missing husband and father.

In the morning the chill blasts of winter entered their humble home, and on looking out they saw that the houses, fields, and roads were thickly covered with snow. The day was clear and cold, as if befitting the holy-day they were about to celebrate. They were able to see a long distance from the house, but no one was in sight.

Akulina was busy baking cakes, and had it not been for the joyous shouts of the children she would not have known that Polikey was coming up the road, for a few minutes later he came in with a bundle in his hand and walked quietly to his corner. Akulina noticed that he was very pale and that his face bore an expression of suffering — as if he would like to have cried but could not do so. But she did not stop to study it, but excitedly inquired: "What! Illitch, is everything all right with you?"

He slowly muttered something, but his wife could not understand what he said.

"What!" she cried out, "have you been to see our mistress?"

Polikey still sat on the bed in his corner, glaring wildly about him, and smiling bitterly. He did not reply for a long time, and Akulina again cried:

"Eh? Illitch! Why don't you answer me? Why don't you speak?"

Finally he said: "Akulina, I delivered the money to our mistress; and oh, how she thanked me!" Then he suddenly looked about him, with an anxious, startled air, and with a sad smile on his lips. Two things in the room seemed to engross the most of his attention: the baby in the cradle, and the rope which was attached to the ladder. Approaching the cradle, he began with his thin fingers quickly to untie the knot in the rope by which the two were connected. After untying it he stood for a few moments looking silently at the baby.

Akulina did not notice this proceeding, and with her cakes on the board went to place them in a corner.

Polikey quickly hid the rope beneath his coat, and again seated himself on the bed.

"What is it that troubles you, Illitch?" inquired Akulina. "You are not yourself."

"I have not slept," he answered.

Suddenly a dark shadow crossed the window, and a minute later the girl Aksiutka quickly entered the room, exclaiming:

"The boyarinia commands you, Polikey Illitch, to come to her this moment!"

Polikey looked first at Akulina and then at the girl.

"This moment!" he cried. "What more is wanted?"

He spoke the last sentence so softly that Akulina became quieted in her mind, thinking that perhaps their mistress intended to reward her husband.

"Say that I will come immediately," he said.

But Polikey failed to follow the girl, and went instead to another place.

From the porch of his house there was a ladder reaching to the attic. Arriving at the foot of the ladder Polikey looked around him, and seeing no one about, he quickly ascended to the garret.

Meanwhile the girl had reached her mistress's house.

"What does it mean that Polikey does not come?" said the noblewoman impatiently. "Where can he be? Why does he not come at once?"

Aksiutka flew again to his house and demanded to see Polikey.

"He went a long time ago," answered Akulina, and looking around with an expression of fear on her face, she added, "He may have fallen asleep somewhere on the way."

About this time the joiner's wife, with hair unkempt and clothes bedraggled, went up to the loft to gather the linen which she had previously put there to dry. Suddenly a cry of horror was heard, and the woman, with her eyes closed, and crazed by fear, ran down the ladder like a cat.

"Illitch," she cried, "has hanged himself!"

Poor Akulina ran up the ladder before any of the people, who had gathered from the surrounding houses, could prevent her. With a loud shriek she fell back as if dead, and would surely have been killed had not one of the spectators succeeded in catching her in his arms.

Before dark the same day a peasant of the village, while returning from the town, found the envelope containing Polikey's money on the roadside, and soon after delivered it to the boyarinia.

God Sees the Truth, but Waits

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1925

IN the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitritch Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much, but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksionov was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-bye to his family, his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitritch, do not start to-day; I have had a bad dream about you."

Aksionov laughed, and said, "You are afraid that when I get to the fair I shall go on a spree."

His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream. I dreamt you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite grey."

Aksionov laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods, and bring you some presents from the fair."

So he said good-bye to his family, and drove away.

When he had travelled half-way, he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Aksionov's habit to sleep late, and, wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused his driver before dawn, and told him to put in the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey.

When he had gone about twenty-five miles, he stopped for the horses to be fed. Aksionov rested awhile in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch, and, ordering a samovar to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troika drove up with tinkling bells and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Aksionov and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Aksionov answered him fully, and said, "Won't you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him, "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow-merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

Aksionov wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am travelling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me."

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said, "I am the police-officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police-officer unstrapped Aksionov's luggage and searched it. Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksionov looked, and seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

"How is it there is blood on this knife?"

Aksionov tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: "I — don't know — not mine."

Then the police-officer said: "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only person who could have done it. The house was locked from inside, and no one else was there. Here is this blood-stained knife in your bag, and your face and manner betray you! Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole?"

Aksionov swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand rubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he were guilty.

The police-officer ordered the soldiers to bind Aksionov and to put him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Aksionov crossed himself and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Enquiries as to his character were made in Vladimir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a good man. Then the trial came on: he was charged with murdering a merchant from Ryazan, and robbing him of twenty thousand rubles.

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in jail. At first she was not allowed to see him; but after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken to him. When she saw her husband in prison-dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down, and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her, and sat down near him. She told him of things at home, and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked, "What can we do now?"

"We must petition the Czar not to let an innocent man perish."

His wife told him that she had sent a petition to the Czar, but it had not been accepted.

Aksionov did not reply, but only looked downcast.

Then his wife said, "It was not for nothing I dreamt your hair had turned grey. You remember? You should not have started that day." And passing her fingers through his hair, she said: "Vanya dearest, tell your wife the truth; was it not you who did it?"

"So you, too, suspect me!" said Aksionov, and, hiding his face in his hands, he began to weep. Then a soldier came to say that the wife and children must go away; and Aksionov said good-bye to his family for the last time.

When they were gone, Aksionov recalled what had been said, and when he remembered that his wife also had suspected him, he said to himself, "It seems that only God can know the truth; it is to Him alone we must appeal, and from Him alone expect mercy."

And Aksionov wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope, and only prayed to God.

Aksionov was condemned to be flogged and sent to the mines. So he was flogged with a knot, and when the wounds made by the knot were healed, he was driven to Siberia with other convicts.

For twenty-six years Aksionov lived as a convict in Siberia. His hair turned white as snow, and his beard grew long, thin, and grey. All his mirth went; he stooped; he walked slowly, spoke little, and never laughed, but he often prayed.

In prison Aksionov learnt to make boots, and earned a little money, with which he bought The Lives of the Saints. He read this book when there was light enough in the prison; and on Sundays in the prison-church he read the lessons and sang in the choir; for his voice was still good.

The prison authorities liked Aksionov for his meekness, and his fellow-prisoners respected him: they called him "Grandfather," and "The Saint." When they wanted to petition the prison authorities about anything, they always made Aksionov their spokesman, and when there were quarrels among the prisoners they came to him to put things right, and to judge the matter.

No news reached Aksionov from his home, and he did not even know if his wife and children were still alive.

One day a fresh gang of convicts came to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners collected round the new ones and asked them what towns or villages they came from, and what they were sentenced for. Among the rest Aksionov sat down near the newcomers, and listened with downcast air to what was said.

One of the new convicts, a tall, strong man of sixty, with a closely-cropped grey beard, was telling the others what he had been arrested for.

"Well, friends," he said, "I only took a horse that was tied to a sledge, and I was arrested and accused of stealing. I said I had only taken it to get home quicker, and had then let it go; besides, the driver was a personal friend of mine. So I said, 'It's all right.' 'No,' said they, 'you stole it.' But how or where I stole it they could not say. I once really did something wrong, and ought by rights to have come here long ago, but that time I was not found out. Now I have been sent here for nothing at all. . . . Eh, but it's lies I'm telling you; I've been to Siberia before, but I did not stay long."

"Where are you from?" asked some one.

"From Vladimir. My family are of that town. My name is Makar, and they also call me Semyonich."

Aksionov raised his head and said: "Tell me, Semyonich, do you know anything of the merchants Aksionov of Vladimir? Are they still alive?"

"Know them? Of course I do. The Aksionovs are rich, though their father is in Siberia: a sinner like ourselves, it seems! As for you, Gran'dad, how did you come here?"

Aksionov did not like to speak of his misfortune. He only sighed, and said, "For my sins I have been in prison these twenty-six years."

"What sins?" asked Makar Semyonich.

But Aksionov only said, "Well, well — I must have deserved it!" He would have said no more, but his companions told the newcomers how Aksionov came to be in Siberia; how some one had killed a merchant, and had put the knife among Aksionov's things, and Aksionov had been unjustly condemned.

When Makar Semyonich heard this, he looked at Aksionov, slapped his own knee, and exclaimed, "Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you've grown, Gran'dad!"

The others asked him why he was so surprised, and where he had seen Aksionov before; but Makar Semyonich did not reply. He only said: "It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

These words made Aksionov wonder whether this man knew who had killed the merchant; so he said, "Perhaps, Semyonich, you have heard of that affair, or maybe you've seen me before?"

"How could I help hearing? The world's full of rumours. But it's a long time ago, and I've forgotten what I heard."

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksionov.

Makar Semyonich laughed, and replied: "It must have been him in whose bag the knife was found! If some one else hid the knife there, 'He's not a thief till he's caught,' as the saying is. How could any one put a knife into your bag while it was under your head? It would surely have woke you up."

When Aksionov heard these words, he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Aksionov lay awake. He felt terribly unhappy, and all sorts of images rose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite little, as they were at that time: one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast. And then he remembered himself as he used to be — young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar in the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

"And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Aksionov. And his anger was so great against Makar Semyonich that he longed for vengeance, even if he himself should

perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could get no peace. During the day he did not go near Makar Semyonich, nor even look at him.

A fortnight passed in this way. Aksionov could not sleep at night, and was so miserable that he did not know what to do.

One night as he was walking about the prison he noticed some earth that came rolling out from under one of the shelves on which the prisoners slept. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makar Semyonich crept out from under the shelf, and looked up at Aksionov with frightened face. Aksionov tried to pass without looking at him, but Makar seized his hand and told him that he had dug a hole under the wall, getting rid of the earth by putting it into his high-boots, and emptying it out every day on the road when the prisoners were driven to their work.

"Just you keep quiet, old man, and you shall get out too. If you blab, they'll flog the life out of me, but I will kill you first."

Aksionov trembled with anger as he looked at his enemy. He drew his hand away, saying, "I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago! As to telling of you — I may do so or not, as God shall direct."

Next day, when the convicts were led out to work, the convoy soldiers noticed that one or other of the prisoners emptied some earth out of his boots. The prison was searched and the tunnel found. The Governor came and questioned all the prisoners to find out who had dug the hole. They all denied any knowledge of it. Those who knew would not betray Makar Semyonich, knowing he would be flogged almost to death. At last the Governor turned to Aksionov whom he knew to be a just man and said:

"You are a truthful old man; tell me, before God, who dug the hole?"

Makar Semyonich stood as if he were quite unconcerned, looking at the Governor and not so much as glancing at Aksionov. Aksionov's lips and hands trembled, and for a long time he could not utter a word. He thought, "Why should I screen him who ruined my life? Let him pay for what I have suffered. But if I tell, they will probably flog the life out of him and maybe I suspect him wrongly. And, after all, what good would it be to me?"

"Well, old man," repeated the Governor, "tell me the truth: who has been digging under the wall?"

Aksionov glanced at Makar Semyonich, and said, "I cannot say, your honour. It is not God's will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am in your hands."

However much the Governor tried, Aksionov would say no more, and so the matter had to be left.

That night, when Aksionov was lying on his bed and just beginning to doze, some one came quietly and sat down on his bed. He peered through the darkness and recognized Makar.

"What more do you want of me?" asked Aksionov. "Why have you come here?"

Makar Semyonich was silent. So Aksionov sat up and said, "What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!"

Makar Semyonich bent close over Aksionov, and whispered, "Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!"

"What for?" asked Aksionov.

"It was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife among your things. I meant to kill you too, but I heard a noise outside, so I hid the knife in your bag and escaped out of the window."

Aksionov was silent, and did not know what to say. Makar Semyonich slid off the bed-shelf and knelt upon the ground. "Ivan Dmitritch," said he, "forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home."

"It is easy for you to talk," said Aksionov, "but I have suffered for you these twenty-six years. Where could I go to now? . . . My wife is dead, and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go. . . ."

Makar Semyonich did not rise, but beat his head on the floor. "Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!" he cried. "When they flogged me with the knot it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now . . . yet you had pity on me, and did not tell. For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch that I am!" And he began to sob.

When Aksionov heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep.

"God will forgive you!" said he. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words his heart grew light, and the longing for home left him. He no longer had any desire to leave the prison, but only hoped for his last hour to come.

In spite of what Aksionov had said, Makar Semyonich confessed his guilt. But when the order for his release came, Aksionov was already dead.

The Prisoner of the Caucasus

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude 1906

Chapter 1

AN officer named Zhílin was serving in the army in the Caucasus.

One day he received a letter from home. It was from his mother, who wrote: ‘I am getting old, and should like to see my dear son once more before I die. Come and say good-bye to me and bury me, and then, if God pleases, return to service again with my blessing. But I have found a girl for you, who is sensible and good and has some property. If you can love her, you might marry her and remain at home.’

Zhílin thought it over. It was quite true, the old lady was failing fast and he might not have another chance to see her alive. He had better go, and, if the girl was nice, why not marry her?

So he went to his Colonel, obtained leave of absence, said good-bye to his comrades, stood the soldiers four pailfuls of vódka as a farewell treat, and got ready to go.

It was a time of war in the Caucasus. The roads were not safe by night or day. If ever a Russian ventured to ride or walk any distance away from his fort, the Tartars killed him or carried him off to the hills. So it had been arranged that twice every week a body of soldiers should march from one fortress to the next to convoy travellers from point to point.

It was summer. At daybreak the baggage-train got ready under shelter of the fortress; the soldiers marched out; and all started along the road. Zhílin was on horseback, and a cart with his things went with the baggage-train. They had sixteen miles to go. The baggage-train moved slowly; sometimes the soldiers stopped, or perhaps a wheel would come off one of the carts, or a horse refuse to go on, and then everybody had to wait.

When by the sun it was already past noon, they had not gone half the way. It was dusty and hot, the sun was scorching and there was no shelter anywhere: a bare plain all round — not a tree, not a bush, by the road.

Zhílin rode on in front, and stopped, waiting for the baggage to overtake him. Then he heard the signal-horn sounded behind him: the company had again stopped. So he began to think: ‘Hadn’t I better ride on by myself? My horse is a good one: if the Tartars do attack me, I can gallop away. Perhaps, however, it would be wiser to wait.’

As he sat considering, Kostílin, an officer carrying a gun, rode up to him and said:

‘Come along, Zhílin, let’s go on by ourselves. It’s dreadful; I am famished, and the heat is terrible. My shirt is wringing wet.’

Kostílin was a stout, heavy man, and the perspiration was running down his red face. Zhílin thought awhile, and then asked: ‘Is your gun loaded?’

‘Yes it is.’

‘Well, then, let’s go, but on condition that we keep together.’

So they rode forward along the road across the plain, talking, but keeping a look-out on both sides. They could see afar all round. But after crossing the plain the road ran through a valley between two hills, and Zhílin said: 'We had better climb that hill and have a look round, or the Tartars may be on us before we know it.'

But Kostílin answered: 'What's the use? Let us go on.'

Zhílin, however, would not agree.

'No,' he said; 'you can wait here if you like, but I'll go and look round.' And he turned his horse to the left, up the hill. Zhílin's horse was a hunter, and carried him up the hillside as if it had wings. (He had bought it for a hundred roubles as a colt out of a herd, and had broken it in himself.) Hardly had he reached the top of the hill, when he saw some thirty Tartars not much more than a hundred yards ahead of him. As soon as he caught sight of them he turned round but the Tartars had also seen him, and rushed after him at full gallop, getting their guns out as they went. Down galloped Zhílin as fast as the horse's legs could go, shouting to Kostílin: 'Get your gun ready!'

And, in thought, he said to his horse: 'Get me well out of this, my pet; don't stumble, for if you do it's all up. Once I reach the gun, they shan't take me prisoner.'

But, instead of waiting, Kostílin, as soon as he caught sight of the Tartars, turned back towards the fortress at full speed, whipping his horse now on one side now on the other, and its switching tail was all that could be seen of him in the dust.

Zhílin saw it was a bad look-out; the gun was gone, and what could he do with nothing but his sword? He turned his horse towards the escort, thinking to escape, but there were six Tartars rushing to cut him off. His horse was a good one, but theirs were still better; and besides, they were across his path. He tried to rein in his horse and to turn another way, but it was going so fast it could not stop, and dashed on straight towards the Tartars. He saw a red-bearded Tartar on a grey horse, with his gun raised, come at him, yelling and showing his teeth.

'Ah,' thought Zhílin, 'I know you, devils that you are. If you take me alive, you'll put me in a pit and flog me. I will not be taken alive!'

Zhílin, though not a big fellow, was brave. He drew his sword and dashed at the red-bearded Tartar thinking: 'Either I'll ride him down, or disable him with my sword.'

He was still a horse's length away from him, when he was fired at from behind, and his horse was hit. It fell to the ground with all its weight, pinning Zhílin to the earth.

He tried to rise, but two ill-savoured Tartars were already sitting on him and binding his hands behind his back. He made an effort and flung them off, but three others jumped from their horses and began beating his head with the butts of their guns. His eyes grew dim, and he fell back. The Tartars seized him, and, taking spare girths from their saddles, twisted his hands behind him and tied them with a Tartar knot. They knocked his cap off, pulled off his boots, searched him all over, tore his clothes, and took his money and his watch.

Zhílin looked round at his horse. There it lay on its side, poor thing, just as it had fallen; struggling, its legs in the air, unable to touch the ground. There was a hole in

its head, and black blood was pouring out, turning the dust to mud for a couple of feet around.

One of the Tartars went up to the horse and began taking the saddle off, it still kicked, so he drew a dagger and cut its windpipe. A whistling sound came from its throat, the horse gave one plunge, and all was over.

The Tartars took the saddle and trappings. The red-bearded Tartar mounted his horse, and the others lifted Zhílin into the saddle behind him. To prevent his falling off, they strapped him to the Tartar's girdle; and then they all rode away to the hills.

So there sat Zhílin, swaying from side to side, his head striking against the Tartar's stinking back. He could see nothing but that muscular back and sinewy neck, with its closely shaven, bluish nape. Zhílin's head was wounded: the blood had dried over his eyes, and he could neither shift his position on the saddle nor wipe the blood off. His arms were bound so tightly that his collar-bones ached.

They rode up and down hills for a long way. Then they reached a river which they forded, and came to a hard road leading across a valley.

Zhílin tried to see where they were going, but his eyelids were stuck together with blood, and he could not turn.

Twilight began to fall; they crossed another river and rode up a stony hillside. There was a smell of smoke here, and dogs were barking. They had reached an Aoul (a Tartar village). The Tartars got off their horses; Tartar children came and stood round Zhílin, shrieking with pleasure and throwing stones at him.

The Tartar drove the children away, took Zhílin off the horse, and called his man. A Nogáy with high cheek-bones, and nothing on but a shirt (and that so torn that his breast was all bare), answered the call. The Tartar gave him an order. He went and fetched shackles: two blocks of oak with iron rings attached, and a clasp and lock fixed to one of the rings.

They untied Zhílin's arms, fastened the shackles on his leg, and dragged him to a barn, where they pushed him in and locked the door.

Zhílin fell on a heap of manure. He lay still awhile then groped about to find a soft place, and settled down.

Chapter 2

That night Zhílin hardly slept at all. It was the time of year when the nights are short, and daylight soon showed itself through a chink in the wall. He rose, scratched to make the chink bigger, and peeped out.

Through the hole he saw a road leading down-hill; to the right was a Tartar hut with two trees near it, a black dog lay on the threshold, and a goat and kids were moving about wagging their tails. Then he saw a young Tartar woman in a long, loose, bright-coloured gown, with trousers and high boots showing from under it. She had a coat thrown over her head, on which she carried a large metal jug filled with water.

She was leading by the hand a small, closely-shaven Tartar boy, who wore nothing but a shirt; and as she went along balancing herself, the muscles of her back quivered. This woman carried the water into the hut, and, soon after, the red-bearded Tartar of yesterday came out dressed in a silk tunic, with a silver-hilted dagger hanging by his side, shoes on his bare feet, and a tall black sheepskin cap set far back on his head. He came out, stretched himself, and stroked his red beard. He stood awhile, gave an order to his servant, and went away.

Then two lads rode past from watering their horses. The horses' noses were wet. Some other closely-shaven boys ran out, without any trousers, and wearing nothing but their shirts. They crowded together, came to the barn, picked up a twig, and began pushing it in at the chink. Zhílin gave a shout, and the boys shrieked and scampered off, their little bare knees gleaming as they ran.

Zhílin was very thirsty: his throat was parched, and he thought: 'If only they would come and so much as look at me!'

Then he heard some one unlocking the barn. The red-bearded Tartar entered, and with him was another a smaller man, dark, with bright black eyes, red cheeks and a short beard. He had a merry face, and was always laughing. This man was even more richly dressed than the other. He wore a blue silk tunic trimmed with gold, a large silver dagger in his belt, red morocco slippers worked with silver, and over these a pair of thick shoes, and he had a white sheepskin cap on his head.

The red-bearded Tartar entered, muttered something as if he were annoyed, and stood leaning against the doorpost, playing with his dagger, and glaring askance at Zhílin, like a wolf. The dark one, quick and lively and moving as if on springs, came straight up to Zhílin, squatted down in front of him, slapped him on the shoulder, and began to talk very fast in his own language. His teeth showed, and he kept winking, clicking his tongue, and repeating, 'Good Russ, good Russ.'

Zhílin could not understand a word, but said, 'Drink! give me water to drink!'

The dark man only laughed. 'Good Russ,' he said, and went on talking in his own tongue.

Zhílin made signs with lips and hands that he wanted something to drink.

The dark man understood, and laughed. Then he looked out of the door, and called to some one: 'Dina!'

A little girl came running in: she was about thirteen, slight, thin, and like the dark Tartar in face. Evidently she was his daughter. She, too, had clear black eyes, and her face was good-looking. She had on a long blue gown with wide sleeves, and no girdle. The hem of her gown, the front, and the sleeves, were trimmed with red. She wore trousers and slippers, and over the slippers stouter shoes with high heels. Round her neck she had a necklace made of Russian silver coins. She was bareheaded, and her black hair was plaited with a ribbon and ornamented with gilt braid and silver coins.

Her father gave an order, and she ran away and returned with a metal jug. She handed the water to Zhílin and sat down, crouching so that her knees were as high as

her head, and there she sat with wide open eyes watching Zhílin drink, as though he were a wild animal.

When Zhílin handed the empty jug back to her, she gave such a sudden jump back, like a wild goat, that it made her father laugh. He sent her away for something else. She took the jug, ran out, and brought back some unleavened bread on a round board, and once more sat down, crouching, and looking on with staring eves.

Then the Tartars went away and again locked the door.

After a while the Nogáy came and said: 'Ayda, the master, Ayda!'

He, too, knew no Russian. All Zhílin could make out was that he was told to go somewhere.

Zhílin followed the Nógay, but limped, for the shackles dragged his feet so that he could hardly step at all. On getting out of the barn he saw a Tartar village of about ten houses, and a Tartar church with a small tower. Three horses stood saddled before one of the houses; little boys were holding them by the reins. The dark Tartar came out of this house, beckoning with his hand for Zhílin to follow him. Then he laughed, said something in his own language, and returned into the house.

Zhílin entered. The room was a good one: the walls smoothly plastered with clay. Near the front wall lay a pile of bright-coloured feather beds; the side walls were covered with rich carpets used as hangings, and on these were fastened guns, pistols and swords, all inlaid with silver. Close to one of the walls was a small stove on a level with the earthen floor. The floor itself was as clean as a thrashing-ground. A large space in one corner was spread over with felt, on which were rugs, and on these rugs were cushions stuffed with down. And on these cushions sat five Tartars, the dark one, the red-haired one, and three guests. They were wearing their indoor slippers, and each had a cushion behind his back. Before them were standing millet cakes on a round board, melted butter in a bowl and a jug of buza, or Tartar beer. They ate both cakes and butter with their hands.

The dark man jumped up and ordered Zhílin to be placed on one side, not on the carpet but on the bare ground, then he sat down on the carpet again, and offered millet cakes and buza to his guests. The servant made Zhílin sit down, after which he took off his own overshoes, put them by the door where the other shoes were standing, and sat down nearer to his masters on the felt, watching them as they ate, and licking his lips.

The Tartars ate as much as they wanted, and a woman dressed in the same way as the girl — in a long gown and trousers, with a kerchief on her head — came and took away what was left, and brought a handsome basin, and an ewer with a narrow spout. The Tartars washed their hands, folded them, went down on their knees, blew to the four quarters, and said their prayers. After they had talked for a while, one of the guests turned to Zhílin and began to speak in Russian.

'You were captured by Kazi-Mohammed,' he said, and pointed at the red-bearded Tartar. 'And Kazi-Mohammed has given you to Abdul Murat,' pointing at the dark one. 'Abdul Murat is now your master.'

Zhílin was silent. Then Abdul Murat began to talk, laughing, pointing to Zhílin, and repeating, 'Soldier Russ, good Russ.'

The interpreter said, 'He orders you to write home and tell them to send a ransom, and as soon as the money comes he will set you free.'

Zhílin thought for a moment, and said, 'How much ransom does he want?'

The Tartars talked awhile, and then the interpreter said, 'Three thousand roubles.'

'No,' said Zhílin,' I can't pay so much.'

Abdul jumped up and, waving his arms, talked to Zhílin' thinking, as before, that he would understand. The interpreter translated: 'How much will you give?'

Zhílin considered, and said, 'Five hundred roubles.' At this the Tartars began speaking very quickly, all together. Abdul began to shout at the red-bearded one, and jabbered so fast that the spittle spurted out of his mouth. The red-bearded one only screwed up his eyes and clicked his tongue.

They quietened down after a while, and the interpreter said, 'Five hundred roubles is not enough for the master. He paid two hundred for you himself. Kazi-Mohammed was in debt to him, and he took you in payment. Three thousand roubles! Less than that won't do. If you refuse to write, you will be put into a pit and flogged with a whip!'

'Eh!' thought Zhílin, 'the more one fears them the worse it will be.'

So he sprang to his feet, and said, 'You tell that dog that if he tries to frighten me I will not write at all, and he will get nothing. I never was afraid of you dogs, and never will be!'

The interpreter translated, and again they all began to talk at once.

They jabbered for a long time, and then the dark man jumped up, came to Zhílin, and said: 'Dzhigit Russ, dzhigit Russ!' (Dzhigit in their language means 'brave.') And he laughed, and said something to the interpreter, who translated: 'One thousand roubles will satisfy him.'

Zhílin stuck to it: 'I will not give more than five hundred. And if you kill me you'll get nothing at all.'

The Tartars talked awhile, then sent the servant out to fetch something, and kept looking, now at Zhílin, now at the door. The servant returned, followed by a stout, bare-footed, tattered man, who also had his leg shackled.

Zhílin gasped with surprise: it was Kostílin. He, too, had been taken. They were put side by side, and began to tell each other what had occurred. While they talked, the Tartars looked on in silence. Zhílin related what had happened to him; and Kostílin told how his horse had stopped, his gun missed fire, and this same Abdul had overtaken and captured him.

Abdul jumped up, pointed to Kostílin, and said something. The interpreter translated that they both now belonged to one master, and the one who first paid the ransom would be set free first.

‘There now,’ he said to Zhílin, ‘you get angry, but your comrade here is gentle; he has written home, and they will send five thousand roubles. So he will be well fed and well treated.’

Zhílin replied: ‘My comrade can do as he likes; maybe he is rich, I am not. It must be as I said. Kill me, if you like — you will gain nothing by it; but I will not write for more than five hundred roubles.’

They were silent. Suddenly up sprang Abdul, brought a little box, took out a pen, ink, and a bit of paper, gave them to Zhílin, slapped him on the shoulder, and made a sign that he should write. He had agreed to take five hundred roubles.

‘Wait a bit!’ said Zhílin to the interpreter; ‘tell him that he must feed us properly, give us proper clothes and boots, and let us be together. It will be more cheerful for us. And he must have these shackles taken off our feet,’ and Zhílin looked at his master and laughed.

The master also laughed, heard the interpreter, and said: ‘I will give them the best of clothes: a cloak and boots fit to be married in. I will feed them like princes; and if they like they can live together in the barn. But I can’t take off the shackles, or they will run away. They shall be taken off, however, at night.’ And he jumped up and slapped Zhílin on the shoulder, exclaiming: ‘You good, I good!’

Zhílin wrote the letter, but addressed it wrongly, so that it should not reach its destination, thinking to himself: ‘I’ll run away!’

Zhílin and Kostílin were taken back to the barn and given some maize straw, a jug of water, some bread, two old cloaks, and some worn-out military boots — evidently taken from the corpses of Russian soldiers, At night their shackles were taken off their feet, and they were locked up in the barn.

Chapter 3

Zhílin and his friend lived in this way for a whole month. The master always laughed and said: ‘You, Iván, good! I, Abdul, good!’ But he fed them badly giving them nothing but unleavened bread of millet-flour baked into flat cakes, or sometimes only unbaked dough.

Kostílin wrote home a second time, and did nothing but mope and wait for the money to arrive. He would sit for days together in the barn sleeping, or counting the days till a letter could come.

Zhílin knew his letter would reach no one, and he did not write another. He thought: ‘Where could my mother get enough money to ransom me? As it is she lived chiefly on what I sent her. If she had to raise five hundred roubles, she would be quite ruined. With God’s help I’ll manage to escape!’

So he kept on the look-out, planning how to run away.

He would walk about the Aoul whistling; or would sit working, modelling dolls of clay, or weaving baskets out of twigs: for Zhílin was clever with his hands.

Once he modelled a doll with a nose and hands and feet and with a Tartar gown on, and put it up on the roof. When the Tartar women came out to fetch water, the master's daughter, Dina, saw the doll and called the women, who put down their jugs and stood looking and laughing. Zhílin took down the doll and held it out to them. They laughed, but dared not take it. He put down the doll and went into the barn, waiting to see what would happen.

Dina ran up to the doll, looked round, seized it, and ran away.

In the morning, at daybreak, he looked out. Dina came out of the house and sat down on the threshold with the doll, which she had dressed up in bits of red stuff, and she rocked it like a baby, singing a Tartar lullaby. An old woman came out and scolded her, and snatching the doll away she broke it to bits, and sent Dina about her business.

But Zhílin made another doll, better than the first, and gave it to Dina. Once Dina brought a little jug, put it on the ground, sat down gazing at him, and laughed, pointing to the jug.

'What pleases her so?' wondered Zhílin. He took the jug thinking it was water, but it turned out to be milk. He drank the milk and said: 'That's good!'

How pleased Dina was! 'Good, Iván, good!' said she, and she jumped up and clapped her hands. Then, seizing the jug, she ran away. After that, she stealthily brought him some milk every day.

The Tartars make a kind of cheese out of goat's milk, which they dry on the roofs of their houses; and sometimes, on the sly, she brought him some of this cheese. And once, when Abdul had killed a sheep she brought Zhílin a bit of mutton in her sleeve. She would just throw the things down and run away.

One day there was a heavy storm, and the rain fell in torrents for a whole hour. All the streams became turbid. At the ford, the water rose till it was seven feet high, and the current was so strong that it rolled the stones about. Rivulets flowed everywhere, and the rumbling in the hills never ceased. When the storm was over, the water ran in streams down the village street. Zhílin got his master to lend him a knife, and with it he shaped a small cylinder, and cutting some little boards, he made a wheel to which he fixed two dolls, one on each side. The little girls brought him some bits of stuff, and he dressed the dolls, one as a peasant, the other as a peasant woman. Then he fastened them in their places, and set the wheel so that the stream should work it. The wheel began to turn and the dolls danced.

The whole village collected round. Little boys and girls, Tartar men and women, all came and clicked their tongues.

'Ah, Russ! Ah, Iván!'

Abdul had a Russian clock, which was broken. He called Zhílin and showed it to him, clicking his tongue.

'Give it me, I'll mend it for you,' said Zhílin.

He took it to pieces with the knife, sorted the pieces, and put them together again, so that the clock went all right.

The master was delighted, and made him a present of one of his old tunics which was all in holes. Zhílin had to accept it. He could, at any rate, use it as a coverlet at night.

After that Zhílin's fame spread; and Tartars came from distant villages, bringing him now the lock of a gun or of a pistol, now a watch, to mend. His master gave him some tools — pincers, gimlets, and a file.

One day a Tartar fell ill, and they came to Zhílin saying, 'Come and heal him!' Zhílin knew nothing about doctoring, but he went to look, and thought to himself, 'Perhaps he will get well anyway.'

He returned to the barn, mixed some water with sand, and then in the presence of the Tartars whispered some words over it and gave it to the sick man to drink. Luckily for him, the Tartar recovered.

Zhílin began to pick up their language a little, and some of the Tartars grew familiar with him. When they wanted him, they would call: 'Iván! Iván!' Others, however, still looked at him askance, as at a wild beast.

The red-bearded Tartar disliked Zhílin. Whenever he saw him he frowned and turned away, or swore at him. There was also an old man there who did not live in the Aoul, but used to come up from the foot of the hill. Zhílin only saw him when he passed on his way to the Mosque. He was short, and had a white cloth wound round his hat. His beard and moustaches were clipped, and white as snow; and his face was wrinkled and brick-red. His nose was hooked like a hawk's, his grey eyes looked cruel, and he had no teeth except two tusks. He would pass, with his turban on his head, leaning on his staff, and glaring round him like a wolf. If he saw Zhílin he would snort with anger and turn away.

Once Zhílin descended the hill to see where the old man lived. He went down along the pathway and came to a little garden surrounded by a stone wall; and behind the wall he saw cherry and apricot trees, and a hut with a flat roof. He came closer, and saw hives made of plaited straw, and bees flying about and humming. The old man was kneeling, busy doing something with a hive. Zhílin stretched to look, and his shackles rattled. The old man turned round, and, giving a yell, snatched a pistol from his belt and shot at Zhílin, who just managed to shelter himself behind the stone wall.

The old man went to Zhílin's master to complain. The master called Zhílin, and said with a laugh, 'Why did you go to the old man's house?'

'I did him no harm,' replied Zhílin. 'I only wanted to see how he lived.'

The master repeated what Zhílin said.

But the old man was in a rage; he hissed and jabbered, showing his tusks, and shaking his fists at Zhílin.

Zhílin could not understand all, but he gathered that the old man was telling Abdul he ought not to keep Russians in the Aoul, but ought to kill them. At last the old man went away.

Zhílin asked the master who the old man was.

‘He is a great man!’ said the master. ‘He was the bravest of our fellows; he killed many Russians and was at one time very rich. He had three wives and eight sons, and they all lived in one village. Then the Russians came and destroyed the village, and killed seven of his sons. Only one son was left, and he gave himself up to the Russians. The old man also went and gave himself up, and lived among the Russians for three months. At the end of that time he found his son, killed him with his own hands, and then escaped. After that he left off fighting, and went to Mecca to pray to God; that is why he wears a turban. One who has been to Mecca is called “Hadji,” and wears a turban. He does not like you fellows. He tells me to kill you. But I can’t kill you. I have paid money for you and, besides, I have grown fond of you, Iván. Far from killing you, I would not even let you go if I had not promised.’ And he laughed, saying in Russian, ‘You, Iván, good; I, Abdul, good!’

Chapter 4

Zhílin lived in this way for a month. During the day he sauntered about the Aoul or busied himself with some handicraft, but at night, when all was silent in the Aoul, he dug at the floor of the barn. It was no easy task digging, because of the stones; but he worked away at them with his file, and at last had made a hole under the wall large enough to get through.

‘If only I could get to know the lay of the land,’ thought he, ‘and which way to go! But none of the Tartars will tell me.’

So he chose a day when the master was away from home, and set off after dinner to climb the hill beyond the village, and to look around. But before leaving home the master always gave orders to his son to watch Zhílin, and not to lose sight of him. So the lad ran after Zhílin, shouting: ‘Don’t go! Father does not allow it. I’ll call the neighbours if you won’t come back.’

Zhílin tried to persuade him, and said: ‘I’m not going far; I only want to climb that hill. I want to find a herb — to cure sick people with. You come with me if you like. How can I run away with these shackles on? To-morrow I’ll make a bow and arrows for you.’

So he persuaded the lad, and they went. To look at the hill, it did not seem far to the top; but it was hard walking with shackles on his leg. Zhílin went on and on, but it was all he could do to reach the top. There he sat down and noted how the land lay. To the south, beyond the barn, was a valley in which a herd of horses was pasturing and at the bottom of the valley one could see another Aoul. Beyond that was a still steeper hill, and another hill beyond that. Between the hills, in the blue distance, were forests, and still further off were mountains, rising higher and higher. The highest of them were covered with snow, white as sugar; and one snowy peak towered above all the rest. To the east and to the west were other such hills, and here and there smoke rose from Aouls in the ravines. ‘Ah,’ thought he, ‘all that is Tartar country.’ And he

turned towards the Russian side. At his feet he saw a river, and the Aoul he lived in, surrounded by little gardens. He could see women, like tiny dolls, sitting by the river rinsing clothes. Beyond the Aoul was a hill, lower than the one to the south, and beyond it two other hills well wooded; and between these, a smooth bluish plain, and far, far across the plain something that looked like a cloud of smoke. Zhílin tried to remember where the sun used to rise and set when he was living in the fort, and he saw that there was no mistake: the Russian fort must be in that plain. Between those two hills he would have to make his way when he escaped.

The sun was beginning to set. The white, snowy mountains turned red, and the dark hills turned darker; mists rose from the ravine, and the valley, where he supposed the Russian fort to be, seemed on fire with the sunset glow. Zhílin looked carefully. Something seemed to be quivering in the valley like smoke from a chimney, and he felt sure the Russian fortress was there.

It had grown late. The Mullah's cry was heard. The herds were being driven home, the cows were lowing, and the lad kept saying, 'Come home!' But Zhílin did not feel inclined to go away.

At last, however, they went back. 'Well,' thought Zhílin, 'now that I know the way, it is time to escape.' He thought of running away that night. The nights were dark — the moon had waned. But as ill-luck would have it, the Tartars returned home that evening. They generally came back driving cattle before them and in good spirits. But this time they had no cattle. All they brought home was the dead body of a Tartar — the red one's brother — who had been killed. They came back looking sullen, and they all gathered together for the burial. Zhílin also came out to see it.

They wrapped the body in a piece of linen, without any coffin, and carried it out of the village, and laid it on the grass under some plane-trees. The Mullah and the old men came. They wound clothes round their caps, took off their shoes, and squatted on their heels, side by side, near the corpse.

The Mullah was in front: behind him in a row were three old men in turbans, and behind them again the other Tartars. All cast down their eyes and sat in silence. This continued a long time, until the Mullah raised his head and said: 'Allah!' (which means God). He said that one word, and they all cast down their eyes again, and were again silent for a long time. They sat quite still, not moving or making any sound.

Again the Mullah lifted his head and said, 'Allah!' and they all repeated: 'Allah! Allah!' and were again silent.

The dead body lay immovable on the grass, and they sat as still as if they too were dead. Not one of them moved. There was no sound but that of the leaves of the plane-trees stirring in the breeze. Then the Mullah repeated a prayer, and they all rose. They lifted the body and carried it in their arms to a hole in the ground. It was not an ordinary hole, but was hollowed out under the ground like a vault. They took the body under the arms and by the legs, bent it, and let it gently down, pushing it under the earth in a sitting posture, with the hands folded in front.

The Nogáy brought some green rushes, which they stuffed into the hole, and, quickly covering it with earth, they smoothed the ground, and set an upright stone at the head of the grave. Then they trod the earth down, and again sat in a row before the grave, keeping silence for a long time.

At last they rose, said 'Allah! Allah! Allah!' and sighed.

The red-bearded Tartar gave money to the old men; then he too rose, took a whip, struck himself with it three times on the forehead, and went home.

The next morning Zhílin saw the red Tartar, followed by three others, leading a mare out of the village. When they were beyond the village, the red-bearded Tartar took off his tunic and turned up his sleeves, showing his stout arms. Then he drew a dagger and sharpened it on a whetstone. The other Tartars raised the mare's head, and he cut her throat, threw her down and began skinning her, loosening the hide with his big hands. Women and girls came and began to wash the entrails and the inwards. The mare was cut up, the pieces taken into the hut, and the whole village collected at the red Tartar's hut for a funeral feast.

For three days they went on eating the flesh of the mare, drinking buza, and praying for the dead man. All the Tartars were at home. On the fourth day at dinner-time Zhílin saw them preparing to go away. Horses were brought out, they got ready, and some ten of them (the red one among them) rode away; but Abdul stayed at home. It was new moon, and the nights were still dark.

'Ah!' thought Zhílin, 'to-night is the time to escape.' And he told Kostílin; but Kostílin's heart failed him.

'How can we escape?' he said. 'We don't even know the way.'

'I know the way,' said Zhílin.

'Even if you do'' said Kostílin, 'we can't reach the fort in one night.'

'If we can't,' said Zhílin, 'we'll sleep in the forest. See here, I have saved some cheeses. What's the good of sitting and moping here? If they send your ransom — well and good; but suppose they don't manage to collect it? The Tartars are angry now, because the Russians have killed one of their men. They are talking of killing us.'

Kostílin thought it over.

'Well, let's go,' said he.

Zhílin crept into the hole, widened it so that Kostílin might also get through, and then they both sat waiting till all should be quiet in the Aoul.

As soon as all was quiet, Zhílin crept under the wall, got out, and whispered to Kostílin, 'Come!' Kostílin crept out, but in so doing he caught a stone with his foot and made a noise. The master had a very vicious watch-dog, a spotted one called Oulyashin. Zhílin had been careful to feed him for some time before. Oulyashin heard the noise and began to bark and jump, and the other dogs did the same. Zhílin gave a slight whistle, and threw him a bit of cheese. Oulyashin knew Zhílin, wagged his tail, and stopped barking.

But the master had heard the dog, and shouted to him from his hut, 'Hayt, hayt, Oulyashin!'

Zhílin, however, scratched Oulyashin behind the ears, and the dog was quiet, and rubbed against his legs, wagging his tail

They sat hidden behind a corner for awhile. All became silent again, only a sheep coughed inside a shed, and the water rippled over the stones in the hollow. It was dark, the stars were high overhead, and the new moon showed red as it set, horns upward, behind the hill. In the valleys the fog was white as milk.

Zhílin rose and said to his companion, 'Well, friend, come along!'

They started; but they had only gone a few steps when they heard the Mullah crying from the roof, 'Allah, Beshmillah! Ilrahman!' That meant that the people would be going to the Mosque. So they sat down again, hiding behind a wall, and waited a long time till the people had passed. At last all was quiet again.

'Now then! May God be with us!' They crossed themselves, and started once more. They passed through a yard and went down the hillside to the river, crossed the river, and went along the valley.

The mist was thick, but only near the ground; overhead the stars shone quite brightly. Zhílin directed their course by the stars. It was cool in the mist, and easy walking, only their boots were uncomfortable, being worn out and trodden down. Zhílin took his off, threw them away, and went barefoot, jumping from stone to stone, and guiding his course by the stars. Kostílin began to lag behind.

'Walk slower,' he said, 'these confounded boots have quite blistered my feet.'

'Take them off!' said Zhílin. 'It will be easier walking without them.'

Kostílin went barefoot, but got on still worse. The stones cut his feet and he kept lagging behind. Zhílin said: 'If your feet get cut, they'll heal again; but if the Tartars catch us and kill us, it will be worse!'

Kostílin did not reply, but went on, groaning all the time.

Their way lay through the valley for a long time. Then, to the right, they heard dogs barking. Zhílin stopped, looked about, and began climbing the hill feeling with his hands.

'Ah!' said he, 'we have gone wrong, and have come too far to the right. Here is another Aoul, one I saw from the hill. We must turn back and go up that hill to the left. There must be a wood there.'

But Kostílin said: 'Wait a minute! Let me get breath. My feet are all cut and bleeding.'

'Never mind, friend! They'll heal again. You should spring more lightly. Like this!'

And Zhílin ran back and turned to the left up the hill towards the wood.

Kostílin still lagged behind, and groaned. Zhílin only said 'Hush!' and went on and on.

They went up the hill and found a wood as Zhílin had said. They entered the wood and forced their way through the brambles, which tore their clothes. At last they came to a path and followed it.

'Stop!' They heard the tramp of hoofs on the path, and waited, listening. It sounded like the tramping of a horse's feet, but then ceased. They moved on, and again they

heard the tramping. When they paused, it also stopped. Zhílin crept nearer to it, and saw something standing on the path where it was not quite so dark. It looked like a horse, and yet not quite like one, and on it was something queer, not like a man. He heard it snorting. 'What can it be?' Zhílin gave a low whistle, and off it dashed from the path into the thicket, and the woods were filled with the noise of crackling, as if a hurricane were sweeping through, breaking the branches.

Kostílin was so frightened that he sank to the ground. But Zhílin laughed and said: 'It's a stag. Don't you hear him breaking the branches with his antlers? We were afraid of him, and he is afraid of us.'

They went on. The Great Bear was already setting. It was near morning, and they did not know whether they were going the right way or not. Zhílin thought it was the way he had been brought by the Tartars, and that they were still some seven miles from the Russian fort; but he had nothing certain to go by, and at night one easily mistakes the way. After a time they came to a clearing. Kostílin sat down and said: 'Do as you like, I can go no farther! My feet won't carry me.'

Zhílin tried to persuade him.

'No I shall never get there, I can't!'

Zhílin grew angry, and spoke roughly to him.

'Well, then, I shall go on alone. Good-bye!'

Kostílin jumped up and followed. They went another three miles. The mist in the wood had settled down still more densely; they could not see a yard before them, and the stars had grown dim.

Suddenly they heard the sound of a horse's hoofs in front of them. They heard its shoes strike the stones. Zhílin lay down flat, and listened with his ear to the ground.

'Yes, so it is! A horseman is coming towards us.'

They ran off the path, crouched among the bushes and waited. Zhílin crept to the road, looked, and saw a Tartar on horseback driving a cow and humming to himself. The Tartar rode past. Zhílin returned to Kostílin.

'God has led him past us; get up and let's go on!'

Kostílin tried to rise, but fell back again.

'I can't; on my word I can't! I have no strength left.'

He was heavy and stout, and had been perspiring freely. Chilled by the mist, and with his feet all bleeding, he had grown quite limp.

Zhílin tried to lift him, when suddenly Kostílin screamed out: 'Oh, how it hurts!'

Zhílin's heart sank.

'What are you shouting for? The Tartar is still near; he'll have heard you!' And he thought to himself, 'He is really quite done up. What am I to do with him? It won't do to desert a comrade.'

'Well, then, get up, and climb up on my back. I'll carry you if you really can't walk.'

He helped Kostílin up, and put his arms under his thighs. Then he went out on to the path, carrying him.

‘Only, for the love of heaven,’ said Zhílin, ‘don’t throttle me with your hands! Hold on to my shoulders.’

Zhílin found his load heavy; his feet, too, were bleeding, and he was tired out. Now and then he stooped to balance Kostílin better, jerking him up so that he should sit higher, and then went on again.

The Tartar must, however, really have heard Kostílin scream. Zhílin suddenly heard some one galloping behind and shouting in the Tartar tongue. He darted in among the bushes. The Tartar seized his gun and fired, but did not hit them, shouted in his own language, and galloped off along the road.

‘Well, now we are lost, friend!’ said Zhílin. ‘That dog will gather the Tartars together to hunt us down. Unless we can get a couple of miles away from here we are lost!’ And he thought to himself, ‘Why the devil did I saddle myself with this block? I should have got away long ago had I been alone.’

‘Go on alone,’ said Kostílin. ‘Why should you perish because of me?’

‘No I won’t go. It won’t do to desert a comrade.’

Again he took Kostílin on his shoulders and staggered on. They went on in that way for another half-mile or more. They were still in the forest, and could not see the end of it. But the mist was already dispersing, and clouds seemed to be gathering, the stars were no longer to be seen. Zhílin was quite done up. They came to a spring walled in with stones by the side of the path. Zhílin stopped and set Kostílin down.

‘Let me have a rest and a drink,’ said he, ‘and let us eat some of the cheese. It can’t be much farther now.’

But hardly had he lain down to get a drink, when he heard the sound of horses’ feet behind him. Again they darted to the right among the bushes, and lay down under a steep slope.

They heard Tartar voices. The Tartars stopped at the very spot where they had turned off the path. The Tartars talked a bit, and then seemed to be setting a dog on the scent. There was a sound of crackling twigs, and a strange dog appeared from behind the bushes. It stopped, and began to bark.

Then the Tartars, also strangers, came climbing down, seized Zhílin and Kostílin, bound them, put them on horses, and rode away with them.

When they had ridden about two miles, they met Abdul, their owner, with two other Tartars following him. After talking with the strangers, he put Zhílin and Kostílin on two of his own horses and took them back to the Aoul.

Abdul did not laugh now, and did not say a word to them.

They were back at the Aoul by daybreak, and were set down in the street. The children came crowding round, throwing stones, shrieking, and beating them with whips.

The Tartars gathered together in a circle, and the old man from the foot of the hill was also there. They began discussing, and Zhílin heard them considering what should be done with him and Kostílin. Some said they ought to be sent farther into the mountains; but the old man said: ‘They must be killed!’

Abdul disputed with him, saying: 'I gave money for them, and I must get ransom for them.' But the old man said: 'They will pay you nothing, but will only bring misfortune. It is a sin to feed Russians. Kill them, and have done with it!'

They dispersed. When they had gone, the master came up to Zhílin and said: 'If the money for your ransom is not sent within a fortnight, I will flog you; and if you try to run away again, I'll kill you like a dog! Write a letter, and write properly!'

Paper was brought to them, and they wrote the letters. Shackles were put on their feet, and they were taken behind the Mosque to a deep pit about twelve feet square, into which they were let down.

Chapter 6

Life was now very hard for them. Their shackles were never taken off, and they were not let out into the fresh air. Unbaked dough was thrown to them as if they were dogs, and water was let down in a can.

It was wet and close in the pit, and there was a horrible stench. Kostílin grew quite ill, his body became swollen and he ached all over, and moaned or slept all the time. Zhílin, too, grew downcast; he saw it was a bad look-out, and could think of no way of escape.

He tried to make a tunnel, but there was nowhere to put the earth. His master noticed it, and threatened to kill him.

He was sitting on the floor of the pit one day, thinking of freedom and feeling very downhearted, when suddenly a cake fell into his lap, then another, and then a shower of cherries. He looked up, and there was Dina. She looked at him, laughed, and ran away. And Zhílin thought: 'Might not Dina help me?'

He cleared out a little place in the pit, scraped up some clay, and began modelling toys. He made men, horses, and dogs, thinking, 'When Dina comes I'll throw them up to her.'

But Dina did not come next day. Zhílin heard the tramp of horses; some men rode past, and the Tartars gathered in council near the Mosque. They shouted and argued; the word 'Russians' was repeated several times. He could hear the voice of the old man. Though he could not distinguish what was said, he guessed that Russian troops were somewhere near, and that the Tartars, afraid they might come into the Aoul, did not know what to do with their prisoners.

After talking awhile, they went away. Suddenly he heard a rustling overhead, and saw Dina crouching at the edge of the pit, her knees higher than her head, and bending over so that the coins of her plait dangled above the pit. Her eyes gleamed like stars. She drew two cheeses out of her sleeve and threw them to him. Zhílin took them and said, 'Why did you not come before? I have made some toys for you. Here, catch!' And he began throwing the toys up, one by one.

But she shook her head and would not look at them.

'I don't want any,' she said. She sat silent for awhile, and then went on, 'Iván, they want to kill you!' And she pointed to her own throat.

'Who wants to kill me?'

'Father; the old men say he must. But I am sorry for you!'

Zhílin answered: 'Well, if you are sorry for me, bring me a long pole.'

She shook her head, as much as to say, 'I can't!'

He clasped his hands and prayed her: 'Dina, please do! Dear Dina, I beg of you!'

'I can't!' she said, 'they would see me bringing it. They're all at home.' And she went away.

So when evening came Zhílin still sat looking up now and then, and wondering what would happen. The stars were there, but the moon had not yet risen. The Mullah's voice was heard; then all was silent. Zhílin was beginning to doze, thinking: 'The girl will be afraid to do it!'

Suddenly he felt clay falling on his head. He looked up, and saw a long pole poking into the opposite wall of the pit. It kept poking about for a time, and then it came down, sliding into the pit. Zhílin was glad indeed. He took hold of it and lowered it. It was a strong pole, one that he had seen before on the roof of his master's hut.

He looked up. The stars were shining high in the sky, and just above the pit Dina's eyes gleamed in the dark like a cat's. She stooped with her face close to the edge of the pit, and whispered, 'Iván! Iván!' waving her hand in front of her face to show that he should speak low.

'What?' said Zhílin.

'All but two have gone away.'

Then Zhílin said, 'Well, Kostílin, come; let us have one last try; I'll help you up.'

But Kostílin would not hear of it.

'No,' said he, 'It's clear I can't get away from here. How can I go, when I have hardly strength to turn round?'

'Well, good-bye, then! Don't think ill of me!' and they kissed each other. Zhílin seized the pole, told Dina to hold on, and began to climb. He slipped once or twice; the shackles hindered him. Kostílin helped him, and he managed to get to the top. Dina with her little hands, pulled with all her might at his shirt, laughing.

Zhílin drew out the pole and said, 'Put it back in its place, Dina, or they'll notice, and you will be beaten.'

She dragged the pole away, and Zhílin went down the hill. When he had gone down the steep incline, he took a sharp stone and tried to wrench the lock off the shackles. But it was a strong lock and he could not manage to break it, and besides, it was difficult to get at. Then he heard some one running down the hill, springing lightly. He thought: 'Surely, that's Dina again.'

Dina came, took a stone and said, 'Let me try.'

She knelt down and tried to wrench the lock off, but her little hands were as slender as little twigs, and she had not the strength. She threw the stone away and began to

cry. Then Zhílin set to work again at the lock, and Dina squatted beside him with her hand on his shoulder.

Zhílin looked round and saw a red light to the left behind the hill. The moon was just rising. 'Ah!' he thought, 'before the moon has risen I must have passed the valley and be in the forest.' So he rose and threw away the stone. Shackles or no, he must go on.

'Good-bye, Dina dear!' he said. 'I shall never forget you!'

Dina seized hold of him and felt about with her hands for a place to put some cheeses she had brought. He took them from her.

'Thank you, my little one. Who will make dolls for you when I am gone?' And he stroked her head.

Dina burst into tears hiding her face in her hands. Then she ran up the hill like a young goat, the coins in her plait clinking against her back.

Zhílin crossed himself took the lock of his shackles in his hand to prevent its clattering, and went along the road, dragging his shackled leg, and looking towards the place where the moon was about to rise. He now knew the way. If he went straight he would have to walk nearly six miles. If only he could reach the wood before the moon had quite risen! He crossed the river; the light behind the hill was growing whiter. Still looking at it, he went along the valley. The moon was not yet visible. The light became brighter, and one side of the valley was growing lighter and lighter, and shadows were drawing in towards the foot of the hill, creeping nearer and nearer to him.

Zhílin went on, keeping in the shade. He was hurrying, but the moon was moving still faster; the tops of the hills on the right were already lit up. As he got near the wood the white moon appeared from behind the hills, and it became light as day. One could see all the leaves on the trees. It was light on the hill, but silent, as if nothing were alive; no sound could be heard but the gurgling of the river below.

Zhílin reached the wood without meeting any one, chose a dark spot, and sat down to rest.

He rested and ate one of the cheeses. Then he found a stone and set to work again to knock off the shackles. He knocked his hands sore, but could not break the lock. He rose and went along the road. After walking the greater part of a mile he was quite done up, and his feet were aching. He had to stop every ten steps. 'There is nothing else for it,' thought he. 'I must drag on as long as I have any strength left. If I sit down, I shan't be able to rise again. I can't reach the fortress; but when day breaks I'll lie down in the forest, remain there all day, and go on again at night.'

He went on all night. Two Tartars on horseback passed him; but he heard them a long way off, and hid behind a tree.

The moon began to grow paler, the dew to fall. It was getting near dawn, and Zhílin had not reached the end of the forest. 'Well,' thought he, 'I'll walk another thirty steps, and then turn in among the trees and sit down.'

He walked another thirty steps, and saw that he was at the end of the forest. He went to the edge; it was now quite light, and straight before him was the plain and the

fortress. To the left, quite close at the foot of the slope, a fire was dying out, and the smoke from it spread round. There were men gathered about the fire.

He looked intently, and saw guns glistening. They were soldiers — Cossacks!

Zhílin was filled with joy. He collected his remaining strength and set off down the hill, saying to himself: 'God forbid that any mounted Tartar should see me now, in the open field! Near as I am, I could not get there in time.'

Hardly had he said this when, a couple of hundred yards off, on a hillock to the left, he saw three Tartars.

They saw him also and made a rush. His heart sank. He waved his hands, and shouted with all his might, 'Brothers, brothers! Help!'

The Cossacks heard him, and a party of them on horseback darted to cut across the Tartars' path. The Cossacks were far and the Tartars were near; but Zhílin, too, made a last effort. Lifting the shackles with his hand, he ran towards the Cossacks, hardly knowing what he was doing, crossing himself and shouting, 'Brothers! Brothers! Brothers!'

There were some fifteen Cossacks. The Tartars were frightened, and stopped before reaching him. Zhilin staggered up to the Cossacks.

They surrounded him and began questioning him. 'Who are you? What are you? Where from?

But Zhílin was quite beside himself, and could only weep and repeat, 'Brothers! Brothers!'

Then the soldiers came running up and crowded round Zhílin — one giving him bread, another buckwheat, a third vódka: one wrapping a cloak round him, another breaking his shackles.

The officers recognized him, and rode with him to the fortress. The soldiers were glad to see him back, and his comrades all gathered round him.

Zhílin told them all that had happened to him.

'That's the way I went home and got married!' said he. 'No. It seems plain that fate was against it!'

So he went on serving in the Caucasus. A month passed before Kostílin was released, after paying five thousand roubles ransom. He was almost dead when they brought him back.

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