

What Is to Be Done?

A Vital Question

Nikolay Chernyshevsky

1863

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PREFACE.

In the present translation the American public has an opportunity of studying what the paternal Russian government regards as revolutionary literature. In the Russian cities it is possible, by offering guarantees, by depositing fifteen or twenty rubles, and by paying fifteen or twenty kopeks a day, to borrow Tchernishevsky's novel from the libraries. It is dangerous property, however, and the person caught with it in his possession may make unpleasant acquaintance with the police. It was published first in the columns of the "Sovremennik" (Contemporary). It was written with all the enthusiasm which an ardent soul could feel at the first breath of liberty blowing on a land long ground down under the heel of oppression. It made an immense sensation throughout Russia. It is said that hundreds of young girls living in disagreeable circumstances started to follow Viéra Pavlovna's example, and hundreds of young men, to live honorable, lofty, philosophical lives in the fashion of the types represented by Lopukhóf and Kirsánof. The tendency of the story was quite too liberal, and it was hardly brought out in book form before it was ruthlessly suppressed. Even now, however, it works like a leaven; and though it is dead, it lives. It is not a novel in the strict sense of the word. The characters are all drawn from life: Kirsánof is understood to be a picture of the distinguished Professor Shévitch of St. Petersburg, and Viéra Pavlovna still lives. The extraordinary man, so singularly introduced in the third part, is regarded in Russia as an ideal picture of the famous Karakózof.

In the present unsettled state of the labor question this novel of the crushed Russian reformer has a most vital interest. It ought to come to every poor working girl like a breath from heaven, like an inspiration. There is no reason why Viéra Pavlovna's industrial experiment, which is no chimerical dream, should not be put into practice in every town where the English language is spoken. Are not the signs as certain as fate, that co-operation is to be the great system of the future? and how reasonably it is presented in "A Vital Question"! Then there will be no more strikes for eight hours of work, no more quarrels between employers and the employed, for the employed will be themselves their own employers. As regards the still more vital question upon which the book touches, it is evident what the author teaches, and with what a master hand! The present marriage system is in many instances a failure; witness the proportion of divorces to marriages in every state, not only in this country, but in countries where divorce is allowed, and the immorality everywhere. How is it to be stopped? *not by free love*; but *by education* and the *joining of those who were meant to be joined*. Marriage is a fact, and how is it to be purified and made sacred? Tchernishevsky offers his theory of its practical solution, not in the philosophically absurd and weak conduct of Lopukhóf, which, perhaps, was unavoidable in a country like Russia, but in the suggestions of Rakhmétov, which, however, are only to be realized when people have attained a higher state of morality and education than is to be found, except among a very few, in whom the animal nature is absolutely tamed. Cases have been known where man and wife, growing apart by natural development, have again established love through what we call Christian grace; how many such cases are there? It takes a miracle to mix

oil and water. This is a question which forces itself home to every man and woman, "What is to be done about it?" Whatever may be thought about Tchernuishevsky's solution, whatever may be thought about the morality of the business-agreement theory, whatever may be thought of the conduct of Lopukhóf, there can be no doubt of the intense moral purpose of the author; he may be mistaken, but his virtue is Spartan; it is as heroic as though it were ideally Christian.

Such is the motive of the story. But even more important than this special motive is the general theory of the equality of women, the development of which makes the real greatness of the book. Such an ideal of womanhood is offered as can scarcely be found anywhere else in literature. Even those who, possibly misunderstanding what Tchernuishevsky really proposes, think his ideas in respect to freedom of divorce unsound and immoral, cannot fail to recognize the magnificence of the prospect which he opens before "the softer sex" in Viéra Pavlovna's Fourth Vision. It ought to be read and taken to heart by every woman in the world. It lies with the women themselves to determine their treatment by men, and the terrible social state from which now so many unfortunate creatures, both married and single, are suffering, might be cured as malaria is cured by the wind of the sea, if this theory were only brought into practice. "A Vital Question" should especially be grateful to the women of this land, which is popularly supposed to be "the land of freedom."

A few words about the author himself may be interesting.

Nikolai Gavrilovitch Tchernuishevsky¹ was born in 1829, in the city of Sarátov. His father, a man of remarkable intellect and character, was an archpriest of the cathedral, who was revered and loved by all who knew him. The young Nikolai was placed in the Theological School at Sarátov, where he devoted himself with remarkable assiduity to the study of the ancient languages, and particularly of the Bible. At this time he was an unquestioning believer; but as his mind developed, he found that the atmosphere of the Greek Church suffocated him. His old father made no opposition, and sent him to the University of Petersburg, where he entered the philological faculty, and devoted himself to the mastery of the ancient languages, and especially the Slavonic. He was an indefatigable reader, and having been introduced to the study of sociology, he locked himself in his room, and read everything that he could find in Russian, French, and German on the subject, and the training he had received in the seminary quickly enabled him to become a master of it. After his graduation in 1850 he was engaged as instructor of literature in the School of Cadets; but at the end of a year, at the request of his mother, who was very dear to him, he gave up the pleasant circle of acquaintances, and the delightful life in Petersburg, and became a teacher in the gymnasium of his native town. It was a particularly trying position for a man of his liberal views; but he had the satisfaction of exerting an immense influence in the circle in which he moved. It is said that through his silent example and personal popularity many of the petty officials who hitherto had wasted their time and energies became interested in self-culture, and, what was more for Russian *tchinovniks*, refused to accept bribes. Nikolai met a young girl belonging to this circle, and fell in love with her. His mother died in 1853, and shortly after, with his father's blessing, he married, and moved to Petersburg, where he earned a precarious existence by various literary work. Finding that English translations were becoming fashionable, he learned English in two months, and translated a novel. Meantime, he was working for his degree of magister. His dissertation on "The Æsthetic Relation of Art to Reality" was so radical in its ideas that it caused his rejection. He got into difficulty with the director

¹ It is also sometimes spelt Cerniscevski, in the Polish fashion.

of the Corps of Cadets, and resigned his position as teacher, and thenceforth devoted himself to literature. His dissertation gave him a place in the office of the "Sovremennik" as critical and political writer.

After the accession of Alexander II., while the Emperor was still enjoying his prestige as "Tsar-Liberator," Tchernuishevsky, through the journal, energetically devoted himself to the instruction of the people, in the science of political economy. That involved him in a controversy with the conservative political economists of Russia. He was charged with revolutionary sentiments. At first the government tried to buy him off, by offering him the office of editor of certain government publications. He accepted the position of editor of the "Military Magazine," under certain conditions, but he could not hold the position. From this time began a systematic effort to ruin him. Anonymous articles and pamphlets were attributed to him, and finally he was arrested; though nothing was really found against him, he was kept in prison for two years. A spy was introduced into his cell; but the worst that he could be charged with was that he said, "Now is the time, not to think, but to act." But there were rumors of a Polish insurrection, and of risings among the serfs, and such a man was dangerous; therefore he was tried and condemned on forged documents. The reading of the sentence took place on the morning of the twenty-fifth of June, 1864, two years and two months after his incarceration. A great throng gathered, in spite of the rain, and just as the sentence was finished and the sabre was broken, according to the custom when a well-born person is condemned, and while the executioner was fastening Tchernuishevsky's hands to the rings on the scaffold,² a great bouquet fell at his feet. Tchernuishevsky was sent to the mimes. At this time there were upwards of three thousand people imprisoned in Central Russia alone. Two years later occurred the attempt of Karakózofo on the Emperor's life. It happened on the fourth of April (O. S.); and by a singular coincidence Tchernuishevsky's novel was dated April 4, 1863. It was proposed to bring him back to trial as an accomplice. This absurdity was not carried out; but after Tchernuishevsky had served seven years, Count Shuválof, the head of the police, had him excepted from the usual respite. Afterwards he was sent to Yakutsk, and imprisoned under the close guard of two *gens d'armes* and two Cossacks. In the words of the historian, "Thus Nikolai Gavrilovitch Tchernuishevsky was cut off from society and science."

The story of Tchernuishevsky's imprisonment is heart-rending. Even before he was sentenced, he was allowed to see his sick wife only after he had starved himself almost to death, and even then only in the presence of others. Afterwards he was allowed to write her once a year; but this privilege was taken away from him when some spies reported that there was a plot to have him rescued. He was not allowed to have books or writing material, and in sheer desperation he punctured a vein in his arm, and wrote in letters of blood on the wall of his cell. It was not strange that his mind—one of the brightest minds that Russia ever produced—was broken by such tortures. Tchernuishevsky, at last accounts, was still living under police supervision in Astrakhan. A reporter of an English daily interviewed him a year or two ago, and found him still intelligent, but a mental wreck. Such action is worthy of the Austrian government towards dangerous Silvio Pellicos; but is it not incredible that a country in the nineteenth century should employ such means to deprive itself of a man who would have reflected more glory on the realm of its emperors than the emperors themselves?

² "The disgraceful post," as it is called, stands upon the scaffold, provided with rings and chains. The convict's hands are thrust through the rings, and he is fastened so that he cannot move.

The present translation has been made with great care, and it is hoped that it may be forgiven, even by that school of critics which lays down the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit translations." One single change has been made, which it is right to mention, for the sake of those who believe that a ready-made coat must be worn without alteration, even if it does not fit. In one single scene Kirsánof's character has been slightly mended, better to suit the American ideal of man. A very few Russian words have been retained, in cases where there was nothing corresponding to them in English. Such are sufficiently explained in the text. Tchernishevsky's style is often exceedingly awkward. He sometimes strove after originality, at the expense of wisdom; but it cannot fail to be recognized that "A Vital Question" deserves a high rank among modern novels. Those who begin it will not be likely to lay it down unfinished.

Nathan Haskell Dole.
S. S. Skidelsky.

Philadelphia, June 4, 1886.

I. A FOOL.

On the morning of the 23d of July, 1856, the servants of one of the largest hotels of Petersburg, near the Moscow railroad station, were in perplexity, and even partly in fear. On the previous evening, about nine o'clock, a gentleman arrived with a valise, took a room, gave his passport to be registered, asked for tea and a small cutlet, gave orders that they should not disturb him during the evening, because he was tired and wanted to sleep, but that they should wake him without fail at eight o'clock in the morning, because he had important business. Then he locked the door; and, after rattling his knife and fork, and jingling the tea-things for a time, nothing more was heard of him. He was apparently asleep. Morning came; at eight o'clock a servant knocked at the stranger's door; the stranger did not answer. The servant knocked louder, very loud; still the stranger did not reply. Apparently he was very tired. The servant waited a quarter of an hour, again tried to arouse him, again was unsuccessful. He consulted with the other servants, with the butler.

"Can anything have happened to him?"

"We must break in the door."

"No, that won't do! If we break in the door, we must have a policeman."

It was decided to try once more, still louder; if it failed this time, to send for the police.

They made their last endeavor; they could not arouse him. They sent for the police, and now they are waiting to see what the result will be.

About ten o'clock a policeman came; he himself knocked at the door, ordered the servants to knock; result the same as before.

"There is nothing to be done; burst in the door, children."

They broke open the door. The room was empty.

"Look under the bed!"

But there was no one under the bed. The policeman went to the table; on the table lay a sheet of paper, and written in large letters were these words:—

"I shall go away at eleven o'clock this evening, and I shall not return. You will hear of me on the Liteinaïa bridge between two and three o'clock to-night. Let no one be suspected."

"Now I see, the matter is plain; nobody could make anything out of it," said the policeman.

"What do you mean, Ivan Afanasyévitch?" asked the butler.

"Give me some tea. I will tell you."

The policeman's narration long served as a subject for lively discussions and arguments in the hotel. The story was of this sort:—

At half-past three last night,—the night was cloudy, dark,—on the centre of the Liteinaïa bridge a fire flashed, and the report of a pistol was heard. The guards rushed to the spot, a few people quickly collected; not a person or a thing was to be seen where the pistol shot was fired. It was evidently not a murder, but a suicide. Volunteers wanted to dive; in a few moments boat-hooks were brought, a fishing-net was brought; they dived, they grappled, they dragged the river; they brought up about fifty large chips, but they could neither catch nor discover the body. Yes; and

how could it be found? The night was dark. In those two hours the body was already far down towards the sea. Go, find it there. Therefore advanced thinkers arose, discrediting the former supposition:—

“May be there was no corpse whatsoever. May be some drunken man, or simply some mischievous fellow, played a joke, fired off a pistol, and ran; or perhaps the very fellow is standing here among the excited crowd, yes, and laughing at the trouble which he has made.”

But the majority, as is usual when a case is argued reasonably, proved to be conservative, and defended the former supposition:—

“What kind of a joke is that? Of course he put a bullet into his brain, and that is the end of it!” The progressive party were outruled. But the victorious party, as usual, having won the victory, was itself immediately divided. “Let us suppose that he committed suicide. But what did he do it for?”

“He was drunk,” was the opinion of some of the conservatives; “a ruined spendthrift,” asserted others.

“Only a fool” (*durak*), said someone. And this expression, “Only a fool,” was accepted by all, even by those who discredited the fact of a suicide. Indeed, whether it was a drunkard or a spendthrift committed suicide, or whether some mischievous fellow did not commit suicide at all, but simply played a trick; at all events, it was an absurd trick of a fool.

And this put an end to the matter that night on the bridge. In the morning, at the hotel of the Moscow railroad, it was decided that the fool did not play a joke, but committed suicide.

But there still remained, after all this story, an element in regard to which even the vanquished party were in agreement. It was this. If it was not a trick, but a case of suicide, nevertheless, it was a fool! This conclusion, so satisfactory to all parties, was particularly strong from the very fact that the conservatives were victorious; if he had only played a trick by firing his pistol on the bridge, it would have been really doubtful whether he were a fool or a mischievous fellow. But he shot himself on the bridge. Who shot himself on the bridge? How on the bridge? Why on the bridge? Ridiculous to do it on the bridge! and, therefore, he was doubtless a fool.

Again a doubt arose among some of them. He shot himself on the bridge, but people don't go to a bridge to shoot themselves; consequently, he did not commit suicide. Towards evening, however, the servants of the hotel were summoned to the station to identify a cap, pierced with a bullet hole, which had been taken out of the water; all recognized that it was the very same cap that the stranger had worn. Thus indubitably he must have shot himself, and the spirit of denial and progress was entirely defeated.

All were agreed that it was a fool (*durak*), and suddenly all began to chatter, “On the bridge, a clever dodge! It was done evidently so as to save suffering; for if the shot did not kill,—he reasoned wisely,—no matter how slight the wound was, he would jump into the water, and so drown before he knew what had happened. Yes, on the bridge! wisely done!”

At this stage it was utterly impossible to come to any decision; both a fool and wise!

II. THE FIRST CONSEQUENCES OF THE FOOL'S DEED.

On that very same morning, about twelve o'clock, a young woman was sitting in one of the three rooms of a small *datcha* on the Kamennoi Ostrof (Stone Island); she was sewing, and singing in an undertone a little French song full of spirit and courage. "We are poor," said the song, "but we are working people; we have strong hands. We are obscure, but we are not dull, and we want light. Let us learn; knowledge will give us freedom. Let us be industrious; industry will give us wealth. This will go on; if we live, we shall see it.

*Ça ira,
Qui vivra verra.*

We are rough, but from our roughness 'tis only we ourselves who are the losers. We are full of prejudices, but we ourselves suffer from them; this we feel. Let us look for happiness, let us find humanity, we shall be good; this will go on; if we live, we shall see it.

"Industry without knowledge is fruitless; our own happiness is impossible without the happiness of others. As soon as we become enlightened we shall become rich; we shall be happy; we shall form one brotherhood and sisterhood; this will go on; if we live, we shall see it.

"Let us learn and be industrious; let us sing and love; we shall have a heaven on earth! Let us be happy while we live; this will go on; it will soon come to pass; we shall all see it.

*Donc, vivons,
Ça bien vite ira,
Ça viendra,
Nous tons le verrons!"*

Courageous, spirited, was the song, and its melody was joyous. There were two or three melancholy notes in it, but they were concealed by the generally light character of the motive; they vanished in the refrain, they vanished in the conclusion of the couplet,—at least they ought to have vanished and to have been concealed, and they would have vanished had the lady been in a different frame of mind; but now these few melancholy notes are made more prominent than the others. She almost trembles as she perceives it; she lowers her voice as she sings them, and tries to sing the joyful notes louder; but again her mind is drawn away from her song by her own thoughts, and then again the melancholy notes become prominent. Evidently the young woman does not like to give in to melancholy, and it is no less evident that the melancholy is loath to leave her, no matter how hard she tries to drive it away. But whether melancholy or joyful, whether or no it becomes joyful in the spirit of the song, the young woman sews very industriously. She is a good seamstress.

A young servant girl comes into the room.

“Do you see, Masha, how I am sewing? I have almost finished the cuffs which I am getting ready to wear at your wedding.”

“*Akh!* there is much less work in them than in those which you made for me.”

“That’s of no matter! a bride ought to be dressed better than anybody else at her own wedding.”

“And I have brought you a letter, Viéra Pavlovna.”

Viéra Pavlovna’s face expressed perplexity, as she began to break open the letter; the envelope bore the city post-mark.

“How is this? Isn’t he in Moscow?” She hastily unfolded the letter and grew pale; her hand holding the letter fell to her side.

“No, it is not so; I have scarcely had a chance to read the letter; there is nothing in it at all.”

And again she lifted her hand with the letter. All this took place in two seconds. But at the second reading her eyes looked long and immovably at the few lines of the letter, and the brightness of their expression grew dimmer and dimmer; the sheet fell from her nerveless hands to the work-table; she hid her face in her hands; she began to weep.

“What have I done? “What have I done?” And again sobs.

“Viérotchka [Little Viéra]! What is the matter with you? Are you so fond of weeping? How often does this happen? What is the matter with you?”—a young man came into the room with quick but gentle, careful steps.

“Read it; it is on the table.” She was now no longer weeping, but was sitting motionless, scarcely breathing.

The young man took the letter. He also grew pale, and his hands trembled, and long he looked at the letter, short though it was, not more than a score of words all told:—

“I have disturbed your peace of mind. I leave these scenes. Don’t grieve; I love you both so much that I am very happy at my decision. *Proshchajte*” (Farewell).

The young man stood long, rubbing his forehead; then he began to twirl his mustache; then he looked at the sleeve of his coat; finally he collected his thoughts. He made a step forward towards the young woman, who was still sitting motionless, hardly breathing, as if in a lethargy. He took her hand.

“Viérotchka!”

But as his hand touched hers, she jumped up with a cry of terror, as though she had been roused by an electric shock, impetuously drew off from the young man, convulsively pushed him from her.

“Go away! Don’t touch me! You are stained with blood! His blood is on you! I cannot bear to see you! I shall go away from you! I am going away! Leave me!” And she kept pushing, pushing the empty air, motioning him away, and suddenly she tottered, fell into the arm-chair, and covered her face with her hands.

“On me too is his blood! On me! Thou art not to blame! I alone! I alone! What have I done!” Her sobs choked her.

“Viérotchka,” said he, gently and timidly, “my friend!”

She drew a painful sigh, and with a restrained and still trembling voice said, though it was hard to say:—

“My love, leave me alone for now. Come again in an hour. Then I shall be calm. Give me a drink of water, and go!”

He obeyed her silently. He went to his room, sat down at his writing-table, where he had been sitting so calm, so content, but a quarter of an hour before. He took his pen again. "At such moments one should have perfect control over himself. I have a will, and all will be well, will be well." And his pen, without his control, all the time went on writing some article or other. "Can it be borne? It is horrible! Happiness is over!"

"My love, I am ready. Let us talk," was heard from the adjoining room. The young woman's voice was low but firm.

"My love, we must part. I have decided. It is hard, but it would be still harder for us to see each other. I am his murderer. I killed him for thy sake!"

"Viérotchka! why art thou to blame?"

"Don't say a word, do not justify me, else I shall despise thee! I—I am to blame for all. Forgive me, my love, for coming to a decision which will be very hard for thee, and for me, my love, also! But I cannot do otherwise; thou thyself wilt shortly see that it was best to do so. This is unalterable, my friend! Only listen: I shall leave Petersburg; it will be easier at a distance from the places which would remind me of the past. I shall sell my things. On the money I get I shall be able to live some time. Where? In Tver, in Nizhni [Novgorod], I don't know; it is all the same. I shall try to give singing lessons. In all probability I shall find pupils, because I shall settle in some large city. If I don't find them, I shall go out as governess. I think that I shall not come to want; but if I should, I will let you know. At any rate, be sure to have some money ready for me. You know very well that I have a good many necessities, heavy expenses, stingy though I am; I cannot help it. Dost thou hear? I do not refuse thy help. Let this be a proof to thee that thou art still dear to me. And now let us part forever. Go back to town, right away, right away! It will be easier for me when I am alone. To-morrow I shall not be here; then come back. I shall leave for Moscow. There I will see, I will find out in which of the provincial cities I can easiest find singing pupils. I forbid you coming to the station to see me off. *Proshchai*, my friend! Give me thy hand in token of farewell; I shall press it for the last time."

He wanted to kiss her; she stopped his motion.

"No, it must not be; it is impossible. This would be an insult to him. Give me thy hand. I press it, thou seest how warmly! But forgive me."

He did not let go her hand.

"That is enough! Go!" She withdrew her hand. He did not dare to resist. "Forgive me!" She looked at him so tenderly, and with firm steps she went to her room, and not once did she look at him as she went.

It was long before he could find his hat. Though half a dozen times he took it into his hand, he did not see that he had it. He was like a drunken man. At last he realized that what he was looking for was the hat in his hand. He went to the entry, put on his overcoat, and now he is near the gate. "Who is running after me? Surely Masha. Surely something bad has happened to her." He turned around. Viéra Pavlovna threw herself on his neck, embraced him, kissed him passionately.

"No, I could not endure it, my love! Farewell forever!"

She hurried back, threw herself on the bed, and let the tears flow which she had so long restrained.

III. PREFACE.

“The motive of this story is love; the principal character is a woman. So far, so good, although the story itself may be poor enough,” says my lady reader. “This is true,” say I.

The man who reads is not limited to such weak conclusions. Apparently a man’s thinking faculties are naturally stronger and better developed than a woman’s. He says (very likely, however, woman also thinks the same thing, but does not deem it necessary to say it, and therefore I have no cause to argue with her), the man who reads says, “I know that the gentleman who fired the pistol did not commit suicide.” I catch that word “know,” and say, “You do not *know* it, because you have not yet been told, and all you know is that which is told you. You don’t know anything. You do not even know that, by the way in which I began this story, I insulted, I humiliated you. You did not know that, did you? Well, then, let me tell you!”

Yes, the first pages of this story show that I have a very low opinion of the public. I have used the ordinary shrewdness of novelists: I began my story with effective scenes, clipt out from the middle or the end of it; I covered them with a fog. Thou, O public, art clever, very clever, and therefore thou hast neither discernment nor wit. Thou canst not depend upon thyself to tell by the first pages whether the story is worth reading through. Thy sense of smell is wretched; it needs aid, and there are two ways of giving aid,—either the name of the author or effectiveness of style. I am going to relate to thee my first story. Thou hast not acquired a critical faculty, so as to judge whether or no the author is endowed with an artistic talent (yet thou hast so many writers, to whom thou hast attributed an artistic talent!), but my name, has not yet attracted thee, and I am compelled to throw a hook to thee, baited with an attraction of effectiveness. Condemn me not for it. Thou thyself art to blame; thy simple-minded innocence compels me to lower myself to such trivial business. But now thou art caught in my hands, and I can prolong my story, according to my own judgment, without any tricks. Henceforth there shall be no mysteries; thou shalt always be able to look forward twenty pages at a time and see the result of every situation, and now, at the very beginning, I will tell thee the conclusion of my story: the thing will end joyfully, with wine-cups, with song; there will be no theatrical effects nor embellishments. The author does not like embellishments, gentle public, because he always thinks what a chaos there is in thy head; how many, many needless sufferings are caused, inflicted upon every man by the wild confusion of thy ideas. It is to me both pitiful and ridiculous to look at thee; thou art so helpless and so piqued at the superabundant amount of absurdities in thy head.

I am vexed with thee because thou art so spiteful to people, and yet thou thyself art the *people*. Why art thou so spiteful to thyself? That is the reason that I am scolding thee. But thou art spiteful on account of thy mental helplessness; and therefore, while I am scolding thee, I am compelled to help thee. What shall be the first step toward helping thee? By touching upon the very thing that now thou art thinking about. “What sort of an author is this who speaks so impudently to me?” I will tell thee what kind of an author I am.

I do not possess the slightest sign of an artistic talent. My skill in using good language is small, but that is not of the least consequence. Read! my dear public; not without profit shalt thou

read. Truth is a good thing; truth compensates for the faults of that author who serves her. And therefore I will tell thee, that if I had not warned thee, thou wouldst probably have the idea my story was written artistically, that the author possessed a great poetic talent. But I have warned thee that I have no talent, and thou shalt now know that all the good qualities of this story lie in its truthfulness.

In the first place, my kind public, as I am hitting thee under the ribs, I must speak out to the end; although thou art fond of guessing, thou hast no skill to unriddle what has been begun and now ended. When I say that I have not a sign of an artistic talent, and that my story has very little style, don't make up thy mind that I am very much worse than all thy novelists, whom thou callest great, and that my novel is worse than theirs. I do not say that. I say that my story has less style than the works of other people who are endowed with talent. But, as far as merit goes, thou canst boldly place my story in the same rank as the famous writings of thy favorite authors; thou wilt not be mistaken if thou place it still higher. There is more art in it than in theirs; thou mayest rest assured of it.

Thank me now; thou art obsequious to those who despise thee: bow also to me.

But there is in thee, O public, a certain class of people—and at the present time a considerable number—whom I esteem. To thee as a whole; to the majority I am impertinent, and it is only about the majority that I have been speaking. As regards those whom I have just mentioned I should have spoken humbly to them, even with some fear, but I had no need of making explanations to them. I prize their opinions, but I know beforehand that they are on my side. The good and the strong, the honest, the wise, ye have begun to arise among us; ye are not few in number, and ye are growing more and more. If ye were the public, I should not have to write any more; if ye did not exist, it would be impossible for me to write. But ye are not yet the public, but ye are a part of the public; therefore, I must and I can write.

**PART FIRST. THE LIFE OF VIÉRA
PAVLOVNA IN HER PARENTS'
FAMILY.**

I.

Viéra Pavlovna's training was very ordinary. Her life, up to the time when she made the acquaintance of the medical student Lopukhóf, was rather remarkable, although it was not singular. But in her actions even then could be seen something singular.

Viéra Pavlovna grew up in a many-storied house on Gorokhovaia Street, between Sadovia Street and the Semyónovsky bridge. At the present day this house is marked with its appropriate number, but in 1852, when as yet the streets were not numbered, it bore the inscription, "The house of the Actual State Counsellor,¹ Iván Zakharuitch Storeshnikof."

Such was the inscription; but Ivan Zakharuitch Storeshnikof had died as long ago as 1837, and since that time the proprietor (*khozyáin*) of the house was his son Mikhaïl Ivanovitch (thus said the documents); but the tenants knew that Mikhaïl Ivanovitch was merely the son of his father, and that the real proprietor was Anna Petrovna.

The house was at that time just as it is now, large, with two gates and four entrances on the streets, and with three yards (*dvors*) in the rear. At the principal entrance on the street, on the *belétage*, there were living in 1852, just the same as at the present time (1860), the *khozyáika* and her son. Anna Petrovna is now, and she was then, a lady of distinction. Mikhaïl Ivanovitch is now an army officer of distinction, as he was then a distinguished and handsome officer.

I do not know who is now living on the fourth floor apartment, on the right hand, as you enter from one of the innumerable dirty back entrances of the first *dvor*; but in 1852 there were living there the manager of the house, Pavel Konstantinuitch Rozalsky, a hardy and representative man, his wife Marya Alekséyevna, a lean, strong, tall woman, with their daughter, a grown-up girl, the very same Viéra Pavlovna, and their little nine-year-old son Feódor.

Pavel Konstantinuitch, beside having the management of the house, held the office of assistant (*stolonatchalnik*) in a government department. His office gave him no salary, but at home he had a small income; any one else would have had much more, but Pavel Konstantinuitch, as he himself said, had a conscience. Consequently the *khozyáika* of the house was very well satisfied with him, and during the fourteen years of his management he had accumulated a capital of about ten thousand rubles. Of this money only three thousand, and no more, came out of the *khozyáika*'s pocket; the balance was gained by being turned over and over, and not to the detriment of the *khozyáika*. Pavel Konstantinuitch was in the habit of loaning money on pawn of personal property.

Marya Alekséyevna had also a little capital; about five thousand, as she told her *kumashki* (gossipy friends), but in reality she had more. The foundation of this capital had been laid about fifteen years before by the sale of a raccoon-skin *shuba*, a little dress, and some furniture which had been left Marya Alekséyevna by her brother, a *tchinovnik*. Having thus obtained about one hundred and fifty rubles, she also began to turn them over and over by loaning on personal security. She took greater risks than her husband did, and many times she got caught on the hooks.

¹ *Dyeistvitelnui Statskui Sovyetnik* corresponds in the civil rank of the Tchin with that of general of the army.

Some rogue borrowed five rubles from her on the security of a passport; the passport happened to be a stolen one, and it cost Marya Alekséyevna about fifteen rubles more to free herself from the entanglement. Another rascal pawned to her a gold watch for twenty rubles; the watch proved to have been taken from a murdered man, and Marya Alekséyevna was compelled to spend a good round sum to get out of this entanglement. But if she suffered losses which her husband by his careful scrutiny of securities avoided, still her capital grew with greater rapidity. Singular instances of her way of money-getting were detected. Once upon a time—Viéra Pavlovna was then small; if her daughter had been older, Marya Alekséyevna would not have done it, but at that time “why not do it? the child does not understand”; and indeed, Viérotchka by herself would not have understood it, but she did learn of it, thanks to the cook, who explained it to her with very great detail. Yes, and the cook would not have spoken of it, because the child ought not to have known about it; but it happened so that her soul was impatient after Marya Alekséyevna had given her one of her tremendous thrashings because she had taken a walk with her lover (by the way, Matrióna’s eye was always black and blue,—not because of Marya Alekséyevna’s fist, but her lover’s,—and this had its good side, since a cook with discolored eyes does not get such high wages). But as I started to say, once upon a time, there came to Marya Alekséyevna a lady of her acquaintance whom she had not seen for a long time, well dressed, magnificent, handsome; she came and made quite a visit. She staid quietly for a week, but all the time a certain civilian came to see her, a handsome man, who gave Viérotchka candy, and presented her with beautiful dolls, and gave her also two little books. Both had pictures, but in one of the books were pretty little pictures,—animals and cities,—but the other little book Marya Alekséyevna took away from Viérotchka after the gentleman had left; so that she saw the pictures only once, and that was while he was there; he himself showed them to her. About a week this lady stayed with them, and everything was quiet in the house. Marya Alekséyevna all the week did not once go to the cupboard (where a decanter of *vodka* was standing), the key of which she always kept in her own possession. She did not beat Matrióna, did not beat Viérotchka, and she did not scold as loud as usual; then one night Viérotchka was constantly disturbed by their guest’s terrible shrieks, by the going and coming, and the uproar in the house. In the morning Marya Alekséyevna went to the cupboard and stood in front of it longer than usual, and kept saying, “Glory to God! all went well, glory to God!” She even called Matrióna to the cupboard, and said:—

“To your health, Matriónushka, you too worked hard!” But instead of doubling her fist as she used to do in old times, after visiting the cupboard, she kissed Viérotchka and took a nap. After this the house was quiet for about a week, and the guest did not shriek any more, but she never left the room until she went away altogether. Two days after she left, a civilian came, not the one who had been there before, but another civilian, who brought with him the police, and gave Marya Alekséyevna a round berating, but Marya Alekséyevna did not yield to him, but kept asseverating:—

“I know nothing whatsoever of your business. You can find out by the register who has been staying with me. Mrs. Savastyánova, the wife of a merchant of Pskof, and a friend of mine has been here, and that’s all there is of it.”

Finally, after using his whole battery of words, the civilian departed, and never appeared again. Viérotchka witnessed this when she was eight years old, and when she was nine years old, Matrióna explained to her what the occurrence really was. However, such an occurrence happened only once; there were various others, but nothing like this.

When Viérotchka was a little girl of ten years old, as she was going one day with her mother to the Tolkutchy (Pushing) Market, and was turning from Gorokhovaïa (Bean) Street to Sadovaïa (Garden) Street, she received an unexpected slap on the head, with the words: "What are you looking at the church for, you fool, without crossing yourself? What! don't you see that all good people make the sign of the cross?"

When Viérotchka was twelve years old she began to go to school, and a piano-teacher came to give her lessons, a German who was a drunkard, but was otherwise a very good man and an excellent musician. Owing to his habits his terms were very low.

When she was fourteen years old she used to sew for the whole family; the family, however, was not large.

When Viérotchka was going on to her sixteenth year, her mother began to scold her in this way: "Wash your face, 'tis like a gypsy's. You could not get it clean, if you tried; you're such a scarecrow. I'd like to know whose child you are, anyhow."

She was always ridiculed on account of the tawny complexion of her face, and she got accustomed to look upon herself as extremely ugly. Hitherto her mother had dressed her almost in rags, but now she began to give her fine clothes. And Viérotchka used to go to church in her fine clothes with her mother, and say to herself: "These fine clothes would suit somebody else; but no matter how I'm dressed, I'm always a gypsy, a scarecrow. I might as well be in calico as in silk, but it is good to be pretty. How I should like to be pretty!"

When Viérotchka had completed her sixteenth year she stopped taking piano lessons, and no longer went to school, but began to teach in the very same school: afterwards her mother got other teaching for her.

At the end of six months her mother ceased calling her gypsy and scarecrow, and dressed her even more elegantly than before, and Matrióna—this was the third Matrióna since the one whose eye had been black and blue, but she had oftentimes a scratched cheek, but not always—Matrióna told Viérotchka that her father's *natchalnik* was going to pay her his addresses, and that still another *natchalnik* of great importance, with an order around his neck, had the same intention. And in fact the little *tchinovniks* of the department gossiped among themselves that the *natchalnik* of Pavel Konstantinuitch's office was getting very affable to the latter, and the office *natchalnik* began to confide to his cronies that he must have a beautiful wife even though she had no dowry, and he would add that Pavel Konstantinuitch was an excellent *tchinovnik*.

How this would have ended cannot be conjectured, but the *natchalnik* of the office deliberated a long time, and while he was taking his own time, another opportunity arose.

The *khozyáika's* son came to the manager to say that his *mátushka* wanted Pavel Konstantinuitch to get specimens of wall-papers, because she was going to re-paper the rooms in which she was living. Hitherto all such orders had been given through the janitor. Certainly such a case as this could be comprehended even by people who were not as shrewd as Marya Alekséyevna and her husband. The landlady's son sat for more than half an hour and did them the honor of drinking tea with them. It was flower tea. Marya Alekséyevna on the very next day gave her daughter a necklace which had been taken as a pledge and had never been redeemed, and ordered for her daughter two new and very fine dresses; one of a material costing forty rubles, and the other fifty-two. With ruchings and ribbands, and everything in style, these two garments cost one hundred and seventy-four rubles, at least so Marya Alekséyevna said to her husband; but Viérotchka knew that the real cost was less than one hundred rubles, for the purchases were made in her presence, and for one hundred rubles two very fine dresses could be made. Viérotchka was delighted with

the dresses, was delighted with the necklace, and was still more delighted because her mother at last consented to buy her shoes for her at Korolyef's, because the shoes that one gets at the "Pushing Market" are shapeless, while those sold by Korolyef fit the feet so beautifully.

The dresses were not bought in vain; the *khozyáika's* son got into the habit of coming to the manager's rooms, and naturally used to talk with the daughter more than with the manager or the manager's wife, and naturally enough they gave him every opportunity. *Nu!* the mother gave her daughter plenty of advice which need not be repeated, as its tenor can be easily imagined.

One day after dinner the mother said: "Viérotchka, put on your dress, your best dress. I have got up a surprise for you: we are going to the opera. I have got tickets for the second tier, where all the generals' wives go. This is all for your sake, little goose, [*dúrotchka!*] This is the last money that I am going to waste on you. Your father has spent so much on you that it has gone to his stomach! How much did it cost to send you to school and to give you piano lessons? You don't appreciate it in the least, you ungrateful hussy; no, you haven't any soul in you, you unfeeling minx!" That was all that Marya Alekséyevna said. She no longer scolded her daughter, and that could scarcely be called a scolding. Marya Alekséyevna now only spoke to Viérotchka, and had never really scolded her or beaten her since the rumor about the office *natchalnik* had been spread abroad.

They went to the opera. After the first act the *khozyáika's* son came into their box with two of his friends; one was a civilian, thin and rather elegant; the other was an army man, fat, and freer from affectation. They took seats and sat down, and they whispered among themselves for a time; the *khozyáika's* son and the civilian said a good deal, the officer said less. Marya Alekséyevna tried to listen, and, though she distinguished almost every word, she understood very little, because they spoke in French. She caught some half a dozen words in their conversation,—*belle, charmante, amour, bonheur*. But what good was it to know so few words,—*belle, charmante?* Marya Alekséyevna knew long ago that her gypsy was *belle* and *charmante*. *Amour*—Marya Alekséyevna could see that he was over head and ears in love; and when there is *amour*, of course there must be *bonheur*. What good did these words do? The main question is, will he offer himself before long?

"Viérotchka, you ungrateful thing!" whispers Marya Alekséyevna to her daughter; "why do you turn your head away from them? Do you feel offended because they came in? They do you honor, you fool [*dura!*] What is the French for wedding? *mariage*, hey, Viérotchka? And what is bridegroom and bride? What is 'to get married'?"

Viérotchka told her.

"No, I did not hear any such words. Viéra, are you sure that you told me right? You be careful!"

"No, no! You will never hear any such words from them. Let us go home. I cannot remain here any longer."

"What's that you say, you nasty thing?" Marya Alekséyevna's eyes grew bloodshot.

"Let us go home. Do with me as you please afterwards, but I will not stay here. I will tell you why when we go. *Mámenka*,"—this word was said loud enough for all to hear—"I have a very bad headache. I cannot remain here. I beg of you!"

Viérotchka stood up.

The young men were confused.

"It will pass away, Viérotchka," said Marya Alekséyevna, sternly but decorously. "Just take a walk through the corridor with Mikhail Ivanitch, and your headache will go off."

"No, it will not go off; I feel very bad; quick, *mámenka!*"

The gentlemen opened the door; each wanted to offer Viérotchka his arm, but the detestable young girl refused. They handed the ladies the cloaks; they escorted them down to the carriage. Marya Alekséyevna looked haughtily at the waiters. "Look you, serfs! what cavaliers these are; and this one here is going to be my son-in-law. I myself will have such serfs. And you put on airs, put on airs if you dare, you nasty thing, you! I will put them on for you!" But wait, wait; the *son-in-law* is saying something to her ugly but proud little girl, while he is putting her into the carriage. "*Santé*, that must mean health; *savoir*, that's 'I know'; *visite*, the same as in Russian; *permettez*, 'I beg your pardon.'"

Marya Alekséyevna's anger was not less diminished by these words, but she had to take them into consideration. The carriage drove away.

"What did he say to you when he put you in?"

"He said that he would call to-morrow morning to learn about my health."

"Ain't you lying? do you mean to-morrow?"

Viérotchka was silent.

"You are a lucky girl." Marya Alekséyevna could not resist pulling her daughter's hair, only once, and not violently.

"*Nu!* I will not lay my finger on you if you will only behave to-morrow. Sleep to-night, you fool! Don't you dare to weep! Look out, if I see to-morrow morning that you are pale, or that your eyes are red with crying. I have let things go so far; I shall not stand it any longer. I shall not take pity on your pretty little face. If you lose this chance, I will teach you how to act."

"I ceased to weep long, long ago; you know it."

"That is all right [*to-to-zhe*]; but try to be a little more sociable with him."

"Yes, I will speak with him to-morrow."

"That's all right [*to-to*]; it's time you came to your senses. Fear God, and have pity on your mother, you shameless thing!"

Ten minutes passed.

"Viérotchka, don't be angry with me. I scold you because I love you; I want to be good to you. You have no idea how dear children are to their mothers. I brought you forth with pain. Viérotchka, be grateful, be obedient; you yourself will see that it is for your own good. Behave as I tell you. To-morrow he will offer himself."

"*Mámenka*, you are mistaken. He has no thought of offering himself. *Mámenka*, if you had heard what they said!"

"I know. If they were not talking about a wedding, then it was about something else. *Da!* let 'em try it; they'll find they've got the wrong ones to deal with. We'll bend him into a ram's horn. I'll bring him into church in a bag; I'll drag him around the chancel by the whiskers, and he will be glad of it. *Nu!* but I have said enough. A young girl should not know about these things; it's the mother's business. But a young girl must be obedient; she don't know anything yet. Now will you speak with him as I tell you?"

"Yes, I will speak with him."

"And you, Pavel Konstantinuitch, what are you sitting up for like a stump! Tell her yourself that you, as her father, command her to obey her mother, and that her mother will certainly teach her no evil."

"Marya Alekséyevna, you are a clever woman, but this is rather a dangerous step; if you don't look out, you will carry things too far."

“*Durak* [fool]! that’s nice kind of talk; and in Viérotchka’s presence, too! I am sorry that I let you speak. The proverb tells the truth: ‘Don’t touch filth if you don’t want to smell.’ Perfect nonsense! Don’t argue, but answer; must a daughter obey her mother or not?”

“Of course she must; what’s the use of speaking, Marya Alekséyevna?”

“*Nu!* give her your orders then, since you are her father.”

“Viérotchka, obey your mother in everything. Your mother is a clever woman, a woman of experience. She will tell you nothing bad. I command you as your father.”

The carriage stopped at the gate.

“That’s enough, *mámenka*. I told you that I would speak with him. I am very tired. I must rest.”

“Go to bed; get some sleep. I shall not disturb you. You must be fresh for to-morrow. Sleep well.”

In fact, all the time that they were climbing the stairs, Marya Alekséyevna held her peace; and it was a great effort for her; and what an effort it was for her to be pleasant when Viérotchka went directly to her room, saying that she did not care for tea! and what an effort it was for her to say in a pleasant voice, “Viérotchka, come to me.” The daughter obeyed. “I want to give you my blessing before you go to sleep, Viérotchka. Bend your little head.” The daughter bent her head. “May God bless you, Viérotchka, as I bless you.” She repeated the blessing thrice, and gave her her hand to kiss.

“No, *mámenka!* I told you long ago, that I would not kiss your hand. And now let me go. I tell you the truth; I feel very bad.”

Akh! how angry grew Marya Alekséyevna’s eyes once again! But she controlled herself, and said gently, “Go on, go to bed.”

It took Viérotchka a long time to undress, because she was lost in thought. First she took off her bracelet, and sat long with it in her hand; then she removed her ear-rings, and forgot herself again. At last she remembered that she was very tired. She could not even stand before the looking-glass, but threw herself into the chair in utter weariness. She sat there some time before it came over her that she must undress as quickly as possible; but she had hardly taken off her dress and laid down, before Marya Alekséyevna came into the room with a waiter, whereon stood her father’s great cup and a pile of toasted bread.

“Take some, Viérotchka; here, take some, for health’s sake! I myself have brought it to you. You see your mother looks out for you. I was sitting and thinking, ‘How is it that Viérotchka went to bed without tea?’ While I was drinking I was full of thought. And here I have brought it. Take it, my dear daughter [*moya dochka mílaïa*].”

Her mother’s voice sounded strange to Viérotchka; but in reality, it was soft and kind; it had never been so before. She looked at her mother with amazement. Marya Alekséyevna’s cheeks were fiery red, and her eyes were unsteady.

“Take it. I’ll sit down and look at you. When you have finished this cup, I will bring you another.”

The tea, which was half-filled with delicious, thick cream, awakened Viérotchka’s appetite. She lifted herself on her elbow, and began to drink.

“How delicious tea is when it is fresh and strong, and when it has lots of sugar and cream! Perfectly delicious! It is not like tea that has been drawn once, and is made with one little mean bit of sugar, and tastes like medicine. When I have money of my own, I shall always drink such tea as this is. Thank you, *mámenka*.”

“Don’t go to sleep yet; I will bring you another one.” She came back with a second cup of the same excellent tea. “Drink it, and I will stay with you.” She said nothing for a moment, and then suddenly she began to speak in a strange way, sometimes so fast that her words could not be understood, and the next minute drawling.

“Now, Viérotchka, you have thanked me. It’s a long time since I have had any thanks from you. You think that I am cross. Yes, I am cross. But it is impossible not to be cross. But I am weak, Viérotchka! After three punches, of course I feel weak! And think how old I am. *Da!* and you have shaken my nerves, Viérotchka; you pained me greatly; and so I felt weak. And my life is a hard one, Viérotchka! I don’t want you to live such a life. Be a rich woman! Think of the suffering that I have gone through, Viérotchka, a-a-a-and just think of it! You cannot remember how me and your father used to live before he was manager. Poor, a-a-a-and oh, how poor! and then I was honest, Viérotchka! Now I am not honest. No, I shall not take a sin on my soul, I will not tell you a lie, I will not say that I am honest now. But what’s the use? That time is all past. Viérotchka, you are educated and I am not educated, but I know everything that is wrote in your books; there it is wrote that one ought not to treat anybody as I was treated. ‘You,’ they say, ‘are dishonest.’ Now here’s your father, for example; he’s your father, but he was not Nádinka’s father. He’s a poor soul, yet he dared then to pick my eyes to reproach me. *Nu*, then the ill temper got the best of me, and I say that, judged by your standard, I ain’t a good woman; but then I be as I be. Nádinka was born. *Nu*, what of that? Supposing she was born? Who taught me to do such things? How did your father get his place? My sin was much less than his. And they took her away from me, and they put her into the Foundling House; and it was impossible to find out what became of her, and so I never saw her, and I don’t know whether she is among the livin’ or not. Faith, how could she be alive! *Nu*, at the present time I should not have cared so much, but then it wa’n’t so easy, and my temper got the best of me. *Nu*, and so I became cross. And since then everything has gone all right. Who got the situation for your father, fool that he is? I got it for him. And who got him promoted to be a manager? I did; and so we began to live comfortably. And why? Because I lost my temper and my good name! This I know. It’s written in your books, Viérotchka, that it’s only the wicked and ill-tempered who get along in this world; and that is gospel truth, Viérotchka! Now your father has lots of money, Viérotchka; and it was through me that he got it. And I too have money, and probably more than he has,—all through my exertions. I shall have bread enough for my last years. And your father, fool that he is, has begun to respect me, and he has to toe the line. I scold him well. But before, he used to treat me mean. And why was it? I didn’t deserve it then. It must have been because I wa’n’t ill-tempered. And it’s written in your books, Viérotchka, that such a life is bad, and don’t you suppose I know it? Yes, and it is written in your books, too, that to live otherwise one must reform things; but accordin’ to the present way of the world one can’t live as the books say. But why don’t they reform the world? *Ekh!* Viérotchka, you think that I don’t know what kind of rules are in your books. I know; they are fine. But we sha’n’t live to see ‘em, you and me. Folks is too stupid; how can you make reforms with such folks? Let’s live in the old way. You too had better live in the old way. What are the old rules? In your books it is written; the old rule bids you to rob and cheat. It is true, Viérotchka. Well, then, since there is no new order, live in the old way; steal and cheat. I give you my advice because I love you—khrrr.”

Marya Alekséyevna was snoring! She was fast asleep.

II.

Marya Alekséyevna knew what was spoken at the theatre, but she did not yet know what followed that conversation.

At the very time that she was getting more and more angry with her daughter, and, in consequence of having put too much rum in her punch, was snoring in her daughter's room, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch Storeshnikof was taking supper in a certain fashionable restaurant with the other young gentlemen who had accompanied him to the box.

There was still a fourth person in the company,—a French girl who came with the officer. The supper was almost ended.

“Monsieur Storeshnik.”

Storeshnikof felt greatly set up. The French girl addressed him for the third time during the supper.

“Monsieur Storeshnik! Allow me to address you so. It sounds better and is much easier to speak. I did not think that I was going to be the only lady in your company; I hoped to see Adèle here. That would have been charming, I see her so seldom.”

“Adèle unfortunately has quarrelled with me.”

The officer wanted to say something, but he did not speak.

“Don't believe him, Mademoiselle Julie,” said the civilian. “He does not dare to tell you the truth; he thinks that you will not like it when you find out that he has given up a French girl for a Russian.”

“I don't know why it was we came here,” said the officer.

“Why, yes, Serge; it was because Jean asked us. And it has been very pleasant for me to get acquainted with Monsieur Storeshnikof. No, Monsieur Storeshnikof; *fy*, what bad taste you show! I should never have said anything if you had deserted Adèle for that Circassian beauty in whose box you were sitting; but to give up a French girl for a Russian! I imagine her: colorless eyes, colorless, thin hair, a vacant, colorless face. I beg pardon; not colorless, but as you call it, blood with cream [*krof so slivkami*], and by that you mean a dish which only your Esquimaux can take into their mouths.—Jean, let that sinner against grace have the ash-tray. Let him scatter ashes on his wicked head!”

“You have spoken so much nonsense, Julie, that it ought to be your head, not his, that should be sown with ashes,” said the officer. “It happens that the very girl whom you called the Circassian was the Russian.”

“You are making sport of me!”

“A genuine Russian,” said the officer.

“Impossible!”

“You are quite wrong, my dear Julie, if you think that our nation has only one type of beauty, like your own. You have a great many blondes, but we, Julie, are a mixture of nations. We have the white-haired like the Finns—”

“Yes, yes, the Finns,” said the French girl.

“And those with black hair, who are even darker than Italians; Tartars and Mongolians—”

“Yes, yes, Tartars and Mongolians; I know about them,” said the French girl again.

“And all of them have given us a share of their blood. We have blondes, whom you may despise, but they are only a local type; a very common type, to be sure, but not predominating.”

“That’s strange. But she is lovely. Why doesn’t she go on the stage? By the way, gentlemen, I only speak of what I have seen. There remains a very important question,—her foot. Your great poet Karasen, I have been told, said that in all Russia there could not be found five pair of small, straight little feet.”

“Julie! it was not Karasen who said that, and you had better call him Karamzin. Karamzin was a historian, and he wasn’t a Russian, but a Tartar. Now, here’s a new proof of the variety of our types. It was Pushkin who spoke about the little feet. His poetry was very good in its day, but now it has lost a large part of its value. By the way, the Esquimaux live in America, and our savages who drink the blood of elans are called Samoyeds.”

“Thank you, Serge. Karamzin, historian; Pushkin, I know; Esquimaux, in America; the Russians are Samoyeds; yes, Samoyeds. That is such a lovely word: Sa-mo-ye-dui! Now I shall remember it. Now, gentlemen, I shall ask Serge to tell me all this again when we are alone. It is a very profitable subject for conversation; besides, science is my hobby. I was born to be a Madame Staël, gentlemen. But this is an episode entirely out of the track. Let us return to the question,—her foot.”

“If you will allow me to call upon you to-morrow, Mademoiselle Julie, I shall have the honor of bringing you her shoe.”

“Bring it. I will try it on. That appeals to my curiosity.”

Storeshnikof was enraptured. Why? Because he had got into Jean’s wake, and Jean was in Serge’s wake, and Julie—she was one of the most prominent of the French ladies among all the French ladies of Serge’s society. It was an honor, a great honor.”

“I don’t care anything about her foot,” said Jean; “but I as a practical man am interested in something beside her foot. I want to see if she has a pretty figure.”

“Her figure is very pretty,” said Storeshnikof, who was encouraged by the praise given his taste, and who thought at the same time that he could give Julie a compliment. He had not dared to do so before. “Her figure is charming, although to praise another woman’s figure here is certainly blasphemy.”

“Ha! ha! ha! this gentleman wants to make a compliment on my figure! I am neither a hypocrite nor a liar, Monsieur Storeshnik, and I don’t praise myself, nor can I endure that others should flatter what is bad in me. Thank God, I have something for which I can honestly be praised. But my figure! ha! ha! ha! Jean, you can tell him whether my figure is worth praising. Jean, why don’t you speak? Your hand, Monsieur Storeshnik.” She seized his hand. “See here! Now you will know that I am not all that I seem! I have to wear a padded dress, just as I wear a petticoat, not because I like it. No, in my opinion it would be better without such hypocrisy, but because it is the fashion. But a woman who has lived as I have, and how have I lived Monsieur Storeshnik? I am a saint now compared to what I have been; such a woman cannot preserve her beauty!”

And suddenly she burst into tears,—“My beauty! My beauty! my lost innocence! Oh God, why was I born?”

“You lie, gentlemen!” she cried, jumping up and pounding with her fist on the table. “You are slanderers. You are low fellows. She is not his mistress. He is trying to buy her. I saw how she turned away from him; how she burned with indignation and with scorn. It was contemptible.”

"Yes," said the civilian, lazily stretching himself, "you have boasted a little prematurely, Storeshnikof; you have not caught your fish yet, and yet you said that she was yours, and that you had broken with Adèle so as to deceive us the better. Yes, you gave us a very good description, but you described to us what you had not seen yet; however, it's no matter. A week sooner or later makes no difference. You must not be discouraged about drawing on your imagination for stories. You will get on even better than you thought. I have been there; you will be satisfied."

Storeshnikof was beside himself with anger. "No, Mademoiselle Julie, you are mistaken; I venture to assure you that you are mistaken in your conclusion; forgive me for daring to contradict you, but she *is* my mistress. That was an ordinary lover's quarrel because she was jealous; she saw that I was sitting in Mademoiselle Mathilde's box during the first act; that's all."

"That's a lie, my dear, that's a lie," said Jean, yawning.

"I don't tell lies! I don't tell lies!"

"Prove it. I am a positive man, and I don't believe anything without proofs."

"What proofs can I bring you?"

"Now here you are backing out, and you as good as confess that you lie. What proofs? As if it would be hard to show them. Now, then, here's for you: to-morrow we will meet here again at supper. Mademoiselle Julie will be good enough to bring her Serge; I shall bring my dear little Berthe; you bring *her*. If you bring her, I am the loser, the supper shall be at my expense. If you don't bring her, you shall be driven out from our circle in disgrace.—Jean, touch the bell." The servant appeared. "Simon, be good enough to get supper for six people to-morrow; one just like the one that I had when Berthe and I were married at your house—do you remember?—before Christmas, and have it in this very room!"

"How could I ever forget such a supper, Monsieur? It shall be done." The servant went out.

"You contemptible, miserable men! Two years I lived as a bad woman in a house with prostitutes and thieves, and never once did I meet three such low people as you are! *Mon Dieu!* what sort of people do I have to live with in *society*? Why must I suffer such disgrace, O God!" She fell on her knees: "O God, I am a feeble woman! I could bear hunger, but in Paris the winters were so cold. The cold was so bitter, and the temptations were so overpowering. I wanted to live; I wanted to love. O God, that was no sin! Why art thou punishing me so? Deliver me from this band. Lift me out of this mire. Give me strength to become even a bad woman again in Paris; I ask of Thee nothing else: I deserve nothing else. Only deliver me from these men, from these contemptible men!"

She jumped up, and ran to the officer: "Serge, are you too like the rest? No, you are better."

"Better?" repeated the officer, phlegmatically.

"Isn't this thing contemptible?"

"It is, Julie."

"And you don't protest? You allow it? You agree to it? You share in it?"

"Sit on my knee, my dear Julie." He began to caress her, and she grew calmer. "How I love you at such moments! You are a glorious woman. Now, why don't you consent to go through the marriage ceremony with me? How many times have I asked you to? Give your consent."

"Marriage? the bridle? conventionality? Never! I have forbidden you to mention such absurdities. Don't get me angry. But Serge, dear Serge, forbid him; he is afraid of you. Save her!"

"Julie, be calmer. This is impossible. If not he, then somebody else; what difference does it make? Just look here. Jean is already thinking of getting her away from him, and there are thousands of such Jeans, as you know well. It is impossible to save the daughter when her mother

is anxious to sell her. 'You can't knock down a wall with your forehead,' we Russians say. We are a clever people, Julie. You see how calmly I live, accepting this Russian principle of ours."

"Never! You are a slave! The French woman is free. The French woman struggles, may fall, but still she struggles. I will not allow this. Who is she? Where does she live? Do you know?"

"I know."

"Let us go to her. I am going to warn her."

"What! at one o'clock at night? No, let us go home.—*Au revoir!* Jean.—*Au revoir!* Storeshnikof.—Of course, you will not expect Julie and me at your supper, to-morrow. You see how excited she is. And I also, to tell you the truth, don't like this business at all. Of course, my opinion has nothing to do with you. *Au revoir!*"

"What a crazy Frenchwoman!" said the civilian, stretching himself and yawning, as the officer and Julia left. "A very piquante woman, but this is too much. It is very pleasant to see a nice little woman get warmed up; but I would not live with her four hours, let alone four years. Of course, Storeshnikof, our supper will not be destroyed by her caprice. I shall bring Paul and Mathilde in their place. And now it's time to go home. I have got to call on Berthe, and then I must go and see the little Lottchen, who is mighty pretty."

III.

“*Nu*, Viéra, all right! Your eyes show you haven’t cried. Evidently you saw that your mother tells the truth. You always used to be an off horse.” Viérotchka made an impatient gesture. “*Nu!* its all right; I shan’t say anything more; don’t get stirred up! And last night I fell asleep in your room; perhaps I talked too long. Last night I was not myself. Don’t heed what I said when I was a little tipsy; do you hear? don’t heed it!”

Viérotchka once more saw the ordinary Marya Alekséyevna. The evening before it seemed to her that underneath her animal outside she saw the features of a human being; but now she seemed to be a mere animal and nothing else. Viérotchka made an effort to overcome her repugnance, but she could not. Hitherto she had only despised her mother; yesterday evening it seemed to her that she was ceasing to despise her and beginning to feel only pity for her. But now again she felt the old repugnance, but there remained also the pity for her.

“Dress yourself, Viérotchka. He’ll likely get here before long.” She very carefully examined her daughter’s wardrobe. “If you only behave yourself, I will make you a present of a pair of ear-rings with large emeralds; they are old fashioned, but if they are made over, they’ll make a handsome little brooch. They were left in pawn for one hundred and fifty rubles, making with interest two hundred and fifty; but they are worth more than four hundred. Do you hear? I am going to give them to you.”

Storeschnikof appeared. Last evening he was quite at a loss to know how to accomplish the task which he had undertaken; he walked from the restaurant to his house, thinking all the time. But when he reached home he was calm; he made up his mind as he walked, and now he was satisfied with himself.

He asked about Viéra Pavlovna’s health.

“I am well.”

He said that he was very glad, and the conversation turned on the necessity of making the most of health.

“Of course it is necessary, and according to Marya Alekséyevna’s opinion, one ought to make the most of youth also.” He perfectly agreed with that sentiment, and thought that it would be well to take advantage of the fine weather to enjoy a ride out of town: “It is a frosty day, and the road is elegant.”

“With whom do you intend to go?”

“Only three of us,—you, Marya Alekséyevna, Viéra Pavlovna, and myself.”

In this case Marya Alekséyevna is perfectly agreed; but now she is going to prepare some coffee and lunch, and Viérotchka will sing something.

“Viérotchka, will you sing something?” she adds in a tone that leaves no room for refusal.

“I will sing.”

Viérotchka sat down at the piano, and sang a song called “Troïka” (The Three Span), for at this time Pushkin’s poem was set to music. To Marya Alekséyevna listening at the door, this song

was very good. The young girl was looking at the officer. "That little Viérka, if she only wants, can be pretty shrewd, the minx!"

Soon Viérotchka stopped. This was right; Marya Alekséyevna had advised her: "Sing a little while, and then begin to talk."

Now Viérotchka is speaking, but to Marya Alekséyevna's mortification she is speaking in French. "What a fool I was! I forgot to tell her to speak in Russian; but Viéra is speaking calmly; she is smiling. *Nu!* evidently everything is going well. Only what made him open his eyes so wide? But then, he is a fool [*durak*], a genuine fool, and all that he can do is to blink his eyes. But this is just the kind we want. Now she is giving him her hand; Viérka is smart; I praise her!"

"Monsieur Storeshnikof, I must speak seriously with you. Last night you took a box so that you might represent me to your friends as your mistress. I am not going to tell you that it was dishonorable; if you had been capable of comprehending it, you would not have done it. But I warn you, if you ever dare to speak to me in the theatre, or on the street, or anywhere else, I shall slap your face. My mother will torture me" (here Viérotchka smiled) "let come what may, it is all the same. This evening you receive a note from my mother to the effect that our sleighride is given up, because I am not well."

He stood up and blinked his eyes, just as Marya Alekséyevna had noticed.

"I speak to you as to a man who has not a spark of honor in him. But may be you are not absolutely ruined. If it is so, I beg of you, cease calling upon us! Then I will forgive your slander. If you consent, give me your hand."

She offered him her hand; he took it, hardly knowing what he was doing.

"I thank you. Now go. Say that you must hurry to get the horses ready for the drive."

Again he blinked his eyes. She turned to the notes and began to finish singing the "Troïka." It was a pity that there were no good judges of singing there; it was charming to hear her; indeed, it was rare that one heard so much expression put into music. Really, there was too much feeling; it was not artistic.

In a moment Marya Alekséyevna came in, and the cook followed her with a waiter containing coffee and lunch. Mikhaïl Ivanuitch, instead of taking the lunch, retreated to the door.

"Where are you going, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch?"

"I am in a hurry, Marya Alekséyevna, to give orders about the horses."

"*Da!* you have ample time, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch." But Mikhaïl Ivanuitch was already behind the door.

Marya Alekséyevna dashed from the reception room into the parlor with uplifted fists. "What have you done, you confounded Viérka. Ha?" But the confounded Viérka was no longer in the parlor; her mother hastened after her to her room, but the door of Viérotchka's room was locked. The mother pressed with all the strength of her body to break open the door, but the door did not yield, and Viérka said: "If you try to break open the door, I shall open the window and call for help. I will not give myself into your hands alive."

Marya Alekséyevna's anger lasted long, but she did not break open the door; finally, she got tired of shouting. Then Viérotchka said: "*Mámenka*, hitherto I simply have not loved you; but since last night, I pity you; you have had much sorrow, and that has made you what you are. Hitherto I have not talked with you, but now I want to talk; but only when you have got over being angry. We will talk kindly, as we never have before."

Of course, Marya Alekséyevna did not take these words much to heart; but weary nerves demand rest, and Marya Alekséyevna began to reason whether it would not be better to com-

promise with her daughter before she, the miserable creature, gets entirely out of her hands. “Besides, without her, nothing can be done; we can’t marry her to Mishka, the fool, unless she’s here to marry him, can we? Besides, I don’t know yet what she has told him; they squeezed each other’s hands; what does that signify?”

And thus the weary Marya Alekséyevna was reasoning between ferocity and cunningness, when suddenly the bell rang. It was Julie and Serge.

IV.

“Serge, does her mother speak French?” were Julie’s first words when she awoke.

“I don’t know; so you have not put that idea out of your head yet?”

“No, I have not.”

And after taking into consideration all that they had seen in the theatre, they decided that in all probability this young girl’s mother did not speak French. So Julie took Serge along with her as interpreter. At all events, such was his fate, and he would have had to go even if Viérotchka’s mother had been the Cardinal Mezzofanti;¹ and he did not complain of his fate, but went everywhere with Julie, as though he were maid of honor to some heroine! Julie got up late, but on the way she stopped at Wickman’s, and then, though it was not on her way, she went to four other stores because she needed certain articles. It was in this way that Mikhaïl Ivanuitch had ample time to explain himself, Marya Alekséyevna had ample time to get enraged and to get calmed down, before Julie and Serge came from the Liteinaïa bridge to the Gorokhovaïa Street.

“But what excuse have we for coming here? *Fy*, what miserable stairs! I never saw such even in Paris!”

“It’s all the same; make up an excuse. Her mother keeps a sort of a pawn shop. Take off your brooch! Hold on! here’s a better one: *she* gives piano lessons. Let’s say that you have a niece.”

Matrióna for the first time in her life was ashamed of her smashed cheek-bone when she saw Serge’s uniform, and especially Julie’s magnificence; she had never before met face to face with a woman of such importance. Marya Alekséyevna was in such a state of wonder and indescribable surprise when Matrióna announced that Colonel N—— N—— with his spouse had done themselves the honor of calling! especially those words “with his spouse”!

The gossip that permeated into the circle where Marya Alekséyevna moved, affected exclusively the class of civilians, but the gossip about genuine aristocrats died away in the air before it reached half way down to Marya Alekséyevna; therefore she accepted in the full legal interpretation of the thought the words husband and wife, as Serge and Julie called each other, in accordance with the Parisian fashion. Marya Alekséyevna quickly composed herself and hastened down to meet them.

Serge said that he was very glad of the chance that he had had the evening before, etc., that his wife had a niece, etc., that his wife did not speak Russian, and therefore he was interpreter.

“Yes, I may be grateful to my Creator,” said Marya Alekséyevna; “Viérotchka has a great talent for teaching the piano, and I should count it a great piece of luck if she were to visit such a house as yours. Only my little teacher is not very well just now.”

Marya Alekséyevna spoke particularly loud, so that Viérotchka might hear and understand the approaching truce. She herself in her admiration, as it were, devoured her visitors with her eyes.

¹ Mezzofanti (Giuseppe Gaspardo), chief keeper of the Vatican library, was said to have spoken over one hundred languages.

"I don't know whether she's got the strength to come out and give you a proof of her skill on the piano.—Viérotchka, my love, can you come out or not? Only some strangers—there won't be a scene—why won't you come out?"

Viérotchka opened the door, glanced at Serge, and turned crimson with shame and anger. Even unobservant eyes could not have failed to take notice of this, and Julie's eyes were sharper, if that were possible, than even Marya Alekséyevna's. The French woman began without beating around the bush:—

"My dear child, you are surprised and indignant to see a man in whose presence you were so much offended last night, and who probably himself gave you some reason for offence. My husband is thoughtless; but for all that, he is far better than the rest of the lazy young fellows. Please forgive him for my sake; I came to you with good intentions. The lessons for my niece was only a pretence; but it is necessary to keep it up for a while. Please play us something—something quite short; then you and I will go to your room, and we'll talk the matter over. Listen to me, my child."

Can this be the same Julie who is so well known among the aristocratic young bloods of Petersburg? Can this be the same Julie who plays such tricks as make even devil-may-care young fellows blush? No, it is a princess to whose ears a rough word never came!

Viérotchka sat down to show her skill on the piano. Julie stood behind her; Serge engaged himself in conversation with Marya Alekséyevna, with the view of finding out what the relationship was between her and Storeshnikof. In the course of a few minutes Julie stopped Viérotchka, put her arm around her waist, walked with her up and down the parlor, then went with her to her room. Serge explained that his wife was satisfied with Viérotchka's playing, but wanted to speak with her because it was necessary also to know the teacher's character, etc., and he continued to talk with Marya Alekséyevna about Storeshnikof. All this was excellent, but Marya Alekséyevna found reason for greater suspicion and vigilance.

"My dear child," said Julie, as she entered Viérotchka's room, "your mother is a very bad woman. But in order that I may know what to say to you, I beg of you to tell me how and why you went to the theatre last night. I know all about it already from my husband, but from your story I shall learn your character. Don't be afraid of me." And when she had heard Viérotchka's account, she continued:—

"Yes, one can speak plainly with you; you have character." And in very careful, delicate terms she told the story of the wager that had been made the evening before; whereupon Viérotchka told her about the invitation to go to ride.

"Now do you suppose he wanted to deceive your mother, or were they both in a conspiracy against you?"

Viérotchka began to aver with much warmth that her mother was not such a bad woman as to be in a conspiracy.

"It won't take me long to find out," said Julie. "You stay here; you are not needed there." Julie returned to the parlor.

"Serge, he has invited this woman and her daughter to take a ride this evening. Tell her about last night's supper."

"Your daughter is agreeable to my wife; now it is necessary to see about her terms; in all probability we shall not have any trouble on that score. But allow me to finish our talk about our mutual friend. You give him very high praise, but are you aware of the way that he talks

about his relationship to your family? For example, do you know why he invited us last evening to your box?"

In Marya Alekséyevna's eyes there gleamed, instead of a look of anxious inquiry, the thought, "Then it is so!"

"I am not a gossip," she replied with dissatisfaction. "I myself do not carry tattle around, and I don't listen much to the tattle of others." This was said not without sarcasm, in spite of all her admiration of her visitor. "There are always a good many little things that young people talk about among themselves; there is no need of bothering with them."

"Very good; well then, do you call this also gossip?" He began to tell the story of the supper. Marya Alekséyevna did not let him finish; as soon as he said the first word about the wager, she leaped to her feet and cried out in wrath, entirely forgetting the importance of her guests:—

"Now what sort of tricks are these! *Akh!* the villain! *Akh!* the murderer! Now I see why he invited us to go a-driving! He wanted to get me out of the way so as to ruin a defenceless young girl! *Akh!* the beastly man!" and so she went on. Then she began to thank her guests for salvation of her life and her daughter's honor. "And so that was what you were driving at, *bátiushka*; I suspicioned it at the very first, that you did not come without some good reason; lessons is lessons, but I saw that you had some other game; but I did not think that was the reason; I thought that you had some other bride for him, that you wanted to take him away from us; I have been unjust to you, poor sinner that I am; be generous and forgive me! You have done me such a great favor that I shall never forget it as long as I live." And thus she went on pouring out curses, blessings, excuses, in a disorderly torrent.

Julie did not listen long to this endless speech, the meaning of which was plain to her from the tone of her voice, and from her gestures. While Marya Alekséyevna was speaking the very first words, the French woman got up and returned to Viérotchka's room.

"No, your mother was not his accomplice, and now she is very indignant with him. But I know such people as your mother very well. They can't long hold out in their dislike of people who have money. She will soon be on the lookout for a husband for you again, and what will be the end of it all, God knows. At all events, it will be very hard for you. At first she will leave you in peace; but I tell you it will not last long. What are you going to do now? Have you any relatives in Petersburg?"

"No."

"That is too bad. Have you a lover?"

Viérotchka did not know how to answer this; she only opened her eyes in wonder.

"Forgive me, forgive me; I might have known that, but so much the worse. Of course, then you have no one to protect you. What can be done? Now listen; I am not what I seemed to you at first. I am not *his* wife; we only live together. I am known in all Petersburg as a very bad woman, but I am an honest woman. To visit me would cost you your reputation; it is sufficiently risky for you that I have called at your rooms only once, and to call upon you a second time would be sure ruin. Meantime it is necessary for me to see you again, and probably more than once; that is, if you have any confidence in me. Yes? Then what time can I see you to-morrow?"

"About twelve o'clock," said Viérotchka. This was rather too early for Julie, but all right; she would give orders to be called at that time, and she would meet Viérotchka at the Gostinui Dvor,²

² The Gostinui Dvor is the name of a great collection of shops under one roof in Saint Petersburg.

opposite the Nevsky Prospckt. This place is not so much frequented as the others; it will be easier to find each other, and no one knows Julie there.

“Yes, and here is another lucky thought; give me a piece of paper; I’ll write a note to that contemptible fellow, and so get him into my power.” Julie wrote, “Monsieur Storeschnikof, you are now in all probability in great embarrassment; if you wish to get out of it, come to my house at seven o’clock. M. le Tellier.”

“Now, good by.”

Julie offered her hand, but Viérotchka threw herself on her neck, kissed her, wept, and kissed her again, and Julie was still less able to bear it; she shed tears still more abundantly than Viérotchka; the feeling that she was doing a noble deed gave her such happiness and pride that it was very touching; she went into ecstasies, she kept on speaking, always with tears and kisses, and finally she ended with an exclamation:—

“My friend! my dear child! may God spare you from knowing what I am feeling now, when, for the first time in many years, pure lips touch mine. Die, but don’t give a kiss without love!”

V.

Storeshnikof's plan was not so murderous as Marya Alekséyevna supposed; she in her own style put it in a too brutal form, but the spirit of the thing she interpreted aright. Storeshnikof's idea was to bring the two ladies a little later in the evening to the restaurant where the supper was going to be; of course, they would be hungry and cold, and it would be necessary for them to get warm, and have a cup of tea. He would have a little opium put into Marya Alekséyevna's teacup or wineglass; Viérotchka would be frightened to see her mother lose consciousness; he would take Viérotchka into the room where the supper was going on, and then his bet would be won; what the final result would be, he would leave to chance. Maybe Viérotchka in her perplexity would not understand the matter, and would agree to remain in the strange company, but even if she remained but a little while, it would not make any difference; it would be excused because she had only just entered upon that adventurous course of life, and naturally felt a bit of awkwardness at first. Then afterwards he would buy Marya Alekséyevna off with a little money, after which he would have nothing more to do with her.

But now what was he to do? He cursed his boastfulness before his friends, his faint-heartedness when met by Viérotchka's unexpected and abrupt resistance; he wished that the earth would open and swallow him. Now what was he to do? While his mind was in such disorder and despair, a letter from Julie brought healing balm to his wound; a ray of hope shone into the impenetrable darkness; a solid road opened through the quagmire under the feet of the sinking man. "Oh! she can; she is the cleverest woman; she can bring anything about! She is the noblest of women!"

At ten minutes before seven he was standing before her door. "She is waiting for you, and gave orders to have you admitted."

How majestically she is sitting! how stern she looks! She scarcely bends her head in reply to his bow: "I am very glad to see you; take a seat."

Not a muscle moved in her face. "It will be a good scolding [lit. head-washing], I suppose; no matter, scold away, only save me."

"Monsieur Storeshnik," she began in a cold, slow way, "you know my opinion of the matter in regard to which we have come together now, and which, of course, I see no need of characterizing again. I have seen that young lady whom you were talking about last night; I have heard about your visit to them to-day; consequently, I know all about everything, and I am very glad, because it saves me from asking you any questions. Your position is perfectly clear, not only to you, but to me."

"Lord! I'd rather she would scold," thought the victim.

"It seems to me," she went on, "that you cannot get out of it without somebody's help, and that you cannot expect anybody to help you successfully but me. If you have anything to say in your defence, I will listen." "And so," after a pause, "you, as well as I, suppose that no one else is able to help you; just listen to what I am able and willing to do for you: if my supposititious help is going to be of any use to you, I will tell you the terms on which I agree to accomplish it."

And in the long, long style of an official explanation, she told him that she could send a letter to Jean in which she would say, "that, after last night's caprice, she had thought things over; that she wanted to take part in the supper, but that she was engaged for this evening, and therefore she asked Jean to persuade Storeshnikof to postpone the supper till some time that should be agreed upon with Jean." She read the letter over; the letter expressed a conviction that Storeshnikof would win the wager, and that it would be disagreeable to him to put off his triumph. "Would this letter be sufficient?" "Indeed, it would." "In such a case," continued Julie, in the very same style of official notes; she would send off the letter on two conditions: "You can accept them or not; if you accept them, I will send off the letter; if you refuse them, I shall burn the letter;" and all this was said in the everlasting manner that seemed to draw out the soul of the rescued man. At last came the conditions; there were two: "First, that you cease persecuting the young person of whom we were speaking; second, that you cease mentioning her name in your conversations."

"Is that all?" the rescued man wonders: "I thought she would ask, the deuce knows what, and I should have been willing to grant anything." He agrees, and his face shows a triumph at the easiness of her conditions; but Julie is not in the least softened, and she keeps on with her explanations. "The first is necessary for her sake; the second also for her sake, but still more for yours. I shall postpone the supper for a week, and then for another week; and then the thing will be forgotten: but you must understand that the others will forget about it only unless you do not any longer say a single word about the young Lady about whom, etc." And at the same time she keeps on explaining and assuring him that the letter will be received by Jean in ample time. "I have made inquiries, and he will dine with Berthe, etc.; he will call on you as soon as he has finished his cigar, etc." And this too was said as before; then she said, "And so the letter will be sent, and I am very glad; please read it over; I have no confidence in others, and I do not expect others to have confidence in me.—You have read it over: please seal it yourself. Here is an envelope; I will ring the bell.—Pauline, have the goodness to post this letter, etc. Pauline, I have not seen Monsieur Storeshnikof to-day; do you understand? he has not been here!"

This tormenting salvation lasted about an hour. Finally the letter was sent off, and the rescued man breathes more freely, but the perspiration runs down his face, and Julie continues:—

"In a quarter of an hour you must hurry home, so that Jean may find you there. But this quarter of an hour is still at your disposal, and I am going to avail myself of it to say a few words to you; you will follow or you will not follow the advice which they contain, but you will at least think it over seriously. I shall not say a word about the obligations that an honorable man feels towards a young girl whose good name he has compromised; I know too well our aristocratic young men to expect any advantage from going over this side of the question. But I find that if you should marry the young person about whom we have been speaking, it would be a good thing for you. As a straightforward woman, I shall lay down before you explicitly the foundations of my belief, though some of them may be ticklish in your ears; however, your least word will be sufficient for me to stop. You are a man of a weak character, and you run the risk of falling into the hands of some bad woman who will torment you and make you her mere plaything. But *she* is kind and noble, and therefore she would not treat you shabbily. To marry her, notwithstanding the lowness of her birth compared to yours, notwithstanding her poverty, would help you along in your career; she, when once introduced into the 'great world' with all the money that you have, with all her beauty, good sense, and strength of character, would occupy a brilliant place; the advantage of this can be understood by every husband. But aside from these advantages, which every other husband would receive from such a wife, you, through the peculiarities of

your nature, more than any one else, need an assistant. I will speak still plainer: you need some one to lead you. Every word that I have spoken has been weighed; every word has been based on my observation of her. I do not ask you to believe me, but I recommend that you think over my advice. I doubt very much whether she would accept your offer; but if she should accept it, it would be a good thing for you. I shall not detain you any longer; now you must hurry home.”

VI.

Marya Alekséyevna, of course, did not even complain of Viérotchka's refusal of the sleighride, after she found out that that Mishka-*durak* was not at all such a *durak* as she thought, and that he had almost got ahead of her. Viérotchka was left in peace, and on the next morning, without meeting with any hinderance, she started for the Gostinui Dvor.

"It is freezing here; I do not like cold weather," said Julie. "We must go somewhere else; but where? Wait. I'll be right back from this shop."

She bought a thick veil for Viérotchka. "Put it on; then you can go with me without any fear. But don't lift your veil until we are alone! Pauline is very modest, but I don't want that even she should see you. I am too careful of you, my child!"

In fact she herself wore her maid's cloak and bonnet and a thick veil. When Julie got warm, she listened to all the news that Viérotchka had to tell her; then she told her in turn about her interview with Storeshnikof.

"Now, my dear child, there is no doubt that he will make you an offer. These young men are always getting over ears in love when their flirting meets no response. Do you know, my dear child, that you have treated him quite like an experienced coquette. Coquetry—I am speaking about genuine coquetry, not about foolish, stupid imitations of it, for they are disgusting, like any other imitation of a good thing—coquetry, I say, means sense and tact in the way that a woman treats a man. Therefore absolutely innocent girls act without meaning it, exactly like experienced coquettes, if only they have sense and tact. Maybe my motives will partly influence him, but the main thing is your resistance. However, he will make you an offer, and I advise you to accept it."

"You who told me only yesterday that it was better to die than give a kiss without love?"

"My dear child, that was said in excitement: in moments of excitement it is true and good. But life is prose and calculation."

"No! never! never! He is contemptible! this is abominable! I shall not lower myself; let him devour me; I'd sooner jump out of the window—sooner go out and beg for bread—but to give my hand to a contemptible, low man—no! it is better to die!"

Julie began to explain the advantages: "You will get rid of your mother's persecutions; you stand in danger of being sold; he is not bad, but only a little off; a narrow man who is not bad is better than any other husband for a woman of strong character; you would be mistress of the house."

She depicted the position of actresses, dancers, who do not love their "husbands" but reign over them: "This is the freest situation in the world for a woman, except that situation of independence and power which society might grant to a legally married woman; that is, it might give her as much independence as an actress has towards the admirer of an actress."¹

She spoke much; Viérotchka spoke much; they both got excited. Viérotchka finally became pathetic.

¹ In Russia a married woman has absolutely no legal power; the husband has all the rights and privileges. Tchernuishevsky wants to develop the idea of allowing married women equal right with husbands.

“You call me fanciful, you ask me what I want from life. I want neither to reign nor to be subjected; I do not want to deceive or to make pretence; I do not want to regard the opinions of others, to strive for what other people recommend to me, without I feel the need of it. I am not used to riches—for myself they are not necessary; why, then, should I seek them only because others think that they are pleasant for all people, and consequently must be pleasant for me? I have never gone into society, I have not known what it was to shine, and as yet I have no desire to do so; why, then, should I sacrifice anything for a brilliant situation, only because according to the ideas of others it is pleasant? For what I do not feel the slightest need of, I am not going to sacrifice, I do not say myself, but even my slightest caprice. I want to be independent and live in my own way; I am prepared for whatever is needful for myself; whatever is not needful I do not want. What will be necessary for me I do not know; you say, ‘I am young and inexperienced, that I shall change as time goes on,’—well, so be it; when the time comes, I shall change; but now I do not want, do not want, do not want, anything that I do not want! ‘But what do I want now?’ you ask. Well, I am sure I do not know. Do I want to love a man? I do not know! It was only yesterday morning I did not know when I got up that I was going to want to love you; and several hours before I began to love you I did not know that I could love any one; and I did not know how I should feel when I felt love for you; and so now I do not know how I should feel to love a man; I only know that I do not want to be anybody’s slave! I want to be free! I do not want to be under obligations to any one, so that any one should dare to say to me, ‘You must do something for me.’ I want to do only what I have it in my heart to do, and let others do the same; I do not want to ask anything of anybody; I do not want to curtail anybody’s freedom; I want to be free myself!”

Julie listened and was lost in thought, and her face grew red; but then she could not help her face growing red when she sat near a fire. She leaped to her feet, and said in a broken voice:—

“Well, well, my child, I myself should have felt that way if I had not been ruined. But I am not corrupted by those deeds that are generally thought to ruin a woman; not by what happened to me in the past, what I endured and suffered; not because of those things was my body given over to insult; but because I was used to idleness, to luxury; because I am not strong enough to live by myself; because I need other people; because I try to please; therefore I am doing what I do not like to do, and this is wretchedness. Don’t listen to what I said, my child; I have been trying to ruin you. This is torment; I cannot touch the pure without polluting it. Avoid me, my child; I am a bad woman; don’t think about society! They are all bad there, worse than I am. Where idleness is, there is abomination; where grandeur is, there is abomination. Run, run!”²

² The Russian poet Nekrás of says in his poem, “Uboğaia i Naryadnaia” (The Poor Woman and the Luxurious), of just such a girl as Julie:—

Sryet tiébya predaiot poraganyu
I okhotno proshchaïet drugoe;
 Society condemns you to destruction,
 But the rest of the world willingly forgives.

VII.

Storeshnikof kept thinking more and more frequently, "Well, now, suppose I should take and marry her?" What happened to him was a very common thing, not only with people of weak character of his stamp, but also not seldom with people of more independent character. In the histories of the nations such cases as his fill the volumes of Hume and Gibbon, Ranke and Thierry; men crowd only to one side simply because they do not hear the words, "Now strive, brethren, to take the other side"; and if by chance they hear and turn to the other side of the circle, then they go to crowding just as bad on the other side. Storeshnikof had heard and seen that rich young men were in the habit of taking poor and pretty young girls as mistresses. Well, and so he tried to make Viérotchka his mistress. No other word had entered his head; he heard the other word, "You might marry her"; well, now he begins to think about the word "wife," just as before he thought about the word "mistress."

This is a universal characteristic, and Storeshnikof illustrates very clearly in his own case nine-tenths of the motives in the history of the human race. But historians and psychologists say that in every special fact the universal cause is "individualized," according to their expression, by local, temporary, national, and personal elements, although they—that is, these elements—are important; for example, all spoons, albeit they are spoons, yet whoever gobbles soup or *shchi* with the spoon in his hand must examine that special spoon. Therefore let us examine Storeshnikof!

The principal thing that Julie had said—as though she had been reading all the Russian novels that treat of such things—was this, Resistance strengthens desire.

The thought about Viérotchka took possession of Storeshnikof after the theatre with more power than ever before. After exhibiting to his friends the mistress of his fancy, it seemed to him that she was much more beautiful than he had imagined. Beauty, just like intellect or any other valuable thing, is treasured by the majority of people exactly according as it is reckoned by the general opinion. Everybody sees that a handsome face is handsome, but to what degree it is handsome, how can that be expressed unless its rank takes a diploma? Viérotchka, sitting in the gallery or in the back row of the theatre, would not have been noticed; but when she appeared in a box in the second tier, a good many opera-glasses were directed towards her; and how many encomiums of her beauty did not Storeshnikof hear, when, after seeing her to her carriage, he returned to the foyer. And Serge! Oh, what a refined taste he has! And Julie! Well, when such good fortune is hatched, there is no need of making a choice as to the way of possessing it.

His self-love was stirred at the same time as his passion. But it was touched also on the other side. "It is hardly likely that she will accept you." What! not accept him with such a uniform and such an estate? No, you are mistaken, Frenchwoman; she will take it; of course, she will, she will!

There was still another reason of the same stamp. Storeshnikof's mother, of course, would oppose his choice; his mother is a representative of the world, and Storeshnikof hitherto has stood in awe of his mother, and of course he has been burdened by his dependence on her. For

people who have no strength of character it is very charming to think, "I am not afraid. I have a strong character."

Of course, there was also a desire to advance in his worldly career through his wife.

And to all this there was added the fact that Storeshnikof did not dare to show himself to Viérotchka in his former rôle, and meantime he could not resist looking at her.

In a word, Storeshnikof each day thought more seriously of getting married, and at the end of a week, when Marya Alekséyevna, after returning from a late service, was sitting down and thinking how she might catch him, he himself appeared, and made an offer of marriage. Viérotchka did not come out of her room, and so he could only speak with Marya Alekséyevna. Marya Alekséyevna of course said that she on her part looked upon it as a great honor, but as a loving mother, she must know her daughter's mind, and asks him to call for his answer on the next morning.

"*Nu!* she's a trump, my girl Viéra," said Marya Alekséyevna to her husband, surprised at such an abrupt turning of the case; "just see how she has got the young lad under her thumb. And I was thinking and thinking, and did not know how to put my wits to work; I was thinking how much bother it would cost me to catch him again; I was thinking how the whole affair was ruined, while she, my *golubushka* [my darling, literally, little pigeon], did not spoil it at all, but brought it round all right. She knew how it was necessary to act. *Nu!* she is cunning; it's no use talkin'."

"The Lord inspires infants with wisdom," said Pavel Konstantinuitch.

He seldom played any part in domestic life. But Marya Alekséyevna was a stern observer of the good old traditions, and on such a solemn occasion as the telling her daughter about the offer, she allowed her husband to take the rôle of honor, which by right belongs to the head and ruler of the family. Pavel Konstantinuitch and Marya Alekséyevna seated themselves on the sofa, as on the most solemn place, and sent Matrióna to ask the *baruishna* to come to them.

"Viéra,"—Pavel Konstantinuitch began,—"Mikhaïl Ivanuitch has done us the honor of asking your hand. We answered like loving parents that we would not compel you, but we said that on our side we were glad. You, as a good and dutiful daughter, such as you have always appeared to be, will depend on our experience, that we have not dared to ask God for such a husband for you. Do you agree, Viéra?"

"No," said Viérotchka.

"What is that you say, Viéra?" cried Pavel Konstantinuitch. The thing was so plain that even he could cry out, not asking his wife how to act.

"Have you lost your senses, you fool? Repeat that if you dare, you disobedient thing!" cried Marya Alekséyevna, doubling her fists against her daughter.

"Forgive me, *mámenka*," said Viéra, rising; "if you touch me, I will leave the house; if you lock me up, I will jump out of the window. I knew how you would take my refusal, and I have resolved how to act. Take a seat, and sit down, or I shall go."

Marya Alekséyevna sat down again. "What a piece of stupidity! that front door is not under lock and key; she would push away the bolt in a second; we could not ketch her. She would run away! she is crazy!"

"I shall not marry him! Without my consent, they can't marry me!"

"Viéra, you are losing your senses," said Marya Alekséyevna in a choking voice.

"How can that be? What answer can we give him to-morrow?" exclaimed her father.

"You are not to blame towards him, but I will not consent."

This scene lasted about two hours. Marya Alekséyevna was in a stew; twenty times she began to cry out, and clench her fists, but Viérotchka said: "Don't get up, or I shall leave!" They kept beating about the bush, but they could not do anything. It ended when Matrióna came in to ask whether she would put on the dinner. "The *pirog* [pie] was overdone."

"Think till evening, Viéra. Come to your senses, you fool!" said Marya Alekséyevna, and whispered something to Matrióna.

"*Mámenka*, you are going to do something to me! to take out the key from my bedroom, or something else. Don't you do it, or it will be worse!"

Marya Alekséyevna said to the cook, "No matter. What a beast she is! this Viérka! If it were not that he wanted her on account of her face, I would beat her till she bled! But now how can I touch her? She will disfigure herself, the confounded fool!"

They went in to dinner. They dined quietly. After dinner Viérotchka went to her room. Pavel Konstantinuitch lay down, as he usually did, to take a nap, but this time the nap was a failure. As soon as he closed his eyes, Matrióna came in and said that the *khozyáika's* manservant was there; that the landlady asks Pavel Konstantinuitch to call upon her immediately. Matrióna was trembling like an aspen leaf. Why should she tremble?

VIII.

How could Matrióna help trembling when the whole trouble arose through her? As soon as she called Viérotchka to her *pápenka* and *mámenka*, she immediately ran off to tell the wife of the *khozyáika's* cook how “your *barin* is courting our *baruishna*”; they called the youngest of the *khozyáika's* chambermaids, and began to blame her for her unfriendliness in not having told them anything about it before. The youngest chambermaid could not understand what the secret was that they blamed her for not telling: she had never concealed anything. They told her when she said, “I have not concealed anything,” that they were sorry for reproaching her for concealing anything. She ran off to tell the news to the oldest of the chambermaids; the oldest of the chambermaids said, “Of course, he has done this without his mother’s knowledge, because I have not heard anything, and I must know everything that Anna Petrovna knows,” and she went off to tell the whole story to the *baruina*; such was the mischief caused by Matrióna! “My confounded little tongue has made me a great deal of bother,” she thought. “Marya Alekséyevna will find out who let the cat out of the bag.” But it happened that Marya Alekséyevna forgot to ask who told of it.

Anna Petrovna could not say anything else but *akh* and *okh*: twice she fell in a swoon, even while she was alone with the senior chambermaid. Of course, she was greatly shocked, and she summoned her son. The son appeared.

“Michel, is it true what I have heard?” in a tone of indignant suffering.

“What have you heard, *maman*?”

“That you have offered yourself to this—to this—to this—to the daughter of our manager!”

“I have, *maman*.”

“Without asking your mother’s consent?”

“I intended to ask your consent after I had obtained hers.”

“I presume that you were surer of her consent than of mine!”

“*Maman*, it is the fashion nowadays to get the girl’s consent first, and to speak to relations afterwards.”

“Is that your fashion? Maybe it is also your fashion for the sons of good families to marry God knows whom, and for the mothers to consent to it?”

“But, *maman*, she is not ‘a God-knows-whom’; when you come to know her you will approve of my choice.”

“*When I know her!* I shall never know her! *I approve of your choice!* I forbid any thought of this choice! Do you hear? I forbid it!”

“*Maman*, this is not the fashion nowadays; I am not a little boy to be lead around by the hand by you. I know myself where I am going.”

“*Akh!*” Anna Petrovna shut her eyes.

Mikhaïl Ivanuitch had to yield before Marya Alekséyevna, to Julie, to Viérotchka, because they were women of sense and strong character; but here, as far as sense was concerned, the battle was drawn, and if the mother was stronger by reason of her character, still the son felt

solid ground under his feet; he had stood in awe of his mother hitherto through habit, but they both remembered very well that in reality the *khozyáika* was not the *khozyáika*, but only the mother of the *khozyáin*; and again that the *khozyáika*'s son is in reality not the *khozyáika*'s son, but the *khozyáin*. And therefore the *khozyáika* hesitated to use the decided word "forbid"; she prolonged the conversation, hoping to defeat her son and get him tired out before a genuine battle was fought. But the son had gone to such lengths that it was impossible to withdraw, and he was compelled by the necessity of the case to fight it out.

"*Maman*, I assure you that a better daughter you could not have."

"You torment! your mother's murderer!"

"*Maman*, let us reason about it coolly. Sooner or later I shall have to get married, and a married man must have greater expenses than a bachelor. I could, of course, marry such a woman that all the income of the estate would have to be spent on my establishment. But she will be a dutiful daughter, and we could live with you just as I always have."

"Torment! my murderer! get out of my sight!"

"*Maman*, don't be angry; I am not in the least to blame!"

"Marry such a wench, and not to blame!"

"Now, *maman*, I am going to leave you. I do not want you to call her such names in my presence."

"My murderer!"

Anna Petrovna fell in a swoon, and Michel went off, satisfied with the courageous way in which he had carried out the first scene, which was the most important of all.

Seeing that her son was gone, Anna Petrovna recovered from her swoon. Her son has absolutely escaped from her power! In response to her "*I forbid*" he explains that the house is his! Anna Petrovna thought and thought; she poured out her grief before the senior chambermaid, who in these circumstances shared absolutely in the *khozyáika*'s feelings of contempt for the manager's daughter; she consulted with her and sent for the manager.

"Hitherto I have been very well satisfied with you, Pavel Konstantinitch; but now these intrigues, in which possibly you have had no share, may compel me to quarrel with you."

"Your ladyship,¹ I am not to blame in the slightest degree, 'fore God!"

"I knew long ago that Michel was hanging around your daughter. I did not put a stop to it, because a young man cannot live without recreation. I am willing to make allowances for the mischief of young men, but I cannot endure that my family should be degraded. How did your daughter dare to think of entertaining such an ambition?"

"Your ladyship, she has not dared to entertain any such ambition. She is a modest girl; we have brought her up respectably."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Your ladyship, she would never dare to do anything against your will."

Anna Petrovna did not believe her ears. Can it be possible that this good news is true?

"You must be aware what my will is. I cannot consent to such an unnatural and, I may say, *disreputable* marriage."

"We are sensible of that, your ladyship, and Viérotchka feels it also. She said so; 'I do not dare to offend her ladyship,' were her very words."

"How could that be?"

¹ *Váshe Prevoskhoditelstvo*, literally, your eminence.

"It happened, your ladyship, that Mikhaïl Ivanuitch named his intentions to my wife, and my wife told him that she could not give him an answer till to-morrow mornin', and my wife and me intended, your ladyship, to call on you and tell you all about it, because, bein' as it was late, we did not dare to disturb your ladyship. And when Mikhaïl Ivanuitch went, we told Viérotchka, and she said, 'I perfectly agree with you, *pápenka* and *mámenka*, that it is not to be dreamed of.'"

"Is she such a sensible and honest girl?"

"Certainly, your ladyship, she is a virtuous girl."

"Well, I am very glad that we can remain friends with you. I will pay you for this. I am even now ready to pay you for this. On the front stairs, where the tailor lives, the apartment on the second floor is vacant, isn't it?"

"It will be vacant in three days, your ladyship."

"Take it for yourself. You may spend a hundred rubles to have it put in order, and I will add to your salary two hundred and forty rubles a year."

"Allow me to kiss your ladyship's little hand!"

"Very well, that will do.—Tatiana!" The senior chambermaid came in. "Find me my blue velvet cloak. I want to give this to your wife. It cost me one hundred and fifty rubles [really eighty-five!] I have only worn it twice [in reality, more than twenty times]. And this I give to your daughter." Anna Petrovna handed the manager a lady's small watch. "I paid three hundred rubles" (in reality one hundred and twenty) "for it. I can make presents, and I shall not forget you in the future either. I make allowances for the mischief of young men."

After dismissing the manager, Anna Petrovna again summoned Tatiana: "Ask Mikhaïl Ivanuitch to come to me—or, no, it's better, I will go him myself." She was afraid that her messenger would tell the news to her son's valet, and the valet would tell her son what news the manager brought, and the bouquet would vanish, and not make the impression on her son's nose as if it were fresh from the wine of her own words!

Mikhaïl Ivanuitch was lying down, and not without some satisfaction, was twisting his mustache: "Now, what has brought her here? I have no smelling-salts for fainting-fits!" he thought, getting up when his mother entered. But he saw in her face a scornful triumph.

She sat down; she said: "Sit down, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch, and we will have a talk." And she looked at him for a long time with a smile; at last she continued: "I am very well content, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch; guess why I am content."

"I do not know what to guess, *maman*; you are so strange—"

"You will see that there is nothing strange at all; think away, and perhaps you will guess!"

Again a long pause. He is lost in perplexity; she is enjoying her triumph.

"You cannot guess; I will tell you. It is very simple and natural; if you had a spark of noble feeling, you would have guessed it. Your mistress"—in the former talk Anna Petrovna had to tack ship, but now she had no reason to tack; the means of defeating her was taken away from her opponent—"Your mistress—don't you answer me back, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch—you yourself have boasted everywhere that she was your mistress,—this creature of low origin, of low training, of low behavior—even this contemptible creature—"

"*Maman*, I am not willing to hear such expressions about the girl who is to be my wife."

"I should not have used them, if I had thought that she was going to be your wife. And I began with the intention of explaining to you that this was not to be, and why it was not to be. Allow me to finish. Then you may freely reproach me for these expressions, which will then be out of place according to your idea; but now allow me to finish. I wish to say that your mistress,

this nameless creature, untrained, mannerless, feelingless—even she puts you to shame, even she understands all the shamelessness of your intentions—”

“What? what is that? Speak, *maman!*”

“You yourself are hindering me. I was going to say that even she—do you hear?—even she!—could understand and appreciate my feelings; even she when she learned from her mother about your offer, sent her father to tell me, that she would not put herself in opposition to my will and would not degrade our family by her polluted name.”

“*Maman*, you are deceiving me!”

“Fortunately for me and you, no! She says that—”

But Mikhaïl Ivanuitch was no longer in the room; he had already put on his army coat.

“Hold him, Piotr! hold him!” cried Anna Petrovna. Piotr opened wide his mouth at such an extraordinary command, but Mikhaïl Ivanuitch was already running down the front doorsteps.

IX.

“*Nu!* how was it?” asked Marya Alekséyevna, as her husband came back.

“Elegant, *mátushka*; she knew all about it, and she says, ‘How did you dare?’ and I says, ‘We don’t dare, your ladyship, and Viérotchka has already refused him.’”

“What? What? You said such nonsense as that, you ass?”¹

“Marya Alekséyevna—”

“You ass! you villain! you have killed me! you have cut my throat! Take that!”—The husband received a slap. “And take that!” Another slap. “That’s the way to teach you, *durak!*” She seized him by the hair and began to drag him about the room. The lesson continued for some time, for Storeschnikof, after his mother’s long lecture and pauses, came running into the room, and found Marya Alekséyevna still in the full heat of instruction.

“You ass! you did not even fasten the door—and what a state strangers find us in! You ought to be ashamed to be such a hog [*svinya!*]” That was all that Marya Alekséyevna found to say.

“Where is Viéra Pavlovna? I must see Viéra Pavlovna! Immediately! Is it true that she refuses me?”

The circumstances were so embarrassing that Marya Alekséyevna could only motion with her hand. The very same thing happened to Napoleon after the Battle of Waterloo, when Marshal Grouchy proved to be stupid like Pavel Konstantinuitch, and La Fayette was bold like Viérotchka; Napoleon was fighting, fighting—doing, accomplishing all the miracles in his art—but it was without avail, and he could only motion with his hand, and say, “I give it all up; let every one do as he pleases, with himself and with me.”

“Viéra Pavlovna, do you refuse my hand?”

“Judge for yourself; how can I not refuse it?”

“Viéra Pavlovna, I have cruelly offended you; I am to blame; I am worthy of being hung; but I cannot bear your refusal,” etc., etc.

Viérotchka listened to him for several minutes; finally—it was time to put an end to it—this was hard:—

“No, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch, this is enough! Stop! I cannot consent.”

“Well, if that must be so, I beg one favor; you feel just now too keenly how I offended you; don’t give me your answer yet; allow me time to win your forgiveness! I seem to you low, vile; but look, maybe I shall grow to be better; I will use all my strength to become a better man; help me! Don’t push me away now! Give me time! I will obey you in everything that you may ask; you shall see how humble I am; maybe you will see that there is some good in me; only give me time!”

“I am sorry for you,” said Viérotchka; “I see the sincerity of your love.” (Viérotchka, this is not love at all; it is only a mixture of different grades of depravity and meanness: love is something quite different; because a man finds it disagreeable to be refused by a women, that man is not

¹ *Osel* pronounced *As-yól*.

necessarily in love with her; that is not love at all; but Viérotchka does not know this yet and she is touched.) “You want me not to give my answer yet—very good; but I warn you that the postponement will lead to nothing. I shall never give you any other answer than the one that you have just received.”

“I shall deserve—I shall deserve another answer; you will be my salvation!” He grasped her hand and began to kiss it.

Marya Alekséyevna came into the room, and in the stress of her emotion was going to bless her dear children without further formality,—that is, without Pavel Konstantinitch,—then to call him, and have them solemnly blessed. Storeschnikof demolished one-half of her joy by explaining to her that Viéra Pavlovna, although she had not as yet consented, did not absolutely refuse, but merely postponed the answer. This was bad; but still it was good compared to what she had expected.

Storeschnikof went home in triumph. Again the threat about the estate came upon the scene, and again Anna Petrovna fell in a swoon.

Marya Alekséyevna was absolutely at a loss to know what to think about Viérotchka. Her daughter spoke as though she were entirely opposed to her intentions. But the result proved that her daughter put an end to all the embarrassment, which had seemed too much for Marya Alekséyevna to manage. If one judged by the course of the affair, then it would look as though Viérotchka wanted the same thing that Marya Alekséyevna wanted; but, as an educated and wily creature, she elaborates her material in a different way. But, if this is so, why should she not say to Marya Alekséyevna, “*Mátushka*, I desire the same thing that you do; be at ease”? or else she must be so angry at her mother, that she wants to do the very same thing that they are both anxious to bring about, by herself, without her mother’s co-operation. But her willingness to postpone the answer is perfectly comprehensible to Marya Alekséyevna. She wants to give her future husband a thoroughly good schooling, so that he should not dare to breathe without her, and so as to extort Anna Petrovna’s submission. Apparently she is even more cunning than Marya Alekséyevna herself. Whenever Marya Alekséyevna thought about this, her thoughts brought her to this view. But her eyes and ears always testified against it. And meantime how to act if this view is false, if her daughter is not really going to marry Storeschnikof? She is such a wild creature that it is impossible to know how to tame her. But, in all probability, the good-for-nothing Viérka does not want to marry; such is doubtless the case. Marya Alekséyevna’s common sense was really too strong to be deceived by her own wily reasoning about Viérotchka being a cunning intriguer. “But this vile young girl is managing everything in such a way that, when she does marry (and the deuce knows what she has in mind; maybe this very thing!), at all events, she will evidently be the complete mistress over her husband and his mother, and over the whole household; and so, what is left for her? Only to wait and see,—nothing else is possible! Just now Viérka does not want to do this; but she will make up her mind for the joke of the thing, and she will want it. Well, besides, we can use moral suasion. Only leave it to time! But now we must wait till that time shall come.”

Marya Alekséyevna waited. But how charming to her was the thought, refuted by her common sense, that Viérka was bringing the affair to a marriage! Everything but Viérotchka’s words and actions corroborated this thought. The future husband was a “silken one”; the future husband’s mother struggled about three weeks, but her son defeated her by using his threat in regard to the estate, and she began to grow more reasonable. She expressed the desire to make Viérotchka’s acquaintance. Viérotchka did not go to see her. At the first moment Marya Alekséyevna thought

that if she were in Viérotchka's place she should have acted more wisely, that she should have gone; but on thinking the matter over, she came to the conclusion that not to go was the wiser course. Oh, what a cunning creature! And, in fact, in a couple of weeks Anna Petrovna herself called, under the pretext that she wanted to look at the arrangement of the new apartment. She was cool and caustically polite. Viérotchka, after listening to two or three of her biting remarks, went to her room. Before she left, it did not occur to Marya Alekséyevna that it was necessary to leave; she thought that it was necessary to answer biting remarks with biting remarks. But when Viérotchka left, Marya Alekséyevna quickly reasoned, "Yes, that was the best move of all; let her son pay her in her own coin,—that's the best way." At the end of two weeks Anna Petrovna called again, and gave no excuses for her call. She simply said that she came to make them a call, and she said nothing sarcastic in Viérotchka's presence.

Time passed on. The prospective husband made Viérotchka presents; they were made through Marya Alekséyevna, and of course remained in her possession, like Anna Petrovna's watch. However, not all of them remained with her; some of the cheapest of them she gave to Viérotchka, saying that they were things that had remained in pawn unredeemed. It was necessary for the prospective husband to see some of his gifts worn by the bride! He saw them and grew more confident that he should get Viérotchka's consent; otherwise, she would not have accepted his presents. But why does she put off her answer? He himself perceived—and Marya Alekséyevna told him—the reason. "She is waiting till Anna Petrovna gets entirely reconciled." And he, with redoubled energy, pulled on the line whereto his mother was hooked,—an occupation that gave him much satisfaction.

Thus Viérotchka was left in peace; they looked into her eyes. This canine deference was detestable to her; she tried to be with her mother as little as possible. Her mother ceased to have the courage to enter her room, and when Viérotchka was sitting there, and this was the larger part of the day, she was not disturbed. Mikhaïl Ivanuitch was occasionally allowed to enter her room. He was as obedient to her as a child. She told him to read; he read with great energy, as though to get ready for an examination. He derived very little instruction from his reading, but still he got some good from it. She tried to help him shine in conversation. Conversations came easier to him than books; and he made some progress, very slow, very trifling, but all the same he progressed. He began to treat his mother with more respect than before; began to prefer keeping her under the bridle than on the hook.

Thus passed three or four months. There was a reconciliation, there was peace; but every day a storm threatened, and Viérotchka's heart was dying within her at the horrible anticipation,—if not to-day, then to-morrow Mikhaïl Ivanuitch or Marya Alekséyevna would demand of her the answer. They will not wait a whole century.

If I were to want to make an effective collision, I should give to this situation a crackling conclusion; but such did not occur. If I wanted to allure by uncertainty, I should not say now that nothing of the kind happened; but I am writing without any subterfuges, and I therefore will anticipate and say there will be no crackling collision; the situation will be untied without storms, without thunder or lightning.

**PART SECOND. FIRST LOVE, AND
LEGAL MARRIAGE.**

I.

It is well known how situations like the above would end in former times: a fine young girl, belonging to a low family, an insignificant man who is to become her husband under compulsion, who is detestable to her, who when left to himself, being already a mean man, would constantly grow meaner, but joined to her, comes under her influence, and little by little begins to resemble a man, of no especial account, to be sure, not very good, but, on the other hand, not very bad. The girl at first declares that she will not marry him; but gradually getting accustomed to having him under her command, and being convinced that out of two such evils as such a husband and such a family as her own, the husband would be the less evil, makes her admirer happy. At first it is detestable to her when she finds that she can make her husband happy without loving him; but her husband is obedient,—“patience makes love,”—and she becomes an ordinary fine lady, that is, a woman who, excellent naturally, gets reconciled to meanness, and living on the earth only vegetates (literally, obscures the heaven with smoke). Such used to be the way, in old times, with nice young girls, such used to be the way with nice young men, all of whom became excellent people, but lived on earth in such a way as to obscure the heaven. Such used to be the way in former times, because excellent people were very few; the harvest of them, apparently, was so small in old times that there was not one to a ten-acre lot,¹ and no one can live a century as a single man or a single woman without fading away! And thus they either used to fade away or reconcile themselves to meanness.

But nowadays it happens more and more frequently that things take a different turn: respectable people get acquainted with each other. Yes, and how can this help happening more and more often when the number of respectable people increases with every new year? And, in time, this will be a very ordinary occurrence, and, indeed, the time will come when nothing else will happen, because all people will be decent. Then it will be very good!

Good it was for Viérotchka also. Therefore, with her permission, I will relate to you the story of her life, since, so far as I know, she is one of the first women whose life was established in this good way. First occurrences have a historical interest. The first swallow is regarded with great interest by the natives of the North.

The occurrences by means of which Viérotchka’s life began to improve were somewhat in this order: It was necessary to get Viérotchka’s little brother ready for the gymnasium. Her father asked his colleagues if they knew of a cheap tutor. One of his colleagues recommended to him the medical student Lopukhóf.

Lopukhóf gave five or six lessons to his new pupil before he and Viérotchka met. He used to sit with Feódor in one room of the apartment, she in another, in her own room. It was getting time for the examinations at the medical school, and so he changed the lesson hours from morning till the evening, because in the morning he had to do his own studying, and when it came evening, he found the whole family at tea.

¹ “*Kolos ot kólósa, nyé sluikhat i gólósa,*” a Russian proverb, meaning that the ear of corn is so far from its neighbor that the sound of the voice cannot reach from the one to the other.

On the sofa were sitting his acquaintances,—the father, the mother of the pupil; behind the mother, on a chair, the pupil was sitting, and somewhat farther, a person whom he did not know, a tall, well-proportioned young girl, rather slender, with black hair,—“thick, handsome hair!”—with black eyes—“her eyes are handsome, yes, very handsome”—with the Southern type of face—“as though she were a Malo-Russian, or rather even a Caucasian type; that’s nothing, a very handsome face, but somewhat reserved; but that’s not Southern. Her health is good; there would not be as many of us doctors if people were like her. Yes, healthy red cheeks and a good broad chest, she’ll never make the acquaintance of the stethoscope. When she enters society she will create a great effect. However, it does not interest me.”

And she looked up at the tutor as he came in. The student was no longer young, a man of medium size or possibly taller than the average, with dark auburn hair, with regular and even handsome features, with a proud and courageous expression; “not bad-looking; he must be kind, but he’s too solemn.”

She did not add to her thoughts the epilogue, “it does not interest me,” because it did not occur to her to ask herself whether she would be interested in him or not. Why should she be, when Feódor told her so much about him that she was weary of hearing? “He is kind, sister, but he is not sociable. And I told him, sister, that you were a beauty, and, sister, he said, ‘What of that?’ And I told him, sister, ‘that everybody falls in love with pretty girls’; and he said, ‘All stupid people fall in love’; and I said ‘Don’t you like them?’ and he said, ‘I have no time.’ And, sister, I said to him, ‘Don’t you want to get acquainted with Viérotchka?’ and he said, ‘I have a good many acquaintances beside her.’”

All this Feódor rattled off immediately after the first lesson, and afterwards he kept saying much the same thing with various additions: “And I told him to-day, sister, that ‘everybody looks at you whenever you go anywhere,’ and, sister, he said, ‘Well, that’s good’; and I said to him, ‘Don’t you want to see her?’ and he said, ‘I shall have time enough to see her.’” And then again: “I told him, sister, ‘what little hands you had,’ and, sister, he said, ‘You want to chatter; haven’t you got anything better to chatter about?’”

And the tutor learned from Feódor everything that was worth knowing about his sister; he tried to stop Feódor’s chattering about family affairs, but how can you stop a nine-year-old child from chattering to you about everything unless you threaten him? After he has said five words you succeed in stopping him, but then it is too late; because children begin without any preface, getting the very essence of the thing; and among all sorts of disclosures relating to his family affairs the tutor heard such disjointed sentences as these: “My sister is going to marry a rich man”; “and *mámenka* says that the bridegroom is a stupid”; “and how *mámenka* flatters him”; “and *mámenka* says, ‘sister caught him cute’”; “and *mámenka* says, ‘I am cute, but Viérotchka is cuter’”; “and *mámenka* says, ‘we are going to fire the bridegroom’s mother out of the house’”; and so forth.

Naturally, when the young people got such ideas of each other, they had no great desire to become acquainted. However, so far, we know only this much: that it was natural on Viérotchka’s part; she had not reached that stage of development that she had any desire of “defeating savages,” or of “taming such a bear”; nay, she was still far from it; she was glad that she was left in peace; she was like a crushed and tortured man, who has the good fortune to fall in such a way that the broken arm is undisturbed and the pain in the side is not felt, and who fears to move lest the pain in all his joints should return. Why should she care to form new acquaintances, and especially with young men?

Yes, such is Viérotchka. *Nu!* but he? He is like a savage, to judge him by Feódor's description, and his head is full of books and anatomical preparations, such as fill the soul of a medical student with the keenest delight and furnish him the richest pabulum. Or perhaps Feódor misrepresented him?

II.

No, Feódor did not misrepresent him; Lopukhóf was in fact a student whose head was full of books—what books we shall learn from Marya Alekséyevna’s bibliographical investigations—and with anatomical preparations; for unless a man fills his head with anatomical preparations, he cannot become a professor, and that was Lopukhóf’s ambition. But, as we see, if we depend upon Feódor’s descriptions of Viérotchka made for Lopukhóf’s benefit, Lopukhóf did not learn very accurately about her, and for the same reason we must correct Feódor’s description of his teacher if we would know Lopukhóf better.

As regarded pecuniary matters Lopukhóf belonged to that very small minority of special medical students who are not supported by government, and yet who just escape starvation and freezing.¹ How and in what way the great majority of them live is known, of course, only to God, not to mortals. But our story does not intend to deal with people who are in need of victuals, and therefore it will devote only two or three words to the period in Lopukhóf’s life when he suffered such hardships.

And it was not very long that he was in such a condition,—only three years, and even less. Before he entered the medical school he had plenty of food. His father, a *meshchanín* (commoner) of the town of Riazan, lived in the style of the *meshchanín*, comfortably; that is, his family had *shchi* (cabbage soup) and meat not on Sundays only, and even had tea every day. He was able to keep his son at the gymnasium after a fashion; but, after his son reached the age of fifteen, he made it easier for him by doing some teaching. The father’s means were not sufficient for the support of his son in Petersburg; however, during the first two years Lopukhóf received from home the sum of thirty-five rubles a year, and he obtained almost as much more by copying papers as unattached clerk in one of the districts of the Vuiborgsky ward. It was only during this time that he was hard up; and that was his own fault. He was accepted as a governmental scholar, but he managed to quarrel with some one and was compelled to take to his own fodder. When he was in the third class, his affairs began to improve; the assistant district supervisor engaged him as a private tutor; then he found other pupils, and now for two years he has not been in need; for a year and more he has been living in one house, not in one, but in two different rooms; and that is proof that he is not poor. He has for a room-mate another student as lucky as himself. His name is Kirsánof. They are the closest friends. Both of them were used from early life to push their own way, without depending upon others, and in other respects there was a great resemblance between them; so that if one were to meet either of them separately, they would both seem like people of the same character; and when they were seen together, it was observable that though both of them were very reliable and honest people, Lopukhóf was rather more reserved, while his chum was more effusive. So far, we have seen only Lopukhóf; Kirsánof will appear later on. Apart from Kirsánof it may be remarked in regard to Lopukhóf exactly the same thing that we shall have to remark about Kirsánof. For instance, Lopukhóf was

¹ “*Nyé gólodayet i nyé khólodayet*,” a play upon words, as though he had said, “Know neither gold nor cold.”

at the present time occupied more than with anything else with the question how to establish his life after his graduation, which would occur now in a few months, and the same is true of Kirsánof; and both hid the same plan for the future.

Lopukhóf knew for a certainty that he was going to be a surgeon in one of the army hospitals of Petersburg, and this is looked upon as a great piece of good fortune; and that he was going to get a professorship in the medical school. He had no desire to practise.

It is a very peculiar thing that during the past ten years there has appeared among some of the best of the medical students a resolution not to practise medicine after graduation, though that is the only way by which a medical man can gain a livelihood; at the first opportunity they give up medicine for some of its subsidiary sciences,—physiology, chemistry, or something of the sort. And every one of these young men knows that if they practised until they were thirty years old, they might gain a reputation; at thirty-five, a competency for life; and at forty-five, wealth.

But they argue in a different way: You see, don't you, that medicine is in such a state of infancy that one should not as yet try to cure, but to collect the materials; so that the doctors of the future may know how to cure. And here for the advantage of the well-beloved science—they are great hands to curse medicine; but, nevertheless, they are devoting all their energies for its advantage—they refuse riches, they refuse pleasure, for the sake of sitting in the hospitals, and they are making, don't you know, observations that are interesting to science: they cut up frogs; they dissect a hundred subjects every year; and at the first chance they establish chemical laboratories. With what severity they follow out this lofty resolution depends, of course, on the way in which their domestic life is established. If it is not necessary for those dependent upon them, they do not even begin to practise, and they are willing to live almost in poverty; but if their domestic circumstances compel them to do so, they practise, but only just so long as it is necessary to, for their family; that is, on a very limited scale, and they cure only those people who are really sick, and who can really be cured by the present pitiful state of the science; that is, the sick who bring them no advantage at all. To this class Lopukhóf and Kirsánof belonged. They expected to graduate this year, and they have announced that they will take, or, as they say at the medical school, “do,” their examinations merely for the degree of M. D. They have both been hard at work on their medical theses, and they have made way with a huge quantity of frogs; both have adopted as a specialty the nervous system, and properly speaking they were working in co-operation; but for the formal dissertation the work was divided: one has gathered for his materials the facts that they both observed on one question, the other did the same thing for another.

However, it is now time to speak about Lopukhóf alone. There was a time when he drank too much; this happened when he was without tea, and sometimes even without boots. Such circumstances are extremely conducive to drinking, not only as regards willingness, but also possibility; to buy drink is cheaper than to buy food and clothes. But this habit of drinking arose from grief at intolerable poverty, and nothing more. Now, there was not to be found a man who led a sterner life, and not in regard to wine alone. In other days Lopukhóf had a good many love adventures: once, for example, it happened that he fell in love with a foreign ballet dancer. What was to be done? He thought the matter over, and went to call upon her.

“What do you want?”

“I was sent by Count So-and-so with a note.” His student's uniform was easily mistaken by the servant to be that of a clerk or some officer's *denshchik*.

“Give me the note. Will you wait for an answer?”

“The count told me to wait.” The servant returned in surprise.

“She bade me ask you in.”

“Here he is! here he is! This is the man who shouts so loud for me that I can distinguish his voice from the green-room. How many times have you been carried off to the police station for such a demonstration in my honor?”

“Twice.”

“That isn’t much. Well, why are you here?”

“To see you!”

“Capital! What else?”

“I do not know. What would you like?”

“Well I know what I would like. I would like some breakfast. You see the things are on the table. Sit down with me.” Another plate was placed on the table. She laughed at him; he laughed at himself. “He is young, not bad looking, not stupid, and besides it’s a novelty. Why not have some fun out of him?” She fooled him about two weeks, and then she said, “Get thee hence.”

“Well, that is just what I wanted to do, but I did not know how.”

“Then we will part good friends?” They gave each other a parting kiss, and that was the end of it. But this was some time before, three years ago, and now it is two years since he has renounced all such follies.

Besides his comrades and two or three professors, who recognized in him a good worker in the cause of science, his only acquaintances were in the families where he gave lessons; but he did not know the families at all. He avoided familiarity as he would fire, and he held proudly aloof from all the members of these families, except the little boys and girls who were his pupils.

III.

And so Lopukhóf entered the room, saw the company sitting at the tea-table, and in their number was Viérotchka; *nu!* of course the company, including also Viérotchka, saw that the tutor entered the room. "Please take a seat," said Marya Alekséyevna.—Matrióna, bring another glass."

"If it is meant for me, then I thank you. I don't drink tea."

"Matrióna, no matter about the glass. (A well-bred young man!)—Why shouldn't you drink some? You ought to drink some!"

He looked at Marya Alekséyevna and at Viérotchka willingly, as it were; and maybe it was really willingly. Maybe he noticed that she slightly shrugged her shoulders. "And he must have seen that I blushed!"

"Thank you! I drink tea only at home."

"After all, he is not such a savage; he came in, and he bowed easily and gracefully." Such was the observation made at one end of the table.

"After all, if she is a trifle spoiled, then at least she blushes for her mother's meanness," was the observation at the other end of the table.

But Feódor soon finished his tea and went to take his lesson. The most important result of the evening was that Marya Alekséyevna formed a most favorable opinion of the tutor, because she saw that her sugarbowl would, in all probability, not suffer great loss by changing the hour of the lessons from morning to evening.

Two days later the teacher again found the family at table, and again he refused to take tea, and thus he absolutely calmed Marya Alekséyevna's fears. But this time he saw at the table a new face,—an officer, upon whom Marya Alekséyevna was assiduously fawning.

"Ah, the bridegroom!"

But the bridegroom, owing to the importance of his uniform and family, felt that it was incumbent upon him not simply to look at the tutor, but after looking at him, to measure him from head to foot with the impertinent steady stare which is adopted in fashionable society. But he had no sooner taken his measure than he began to feel that the tutor was likewise taking his measure, and, even worse, was looking straight into his eyes, and so keenly that instead of keeping up the stare the bridegroom said:—

"Your work must be hard, Monsieur Lopukhóf,—I mean your medical work."

"Yes, it is;" and he continues to look him straight in the eyes.

The bridegroom was conscious that he was fumbling with his left hand at the three upper buttons of his uniform, but he did not know the reason. *Nu!* when the awkwardness gets as far as the buttons, there is no other salvation than to make haste to drink his tea, and ask Marya Alekséyevna for some more.

"Your uniform, if I am not mistaken, belong to such and such a regiment?"

"Yes, I serve in that regiment," is Mikhaïl Ivanuitch's reply.

"Have you been long in the service?"

"Nine years."

“Did you begin in that regiment?”

“I did.”

“Have you a company or not?”

“No, I have none as yet. (He cross-examines me as though I were a private!)”

“Do you expect to get one soon?”

“Not very soon.”

“Hm!”

The tutor was satisfied, and ceased his examination, though he still looked straight into the imaginary private’s eyes.

“And yet,—and yet,” thinks Viérotchka; and what does she mean by “and yet”? Finally she makes up her mind what she means by “and yet.” “And yet he conducts himself just as Serge did when he came with the kind Julie. How is he a savage? Why does he speak so strangely about girls? ‘that pretty girls are loved only by stupid people?’ And—and—” (why does she repeat “and”? At last she knows!) “and why didn’t he want to know anything about me? why did he say that it was not interesting?”

“Viérotchka, will you play something on the piano for Mikhaïl Ivanuitch and I,” said Marya Alekséyevna, when Viérotchka had set down her second cup.

“Certainly.”

“And if you would sing something,” adds Mikhaïl Ivanuitch, in a flattering tone.

“Certainly.”

“This ‘certainly’ sounded as though she had said, ‘I am ready to do anything to get rid of you,’” thinks the tutor. And now he had been sitting down with them fully five minutes; and though he had not been looking at her, yet he knows that she has not looked once at the bridegroom, except when she answered him just now. And even now she looks at him as though she were looking at her father and mother,—coolly, and without the least trace of affection. “There must be something quite different from what Feódor told me. However, more than anything else she must be in reality a proud, calculating girl, who wants to enter the upper ten in order to rule and shine. It is disagreeable to her that she cannot find a better bridegroom for that purpose. But, despising the bridegroom, she yet accepts his hand because there is no other hand to lead her where she wants to go. Well, after all, this is rather interesting.”

“Feódor, hurry up and finish your tea,” remarked the mother.

“Don’t hurry him, Marya Alekséyevna; I want to listen, if Viéra Pavlovna will allow me.”

Viérotchka picked up the first music that came to hand, without looking at what it was, opened it at haphazard, and began to play mechanically; no matter, only so as to get done with it the sooner. But the piece happened to be of a good order; it was from an excellent opera, and soon the girl’s playing grew animated. After she was done she started to get up.

“But you promised to sing, Viéra Pavlovna; if I were there, I would ask you to sing something from Rigoletto.” (This winter “La donna é mobile” was the fashionable aria.)

“If you like.”

Viérotchka sang “La donna é mobile”; then she got up and went to her room.

“No, she is not a heartless, cold girl without any soul; this is interesting.”

“Isn’t that good?” asked Mikhaïl Ivanuitch, in a simple voice, without this time taking the tutor’s measure. (“There is no need of being in strained relations with people who can examine privates. Why not speak without any pretentiousness so as not to get his ill will?”)

“Yes, very good.”

“Do you understand music?”

“Just a little.”

“Are you a musician?”

“Somewhat.”

Marya Alekséyevna overheard this talk, and a happy thought struck her.

“What do you play on, Dmitri Sergéitch?” she asked.

“The piano.”

“May we ask you to give us a tune?”

“Very willingly.”

He played a certain piece. He played passably—not badly at all.

After he had finished the lesson, Marya Alekséyevna came to him and said that they were going to have a little party the next evening; that it was her daughter’s birthday, and asked him to come round.

Of course, there is always a dearth of young men, according to the style of all such parties; but no matter. He looked closer at the girl: with her or about her there is something interesting.

“I thank you heartily.”

But the tutor was mistaken; Mary Alekséyevna had something more important in view than in finding a partner for her dancing girls.

Reader, you of course have anticipated that on this evening some explanation would take place; that Viérotchka and Lopukhóf will fall in love with each other?

Of course they will!

IV.

Marya Alekséyevna wanted to give a great party on Viérotchka's birthday, but Viérotchka begged to have no guests invited: the one wanted to show off the bridegroom; the other found such an exhibition distasteful. They compromised by having the smallest possible party, inviting only a few of their most intimate friends. They invited Pavel Konstantinuitch's colleagues,—those, of course, who had been longer in the service and were higher in position than himself,—two of Marya Alekséyevna's friends, three young girls who were more intimate with Viérotchka than any others.

As Lopukhóf looked over the assembling guests, he noticed that there was no lack of partners (*kavalier*); every one of the young girls had a young man, either as candidate for bridegroom or bridegroom already. Therefore Lopukhóf was not invited in the capacity of a partner; why, then? As he thought the matter over he remembered that his playing on the piano preceded his invitation. Of course he was invited so as to save expense—to take the place of an accompanist (*tapper*). "All right," he thought. "Excuse me, Marya Alekséyevna," and he went to Pavel Konstantinuitch.

"How now, Pavel Konstantinuitch; it's time to have a game of cards. You see it's rather tiresome for us old people!"

"What do you want to play?"

"Anything."

Soon a party was made up, and Lopukhóf sat down to play. The medical school on Vuiborgskaïa Street is a classical establishment for card-playing. It is not a rare occurrence in some of the rooms—that is, in the governmental students' apartments—for a game of cards to be kept up for a day and a half without stopping. It must be admitted that the sums that change hands at the students' card-tables are much smaller than those at the English Club; but the standard of the gamester's art is much higher. Even Lopukhóf used to play a great deal in his day; that is, when he had no money.

"*Mesdames*, what shall we do? We must play by cutting in, that's a fact; but there'll be only seven of us left. Either a gentleman or a lady will be lacking for the quadrille."

The first rubber was drawing to an end, when one of the girls, the liveliest of all, came flying up to Lopukhóf:—

"Monsieur Lopukhóf, you must dance."

"On one condition," he said, rising and bowing.

"What?"

"That you give me the first quadrille."

"*Akh! Bozhe moi!* I am engaged for the first one! You are welcome to the next, though."

Lopukhóf again made a profound bow. Two of the gentlemen took their turn in cutting in. At the third quadrille Lopukhóf asked Viérotchka. The first she had danced with Mikhaïl Ivanuitch; the second he danced with the lively girl.

Lopukhóf had been watching Viérotchka, and was now absolutely convinced of the mistake in his former idea of her being a heartless girl, coolly marrying for money a man whom she despised.

He saw before him an ordinary young girl, who dances and laughs with her whole soul. Yes, to Viérotchka's shame be it said that she was an ordinary girl who loved to dance. At first she set her face firmly against the party; but when the party was arranged—small, without any show, and consequently not a trial to her—even she, in a way that she would never have believed, forgot her melancholy. At her time of life one does not like to lie melancholy; but liveliness and gayety are so natural that the least chance of self-forgetfulness brings also, for a time, forgetfulness of sorrow. Lopukhóf was now inclined in her favor, but as yet there were a good many things not clear to him.

He was getting interested in Viérotchka's anomalous position.

"Monsieur Lopukhóf, I never expected to see you dancing," she began.

"Why not? Is it so hard to dance?"

"For most people certainly it is not; but for you, why—yes—of course it is."

"Why for me?"

"Because I know your secret—yours and Feódor's; you despise women!"

"Feódor did not in the least understand my secret. I don't despise women, but I avoid them; and do you know why? I have a bride,—a very jealous one,—who, in order to compel me to avoid them, told me their secret."

"You have a bride?"

"Yes!"

"How surprising! A student, and already engaged! Is she pretty? Are you in love with her?"

"Yes, she is a beauty, and I love her very dearly."

"Is she a *brunetka* or a *blondinka*?"

"I cannot tell you that; it is a secret!"

"Well, God be with her, if it is a secret! But what was the secret about women that she revealed to you that makes you avoid their society?"

"She saw that I did not like to be in a melancholy state of mind, and she whispered in my ear such a secret about them, that I cannot see a woman without getting into a melancholy mood, and so I avoid women."

"You cannot see a woman without getting into a melancholy mood? At all events, you are a master in the art of making compliments."

"What else can I say? To pity is the same thing as being in a melancholy state of mind."

"Do we need pity so much as all that?"

"Yes; aren't you a woman? I have only to repeat to you your dearest wish, and you will agree with me. It is the universal desire of all women."

"Do tell me, tell me!"

"It is this: '*Akh!* how I should like to be a man!' I never met a woman who did not secretly wish this with all her heart. And in the majority of cases, it is not necessary to search for it; it is expressed spontaneously without any need of drawing it out. If a woman has any trouble whatsoever, you will soon hear something like this: 'We are poor miserable creatures, we women!' or, 'Men are so different from women!' or even without any circumlocution, '*Akh!* why was I not a man?'"

Viérotchka smiled. "True; every woman has said that."

"And now you see how women are to be pitied; for if their dearest wish were to be fulfilled, there would not be any women in the world!"

"Yes, it seems as if it were so," said Viérotchka.

"It is exactly the same way; if the eager desires of every poor man were fulfilled, there would not be a single poor man in the world. Don't you see how pitiable women are? They are just as much to be pitied as the poor are. Who likes to see poor people? Just the same way, it is painful for me to see women since I have learned their secret. And it was revealed to me by my jealous bride on the very day of our engagement. Till that time I was very fond of being in the society of women. After that, it was snatched away from me. My bride cured me."

"Your bride must be a kind and sensible young lady; yes, we women are pitiable creatures, we are poor," said Viérotchka; "but who is your bride? You speak so mysteriously!"

"That is one of my secrets which Feódor does not tell you. I entirely share the wish of the poor that there should not be any in existence, and some time this wish is going to be realized; sooner or later we shall be able to lay out our lives in such a way that there'll be no poor; but—"

"What, no more poor?" interrupted Viérotchka. "I myself have thought that the time might come when there would not be any more poverty; but how it would come about I could not tell; tell me how!"

"I myself cannot tell this; only my bride can tell. I am alone here. I can only say this much: that she is looking out for that, and she is very strong; she is stronger than any one else in the world. But let us not talk about her, but about women. I perfectly agree with the wish of the poor that there should not be any more poor, and my bride is going to bring this about. But I do not agree with the wish of women that there shouldn't be more women in the world, because this wish cannot be realized; and I never agree with what cannot be realized. But I have a different kind of a wish: I should like all women to get acquainted with my bride; she takes as much care of them as she does of everything else. If they would make friends with her, I should have no reason to pity them and their wish '*Akh, why wasn't I born a man!*' would vanish; for if women get acquainted with her, then they would not be worse off than men are."

"Monsieur Lopukhóf! one more quadrille, without fail!"

"I shall be very much pleased." He pressed her hand as calmly and gravely as though he were an old friend, or she his comrade. "Which one?"

"The last one."

"Very well."

Marya Alekséyevna several times passed near them while they were dancing the quadrille.

What would Marya Alekséyevna have thought had she heard this conversation? We who have heard every word of it from beginning to end, all of us will say that such a conversation during a quadrille is very unnatural.

The last quadrille came.

"We spoke all the time about myself," said Lopukhóf; "and that is very bad manners on my part, to be speaking all the time about myself. Now I want to make up for my impoliteness by speaking about you, Viéra Pavlovna. Did you know that I had a far worse opinion of you than you did of me. And now—well, we'll speak about this afterwards. Now first of all, there is one question that I cannot answer; please answer it for me. Will your marriage take place soon?"

"Never!"

"I thought so, for the last three hours,—ever since I left the card-table to come in here. But why is he considered to be your bridegroom?"

"Why is he considered to be my bridegroom? why, indeed? There's one reason I cannot tell you; it is too hard for me: but there's another I can. I pity him; he loves me so! You will say,

‘I must tell him frankly what I think about our marriage’; I did tell him, but he replied, ‘Don’t speak; it kills me; be silent.’”

“That is the second reason; but the first one which you find hard to tell me, I can tell you; it’s because your position in your family is terrible.”

“At the present time it is tolerable. Now no one torments me; they are waiting for me to decide and they leave me almost entirely alone.”

“But this may not last very long; they will begin to bring pressure upon you; what then?”

“Nothing. I have thought about it and made up my mind what to do; I shall not stay here any longer; I can be an actress. What an enviable life it is! Liberty! Liberty!”

“And applause.”

“Yes; that’s also pleasant, but the main thing is liberty; to do what I please; to live as I please, not asking anybody for anything, not be dependent on anybody; that’s the way I want to live!”

“That is true, that is good! Now I want to ask you something: I will find out how this can be done, to whom application must be made—shall I?”

“Thank you.” Viérotchka pressed his hand. “Do it very soon; I want to tear myself away as quick as I can from this miserable, intolerable, and degrading situation. I say, ‘I am calm, I can bear it,’ but is it so in reality? don’t I see what is done with my good name? don’t I know what all those who are here think of me? They say, ‘She’s a schemer, she’s cunning, she wants to be rich, she wants to get into fine society, to shine; she will keep her husband under the shoe, twist him around her little finger, deceive him.’ Don’t I know that they think this about me? I don’t want to live so, no indeed!” Suddenly she fell into deep thought, “Don’t laugh because I said, ‘I pity him—he loves me so.’”

“Does he love you? does he look at you the same way that I do or not? has he such a look?”

“Your eyes are frank, honest. No; your look does not offend me.”

“You see, Viéra Pavlovna, it is because—but no matter. Does he look so?”

Viérotchka blushed and made no reply.

“Then he does not love you. That is not love, Viéra Pavlovna.”

“But—” Viérotchka did not finish her sentence, but stopped.

“You were going to say, ‘What is it, then, if it is not love?’ Let that go; but you yourself say that is not love. Whom do you love best of all? I am not speaking of this kind of love—but of your relations, your friends.”

“It seems to me, no one in particular, none of them very much; but no, not long ago, I met a very peculiar woman. She spoke very badly to me, called herself very hard names; she forbade me to keep up my acquaintance with her; we met in a very extraordinary way; she said that if ever I found myself in such need that I was in danger of dying, then only I might come to her, but not otherwise; I loved her very much.”

“Would you want her to do anything for you that would be disagreeable or injurious for her?”

Viérotchka smiled. “But how could it be so?”

“But no; now imagine that you were very, very much in need of her help, and that she said to you, ‘If I do this for you, it would torment me,’ would you repeat your request, would you insist on it?”

“I would sooner die.”

“Now you just told me that you loved her. But this love is only feeling, not a passion. And what is love—passion! and how can you distinguish passion from simple feeling?—by its strength. Consequently, if when one is moved by simple feeling, which is weak, very weak compared to

passion, love places you in such relations to a man that you say, 'I would rather die than be the cause of torment to him.' If a simple feeling speaks so, what will passion say which is a thousand-fold stronger? It will say, 'I will sooner die than—not ask, not demand—but even admit that any man should do anything for me except what is agreeable to himself; I would sooner die than admit the possibility of his doing anything for my sake under compulsion or at inconvenience to himself.' Such a passion, speaking this way, is love. But passion that speaks otherwise is passion and *not* love. I am going home now; I have told you everything, Viéra Pavlovna."

Viérotchka pressed his hand. "*Au revoir*,¹ but why don't you congratulate me? to-day is my birthday."

Lopukhóf looked at her. "Maybe, maybe! if you have not made this mistake, then I am glad."

¹ *Dō svidánya*, literally, till we meet again.

V.

“How soon this came, how unexpected,” thinks Viérotchka alone in her room at the close of the evening. “We spoke for the first time, and yet we became such good friends; half an hour before not to know each other, and in an hour’s time to become such good friends, how strange!”

No; it is not strange at all, Viérotchka. People like Lopukhóf have magical words, which attract to them every abused and persecuted creature. It is their “bride” that whispers such words into their ears. But here is something that is indeed strange, Viérotchka,—but not for you and me,—that you are so calm. Here people think that love is an exciting feeling, and you will fall asleep as gently as a child, and you will be neither frightened nor disturbed by dreams; you may dream of happy childish games, forfeits, tag, or maybe dances, also gay and unconcerned. It seems strange to some people, but you do not know that it is strange, and I know that it is *not* strange. Agitation in love does not point to love; agitation in it is something that should not exist, for love in itself is joyous and unconcerned.

“How strange this is,” thinks Viérotchka; “here I myself, again and again have thought and felt all that he said about the poor and about women and how one should love. Where could I have got my ideas, or was it in the books which I have read? No; there is nothing of the sort there. What I found in books was either doubts or reservations, and everything like this seemed extraordinary, incredible, like ideals that are good but are impossible to be realized; and all this seems to me so simple, simpler than anything else, a perfectly ordinary thing, it cannot help being, it must be so, surely, more surely than anything else. And I used to think that those were the best books. Now here is George Sand—such a good and noble woman!—and yet, she thinks that these ideas are only visionary. And our own writers—but no; our writers have nothing of the kind at all. Or take Dickens; he has something of the sort, but it seems as though he did not hope for it at all, as though he only wished that it might be, for he is kind-hearted, but he is sure that it cannot be. But how is it that they don’t know that this *cannot help being*, that this state of things must actually come about, that it will be accomplished without fail, that no one will be poor or unfortunate? But don’t they say this? No; they only feel pity, but they think that in reality things will remain as they are at present, possibly a trifle better, but not much. And these thoughts of mine—they don’t express them; if they did, I should have known that kind and sensible people also think so. But here I have been imagining that it is only I who had such thoughts; it’s because I am a dull young girl. How absurd to think that besides my stupid self no one has had such thoughts, that no one else expects this new order of things. But *he* says that his ‘bride’ explains to every one who loves her that all these things will come about as it seems to me they will, and she explains it to them so plainly that all of them have begun to strive to have it realized as soon as possible. What a sensible ‘bride’ he has! but who is she? I must find out, surely I shall find out! Yes; it will be a good thing when there shall be no more poor; people won’t oppress each other then; all will be joyous, kind, and happy!”

And hereupon Viérotchka fell asleep, and slept soundly, and saw nothing in her dreams.

No, Viérotchka, it is not strange that you have thought over and taken all this to heart; you who are a simple-hearted young girl, and have not even heard the names of those men who have begun to teach this and prove that this must be so, that this must come about without fail, that this cannot help being; it is not strange that you have understood and taken to heart the thoughts which your books have failed to present plainly to you. Your books were written by men who were only beginning to learn these ideas when they were only ideas; these ideas seemed wonderful and fascinating and—nothing more. Now, Viérotchka, these ideas are plainly seen to be realizable; and other books are written by other people, who find that these ideas are excellent, that there is nothing wonderful in them; and, Viérotchka, these ideas are floating in the air like a perfume from the fields in flower-time; they penetrate everywhere; you have heard them even from your tipsy mother, who told you that it was necessary to live and why it was necessary to live by deceit and theft; she wanted to speak against your ideas, but she herself gave them greater development; you heard them from the cynical, ruined French girl, who drags her lover after her like a chambermaid, does whatever she pleases with him, yet as soon as she comes to her senses, she finds that she has no will of her own, that she must please, compel herself—though it is very hard for her—and yet, it would seem, would it not, that her life with the kind, refined, and complaisant Sergei is easy and pleasant? and yet she says: “Even for me, bad woman as I am, such relations are detestable.” Nowadays it is not difficult to adopt such ideas as you have. But others do not take them to heart as you have. This is good, but there is nothing strange about it. Is there anything strange in the fact that you want to be free and happy? Now such a desire—God knows what a head-splitting discovery this is; God knows what a step forward it is towards heroism!

But here is something strange, Viérotchka, that there are some people who have no such desire, who have other desires, and it may probably seem strange to such people that on the first evening of your love, you fell asleep with such thoughts; that from the thought of yourself, of your sweetheart, of your love, you turned to the thoughts that all people must be happy, and that it is necessary to bring about its accomplishment as soon as possible. And do you not know that it is strange, and I do know that it is not strange, that it is both natural and human. “I feel joy and happiness; consequently, I want all people to feel joyful and happy.” But humanely speaking, both thoughts are the same. You are a good girl; you are not a stupid girl; but excuse me if I do not find anything wonderful in you; maybe half the girls whom I have known and whom I know, and maybe more than half—I have not counted them; they are too many to count—are not worse than you, and some of them are even better. Excuse me.

It seems to Lopukhóf that you are a wonderful girl. So it is; but it is not wonderful that it seems to him so, because he has fallen in love with you! And there is nothing wonderful in the fact that he loves you; it is quite possible to love you; and if he loves you, then it must seem to him that you are wonderful.

VI.

During the time of the first quadrille Marya Alekséyevna was continually dogging her daughter and the tutor; but during the second quadrille she did not show herself near them, but was busy in her capacity as hostess in the preparation of the supper. After her preparations were made she asked for the tutor, but the tutor was gone.

Two days later the tutor came to give his lesson. The *samovar* (tea-urn) was placed on the table, and Matrióna came to call Feódor. While he was giving the boy his lesson, he was interrupted by Marya Alekséyevna entering the room. The tutor preferred to remain in his place, because it was not his custom to drink tea with them, and besides, he was going to look over Feódor's copy-book; but Marya Alekséyevna asked him to come in because she wanted to have a talk with him; so he went and sat down at the tea-table.

Marya Alekséyevna began to ask him about Feódor's capacity, about the best gymnasium for him, and whether it would not be better to place the boy in the gymnasium boarding-house. These questions were very natural, but were they not made too soon? During this conversation she so sincerely and politely begged the tutor to take tea with them, that Lopukhóf concluded to break his rule; he took the glass. Viérotchka did not make her appearance for some time. At last she came in; she and the tutor bowed to each other as though there were nothing between them, and Marya Alekséyevna continued to speak about Feódor; then abruptly she turned the conversation to the tutor himself. She asked him who he was, what he was, what relations he had, whether they were rich, how he lived, and how he intended to live. The tutor answered laconically and indefinitely, that he had relatives, that they lived in the provinces, that they were not very well-to-do, that he supported himself by giving lessons, that he intended to practise medicine in Petersburg; in a word, Marya Alekséyevna gained very little information from what he said. Determining to break through his reserve, Marya Alekséyevna went at the matter more directly.

"Now you say that you intend to practise medicine here, and, thank God, the city doctors are able to make a living! Have you thought yet of setting up a family?—I mean, have you found a girl yet?"

What does she mean? The tutor had almost forgotten about his ideal bride, and he had it on his lips to say, "I have no one in view as yet"; but he suddenly remembered. *Akh!* of course she overheard! It put him into a ridiculous dilemma. What a piece of work I made of it! Why did I make up such an allegory when it wasn't in the least necessary? *Nu vot!* go to! they say that it's dangerous to take part in a propaganda; now here, how my propaganda influenced Viéra Pavlovna, though her heart is pure and disposed to no ill. *Nu!* she must have overheard and understood; but what business is that of mine? "Yes, I have a girl in view!"

"Are you engaged to her yet?"

"I am."

"Are you formally engaged, or is it only a tacit understanding between you?"

"We are formally engaged."

Poor Marya Alekséyevna! She had caught the words, “my bride,” “your bride,” “I love her very much,” “she is a beauty,” and her solicitude lest the tutor were flirting with her daughter was allayed; and so during the second quadrille she was able entirely to put her mind on the care of preparing the supper. But she wanted to hear the details of this reassuring story more circumstantially and particularly. She kept on with her cross-examination. All people like such reassuring conversation; at all events it satisfies curiosity, and one likes to know everything. The tutor gave satisfactory answers, though, according to his wont, they were very brief.

“Is your bride pretty?”

“Uncommonly.”

“Has she a dowry?”

“A very large one.”

“How large?”

“Very large!”

“As much as a hundred thousand?”

“Much more than that.”

“How much more?”

“There’s no use telling that; it is large enough.”

“In cash?”

“Some of it in money.”

“Some of it in estates also?”

“Yes; there’s landed property.”

“Soon?”

“Soon.”

“You mean you are going to be married soon?”

“Yes.”

“That is right, Dmitri Sergéitch; get married before she comes into her property, and so get rid of the crowd of men that’ll be after her money.”

“Perfectly right.”

“How it is that God sent you such good luck, while other men have no such luck at all?”

“It’s so; but almost nobody knows that she is such an heiress.”

“And you found out?”

“I did.”

“How was it you did?”

“To tell the truth, I had long been on the lookout for such a chance, and at last I found it.”

“And you haven’t made any mistake?”

“Certainly not; I’ve seen the documents.”

“Seen ‘em yourself?”

“I, myself. That was the first step I took.”

“Was that the way you set about it?”

“Of course; a man who is in his right mind does not take any risks without proofs.”

“That’s true, Dmitri Sergéitch; no one does. What good luck! It must have been in answer to your parents’ prayers.”

“It must be so.”

Marya Alekséyevna had taken a fancy to the tutor from the time when she found that he did not drink up her tea. It was apparent from everything that he was a man of solid character, with a firm basis of sense; he had little to say,—so much the better, he was not empty-headed, and whatever he said was to the point,—especially in regard to money; but since the evening of the party, she saw that the tutor was a God-send, on account of his absolute disinclination to flirt with the girls in the families where he gave lessons. Such an absolute disinclination can rarely be found among young men. But now she was at the height of her satisfaction with him. “Indeed, what a splendid man he is! And he had never boasted that he was going to marry a rich bride; it was necessary to draw out every word with pincers! And what keen scent he had! Apparently, he must have made up his mind long ago that he would find a rich bride; and how he must have flattered her. *Nu!* this young man, I may say, knows how to manage his affairs. And he set to work by getting hold of the documents. How sensibly he talks about it! he says that no one in his right mind can do such things without documents. He’s a young man of rare good sense.”

Viérotchka could hardly restrain herself from smiling too frankly; but gradually it seemed to her—but how did it seem to her? No; it can’t be so! Yes; it must be! he must be speaking, not to Marya Alekséyevna, though he answers her questions, but to her, Viérotchka; that he is making fun of Marya Alekséyevna; that the seriousness and the truth which underlies what he says is meant only for her, Viérotchka.

Whether it only seemed so to Viérotchka, or whether it was really so, who can say? He knew, and she afterwards found out. But for the rest of us, perhaps there is no need of knowing; for we want only facts. And the fact was that Viérotchka, as she listened to Lopukhóf, at first smiled, but afterwards became serious, and imagined that he was speaking, not with Marya Alekséyevna, but with her, not in jest, but in earnest; and Marya Alekséyevna, who had taken in solemn earnest all that Lopukhóf said from the beginning, turned to Viérotchka, and said:—

“Viérotchka, my dear, what’s become of your thoughts?¹ You are acquainted now with Dmitri Sergéitch; you’d better ask him to play your accompaniment for you, and give us a song.”

By this she meant to intimate: “We have great respect for you, Dmitri Sergéitch, and we want you to be a good friend in our family. And you, Viérotchka, don’t be coy to Dmitri Sergéitch; I am going to tell Mikhaïl Ivanuitch that he’s got a bride of his own, and Mikhaïl Ivanuitch will not be jealous of him.”

This was what was meant to be understood by Viérotchka and Dmitri Sergéitch; he was now in Marya Alekséyevna’s thoughts not the *tutor* but *Dmitri Sergéitch*. But for Marya Alekséyevna herself, these words had a third interpretation which was very natural and real: “We must flatter him a little; his acquaintance may be of some use to us by and by when he gets to be rich, the rascal.” This was the general signification of Marya Alekséyevna’s word for herself; but beside the general signification there was also a special thought: “When I have flattered him a little, I will tell him that we are poor people; that it is hard for me to pay him a silver ruble a lesson.”

So many different meanings were in Marya Alekséyevna’s words! Dmitri Sergéitch said that he would finish his lesson first, and then it would give him pleasure to play on the piano.

¹ Literally, “Why are you sitting like a *buka*?” that is, why are you bent over like the Slavonic letter B? a popular idiom.

VII.

Marya Alekséyevna's words had many interpretations, and they were not less fecund in results. On the side of the special signification,—that is, as regarded the reduction in the price of the lessons,—Marya Alekséyevna attained greater success than she anticipated: when, after two more lessons, she insinuated that they were poor people, Dmitri Sergéitch at first stuck to his price,—stuck to it strenuously; for a long time he did not yield,—long insisted on his three paper rubles. (It must be remembered that at this time the three-ruble note was worth only seventy kopeks.) Marya Alekséyevna did not expect to beat down his price, but, contrary to all her expectations, succeeded in reducing the price to sixty kopeks a lesson. Apparently the special signification of her words—the hope of beating down the price—contradicted her high opinion of Dmitri Sergéitch (not of Lopukhóf, but of Dmitri Sergéitch) as of a man shrewd in money matters. “What would make a man, who is a keen financier, give in about money on account of our poverty?” And if Dmitri Sergéitch did yield, then, consequently, one would be disappointed in him, and find in him a short-sighted man, and therefore a man to be avoided. Of course she would judge that way in the case of a stranger; but human beings are so created that it is hard for them to judge of their own affairs according to the general rule. A man is extremely apt to make exceptions in his own favor.¹ What can be done with this peculiarity of the human heart? It is bad; it is injurious; but Marya Alekséyevna was unfortunately not exempted from this fault, which is the almost universal affliction of the penurious, of the sneaks, and of the wicked. There is salvation from it in only two extreme and opposite kinds of moral right. A man may reach such a lofty plane of transcendental rascality that he becomes the eighth wonder of the world for his virtuosity in crime, like Ali Pasha Yaninska, Djézzar Pasha of Syria, Mahomet Ali of Egypt, all of whom deceived the European diplomats (and Djézzar deceived Napoleon the Great) as though they were children. When rascality has enclosed a man around with such an absolutely impregnable armor, that it is absolutely impossible to reach any human weakness, ambition, love of honors, love of command, love of self, or anything else, he is safe; but such heroes of rascality are very rare; you can scarcely find them in the countries of Europe, where virtuosity in wickedness is destroyed by a good many weak points. Therefore, if they show you a wily fellow, and say, “This fellow cannot be deceived by any one,” boldly put up ten rubles against one that you,

¹ In the original the following slap at the selfishness and rascality of the average tchinovik is dealt. The language, not the thought, is a trifle obscure. *Kollezhsky sekretar* is the eighth order of the civil *tchin*, or order of rank corresponding to major in the army. *Kollezhsky sovyestnik* is the sixth, corresponding to colonel.

“When the *kollezhsky sekretar* Ivanof assures the *kollezhsky sovyestnik* Ivan Ivanuitch that he is devoted to him soul and body, Ivan Ivanuitch knows by his own experience that devotion of soul and body cannot be expected of anybody, and all the more he knows that in private life Ivanof cheated his father five times, and made a very large profit, and in this respect he even excelled Ivan Ivanuitch, who succeeded in cheating his father only three times; but for all that Ivan Ivanuitch believes that Ivanof is devoted to him; that is, he does not believe him, but he is grateful to him; and, although he does not believe him, yet he allows the dust to be thrown in his eyes. Consequently, he believes, although he does not believe.” Which logic is like the old fallacy: One Greek says that all Greeks lie. If all Greeks lie, then he lies; and if he lies, all Greeks tell the truth; therefore he must tell the truth. Then it is true that they lie.

although not so wily, will mislead this wily fellow, if you only make up your mind to do so; and still more boldly put up one hundred rubles against one that he himself is leading himself by the nose in some direction or other, because it is the most ordinary and characteristic feature in the wily to be led in some direction or other by the nose. How artful in all appearance were Louis Philippe and Metternich, and how nicely they led themselves by the nose out of Paris and Vienna, into golden and lovely places of bucolic calmness, and enjoyed the picture of “Makar driving his calves.”²

And Napoleon the First! what a wily rascal he was; wiler than Louis Philippe and Metternich taken together, and yet they say that with all his wiliness he had a genial temper. And thus how masterly he led himself by the nose to Elba; nay, he even wanted to go further, and dragged himself by the nose to St. Helena! How unlikely it seemed at first,—almost impossible; but he succeeded at last in overthrowing all the obstacles in the way of reaching the island of St. Helena. Just read over the history of the campaign of 1815, and you will see with what energy and skill he dragged himself by the nose. Alas! and even Marya Alekséyevna was not exempted from this injurious tendency!

There are few people for whom the armor against temptation serves as an absolute protection from the deception of others. But on the other hand, there are a good many people for whom simple honesty of heart serves as a protection against such deception. According to the testimony of Vidocqs and Johnnie Cains, there is nothing harder than to deceive an honest, sincere man, if he has some common sense and knowledge of the world. Bright, honest men, who have their wits about them, are not liable to temptation individually. But they have in one respect a weakness that is injurious: when taken all together they are subject to deception. A rascal is not able to lead any *one* of them by the nose, but the noses of them taken collectively are always ready for use. But the rascals, whose noses individually are weak, cannot be led by the nose. In this consists the whole mystery of the history of the world.

But to branch off into the history of the world is not necessary. When you are writing a novel go ahead with your novel!

The first result of Marya Alekséyevna’s words was the cheapening of the lessons. The second result was that by getting the tutor cheaper, that is, not the tutor, but Dmitri Sergéitch, Marya Alekséyevna was still more confirmed in her good opinion of him as a man of solidity. She even came to the conviction that conversation with him would be profitable for Viérotchka; his influence will dispose Viérotchka to marry Mikhaïl Ivanuitch. This conclusion was extremely brilliant, and Marya Alekséyevna would probably not have reached it by her own wit, but she met with such plain proof that she could not help noticing Dmitri Sergéitch’s good influence over Viérotchka. How this was proved to her we shall soon see.

The third result of Marya Alekséyevna’s words was that Viérotchka and Dmitri Sergéitch began under her encouragement and permission to spend considerable time together. After he had finished giving his lessons, towards eight o’clock, Lopukhóf used to stay for two or three hours longer at the Rozalskys. He played cards with the mother of the family and the bridegroom; he talked with them; he played on the piano, and Viérotchka would sing; or Viérotchka played, and he would listen. Sometimes he spoke with Viérotchka, and Marya Alekséyevna did not interfere, was not angry, although, of course, she did not leave them without her supervision.

² *Gdyé Makár telyat gonyaet* (Where Makar drives his calves) is a Russian expression, meaning to go to distant places; often used of people sent to Siberia.

Oh, of course, she did not leave them absolutely to themselves; because, although Dmitri Sergéitch was a very proper young man, still the proverb does not say in vain, "Don't hide things carelessly, and you won't lead a thief into sin." Dmitri Sergéitch is a thief, there is no doubt about it; but it is not said by way of blame, but on the contrary; otherwise, there wouldn't be any reason for respecting him and making him a friend of the family, would there? Is there any sense of making the acquaintance of fools? Of course it is well to make the acquaintance of fools sometimes—when you can take advantage of them. But Dmitri Sergéitch has nothing to his name as yet; it must be, therefore, that they are friendly with him only because of his good qualities; that is, for his sense, solidity, prudence, and skill in managing his own affairs. And if every one has—the deuce knows what—in his mind, then such a clever man must have more than others. Consequently we must look and look at Dmitri Sergéitch.

And Marya Alekséyevna studied him very industriously and energetically; but all her observations only corroborated her opinion of Dmitri Sergéitch's solidity and good character. For instance, how can one tell amorous intentions? By noticing the way in which a young man looks at a girl. Here Viérotchka is playing and Dmitri Sergéitch is standing and listening, and Marya Alekséyevna is watching the direction in which he turns his eyes. But sometimes he does not even look at Viérotchka; he looks anywhere else; or sometimes, when he is looking at her, he looks so innocently, so indifferently into her face, that it can quickly be seen that he is looking at her only out of politeness and is thinking of his bride's dowry. His eyes do not burn like Mikhaïl Ivanuitch's! Again, how can the existence of love be detected? By caressing words. But in this case no caressing words are heard, and they really speak very little together; he talks by preference with Marya Alekséyevna, or, here for instance, he began to bring Viérotchka books. Once Viérotchka went to see a friend, and Mikhaïl Ivanuitch was at the Rozalskys'. Marya Alekséyevna took the books that the tutor brought and handed them to Mikhaïl Ivanuitch.

"Just look here, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch. This French I almost understand by myself. This word *gostinaïa* [meaning drawing-room], of course, it must be a book about manners, ain't it? but the German one I don't understand."

"No, Marya Alekséyevna, that word is not *gostinaïa*, but *destinée*, fate."

"What kind of a fate? Is it a novel that's called so, or is it a sort of oracle or fortune book?"

"We will quickly find out, Marya Alekséyevna, from the book itself."

Mikhaïl Ivanuitch turned several of the leaves.

"It seems to speak mostly about series and things; I guess it is a scientific book."

"About serious things? That is good!"

"No, series."

"What! series? Oh yes, banknotes. Then it's something about managing money!"

"Yes, that's it, Marya Alekséyevna."

"*Nu!* what's the German one?"

Mikhaïl Ivanuitch read slowly:—

"Concerning Religion; works of Ludwig.' Oh, yes, Ludwig the Fourteenth, Marya Alekséyevna; this is the work of Louis XIV. He was a French king, Marya Alekséyevna, the father of the king in whose place Napoleon is reigning now."

"Then it must be a theological work?"

"Yes, I think so."

"That is good, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch; yes, indeed, I knew it! Dmitri Sergéitch is a reliable young man; still one must keep his eyes sharp on any young man."

“Of course he has no bad intentions in his mind, but, for all that, I am extremely grateful to you, Marya Alekséyevna, for keeping your eyes open.”

“One’s got to do so; I am on the watch, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch; it’s a mother’s duty to keep her daughter straight, and I pledge you my honor as far as Viérotchka is concerned. But there’s one thing occurs to me, Mikhaïl Ivanuitch. “What belief did that French king hold?”

“Catholic, naturally!”

“Then, don’t he try to convert folks into the papistry?”

“I don’t think so, Marya Alekséyevna; if he had been a Catholic bishop, then, of course, he would have tried to make converts; but a king would not spend his time that way. As a wise ruler and politician he’d simply teach virtue.”

“What else?”

Marya Alekséyevna could not help seeing that Mikhaïl Ivanuitch, with all his narrow mind, argued the case very skilfully; but for all that she cleared up the matter with perfect satisfaction. Two or three days later she suddenly said to Lopukhóf, while playing with him rather than with Mikhaïl Ivanuitch:—

“Tell me, Dmitri Sergéitch; I want to ask you something. The father of the last French king, the very man in whose shoes the present Napoleon is reigning, did he make folks git converted into the religion of the Pope?”

“No, he did not, Marya Alekséyevna.”

“Is the Pope’s religion good, Dmitri Sergéitch?”

“No, it is not, Marya Alekséyevna. I play seven of diamonds.”

“I just asked out of curiosity, Dmitri Sergéitch, being as I’m an ignorant woman, and it is interesting to know. You are taking a good many tricks, Dmitri Sergéitch.”

“It can’t be helped, Marya Alekséyevna. We are taught at the medical school to play cards well. A doctor must know how to take tricks.”

Lopukhóf is puzzled to this day to know why Marya Alekséyevna wanted to know whether Philippe Egalité ordered folks to be baptized in the religion of the Pope.

Well, how, after all this, could it be wondered at that Marya Alekséyevna stopped wearying herself by perpetual supervision? He keeps his eyes where they should be, his face has shown no amorous susceptibilities; he gives her theological books to read; that ought to be enough. But no, Marya Alekséyevna was not satisfied; but she even managed to put him to a test, as though she had studied the logic which I have learned by heart, and which says, “the observations of phenomena must be made by means of experiments, carried on in a skilful plan, if one would have the most thorough penetration into the secrets of such relations”; and she so managed to bring about this trial, as though she had read Sakson’s grammar, which tells how Hamlet was tempted by Ophelia in the grove.

VIII. THE TEMPTATION OF HAMLET.

One day at tea, Marya Alekséyevna said that she had a headache; after serving the tea, and locking up the sugarbowl she went away and retired. Viéra and Lopukhóf remained sitting in the tea-room, which adjoined the bed-room where Marya Alekséyevna had gone.

After a few minutes she sent a message by Feódor: "Tell your sister that their talk keeps me from going to sleep; let 'em go somewhere else so as not to bother me. Say it politely, so as not to offend Dmitri Sergéitch; you see what good care he takes of you." Feódor went and told what his mother wanted.

"Let us go to my room, Dmitri Sergéitch; it is away from mother's bed-room, and we shall not be disturbed."

Of course this was what Marya Alekséyevna expected. At the end of a quarter of an hour she crept in her stocking feet up to the door of Viérotchka's room. The door was ajar; between the door and the jamb was a splendid crack: Marya Alekséyevna applied her eyes to it and strained her ears.

This was the sight that she saw:—

In Viérotchka's rooms were two windows; between them stood a writing-table. Viérotchka was sitting near one window, knitting a woollen chest-protector for her father, religiously fulfilling Marya Alekséyevna's command. At the other window, at the other end of the table, Lopukhóf was sitting; he was leaning with one elbow on the table; he had a cigar in his hand; his other hand was thrust in his pocket; the distance between Viérotchka and him was not less than two arshíns (4.6 feet). Viérotchka was looking most of the time at her knitting; Lopukhóf was looking most of the time at his cigar. This was a gratifying state of things.

The conversation that she overheard was as follows:—

"Is it necessary to look at life in this way?" These were the first words that Marya Alekséyevna caught.

"Yes, Viéra Pavlovna, it is necessary."

"Then cold, practical people must tell the truth, when they say that men are governed only by selfish motives?"

"They tell the truth. What are called the higher feelings, ideal aspirations; all these in the general course of life are absolutely nothing in comparison with the inspiration felt by every one to do things for his own interest. At bottom, the impulse even for the others is caused by selfishness."

"*Da!* are you, for example, of the same sort?"

"What do you suppose, Viéra Pavlovna? Just listen and see what is the essential motive of all my life. The essence of my life, hitherto, has consisted in study and preparation to be a doctor. Excellent! Why did my father send me to school? He used constantly to repeat to me: 'Study, Mitya; when you have finished your course you will be a *tchinovnik*; you will be able to support me and your mother, and it will be good for you, too.' And that was the reason that I studied; without that motive, my father would never have let me study: you see my family was in need

of a wage-winner. *Da!* and I myself, though I am fond of study, would not have spent time on it, would I, if I had not thought that the expenditure would have been paid back with interest? After I got through school, I urged my father to send me to the medical academy instead of making me a *tchinovnik*. How did that come about? Father and I saw that medical men live much better than civil *tchinovniks* and the heads of departments, and I could not get any higher rank than that. And that was why I got the means and went to the medical school; it stood for bread and butter. Without this in view I should not have gone to the medical school and should not have stayed in it.”

“But you loved to study while you were at school, and have you not liked medical science?”

“Yes. It is an ornament, and it is also profitable; but success is generally won without this ornament, while without a motive, never! Love for science was only a result arising from a certain state of things; it was not its cause; the cause was just one thing,—self-interest” [*vuigoda*, profit].

“Let us suppose that you are right; yes, you are right! All actions that I can remember can be explained by self-interest. But this theory is cold!”

“Theory must by necessity be cold. The mind must judge of things coldly.”

“But it is merciless.”

“Yes, to fancies that are empty and injurious.”

“But it is prosaic.”

“Science does not care for a poetical form.”

“And so this theory, which I cannot help admitting, brings people into a cold, merciless, and prosaic life?”

“No, Viéra Pavlovna; this theory is cold, but it teaches a man to bring out the warmth. A match is cold, the match-box on which you scratch the match is also cold; but there is fire in them which gets a man warm food, and warms him also. This theory is merciless; but if it is followed, people will not become the wretched objects of idle charity. The lancet must not bend; otherwise it will be necessary to pity the patient, who will suffer none the less because of your sympathy. This theory is prosaic, but it reveals true motives of life and poetry in the truth of life. Why is Shakspeare the greatest poet? Because he is true to life, and has less illusion than other poets.”

“So am I, also, going to be pitiless, Dmitri Sergéitch,” said Viérotchka, smiling. “Don’t be drawn away by the thought that you have in me an obstinate opponent of your self-interest theory, and that you have converted me to be a new disciple. I myself long ago felt the same thing, especially after I read your book and heard it from you. But I thought that these were my individual ideas, that clever and scientific men thought otherwise, and so I was in doubt. All that we used to read was written in a spirit of contrariety; it was full of adverse criticisms, of sarcastic attacks upon what we used to see in ourselves and others. Nature, life, reason, lead you one direction; books drag you the other: they say, ‘This is mean, contemptible.’ Do you know, I myself saw the absurdity of the arguments which I myself brought up!”

“Yes, so they were absurd, Viéra Pavlovna.”

“Well then,” said she, laughing, “we are making each other wonderful compliments. I say to you, ‘You, Dmitri Sergéitch, please don’t lift your nose so high.’ You say to me, ‘You are ridiculous with your doubts, Viéra Pavlovna.’”

“At any rate,” said he, also laughing, “we have no selfish interest in making love to each other, and therefore, we don’t make love.”

“All right, Dmitri Sergéitch; people are egotistical, aren’t they? You were speaking about yourself, and now I want to speak about myself.”

“Of course, men must think about themselves most of all.”

“Very good. Now let us see if you will put this into practice.”

“Let us see.”

“A rich man wants to marry me. I don’t like him. Must I accept his offer?”

“Consider what is for your best advantage.”

“My best advantage! You know that I am very poor. On one side is my dislike of the man; on the other, I should have the upper hand of him, an enviable position in society, money, a crowd of worshippers!”

“Weigh everything; choose what would be most advantageous.”

“And if I choose the husband’s wealth and the crowd of worshippers?”

“I shall say that you have chosen that which seemed more correspondent with your interests.”

“And what ought to be said about myself?”

“If you have acted coolly, after mature deliberation, it will have to be said that you have done wisely, and probably you will not be sorry for it.”

“But would my choice deserve condemnation?”

“People who talk all sorts of nonsense will speak about it as they please; but people who look upon life from a reasonable standpoint will say that you have done as you ought. If you have done so, it will show that such was your individuality, that you could not have acted otherwise, circumstances being as they are; they will say that you have acted under the necessity of things, that properly speaking you could not have had any other choice.”

“And no condemnation whatever for my actions?”

“Who has the right to condemn the results of a fact when the fact itself is in existence? Your individuality in the given circumstances is a fact; your actions are the essential, unavoidable results of this fact, arising from the nature of things. You are not responsible for them, and to condemn them is absurd.”

“Well, I see you stick to your theory. And so I shall not deserve your condemnation, if I accept the rich man’s offer?”

“I should be a fool if I condemned it.”

“And so your permission,—I might say, your approval—I might even say, your direct advice—is to do as I have said?”

“There is always one thing to advise,—‘reason out what is for your best’; if you do that, you have my approval.”

“Thank you. Now the personal case is decided. Let us return to the first, that is, the general question. We began by saying that a man acts from necessity; his actions are determined by the influences from which they take their rise, the stronger motives always predominating. Our arguments went thus: when an action has vital importance, the stimulus is called self-interest; its interaction in man is the calculation of self-interests, and therefore a man must always act in accordance with the motive of self-interest. Do I express the thread of the thought?”

“Perfectly.”

“You see what a good pupil I am. Now this private question about the actions that have an important bearing upon life is settled. But in the general question there remain some difficulties yet. Your book says that a man acts from necessity; but there are cases when it seems that it depends upon my will to act in this way or in that. For instance, I am playing, and I turn the leaves of the music. I turn them sometimes with my left hand, sometimes with my right hand. Let us suppose that I have turned them now with the right hand; why could I not have done it with my left hand? Does it not depend upon my own will?”

“No, Viéra Pavlovna; when you are turning the leaves, not thinking which hand you use, you turn them with the hand that is most convenient; there is no will about it. If you think, ‘Let me turn them with my right hand,’ you then turn them under the influence of this thought; but this thought itself was not a matter of your will, but was engendered unavoidably by others.”

At this word Marya Alekséyevna ceased to listen. “*Nu!* they are spending their time over science; that ain’t in my line, it ain’t necessary either. What a wise, intelligent, and I may say noble, young man he is! What reasonable advice he gives Viérotchka! And that shows that he is a learned man: now here I go and tells her the same things; she does not listen, she gets offended; I can’t suit her because I don’t know how to speak scientific enough. But here when he speaks scientific, she listens and sees that it is the truth, and she agrees with it. *Da!* it is said not in vain, ‘knowledge is light; ignorance, darkness.’ If I had been a well-educated woman, would it have been with me as it is now? I’d have got my husband into favor with the generals; I would have got a place for him in the department of supplies, or somewhere else just as good! *Nu!* of course I should have done the business myself with the contractors! the idea of his doing it—rubbish! I’d have built a much better house than this. I’d have bought more than a thousand souls [*dushi*, serfs]. But now I cannot. It is necessary to get a recommendation first in the society of generals; and how can I do that? I can’t speak French, nor any other language of theirs. They’ll say, ‘She hain’t got any manners; all she’s good for is to make an uproar on the hay-market!’ So I am no good! ‘Ignorance is darkness.’ Indeed ‘knowledge is light; ignorance is darkness.’”

Now it was just this conversation that Marya Alekséyevna had overheard that brought her to the conviction that Dmitri Sergéitch’s conversation was not only not dangerous for Viérotchka,—she had been inclined to think that before,—but was even likely to do her good, to lighten her own labors in overcoming Viérotchka’s foolish, inexperienced, girlish, thoughts, and hasten the mystical benediction in the affair with Mikhaïl Ivanutch.

IX.

The relations of Marya Alekséyevna to Lopukhóf resemble a farce; Marya Alekséyevna's character is exposed by them in a ridiculous way. Both these facts are quite against my will. If I had wanted to preserve a high standard of art, I should have concealed Marya Alekséyevna's relations to Lopukhóf, the description of which gives this part of my story the nature of a vaudeville. To hide them would have been easy. The essential element of the matter could have been expressed without them. Would it have been at all surprising if the tutor, even if he had not entered into this friendship with Marya Alekséyevna, had found occasion sometimes, though seldom, to say a few words with the daughter of a family where he is giving lessons? Does it take many words to engender love? There was no need of Marya Alekséyevna putting in a hand to help along this result which was brought about by the meeting of Viérotchka with Lopukhóf. But I am telling this story, not as it would be necessary if I wanted to win an artistic reputation, but simply in accordance with the facts. As a novelist, I am very sorry because I have written several pages which are on the low level of a vaudeville.

My design of relating the case as it was, and not as it would have been if I had followed my inclinations, also causes me another unpleasantness. I am very much dissatisfied because Marya Alekséyevna is represented in a ridiculous way with her conceptions of Lopukhóf's bride as he described her, with her fantastic guessing about the contents of the books which Lopukhóf gave Viérotchka, with her reasoning about Philippe Egalité trying to convert folks to the faith of the Pope, and her ideas of the works written by King Louis XIV. Every one is liable to error; mistakes may be stupid if a man judges of matters which are foreign to his experience; but it would be unjust to conclude from these stupid blunders made by Marya Alekséyevna that her disposition to Lopukhóf was founded entirely on these blunders; not at all, not for a moment would any fantastic ideas of a rich bride or the goodness of Philippe Egalité have obscured her common sense, if in Lopukhóf's actual words and actions had anything suspicious been noticeable. But in point of fact, he behaved himself in such a way that, according to Marya Alekséyevna's opinion, only a man after her own heart could behave himself; now here was a brave young man, who did not allow his eyes to gaze impudently at a very pretty young girl; he did not pay her ambiguous attentions, he was always willing to play cards with Marya Alekséyevna, he never said that he would rather sit with Viéra Pavlovna, he discussed matters in a spirit that seemed to Marya Alekséyevna in accordance with her own spirit; like her, he said that everything in the world is done for self-interest, that when a cheat cheats (*plut plutÿyet*), there is no need of getting excited and crying out about the principles of honesty which such a cheat is bound to observe, that a cheat is not a cheat without good reason, that he was made such by his environment, that not to be a cheat—leaving aside the impossibility of not being a cheat—would have been stupid, that is, simply foolish on his part. Yes, Marya Alekséyevna was right, when she found a resemblance between her and Lopukhóf.

I appreciate how deeply Lopukhóf is compromised in the eyes of the civilized public by the sympathy shown by Marya Alekséyevna in his way of thinking. But I do not want to flatter any

one, and I don't conceal this circumstance, though it is so injurious to Lopukhóf's reputation, although I confessed that it was in my power to conceal Lopukhóf's relations with the Rozal-sky family. I will say even more; I myself will even undertake to explain that he even actually deserved Marya Alekséyevna's good will.

In point of fact, it appears from the conversation between Lopukhóf and Viérotchka, that the style of his thinking would far more easily seem good to people of Mary Alekséyevna's stamp, than to eloquent partizans of various beautiful ideas. Lopukhóf saw things in exactly the same light as they appear to the great mass of the human race, with the exception of the partizans of beautiful ideas. If Marya Alekséyevna could repeat with satisfaction what she herself had heard of Lopukhóf's advice to Viérotchka in regard to Streshnikov's offer, he likewise would take satisfaction in adding *right* to her drunken confession to Viérotchka. The resemblance between their conceptions was so striking, that enlightened and noble novelists, journalists, and other instructors of our public, would long ago have declared that people of Lopukhóf's stamp differ in no respect from people of Marya Alekséyevna's stamp. If such enlightened and noble writers so understand Lopukhóf's stamp, could we really condemn Marya Alekséyevna because she could find in Lopukhóf nothing but what our best writers, teachers, and philosophers find in people of his stamp?

Of course, if Marya Alekséyevna had known half of what these writers knew, she would have had sufficient mind to understand that Lopukhóf is bad company for her. But aside from the fact that she was an uneducated woman, she has still another excuse for mistake. Lopukhóf did not give her the full benefit of his ideas. He was a propagandist, but not such an one as the lovers of fine ideas who are always anxious to give Marya Alekséyevnas the benefit of the noble conceptions by which they themselves are enlightened. He had enough good sense not to try to straighten a fifty-year-old tree. They both accepted facts in the same way, and so discussed them. Like a man with a theoretical education, he could draw from facts such conclusions as were impossible to Marya Alekséyevna and her similars, who do not know anything beyond personal every-day cares and current aphorisms of popular wisdom,—proverbs, sayings, and the folklore which is old, archaic, and even stale. But they could never reach his conclusions. If, for instance, he had begun to explain what he meant by the word "self-interest," which he used when talking with Viérotchka, Marya Alekséyevna would have made a grimace, seeing that self-interest, as he understood it, was not the same as self-interest as she understood it; but Lopukhóf did not explain this to Marya Alekséyevna, and neither was there any explanation of it in his talk with Viérotchka, because Viérotchka knew the meaning of the word as she had seen it used in those books which started the conversation. Of course it is also true that while saying *you are right* to Marya Alekséyevna's drunken confession, Lopukhóf would have added to the word "right" (*prava*) these words: "According to your own confession, Marya Alekséyevna, the new order of things is much better than the old, and I have nothing against those who are trying to make the reform and get pleasure out of it; but as far as the stupidity of the people is concerned, which you regard as a hindrance against the new order, then of course I must agree with you; but you yourself will not deny, Marya Alekséyevna, that people soon get educated, and they see that it is to their advantage to do what before they could not see any need of doing; you will also agree that hitherto they have had no way of learning sense and reason; but give them this possibility, and why, of course they will take advantage of it."

But he never went as far as this in speaking with Marya Alekséyevna; and that, too, not from carefulness, though he was very careful, but simply from the very good reason of his common

sense and politeness, which also prevented him from talking to her in Latin, and from tiring her ears with arguments about the latest advances in medicine, though such subjects were interesting to him. He possessed so much politeness and delicacy that he would not torment a person with declamations which are not understood by that person.

Now, while I say all this to justify Marya Alekséyevna's oversight in not finding out in time what sort of man Lopukhóf really was, I don't say it to justify Lopukhóf himself. To justify Lopukhóf would not be the right thing; and why it would not be the right thing you will see as you go on. Those who could not justify him, but yet from their sense of humanity would forgive, could not forgive him. For instance, they might allege for his excuse that he was a medical man, and was occupied with natural sciences, and that disposes to a materialistic view. But such an excuse is very poor. There are very many sciences that lead to such a view, aren't there?—mathematical, and historical, and political, and many others, of all sorts. But are all geometricians, astronomers, all historians, political economists, lawyers, journalists, and all other scientific people, materialists? Not by a long chalk! Consequently, Lopukhóf is not to be excused for his fault. Those who sympathize with him, but do not justify him, could also say for his excuse that he is not entirely lacking in praiseworthy characteristics; he made up his mind, conscientiously and resolutely, to renounce all material advantages and honors, so as to work for the benefit of others, finding that the pleasure to be derived from such work was most beneficial for him; he looked at a girl, who was so beautiful that he fell in love with her, with purer eyes than if she had been his sister. But in reply to this excuse for his materialism, it must be said that it is universally true that there is no man so depraved as not to show some signs of good, and that materialists, of whatever character, remain materialists still; and this itself proves decidedly that they are immoral and degraded people, who cannot be excused, because to excuse them would be to encourage materialism. And so, while not justifying Lopukhóf, it is also impossible to excuse him. And to justify him is also not the right thing; because the lovers of fine ideas and the defenders of higher aspirations, who have declared that materialists are low and immoral people, in these later days have so thoroughly recommended themselves in the matter of sense, and also in the matter of character, in the eyes of all respectable people, whether materialists or not, that to defend anybody from their censure has become a work of supererogation, and to pay heed to their words has become even unseemly.

X.

Of course, the main subject of the conversations between Lopukhóf and Viérotchka was not the question as to which fashion of ideas should be looked upon as the right one; but, as a rule, they spoke with each other very little, and their long talks, which rarely occurred, touched upon only outside matters, such as ways of thinking, and kindred topics. They knew that two very vigilant eyes were on them. And, consequently, in regard to the main thing that interested them, they exchanged very few words; and this was generally at the time when they were getting the music ready for playing or singing. And this main topic which occupied so small a place in their infrequent long talks, and even in their brief snatches of talk, occupied but a small place,—this subject was not their feeling towards each other,—not at all; they did not speak a word after the first indefinite words which were said at their first talk during the party; they had no time to speak about it. In the two or three minutes used for the exchange of thought, without the fear of being overheard, they had hardly time to speak about the other subject, which was more important to them than their own thoughts and feelings; and this was in regard to the ways and means by which Viérotchka could escape her terrible situation.

On the morning that followed his first conversation with her, Lopukhóf took pains to find out how it would be possible for her to become an actress. He knew that there were a good many risks and trials standing in the way of a girl going on the stage; but he thought that with a firm character she might succeed all straight. But it proved to be otherwise. When he came to give his lesson, two days later, he was compelled to say to Viérotchka, “I advise you to give up the thought of becoming an actress.”

“Why?”

“Because it would be much better for you to accept Storeshnikof’s offer.”

This ended the talk, which was said while he and Viérotchka were getting the music—he about to play, and she to sing. Viérotchka hung her head, and several times lost the beat, although the piece was very familiar to her. When the piece was finished, they began to consult what they should sing next, and Viérotchka found a chance to say:—

“It seemed to me that that was the very best, and it’s hard for me to hear that it is impossible. It will be harder to live, but still I shall find some way of living; I will go out as governess.”

When he was there again two days later, she said:—

“I could not find any one through whom I could get the place of governess. Please keep your eyes open for me, Dmitri Sergéitch; there is no one but you.”

“I am sorry I have so few acquaintances who might help in this way. All the families where I am giving or have given lessons are poor people, and their acquaintances are about the same; but I will do the best I can.”

“My friend, I am wasting your time; but what else can I do?”

“Viéra Pavlovna, there is no need of speaking about my time, since I am your *friend*.”

Viérotchka both smiled and blushed. She herself did not notice how instead of calling him Dmitri Sergéitch, she called him "*my friend*." Lopukhóf also smiled. "You did not mean to say it, Viéra Pavlovna; take it back if you are sorry that you gave it to me."

Viérotchka smiled, "It is too late," and she blushed, "and I am not sorry"; and she blushed still more.

"When need comes, you will see that I am a true friend." They pressed each other's hands.

You have here the two first conversations after that evening.

Two days later, there was in the "Police Gazette" an advertisement to this effect: "A girl of good family, speaking French and German, etc., desires a place as governess; inquiries can be made of the *tchinovnik* So-and-So at Kolonma, NN. street, NN. house."

Now Lopukhóf was obliged to spend a great deal of his time in attending to Viérotchka's affairs. Every morning he had to go for the most part on foot from Vuiborgsky ward to Kolomna to his friend whose address was given in the advertisement. It was a long walk; but he could not find any other friend who lived near the Vuiborgsky ward. It was necessary that the friend at whose home inquiries could be made should be subject to several conditions,—a respectable home, good family circumstances, a respectable appearance. A poor domicile might lead to the offer of unfavorable conditions as a governess; without respectability and apparently good family circumstances the girl's recommendation would not be looked upon favorably. And Lopukhóf could not place his own address in the advertisement: what would be thought of a girl who was cared for by no one besides a student? And so Lopukhóf had to take an unusual amount of exercise. After he had taken the addresses of those who came to inquire about the governess, he had to continue his walk still farther; the *tchinovnik* told the inquirers that he was a distant relative of the girl and acted only as agent, but that she had a nephew who would come the next day and give further particulars. The nephew instead of going in a carriage went on foot, looked at the people, and of course, as a general thing, was dissatisfied with the surroundings; in one family they put on too many airs; in another, the mother of the family was a good woman, but the father was a fool (*durak*); and the third, the opposite was true; and so on. In some it would be comfortable to live, but the conditions would be impossible for Viérotchka; either it was necessary to speak English, but English she does not speak, or they did not want a governess but a nurse; or the people were well enough in their way, but they were themselves poor, and there was no place in their apartment for a governess, where there were already two grown children, two little ones, a maid, and a nurse. But the advertisement continued to appear in the "Police Gazette," and likewise the governess-seekers and Lopukhóf did not lose hope.

In such a manner two weeks passed by. On the fifth day of his hunt, when Lopukhóf had returned from his walk and was lying down on his sofa, Kirsánof said:—

"Dmitri, you are getting to be a bad assistant in my work. You spend all your mornings out, and the larger part of your afternoons and evenings. You must have got a good many lessons to give, haven't you? Can you spare the time to give them just now? I want to give up those that I have; I have saved up forty rubles or so, and that will be enough till I graduate. And you have more than I have—at least a hundred, haven't you?"

"More; a hundred and fifty. I have no pupils, though; I have given them all up but one; I have something that I must attend to. If I accomplish it, you will not be sorry that I am behind you in the work."

"What is it?"

“You see the lesson which I have not given up is in a wretched family, but there is a nice girl there. She wants to be a governess, so as to leave the family, and so I am looking up a place for her.”

“A nice girl?”

“Yes.”

“*Nu*, this is good. Look out.”

And so the conversation ended.

Ekh! Messrs. Kirsánof and Lopukhóf, you are learned men, but you cannot imagine in what respect this is peculiarly good. Let us grant that what you have been talking about is good. Kirsánof did not think of asking whether the girl were pretty, and Lopukhóf did not think to say that she was. Kirsánof did not think to say, “Yes, brother, you must have fallen in love that you are so energetic in looking out for this girl.” Lopukhóf did not think of saying, “And I, brother, am very much interested in her”; or if he thought it, and did not care to say it, he certainly did not think to remark for the sake of turning aside suspicion, “Don’t imagine, Aleksandr, that I am in love.” Don’t you see they both thought that when there was a chance to free a person from a bad situation, it made very little difference whether that person possessed a handsome face or not, even though the person were a young girl; but in such a case there could be no discussion of falling in love or not falling in love. They did not even *think* of thinking of it, and what is best of all, they did not notice that they were doing a noble action.

But, however, doesn’t this prove to the sagacious class of readers (it proves to the majority of literary men, and this is composed of the most sagacious people), doesn’t it prove, I say, that Kirsánof and Lopukhóf were cold and deprived of all æsthetic sense? This was not so very long ago a favorite expression among the æsthetic writers who had lofty ideals. “Æsthetic sense” may be even now fashionable; I don’t know how it is; I have not seen it used for some time. Is it natural that young men, who possess a spark of taste, or a grain of heart, can fail to be interested in the face when speaking of a girl? Of course these people have no artistic feeling; that is, æsthetic sense: and according to the opinion of others, who have learned human nature in circles which are richer in æsthetic feelings than the company of our æsthetic literati, young men in such circumstances will invariably speak about young women from the plastic side. Gentlemen, it used to be so, but not now; it is now true in certain instances, but not with those young men who are alone regarded as the present generation. Gentlemen, this is a peculiar generation.

XI.

“Well, my dear, haven’t you found any situation for me yet?”

“Not yet, Viéra Pavlovna, but don’t despair; we shall find one. Every day I go to see two or three families. It is impossible that a respectable place will be not found at last where you can live.”

“*Akh!* but if you only knew, my friend, how hard, how hard, it is for me to remain here. When there was no near possibility for me to escape from this degradation, from this misery, I kept myself by main force in a deathly apathy. But now, my friend, it is too suffocating in this foul, wretched atmosphere!”

“Patience, patience, Viéra Pavlovna. We shall find something.” Here is an example of their talk for a week.

Tuesday.—“Patience, patience, Viéra Pavlovna, we shall find something.”

“My friend, how much trouble this is causing you! What a waste of time! How can I repay you?”

“You will repay me, my dear, by not getting vexed.” Lopukhóf said this, and became confused. Viérotchka looked at him. No, it was not that he did not finish his sentence; he did not intend to add to it, and he is waiting for her answer.

“What should I be vexed about? What have you done?” Lopukhóf became still more confused, and seemed to be grieved.

“What is the matter, my friend?”

“To think you did not notice it at all!” He spoke so sorrowfully, and then he laughed so gayly. “*Akh, bozhe moi!* how stupid I am, how stupid! Forgive me, my friend.”

“*Nu!* what is the matter?”

“Nothing; you have already given me my reward.”

“*Akh!* what do you mean? What a jester you are! Well, all right, you may call me so.”

On Thursday came the “Trial of Hamlet,” according to Sakson’s Grammar. For several days after that, Marya Alekséyevna takes some little—though not much—rest from her inspection.

Saturday.—After tea, Marya Alekséyevna goes out to count over the clothes which the laundress had brought.

“My dear, I think the matter will be successful.”

“Really? If that is so, *Akh, bozhe moi!* *Akh, bozhe moi!* arrange it as soon as possible! It seems to me that I shall die if this is to go on much longer. When will it be, and how?”

“It will be decided to-morrow. The hope is almost, almost certain.”

“What is it? How is it?”

“Keep calm, my friend; you’ll be noticed. Here you are almost dancing with joy. Marya Alekséyevna will be back after something if you don’t look out.”

“Well, you are a fine fellow! You came in so radiant that *mámenka* looked at you a long time.”

“At any rate, I told her why I was happy; I saw that it was necessary to tell her, and so I said that I have found a splendid place.”

"You horrid, horrid man! here you keep cautioning me, and you have not told me, as yet, a single thing. What is it? Do tell me at last!"

"This morning Kirsánof—you know, my dear, that my chum's name is Kirsánof—"

"I know, you horrid, horrid man, I know! Now, speak quick, without any more nonsense."

"You, yourself, are hindering me, my friend."

"*Akh, bozhe moi!* and all these digressions without ever once coming to the point. I don't know how I could punish you. I will get you down on your knees yet; it cannot be done here. I command you to get down on your knees in your room, as soon as you get home, and I want your Kirsánof to look on, and then send me a note, saying that you were down on your knees. Do you hear what I am going to do with you?"

"Very good; I will get down on my knees; and now I shall hold my peace. After I have undergone my punishment and am forgiven, I will speak."

"I forgive you; only speak, you horrid man!"

"Thank you; you grant forgiveness when you yourself are to blame. You, yourself, have made all the interruptions."

"Viéra Pavlovna, why do you call me so? I thought you were going to call me *my friend*?"

"Yes, I meant it as a reproach, my friend! I am a man easily offended, and very severe!"

"A reproach? How dare you make me reproaches? I do not want to hear you!"

"You don't?"

"Certainly I don't. What is there for me to hear? You have told me everything already,—that the matter will be arranged, that it will be decided to-morrow; you see, my friend, you yourself don't know anything more to-day. What is there to hear? Good by, my dear (*Dō svidánya, moi drüg!*)"

"But listen to me, my friend; my friend, do listen!"

"I am not going to listen; I am going away." She came back. "Speak quick! I will not interrupt you. *Akh, bozhe moi!* if you only knew how happy you have made me! Give me your hand! See how warmly, warmly, I press it!"

"But why are your eyes full of tears?"

"I thank you, I thank you!"

"This morning Kirsánof gave me the address of a lady who made an appointment for me to call on her to-morrow. I am not personally acquainted with her, but I have heard much about her from a mutual friend who acted as go-between. I know her husband though; we have met at our friend's many times. Judging from all this, I am sure that one could get along well in her family; and when she gave her address to her friend, she said that she was certain that we should agree about terms. Consequently, the matter can be looked upon as almost absolutely settled."

"*Akh!* how good it will be! what joy!" murmured Viérotchka. "But I want to have it settled soon, as soon as possible! Will you come from her directly to us?"

"No, my dear; that would rouse suspicions. I never come here except during lesson hours. I'll do this way. I will send a letter to Marya Alekséyevna by mail, saying that I shall not be able to give the lesson on Tuesday, and shall have to postpone it till Wednesday. If the letter says *Wednesday morning*, you will understand that the matter is arranged; if it says *Wednesday evening*, you will know that it has fallen through. But it is almost certain to read *in the morning*. Marya Alekséyevna will tell it to Feódor, and to you and to Pavel Konstantinitch."

"When will the letter get here?"

"In the evening."

“It’s so long! No, I shall not have enough patience! And then what shall I learn from the letter? Only yes, and then I shall have to wait till Wednesday! It is torturing. If it is yes, I shall go and call on the lady as soon as I can. I shall want to know all about it. But how can it be managed? This is the way I’ll do; I’ll be waiting for you on the street when you leave that lady’s.”

“My friend, that would be still more risky than for me to call on you. No! it would be much better for me to call on you!”

“No! perhaps it would be impossible for us to have a word together. At any rate, *mámenka* might become suspicious. No! it would be better as I suggested first. I have such a thick veil that no one would recognize me through it.”

“Well, I admit that your plan seems feasible. Let me think!”

“There’s no time to think! *Mámenka* may be here any minute. Where does the lady live?”

“On Galernaïa Street, near the bridge.”

“What time shall you call on her?”

“She appointed twelve o’clock.”

“At twelve I shall be sitting on the Konno-Gvardeïsky Boulevard, on the last bench, and at the end nearest the bridge. I said that I would wear a thick veil; but here’s a sign for you: I will carry a roll of music in my hand. If I am not there on time you will know that I am detained. But you sit down on that bench and wait. I may be late, but I shall be there without fail. How well I have planned it! How grateful I am to you! How happy I shall be! How is your bride, Dmitri Sergéitch? See, I call you Dmitri Sergéitch instead of *my friend!* How glad, how glad I am!”

Viérotchka ran to the piano, and began to play.

“My dear! What a degradation to art! How ruinous to your taste to give up operas for galops!”

“Certainly, certainly!”

In a few minutes Marya Alekséyevna returned. Dmitri Sergéitch played two-handed “preference” with her. At first he won; then he allowed her to win. He even lost thirty-five kopeks. This was the first time, and it filled her with victorious glory, and when he went away he left her greatly pleased; not so much on account of the money as on account of the victory. There are purely ideal pleasures even for hearts soiled with materialism, and this is proof positive, that a materialistic explanation of life is unsatisfactory.

XII. VIÉROTCHKA'S FIRST DREAM.

And Viérotchka dreamed a dream.

She dreamed that she was locked up in a damp, gloomy cellar, and suddenly the door opened, and Viérotchka found herself in a field. She was running, frolicking, and she thinks: "How is it that I did not die in the cellar? It is because I had never seen the fields before! Had I seen them, I must have died in the cellar." And again she seemed to be running and frolicking. Then she dreamed that she was paralyzed, and she said to herself: "How is it that I have the paralysis? Old men, old women, have the paralysis, but young girls never have it!"

"Oh, yes, they do, very often," an unknown voice seemed to reply, "and very soon you will be well. Let me only touch your hand; you see you are well already; now get up!"

"Who was it that spoke? How relieved I am! All the pain has gone!"

And Viérotchka got up and began to walk, to run, and again she is in the field; again she is running and frolicking, and she thinks: "How could I have endured the paralysis? It was because I was born with paralysis and did not know how to walk and to run! Had I known, I could not have endured it."

And still she keeps on running and frolicking. And here comes a young girl across the field. How strange! her face and her gait, everything about her, keeps changing, changing constantly. Now she is English, French, now she is already German, Polish, and now she has become Russian, again English, again German, again Russian; and how is it that she has only the one face? An English girl does not look like a French girl, a German girl does not look like a Russian; but her face keeps changing, and yet it is the very same face. What a strange person! And the expression of her face is constantly changing: how gentle she is, how angry; now she is melancholy, now she is gay. She is always changing, and she is always kind; how is that? even when she is angry is she always kind? But only see what a beauty she is! no matter how her face changes, with every change she grows more and more beautiful. She approaches Viérotchka.

"Who are you?"

"He used to call me Viéra Pavlovna; but now he always calls me 'My dear [*Moi drüg*].'"

"Ah! so this is you! that Viérotchka who fell in love with me?"

"Yes; I love you very much; but who are you?"

"I am your bridegroom's bride!"

"What bridegroom?"

"I do not know. I do not know my own bridegrooms. They know me; but it is impossible for me to know them, I have so many! You must choose one of them as a bridegroom for yourself,—only from among them, from among my bridegrooms."

"I have already chosen."

"I do not need to know his name, and I do not know them. But only choose from among them, from my bridegrooms. I want my sisters and my bridegrooms to select from amongst each other. Have you been locked up in a cellar? Have you been paralyzed?"

"I have."

“Are you free now?”

“I am.”

“It is I who set you free; it is I who cured you. Remember, that there are a good many not yet freed; many not yet cured. Free them; cure them; will you?”

“I will! But what is your name? I am so anxious to know!”

“I have many names; I have various names. According as it is necessary for any one to call me, an appropriate name I give! You may call me Philanthropy [literally, love for humanity]. This is my real name; not many call me so. But you must call me so.”

And Viérotchka seems to be going about in the city; here is a cellar, in the cellar young girls are locked up. Viérotchka touches the lock, the lock is unfastened. “You are free!” Out they go! Here is a room, in the room young girls are lying stricken with paralysis. “Arise!” They get up, they go out, and here they all are in the field, running and frolicking. *Akh!* how gay! when there are many together, it is far more lively than to be in solitude! *Akh!* how gay!

XIII.

Lopukhóf during these last weeks has had no time to spend with his acquaintances of the medical school. Kirsánof, who has kept up his intercourse with them, has replied, when asked about Lopukhóf, that he has had among other things, some business to attend to; and one of their common friends, as we know, gave him the address of a lady, the lady to whose house Lopukhóf is now going.

“How excellently the matter will be arranged, if all turns out satisfactorily,” thought Lopukhóf on his way to the lady’s house. “In two years, or certainly in two years and a half, I shall get a professorship. Then we shall have something to live on. And meantime, she will be staying quietly at the B.s’, provided only Mrs. B. prove to be the right sort of woman, and there can hardly be a doubt of that.”

In fact, Lopukhóf found in Mrs. B. a clever, kind-hearted woman, without pretence, though from her husband’s position, and from their wealth and connections, she had a right to put on great style. The conditions were favorable, the family circumstances very propitious for Viérotchka. Everything proved to be entirely satisfactory, just as Lopukhóf expected. Mrs. B. also found Lopukhóf’s replies in regard to Viérotchka’s character perfectly satisfactory. The affair was rapidly drawing near a settlement, and after they had talked half an hour, Mrs. B. said, “If your young aunt should consent to my terms, I will ask her to remove to my house, and the sooner, the better for me.”

“She consents; she has authorized me to consent for her. But now that we have settled the matter, I must tell you what would have been wrong for me to tell you before: the young girl is no relation of mine. She is the daughter of a *tchinovnik* at whose house I give lessons. There is no one besides me to whom she can confide her troubles. But I am an absolute stranger to her.”

“I knew it, Monsieur Lopukhóf. You yourself, Professor N.” (naming the acquaintance through whom her address had been obtained), “and your chum, who spoke to him about this matter of yours, know each other to be so honorable that you can speak among yourselves about the friendship one of you has for a young girl, and not compromise the young girl in the eyes of the others. And Professor N., having the same good opinion of me, and knowing that I was looking for a governess, felt that he was in the right to tell me that the young girl was no relation of yours. Don’t blame him for indiscretion; he knows me very well. I also am a person of honor, Monsieur Lopukhóf; and, believe me, I understand who is worthy of respect. I have as much faith in N. as I have in myself; and N. has as much faith in you as he has in himself. But N. did not know her name, and now it seems to me that I may ask it, seeing that we have settled the matter, and to-day or to-morrow she may come into our family.”

“Her name is Viéra Pavlovna Rozalskaïa.”

“Now there is another explanation that I owe you. It may seem strange to you that I, with all my care for my children, should decide to settle this matter with you without having seen the one who will come into such close relations to my children. But I know very well of what sort of people your circle consists. I know that if one of you takes such a friendly interest in a person,

then this person must be a genuine godsend for a mother, who wishes her daughter to grow up into a truly good woman. Therefore, an examination seemed to me an entirely unnecessary piece of indelicacy. I am giving not you, but myself, a compliment!”

“I am very glad now for Mademoiselle Rozalskaïa; her domestic life has been so hard that she felt that she should be comfortable in any sort of a family. But I did not dream of finding such a really excellent career for her as opens for her in your home.”

“Yes; N. told me that she leads a miserable life in her family.”

“Very miserable.”

Lopukhóf began to relate all that was necessary for Mrs. B. to know, so that in conversations with Viérotchka, she might avoid all references that would remind the young girl of her past life. Mrs. B. listened with interest; finally she pressed Lopukhóf’s hand.

“No; that is enough, Monsieur Lopukhóf, or I shall get sentimental, and at my age—and I am almost forty—it would be ridiculous to show that even now I cannot listen with indifference to tales of family tyranny, from which I suffered myself when I was young.”

“Allow me to tell you one thing more. It is not so important for you, and there is probably no need of my telling you this. Yet it is better to tell you. Just now, she is running away from a lover whom her mother is doing her best to make her marry.”

Mrs. B. was lost in thought. Lopukhóf looked at her and also began to appear thoughtful:—

“If I am not mistaken, this circumstance does not seem to you as unimportant as it does to me!”

Mrs. B. seemed utterly absorbed in thought.

“Excuse me,” he continued, seeing that her mind was entirely distracted. “Excuse me, but I see that this troubles you.”

“Yes, it is a very serious matter, Monsieur Lopukhóf. To leave home against the will of her parents; that of course means to bring about a great quarrel. But that, as I told you, was of no consequence. If she were running away merely from their folly and cruelty, the matter could be arranged with them some way or other; if worst came to worst, we could give them some money, and they would be satisfied. That’s nothing. But when such a mother forces a bridegroom on her daughter, it means that the bridegroom is rich, a very profitable investment.”

“Of course,” said Lopukhóf, in a perfectly melancholy tone of voice.

“Of course, Monsieur Lopukhóf, he’s rich; and it is that which troubles me. In such a case the mother is not going to give in so easily. And do you know the law about parents? In matters of this kind they have full control. They will begin a lawsuit, and carry it out to the bitter end.”

Lopukhóf arose.

“And so it remains for me only to ask you to forget all that I have told you.”

“No, wait a moment. Allow me at least to justify myself somewhat before you. *Bozhe moi!* how mean I must seem in your eyes! That which ought to stir up every honorable person to sympathy and protection; that very thing keeps me back. Oh, what pitiable people we are!”

Indeed, it was sad to look at her. She was not putting it on. It was really painful to her. For a long time her words were disjointed, so confused had she become. Then her thoughts began to become logical, but, whether disjointed or logical, they meant nothing to Lopukhóf. Yes, even he was also confused. He was so occupied with the discovery that she had made for him that he could not heed her explanation in regard to the discovery. After he had given her sufficient time to speak out her mind, he said:—

“All that you have said in your own excuse is idle. I was obliged to remain so as not to seem discourteous, lest you should think that I blamed you or were angry. But I must confess that I did not listen to what you said. Oh, if I did not know that you were right! And how good it would be if you were not right! I would tell her that we could not agree about the terms, or that you did not satisfy me! and that would be the end of it; she and I could hope for some other way of escape. But now what can I tell her?”

Mrs. B. shed tears.

“What can I tell her?” repeated Lopukhóf, as he went down stairs. “What will become of her? What will become of her?” he asked himself as he came out from Galernaïa Street upon the Konno-Gvardeisky Boulevard.

Of course Mrs. B. was not right in that absolute sense of the word in which people are right who try to prove to little children that the moon is not to be seized with the hand. It was very possible, nay, even probable, that through her position in society, through her husband’s quite important official connections, if she had seriously desired Viérotchka to live with her, Marya Alekséyevna would not have been able to tear Viérotchka from her hands, without causing serious trouble for herself and her husband, who would have to figure as the official defendants in the law-suit, and this she would have feared. But, nevertheless, Mrs. B. would have to take a good deal of trouble on her shoulders, and would possibly have some disagreeable interviews. It would be necessary in behalf of a stranger to incur obligations to people whose services it would be better to reserve for one’s own affairs. Who is compelled, and what reasonable man would want, to act in a different way from Mrs. B.? We haven’t the slightest right to blame her. Yes, Lopukhóf was not wrong when he despaired about Viérotchka’s escape.

XIV.

Now Viérotchka has been sitting long, long, on the appointed bench, and how often did her heart beat quickly, quickly, when she saw an army cap coming around the corner. "Ah! there he is; my friend!" She jumped up, and ran to meet him.

Maybe he would have regained his courage by the time he had reached the bench; but he was taken unawares, and his face was seen sooner than he anticipated, and so he was caught with a gloomy expression.

"Failure?"

"A failure, my friend."

"But it seemed to be so certain. How did it come to be a failure? "What was the reason, my dear?"

"Let us go home, my friend; I will go with you. We'll talk it over. I will tell you in a few words why it failed: but now let me think; I cannot collect my thoughts yet. We must think up some other plan. Let us not despair; we shall find something."

These last words gave him little hope, but not much.

"Tell me right away; I can't endure to wait. You say, 'Think up some other plan'; then it means that our former plans are impracticable. Can't I be a governess? How poor I am! how unhappy I am!"

"Why deceive you? 'Tis true, you cannot; I wanted to tell you so. But patience, my dear, patience! Be brave. Keep up good heart; whoever keeps up good heart succeeds!"

"*Akh!* my dear, I keep up good heart, but how hard it is!"

They walked for a few moments in silence. What is it? Why, yes, she is carrying something in her hand under her cloak!

"My dear, you are carrying something; here, let me take it."

"No, no, it's not necessary. It isn't heavy; it's nothing."

Again they go in silence. They go a long way.

"And to think I did not go to sleep till two o'clock out of joy, my friend; and when I went to sleep, what a dream I had! It seemed to me as though I were set free from a stifling cellar, as though I were paralyzed and then cured, and ran out into the field, and so many young girls ran out with me, who, like myself, were set free from stifling cellars, were cured of paralysis; and we were so happy, so happy to run about in the open field! The dream has not been realized; and I did so think that I should not have to go home again!"

"My dear, let me carry your bundle for you, since now I know what it is."

Again they walk in silence. Long they walk in perfect silence.

"My dear, you see as that lady and I tallied the matter over, we came to this conclusion: you cannot leave home without Marya Alekséyevna's consent. 'Tis impossible—no, no, take my arm; I am afraid you are ill!"

"No, it's nothing; only it's stifling under this veil." She drew back the veil. "Now it's all right; I feel better."

“How pale she is!—No, my dear, don’t think about what I said. I did not express myself well. We’ll arrange everything all right.”

“How can we arrange things, my love? You say this only so as to console me. Nothing can be done!”

He has nothing to say. Again they walk in silence.

“How pale, how pale she is!—My dear, there is one way.”

“What way, my pet [*milui*]?”

“I will tell you, my dear; but only when you get a little calmer. You will have to decide about it deliberately.”

“Tell me now! I cannot get calm until I know.”

“No! now you are too much excited, my dear. Now you could not decide an important question. In a little while. Soon! Here’s the front door. *Dō svedánya* [good by], my dear. As soon as I see that you would give a deliberate answer, I’ll tell you.”

“When will that be?”

“Day after to-morrow, when I give the next lesson.”

“Too long!”

“I will call on purpose to-morrow.”

“No, sooner than that!”

“This evening.”

“No, I will not let you go! Come in with me now. You say I am not calm; you say I cannot decide. Very well, take dinner with us; you will see that I shall be calm. After dinner *mámenka* takes a nap, and we can talk.”

“But how can I come in? If we come in together, your *mámenka*’s suspicions will be awakened again!”

“Suspicious! what do I care? No, my dear, and for this very reason it would be better for you to come in. We may have been seen, for I walked with my veil up.”

“You are right.”

XV.

Marya Alekséyevna was greatly surprised to see her daughter and Lopukhóf coming in together. She forthwith proceeded to subject them to the keenest inspection.

"I called to tell you, Marya Alekséyevna, that I have an engagement for day after to-morrow evening, and so I am going to give the lesson to-morrow instead. Permit me to sit down. I am very tired and unwell. I should like to rest."

"Why, what's the matter, Dmitri Sergéitch? Indeed, you look very bad!"

("Is it a love-scrape, or did they meet by chance? If it were a love affair, he'd have been gay. Or can they have fallen in love and quarrelled, because she would not give in to his wishes? Then, of course, he'd have been angry; only, if they'd quarrelled, he wouldn't have escorted her. And then, again, she went straight to her room, she didn't look at him, and there was no signs of a quarrel. No, evidently they must have met by chance. But the deuce knows 'em! Got to watch 'em with both eyes.")

"There is nothing special the matter with me, Marya Alekséyevna; but Viéra Pavlova looked rather pale, or at least I thought so."

"What? Viérotchka? She's often so."

"Well, maybe it only seemed so to me. I must confess that my head swims, it is so full of thoughts."

"Why, what's the matter, Dmitri Sergéitch? You ain't had a fallin' out with you sweetheart, have you?"

"No, Marya Alekséyevna; I am content with my sweetheart! It's her parents that I have to quarrel with."

"What do you mean, *bátiushka*? Dmitri Sergéitch, how is it possible to quarrel with her parents? I didn't think that of you, *bátiushka*!"

"It can't be helped, Marya Alekséyevna; it's such a family. They expect a man to do God knows what things beyond his power."

"That's a different thing, Dmitri Sergéitch. You can't satisfy everybody; you've got to set limits, that's a fact. If such is the case, that is, if the quarrel's about money, I can't blame you."

"Allow me to be rude, Marya Alekséyevna; I am so tired that I feel the need of rest in pleasant and estimable society, and such a society I find nowhere except in your house. Permit me to impose myself upon you for dinner to-day, and permit me to give some orders to your Matrióna. It seems to me that Denker's wine-cellar is not very far from here, and his wine is not a God-knows-what kind, but excellent."

Marya Alekséyevna's face, which at the first mention of dinner became black with rage, put off its decided expression when he spoke of Matrióna, and assumed a look of eagerness.

"We will see, *golubchik*; will you contribute something towards the dinner? Denker—of course he must have something good."

But the *golubtchik*, not looking into her face at all, had already taken out his cigar-case, torn off a piece of paper from a letter that had seen long service in it, took out his pencil, and proceeded to write:—

“If I may ask you, Marya Alekséyevna, what kind of wine do you like to drink?”

“I, *bátiushka* Dmitri Sergéitch, must tell you the truth: I know very little about wines, because I scarcely ever drink; it ain’t a woman’s business.”

“It can be easily seen from your face at a glance that you don’t drink. However, be it so, Marya Alekséyevna; even young girls drink *maraschino*; will you permit me to order it?”

“What kind of wine is that Dmitri Sergéitch?”

“Simple; you might almost say it wasn’t wine at all, but only syrup.” He took out a “red note” (ten rubles). “There, I guess that’ll do!” He ran over his order at a glance. “At all events, I’ll make it five rubles more.”

(“Three weeks’ income, a month’s support! But it can’t be done in any other way. It is necessary to give Marya Alekséyevna a good bribe.”)

Marya Alekséyevna’s eyes filled with moisture, and involuntarily the sweetest of smiles spread over her face.

“Have you a confectioner near at hand? I wonder if we could find a walnut *pirog* ready made. According to my taste that’s the very best kind of pie, Marya Alekséyevna; but if we can’t find any, we’ll have to put up with the best we can get.”

He went into the kitchen and sent Matrióna to make the purchases.

“Let’s have a regular picnic to-day, Marya Alekséyevna. I want to drink away my quarrel with those parents. Why shouldn’t we have a picnic, Marya Alekséyevna? I get along first rate with my sweetheart. Shan’t we live well, shan’t we live happily, Marya Alekséyevna?”

“Yes indeed, *bátiushka* Dmitri Sergéitch. That’s the reason [*to-to*]; I see that you are so flush with your money, which I never expected of you because you are a man of solid understanding. Evidently you must have had a little advance from your bride’s dowry, ain’t that so?”

“No, Marya Alekséyevna; but as long as I have money in my pocket, we may as well picnic. What do you mean by the little advance on the dowry? You have to do business in a straightforward way else suspicions’ll be aroused. Besides, it is not high-toned, Marya Alekséyevna.”

“It ain’t high-toned, Dmitri Sergéitch, that’s a fact; it ain’t high-toned. Accordin’ to my idee, one must be high-toned in everything.”

“You are right, Marya Alekséyevna.”

The half or three-quarters of an hour remaining before dinner time passed in the most amiable conversation of this sort, touching on all sorts of noble sentiments. Dmitri Sergéitch, among other things, declared in a transport of confidence that his marriage would soon take place.

“And how is it about Viéra Pavlovna’s marriage?”

Marya Alekséyevna is not able to answer because she is not bringing any pressure upon her daughter. Of course not, but in his opinion Viéra Pavlovna will soon make up her mind to marry; to be sure, she had not told him anything, but he had eyes of his own. “You and I, Marya Alekséyevna, are old sparrows, you know; and we can’t be caught with chaff. Though my years aren’t so very many, still I’m an old sparrow, a tough roll [*kalatch*]. Isn’t that so, Marya Alekséyevna?”

“Yes, that’s so, *bátiushka*, a tough roll, a tough roll!”

In a word, this pleasant, confidential conversation with Marya Alekséyevna had so enlivened Dmitri Sergéitch that he forgot all about his melancholy. He was livelier than Marya Alekséyevna had ever seen him before. (“What a cute rogue he is! a clever rascal [*shelma*]! He must have

got out of his sweetheart [bride] more than one thousand; and prob'ly her folks found out how he was stuffin' his pockets, and when they went for him, I reckon he tol' 'em:—'No, *bátiushka* and *matushka*, I am ready as a son to respect you, but I haven't got any cash, for you.' What a cute rascal, to be sure! It's pleasant to talk with such a man, especially, when finding out that Matrióna has got back you make an excuse to go to your bed-room for a clean handkercher, and peek into the kitchen, and find that she's bought more than twelve rubles' worth of wine. We'll only use a third of it at dinner; and a *pirog* [pie] which must have cost a ruble and a half. *Nu!* as far as the *pirog* goes, you might say 'twas money thrown away. Yet I reckon some o' that'll be left over. It'll be a good thing to treat my cronies with instead of jam. Oh no, it's no loss; it's a gain.")

XVI.

But Viérotchka was sitting in her room.

“Did I do well to make him come in? *Mámenka* looked so sharply! And what an awkward position I have put him in! How can he stay to dinner? *Bozhe moi!* what will become of poor me?

“He says there’s one way. No, my love, there’s no way at all. Yes, there *is* one way, the window; when it becomes absolutely unendurable, I will throw myself out. How foolish I am! *When it becomes unendurable!* How is it now? And when you throw yourself out of the window, how quick, quick you fly, not as though you were falling, but as though you really had wings; that must be very delightful. Only—afterwards you strike against the sidewalk—*akh!* how terribly it must hurt! No, I don’t believe you’d have time to feel it; but—only it must be very hard. But it would be over in a twinkling; and then before you struck—how soft the air is—like a feather cushion—it takes you up so gently, so tenderly. No, it must be good. Yes, but what then! Everybody would be gazing; one’s skull broken, face torn, in blood, in mud. No, if clean sand could only be scattered over the spot; but down there the sand is all filthy. No, if it were white and clean, it would be good; one’s face would not be torn; it would be clean, and not disgust people. And in Paris young girls stifle themselves with coal gas; that’s a good idea, a very good idea: but it is not good to jump out of the window. The other’s a good way, though. How loud they are talking out there! What are they talking about? No, I can’t catch what they are saying. I would leave him a note explaining everything; this is what I told him the other day: ‘This is my birthday.’ How forward I was! How could I have been so? But then I was foolish, and didn’t understand. Yes, how sensible the poor girls are in Paris! Well, can’t I be just as sensible? How strange it will be! They’ll come into the room; they won’t see anything; only there’ll be a smell of gas, a greenish tint to the air; they’ll be frightened. ‘What does this mean? Where is Viérotchka?’ *Mámenka* will scold *pápenka*: ‘What are you standing therefor? Open the window.’ They open the window, and see me sitting at my bureau, my head resting on it, and my face in my hands. ‘Viérotchka, are you suffocated?’ I make no reply. ‘Viérotchka, why don’t you speak? *Akh!* she is suffocated!’ They’ll begin to scream, to weep. *Akh!* how strange it will be! for them to weep, and for *mámenka* to begin to tell how she loved me. Yes, but he will be grieved. Well, I’ll leave him a note. Yes, I’ll think about it, think about it, and do like the poor girls in Paris; if I make up my mind, I shall do it. I’m not afraid! And what is there to be afraid of? It must be so good! But I will wait till he has told me what the plan is that he proposes. But no, there can’t be any; he only said so to console me. Why do people try to offer consolation? There’s no sense in it at all. Can there be any consolation when there’s no help? He is sensible, and yet he does just the same. What did he say so for? There’s no sense in it. But what’s he talking about? He seems to feel happy. How merry his voice sounds! Has he really thought of some plan? No, there can’t be any way whatever. But if he had not thought of something, would he be so happy? What can he have thought of?”

XVII.

“Viérotchka, come to dinner!” shouted Marya Alekséyevna. In fact Pavel Konstantinuitch had returned; the *pirog* was all ready long ago; it was not the *pirog* from the confectioner’s, but one that Matrióna had made out of the stuffed beef that they had the day before.

“Marya Alekséyevna, do you ever take a glass of *vodka* before dinner? It’s very healthful, especially this kind, made out of bitter oranges; I tell you this as a medical man. Please try it; yes, yes, you must try it! without fail; I, as a doctor, prescribe it for you.”

“S’pose I’ll have to hearken a doctor; so I’ll try half a glass of it.”

“No, Marya Alekséyevna; half a glass won’t do you any good.”

“And how about yourself, Dmitri Sergéitch?”

“I’m growing old, Marya Alekséyevna; I’ve become steady. I swore off.”

“Well, it does kinder warm one through.”

“That’s where the good comes in, Marya Alekséyevna; it gives you new warmth.”

(“How gay he is! Is there really something in prospect? And how on earth did he manage to become so friendly with her? And he does not even look at me. *Akh!* how shrewd he is!”)

They sat down to table.

“Now, here we must drink a health to Pavel Konstantinuitch. Let us drink it with this. Ale—it’s just the same thing as beer, not any stronger than beer. Try it, Marya Alekséyevna.”

“If, as you say, it’s beer, why, there’s no reason not to drink beer.”

(“*Gospodi* (Heavens)! what a lot of bottles! *Akh!* how silly I am. That’s the way she got to be so friendly!”)

(“What a cunning rascal he is! He himself don’t drink. He only touches his ale with his lips! But what excellent ale! It tastes better nor *kvas*, and it’s strong; its got a very good strength. When I get her married off to Mishka, I’ll give up *vodka* and drink nothing but ale. *Nu!* this fellow’ll never loose his head in drink! If he’d only give in to it, the villain! But then, it’s for my advantage! I reckon if he wanted to drink tea, he’d drink enough!) You’d ought to drink some yourself, Dmitri Sergéitch.”

“Eh! in my day we used to drink a good deal, Marya Alekséyevna. I drank enough to last a long time. When I had no luck, and no money, I used to get drunk; but now I have enough to do, and enough money, I don’t need wine; I feel gay enough without it.”

And so the entire dinner passed off. They bring on the confectioner’s *pirog*.

“My dear Matrióna Stepanóvna, what goes well with this?”

“I’ll bring it right in, Dmitri Sergéitch;” and Matrióna hurries back with a bottle of champagne.

“Viéra Pavlovna, you and I have not taken anything yet; now let us drink ‘to the health of my bride and your bridegroom!’”

“What does he mean? Does he really mean that?” thinks Viérotchka.

“May God grant your bride and Viérotchka’s bridegroom all happiness,” says Marya Alekséyevna; “and to us old folks may He grant to see Viérotchka’s wedding right soon!”

“Never you fear; you won’t have long to wait, Marya Alekséyevna.—Isn’t that so, Viéra Pavlovna? *Da!*”

“Does he really mean what he says?” thinks Viérotchka.

“Certainly [*da!*] Viéra Pavlovna; of course she means to marry him! Just say ‘yes.’”

“Yes,” says Viérotchka.

“That’s right, Viéra Pavlovna; why should you keep your *mámenka* waiting and doubting? ‘Yes,’ and that settles it. And now we must drink another toast to Viéra Pavlovna’s approaching wedding. Drink it, Viéra Pavlovna; don’t be afraid! it will be all right. Let us clink glasses ‘to your approaching nuptials!’”

They clink glasses.

“God grant it! God grant it! [*daï Bog! daï Bog!*] Thank you, Viérotchka; you make happy, Viérotchka, in my old age,” says Marya Alekséyevna, wiping away her tears. The English ale and the maraschino had brought her into a sentimental state of mind.

“*Daï Bog! daï Bog!*” echoed Pavel Konstantinuitch.

“How pleased we are with you, Dmitri Sergéitch,” says Marya Alekséyevna after dinner was over; “yes, indeed we are pleased. You have been our guest and yet you have treated us! Well, we can well say that you have given us a holiday’s entertainment!” Her eyes had a far pleasanter expression than the impudent one that they generally wore.

Not everything results as cleverly as it is cleverly planned. Lopukhóf had not dared to hope for such a result when he bought the wine; he only intended to give Marya Alekséyevna a bribe, so that he might not lose her good will by having invited himself to stay to dinner. Would she have drunk so much before a stranger, even though they had common sympathies, unless she trusted him? But is there any one whom she would trust! And in fact she herself had not intended to yield so soon to the temptation. She meant to postpone her main share in the enjoyment of the good things till after tea. But every human being has his weakness; she could have withstood the *vodka* and other familiar drinks, but ale and other attractions of the sort led her astray through inexperience.

The dinner passed off in very formal and baronial style, and therefore Marya Alekséyevna ordered Matrióna to set on the *samovar*, as is customary after baronial dinners. But only she herself and Lopukhóf availed themselves of this luxury. Viérotchka declared that she didn’t want any tea, and she went right to her room. Pavel Konstantinuitch, like an ignorant boor, went off to take his nap, as he always did after dinner. Dmitri Sergéitch drank deliberately, and when he had finished one cup, he asked for another. Here Marya Alekséyevna began to feel a bit queer; she excused herself by saying that she had not been well since early morning; the guest begged her not to stand on ceremony and she left him to himself. He drank a second cup and a third, and took a nap in his chair; must have dozed some time, “like our golden one [*zoloto*],” as Matrióna expressed; and the golden one was already snoring. It must have been her snoring that wakened Dmitri Sergéitch, after Matrióna went into the kitchen for good and all, taking with her the *samovar* and the cups.

XVIII.

“Forgive me, Viéra Pavlovna,” said Lopukhóf, coming into her room. How gently he speaks, and his voice trembles; but at dinner he spoke loud, and he did not call her *my dear*, but *Viéra Pavlovna*. “Forgive me for having been impertinent. You know what I said: yes, a husband and wife cannot be separated. Then you are free.”

He took her hand and kissed it.

“My dearest, you saw that I wept when you came in; it was out of joy.”

Lopukhóf kissed her hand; many times he kissed her hand.

“Here, my dearest, you are freeing me from the cellar; how clever and kind you are. How did you happen to think about it?”

“It was when we first danced together, that I thought about it.”

“My dearest, I thought then that you were kind. You are giving me liberty, my dearest. Now I am ready to suffer, now I know that I am leaving the cellar; now it will not be so suffocating for me, now I know that I am already leaving it; but how shall I leave it, my dearest?”

“This is the way, Viérotchka. It is now the end of April. At the beginning of July my work at the medical school will be over. I must graduate, so that we can have the means to live, and then you shall leave your cellar. Endure it only three months, or even less; you shall get out. I shall have the position of surgeon. The salary is not over large; but no matter, I shall have some practice; as much as will be necessary, and we shall get along.”

“*Akh!* my dearest, we shall need but very little. But I do not want it to be so; I do not want to live at your expense. You see I am earning something now by giving lessons; but I shall lose them then, for *mámenka* will tell everybody that I am an abomination. But I shall find other pupils. I shall begin to live. Now isn't that the right way? Don't you see that I mustn't live at your expense?”

“Who gave you that idea, my dearest friend, Viérotchka?”

“*Akh!* and now he is asking me who gave me that idea. Why, weren't you yourself always saying this very thing? And in your books—fully half of them say so!”

“In the books? Did I say so? When was it, Viérotchka?”

“*Akh!* when was it indeed! and who told me that money lay at the root of all things? Who told me that, Dmitri Sergéitch?”

“Well, what of that?”

“And you think that I am such a foolish young girl that I cannot draw a conclusion from premises, to use the words of your books?”

“Well, what conclusions? My dearest friend, Viérotchka, you are talking God-knows-what nonsense.”

“*Akh!* smarty! he wants to be a despot; he wants me to become his slave! no indeed, this cannot be. Dmitri Sergéitch, do you understand?”

“Then you tell me, and I shall understand.”

“Money lies at the root of all things, you say, Dmitri Sergéitch; whoever has the money has the might and the right, say your books; consequently, so long as a woman lives at her husband’s expense, she will be dependent upon him; isn’t that so, Dmitri Sergéitch? You supposed that I did not understand it; that I was going to be your slave. No, Dmitri Sergéitch, I am not going to allow you to be a despot over me! You want to be a benevolent, kind despot, but I will not allow it; but I do not want it to be so, Dmitri Sergéitch! Now, my *milenki* [darling], how else can we live? You will cut off people’s hands and legs, you will make them drink miserable mixtures, and I will give piano-lessons. And how else should we live?”

“That’s right, that’s right. Let every one preserve his independence from everybody with all his might, no matter how he loves him, how he trusts him! Whether you will carry out what you propose or not, I do not know; but it makes very little difference: whoever makes up his mind to do a thing of this sort has already built his fort; he already feels that he can get along by himself; that he can refuse the help of others, if necessary, and this feeling is almost enough of itself. What queer people we are, Viérotchka! You say, ‘I do not want to live at your expense,’ and I am praising you for it! Who else says such things, Viérotchka?”

“No matter if we are queer, my *milenki*; what do we care? We shall live according to our own style; it is better for us. How else should we live, *milenki*?”

“Viéra Pavlovna, I have proposed to you my ideas about one side of our life; you have condescended to overthrow them altogether with your plan. You have called me a tyrant and a slave-holder; now be kind enough to think yourself how the other parts of our relations shall be arranged. I count it idle to give you the benefit of my thoughts, lest they should be destroyed by you in the same way. My friend, Viérotchka, tell me yourself how we ought to live; in all probability, there will be nothing left for me to say but this, ‘My dear [*móya milia*], how very wise your ideas are!’”

“What is that? Do you mean to give me a compliment? You want to be very polite; but I know too well how people flatter so as to reign under a mask of humility. I beg of you to speak more simply hereafter. My dear [*milui moi*], you are praising me to death. I am ashamed, my dear; don’t praise me, lest I become too proud.”

“Very good, Viéra Pavlovna; I will begin to say rough things to you if you like that better. There is so little femininity in your nature, Viéra Pavlovna, that most likely you have nothing but men’s thoughts.”

“*Akh!* my dearest, what does that word ‘femininity’ mean? I understand that a woman speaks in a contralto voice,—a man, in a baritone; but what of that? Is it worth while to bother about our contralto voices? Is it worth while to ask us about such things? Why do people keep telling us that it is our duty to remain feminine? Isn’t it a piece of nonsense, dear?”

“It is nonsense, Viérotchka, and a very great piece of triviality.”

“So, then, my dear, I shall not bother myself about femininity; now listen, Dmitri Sergéitch, I am going to express in absolutely masculine fashion the way that I think we ought to live. We shall be friends; only I wish to be your principal friend. *Akh!* I have never told you how I dislike this dear Kirsánof of yours!”

“You must not, Viérotchka; he is a very fine man!”

“But I hate him! I shall forbid your seeing him!”

“That is a fine beginning! She is so afraid of my despotism that she wants to make a doll of her husband. And how can I help seeing him when we live together?”

“You are always sitting together like lovers!”

"Of course. At breakfast and at dinner. When one's hands are always occupied, it is hard to use them like lovers' hands."

"And you are always inseparable!"

"Most likely. He is in his room and I in mine; that means almost inseparable."

"And if that is so, why shouldn't you stop seeing him altogether?"

"Well [*da*], we are friends; sometimes we want to talk, and we talk, and so far we haven't been burdensome to each other."

"You are always sitting together, hugging and disputing. I hate him."

"What makes you think so, Viérotchka? We have never quarrelled. We live almost separately; we are friends, to be sure; but what of that?"

"*Akh!* my dearest, how I deceived you, how cleverly I deceived you. You did not want to tell me how we should live together, and yet you have told me everything! How I deceived you! Listen: this is the way we should live according to your idea. In the first place, we shall have two rooms, yours and mine, and then a third room where we shall drink tea, take dinner, receive guests who come to call on both of us! and not on you alone, and not on me alone. In the second place, I must not dare to enter your room lest I bother you. You see Kirsánof does not dare to interrupt you, and so you do not quarrel with him. And it will be the same with mine. That is the second. Now there is a third! *Akh!* my dearest, I forget to ask you about it. Does Kirsánof interfere with your affairs, or you with his? Have you a right to ask each other about anything?"

"*Eh!* now I see why you mention Kirsánof; I shall not tell you!"

"No! but I dislike him for all this; and you need not tell me, for it's not necessary. I myself know. You have no right to ask each other about anything. And so, in the third place, I shall have no right to ask you about anything, my dear. If it is necessary for you to tell me about any of your affairs, you will tell me yourself, and *vice versa*. Here are three rules. What more more is there?"

"Viérotchka, your second rule demands explanations. We shall see each other at tea or dinner in our neutral room. Now imagine such an occasion as this: We have drunk our tea in the morning, I am sitting in my room, and do not dare to show my nose in yours; consequently, I cannot see you till dinner time; isn't that so?"

"Of course."

"Excellent! An acquaintance of mine comes and says, that at two o'clock another acquaintance will call on me, but it happens my business calls me away at one. May I ask you to tell that acquaintance who is coming at two the proper answer? may I ask you whether you intend to remain at home?"

"Of course you may. Whether I will undertake it is another question! If I refuse, you have no right to claim it of me; you have no right to even ask why I refuse. But to ask whether I will consent to do you that little service—you shall have that right."

"Excellent! But at breakfast I did not know that he was coming, and I shall not dare to enter your room; how then can I ask the question?"

"*O bozhe!* how simple he is! a little child! Just listen to him! How he misunderstands me! This is the way you must do, Dmitri Sergéitch. You shall enter the neutral room and say, 'Viéra Pavlovna!' I shall answer from my room, 'What do you want, Dmitri Sergéitch.' You will reply, 'I am going out. In my absence Mr. A. will call (of course you will give me your friend's name); I have some news to tell him; may I ask you, Viéra Pavlovna, to tell him that?' If I answer 'no' our conversation is at an end; but if I say 'yes' I shall come out into the neutral room, and you

shall tell me what you want me to tell your friend. Now, my dear little child, you know, don't you, how it will be necessary to act?"

"Yes, my dear Viérotchka, jesting aside, it is much better to live in the way that you propose. Only, who in the world put such ideas into your head? I know them, and I remember where I have read of such things; but such books never come into your hands. In the books which I let you have there were no such ideas. Did you hear them? from whom? I was almost the first person whom you ever met from among respectable people."

"*Akh!* my dear, is it so very hard to think out such things? I have seen family life,—I am not speaking about my family; my family is so peculiar,—but I have friends, and I have been in their homes. *Bozhe moi!* what disagreeable scenes between husbands and wives; you cannot imagine them, my dear!"

"*Nu!* I have no trouble in imagining them, Viérotchka."

"Do you know how it seems to me, my dear? People ought not to live the way they do: always together, always together! They ought not to see each other except on business, or when they come together to rest or have a good time. I am always looking and thinking, why is everybody so polite to strangers? Why do all people try to appear better than they are in their own families? And in fact, before strangers they are better. Why is it? Why do they treat their own people worse than they do strangers, though they love them more? Do you know, my dear, that there is one favor that I want to ask of you,—to treat me as you have always treated me. This has not hindered you from loving me; after all, you and I have been nearer to each other than all the rest. How have you always acted towards me? Have you ever answered rudely? have you ever spoken unkindly? Never! People ask how it is possible to be rude to a woman or a girl who is a stranger; how is it possible to speak harshly to her? So far, so good, my dear; now I am your bride; I am going to be your wife, but you must always treat me as they say it is right to treat a stranger: this, my dear, seems to be better than all else for preserving harmony, for preserving love. So, my dear!"

"I don't know what to think of you, Viérotchka. This is not the first time that you have surprised me."

"My dear [*milenki moi*], you want to flatter me to death. No, my friend, it is not as difficult to understand as it may seem to you. Such thoughts are not peculiar to me alone, my dear; they are held by a good many girls and young women, even such simpletons as I am. Only it is impossible for them to tell their bridegrooms or their husbands what they think; they know that if they did, it would be said that they were immoral. I fell in love with you, my dear, because you don't think so. Do you know when I began to love you? It was when we talked together the first time, my birthday; when you said that women were poor, and to be pitied: it was then that I fell in love with you."

"And when did I fall in love with you? That very same day? Do you suppose it was on that very same day when I told you that?"

"How strange you are, dearest [*milenki*]! You said that I couldn't guess; but if I should guess, you would begin to praise me again."

"But try to guess for all that!"

"Well, of course it was when I asked whether it was not possible to arrange things so that all people could live comfortably."

"I must kiss your hand again in payment for that, Viérotchka."

"That'll do, my dear; I do not like the habit of kissing women's hands."

“Why not, Viérotchka?”

“*Akh!* my dear, you yourself know why. What is the good of asking me? Don’t ask such questions, my *mílenki!*”

“Yes, my friend, that is true; one should not ask such questions: it is wrong. I’ll ask you only when I do not really know what you mean; and you meant that nobody’s hand should be kissed.”

Viérotchka laughed heartily.

“Now I forgive you, because I have succeeded in laughing at you. You see, you wanted to examine me, and you yourself did not know the principal reason why it is not well. Nobody’s hands should be kissed; that’s true: but that was not what I was talking about; not the general rule, but only about the impropriety of a man kissing a woman’s hand. This, my dear, ought to be very offensive to a woman; it shows that she is not looked upon as an equal. Women think that a man cannot lower self-respect before a woman; that she is already so much lower than he is, that no matter how much he lowers himself before her, still he does not come down to her level, but is far higher than she is. But you do not think this way, my dear; why, then should you kiss my hand. But listen to what I think, my *mílenki*, as though we had never been bridegroom and bride.”

“Yes, that is true, Viérotchka; it looks very little like it. But what are we then?”

“God knows what we are, my *mílenki*; or rather it’s this way: as though we had been married, long, long ago.”

“That’s so, my dear, it is true; we are old friends, nothing has changed.”

“Only one thing has changed, my *mílenki*: that now I know that I am coming out from the cellar to enjoy freedom.”

XIX.

Thus they talked,—rather a strange conversation for the first one after their engagement,—and they pressed each other's hands, and Lopukhóf went home by himself, and Viérotchka locked the door after him, because Matrióna remained sitting longer than usual in the dining-room, hoping that her "golden one" would snore for a long time to come; and, in fact, her golden one did snore for a long time to come.

When Lopukhóf reached home about seven o'clock he tried to apply himself to work, but he could not collect his thoughts. His mind was occupied not with his work, but he was constantly occupied with the same visions that came to him during the lone walk from the Semyonovsky bridge to the Vuiborgsky ward: naturally with visions of love. Certainly with such visions, but yet not entirely with love and not entirely with visions. The life of a man without means has its prosaic interests, and it was about them that Lopukhóf was also thinking: that is to be taken for granted. He is a materialist, and therefore he thinks only about his interests, and in point of fact, he was all the time thinking about his own interests. Instead of lofty, poetical, and plastic imaginations, such love imaginations as are proper for a coarse materialist occupied his time.

"A sacrifice—, it will be almost impossible to get this out of her head, and this is bad. When you think that you are specially indebted to a person, your relations to this person are apt to be somewhat strained, and she may find this out. Friends may explain to her what a career was before me; and even if friends do not explain this to her, she will find it out for herself. She will say, 'My dear, here you have given up for my sake the career which you anticipated.' Well, I don't mean money, for neither my friends nor she herself will think that I care about that. Well, it's a good thing that she will not say to herself, 'He remained for my sake in poverty when otherwise he might have been rich.' This she will not think; but she may learn that I longed for scientific fame, and that I might have won it. But she will find something to worry about: '*Akh!* what a sacrifice he made for my sake!' And I never thought of making a sacrifice; I was never so foolish as to make sacrifices, and I hope I never shall be. I have done what was for my best good. I am not a man to offer sacrifices; and there are no such men in existence. It is a false term; a sacrifice is equivalent to such nonsense as 'top-boots with soft-boiled eggs!' One acts in the way that's most agreeable; now just go ahead and preach this. It is accepted in theory, but when the hard fact comes before a person, he is humiliated. 'You,' he says, 'are my benefactor,' and already the blade has shown itself. 'You,' he says, 'have rescued me from the cellar. How kind you are to me!' Why should I have bothered to set you free, if I myself had not liked to do it? Is it I who set you free, think you? Do you think that I should take all this trouble, unless it had afforded me myself some satisfaction? Maybe I have set myself free; of course. I have. I myself want to live, want to love; do you understand? I am doing everything for myself. Now, how can I manage so as not to arouse this pernicious feeling of gratefulness which would be so trying to her? Well, we'll manage it somehow. She is sensible, and will understand that it is a mere bagatelle. Of course, I did not intend to act this way; I intended to act otherwise. I thought that if she succeeded in leaving her family, we would postpone the thing about two years. In

the meantime, I should have succeeded in getting a professorship; my finances would, by that time, have been satisfactory: but it has proved to be impossible. Well, what loss has it been to me? Did I have myself in view when it seemed to me that my money matters must be in order beforehand? What does a man need? A man does not need anything. If he has boots, if he is not out at elbows, if he has *shchi* [cabbage soup], if he has a warm room, what more does he want? And all this I have; consequently, what loss shall I have? But for a young and pretty woman that is not enough!

“She must have pleasures; she must succeed in society; and for this there will not be money enough. Of course she will not think that she is deprived of these things; she is a sensible, virtuous girl. She will say to herself: ‘These things are trifles; it’s all nonsense, and I despise them.’ And she will despise them. But does it help when a person does not know what he is deprived of, or is even assured that he is not in need of anything. It is an illusion, a fancy. Nature is deadened by reason, circumstances, pride, and is silent, and does not speak aloud about itself to the understanding; and yet while it is silent, it works and undermines life. A young woman, especially a pretty young woman, must not live in that way; it is not agreeable to be dressed worse than others, and to be prevented from shining by being scrimped in means. I am sorry for you, my poor little girl; I thought that something better would be arranged for you. But what do I care? It is my gain. It is a question whether she would consent to marry me two years hence, and now she does.”

“Dmitri, come and drink your tea!”

“I am coming.”

Lopukhóf went into Kirsánof’s room, and on the way he had time to think: “And how true it is that I am always on the first floor! I began with self and ended with self. And why did I begin by calling it a sacrifice? What nonsense! as though I gave up my scientific reputation! as though I gave up my professorship! Is it not all the same? I shall work in the same way; I shall get a professorship just the same, and likewise I shall serve the cause of medicine. It is pleasant to a man who is a theorist to observe how egotism plays with his ideas when he comes to put them into practice.”

I intend to forewarn the reader about all things, and therefore I shall tell him not to suppose that this monologue spoken by Lopukhóf contains a mysterious hint on the part of the author as to some important motive in the further development of the relations between Lopukhóf and Viéra Pavlovna. Viéra Pavlovna’s life will not be undermined by being deprived of the means of shining in society and of dressing expensively; and her relations to Lopukhóf will not be demoralized by a “pernicious feeling of gratefulness.” I am not one of those artists in whose every word is hidden some kind of a spring. I am only relating what people have done and thought. If any kind of an action, conversation, monologue, is necessary for the characterizing of a person or a situation, I relate it, even though it may respond with no results in the further development of my story.

“Now, Aleksandr, you must not complain because I am behind you in our work. I shall be ahead of you.”

“Why? Are you through with that young woman’s affair?”

“I am.”

“Is she going to be a governess at the B.s’?”

“No, she is not going to be a governess. It has been arranged otherwise. She will now be able for a while to live a tolerable life in her own family.”

“Well, that’s good. It is pretty tough to be a governess. And now, brother, I am done with the optic nerve and I am going to take up the next pair, and how far have you got along?”

“I shall have to finish the work at—.” And here came a series of anatomical and physiological terms.

XX.

“It is now the twenty-eighth of April; he said that he should be through by the first of July. Let us say the tenth; but that is not the first. Well, we can take the tenth; or, so as to get nearer, I’ll suppose it’s the fifteenth. No, I’ll take the tenth, after all. Now, how many days are left? To-day should not be counted; there are only five hours of it left. There are two days more in April; May, thirty-one, and two make thirty-three; June, thirty, and thirty-three makes sixty-three; in July ten days; altogether it makes seventy-three. Is that much? Only seventy-three days, and then—freedom! I shall get out of this cellar. *Akh!* how happy I am! My *milenki!* I how cleverly he thought it all out! How happy I am!”

This was on Sunday evening. On Monday came a lesson given instead of Tuesday.

“My dear, my beloved!¹ how glad I am to be with you, if only for a minute! Do you know how many days there are left for me to be in this cellar? When will you be done? Will you be done by the tenth of July?”

“Yes, Viérotchka.”

“Then I shall have to sit in this cellar only seventy-two days and this evening. One day I have marked off already. See I have made a little calendar just as boarding-school girls and boys do, and I cross off the days. How delightful it is to cross them off!”

“My dear little Viérotchka, my dear!² Indeed, you have not long to worry along here; two months and a half will quickly pass, and you will be free.”

“*Akh!* how delightful it will be! Only just at present, my dearest,³ don’t always talk with me, and don’t look at me; and we must not play on the piano every time you come, either. And I shall not come out of my room every time that you come here; no, I shall not have enough strength of mind for that. I shall come out always, if only for one minute; and I shall look at you so coldly; not fondly at all. And now I am going right away to my room. Good by, my dear.⁴ When?”

“Thursday.”

“Three days; how long! But then there will be only sixty-eight days left.”

“Count less; about the seventh you will be able to get away from here.”

“The seventh? Then it is now only sixty-eight days. How happy you have made me! Good by, my dear.”

Thursday.—“My dearest,⁵ there are only sixty-six days to stay here.”

“Yes, Viérotchka; the time flies fast.” “Fast? No, my dear. *Akh!* how long the days seem! Sometimes it seemed to me as though a whole month had dragged along while these three days were passing. Good by, my dearest,⁶ we must not talk long; aren’t we shrewd? yes? Good by.

¹ *Drūg moi, milenki moi.*

² *Milenkaia moya.*

³ *Moï milenki.*

⁴ *Dō svidánya, moï milui.*

⁵ *Moï milenki.*

⁶ *Dō svidánya, moï milenki.*

Akh! only sixty-six remain for me to sit in the cellar.—Hm! hm! it is not so noticeable, of course; when one is at work, time flies. And then I am not in a cellar. Hm! hm! *da!*”

Saturday.—”*Akh!* my dearest,⁷ only sixty-four days are left. *Akh!* how gloomy it is here! These two days have seemed longer than those three days. *Akh!* how gloomy! How miserable it is here; if you only realized it, my dear.⁸ Good by, my dear, my sweetheart,⁹ till Tuesday; and these three days will seem longer than the last five. Good by, my dear.—Hm! hm! *da!* hm! her eyes look badly. She does not like to weep. This is not well. Hm! *da!*”

Tuesday.—”*Akh!* my dearest,¹⁰ I gave up counting the days. They don’t pass,—they don’t pass at all.”

“Viérotchka, my little friend, I have a favor to ask of you. We must have a nice little talk together. You are anxiously longing for freedom. Well, give yourself a little freedom; we must have a talk together.”

“Yes, we must, *moï mílenki*, we must.”

“Then I will ask you how this suits you. What time will it be most convenient for you tomorrow; it does not make the least difference what time, only tell me; be again on that bench of the Konno-Gvardiesky Boulevard. Will you?”

“I will be there, *moï mílenki*, without fail. At eleven o’clock; is that right?”

“Very well; thank you, little friend.”

“Good by, my dearest.¹¹ *Akh!* how glad I am that you have thought about it! How was it that I, myself, foolish little thing that I am, did not think about it? Good by. We will talk; at all events, I shall breathe the fresh air. Good by, *mílenki*. At eleven o’clock, without fail.”

Friday.—“Viérotchka, where are you going?”

“I, *mámenka?*”

Viérotchka blushed.

“To the Nevsky Prospekt, *mámenka.*”

“Then I am going with you, Viérotchka; I have an errand at the Gostinui Dvor. What did you put on such a dress as that for, Viérotchka, when you say you are going to the Nevsky. You ought to put on a better one when you are going to the Nevsky; folks’ll see you.”

“I like this dress. Just wait one second, *mámenka*; I want to get just one thing out of my room.”

They start; they go. They reached the Gostinui Dvor. They were going along the block that runs parallel with Sadovaïa Street; they are not far from the Nevsky corner, and here is Ruzanof’s shop.

“*Mámenka*, I have two words to tell you.”

“What is the matter with you, Viérotchka?”

“Good by, *mámenka*. I don’t know whether we shall meet again soon. If you don’t get angry, it’ll be to-morrow.”

“What is it, Viérotchka? I cannot understand it, somehow?”

“Good by, *mámenka*; I am going to my husband. Dmitri Sergéitch and I were married three days ago. Drive to Karavannaïa Street, Izvoshchik.”

⁷ *Moï mílenki.*

⁸ *Mílenki moi.*

⁹ *Dō svidánya, moï mílui, golubtchik moi.*

¹⁰ *Moï mílenki.*

¹¹ *Dō svidánya, moï mílenki.*

“A quarter, lady.”

“All right; only be quick about it. He will call upon you this evening, *mámenka*; and don’t get angry with me, *mámenka*.”

These words hardly reached Marya Alekséyevna’s ears.

“Don’t drive to Karavannaia Street; I only said so as to get away from that lady as quickly as I could. Go to the left¹² down Nevsky. I must go much further than Karavannaia Street, to the Vasilyevsky Island, the fifth block behind the Middle Prospekt. Drive fast; I will give you a good fee.”

“*Akh!* lady, you were pleased to fool me. You’ll have to give me half a ruble.”

“If you drive fast.”

¹² *Po lyévo.*

XXI.

The wedding had been managed in simple, and yet far from common fashion.

Two days after the conversation which resulted in their engagement, Viérotchka was delighted at her approaching freedom. On the third day the “cellar,” as she called it, seemed twice as intolerable as before; on the fourth day she wept, which was contrary to her liking, but she did not weep much; on the fifth day she wept more; on the sixth day she did not weep at all, but she could not sleep from sorrow.

Lopukhóf looked on, then he spoke the monologue beginning “Hm! hm!” He looked a second time and spoke the monologue “Hm! hm! *da*, hm!” At the first monologue he had a dim suggestion of an idea, but he was not sure what it was; at the second monologue he saw plainly in his mind what he imagined at the first. “It does not do to offer a person freedom and then leave him in prison.” After that he thought steadily for two hours,—an hour and a half on his way from Semyonovsky bridge to Vuiborgsky, and half an hour on his sofa. The first quarter of an hour he thought without wrinkling his forehead; the remaining hour and three quarters he wrinkled his forehead; at the end of the two hours he struck his forehead, and using worse words than Gogol’s postmaster Telyatin (the calf), looked at his watch, and saying, “Ten o’clock, yes, there is time yet” left the room.

During the first quarter of an hour, when his brow was smooth, this was what he thought, “It’s *all* nonsense; why should I graduate? I shall not be ruined if I don’t get a diploma, and it is not necessary. By lessons and translations I shall not make less; I shall make even more than if I had become a doctor; *bagatelles!*”

Consequently there was no need of wrinkling his brow; to tell the truth, the task did not appear to be of a head-splitting nature, partly because that from the first lesson he had anticipated something in the nature of his present resolution. He now perceived this. And if any one had reminded him of his arguments that began with the theme ‘sacrifice’ and ended with the thought of fine dresses, one might have proved to him that something in the nature of these circumstances was anticipated from that very time, because otherwise there would be no sense in the words “to renounce my scientific career.” At that time it seemed to him that he was not going to renounce it, but instinct was already saying, “Renounce it; there will be no postponement!” And if any one had proved to Lopukhóf, as to a practical thinker, that there was no ground then for his renunciation, he would have triumphed as a theoretical man, and would have said: “Now here is a new example for you of how egotism rules our thoughts (for I ought to have seen, but I did not see, for I was trying to look in another direction), and rules our actions; for why did I make the girl stay in her ‘cellar’ a week longer, when the matter ought to have been foreseen and provided for long ago?”

But he remembered nothing of that kind, and it did not occur to him because he had to wrinkle his forehead, and while wrinkling it to think for an hour and three-quarters on the question, “Who will marry us?” and there was only one answer all the time, “There is no one to marry us.” But suddenly in place of the answer, “No one to marry us,” the name of Mertsálof came into his

head; then it was that he struck himself on the forehead and swore with good reason. "How is it possible that I did not think of Mertsálof at the very beginning?" And to a certain degree he was wrong in his wonder; he was not accustomed to think of Mertsálof as of a man who marries.

In the medical school there are a good many people of all kinds; there are among them some seminarists; these men have acquaintances in the theological seminary, and through them Lopukhóf had also made acquaintances there. One of the students whom he knew at the theological seminary—not an intimate, but a friend—had graduated a year ago and had become a priest, and was living in a certain building with endless corridors on the Vasilyevsky Island. To him Lopukhóf went, and as it was an extra occasion and a late hour, he took an *izvoshchik*.

Mertsálof was sitting alone in his room, and was reading some new book—possibly by Louis XIV., or some one else of the same dynasty.

"Such and such is the state of things, Alekséi Petróvitch: I know that it is a very serious risk for you to undertake; it is right enough if we get reconciled with the parents, but suppose they begin a law-suit? There may be some trouble for you, and there probably will be; but—"

Lopukhóf could not find in his mind anything to attach to his "but," for how in the world can you persuade a man to put his neck for your sake into a noose?

Mertsálof was also in a quandary, and tried hard to find a "but" which would authorize him to run such a risk, and he had no better success in getting beyond the "but."

"How can we arrange this matter? I should certainly like to. What you are doing now, I did a year ago, and I gave up my liberty just as you are going to do! I have some scruples, but I must help you out of it. Yet when one has a wife, it is rather dangerous to go ahead without precaution."

"How are you? good evening, Alósha: all my people send their best regards to you. How are you, Lopukhóf; we haven't seen you for a long time. What is this that you are speaking here about a wife? Oh, yes, the wives are always to blame!"

This was said by a young married woman of about seventeen who had just come in from a visit to her parents; she was a pretty and lively *blondinka*.

Mertsálof told his wife about the state of things. The young woman's eyes flashed.

"Alósha, they will not eat you up!"

"There is a risk, Natasha!"

"A very large risk," said Lopukhóf in corroboration.

"Well, what can be done? you must run the risk, Alósha, I beg of you."

"If you will not blame me, Natasha, for not taking you into account in running into this danger, then that settles it. When do you want to get married, Dmitri Sergéitch?"

In point of fact all hindrances were set aside. On Monday morning Lopukhóf said to Kirsánof:—

"Do you know, Aleksandr, that I am going to make you a present of my half of our work. Take my papers and preparations; I give it all up; I am going to leave the medical school; this is my last request! I am going to be married!"

Lopukhóf told him the whole story in a few words.

"If you were stupid or I were stupid, I should tell you, Dmitri, that this is the way that insane men act. But now I shall not say any such thing. All the objections that I could raise you must have thought over more than I have done. And even if you have not thought them over, it does not make any difference. Whether you are acting foolishly or wisely I do not know, but at least I shall not attempt to act so foolishly as to dissuade you, when I know that your mind is made up. Can I be of any service or not?"

"I want to find an apartment somewhere in an inexpensive neighborhood—three rooms; and I must make application to get my medical school papers right away, to-morrow, if possible; so you will look us up a house."¹

On Tuesday Lopukhóf got his papers, went to Mertsálof and said that the wedding would be on the next day. "At what time would be most convenient for you, Alekséi Petróvitch?"

It makes no difference to Alekséi Petróvitch, as he stays at home all day. "I think, though, that I shall have time to send Kirsánof to let you know."

On Wednesday, at eleven o'clock, Lopukhóf went to the boulevard, and after waiting for some time for Viérotchka began to get worried; but here she is, all out of breath.

"Viérotchka, my dear [*drüg moi*], has anything happened to you?"

"No, *mílenki*, nothing; I was late only because I overslept."

"That means—what time did you go to bed?"

"*Mílenki*, I didn't want to tell you; at seven o'clock, *mílenki*; but I was thinking all night long; no, it was earlier, it was six!"

"I want to ask you about something, my dear Viérotchka: we must get married soon, mustn't we? so that we may both be comfortable?"

"Yes, *mílenki*, we must; we must very soon!"

"Then in four days, in three—"

"*Akh!* if it could be so, *mílenki*; then you would be a smart boy!"

"In three days I will surely find a house; will buy everything for housekeeping, and then will it be possible for us to live in it together?"

"It will, my *golubtchik*, it certainly will!"

"But it will be necessary to get married first."

"*Akh!* I forgot, *mílenki*, that it was necessary to get married first!"

"Well, we can get married to-day; that was the very thing that I wanted to ask you about."

"Let us go right away and get married; and how have you managed everything? What a bright boy you are, *mílenki!*"

"I will tell you everything on our way; let us go!"

Here they are! they have passed through the long corridors into the church, they have found the sexton, they have sent for Mertsálof; Mertsálof lived in the house where the endless corridors were.

"Now, Viérotchka, I have to ask of you still another favor. You know that they make young couples kiss each other in church?"

"Yes, my *mílenki*; only how ridiculous it is!"

"Well, lest it should be too ridiculous then, let us kiss each other now."

"Very well, let us kiss each other; but could it not be done without it?"

"Yes, but it is impossible to get along without it in church; so let us prepare ourselves."

They kissed each other.

"*Mílenki*, it is well that we have had time to prepare ourselves; here comes the sexton; now it will not seem so ridiculous in church!"

¹ Before entering the medical school or any department of the Russian universities, a student is obliged to deposit with the authorities the certificate of his birth and baptism, and the diploma from the gymnasium (*attestat zriélosti*). That gives him the authority to teach, and shortens his term of service in the army. Without a diploma from the medical school a man cannot practise medicine.

But it was not the sexton who came—the sexton did not come till after the *diakön*; it was Kirsánof, who had been waiting for them at Mertsálof's.

“Viérotchka, this is Aleksandr Matvéitch Kirsánof, whom you do not like, and whom you have forbidden me to meet.”

“Viéra Pavlovna, what is the reason that you want to separate our tender hearts?”

“For the very reason that they are tender,” said Viérotchka, giving Kirsánof her hand and still smiling; then she fell into thought. “But shall I be able to love him as well as you do? You love him very dearly, don't you?”

“I? I love no one but myself, Viéra Pavlovna!”

“And you don't love him?”

“We have lived together, and we have never quarrelled; isn't that enough?”

“And hasn't he loved you either?”

“I never observed anything of the sort. However, let us ask him.—Have you ever loved me, Dmitri?”

“I never particularly despised you!”

“Well, if that is the case, Aleksandr Matvéitch, I shall not forbid your meeting, and I myself will love you!”

“Now that is much better, Viéra Pavlovna.”

“And now, I, too, am ready,” said Alekséi Petróvitch, coming in. “Let us go into the church.” Alekséi Petróvitch was gay and full of jests; but when the ceremony began, his voice trembled, “Suppose it should result in a lawsuit? Natasha, you must go back to your father; your husband does not support you, and it is a wretched life to have a husband alive, and to live on your father's bread!” However, after several words, he again regained complete control of himself.

When the service was half over, Natalia Andréyevna, or Natasha, as Alekséi Petróvitch called his wife, invited the young people to come to her house after the ceremony; she had prepared a little breakfast. They came in, they laughed, they even danced two quadrilles with two couples: they also waltzed. Alekséi Petróvitch, who could not dance, played the violin for them; an hour and a half flew by quickly and unnoticed. It was a gay wedding.

“I think that they must be waiting dinner for me at home,” said Viérotchka, “it is about time.—Now, my *mílenki*, I shall be able to live three or four days in my cellar without being melancholy, and possibly even more. Why should I worry now? There is nothing for me to fear now. No, don't go home with me; I am going all alone by myself, so as not to be seen by anybody.”

“It's all right; they will not eat me up; don't worry, gentlemen,” said Alekséi Petróvitch, as he escorted Lopukhóf and Kirsánof to the door, who had remained for a few minutes, so as to give Viérotchka a chance to get out of sight. “I am very glad now that Natasha encouraged me!”

On the following day, after a four days' hunt, a good house was found, at the farther end of the fifth block on the Vasilyevsky Island. Having all in all one hundred and sixty rubles in reserve, Lopukhóf concluded, with his friend, that it would be impossible for him and Viérotchka to think as yet of attempting to keep house, or to have their own furniture and dishes; and therefore they rented three rooms, together with furniture, dishes, and board, from an old man, who quietly spent his days, with a little stock of buttons, ribbons, pins, and other things, at the fence on the Middle Prospekt, between the first and second blocks; while his evenings were passed in quiet conversation with his old woman, who, for her part, spent her days in mending hundreds and thousands of old things of every sort, brought to her in bundles from the Pushing Market.

The servants also belonged to the landlord; in other words, they were the landlord and landlady themselves.

All this cost them thirty rubles a month. At that period—ten years ago (1853)—the times were not so hard in Petersburg, judged by the Petersburg standard. With such an arrangement, their means would last for three or even four months. Ten rubles a month is enough for tea, isn't it? and in four months Lopukhóf hoped to find pupils, some kind of literary work, or even some kind of occupation in a mercantile office,—he did not care what. On the very day when the house was found (and, indeed, the house was a very good one; they looked out for that, and therefore they found what they wanted), Lopukhóf, while he was giving his lesson on Thursday, as usual, said to Viérotchka:—

“To-morrow you can come to me, my dear; here is the address. I shall not say anything more now, lest they may notice something.”

“My *milenki*, you have saved me!”

Now, how to leave the house. Shall they confess what they have done? Viérotchka thought seriously about doing so; but her mother might lay violent hands on her, and might even lock her up. Viérotchka concluded to leave a letter in her room. When Marya Alekséyevna heard that her daughter was going to the Nevsky Prospekt, and said that she was going too, Viérotchka went back to her room, and took the letter; it seemed to her that it was better, more honorable, if she herself told her mother to her face; for on the street her mother would not attempt to beat her, and it would only be necessary to stand at a distance from her while speaking, to take an *izvoshchik* as soon as possible, and then drive off before she had time to catch her by the sleeve.

In such a manner the effective scene came about at Ruzanof's store.

XXII.

But we have had only one-half of this scene.

For about a moment,—no, rather less,—Marya Alekséyevna, who had suspected nothing of the kind, stood thunder-struck, endeavoring to understand, and absolutely failing to understand, what her daughter had said, what it meant, and how it came about; but it was only for a moment, or even less. She came to herself with a start. She uttered some objurgation or other; but her daughter was already far down the Nevsky. Marya Alekséyevna dashed several steps in her direction. “Must take an *izvoshchik*.” She turned to the sidewalk.

“*Izvoshchik!*”

“Where do you want to go, lady?” Where did she want to go? she heard her daughter say, “To Karavannaïa Street”; but her daughter turned to the left down the Nevsky. Where does she want to go?

“I want to overtake her yonder, that beast!”

“To ketch some one? Speak sense; where do you want to go? How can I go without any directions? And you hain’t given me any idea.”

Marya Alekséyevna entirely lost control of herself, and she began to berate the *izvoshchik*.

“You are drunk, *baruina*; that’s all there is of it,” said the *izvoshchik*, and left her. Marya Alekséyevna ran after him, still scolding, and she shouted at the other *izvoshchiks*, and she dashed in all directions for some time, and she gesticulated with her hands, and then she went back under the colonnade, and she kicked and she acted like a mad woman; and around her were gathered half a dozen rude fellows, who had been peddling various articles around the columns of the Gostinui Dvor. The fellows were laughing at her, and they exchanged among themselves words of more or less unfavorable character, and they praised her ironically, and they offered her their advice to be calm.

“Ay! *da! baruina!* how early you managed to get full! lively *baruina!*”

“*Baruina!* ah! *baruina!* buy half a dozen lemons of me; they are good to take when you’re tipsy; I’ll let thee have them cheap.”

“*Baruina!* ah! *baruina!* don’t listen to him; a lemon won’t do you the least good; but go and take a nap.”

“*Baruina!* ah! *baruina!* you’re a good hand at scolding; let’s get up a scolding match, and see who’ll beat!”

Marya Alekséyevna, not knowing at all what she was about, boxed the ears of one of the nearest of her interlocutors,—a fellow of seventeen, who, not without grace, was stretching out his tongue at her; his hat flew off, and his hair was right at hand. Marya Alekséyevna got her fingers into it. This act roused the rest of her interlocutors into a state of indescribable enthusiasm.

“Ay! *baruina!* give it to him!” Others shouted:—

“Fyedka! give it back to her in small change!”

But the majority of the interlocutors were on Marya Alekséyevna’s side.

“How can Fyedka stand up to her?”

“Give it to him, *baruina!* knock Fyedka down! He deserves it, the rascal.”

A good many spectators had now collected besides the interlocutors, both *izvoshchiks*, and the clerks of the shops, and the passers-by. Marya Alekséyevna, as though coming to her senses, and with a final mechanical motion pushing away Fyedka’s head, started across the street. The enthusiastic praises of her interlocutors accompanied her.

She saw that she was on the way home after she had passed the doors of the “School of Pages”; she took an *izvoshchik* and reached home in safety. Finding Feódor at the door, she gave him a beating; she rushed to the cupboard; she pounded Matrióna, who came out to see what made the noise; again she rushed to the cupboard; she dashed to Viérotchka’s room, then she rushed back again to the cupboard; once more she dashed to Viérotchka’s room, and remained there a long time; then she made a tour of all the rooms, scolding, but finding no one on whom to lay her hands. Feódor had run to the rear stairs; Matrióna, who was looking through the crack of Viérotchka’s room, frightened out of her wits, ran back when she saw that Marya Alekséyevna was getting up. She lost her head, and could not find her way to the kitchen, but found herself instead under Marya Alekséyevna’s bed, where she remained in safety until she was called out under a flag of truce.

Whether it was a long or short period that she was scolding and shouting as she walked through the empty rooms, Marya Alekséyevna could never tell; but it must have been long, because when Pavel Konstantinuitch came from his office, he also had a dose both materially and ideally from Marya Alekséyevna. But as everything must come to an end, Marya Alekséyevna cried out, “Matrióna, let us have dinner!” Matrióna saw that the storm was ended; she crept out from under the bed and got dinner.

At dinner Marya Alekséyevna did not scold at all, but she only growled without any intentions of attacking; but only for her own satisfaction; and afterwards she did not take a nap, but sat down alone and did not speak, but was growling. Then she stopped growling and became absolutely silent; finally she cried out:—

“Matrióna! wake the *barin*, and tell him to come to me!”

Matrióna, who, while expecting orders, did not dare to go into the dining-room or anywhere else, fulfilled the command. Pavel Konstantinuitch appeared.

“Go to the *khozyáika* and tell her that our daughter has married that devil because you wished her to. Tell her, ‘It was against my wife’s will.’ Tell her that you did so, so as to please her ladyship, because you saw that it was not her ladyship’s wish. Tell her, ‘My wife was alone to blame, and I only carried out your ladyship’s will.’ Tell her, ‘I myself brought them together.’ Do you understand or not?”

“I understand you, Marya Alekséyevna. You are very wise in your plan.”

“Well then, go along with you! Even if she is eating her dinner, don’t mind; call her right out! Bring her from the dinner-table! so long as she does not know the real truth.”

The assurance of Pavel Konstantinuitch’s words was so impressive that the *khozyáika* would have believed him even if he had not possessed the gift of a persuasive tongue. But the impressiveness of this gift was so great that the *khozyáika* would have forgiven Pavel Konstantinuitch, even if there had not been substantial proofs that he had constantly acted against his wife, and purposely brought Viérotchka and Lopukhóf together, in order to block the “ignoble marriage” of Mikhaïl Ivanuitch. But how did they get married? Pavel Konstantinuitch was not stingy in giving her a dowry. He had given Lopukhóf five thousand rubles in cash, and he had given the marriage and all its cost at his own expense. Through him the young people had exchanged

little notes. They had met at the house of his colleague, the *natchalnik* Filant'yef, "a married man, your ladyship. Although I am a man of little account, the maiden honor of my daughter, your ladyship, is dear to me. They met in my presence; and although we have not money enough to justify giving a boy of the age of ours a tutor, yet I hired one for an excuse, your ladyship," etc., etc. His wife's unreliability Pavel Konstantinuitch depicted in the darkest colors.

How then could she help being convinced and forgiving Pavel Konstantinuitch? And the main thing—what a great and unexpected piece of happiness! Joy softens the heart. The *khozyáika* began her speech of forgiveness with a very long explanation of the thoughts and actions of Marya Alekséyevna, and at first asked Pavel Konstantinuitch to send his wife away; but he implored her, and she herself acknowledged, that it was rather for show than because she meant it. Finally it was decided that Pavel Konstantinuitch should retain his place as manager; that they should give up their rooms facing the street and take another suite in the back of the building, on condition that his wife should not dare to show her face in those places on the first *dvor* where the *khozyáika*'s eyes might fall; and that she should be obliged to go out of doors, when she went at all, by a staircase that lay far from the *khozyáika*'s windows. From the twenty rubles a month that had been added to his salary, fifteen rubles should be taken back and five rubles would be left to him for a compensation for the manager's energy in the *khozyáika*'s interests and towards the expenses of his daughter's wedding.

XXIII.

Marya Alekséyevna had a number of schemes in mind as to the way to act towards Lopukhóf when he should come in the evening. The most revengeful was to hide two *dvorniks* in the kitchen, who at a given signal should throw themselves on Lopukhóf, and beat him to death. The most pathetic was solemnly to pronounce with her own lips, aided by Pavel Konstantinuitch, a parental curse on their disobedient daughter and on him, their murderer, with an explanation that the curse was valid,—even the earth, as is well known, does not receive the dust of those who are cursed by their parents. But this belonged to the same category of imaginations as the *khozyáika* had, in regard to separating Pavel Konstantinuitch from his wife; for such schemes, like any other poetry, have no practical application, properly speaking, except to relieve the heart, by furnishing a framework for endless thoughts in solitude, and for other explanations, when, by and by, she should come to speak about it; as, for example, he or she might have done this or that, and he or she intended to do so, but, owing to his or her kindness, he or she felt grieved to do so.

The plan of beating Lopukhóf and cursing her daughter were the ideal part of Marya Alekséyevna's thoughts and feelings. But the actual part of her mind and soul took a direction not so lofty, but more practical; and this difference is attributable to the inherent weakness of every human being. When Marya Alekséyevna came to her senses, at the gates of the "School of Pages," she comprehended that her daughter had really disappeared, was married, and had left her for good and all; and this fact came before her imagination in the form of the following mental exclamation, "She has robbed me!" And all the way home she kept exclaiming mentally, and sometimes even audibly, "She has robbed me!" And, therefore, while she was detained for several minutes by the process of communicating her grievance to Feódor and Matrióna, through human weakness,—every human being is carried away, by the expression of feeling, to such an extent that he often forgets, in the excitement of the spirit, the interests of the moment,—Marya Alekséyevna ran into Viérotchka's room, peeked into the drawers of her bureau, into her wardrobe; she cast a hasty glance over everything; no, apparently everything is untouched. And then she began to confirm this reassuring impression by a careful examination. The result was that really all her dresses and things remained there, with the exception of a pair of simple gold ear-rings, and an old white mousseline dress, and an old cloak, which Viérotchka wore when she went away. As regarded the practical direction in which Marya Alekséyevna's acts would take, she expected that Viérotchka would give Lopukhóf an inventory of her things, which he would ask for; and she firmly decided that she should give her nothing from among her possessions of gold and the like, that she would give her four of the simplest of her dresses, and some of the thinnest and oldest of her underwear. To give her nothing was impossible, since her noble generosity would not allow it; and Marya Alekséyevna had always been very strict in her observance of noble generosity.

Another question of actual life was her relation to the *khozyáika*; we have already seen that Marya Alekséyevna successfully solved the answer to it.

Now, there is a third question, "What can be done with the hussy and the rascal?" that is, with her daughter and her unexpected son-in-law. Curse them? that is not hard: but it is useless, except as a dessert after something substantial. Only how is this substantial something possible? To lodge a complaint, to bring about a lawsuit, to have them arrested! At first, when her feelings were all stirred up. Marya Alekséyevna looked upon this solution of the question from an ideal standpoint, and ideally it seemed to her very delightful. But, in proportion as her blood grew calmer, after the weariness of the storm, the matter began to appear in a different light. Nobody knew better than Marya Alekséyevna that lawsuits are conducted through the agency of money, and money alone; and such cases as charmed her by their ideal beauty are conducted through the agency of large, very large, sums of money, and they are dragged out unendingly, and, after wasting a great deal of money, they often come to nothing in the end.

"What is to be done [*tchto dyélat*]?" At the final upshot it seemed that there were only two courses to take: to quarrel with Lopukhóf to her heart's content, and to retain Viérotchka's things when he demanded them, and, as a means of doing that, to threaten him with a lawsuit. But she certainly must quarrel to her full sweetness.

But she did not succeed in quarrelling. Lopukhóf came, and began by saying, "Viérotchka and I ask you, Marya Alekséyevna and Pavel Konstantinuitch, to forgive us for taking this step without your consent."

On hearing this, Marya Alekséyevna cried, "I shall curse her, the good-for-nothing!"

But, instead of saying the whole word "good-for-nothing," Marya Alekséyevna had only time to say "good-for-n—," because Lopukhóf interrupted her, in a loud voice: "I shall not listen to your abuse; I came to speak about business. You are angry, and you cannot speak calmly, and so I will talk only with Pavel Konstantinuitch; and, Marya Alekséyevna, you send Feódor and Matrióna to call us when you get calmed down."

While saying this, he started to lead Pavel Konstantinuitch from the parlor into his bed-room; and he spoke so loud that there was no chance of out-crying him, and therefore she was obliged to stop off short.

He took Pavel Konstantinuitch to the parlor door; here he stopped, turned around, and said: "And now, Marya Alekséyevna, I am going to talk with you; but only about business, and it must be calmly."

She was about to lift her voice a second time, but he interrupted her again, "*Nu*, if you can't speak calmly, then we shall leave you."

"Now, what makes *you* go out, you fool [*durak*]?" she shouted.

"Well, he is leading me out!"

"And if Pavel Konstantinuitch did not choose to speak calmly, then I would leave; it would not make any difference to me. But why should you, Pavel Konstantinuitch, allow yourself to be called such names? Marya Alekséyevna does not understand business; she really thinks that she can do anything that she pleases with us; but you are a *tchinovnik*, you are a man of experience; you of course understand propriety. You tell her that she cannot do anything with Viérotchka now, and still less with me."

"The rascal must know that nothing can be done to him," thought Marya Alekséyevna, and she said to Lopukhóf that, being her mother, she was excited at first, but now she could speak coolly.

Lopukhóf returned with Pavel Konstantinuitch; they sat down. Lopukhóf asked her to listen until he should finish what he had to say, and to postpone what she had to reply, and then he began to speak, lifting his voice powerfully whenever she attempted to interrupt him, and thus

he finished his speech in safety. It was to this effect: that it was impossible to untie them, and therefore the case of Storeshnikof was beyond recall; “as you know yourself; consequently it will be idle for you to take the trouble. However, do as you please; If you have extra money, I even advise you to try it; and, then, again there is hardly any reason for being vexed, because Viérotchka never wanted to marry Storeshnikof; consequently, this case was always beyond realization, as you yourself have seen, Marya Alekséyevna; and young girls must certainly marry, and, as a general thing, they are lost to their parents. It would be necessary to give a dowry, and then a wedding itself would cost a good deal of money; but the main thing is the dowry; consequently, Marya Alekséyevna, you and your husband ought to be thankful to your daughter for marrying without causing you any expense.” He spoke in this style, and he spoke with such detail that it took him a good half-hour.

When he finished, Marya Alekséyevna saw that there was no use in bulldozing such a rogue, and therefore she began to speak about her feelings: how she was particularly grieved that Viérotchka should have married without asking her parents’ consent, because it was very painful for a mother’s heart. Now, when a thing touches a mother’s feelings and grievances, then, naturally, the conversation takes a turn, as though it were impossible not to speak about them: this, propriety demands. Now they have satisfied propriety,—they have spoken about this interesting fact. Marya Alekséyevna has said that, as a loving mother, she was grieved; Lopukhóf has said that she, as a loving mother, had no need of being grieved; and having fulfilled the measure of propriety, by a discourse of suitable length about feelings, they took up another point, also demanded by propriety, to wit: that she had always wished her daughter to be happy. This was said on one side; and on the other side the reply was made that this was a thing that could never be doubted. When the conversation had been prolonged to a suitable length on this point also, they began to take leave of each other, also with explanations of such a length, as is demanded by propriety among gentlefolk, and the result of it all proved that Lopukhóf, understanding the sorrow of a mother’s heart, did not ask Marya Alekséyevna’s consent for her daughter to come to see her, because, maybe it would be hard for a mother’s heart; but when Marya Alekséyevna should have heard that Viérotchka was living happily, which, of course, was Marya Alekséyevna’s sole desire, then her maternal heart would be entirely calmed; consequently, then she would be able to see her daughter without being grieved.

Thus they came to this wise conclusion, and separated peacefully.

“Well, he’s a keen one,”¹ said Marya Alekséyevna to herself, as she escorted her son-in-law to the door.

That night she dreamed a dream of this nature: she was sitting at the window, and saw on the street an elegant carriage passing along the street, and the carriage stopped, and from the carriage stepped a handsomely dressed lady and a man, and they came into her room, and the lady said, “Look, *mamasha*, how well my husband dresses me!” and this lady was Viérotchka. And Marya Alekséyevna seemed to see that the stuff of which the dress was made was of the very best, and Viérotchka said: “The material alone cost five hundred silver rubles, and that is a trifle for us, *mamasha*; and I have a whole dozen of dresses like this! and this, *mamasha*, cost more,—here, look at my fingers!” Marya Alekséyevna looked at Viérotchka’s fingers; and on her fingers were rings with large diamonds. “This ring, *mamasha*, is worth two thousand rubles; and this one here, *mamasha*, cost more,—four thousand rubles,—and look at my breast, *mamasha*!

¹ *Nu, razboïnnik*, literally, highwayman, murderer.

this brooch cost still more; it is worth ten thousand rubles!” And then the gentleman spoke,—and the gentleman was Dmitri Sergéitch: “All these are mere trifles for us, dear *mámenka* Marja Alekséyevna; but the thing of the most importance is here in my pocket. Look, dear *mámenka*, at my pocket-book! How fat it is! there are nothing but hundred-ruble notes in it, and I am going to make you a present, *mamasha*, of this pocket-book, because it is a trifle to us. But this other pocket-book is still fatter, dear *mámenka*; I do not give it to you, because it has no paper money, but only bonds and mercantile notes, and every bond and note is worth more than the whole pocket-book which I just gave you, dear *mámenka* Marya Alekséyevna.”

“You have succeeded, dear son Dmitri Sergéitch, in making my daughter and all our family happy; but where in the world, my dear son, did you get so much wealth?” “I, dear *mamasha*, became a monopolist!”

And while she was awaking from her dream, Marya Alekséyevna thinks to herself, “Indeed, it would be a good thing if he became a monopolist!”

XXIV. A WORD OF PRAISE FOR MARYA ALEKSÉYEVNA.

You have ceased to be a person of any importance in Viérotchka's life, Marya Alekséyevna, and now that we are going to part from you, the author of this narrative begs you not to complain, that you are dismissed from the stage with an epilogue which is somewhat unfavorable to you. Do not think that we will treat you without due respect. You were fooled, but that does not in the least lessen our respect for your good sense, Marya Alekséyevna; your mistake does not testify against you. You were thrown in contact with people such as had never before crossed your path, and therefore it was no crime that you were mistaken in them when you judged them by your former experience. All your former life brought you to the conclusion that people were divided into two classes,—fools and rascals: "Whoever is not a fool must be a rascal," you used to think; "and he who is not a rascal can only be a fool."

This view was very true, Marya Alekséyevna, until within a very short time, Marya Alekséyevna. You have met with people, Marya Alekséyevna, who spoke very glibly, and you saw that all these people, without a single exception, were either foxy, throwing dust in the eyes of others, or full-grown stupids, not knowing life and not having the wit to accommodate themselves to circumstances. And therefore, Marya Alekséyevna, you considered them as evincing stupidity and fair game for deceit, and you were right, Marya Alekséyevna. Your opinion of men was already entirely formed when you met the first woman who was neither stupid nor villanous; it was excusable that you got confused and did not know what to think of her or how to treat her. Your views of people were already entirely formed when you met the first noble-minded man, who was not a simple, pitiable child, who knew life as thoroughly as you did, whose judgments of it were not less correct than your own, who could transact business with no less skill than you; it was excusable that you were mistaken in him and looked upon him as a scoundrel like yourself. These mistakes, Marya Alekséyevna, do not lessen my regard for you as a clever and active woman. You brought your husband up from nothingness; you have gained for yourself a competency against your declining years,—these are good things, and they were hard for you to accomplish. Your method was bad, but your environment gave you no other method. Your methods belong to your environment, and not to you personally, and hence it is not to your dishonor, but it is a credit to your intellect and strength of character.

Are you satisfied, Marya Alekséyevna, with this acknowledgment of your good qualities? Of course you must be satisfied with this, because you never thought of claiming to be lovely or gentle. In a moment of involuntary frankness, you yourself confessed that you were a bad and dishonorable woman, and you did not look upon your wickedness and dishonesty as disgraceful to you, because you proved that your environment would not allow you to be otherwise. Consequently, you will not care, because in addition to the praise of your intellect and strength of character no praise has been bestowed upon you for your good qualities; you yourself don't claim to have them, and you do not look upon them as worth having, but rather you regard them as

characteristic of stupidity. Consequently you will not ask further praise than what I have just given you. But I can say one thing more in your favor: of all the people whom I do not like, and with whom I do not like to have business, I would rather deal with you than all the rest. Of course you are unmerciful wherever it affects your advantage; but if you have no advantage in doing anybody harm, you will not do it out of stupid little spitefulness. You consider that it is not worth while to lose time, labor, and money without return. Of course you would have been glad to roast your daughter and her husband over a slow fire; but you were able to curb your revengeful inclination and to reason the matter over coolly, and you understood that you had no chance of success in roasting them, and this is a great thing, Marya Alekséyevna, to be able to recognize an impossibility! When you once recognized it you gave up your idea of beginning a lawsuit, since the lawsuit would not punish the people who stirred up your anger; you calculated that those little unpleasantnesses, which a lawsuit would cause them, would bring you yourself into more bother and expense, and therefore you did not begin the lawsuit. If it is impossible to conquer an enemy; if, in causing him a trifling loss you are causing yourself a greater, then you had better not begin the battle; you understood this, and you had the common sense and courage to yield to an impossibility, without unnecessarily causing harm to yourself or anybody else: this, too, was a great thing, Marya Alekséyevna. Yes, Marya Alekséyevna, one can get along with you; you do not indulge in wrath for the sake of wrath, to your own detriment: and this is a very rare and very important quality, Marya Alekséyevna. Millions of people are more injurious to themselves and others than you are, Marya Alekséyevna, even though they may not have that detestable side that you have. You are better than the majority of those who are simply bad, because you are not without reason and are not stupid. I should have been glad to sponge you off from the face of the earth, but I have a certain regard for you: you do harm in no way. Now you are spending your time in mean business because your environment is so constituted, but put you into other circumstances, and you would take delight in being harmless, in being even useful, because you do not want to do any harm without being paid for it, and it were profitable to you, you could do whatever you wanted; consequently, you would act honorably and nobly if it were advisable. You are capable of doing so, Marya Alekséyevna, and you are not to blame because this capability is latent; that instead of doing so, you are acting in a contrary way; but you possess it, and this cannot be said of all. Wretches are capable of doing anything. You are only a bad woman, but you are not hopelessly a wretched woman. You are higher than many, even if judged by the moral standard.

“Are you satisfied, Marya Alekséyevna?”

“What should I be satisfied for, *bátiushka*. My circumstances are bad, aren't they?”

“That is all right, Marya Alekséyevna!”

**PART THIRD. MARRIAGE AND
SECOND LOVE.**

I.

Three months have passed since Viérotchka was rescued from the cellar. The Lopukhófs' affairs have prospered. He has had a fair number of pupils; he obtained work of a certain publisher, to translate a text-book on geography. Viéra Pavlovna also found two pupils, not of the highest grade, but still not to be despised. Together they have an income of eighty rubles a month. But such an income scarcely allows any one to live luxuriously, but they ran no risk of running into poverty. Their means have gradually increased, and they have calculated that in four months or even sooner they can set up their own establishment. And this was afterwards realized.

The system of their lives was arranged, of course not absolutely in accordance with Viérotchka's half-jesting, half-serious plan proposed on the day of their fantastic engagement, but nevertheless it was very much like it. The old man and woman at whose house they lived, gossiped together about the strange way in which the young couple lived—as though they were not young people at all, not even like husband and wife; like nobody else in the world.

“Well, now, Petrovna, it seems to me just as queer as it does to you. You could not tell for the life of you whether she wan't his sister and he her brother!”

“You think that's a good comparison, do you? Between brother and sister there ain't any ceremony at all. But look at them! He gits up, puts on his clo'es, and sits down and waits till the *samovar* is brought. Then he makes tea and calls her, and she too comes out all dressed. What kind of a brother and sister's that? You had better say this: being as there's poor folks who through their poverty have to live two families in one apartment; and you might compare them to such!”

“And how is it, Petrovna, that a husband can't go into his wife's room? When she ain't dressed, she don't let him in. What does that look like?”

“You ought to see how they part at night. She says: ‘*Proshchai mîlenki*, good night.’ Then they separate, each to sit in their own rooms. They read books, and he sometimes writes. Just you listen and I'll tell you what happened once. She went to bed and was reading a book. Then I heard through the partition (it happened I was wide awake that night); I hear her a gittin' up. And what do you think? I was list'nin'. She was a-standin' before her lookin' glass a-combin' of her hair. Well [*nu*], she seemed to be gittin' ready to go out to see some comp'ny. I was list'nin'. Out she went. Then [*nu*] I, too, goes out into the entry, gits up in a chair, and peeks through the transom into his room. I was list'nin' as she went to the door. ‘Can I come in, *mîlenki*? And he says, ‘In a minute, Viérotchka.’ He too was in bed. He put on his pants and his coat. Now [*nu*], thinks I, he'll be tyin' up his cravat. But he don't put on his cravat; he fixes hisself a little, and says, ‘Now you can come in, Viérotchka.’ Says she, ‘I don't understand something in this book; please explain it to me.’ He tells her. ‘Well [*nu*], *mîlenki*, forgive me for botherin' of you.’ And says he, ‘Oh, it's nothin', Viérotchka; I was only lyin' down, you haven't disturbed me.’ And so [*nu*] she went out.”

“And so she went out?”

“And so she went out.”

“And wan’t there nothin’ more?”

“No, nothin’ more. But it ain’t so queer’t she went out so, as ‘twas ‘cause she went and dressed herself when she went to see him. He says, ‘Just wait.’ Then he dressed hisself, and then he says, ‘Come in.’ You better tell me this: what kind of actions is them?”

“It must be this way, Petrovna; it’s a kind of sect, I reckon, ‘cause you know there’s a good many kind of sects.”

“It looks like it. See here! I guess your idee is right.”

Here is another conversation:—

“Danilutch, I axed her about them actions of theirs. Says I, ‘Don’t git mad at my question; but what’s your religious views.’ ‘Of course,’ says she, ‘it’s the Russian.’ ‘And your old man [*supruzchnik*].’ ‘His is Russian too,’ she said. Says I, ‘Don’t you belong to any sec’?’ Says she, ‘No, I don’t belong to any. What makes you think so?’ ‘Because,’ says I, ‘because, lady, I don’t know whether to call you *Miss* or *Mrs*. Do you live with your old man?’ She laughed. ‘Why, yes, says she, ‘o’ course I do.’”

“She laughed, did she?”

“Yes, she did. ‘O’ course I live with him,’ says she. ‘Then,’ says I, ‘what makes you act as you do? You never see him without his clo’es on, as though you wan’t his wife.’ And, says she, ‘It’s because I don’t want him to see me in dishabilly.’ Oh no, they don’t belong to any sec’s at all. ‘Then,’ says I, ‘what makes you do so?’ ‘So as to keep love in the house and git rid of quarrels,’ says she.”

“Well now, Petrovna, that looks as though she spoke the truth. Of course, she allus wants to look decent!”

“And then she goes on and says, says she, ‘If I don’t want other folks to see me in dishabilly, then why should my husband, whom I love more, see me before I have washed my face. It wouldn’t do to show myself before him in any such way.’”

“Well, so does that look as though she spoke the truth, Petrovna. What makes men fall in love with other men’s wives? It’s because they see then nicely dressed, while they see their own wives—how did you call it? oh, yes, in dishabilly. It’s said so in Holy Writ, in Solomon’s Proverbs, and he was the wisest of the Tsars!”

II.

The affairs of the Lopukhófs prospered. Viéra Pavlovna was always happy. But one time (this was some five months after the wedding) Dmitri Sergéitch, returning from one of his lessons, found his wife in a peculiar state of mind. Her eyes were shining with pride and happiness. This caused Dmitri Sergéitch to remember that for several days past he had seen in her some signs of mental exaltation, joyful thoughts, and tender pride.

“My dear, you seem to be so happy; why don’t you give us the benefit of it?”

“I think I am, my dear; but you just wait a little while. I will tell you when I am sure that I am right. You must wait for several days. And it is going to be a great joy to me, and you too will be glad, I am sure; and Kirsánof and Mertsálof will be pleased with it.”

“But what in the world is it?”

“Ah, you have forgotten our agreement, haven’t you, not to ask questions? I will tell you when I am sure of it.”

Another week passed by.

“My *milenki*, I am going to tell you my joy; only you must give me your advice, because you know all about it. You know that I have been wanting for a long, long time to do something great; and I have made up my mind that we must start a sewing union. Isn’t that a good idea?”

“Now, my dear, we made an agreement that I should not kiss your hand, but that was a general rule; it did not include such an occasion as this. Give me your hand, Viéra Pavlovna!”

“By and by, my *milenki*, when I have succeeded in doing it.”

“When you have succeeded, then I shall not be the only one to kiss it: Kirsánof and Alekséi Petrovitch, all will want to kiss it. But now I am alone; and the intention is worthy of it.”

“Violence! I shall scream!”

“Scream then!”

“*Milenki moi!* I shall be ashamed, and tell you nothing. As though it were anything of such great importance!”

“Here is where its importance lies: we all make plans, but we don’t accomplish anything. But you began to think long after the rest of us, and sooner than all of us have resolved to put your ideas to the test.”

Viérotchka bent her head on her husband’s breast, and hid her face. “My dear, you have praised me to death.”

Her husband kissed her head. “What a clever little head!”

“*Milenki moi*, stop! It is impossible to tell you anything! Do you know what kind of a man you are?”

“I will stop. Tell me, my tender-hearted girl.”

“Don’t you dare to address me so!”

“Well, you hard-hearted one.”

“*Akh!* what kind of a man are you, all the time interrupting me? Just listen. Sit down quietly. Here, it seems to me, is the main thing: that at the very beginning, when you select a few, to make

the selection very carefully. You must have really honorable, good people, not narrow-minded, not fickle, but steady, and at the same time gentle, so that there should not be any idle quarrels among them, and that they should be able to select others of the same kind. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, dear."

"Now, I have three such girls. *Akh!* how long I had to hunt! Now here, my dearest, for the last three months I have been going round among the shops trying to make acquaintances, and I have succeeded. Such nice girls! I have got thoroughly acquainted with them."

"And then, moreover, they must be thoroughly up in their art. The business must stand on its own merits. Everything must have a solid foundation of mercantile calculations."

"*Akh!* of course it must."

"What more is left? Why do you need my advice, then?"

"In regard to the details, *moi milenki.*"

"Tell me the details. Of course you must have thought yourself about everything, and you will be able to accommodate yourself to circumstances. You know that the most important thing here is principle, character, and knowledge. Details come of themselves from the conditions peculiar to every circumstance."

"I know; but after all, when you give your approval, I shall be more assured."

They talked for a long time. Lopukhóf found nothing to correct in his wife's plan; but as far as she was concerned, the plan developed and became more and more clear as she talked it over with him.

On the next day Lopukhóf took to the office of the "Police News" an advertisement: "Viéra Pavlovna Lopukhóva would take orders for sewing ladies' garments, linen, etc., at moderate prices, etc."

On that very morning Viéra Pavlovna went to see Julie.

"She does not know my married name. Tell her Mademoiselle Rozálskaia."

"My child, you are without a veil. You come to me openly, and tell your name to the servant. Now this is sheer folly. You are ruining yourself, my child!"

"Yes, but I am married now, and I can go wherever I please, and do what I want to."

"But your husband; he may find it out."

"He will be here in an hour."

Then the questions began as to how she got married. Julie was delighted. She hugged her, she kissed her, she wept. When she became calmer, Viéra Pavlovna told her the purpose of her visit.

"You know that old friends are not thought of, except when their help is needed. I have a great favor to ask of you. I am going to establish a sewing shop. Give me your orders and recommend me to your acquaintances. I myself sew nicely and I have good apprentices. You know one of them." And, in fact, Julie knew one of them to be a good seamstress. "Here are specimens of my work. This garment I made myself; you see how nicely it fits."

Julie examined very carefully the fit of the garment; she looked at the embroidery of the shawl, at the little cuffs, and she was satisfied.

"My child, you might be very successful; you have both skill and taste. But to succeed you must have a great shop on the Nevsky."

"Yes, I shall establish one there in good time. Now I take orders at home."

Having finished talking about business, they began to talk again about Viérotchka's marriage.

“And that Storeshnik drank terribly for a couple of weeks, and then he made up with Adèle. And I am very glad for Adèle’s sake. He is a kind fellow. I am only sorry that Adèle has not a better reputation.”

As it came up naturally, Julie began to talk about the adventures of Adèle and others. Now Mademoiselle Rozálskaïa is a married lady, and Julie does not think it necessary to hold her tongue. At first she spoke reasonably; then she was drawn away, drawn away, and began with delight to depict their dissipated existence, and she went on and on. Viéra Pavlovna was embarrassed, but Julie did not heed it. Viéra Pavlovna recovered her self-possession, and listened with that cruel interest with which you examine the features of a lovely face disfigured by disease. But Lopukhóf came in. Julie in an instant was changed into a stately woman of the world, full of the sternest dignity. However, she did not keep up that rôle very long. After she had congratulated Lopukhóf on his wife, “such a beauty,” she again got excited. “Now, we must celebrate your wedding.” She ordered a breakfast off-hand; she offered champagne. Viérotchka had to drink half a glass in honor of her wedding, half a glass in honor of her “union,” and half a glass in honor of Julie herself. Her head began to turn. She and Julie shout, laugh, and get excited. Julie pinches Viérotchka; she jumps; she runs away, Viérotchka after her; they run all over the apartment, jumping over the chairs; Lopukhóf sits and laughs. It ended with Julie making up her mind to exhibit her strength.

“I am going to lift you up with one hand!”

“You can’t do it!”

They began to wrestle; they both fell on the sofa and neither felt like getting up, and so they lay there laughing until they fell asleep.

For the first time in many years Lopukhóf did not know what to do. “Should he waken them? It is a pity; you may spoil a pleasant meeting by making a bad ending!” He carefully got up, went across the room to see if he could find a book. He found a book, “Chronique de l’Œil de Bœuf,” in comparison with which “Faublas” is virtue itself. He sat down on a sofa, at the other end of the room, began to read, and in a quarter of an hour, he himself fell asleep through tediousness.

In two hours, Pauline wakened Julie: it was dinner time. They sat down alone without Serge, who had gone to some great dinner. Julie and Viérotchka again got hilarious, and then again they grew serious; when they bade each other farewell they became entirely serious, and Julie thought of asking—she had never had a chance to do so before—why Viérotchka meant to establish a sewing shop. If she wanted to make money, then it would be much easier if she would become an actress, or a singer: she has such a strong voice. This matter caused them to sit down again. Viérotchka began to describe her plan, and Julie again became enthusiastic, and she poured out blessings, and, among other things, she declared that she, Julie Le Tellier, was an abandoned woman, and she wept, but she knew what virtue was, and again she wept, and again she kissed her, and again she broke out into blessings.

Four days later Julie came to Viéra Pavlovna and gave her a good many orders for herself; she gave her the addresses of a number of her friends, from whom she might also receive orders. She brought Serge along with her, telling him that it could not be avoided: “Lopukhóf called on me, and now you must return it.” Julie behaved with exemplary seriousness, and kept it up without the least failure, although she stayed at the Lopukhófs’ a long time. She saw that there were no thick walls, but thin partitions, and that her remarks might be overheard. She did not get excited, but she fell rather into a bucolic frame of mind, looking with delight at all the particulars of the poor estate of the Lopukhófs’, and finding that that was the way to live; that men ought not

to live otherwise; that only in moderate circumstances is true happiness possible, and she even announced to Serge that she would go with him to live in Switzerland, where they would have a little house amid the fields and mountains, on the shore of a lake, loving each other, fishing, taking care of their garden. Serge declared that he was perfectly ready, but he wanted to wait and see what she would say at the end of three or four hours.

The thunder of the elegant carriage, and the prancing of Julie's wonderful horses, made a startling impression on the inhabitants of the fifth block, between the Middle and the Little Prospekts, where nothing of the sort had been seen, at least since the time of Peter the Great, if not longer. Many eyes were looking as the wonderful phenomenon stopped at the locked gates of a one-storied, frame building, with its seven windows, and when from the wonderful carriage stepped the still more wonderful phenomenon of an elegant lady, with a brilliant officer, whose important position could not be doubted. The grief was general, when in a moment the gates were opened, and the carriage rolled into the *dvor*; curiosity was deprived of the hope of seeing the graceful officer, and still more graceful lady, a second time, when they took their departure. When Daniluitch returned home from his peddling, Petrovna had a talk with him:—

“Daniluitch, well our tenants must be from among very important folks. A general and a *generálsha* came to see them. The *generálsha* was dressed so elegant that I can't begin to tell you; and the general had two stars!”

How Petrovna came to see the stars on Serge, who had never had any decorations, and would not have worn them if he had had them, while out on service with Julie, is a wonderful circumstance; but that she actually saw them; that she was not mistaken, and did not exaggerate, for this I will not take her word; but I will myself be responsible for her: she did actually see them. It is we who know that he did not have them; but he had such an appearance, that from Petrovna's standpoint, it was impossible not to see two stars on him,—and so she saw them; I am not joking when I tell you that she really saw them.

“And what livery the lackey wore, Daniluitch! Real English stuff, five rubles an arshín; such a solemn man he was, and so important, but just as perlite as could be; he give me a civil answer; he allowed me to feel of his sleeve; elegant cloth. They seem to have so much money that they feed it out to their chickens.¹ And they sat in our tenants' rooms, Daniluitch, and talked with them cosily, for more'n two hours, just as I talk with you, and them tenants did not even bow to them, and they were joking with them, and the tenant was sitting with the general, both of them sitting comfortably on the chair, and they were smoking! and our tenant smoked right in the general's face, and he sat comfortably before him! *what else?* His cigarette went out, and then he lighted it at the general's! And with what grace the general kissed our lady's little hand! why, I can't begin to tell you! What can we make out of this, Daniluitch?”

“Everything is from God, is the way I reason it; I reckon that whether it's acquaintance or relation, it's all from God.”

“So it is, Daniluitch; there's no doubt about it; but this is what I think: that either our tenant or his wife are either a brother or a sister of either the general or the *generálsha*. And, to tell you the truth, I think that she must be the general's sister.”

“What makes you think so, Petrovna? It don't seem natural. If it was so, then they'd have money.”

¹ *Deneg-to stolko tchto kurui nyé kliuiut*: a Russian proverb, literally meaning: they have so much money that the chickens will not pick it up.

“That’s a fact, Daniluitch. It must be this way: either the mother or the father had a natural child; because they don’t favor each other. Really, there ain’t no resemblance ‘t all.”

“That may be, Petrovna; perhaps there was a natural child. Such things *do* happen.”

Petrovna, for four whole days, enjoyed great importance in her little store. This little store for three whole days drew a part of the public from the store on the other side of the street. Petrovna, for the sake of enlightening the public during these days, even neglected her work to a certain extent, and slaked the thirst of those who were thirsting for knowledge.

The result of all this was that within a week Pavel Konstantinuitch came to see his daughter and son-in-law.

Marya Alekséyevna had been anxious to gather some information about the lives led by her daughter and the “villain.” It was not done systematically or constantly, and, for the most part, it arose from a scientific instinct of curiosity. One of her little gossiping acquaintances, who lived on the Vasilyevsky Island, was entrusted with the task of finding out about Viéra Pavlovna, whenever she happened to pass by where she lived; and the gossip brought her reports, as often as once a month, or even oftener, according to circumstances. “The Lopukhófs live in harmony; they have no quarrels; there’s only one thing: there are a good many young folks call on them, and all the young men are good friends and modest. They do not live luxuriously; but apparently they have money. They not only do not sell; but they buy. She has made herself two silk dresses. They have bought two sofas, an oblong table, a half a dozen chairs,—they got them at a bargain, for forty rubles; but the furniture is good, and it would ordinarily cost a hundred rubles. They have notified the landlord to look for new tenants. ‘We are going to leave in about a month for our new quarters; and to you,’—that is, the landlord,—‘we are very grateful for your kindness to us.’ ‘*Nu!*’ say the landlord; ‘of course,’ says he; ‘and we for yours.’”

Marya Alekséyevna was consoled by these reports. Though she was a very rough and a very wicked woman, though she had tormented her daughter and was ready to kill her, to ruin her for her own interests, and though she cursed her, because, through her, she had failed in her plan of getting rich,—all this is true; but does it follow from this that she felt no love for her daughter? It does not follow at all. When the matter was ended, when her daughter tore herself away from her power forever, what could she do? Whatever falls from the wagon is lost. For all that, she is her daughter; and now, when there was no chance whatsoever for Viéra Pavlovna to serve Marya Alekséyevna’s interests, the mother sincerely wished her daughter good. And then, again, it does not follow that she would wish things to be God-knows-how, that it made no difference with her; she certainly had not subjected her to any system of espionage. The steps taken for watching her daughter were only adopted because she, you must confess, was morally obliged to watch her; well, and in exactly the same way, as regards the wishes for her good, she had to do it, because she was her daughter. Why shouldn’t she be reconciled? All the more when the villanous son-in-law is, according to all appearances, a man of solid character. Maybe he will be of service in time. Thus Marya Alekséyevna, little by little, approached the thought of renewing her relations with her daughter. It might have to wait half a year, or even a year, to accomplish it; but there was no need of being in a hurry; time is patient. But the news about the general and the *generálsha* at once pushed the story forward, fully all the remainder of the last half way. The villain has really proved to be a rogue. An ex-student (*studentishka*), without rank, with only a few rubles, he has made friends with a young, and therefore a very important, and rich general, and the two wives have become acquainted. Such a man will get ahead! Or even,

may be, Viéra made friends with the *generálsha*, and introduced her husband to the general; it is all the same. At all events, Viéra will get on.

And so, soon after getting the news of the famous visit, the father was sent to announce to the daughter that her mother had forgiven her, and would be glad to see her. Viéra Pavlovna went with Pavel Konstantinuitch and her husband, and they spent the early part of the evening there. The meeting was cold and constrained. They spoke much about Feódor, because it was not a dangerous subject. He had gone to the gymnasium; they persuaded Marya Alekséyevna to put him into the gymnasium boarding-school. Dmitri Sergéitch would visit him there, and during his holidays Viéra Pavlovna would take him home with her. Somehow or other they managed to spend the time until tea was ready, and then they made haste to leave. The Lopukhófs said that they expected callers.

For half a year Viéra Pavlovna had breathed pure air; her lungs had entirely forgotten the bad atmosphere of wily words, vile thoughts, low schemes, all for the sake of lucre, and her cellar made a horrible impression upon her. Filth, misery, vulgarity of every sort,—everything came up before her eyes with the keenness of a novelty.

“How did I ever have the strength to live in such miserable bonds? How could I ever breathe in that cellar? And I not only lived and breathed there, but even grew strong and well! It is wonderful! it is incomprehensible! How could I grow up there into a love for goodness? It is incomprehensible! It is beyond belief!” thought Viéra Pavlovna, as she returned home; and she felt herself rescued from suffocation.

In a little while after they got home, the guests whom they expected came, their regular cronies,—Alekséi Petróvitch, and Natalia Andreyevna, and Kirsánof; and the evening passed as it usually did. How doubly happy seemed her new life to Viéra Pavlovna, with its pure thoughts, in the society of wholesome people! As was customary, they had a jolly conversation, with many anecdotes, and at the same time they talked seriously about everything in the world: on the historical events of the time (the civil war in Kansas, the forerunner of the great war between the North and the South, which is now going on, the forerunner of still greater events, not in America alone, occupied the minds of this circle. Now everybody talks about politics, but then, only a few felt any interest in this subject, and in this small number, were Lopukhóf, Kirsánof and their friends); and they talked about the arguments of that day, as to the chemical foundations of agriculture according to the theory of Liebig, and about the laws of historical progress, without which never a conversation in society like this could go on; and about the great importance of distinguishing between real desires, which search, and seek, and find satisfaction for themselves; and fantastic wishes, which cannot be realized, and which cannot find any satisfaction, like the fantastic thirst in time of fever, for which, for the one, as well as for the other, there is one satisfaction,—to cure the organism, by whose diseased state they are engendered through the disfiguring of actual wishes and finally, about the importance of this radical differentiation which was brought out at that time by the anthropological philosophy, and about everything of this sort, and not of this sort, but allied. The ladies at times listened to these scientific discussions, which were spoken as though there were no scientific terms, and took a share asking questions sometimes, but more often not waiting for the answers; and they have even thrown cold water on Lopukhóf and Alekséi Petróvitch, when they get too much interested in the great importance of recent mineral improvements: but Alekséi Petróvitch and Lopukhóf discussed their scientific questions, and were not disturbed. Kirsánof was a bad help-meet; he was more; even entirely, on

the side of the ladies, and they all three played, sang, laughed, till late into the night, and then, becoming tired, they finally separated, even the immovable enthusiasts for serious conversation.

III. VIÉRA PAVLOVNA'S SECOND DREAM.

And here Viéra Pavlovna falls asleep, and Viéra Pavlovna dreams a dream.

A field, and across the field goes a man, namely, her *mílenki*, together with Alekséi Petróvitch, and her *mílenki* says: "You are interested in knowing why some dirt brings forth wheat so white, and pure, and delicate, while other dirt does not bring it forth at all. You will soon see the difference yourself. Look at the root of this beautiful ear of wheat. Around the root is dirt, but this dirt is just pulled up, you might even call it clean; you smell a moist odor, disagreeable, but not foul, and not putrid. You know that in the philosophical language which you and I use, this clean dirt is called actual dirt. It is dirt, to be sure; but look at it attentively and you will see that all the elements of which it is composed are healthy in themselves. When they are gathered together, they make dirt; but let the atoms change in some degree their relative co-ordination, and something else will take its place, and all that takes its place will be healthy, because the fundamental elements are healthy. Whence comes the healthy element of this dirt? Just notice the situation of this little field: you see that there is a ditch here for the water to run, and therefore there can be no rottenness here."

"Yes, motion is reality," says Alekséi Petróvitch, "because motion is life; and reality and life are one and the same thing. But the main element of life is labor, and therefore, the main element of reality is labor, and the truest sign of reality is activity."

"So you see, Alekséi Petróvitch, when the sun begins to warm this dirt, and the warmth begins to transfer its elements into a more complicated chemical correlation, into the correlation of higher forms, the wheat ear which grows out of this dirt through the warmth of the sun will be a healthy wheat ear."

"Yes, it is because it is the soil of actual life, Alekséi Petróvitch."

"Now let us go to the next field; let us also here pull up a plant, and examine its root. It is also dirty. But just notice the nature of this dirt. It is not hard to see that this dirt is rotten."

"This is fantastic dirt, to use the scientific terminology," says Alekséi Petróvitch.

"It's so; the elements of this dirt are in an unhealthy state. It is natural that no matter how they are transposed, the things not resembling dirt, derived from this dirt will be unhealthy and rotten."

"Yes; it is because the very elements are unhealthy," says Alekséi Petróvitch.

"It will not be hard for us to find the cause of this unhealthiness."

"That is, of this fantastic rottenness," says Alekséi Petróvitch.

"Yes, the rottenness of these elements; if you will notice the situation of this field, you see the water has no ditch, and there it becomes stagnant and rotten."

"Yes, absence of motion is absence of labor," says Alekséi Petróvitch. "Because labor is shown in anthropological analysis to be the radical form of motion, and which gives foundation and material for all other forms,—recreation, rest, amusement, gayety; all these without the preliminary labor have no reality; and without motion, there is no life, that is, there is no reality; therefore, this dirt is fantastic, in other words, rotten. Till within a short time ago, men did not know how

to restore health to such fields; but now means has been found; that is, drainage. The superfluous water runs off in canals, and enough remains, and it is kept in motion, and the field becomes practicable. But as long as this means is not applied, the dirt remains fantastic, that is to say, rotten, and it cannot produce any good crops; whereas, as is very natural, from the good dirt they get good crops, because it is healthy dirt. And this is what we wanted to prove; *quod erat demonstrandum*, as they say in Latin.”

As they spoke in Latin the words meaning “which was to be proven,” Viéra Pavlovna did not catch the words.

“And you, Alekséi Petróvitch, have a desire to amuse yourself with hog-Latin and syllogisms,” says her *mílenki*; that is, her husband.

Viéra Pavlovna here seemed to join them and say, “Now do stop talking about your analyses, identities, and anthropologisms. Please talk about something, gentlemen, so that I may take part in your conversation; or rather, let us play.”

“Yes, let us play,” said Alekséi Petróvitch. “Let us play ‘Confession.’”

“Come on! come on! It’ll be very gay,” says Viéra Pavlovna. “You suggested the game; now you must show us how to do it.”

“With pleasure, my sister,” says Alekséi Petróvitch. “But how old are you, my dear sister? eighteen?”

“I shall soon be nineteen.”

“But you are not yet; therefore, let us suppose that you are eighteen, and we will all confess what we did till we were eighteen, because we must have an equality of conditions. I will confess for myself and my wife. My father was a *diakon* in a governmental town, and then he took up the business of book-binding; and my mother took seminarists to board. From morning till night my father and mother were always worrying and talking about how to live. Father used to drink, but only at times when intolerable want stared him in the face—that was real grief; or, when his income was pretty good, he used to give my mother all he had, and say, ‘Well, *mátushka*, now thank God, you will not suffer want for two months to come; but I have left half a ruble in my pocket, and I shall take a drink for very joy’—that was a real joy. My mother used to get vexed very often. Sometimes she used to beat me, but only when she had a pain in the small of the back, as she herself used to say, from lifting the boiler and kettles, from washing all the clothes of five of us besides five seminarists, and from washing the floors dirtied by our twenty feet which did not wear *galoshes*, and from taking care of the cow. It is a real strain upon the nerves to bear too much labor without rest. And for all that, the ends did not used to meet, as she expressed it; that is, she was short of money for getting boots for some one of us brothers, or shoes for the sisters. Then she used to beat us. She used to pet us too, when we, stupid little children that we were, expressed a desire to help her in her work, or whenever we did anything clever, or whenever she took a very rare moment of rest, and her back did not ache, as she used to say—all that was a real joy—”

“*Akh!* don’t tell us anything more about your real sorrows and joys,” says Viéra Pavlovna.

“If that is the case, perhaps you would like to hear Natasha’s confession?”

“I do not want to hear it. She, too, had the same kind of real sorrows and joys, I am sure of it.”

“That’s absolutely true.”

“But, maybe, you will be interested in hearing my confession,” says Serge, who suddenly appeared to be with them.

“We will see,” says Viéra Pavlovna.

“My father and mother, though they were rich, yet they always worried and talked about money. Rich people, too, are not free from such kinds of worryment—”

“You don’t know how to play ‘Confession,’ Serge,” said Alekséi Petróvitch, politely. “Please tell me why they worried about money matters? What expenses worried them? What necessities put them into embarrassment?”

“Yes, I understand why you ask that,” said Serge; “but let us drop this subject. Let us turn to the other view of their thoughts. They, too, took care of their children.”

“But they always had enough to give their children, didn’t they?” asked Alekséi Petróvitch.

“Of course; but they had to look out that—”

“Don’t play ‘Confession,’ Serge,” said Alekséi Petróvitch. “We know your whole story; care about superfluities, thoughts about things not necessary, have been the soil in which you grew up; that is, a fantastic soil. Just look at yourself! You are naturally not at all a stupid man, but a very good man; maybe not worse and not more stupid than we are; but what are you good for? what is the use of your living?”

“I am good for escorting Julie everywhere that she wants me to go. I help Julie to spend all the money she wants to spend,” replies Serge.

“From this we see,” says Alekséi Petróvitch, “that a fantastic and unhealthy soil—”

“*Akh!* how tired I am of your realism and fantasticism! I don’t know what they mean by such terms, and still they keep on using them,” says Viéra Pavlovna.

“Wouldn’t you like to talk with me?” asks Marya Alekséyevna, who also appeared suddenly. “You gentlemen get away from here, for I want to talk with my daughter.”

All disappear. Viérotchka finds herself alone with Marya Alekséyevna. Marya Alekséyevna’s face assumes a laughing expression.

“Viéra Pavlovna, you are an educated woman; you are so virtuous and high-toned,” says Marya Alekséyevna, and her voice trembles with anger; “you are so kind; how can I then, who am rough and a drunkard, talk with you? Viéra Pavlovna, you have a bad and beastly mother; but allow me to ask, lady, why your mother took all the bother she did for you? It was about victuals. This, according to your idea, is a genuine care peculiar to humanity; isn’t that so? You have had scoldings, you have seen bad deeds and meanness; but allow me to ask what they were meant for? Was it for nothing? Was it all nonsense? No, lady; no matter how things go in your family, it was not an empty, fantastic life. You see, Viéra Pavlovna, I have learned to speak as you do, in scientific language. But it may grieve you and shame you, Viéra Pavlovna, that your mother is a bad and ill-tempered woman? Would you like, Viéra Pavlovna, for me to become a good and honest woman? I am an enchantress, Viéra Pavlovna; I can bewitch things; I can fulfil your wish. Just look, Viéra Pavlovna! your wish is already being fulfilled. I, who am vixenish, vanish. Look at this kind mother and her daughter!”

A room. On the door-sill snores a drunken, unshaven, miserable man. Who it is cannot be told; his face is half covered with his hand, and the rest is discolored and bruised. A bed. On the bed a woman; yes, it is Marya Alekséyevna; but how kind, but how pale she is! how feeble, though she is only forty-five years old! how exhausted! By the bedside is a young girl of eighteen. “It is I myself, Viérotchka; but how ragged I seem! What does this mean? my complexion is so yellow, and my features are so rough! and what a miserable chamber! Scarcely any furniture!”

“Viérotchka, my dear, my angel,” says Marya Alekséyevna, “just lie down and take a rest, my treasure. Why do you watch with me? I can attend to myself. This is the third night that you have not slept.”

"Never mind; I am not tired," says Viérotchka.

"I am not any better, Viérotchka. How will you get along without me? Your father's pittance is as small as it can be, and he himself is a poor support to you. You are a pretty girl. There are many bad people in this world. There will be no one to watch over you. I tremble for you." Viérotchka weeps.

"My dear, don't be grieved; I am telling you this, not to blame you, but to warn you. What made you leave home on Friday, the day before I fell sick?" Viérotchka weeps.

"He will deceive you, Viérotchka. Give him up."

"No, *mámenka*."

Two months pass. How is it that two months pass in one minute? An army officer is sitting. On the table before the officer is a bottle. On the officer's knees is she, Viérotchka.

Again two months more have passed in one minute.

A lady is sitting. Before the lady she, Viérotchka, is standing.

"Can you iron, dear?"

"I can."

"To what class do you belong? Are you a serf or free?"

"My father was a *tchinovnik*."¹

"So you belong to the nobility, my dear? Then I can't take you. What kind of a servant would you make? Go away, my dear; I can't take you."

Viérotchka is on the street.

"Mademoiselle! ho, mademoiselle!" says some young drunken fellow, accosting her. "Where are you going? Let me escort you."

Viérotchka runs to the Neva.

"Well, my dear, have you seen all these things that my magic art has conjured up? How do you like being with your kind mother?" asks the real Marya Alekséyevna, again appearing. Am I not a good enchantress? Hain't I hit it off well? Why don't you speak? You have a tongue in your mouth, hain't you? I'll squeeze a word out of you! It's so hard to make you speak. Have you been shopping?"

"Yes," says Viérotchka; and she trembles.

"Have you seen, have you heard, what's going on?"

"Yes."

"Do they live well, them learned folks? Do they read books, and think as you do about your new plan for folks getting along better? Do they? Tell me!"

Viérotchka says nothing, but she trembles.

"*Ek!* there ain't nothing to be got out of you. Do they live well? Hear my question!"

Viérotchka says nothing, but she is in a cold sweat.

"One can't git a word out of you! Do they live well? I ask you. Are they good? I ask you. Would you like to be like them? You don't speak! You turn away your phiz! Just listen, Viérotchka, to what I am going to say! You are educated; you are educated on money that I stole. You are thinking about the good; but if I had not been bad, you would not have even known what good

¹ The Russian *tchin*, or hierarchy of rank, was established by Peter the Great. It consists of fourteen grades, with complicated titles in the civil, military, and marine service, the court, etc. The lowest title in the civil rank is "Collegiate Register," corresponding with cornet in the army. From the fourteenth to the seventh class in the army, from the ninth to the fourth in the civil service, personal nobility is attached. Above those grades nobility is hereditary. Any person who comes under this vast hierarchy is a *tchinovnik*.

is. Do you understand? You owe all to me. You are my daughter. Do you understand? I am your mother!”

Viérotchka weeps and trembles, and is in a cold sweat. “*Mámenka*, what do you want of me? I cannot love you.”

“Do I ask you to love me?”

“I should like at least to respect you; but I cannot do that, either.”

“Do I need your respect?”

“What do you want, then, *mámenka*? Why have you come to me, and why do you speak so harshly to me? What do you want of me?”

“Be grateful, you selfish girl! Do not love, do not respect me? I am a vixen; why should you love me? I am bad; why should you respect me? But you understand, Viérka, that if I were not what I am, you would not be what you are. You are good because I am bad. You are sweet-tempered because I am a vixen. Understand that, Viérka, and be grateful.”

“Leave me, Marya Alekséyevna; I want to speak with my sister.”

Marya Alekséyevna vanishes.

The bride of her bridegrooms, the sister of her sisters, takes Viérotchka by the hand. “Viérotchka, I always wanted to be kind to you because I am kind and I am just as the person is with whom I speak. But now you are melancholy, so you see I too am melancholy. Look! do I make a good appearance being melancholy?”

“You look better than any one else in the world.”

“Kiss me, Viérotchka. We both of us are sad; and yet your mother spoke the truth. I do not like your mother, but I need her help.”

“Can’t you get along without her?”

“By and by I shall be able to get along without her, when people will not need to be ill-tempered; but now it is impossible. You see, kind people cannot get to their feet alone. It is the ill-tempered who alone are strong. They are keen. But you see, Viérotchka, that there are different degrees of ill-temper: some of them want everything in the world to go to the bad; others, who are just as ill-tempered, want things to improve, because it would be better for their interests. You see it was necessary for your mother’s plans to have you educated. She took your money which you got by giving lessons, because she wanted her daughter to capture a rich son-in-law for her; and for that same reason she wanted you to be educated. You see she had bad thoughts, and yet they brought forth good for mankind. Haven’t you been benefited? But many bad people act otherwise. If your mother had been Anna Petrónna, would you have studied so as to become educated? Would you have learned what was good, and loved it? No; you would not have been allowed to learn about the good; you would have been made a doll. Isn’t it so? Such a mother must have a doll in her daughter, because she herself is a doll, and she is always playing dolls with dolls. But your mother was a bad woman; yet she was a character. It was necessary for her that you should not be a doll. Don’t you see how the wicked vary? Others are hindering me, because I want men to be men, and not dolls; they want men to be dolls. And other bad people are helping me. They do not consciously help me, but they give ample chance for men to be men; they gather the means for men to be men, and this is all that I want. Yes, Viérotchka, now I cannot get along without such bad people, since they work against the other kind of bad. My bad people are bad, but under their cruel hands the good is growing. Yes, Viérotchka, be grateful to your mother. Do not love her; she is bad; but you owe everything to her, know that; without her, you would not have been!”

"And will it always be so, or will it change?"

"No, Viérotchka, it will not always be so; it will change by and by. When the kind become strong, I shall not need the ill-tempered; and this will be soon, Viérotchka. Then the bad will see that it is impossible for them to be bad; and those ill-tempered who had any character will become kind. They were ill-tempered only because it was contrary to their interests to be kind; because they know that goodness is better than badness. They will begin to love it when it will be possible for them to love it without injuring their interests."

"And what will become of the bad who were dolls? I feel sorry for them, too!"

They will play with other kinds of dolls, only they will be harmless dolls. But they will have children different from what they themselves are, because I will make all men to be men, and I shall teach their children not to be dolls, but men."

"*Akh!* how good that will be!"

"Yes, even now it is good, because this good is in preparation; at least, those who, helping to bring it about, are already enjoying it. When you, Viérotchka, help your cook to get your dinner ready, it may be suffocating in the kitchen, but it is good for you. What do you care for the gas and suffocating odors! All enjoy sitting at dinner, but more than all he who helps get it ready; it tastes doubly sweet to him. And you like to eat good things, Viérotchka, don't you?"

"It is true," says Viérotchka; and she smiles because she was caught in liking sweetmeats, and in liking to prepare them in the kitchen.

"Then, why are you melancholy? You are not melancholy any more!"

"How kind you are!"

"And happy, Viérotchka; I am always happy, Viérotchka! Even when I am melancholy, yet I am happy; is not that true?"

"Yes; but when I am melancholy, you also come as though you were melancholy, and you always drive away the blues. I am happy with you, very happy."

"Do you remember the little song, *Donc vivons?*"

"I do."

"Let us sing it!"

"All right!"

"Viérotchka! Viérotchka, have I waked you up? However, breakfast is ready. I was frightened, I heard you groaning; I came in, and you were singing in your sleep."

"No, my *mílenki*, you didn't wake me; I should have waked myself. But what a strange dream I had, *mílenki*; I will tell you at tea. Leave me; I want to get dressed. And how did you dare to come into my room without permission, Dmitri Sergéitch? You forget yourself. Were you frightened about me, my *mílenki*? Come here, and I will kiss you for it!" She kissed him. "Now leave me! leave me! I want to get dressed."

"Oh, let me stay! I'll act as your dressing-maid."

"*Nu!* I don't object, only how shameful it is."

IV.

Viéra Pavlovna's sewing union was established. The foundations were very simple at first,—so simple, indeed, that it is not worth while to speak of them. Viéra Pavlovna did not make any rules at all for her first three seamstresses, except that she would pay them a trifle more than the regular seamstresses were getting at the shops. There was nothing particularly strange about the business; the seamstresses saw that Viéra Pavlovna was not a woman of mere words, not fickle; and therefore, without any hesitation they accepted her offer to work with her. There was no reason for hesitation in the fact that a woman of moderate means wanted to establish a sewing shop. These three girls found three or four more. They selected them with the same care with which Viéra Pavlovna proposed to them, and in these conditions of choice there was nothing worthy of suspicion; that is, there was nothing out of the ordinary run about it. A young and modest woman wishes the working girls in her establishment to be girls of straightforward character, kind, considerate, inclined to stay in one place; is there anything strange about that? She does not want any quarrels, that's all; and therefore it's clever of her, and nothing more. Viéra Pavlovna made acquaintance with these chosen girls; she became very well acquainted with them before she agreed to accept them; that was natural. It shows that she is a woman of sound common sense, and that's all. There is nothing to deliberate about; there is nothing to distrust.

Thus they worked a month, receiving in due time the wages which had been agreed upon. Viéra Pavlovna was constantly at the shop, and they learned to look upon her as an economical, careful, and reasonable woman, with unusual consideration for them, and thus she won their full confidence. There was nothing extraordinary about that either, nor was anything noticeable except that the mistress was a good mistress, in whose hands the business would succeed; she knows how to manage.

But at the end of a month Viéra Pavlovna came into the shop one day with some kind of an account-book; she asked her seamstresses to stop work, and listen to what she had to say.

She began to speak, in very simple language, things which were comprehensible, very comprehensible, but which her seamstresses had never heard before, either from her or from anybody else.

“Now that we know each other well,” she began, “I can say of you that you are good workers and good girls. And you will not say that I am a fool. Consequently I can speak with you frankly about my ideas. If you should find anything strange in them, you will think carefully about them, and not insist that my ideas are foolish, because you know that I am not a foolish woman. This is the plan that I propose:—

“Good people say that it is possible to establish sewing shops where seamstresses might work to much greater profit to themselves than in those shops that we know about. And so I wanted to make an experiment. Judging by the first month, it appears that it can be done. You have been receiving your wages regularly, and now I want to tell you how much over and above your wages and all other expenses remain in my hands as clear profit.”

Viéra Pavlovna read over to them the debit and credit account for the month. In the expense account were reckoned, besides the wages paid, all other expenses,—the rent of the shop, light, even down to Viéra Pavlovna's charges for an *izvoshchik*, which she hired in the interests of the shop, and cost about a ruble.

"You see," she continued, "there remains in my hands so much money. Now what am I going to do with it? I have established this sewing shop with the express purpose of letting the profits go to the very seamstresses by whose work it was earned. Therefore, I am going to divide it among you. This first time, all of you will get an equal share; each one of you her own. By and by we can see whether we cannot manage it better, or whether there isn't some other way that will not be still more profitable for you."

She divided the money.

For some time the seamstresses could not believe their senses, so great was their surprise; then they began to pour out their thanks. Viéra Pavlovna gave them sufficient time to express their gratitude for the division of the money, so that she might not hurt their feelings, by refusing to listen, for that would have looked like indifference to their opinions and inclinations; then she continued:—

"Now I must explain to you the hardest question of all; it will be sure to arise, and I do not know as I shall be able to make it plain to you. Yet I must speak about it. Why didn't I keep the money, and what was my design in establishing the shop, if I did not intend to profit from the advantage arising from it? I live with my husband, as you know, and have a sufficiency: we are not rich, but we have all that we need. If I am in need of anything, all I have to do would be to ask my husband for it; and I should not even have to ask him, for he would see that I was in want of more money, and I should have it. He does not spend his time now in doing those things which bring him in most money, but in those things which he likes best. And as we love each other dearly, it pleases him most of all to do those things which I like, and it is the same with me. Therefore, if I should be short of money, he would undertake some business which would be more profitable than his present occupation, and he is able to find such a business, because he is a clever and an able man; but you have some idea of him, and the fact that he does not do so, is proof positive that the money which we both have is enough for us both. This is because I have no great hankering after money, for you know that different people have different desires, and not all care for money; some hanker after balls; some after fine dresses, or cards, and all such people are ready to ruin themselves for the sake of their passion, and a good many do ruin themselves, and no one is surprised that their passion is dearer to them than money. And my hobby happens to be this thing which I am trying to arrange with you, and I not only do not ruin myself for the sake of my hobby, but I do not even spend any money on it; I am only too glad to give up some of my time to it, and do not take any of the profit for myself. Well, now, according to my idea, there is nothing strange about this; for who expects to make any money out of his pet hobby? Everybody else even goes to expense for the sake of gratifying it, but I do not do that; I do not put any money out. Consequently, the advantage lies on my side, compared with others; for I ride my hobby and get pleasure out of it, without any loss to myself; whereas, others have to spend money for their pleasures. And why is it that I have this hobby? This is the reason: Kind and clever people have written many books about the way men should get along in this world; how all should have the chance to enjoy life, and our principal way, they say, consists in starting shops according to a new system. And so I want to see for myself whether we shall be able to start such a system as is needed. It is just the same as when one man wants to build a

fine house, another, to plant a splendid garden, or orangery, so as to get pleasure out of them; so do I want to start a fine sewing shop, so that I may have pleasure in it.

“Of course, it would have been satisfactory enough, if I were to divide the profits among you every month, as I have just done; but clever people say that there is still a better way of doing it, so that there should be more profits, and the profits themselves should be used to much better advantage. They say that this can be very easily done. Now, we shall see. I shall tell you, by degrees, what can be done, according to the ideas of clever people; and if you yourselves will take notice, as you look on, and anything which promises well suggests itself to you, we can try to do it, little by little, according to circumstances. But I must confess to you, that without your aid, I cannot take this new step. Nothing new shall be tried without your approval. Clever men say that only what people themselves want to do turns out well. And I think so, too. Consequently, you need not fear any new departures; for everything will go on in the old way, unless you yourselves want to make a change. Without your own wish, nothing can be done.

“And now, this is my last order, as mistress of the shop, without your advice. You see that accounts must be kept, and care must be taken that there are no unnecessary expenses. Last month I managed the business myself, but henceforth, I do not want to take charge of it. Select two of your number to act in concert with me. I will not do anything without them. It is your money, and not mine; therefore, you must look after it. As yet, the thing is an experiment. It has not yet been shown who among you is most capable of managing it; so, for the time being, those who are selected must serve for only a short term, and in a week you will find out whether it will be necessary to select others, or leave the former in their places.”

Long discussions were awakened by these unusual words. But Viéra Pavlovna had already gained their confidence, and she spoke so simply, not going too far in advance, not conjuring up any extraordinary prospects, which, after a moment's enthusiasm, would fade away into distrust, that the girls did not look upon her as a lunatic, and that was all that was required,—that she should not be regarded as a lunatic. The experiment progressed slowly.

Of course it progressed slowly. Here is a short history of the shop for the first three years, during which it played the principal part in the life of Viéra Pavlovna herself.

The girls who at first made up the *personelle* of the new shop were carefully selected; they were good seamstresses; they were directly interested in the success of the scheme; therefore, it was natural that the work went on successfully. The shop never lost any of its customers who once entrusted it with orders. There was some envy manifested on the part of several shops and factories, but it did not produce the least effect except to oblige Viéra Pavlovna to take out a license to display a sign, so that there might not be any chicanery. Soon more orders began to come in than the girls who at first made up the union were able to fill, and thus they were obliged gradually to increase their numbers. At the end of a year and a half there were twenty girls in the union, and after that still more.

One of the first results of giving a decisive voice to the entire shop in the management of its business was a decision which might have been expected: in the very first month of their *regime* the girls decided that it would not do for Viéra Pavlovna to work without pay. When they announced this decision to her, she said that they were right. They wanted to give her the third part of the profits; she laid it aside for some time before she ventured to explain to them that it was diametrically opposed to the fundamental idea of their scheme. For some time they could not understand this; then afterwards they came to the conclusion that Viéra Pavlovna refused a special share of the profits, not from self-conceit, but from the nature of the experiment itself.

By this time the shop had expanded to such dimensions that Viéra Pavlovna by herself was not able to attend to all the cutting, and so she had to get an assistant. They gave Viéra Pavlovna the same wages as the other cutter. The money which she had been laying aside was now, by her request, taken back into the common fund, with the exception of what was due her for her work as cutter; the balance was employed in the establishment of a bank. For about a year Viéra Pavlovna spent the larger part of each day at the shop, and really worked as hard as any one else, according to the schedule of hours. When she saw the possibility of spending less time in the shop than a whole day, her wages were reduced in proportion.

How should the profits be divided? Viéra Pavlovna wanted to bring it about that the profits should be divided equally among them all. They consented to this only towards the middle of the third year; before that time they tried several different schemes. At first they divided the profits proportionally according to the wages earned by each; then they came to the conclusion that if a girl missed work for a few days on account of illness or any other important reason, it would not be fair to reduce her share of the division money, which, properly speaking, had not been gained during those few days, but by the general course of the work and the general state of the shop. Then they went a step further, and agreed that the cutters and other girls who received extra wages, by delivering orders and other duties, were already sufficiently paid by their extra wages, and that therefore it would be unfair for them to get proportionally more than the others also in their share of the profits. The ordinary seamstresses who had no extra duties were so modest that they did not ask for any charge, although they saw the injustice of the other arrangement, which was due to their own vote; the others who had this extra compensation felt the awkwardness of availing themselves of the extra division, and when they once came into the spirit of the scheme, they entirely refused it. It is necessary, however, to remark that this temporary modesty, the patience of the ones and the refusal of the others, was not a remarkable step, taking into the consideration the constant improvement in the affairs of both sides. The most difficult task of all was to develop the idea that the ordinary seamstresses were all entitled to an equal share in the profits, notwithstanding the fact that some of them were earning more wages than others; that seamstresses who were working more successfully than others were already sufficiently compensated for the success of their work by getting better wages. The last change in the way of dividing the profits was accomplished in the middle of the third year after the shop girls understood that the receiving of the profits was not the reward for the art of one or two of their number, but the result of the general character of the shop, the result of its arrangement, its aim,—and this aim meant equality, so far as was possible, in the profits, for all participating in the work without regard to their personal peculiarities, that upon this character of the union depended the participation of the workers in the profits; but the character of the union, its spirit, its arrangement, consisted in the participation of all; and for this participation of all every member was a necessary factor. The silent acquiescence of the most hesitating and of the least gifted is no less beneficial for the preservation and development of the scheme, no less profitable for all of them, and for the success of the whole enterprise, than the active zeal of the most lively and gifted.

I omit a good many details because I am not describing the workshop, but I simply enter into it with sufficient fulness to illustrate Viéra Pavlovna's activity. If I mention some details, it is only because I wanted to show how Viéra Pavlovna acted; how she conducted the business step by step, patiently and tirelessly, and how firmly she kept up to her rule not to show her hand as

mistress, but to explain, to advise, to plan, to offer her assistance, to bring to a successful issue the decision of her co-operatives.

The profits were divided every month; at first each girl took her share and spent it separately apart from the others; each one had immediate necessities, and they were not in the habit of acting together. But when after constantly participating in the business, they had acquired the habit of understanding the entire procedure of the work in the shop, Viéra Pavlovna turned their attention to the fact that in their business the quantity of orders varied in different months of the year, and that therefore it would be advisable, during the most profitable months, to put away a portion of their profits against those months when the profits were not so great. The accounts were kept with great accuracy; the girls knew that if any one of them left the shop, she would get without any difficulty her share of the earnings remaining in the depository; therefore they consented to accede to this plan. A small reserve capital was established; it gradually grew; they began to look for various ways of applying it. From the very first, all understood that this reserve capital could be drawn upon in the way of loans by those members who had any extraordinary need of money, and that no interest would be charged for its use. Poor people have the idea that respectable help in money ought to be given without interest. After this bank was established, there followed a commission house for purchases; the girls found it more profitable to buy tea, coffee, sugar, foot wear, and many other things through this shop, as it bought goods not at retail but at wholesale, consequently cheaper. From this in a short time they branched out still further; they began to understand that it might also be possible to arrange for the purchase of the bread and provisions which they used to buy every day from the bakers and retail shops. But here they saw that to do this they must live in one neighborhood; they began to gather into circles, each circle occupying one suite, and they tried to get quarters near the shop; then the shop had to establish its agency to transact business with the bakeries and the stores. In a year and a half or so, almost all the girls were living in one large apartment, had one general table, and purchased their provisions in exactly the same way as is done in great establishments.

Half of the girls were lonely souls. Some of them had old women as relatives, mothers, or aunts; two supported aged fathers, and a good many had little brothers and sisters. On account of these family relationships three of the girls could not live in the general apartment: one of them had a mother whom it was impossible to get along with; the second had a mother who was a *tchinóvnitsa*, and did not want to live with peasant girls; the third had a drunken father. These only made use of the agency just the same as those seamstresses did who were not girls, but married women. But, apart from these three, all the other girls who had relatives to support lived in the general apartment. They lived by themselves in one suite, two or three in one room; but their male or female relatives were given rooms according to circumstances. Two old ones had separate rooms; all the other old women lived together. For the little boys there was a separate room, and two others for the little girls. It was decided that the little boys could stay until they were eight years old; those above that age would be put out to learn a trade.

There was an accurate account kept of everything, in order that the whole association might get used to the idea that no one was getting any advantage over anybody else, that they were not doing each other any harm. The accounts of the single girls in the apartment for rooms and board were very simple. After some hesitation, they decided to charge for a brother or sister, under eight years of age, the fourth part of the expenses of a grown-up girl, and that then the support of a girl until she was twelve was to be reckoned at one-third; after she was twelve, the price should be one-half of that of her sister. When the little girls should reach the age of thirteen, they should

enter the shop as apprentices, if they did not succeed in establishing themselves otherwise; and it was decided that from sixteen and upwards they should enter as full members of the union, provided they were found to be skilful seamstresses. For the support of the grown-up relatives, as much, of course, was charged as for that of the seamstresses: for separate rooms there was an extra charge. Almost all the old women, and the three old men, who lived in the union apartment, busied themselves in the kitchen and in other domestic duties, and for this, of course, they were paid.

All this can be told very quickly in words, and in reality it seemed very easy, simple, and natural, when it was once accomplished. But everything was done very deliberately, and every new step cost a great many arguments, and every change was the result of a whole series of experiments. It would be very tedious and dry to describe the other details of the shop as particularly as we have told about the division of the profits. In regard to many points it is not necessary to speak at all, lest we should weary the reader; but we must briefly mention one or two other things. For instance, that the union had its agency for selling ready-made clothing, which was made at the time when they were not busy with orders. A separate store they could not as yet accomplish; but they made arrangements with one of the shops in the Gostinui Dvor. They established a little shop in the Pushing Market; two of the old women took charge of this little shop. But it is necessary to speak with a little more fulness about one side of the life of the union.

Viéra Pavlovna, from the very first, began to bring them books. After she had given her directions she began to read aloud. She would read half an hour, or an hour, if she were not interrupted by the necessity of giving out new work. Then the girls took a rest from listening; then followed some more reading, and another rest. It is hardly worth mentioning that the girls, from the very first, became interested in the reading; some of them had been fond of it even before. In two or three weeks, the reading during the working hours took the form of a regular course. In three or four months, two or three good readers were found, who were delegated to relieve Viéra Pavlovna, to read half an hour; and this half-hour was reckoned as regular work. When the duty of reading aloud was taken from Viéra Pavlovna, Viéra Pavlovna, who even before used to vary the monotony of reading by telling stories, began to speak oftener and more at length; then her stories turned into a channel resembling elementary courses in various branches of knowledge. Afterwards—and this was a very great step—Viéra Pavlovna saw the possibility of introducing a regular course of instruction. The girls became so ambitious to learn, and their work went on so successfully, that they decided to take, during their working day before dinner, a long rest for hearing the lessons.

“Alekséi Petróvitch,” said Viéra Petróvitch once, while she was at the Mertsálofs, “I have a favor that I want to ask of you. Natasha is already on my side. My sewing union is becoming a lyceum for all possible knowledge. Be one of its professors.”

“Well, what shall I teach? Latin or Greek or logic or rhetoric?” said Alekséi Petróvitch, laughing. “My specialty would not be very interesting, according to your opinion, and the opinion of another man whom you know.”

“Yes, you are needed, just because you are a specialist. You must serve as the buckler of morality and the special direction of our science.”

“That’s true. I see that without me there would be no morality. Give me a professorship.”

“For instance, Russian history or international history.”

“Capital! But I will read this subject up, and I shall be taken as a specialist. Excellent! Two occupations,—to be a professor and a buckler.”

Natalia Andréyevna, Lopukhóf, two or three students, and Viéra Pavlovna herself were the other professors, as they called themselves in jest.

Together with the course of instructions, they also arranged for amusements. They had evening parties; they had picnics out of town,—at first rarely, but afterwards, when they had more money, more frequently; they took boxes at the theatre. During the third winter they took ten places in the parquet circle during the Italian opera.

How delightful, how exciting this was to Viéra Pavlovna! there was much labor and care, and she also had disappointments. The misfortune that befell one of the best girls in the union powerfully affected not her alone, but the whole shop. Sáshenka Pribuitkova, one of the three girls whom Viéra Pavlovna herself found, was very handsome, and was very modest. She was engaged to a good and kind young man, who was a *tchinovnik*. Once, as she was walking on the street rather late, some gentleman accosted her. She hastened her steps. He followed her, and caught her by the arm. She snatched herself away from him and started to run; but by the motion of pulling away her arm, she hit his chest, and on the pavement was heard the ring of the polite gentleman's watch. The polite gentleman caught Sáshenka with perfect self-possession, and with a feeling of legal right, and cried out, "Robbery! police!" Two policemen came and took Sáshenka to the station-house. Meantime, nothing was known in the shop as to what had become of her, and they could not imagine where she could be lost. On the fourth day a kind soldier, attached to the station-house, brought Viéra Pavlovna a note from Sáshenka. Lopukhóf immediately went off to see about it. He was treated insultingly; he gave them back in their own coin, and went off to Serge. Serge and Julie had gone out of town to a great picnic, and did not come back for two days. Two hours after his return, one of the officials begged Sáshenka's pardon, and went to beg her bridegroom's pardon into the bargain. But he could not find the young man. The bridegroom had been to see Sáshenka the evening before at the station, and having learned from the policemen who were placed in charge of her the name of the dandy (*frant*), went to him, and challenged him to a duel. Before he was challenged, the dandy apologized for his mistake in a very insulting tone; but after he had received the challenge, he burst into a peal of laughter. The *tchinovnik* said, "Here, then, you will not refuse this challenge," and slapped him in the face; the dandy seized a stick; the *tchinovnik* hit him in the chest; the dandy fell to the ground, and his servants hurried to the noise. The *barin* was picked up dead; he had been knocked violently to the floor, and struck his cheek on the sharp corner of a table. The *tchinovnik* was put in prison, a criminal suit was instituted, and no end could be foreseen to this case. What was the result? There was no result; only, from that time, it was sad to look at Sáshenka. The shop had several other experiences; not criminal like this, but likewise not very gay. Very ordinary occurrences, such as cause girls long tears, and young or middle-aged men not long but pleasant recreation. Viéra Pavlovna knew that, according to the existing ideas and conditions, such occurrences were unavoidable; that young girls could not be kept in perfect safety, either by their own care or by that exercised by others. It is just the same way as it used to be in old times, in regard to small-pox, before people learned to get rid of it. Now, whoever suffers from small-pox, is himself to blame, and much more, those near to him; but once it was otherwise: no one was to blame except the miserable weather or the wretched town or village; for the person suffering from small-pox probably carried the contagion by not putting himself into quarantine, until he got well. The same thing is true now of these stories. Some time in the future people may get rid of this kind of small-pox also. Means have been found for it; but people are not yet ready to adopt it, just as it took a long time, a very long time, for people to be willing to adopt preventatives against the

small-pox. Viéra Pavlovna knew that this miserable weather was to be found mainly in cities and towns, and it gets victims even from the most careful hands: but this is a very poor consolation, when you know only that "I am not to blame, my dear, for your sorrow; nor are you to blame, yourself." Nevertheless, every one of these ordinary occurrences caused Viéra Pavlovna much grief, and still more labor. Sometimes it was necessary to look up the girls in order to help them; but more frequently there was no need of hunting; it was only necessary to help, to pacify, to restore courage, to bring back self-respect, to reason, to bid them cease weeping,—“If you stop doing so, you will not need to weep.”

But her happiness was much more, oh, much more! Everything was happiness, except these sorrows; and these sorrows were only exceptional and rare occurrences. To-day or a half-year you may be sorry for one; but at the same time you are glad for all others; and when two or three weeks have passed, you may be glad for this one too. Bright and gay was the ordinary course of the business, and it filled Viéra Pavlovna's heart with constant happiness. And if sometimes things went hard owing to these griefs, yet exceptionally happy circumstances compensated for them; and these arose oftener than her griefs; for instance, they succeeded in establishing the young sisters or brothers of one or another of the girls; on the third year two girls passed their examinations as private teachers. What a happiness that was to them! There were several good things of this sort. But more often the cause of happiness for the whole shop, and for Viéra Pavlovna, was a marriage. There were a good many, and all were fortunate. The marriage passed off very gayly; there were evening parties before and after it, a good many surprises to the bride from her friends in the shop, and a dowry was given her from the reserve fund; and, then, again how much work Viéra Pavlovna had; she had her hands full, of course. One thing at first seemed to the shop indelicate on the part of Viéra Pavlovna: the first bride asked Viéra Pavlovna to be her nuptial god-mother, but her request was not granted; the second did likewise, and was also refused. More often the bridal nuptial god-mother was Mrs. Mertsálova or her mother, who was also a very nice lady; but Viéra Pavlovna always refused; she would help dress the bride, and escort her to the church, but only in the capacity of one of her friends. The first time they thought that the refusal was out of displeasure for something or other; but that was not so; Viéra Pavlovna was very glad of the invitation, only she did not accept it; the second time it was believed that it was from mere modesty; Viéra Pavlovna did not want to appear in public as the patroness of the bride. And, indeed, it was true that she avoided all appearances of being influential. She always took pains to bring others to the front, so that a good many of the ladies, who came to the shop to give order, could not distinguish her from the other cutters. But Viéra Pavlovna took the greatest delight when she was explaining to any one that the whole establishment was founded and supported by the girls themselves. With these explanations she tried to convince herself of what she wanted to believe,—that the shop could get along without her, so that, in time, other shops might be established of the same kind, entirely spontaneously; and why not? wouldn't it be a good thing? It would be better than anything else; even without any leadership, outside of the rank of seamstresses, but by the thought and planning of the seamstresses themselves. This was Viéra Pavlovna's pet dream.

V.

And thus three years have passed since the union was founded, and more than three years since Viéra Pavlovna's marriage. How quietly and busily passed these three years, how full they were of calmness, happiness, and all that was good!

Viéra Pavlovna after waking, long takes her ease in bed; she likes to take her ease, and as it were, to doze; and yet she does not doze, but she thinks of what must needs be done; and so she lies, not dozing and not thinking; yes, she is thinking, "How warm, soft, good, how comfortable it is to sleep in the morning"; and so she lies and takes her ease, until from the neutral room—no, we must say from one of the neutral rooms; there are two of them now, because it is the fourth year of their wedded life—her husband, that is her *mílenki*, says, "Viérotchka, are you awake?"

"Yes, *mílenki*."

That is as good as to say that her husband may begin to make the tea (in the morning it is his work to make the tea), and that Viéra Pavlovna—no, in her room, she is not Viéra Pavlovna, but Viérotchka—may dress herself. How long it takes to dress herself! No, it does not take her long,—one minute; but she plays long with the water; she likes to splash in it, and then she takes considerable time with her hair. No, she does not take very much time for it; she arranges it in a minute; but she trifles with it, because she likes her hair; however, sometimes she is long busy with one of the important stages of her toilet, putting on her shoes; she wears elegant shoes; she dresses very simply, but shoes are her passion.

And here she comes out to tea, kisses her husband. "How did you sleep, *mílenki*?" She talks with him at table about different trifles and serious things; however, Viéra Pavlovna—no, Viérotchka, because at morning tea she is still Viérotchka—drinks not as much tea as cream; tea is only pretext for cream, she has more than half a cup of it; cream is also her passion. It is hard to find good cream in Petersburg, but Viérotchka manages to find the best that there is, without any adulteration. She dreams of having her own cow; well, if business improves as it has been doing, it can be realized in a year's time. But now it is ten o'clock. "*Mílenki*" goes off to give his lessons or to business; he is employed in the office of a manufacturer. Viéra Pavlovna—now she is Viéra Pavlovna again, until the next morning—looks after the house; she has one servant, a young girl whom she has to teach everything, and after you have taught her, it is necessary to break in a new one. Viéra Pavlovna does not keep her servants long; they all get married! Within a half-year or a little more, you will see Viéra Pavlovna working on a collar or a pair of cuffs, preparing herself to be the bride's nuptial godmother; here it is impossible to refuse. "How is it possible to do otherwise, Viéra Pavlovna? you have made all the arrangements yourself, there is no one besides you." Yes, there is a great deal of care about the house. Then it is necessary to go and give her lessons; she has a good many pupils, about ten hours a week; more would be too hard, and she would not have any time. Before the lessons it is necessary to stop in the shop for a little while, and on her way home she has to look in once more. And then comes dinner with the *mílenki*. At dinner they almost always have company; one, more often two. More than two is impossible; when they have two to dinner, it is necessary to do extra work, to prepare a

new dish so as to have enough. If Viéra Pavlovna feels tired when she gets home, dinner is made more simple. She sits till dinner time in her own room, resting, and the dinner is put on as it was begun, without her help. But if she is not tired, affairs in the kitchen begin to boil and steam, and extra dishes appear at dinner, some baked dish, but more often something that can be eaten with cream; that is, something that will serve as an excuse for cream.

At dinner Viéra Pavlovna asks questions and tells about things; more often she tells stories. And how can she help telling them? How much news she has to tell about the shop! After dinner she sits a quarter of an hour longer with the *mílenki*. Then comes *dō svedánya* (good by), and they each go to their own room; and Viéra Pavlovna lies down on her little bed, and takes her ease and reads, and very often she falls asleep, more often than not. Every other day she takes a nap for an hour or an hour and a half; this is a weakness, and it is a weakness of a low character. But Viéra Pavlovna sleeps after dinner when she can get a nap; and she likes to go to sleep, and she feels neither shame nor regret for this low-toned weakness. She then gets up, after sleeping or lounging for an hour or two, dresses, and goes again to the shop, and remains there till tea-time. If they do not have company in the evening, then at tea she has another talk with the *mílenki*, and for half an hour they sit in the neutral room; then it is, "*Dō svedánya, mílenki*"; they kiss each other, and part till breakfast. Now Viéra Pavlovna sometimes works or reads, or rests from reading by playing on the piano, till very late, even till two o'clock. She has a grand piano in her room; the grand was bought not long ago; hitherto their piano was rented. This also was a great happiness, to own their own grand; it was cheaper, too. It was bought at a bargain, for a hundred rubles,—a small Erarovski, second hand; it cost seventy rubles to have it put in order; but the grand was of an excellent tone. Sometimes the *mílenki* comes to hear her sing; but only seldom: he is too busy. Thus goes the evening: work, reading, playing, singing; but reading and singing most of all. This is when they do not have company. But very often they have visitors, generally young people, younger than the "*mílenki*," and younger than Viéra Pavlovna herself; their number includes the instructors of the shop. They esteem Lopukhóf very highly; they consider him one of the best minds in Petersburg, and perhaps they are not mistaken. And their tie to the Lopukhófs consists in this: they feel that it is profitable for them to talk with Dmitri Sergéitch. To Viéra Pavlovna they show immense respect; she even allows them to kiss her hand, not feeling that it is any degradation to herself, and she behaves towards them as though she were fifteen years their senior; that is, she behaves herself in such a way when she does not get into a gale; but, to tell the truth, she very often gets into a gale. She likes to run, to frolic with them, and they are all delighted, and there is a great deal of dancing and waltzing, a great deal of simple running about, a great deal of playing on the piano, a great deal of talking and laughter, and probably more singing than anything else. But the running, laughter, and everything else does not in the least prevent the young people from absolutely and entirely and boundlessly worshipping Viéra Pavlovna, from respecting her—as may God grant respect for an older sister!—as a mother, not even a good mother, is not always respected. However, singing is not frolicking, though sometimes one cannot get along without the nonsense. But for the most part, Viéra Pavlovna slugs seriously; and sometimes, when she does not sing, she plays seriously, and her hearers then sit in dumb silence. Not infrequently they have guests who are older, or who are of the same age as the Lopukhófs; for the most part, Lopukhóf's former classmates, or friends of his former comrades, two or three young professors, almost all bachelors; almost the only married people are the Mertsálofs. The Lopukhófs do not very often go out, and they go scarcely anywhere else than to the Mertsálofs', or to Mrs. Mertsálova's parents'; these kind and simple-hearted people

have a good many sons, who occupy important places in all possible official departments; and therefore at the house of the old people, who live in some comfort, Viéra Pavlovna sees a varied and different calibered society.

Free, ample, active life, not without its luxuries; lying at ease in her soft, warm bed; cream, or baked dishes and cream; it is a life that greatly delights Viéra Pavlovna.

Can there be any better life in the world? To Viéra Pavlovna it seems impossible.

Well (*da*), in early youth nothing better can be imagined.

But years pass on; and with the years, things improve, if life goes on as it should, as it goes on with a few now, as it will pass with a good many in the future.

VI.

Once (it was towards the end of summer) the girls gathered, according to their custom on Sunday, at the outskirts of the city for a picnic. During the summer they used to go out almost every holiday in boats to the islands. Viéra Pavlovna generally went with them, and this time Dmitri Sergéitch went along too, and that made this picnic remarkable. His company was a rarity, and it was the second time that he had been with them. The shop, when they heard about it, was greatly pleased. "Viéra Pavlovna will be gayer than usual, and it may be expected that the picnic will be particularly hilarious." Some of them, who had intended to spend their Sunday otherwise, changed their plans and joined those who had decided to go. It was necessary to take instead of four great hampers, five, and afterwards the number was increased to six. The company consisted of fifty people or more. There were more than twenty seamstresses (there were only six who did not take part in the picnic), three middle-aged women, a dozen children or so,—mothers, sisters, and brothers of the seamstresses; three young men—bridegrooms (one was a watchmaker's apprentice, the second was a small dealer, and these two were not in the least inferior in manners to the third, who was a school-teacher); there were five other young men of different ranks, among them even two army officers; and there were eight university and medical students. They took with them four big *samovars*, great heaps of different baked things, huge reserve stores of cold veal and other eatables. The people are young, there will be much motion, and the fresh air besides; one can count on their appetites. There are half a dozen bottles of wine. For fifty people, including fifteen young men, it does not seem a great supply!

And, in point of fact, the picnic turned out better than was even expected. They had everything. They danced in sixteen couples, and then in twelve, and also in eighteen; and in one quadrille they had even twenty out at once. They played high spy, about twenty-two couples of them; they improvised three swings between the trees; and in the intervals they drank tea and partook of luncheon. For half an hour—no, less, much less—almost half the company listened to a discussion between Dmitri Sergéitch and two students, the most radical of all his younger friends. They found in each other's arguments inconsequentiality, moderantism, and bourgeoisism.¹ These were the terms that they applied to each other; but in private each one had a special sin. One student, romanticism, and Dmitri Sergéitch was a schematist, and the other student believed in rigorism. Of course a stranger would find it hard to keep up his interest in such a discussion longer than five minutes; even one of the disputants, the romanticist, could not hold out longer than an hour and a half, then ran off to those who were dancing; but he did not run off ingloriously. He was indignant at some moderantist or other (almost with me, though I was not there at all), and, knowing that the cause of his indignation was not very old, he cried out, "Why are you talking about him? I will tell you the words which were said to me a few days ago by a respectable person—a very witty woman, 'Only till a man is twenty-five may he preserve intact the style of his thoughts.'" "I know who that lady is," said an officer who, to the romanticist's mortification,

¹ *Nyekonsekventnosti, moderantizm, burzhuznost.*

joined the disputants, "It was Mrs. N. She said it in my presence, and she is really an elegant woman; but she was caught on the spot. Half an hour before she had said that she was twenty-six years old, and do you remember how we all roared?"

And at this all four laughed, and the romanticist beat a retreat, laughing. But the officer took his place in the dispute, and the fun was much more lively than before until it was tea-time. The officer, while showing up the rigorist and the schematist much more cruelly than the romanticist had done, was himself mournfully convicted of Auguste Comteism. After tea, the officer announced that as long as his age still allowed his style of thought to be intact, he would not refrain from joining other people of his age. Then Dmitri Sergéitch and, though it was much against his will, the rigorist followed his example. They did not dance in the dances, but they played high spy. And when the men decided to run races, to jump over the ditch, then the three thinkers distinguished themselves as the most agile champions of manly exercise. The officer received the first prize for jumping over the ditch. Dmitri Sergéitch, who was a very strong man, got into a great rage when the officer defeated him. He hoped to be first in this contest after the rigorist, who had easily lifted in the air and set down again both Dmitri Sergéitch and the officer together; for this feat aroused no ambition either in the officer or Dmitri Sergéitch. The rigorist was a recognized athlete, but Dmitri Sergéitch did not care to endure the affront of not being able to defeat the officer. Half a dozen times they grasped each other, and each time the officer floored him though not without difficulty. After the sixth wrestling bout, Dmitri Sergéitch owned himself undoubtedly the weaker of the two. They were both exhausted. The three thinkers threw themselves on the grass. They continued the dispute, and now Dmitri Sergéitch recognized the value of Auguste Comteism and the officer of schematism, but the rigorist remained as before, a rigorist.

They went home at eleven o'clock. The old women and children fell asleep in the boats (it was a good thing that they had plenty of warm wraps with them); but all the rest talked without ceasing and in all the six boats there was no interruption to the jokes and laughter.

VII.

Two days later at morning tea, Viéra Pavlovna remarked to her husband that she did not like the color of his face. He said that he had not slept well the night before and that he had not felt well since evening, but it was of no consequence. He had caught a little cold at the picnic; of course during the time when he had been lying on the ground after their running and wrestling. He gave himself a little scolding for his carelessness, but he assured Viéra Pavlovna that it was a mere nothing, and he went to his business as usual; and at supper he said that apparently his ill turn had entirely passed, but on the following morning he said that he would have to stay at home for some time. Viéra Pavlovna, who had been greatly worried since the day before, became seriously frightened now and insisted on Dmitri Sergéitch calling a doctor.

“But I myself am a doctor, and can heal myself, if it is necessary; but, as yet, there is no need of doing anything,” said Dmitri Sergéitch, trying to smooth it off. But Viéra Pavlovna was inflexible, and so he wrote a note to Kirsánof, adding that his illness was trifling, and that he asked him to call, simply to please his wife.

Therefore, Kirsánof did not make haste; he stayed at the hospital till dinner time, and called at the Lopukhófs at six o’clock in the evening.

“Well, Aleksandr, I did well to call you,” said Lopukhóf; “there is no danger, and I don’t think that there is going to be any; but I have inflammation of the lungs. Of course I could have cured myself without your aid, but for all that, please take my case in hand. It cannot be helped; it is necessary to satisfy my conscience; you see, I am not a bachelor, as you are.”

They made a long examination of the lung; Kirsánof sounded his chest, and they both agreed that Lopukhóf was not mistaken; there was no danger, and, in all probability, there would be none. But the inflammation of the lung was severe. It would be necessary for him to stay in the house for ten days, Lopukhóf for some time having neglected his illness, but yet it could be cured.

Kirsánof had to have a long talk with Viéra Pavlovna, to quiet her alarm. Finally she was convinced that they were not deceiving her; that, in all probability, the illness was not only not serious, but not even difficult; but this was only “*in all probability*”; but are there not contingencies which arise contrary to all probability?

Kirsánof began to call twice a day on the sick man; they both saw that the illness was without complications, and not dangerous. On the fourth morning, Kirsánof said to Viéra Pavlovna:—

“Dmitri is all right; everything is going well with him; for three or four days more it may be hard, but it will not be more severe than it is to-day, and then he will begin to gain. But I want to talk seriously about you yourself, Viéra Pavlovna. You do not act wisely, in sitting up all night; he does not need a nurse; he does not even need me. But you may harm yourself, all for nothing. Your nerves are already very much unstrung.”

For a long time he tried to reason with Viéra Pavlovna, but without avail. “I know it’s nothing,” and, “There’s no reason in it,” and “I should be glad to, but I cannot,”—that is, glad to sleep in the night-time, and leave her husband without a watcher. Finally she said: “All that you are telling

me now, he has already told me many times, as you know well. Of course, I would have listened to him sooner than to you; consequently, I can't."

Against such an argument there is no disputing. Kirsánof shook his head and went away.

He came to see the sick man at ten o'clock, that evening, and sat by his bedside, together with Viéra Pavlovna, for half an hour, and then he said: "Now, Viéra Pavlovna, go and get some rest. We both ask you to. I am going to stay here to-night."

Viéra Pavlovna hesitated; she herself knew, or more than half knew, that it was not necessary to sit all night beside the sick man, and here she is compelling Kirsánof, who is a busy man, to waste his time. And what was it in reality? "It apparently is not necessary"; *apparently*, but who knows? No; it is impossible to leave the *milenki* alone! Who knows what might happen? He may want a drink, he may want tea; he is so delicate, he will not wake up; consequently, it is impossible not to sit by his side. But it is not necessary for Kirsánof; she will not allow it. She said that she would not go away, for she was not very tired; that she was taking a great deal of rest in the daytime:—

"Under the present circumstances, I beg of you to leave us entirely to ourselves." Kirsánof took her hand and led her from the room, almost by main force.

"I am really ashamed of her, Aleksandr," said the sick man; "what a ridiculous part you are playing, to sit up all night with a man who is not sick enough to need it. But I am very grateful to you. I could not even persuade her to hire a nurse, when she was afraid to leave me alone; she would not trust me in anybody's hands."

"If I had not seen that it was impossible for her to be calm when you were in somebody else's care, then, of course, I should not have disturbed my comfort. But now, I hope that she will get some sleep. I am a doctor, and I am your friend."

In fact, Viéra Pavlovna, as soon as she touched her bed, fell sound asleep. Three sleepless nights in themselves would not have been so trying, and the worryment by itself would not have been so trying, but the worryment, together with the sleepless nights, without any rest in the daytime, was very dangerous; two or three days and nights more without sleep, and she would have been more seriously ill than her husband.

Kirsánof spent three nights more with the sick man, for it did not tire him much, because he slept very peacefully; only out of carefulness he locked the door, so that Viéra Pavlovna should not see his unconcern. She suspected that he slept instead of watching; she was calm, however, because he was a doctor, and there were no grounds for fear, were there? He himself knows whether he ought to sleep or not. She was ashamed that she could not have been calm before, so as not to have disturbed him; but now he paid no attention to her assurances, that she would sleep even though he were not there.

"You are to blame, Viéra Pavlovna, and, therefore, you must be punished; I do not trust you!"

But, in four days, it was perfectly obvious to her that the sick man was no longer sick; the proofs even to her skepticism were very clear; that very evening they were playing cards; Lopukhóf was half lying down, or was not even lying down at all, and he spoke in a very clear voice. Kirsánof could stop his somnolent watching, and announced that fact.

"Aleksandr Matvéitch, why have you entirely forgotten me,—I mean *me*? You are always on good terms with Dmitri; he calls on you very often; but you have not called on us till this sickness—it seems to me for a half a year, it's such a long time! and, don't you remember, we used to be very good friends?"

“People change, Viéra Pavlovna. Then, again, I am working very hard, if I may say a word for myself. I call on scarcely anybody; I have no time; besides, I am lazy. You get so tired, being at the hospital and the medical school from nine o’clock till five, that you don’t feel it possible to go anywhere else, or make any change, except from your uniform into your smoking-jacket. Friendship is a good thing; but don’t get angry, if I say that a cigar on a sofa, in a smoking-jacket, is better still!”

And, in fact, Kirsánof had not called on the Lopukhófs for more than two years. The reader has not once noticed his name among the common guests, and among the frequent callers for a long time; he was the most infrequent of all.

VIII.

The sapient reader—I explain myself only to the masculine reader; my lady reader has too much understanding to be bothered with guessing, and therefore I do not explain to her; I say this once and for all. There are also among my masculine readers not a few who are not stupid, and to this class of readers also, I do not need to make any explanation; but the majority of readers—and this number includes almost all literary men, and those who claim to be literary men—are sapient, and it is always agreeable for me to talk with such; and so the sapient reader says: “I understand how the affair is going to turn. A new romance is going to begin in Viéra Pavlovna’s life, and in this Kirsánof is going to play a part. I understand even more; Kirsánof fell in love with Viéra Pavlovna long ago, and that was the reason why he ceased to call on the Lopukhófs.” Oh, what penetration you have, my sapient readers! As soon as you are told anything, then you say, “I thought so,” and you plume yourself on your shrewdness. I bow before you, sapient reader!

And thus in Viéra Pavlovna’s life appears a new person, and it would be necessary to describe him, if he had not already been described. When I spoke about Lopukhóf, I had some difficulty in distinguishing between him and his intimate friend, and there was scarcely anything more that I could have said about him that I should not have to repeat about Kirsánof. And, in fact, everything that the (sapient) reader can learn from the following description of Kirsánof’s characteristics, will be a repetition of Lopukhóf’s characteristics. Lopukhóf was the son of a *meshchánin*, who was well to do for a man of his rank,—that is, one who very often has meat in his *shchi*; Kirsánof was the son of a clerk in a provincial court,—that is, a man who often has no meat in his *shchi*; or, in other words, not very often has meat in his *shchi*. Lopukhóf, in very early youth, almost from childhood, earned money for his own support; Kirsánof, after he reached the age of twelve, helped his father copy papers, and he gave lessons while he was still in the fourth class in the gymnasium. They both, by their own exertion, without connections, without acquaintances, made their own way. What sort of a man was Lopukhóf? In the gymnasium he did not succeed in learning French, and he did not go further in German than the declension of *der, die, das*, with few mistakes; but after he entered the medical school, Lopukhóf soon saw that he could not make great progress in science with the Russian language alone; he took a French dictionary and such French books as happened to be at hand, and those that fell into his hands were: “Télémaque” and the stories of Madame Genlis, and several *livraisons* of our clever journal *Revue Etrangère*. They were not very attractive books, but he took them; and though he was an eager reader, he said, “I shall not open a Russian book until I am able to read French fluently.” And thus he learned French fluently. But he acted differently in regard to German: he rented a room in a house where there were a good many German laborers; it was a wretched hole; the Germans were tiresome; it was a long walk to the medical school, but he lived there until he had accomplished what he needed.

Kirsánof did in a different way: he learned the German through different books, with a lexicon, just as Lopukhóf learned French, but French he acquired in a peculiar fashion—through one book without a lexicon. It was the Gospels,—a very familiar book; and he took the New Testament,

in the translation of Geneva; then he read it over eight times; the ninth time he understood it thoroughly; and so he mastered it. What kind of a man was Lopukhóf? This was what he was. One time he was walking in a shabby uniform on the Kammenoi-Ostrof Prospekt, on his way from his lesson, for which he got fifty kopeks (thirty cents) an hour, though he had to go a distance of three versts from the lyceum. A distinguished somebody, of imposing mien, met him, motions him out of the way in the manner of men of imposing mien, and bears straight down upon him without giving way. But Lopukhóf, at that time, had a rule, not to be the first to turn out for anybody except a woman. They bumped against each other with their shoulders, and the distinguished somebody, half turning about, said, "What a pig, what a hog you are!" but while he was preparing to continue the lesson, Lopukhóf made a full turn towards the distinguished somebody, took the distinguished somebody by the body, and deposited him in the gutter very tenderly; then he stood over him, and said, "Don't you move, else I will drag you farther where the mud is deeper." Two *muzhiks* passed, looked on, praised him; a *tchinovnik* passed, looked at him, and did not praise him, but smiled sweetly; some carriages passed by; no one looked out; it could not be seen who was lying in the gutter; Lopukhóf stood there for a time, then he took the distinguished somebody, not by the body this time, but by the hand, picked him up, led him upon the highway, and said, "*Akh*, my dear sir, how did you happen to get into this plight? You have not done yourself any harm, I hope? Allow me to brush your coat!"

A *muzhik* passed by, and began to help wipe the dirt off from the distinguished somebody. Two *meshchánins* passed; they also stopped to help wipe him off; they wiped the dirt off from the distinguished somebody, and departed.

Kirsánof never had such an experience as that; but this was what happened to him: A certain lady, who had people to run errands for her, thought that it was necessary to have prepared a catalogue of the library left her by her husband, who was a follower of Voltaire, and had died twenty years before. Why such a catalogue was needed, after the lapse of twenty years, is more than I can tell. Kirsánof was selected to arrange the catalogue, at a salary of eighty rubles. He worked at it a month and a half. Suddenly the lady came to the conclusion that the catalogue was not necessary. She came into the library and said: "Don't take any more trouble about this work; I have changed my mind. And here's to pay you"; and she gave Kirsánof ten rubles. "Your ladyship" (he gave the lady the benefit of her full title), "I have already done more than half the work; out of seventeen shelves I have already catalogued ten."

"Do you find that I have taken advantage of you as regards pay?—Nicolas, come here and talk this matter over with this gentleman."

Nicholas came in.

"How do you dare to insult my *maman*?"

"You are a milk-sucker!"

An unjustifiable expression on Kirsánof's part. Nicolas was five years older than he.

"You had better hear both sides first."

"Help!" cried Nicolas.

"Help? I will show you how to call for help."

In the twinkling of an eye the lady screamed and fell in a swoon; and Nicolas felt that he could not move his hands, which were fixed to his sides, as by an iron belt; and indeed they were pinned by Kirsánof's right hand, while his left hand had Nicolas by the jaw, ready to clutch his throat, and Kirsánof was saying, "Just see how easily I can choke you." And he squeezed his gullet; and Nicolas perceived that it was a very easy thing for Kirsánof to choke him; but Kirsánof's hand

has already left his throat. He can breathe freely; and yet Kirsánof's hand is at his throat. And Kirsánof addressing the Goliaths who appeared at the door, says: "Stay where you are, else I shall choke him! Get out of here, else I shall choke him!" All this Nicolas understood in the twinkling of an eye; he made a sign with his nose, which signified that Kirsánof was right in the case.

"Now, brother, see me down stairs," said Kirsánof, again turning to Nicolas, and continuing to embrace Nicolas as before. He went into the front room, went down stairs, followed from afar by the astonished gaze of the Goliaths, and on the last step he let go of Nicolas' throat, pushed Nicolas himself away, and went into a store to buy a cap, in place of the one which had remained as a prey in the possession of Nicolas.

Now, what difference can you find between such people? All their most prominent features are features not of individuals, but of a type; a type differing so greatly from that to which you are accustomed, sapient reader, that its general peculiarities hide the individual differences in them. These people when seen amongst others, are like Europeans among Chinamen, whom the Chinamen cannot distinguish apart. In all of them they see one characteristic, that they are "red-headed barbarians, who do not understand any ceremonies." In their eyes the French are just as red-headed as the English. And the Chinamen are right, as they look upon it; all Europeans are like any one European, not individuals, but representatives of a type, and nothing more. All of them alike do not eat cockroaches and centipedes; they are alike in not cutting people into little bits; they all alike drink brandy and wine made from grapes, and not from rice. And actually, even the one thing which the Chinamen see, is their native custom, the drinking of tea, practised in a diametrically different way from their way,—with sugar, and never without sugar.

Thus people of the type to which Lopukhóf and Kirsánof belong seem alike to people of a different type. Every one of them is a man, dauntless, firm, unwavering, capable of undertaking any matter; and if he undertakes it, he sticks so resolutely to it that it cannot slip out of his grasp. This is one side of their nature. Another side: each one of them is a man of irreproachable integrity, so much so that the question never even enters our mind, "Is it possible to rely on this person unconditionally?" It is as clear as the fact that he breathes with his lungs; as long as the lungs breathe, such a heart is warm and unchanged. You can lean your head upon such a bosom, you can rest upon it. These general features are so prominent that the personal peculiarities are covered over by them.

It is not long that this type has been in existence among us. In former times there were only isolated individuals, who gave promise of it; they were exceptions, and as exceptions they felt lonely and powerless, and for that very reason they were inactive, or they fell into despair, or they felt exalted, or became romantic or fanciful; that is, they could not possess the chief characteristic of this type; they could not show any cool practicability, an even, well-regulated activity, or active, sound good sense. Those were people who, though they had this very same nature, had not yet developed into this type; and this type is a recent growth; in my time it had not yet come into existence, though I am not very old; in fact, am not at all an old man. I myself could not have come to be such. I was brought up in a different epoch; and for the very reason because I myself am not of this type, I can, without the least hesitation, express my respect for it; unfortunately I do not give myself a word of praise when I say in regard to these people, They are good people.

This type sprang up not long ago, and it is growing rapidly. It was engendered by the times, it is a sign of the times, and, shall I say further, it will vanish with its time, and not a long time either. Its already short life is doomed to be short in the future. Six years ago these people were not to be seen; three years ago they were despised; and now!—but it does not make any difference what

is thought about them now; in a very few years, a very few years, these people will be called upon, "Save us!" and whatever they will say, will be believed by everybody; a few years more, and maybe not years but months, and they will be cursed, and they will be driven off the stage, they will be hissed and insulted. All right, hiss and cast insults, drive them away and curse; you have gained your benefit from them; that is sufficient for them, and amid the noise of hissings, amid the thunder of curses, they will leave the scene, proud and modest, stern and kind, as they have ever been. And will nothing be left of them on the stage? No. How will the world get along without them? Wretchedly. But after them it will be still better than if they had not been. And years will pass, and people will say, "After they left, the world was better, but still it is bad enough." And when this is said, it shows that the time for this type has come again, and it will come again and be represented in greater numbers, in better forms, because then there will be more of good in the world; and again the same history will be repeated in a new light. And so it will come to pass that men shall say, "Well, now we are enjoying life"; and then it will not be an exceptional type, because all people will be of this same type, and they will find it difficult to understand how there ever was a time when it was considered a peculiar type, and not the general nature of all people.

IX.

But as Europeans among Chinamen are all of one face and one way of acting, only so far as the Chinamen are concerned, but in reality, among the Europeans there are incomparably wider differences than among the Chinese; so in this apparently monotonous type, the variety of individualities is developed into more classes and are more distinguishable from each other than among all the varieties of all the different types that are separate from each other. Here you find all sorts of people,—sybarites, ascetic, severe, and tender-hearted, and every other kind. But, as the sternest of Europeans is very kind, the most cowardly is very brave, the most passionate is very moral in comparison with the Chinaman, so it is with these; the most ascetic of them deems it more necessary for all men to be more comfortable than is imagined by the people not of this type; the most passionate are more stern in their moral rules than the greatest moralizers not of this type. But all this they interpret according to their own fashion; and morality, comfort, and sensuality and goodness, they understand in a peculiar way; and they all understand them in the same way, and not only do they all understand them in one way, but this one way is such a way that morality, comfort, goodness, and passion are all regarded as one and the same thing. But all this, again, is only when it comes into comparison with the understanding of the Chinamen; among themselves a great deal of difference is found in understanding these things, according to the differences of their nature. But how now to bring into harmony this conflict of nature and understanding among themselves?

In conversations about their own affairs among themselves, and only among themselves, and not among Chinamen, European natures give expression to their characteristics. Thus, among the people of this type, apparently there is a very great variety of natures when they are among themselves, and only among themselves and not with strangers.

We have had before us two people of this type, Viéra Pavlovna and Lopukhóf, and we have seen how their relations were arranged between them. Now there comes in a third person. Let us see what difference will be shown now that we have the possibility of comparing the other two with this one. Viéra Pavlovna sees before her Lopukhóf and Kirsánof. Hitherto she has had no choice; now she has.

X.

But it is necessary to say two or three words about Kirsánof's outward appearance.

He, as well as Lopukhóf, had regular and handsome features. Some regarded the former, others the latter, as the better looking. Lopukhóf was rather thinner, had dark chestnut hair, gleaming dark eyes, which seemed almost black, an aquiline nose, thick lips, and a rather oval face. Kirsánof had blonde hair, inclining to a brownish shade, dark blue eyes, a straight Grecian nose, a small mouth, an oblong face, and a remarkably light complexion. Both were men of very tall stature, and straight; Lopukhóf somewhat broader across his shoulders, Kirsánof somewhat taller.

Kirsánof's outward circumstances were very good. He was now a professor. The largest majority at the balloting was at first opposed to him; not only did they want to refuse him his professorship, but they would have taken away his doctor's degree; but this was impossible. Two or three young men, and one, not a young man, from among his former professors, friends of his, long ago declared to the rest of the faculty that there was in the world a certain Virchow, and he lived in Berlin, and also a certain Claude Bernard, and he lived in Paris, and certain others, whose names you could not remember, who also lived in various towns; and that Virchow, Claude Bernard, and the others were the stars, as it were, of the medical science. All this seemed extremely improbable, because we know all the stars of science,—Burghaf, Hufeland; and Harvey was also a very distinguished man, who discovered the circulation of the blood; then Jenner, who taught vaccination. And so we know them; but these Virchows and Claude Bernards we do not know; what kind of stars are they? However, the devil knows them. And here this very Claude Bernard spoke with respect about Kirsánof's works, when Kirsánof took his degree. And so they could not help it; they had to give Kirsánof the degree of doctor; and a year and a half later they gave him a professorship. The students said that if he came into the faculty, the party of good professors would be increased. He had never practised, and he said that he had given up the practice of medicine. But he used to spend long hours at the hospital; it happened that he dined there on some days, and even slept there many nights. But what has he done there? He said that he was working for science, and not for the sake of the sick. "I do not cure; I only observe, and make experiments." The students confirmed this, and declared that at the present time only quacks cured, because at this time it is impossible to effect cures. The hospital servants judged the matter in a different way. "Well, this Kirsánof takes folks home into his *palace*; it must be a bad case," they used to say among themselves; and then they would say to the patient, "Keep up good heart; it takes a tough sickness to stand up against this surgeon; he is a master, and a real father."

XI.

During the first part of Viéra Pavlovna's married life, Kirsánof used to be very frequently at the Lopukhófs', as often as every other day, or, to speak more accurately, almost every day; and soon, almost on the very first day, he became very close friends with Viéra Pavlovna, nearly as much so as with Lopukhóf. It lasted this way for half a year. One time they were sitting all three together: he, the husband, and the wife. The conversation was going on as usual, without any ceremony. Kirsánof was doing the most of the talking, but suddenly he grew silent.

"What has got into you, Aleksandr?"

"What has made you so solemn all of a sudden, Aleksandr Matvéitch?"

"Nothing in particular; I feel rather blue."

"That does not happen to you very often," said Viéra Pavlovna.

"I might say, never, without some reason," said Kirsánof, in a constrained tone.

A few minutes afterwards he got up and went away, earlier than some times, taking his leave in his usual simple manner.

Two days afterwards Lopukhóf told Viéra Pavlovna that he had been to see Kirsánof, who, as it seemed to him, had received him in a very strange way. Kirsánof apparently wanted to be ceremonious towards him, and this had always been an unnecessary formality between them. Lopukhóf had looked him straight in the face, and said:—

"Aleksandr, you must be provoked with some one; is it with me?"

"No."

"Is it with Viérotchka?"

"No."

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing at all; it is only in your imagination."

"Why aren't you friendly towards me to-day? You are not natural; you are as though you were provoked."

Kirsánof began to pour out his assurances that Lopukhóf was mistaken; and in this way he managed to confirm the impression that he was provoked. Then, afterwards, it seemed as though he must have been ashamed; he again became as unaffected, kind, friendly, as could be desired. Lopukhóf, availing himself of the fact that the man seemed in his right mind again, asked him:—

"Now, Aleksandr, tell me the reason of your getting provoked."

"I never thought of being provoked." And again he became disagreeable and disputatious.

What a marvel! Lopukhóf could not think of anything that might have offended him; and this did not seem possible, considering all their mutual respect and warmth of friendship. Viéra Pavlovna also tried hard to recollect whether she could have offended him in any manner, and she, too, could think of nothing out of the way; for she knew, just as her husband did, that it was impossible, as far as she was concerned.

Two days more passed; for Kirsánof not to call at the Lopukhófs' for four days was a most unusual circumstance. Viéra Pavlovna even wondered "could he be well?" Lopukhóf went round

to see if he were really ill. "How? ill?" He is still angry. Lopukhóf questioned him persistently. After repeated negations, he began to get off some disjointed nonsense about his relations with Lopukhóf and Viéra Pavlovna; that he loves and respects them very highly; but after all that had happened, they were not attentive enough to him. But in what respect—and this was worst of all—there was not the slightest hint in his bombastic talk. It was clear that the gentleman was eaten up by ambition. All this was so savage to witness in such a man as Lopukhóf considered Kirsánof to be, and so the visitor said to his host:—

"Now, listen; we have been friends; and the time will come when you will be ashamed of this."

Kirsánof, with affected humility, replied that, in fact, it must on his side be a mere trifle; but what can be done, supposing he has been offended by many things?

"Nu, what was it then?"

He began to bring up a good many occasions at which he had taken offence lately, all in such a style as this: "You said that the lighter the hair of a person, the nearer he is to dulness; Viéra Pavlovna said that tea was getting dearer. The one was a hit at the color of my hair; the other was a hint that I was eating you out of house and home."

Lopukhóf's hands fell to his side. This man has gone crazy with his ambition; or, properly speaking, he has become a fool and a good-for-nothing!

Lopukhóf returned home in a gloomy frame of mind; it was bitter for him to see such a warp in a man of whom he was so fond. To Viéra Pavlovna's questions as to what he had learned, he answered gloomily that it would be better not to speak about it; that Kirsánof had spoken disagreeable nonsense, and that he was probably sick.

In three or four days Kirsánof, who had in all probability come to his senses and seen the savage disgracefulness of his behavior, came to the Lopukhófs. He behaved himself as well as possible; then he began to tell how mean he had been. From Viéra Pavlovna's words he perceived she had not heard from her husband of his absurdities. He sincerely thanked Lopukhóf for his consideration; and, as a punishment to himself, he began to tell the whole story to Viéra Pavlovna. He grew sentimental; he excused himself, and said that he was sick, and again there followed some more nonsense. Viéra Pavlovna tried to say that he ought to stop talking about it; that it was a mere trifle. He clung to the word trifle, and began to rattle off the same sort of ridiculous nonsense as he had done before, in his talk with Lopukhóf. He very delicately and circumstantially began to develop the thought that of course it was a trifle, because he was aware of his insignificance in the eyes of the Lopukhófs, but that he didn't deserve any more; and so on. And all this was said with the most underhanded, slyest hints, and, at the same time, with the most courteous expressions of respect and devotion. Viéra Pavlovna, hearing this, let her hands fall to her side exactly as her husband had done. When he had gone, they remembered that for several days previous to his entirely losing his balance he had been strange. Before, they had not noticed it particularly, or even perceived it; but now his former absurdities are explained. They were of the same kind, only more developed.

After this, Kirsánof began to call very often; but the continuation of their former simple relations was utterly impossible. From behind the mask of a respectable man there appeared such a long ass-ear that the Lopukhófs would have lost a great part of their respect for their former friend, even if this ear were hidden henceforth forever; but it continued to appear frequently. It would not show itself for any long time, and then it would hide itself; but it was pitiful, low, and ugly.

They soon became entirely cold to Kirsánof; and as he really had no pleasure in calling at the Lopukhófs', he soon ceased to call.

But he still used to meet the Lopukhófs at the houses of friends. Some time afterwards the spite of the Lopukhófs towards him grew less; there was nothing serious, the matter now. Lopukhóf began to call on him. In a year he even began to call at the Lopukhófs' again, and he was the same elegant Kirsánof as of old, simple and honest. But he called seldom; it was evident that he hesitated and was ashamed, when he remembered the stupid business of which he had been guilty. Lopukhóf had almost forgotten about it, and so had Viéra Pavlovna. But the cordial relations, once severed, had never returned again. According to outward appearances, he and Lopukhóf were close friends, and, in fact, they were so. Lopukhóf began almost to respect him as before, and called on him not unfrequently. Viéra Pavlovna also gave him back a portion of her former friendliness; but she saw him very seldom.

XII.

Now Lopukhóf's illness, or, more properly speaking, Viéra Pavlovna's extraordinary attachment to her husband, compelled Kirsánof to be more than a week in close, familiar intercourse with the Lopukhófs. He knew that he was stepping in a dangerous path, when he decided to spend whole nights with them, in order to take away Viéra Pavlovna's watch. How happy and proud he had been when, three years ago, having noticed in himself some signs of passion, he had so strenuously succeeded in doing all that was necessary for the interruption of its development. How delighted he felt at this! Two or three weeks he was drawn to the Lopukhófs; but at that time he felt more satisfaction from recognizing his firmness in the struggle than pain from the deprivation, and in a month the pain entirely passed, and there remained only the pleasure of his uprightness. It was so calm and delightful in his soul.

But now there was more danger than then. In these three years Viéra Pavlovna had assuredly undergone great moral development. Then she was scarcely more than a child; now it is otherwise. The emotion stirred by her could no longer resemble the amusing attachment to a little girl whom you love, and at whom you smile at the same time. And not only morally had she developed. If the beauty of a woman is a real beauty, then, in our far North, a beautiful woman grows more beautiful every year. Yes, three years of life at such a period develop a great deal of good in the soul, in the eyes, in the features, and in the whole person, if the person is good and the person's life is good.

It was a great danger, but only for him, Kirsánof. What danger could there be for Viéra Pavlovna? She loves her husband. Kirsánof is not so stupid and conceited as to look upon himself as a dangerous rival for Lopukhóf. And not out of false modesty does he think this; all respectable people who know him and Lopukhóf put them on the same level. And on Lopukhóf's side is the immeasurable advantage of having already won her love; yes, won it; he has absolutely gained her heart. Her choice is already made, and she is satisfied with her choice; and she can have no thought of looking for something better. Isn't it good enough as it is? It is ridiculous to think about it; this fear on her account and Lopukhóf's would be a very stupid piece of self-conceit on Kirsánof's part.

And is it out of any such stupid nonsense that Kirsánof should have to suffer a month, perhaps two? Is it from any such nonsense that he should let a woman strain her nerves, and run the risk of serious illness by sitting by her husband's bedside? Is it worth while, for the sake of avoiding a trifling and short interference with his old quiet and well-regulated life, to let serious harm befall a man, a man of no less worth? And this would have been dishonorable. And this dishonorable action is more disagreeable than the really not very severe struggle with himself which he would have to undergo, and the final end of which in the proud satisfaction of his own firmness there could be no doubt.

Thus reasoned Kirsánof, when deciding to relieve Viéra Pavlovna from her idle watching.

The necessity for the watching passed. For the preservation of propriety, so as not to make an abrupt stop, which would attract attention, Kirsánof had to call two or three times more on the

Lopukhóf's every day, then in a week, then in a month, then in a half-year; and then his absence would be sufficiently explained by his occupation.

XIII.

Everything was going well with Kirsánof, as he thought. His attachment was renewed, and stronger than before; but the struggle with it did not present any serious suffering; it was easy. Here Kirsánof was at the Lopukhófs' for the second time since Dmitri Sergéitch's cure was effected; and he was going to stay till nine o'clock; that would be enough; formality would be observed. Next he would call in two weeks' time; then the separation would be almost accomplished. And now it would be necessary to sit one hour more. And during this week the development of his passion had been about half scotched; in a month everything would be over. He is very well satisfied; he takes part in the conversation as naturally as possible, because he is rejoiced at his success, and his very satisfaction gives him greater unconcern.

Lopukhóf expected to go out of doors for the first time on the morrow. On this account Viéra Pavlovna was in a remarkably lively state of mind; she was even more rejoiced than the invalid himself. The conversation turned upon the illness. They laughed about it; and they praised, in a jocular tone, Viéra Pavlovna's wifely self-sacrifice, who had nearly upset her own health by worrying over what was not worth worrying about.

"Laugh away, laugh away," she said; "but I know well that if you had been in my place, you would not have had enough strength of mind to act any way different."

"What an influence the solicitude of others has upon a person," said Lopukhóf; "now, the sick man himself is subjected to the delusion that he must take God-knows-what care of himself, when he sees that people are worried on his account. I might have left the house three days ago, but I still stayed in the house; and this very morning I wanted to go out, but I postponed it for one day more, so that there might be less danger."

"Yes, you might have gone out a long time ago," said Kirsánof in confirmation.

"Now, I call this heroism, and, to tell the truth, I am awfully tired of it; I should like to go out this instant."

"My dear, it was for the sake of putting me at ease that you showed your heroism. But let us go out this very moment, if you are so anxious to put an end to your quarantine. I am going to run over to the shop for half an hour; let's all go together. It will be very good of you, after your sickness, to pay your first visit to our union. The girls will notice it, and will be greatly pleased at such an attention."

"All right; let's go all together," said Lopukhóf, with noticeable satisfaction at the idea of breathing fresh air to-day.

"I declare! the hostess has shown fine tact!" said Viéra Pavlovna. It did not occur to me that perhaps Aleksandr Matvéitch might not care to go with us."

"No, on the contrary, it is very interesting to me; I have been wanting, for a long time, to go there. Your thought is a happy one."

In point of fact, Viéra Pavlovna's suggestion turned out propitiously. The girls were really delighted that Lopukhóf paid them the first visit after his sickness. Kirsánof was greatly interested in the shop; and a man of his turn of thought could not help being interested. If a special cause

had not prevented him, he would have been from the very first one of the most enthusiastic instructors in it. Half an hour, or maybe even an hour, in the shop passed before they knew it. Viéra Pavlovna led him through the different rooms, and showed him everything. While they were returning from the dining-hall into the working-rooms, a girl, who had not been in the working-rooms, came up to Viéra Pavlovna. The girl and Kirsánof looked at each other.

“Nástenka!”

“Sasha!”¹ and they embraced each other.

“Sáshenka, my dear, how glad I am to see you!” The girl kept on kissing him, and laughed and cried at once. Coming to her senses from joy, she said: “No, Viéra Pavlovna, I am not going to speak about business now; I cannot part from him. Come, Sáshenka, let us go to my room.”

Kirsánof was no less glad than she. But Viéra Pavlovna noticed an expression of deep grief in his eyes, after he recognized her. And this was not to be wondered at; the girl was in the last stages of consumption.

Nástenka had entered the union about a year before, and even then was very ill. If she had remained in the shop where she had been working till that time, she would have died. But in the union there was a chance for her to live somewhat longer. The girls entirely relieved her from sewing. It was easy for them to give her other work that was not harmful for her to do. She looked after the little interests of the shop; she took charge of the closets; she received orders; and no one could say that Nástenka was less useful than any one else in the shop.

The Lopukhófs went away, without waiting for Kirsánof to finish his interview with Nástenka.

¹ Diminutives of Aleksandr, as Nástenka is of Nastasia. The girl's name was Nastasia Borisovna Kriukova.

XIV. NÁSTENKA'S STORY.

On the next day, early in the morning, Nástenka came to Viéra Pavlovna.

"I want to tell you about what you saw yesterday, Viéra Pavlovna," she said; but for some time she was at a loss how to go on. "I would not want you to think ill of him, Viéra Pavlovna."

"What do you mean? You must have a poor opinion of me, Nastasia Borísovna."

"No; if it were some one else besides me, I should not have thought of such a thing; but you know I am not like other girls."

"No, Nastasia Borísovna, you have no right to speak about yourself in such a way. We have known you for a year; and before that a good many of our Union knew you."

"This proves that you do not know anything about me."

"How so? I know a good deal about you. You have been a servant-girl, the last time you were with the actress N.; after she got married, you left her, so as to avoid her father-in-law; you entered Y.'s shop, and from there you came to us. I know all the particulars about it."

"Of course, I know that Maksíмова and Shéina, who knew all about me, would not tell anything to anybody. But, after all, I thought that you and the others might have heard about me. *Akh!* how glad I am they yonder don't know anything about it! And I am going to tell you, so that you may know what a good man he is. I have been a very bad girl, Viéra Pavlovna."

"You, Nastasia Borísovna?"

"Yes, Viéra Pavlovna, I have. I have been a very bold girl; I had not the slightest shame, and I used to be always drunk. And that's the reason that I am ill, Viéra Pavlovna, because with my weak lungs I used to drink too much."

This was the third case of the kind that had come under Viéra Pavlovna's observation. These girls, who had behaved themselves with perfect propriety since their acquaintance with her, told her that hitherto they had been leading bad lives. The first time she was amazed at such a confession; but, after reasoning it over for several days, she asked herself: "How about my own life? The filth in which I grew up was also very bad. However, it did not stick to me; and there are probably thousands of women who have grown up in purity in families worse than mine. Is there anything strange in the fact that those whom a happy chance has brought out from such degradation are not ruined?"

She listened to the second confession, and was not surprised, because the girl who made it had kept intact all the noble peculiarities of a human being,—generosity, capability for genuine service, and softness of heart,—had even preserved a great part of her innocence.

"Nastasia Borísovna, I have heard such confessions as you want to make; and it was hard for both of us,—for her who spoke and for me who listened. I shall respect you not less, but rather more, than before, when now I know that you have endured a great deal; but I understand the whole story without listening. Let us not speak about it; there is no need for you to confess before me. I myself have spent many years in great sorrows; I am trying not to think about them, and I don't like others to speak about them; it's too hard."

“No, Viéra Pavlovna; I have a different feeling about it. I want to tell you what a good man he is; I want some one to know how grateful I am to him; and whom can I tell it to if not to you? What kind of a life I led, of course there is no need of speaking about that,—it was of the same stamp as that of all such poor creatures. I only want to tell you how I became acquainted with him. It is so pleasant for me to talk about him; and besides, I am going to live in his house, and you must know why I am going to leave the shop.”

“If telling this story will give you any pleasure, Anastasia Borísovna, I will gladly listen. Let me get my work first.”

“Yes; but it is impossible for me to work. How kind these girls have been, to let me have such work as agreed with my health. I shall be grateful to them all, to each one. Tell them, Viéra Pavlovna, that I asked you to thank them for me. I was walking on the Nevsky, Viéra Pavlovna; it was rather early when I went out. A student was walking along, and I accosted him. He did not reply, but crosses to the other side of the street. Then he sees that I am following him; I grasped him by the arm. ‘No,’ said I, ‘I am not going to let you go, you are such a handsome little fellow.’ ‘But I beg of you to let go of me,’ he says. ‘No, come along with me.’ ‘I do not care to.’ ‘Well, then, I will go with *you*. Where are you going? I shall not leave you on any account!’ I was such a shameless girl, much worse than anybody else.”

“Perhaps, from the very reason, Anastasia Borísovna, that you were at heart more modest, more conscientious.”

“Yes, it may be so. At least, I have seen this in others; not at that time, of course, but afterwards, I understood it. When I told him that I was going with him, at all events, he laughed, and said, ‘If you want to, come along; but it will be useless.’ He wanted to teach me a lesson, as he told me afterwards; it was disagreeable to him to have me clinging to him. And so I went along, and I told him all sorts of absurdities, but he kept silent; and so we went to his rooms. For a student he lived then very comfortably; he used to get from his pupils about twenty rubles a month, and he lived all by himself. I stretched out on his sofa, and said: ‘*Nu*, where is your wine?’ ‘No,’ says he, ‘I shall give you no wine; but you can have tea, if you want.’ ‘With whiskey,’ I said. ‘No, without whiskey.’ I began to do all sorts of foolish things, to be utterly shameless. He sat down and looked at me; but he did not show any interest, so offensive was it to him. Nowadays you can find such young men, Viéra Pavlovna; since that time young men have been growing morally better, but then it was a very rare thing. I began to get angry, and I scolded him. ‘Since you are such a stick!’ I said, ‘so I am going.’ ‘What is the use of going now? you may as well have some tea; my landlady will bring the *samovar* right in. But don’t abuse me.’ And all the time he addressed me formally [with *vui*, you]. He said, ‘You had better tell me who you are, and how you came to do such things.’ I began to tell him everything that came into my mind. We make up stories to suit ourselves, and that’s the reason no one ever believes us; but there are some, in spite of all that, whose stories are not made up; there are among us well-born and well-educated girls. He listened, and said: ‘No; you have made up your story poorly. I should like to believe it, but it is impossible.’ At this time we were drinking tea. And then he said: ‘Do you know, your constitution makes it bad for you to drink? Your lungs are already very much injured by it. Let me examine you.’ Well, Viéra Pavlovna, you won’t believe me, but I assure you that I felt ashamed,—and yet what was my life? and how shamefully I had been behaving just a few minutes before!—and he noticed it. ‘Don’t be disturbed,’ he says; ‘I only want to examine your lungs.’ He was then only in the second class, but he knew a great deal about medicine; he was away ahead in science.

“He examined my chest. ‘No,’ says he, ‘you must not drink at all; you have very weak lungs.’ ‘How can we help drinking?’ I asked. ‘We cannot get along without it.’ And it is really impossible, Viéra Pavlovna. ‘Then you must give up the life that you are leading.’ ‘Why should I give it up? It’s such a gay life.’ ‘No,’ says he, ‘there’s very little gayety in it. *Nu!*’ says he, ‘I am very busy now, and you had better leave me.’ And I left him, feeling very angry because I had wasted my evening; and I felt very much offended because he was such a passionless fellow, because we have our ambition in such matters, you know.

“And then in a month it occurred to me to go to the same place again. ‘Come on,’ says I, ‘I’ll go and see that stick again; I’ll see if I can’t wake him up.’ This was just before dinner. I had gone to bed the previous night, and I had not been drinking; he was sitting with a book. ‘Hullo, old stick,’ says I. ‘How do you do? What do you want?’ Then I began again to do ridiculous things. ‘I shall put you out,’ he says; ‘stop, I told you that I did not like it. You are not drunk now, and you can understand; and you had better heed what I say; your face shows that you are sicker than you were before; you must give up wine; just fix your dress and we will have a little talk.’ Well, the fact was that my chest had already begun to pain me; he examined me again; he said that my lungs were in a worse state than before; he had a great deal to say; yes, and my chest did pain me, and so I began to get sentimental, and I burst into tears. I did not want to die, and he was all the time threatening me with consumption. And I say, ‘How can I give up my mode of life? My *khozyáika* will not let me go. I owe her seventeen silver rubles.’ We were always kept in debt, you know, so that we could not have any voice in the matter. ‘*Nu!*’ says he, ‘I have no seventeen silver rubles with me, but you come and see me day after to-morrow.’ That seemed so strange, because I did not mean to give him any hint; and how could I have expected it? I did not believe my ears, and I wept still more violently, for I thought he was making fun of me. ‘It is a sin and a shame to insult a poor girl when you see that she is weeping’; and I did not believe him for a long time, until at last I saw that he was in earnest. And what do you think? he raised the money, and gave it to me two days later; and even then I somehow did not believe it. ‘How is it you do this when you do not want to take any favors from me?’ I said. I paid off my *khozyáika*, and rented a separate room; but I had nothing to do, and I had no money. And so I went on living as before, that is, not exactly as before; what an improvement it was, Viéra Pavlovna! I used to receive only my acquaintances, my good friends, those who did not offend me. And I had no wine either. And therefore what an improvement. And do you know how easy it was for me in comparison with what it had been before? no; after all, it was hard; and I want to tell you this. You know me; am I not a modest girl? Who ever hears anything bad of me now? And here in the shop how much care I take of the children! and they all love me; and those old women cannot say that I am teaching them anything bad. And so I lived in this way. Three months or so went by, and during this time I took good care of myself, because my life was peaceful; and though I was ashamed on account of the money, I did not look upon myself as a bad girl. Only at that time Sáshenka used to come to see me, and sometimes I used to go and see him. And now I am coming to speak of the subject that I wanted to tell you about. He did not come to see me as the others did, but he looked after me to see that I did not return to my former weakness, or get to drinking wine. And really the first days he helped me because I had a strong inclination for wine. And I was ashamed on his account; supposing he should come in and see that I was drinking! And possibly if it had not been for that, I should not have resisted, because my friends, very good young fellows, used to say, ‘I am going to send out for wine’; but as I was ashamed on his account, I used to say, ‘No, it must not be.’ But otherwise I should have been tempted; the mere thought that wine was bad

for me would not have been enough. And then in three weeks or so I grew stronger; my craving for wine passed, and I got out of the habit of drinking. And I kept laying up money to pay him back, and in two months I paid him up. How glad he was that I returned him the money. The day after he brought me some muslin for a dress, and some other things that he bought with that money. He used to come to see me after that just as a doctor calls to take care of an invalid. And a month after I had paid off my debt, he was sitting in my room, and said, 'Now, Nástenka, I begin to like your looks.' And really, it's true, wine spoils the complexion, and its effects don't pass off suddenly; but by this time they had passed, and the complexion of my face had become more delicate, and my eyes were clearer; and then again as I had got out of my former habits, I began to speak modestly, for you know my thoughts after I gave up drinking became modest, though I used to get entangled in my speech, and sometimes I used to forget myself on account of my former carelessness; but by this time I had got accustomed to behaving myself and to speaking more modestly. And as soon as he said that I pleased him, I was so happy that I wanted to throw myself on his neck, but I did not dare, and I refrained. And he said, 'You see, Nástenka, I am not devoid of feelings.' And he declared that I had become a nice modest young girl, and he caressed me; and how did he caress me? He took my hand and laid it on his, and began to smooth it with his other hand; and he looked at my hand, and indeed at that time my hands were white and delicate. And so when he took my hand—you would not believe it—I blushed, after my life, Viéra Pavlovna, as though I had been an innocent *baruishna*. This is strange, but it is so. But with all my shame,—it is absurd to say, Viéra Pavlovna, with all my shame, it is true,—I still said, 'How is it that you are willing to caress me, Aleksandr Matvéitch?' And he said, 'It is because you are a virtuous girl now, Nástenka.' And the words, 'virtuous girl,' that he called me, affected me so much that I burst into tears. And then he said, 'What is the matter, Nástenka?' and he kissed me. What do you think? When he kissed me, my head began to swim, and I forgot all about the past; is it possible to believe, Viéra Pavlovna, that such a thing could happen to me after such a life as mine?

"Well, on the next morning, I was sitting and weeping, and wondering what would become of me, and how should I live, poor creature that I was. All that was left for me was to throw myself into the Neva. I felt that I could not live such a life as I had been living! I might die; I might starve to death; but I could not live so any more. You see that I had been in love with him long ago; but, as he had not shown any such feelings towards me, I had no hope of ever winning his love, and my love died away within me, and I did not even know that I had it. And now it was all brought to light again; and, of course, when you feel such a love, how can you look upon anybody else with favor, except the man whom you love? You yourself know that this is impossible. There is nothing else in existence except the one man. Here I was sitting and weeping, 'What can I do now, being as I have nothing to live on?' And I really, made up my mind to go and see him once more, and then go and drown myself. And thus I spent the whole morning weeping. But suddenly I saw him coming in, and he began to kiss me, and he said, 'Nástenka, do you want to live at my house?' And I told him how I felt; and so I went to live at his house. That was a happy time, Viéra Pavlovna; I think that few have ever enjoyed such happiness. And he was always so kind to me. How many times it happened that I woke up, and he was sitting with a book; and then he would come and look after me, and he would forget his book, and he would sit and keep watch over me. But what a modest man he was, Viéra Pavlovna; I could understand it afterwards, when I came to read and find out how love is described in novels; I could judge then. But, with all his modesty, how he loved me! And what a feeling you have when a beloved man loves you.

It is a happiness such as you can form no idea of. Let us imagine when he kissed me for the first time: my head even turned; I bowed before him. Such a feeling is sweet, indeed; but that was nothing in comparison to the feeling afterwards. Before the blood boils, you know, there is anxiety; and even in the sweet feeling there is more or less torment; so that it is even hard to bear it, although it is hardly worth while to say how blessed it is; because, for such a minute, you are ready to sacrifice your life,—and there are some who do sacrifice their lives, Viéra Pavlovna,—therefore it must be a great happiness. But still it is not this, not this at all. It is just the same as when you get lost in day-dreams sometimes, when you are sitting alone, and merely think, ‘*Akh!* how I love him!’ and there is no worriment, no anxiety at all, in this pleasantness; and you feel so calm, so easy in mind! So it is the same feeling, only a thousand-fold stronger, when this beloved man loves you. And how calm you feel; and the heart does not throb,—no, for that would mean disturbance, and you feel nothing of that kind,—but it is much smoother, and there is more pleasantness; and it beats so gently and your chest expands and you breathe freer! *Akh!* this is so, this is true; it is very easy to breathe! *akh!* how easy! So that when an hour or two passes, like one minute,—no, not a minute, not a second,—there is no time at all, just as when you fall asleep and get up again. If you fall asleep, you know that much time has passed since you went asleep; but how has the time passed? It did not make up a single minute. And then, again, it is the same thing as after you have been asleep: there is no weariness, but, on the contrary, freshness, courage, as though you had been resting; and so it is: you have been resting. I said that it was very easy to breathe, and that is the very truth. What a strength in the glance, Viéra Pavlovna! No caresses of friends can caress you in such a way, or give you such a sense of luxury, as his glance. All the rest that is in love is not as comforting as this comfort.

“And how he loved me! how he loved me! *Akh!* what a delight it was! No one can imagine it, except the one who has experienced it. You know that, Viéra Pavlovna!

“You know, Viéra Pavlovna, that the look of even a woman makes me blush; our girls will tell you how bashful I am. It is for that reason that I live in a separate room; and how strange it is, you would scarcely believe it. But you know all about it, and I need not tell you. But when you think about it, you cannot part from this thought. No; I am going to leave you, Viéra Pavlovna; there is nothing more for me to tell you. I only wanted to tell you how good Sáshenka is.”

XV.

Nástenka finished telling her story to Viéra Pavlovna on other days. She lived at Kirsánof's house about two years. The signs of her threatening sickness seemed entirely to have disappeared; but at the end of the second year, when spring came, consumption suddenly appeared in its full development. The doctor thought that if she went away, she might count on staving off her death for a long while. They decided to part. To occupy her time in sedentary employment was also sure destruction. It was necessary for her to look for occupation as a housekeeper, chambermaid, nurse-girl, or something of the kind, and with such a mistress as would not impose trying duties upon her, and in such a way that there should not be unpleasantness, and this was a very important thing. These conditions were hard to meet; but such a place was found. Kirsánof had acquaintances among rising artists. Through them Nástenka found a place as chambermaid with one of the actresses in the Russian theatre, an excellent woman.

As long as the actress remained on the stage, Nástenka was well satisfied to live with her. The actress was a refined woman, and Nástenka valued her place; it would be hard to find another like it. Nástenka became attached to her because she never had any disagreeable scenes with her, and the actress seeing this, became kinder than ever. Nástenka lived a quiet life there, and her disease ceased, or almost ceased, to develop. But the actress got married, renounced the stage, and made her home in her husband's family. And here, as Viéra Pavlovna had already heard before, the actress's father-in-law began to affront the chambermaid. Nástenka, let us suppose, was not subjected to temptation, but it occasioned a family quarrel; the former actress began to put the old man to shame; the old man felt the shame. Nástenka did not want to be the cause of a family disorder, and even if she had wanted, she could not enjoy the peaceful life of her former situation, and she gave it up.

That was about two years and a half since her parting from Kirsánof. They had not seen each other at all during this time. He called upon her, but the happiness of the meeting affected her so unfavorably that he begged her not to let him call upon her for her own sake. Nástenka tried to live as chambermaid in two or three families, but everywhere she found so many worriments and unpleasantnesses, that it seemed better for her to become a seamstress, though it was a direct step towards the development of her disease; the disease would have been developed from any such trying position, and so it would be better for her to be subjected to such a fate, but without the unpleasantness, and only from her own work. A year of sewing entirely undermined Nástenka's health. When she entered Viéra Pavlovna's union, Lopukhóf, who was then the doctor for the shop, did everything possible to stop the development of the consumption; he did a great deal, that is, so far as a man with so little real knowledge of medicine can do. But the end was at hand.

Nástenka had enjoyed the delusion universal among those who suffer from consumption, imagining that her disease was not very far advanced, and so she did not seek to see Kirsánof; but for the last two months she had persistently asked Lopukhóf whether she had long to live. Why she wanted to know, she did not say, and Lopukhóf did not feel that he had the right to tell her plainly about the approaching crisis, for he did not see in her question anything more than the

universal attachment to human life. He tried to calm her; but she, as it often happens, could not be contented, for she kept aloof from that which might have given her days a glimpse of happiness; but now she herself saw that she had not long to live, and her feelings were dominated by this thought: but the doctor assured her that she must take care of herself. She knew that she had to believe more in him than in her own hopes, and therefore she did not look to see Kirsánof.

Of course this doubt could not last long. According as her last days approached, Nástenka's questions became more persistent; she either would have said that she had a particular reason for knowing the truth, or Lopukhóf and Viéra Pavlovna would have guessed that she had a particular reason in her questions, and two or three weeks, or maybe several days later, the result would have been the same as really happened, owing to Kirsánof's unexpected appearance in the shop. But now the doubt was at an end; not brought by the further progress of her questions, but by this accidental circumstance.

"How glad I am, how glad I am! I always have been wanting to catch a sight of you, Sáshenka," said Nástenka, when she took him to her room.

"Yes, Nástenka, I too am no less glad than you; now you shall not leave me again. Come back to my house," said Kirsánof, who was drawn away by a feeling of sympathy and compassion; but after he said this, it occurred to him, "How could I have said that to her? She most likely is not aware of the nearness of the crisis."

But she either did not understand at first the sense that could be drawn from these words, or she understood it, and did not care to heed it; and her gladness at seeing once more the man whom she loved, deadened her grief at the approaching end; at all events, she simply showed her happiness by saying, "How kind you are! How could I have ever left you?"

But after he left she wept. Only now she either understood, or may have noticed that she had understood, what it meant for her to see him once more. "Well, it is of no use for you to take care of yourself any longer, but at least you shall enjoy the little of life that is left."

And indeed she was glad; he never left her for a moment, except those hours when he had to be in the hospital, or at the medical school; so she lived about a month, and he was always with her. And how much they talked about everything; what had happened since she had left his house, and still further recollections about her past, and how many pleasures she had; he even took her out to ride; he hired a coupé, and he took her out every pleasant day into the suburbs of Petersburg, and she was greatly delighted. Nature is so dear to a human being that even this pitiable, miserable nature surrounding Petersburg, which cost millions and tens of millions of rubles, people are delighted with; he used to read to her, and they played *loto*, and she even tried to play chess, as though she had time to learn it.

Viéra Pavlovna sometimes spent late hours at their house when returning from her walks, and still more often she used to call on the invalid in the morning, to distract her thoughts when she was alone, and when they were alone together, Nástenka had only one thing to tell her, how kind Aleksandr Matvéitch was, and how good, and how she loved him.

XVI.

Four months passed. The watching over Nástenka and then his recollections about her deceived Kirsánof; it seemed to him that now he was out of danger as far as Viéra Pavlovna were concerned; he did not avoid her when she came to see Nástenka and stopped to talk with him; and afterwards when she tried to console him. As long as he mourned for Nástenka, there was nothing in his feelings towards Viéra Pavlovna except a friendly feeling of gratefulness towards her.

But,—the reader has already learned to know what I mean by *but* the same as he will always know beforehand what is going to follow the pages that he has already read,—*but*, of course, Kirsánof's feeling towards Nástenka had not been the same as Nástenka's feelings towards him; he had long ceased to feel love for her; he only felt well disposed to her, as towards a woman whom he had loved long before. His former love towards her was only the thirst of a youth to love some one, no matter whom. Of course Nástenka was not his equal, because they were not equal in mental development. When he ceased to be a youth, he could only feel pity for Nástenka, and nothing more; possibly he could be tender to her, on account of old recollections and compassion, and that was all. His grief for her, in fact, was very soon appeased; but when his grief was a thing of the past, he imagined that he was still occupied with it; and after he saw that he did not really feel any grief, but only recollections of it, he saw himself in such relations with Viéra Pavlovna that he found that he was entrapped in a great misfortune.

Viéra Pavlovna tried to distract him, and he gave himself up to it, for he considered himself safe, or rather not realizing that he was falling in love with Viéra Pavlovna again, or realizing that, by giving himself up to her care, he was drifting towards misfortune. Well, and what happened now in two or three months, after Viéra Pavlovna began to console him for his grief for Nástenka? Nothing except the fact that he used to spend almost every evening at the Lopukhófs', or escorted Viéra Pavlovna somewhere or other, frequently with her husband, but more often by himself. That was all that happened, but this was altogether too much, not only for him, but also for her.

How did Viéra Pavlovna spend her days now? Till evening it was just the same as before. Now, here it is six o'clock; at this time she usually goes alone to the shop, or she sits in her room, and works by herself. But now, if she has to be at the shop in the evening, Kirsánof was told about it the evening before, and he comes to escort her. On their walk to and from the shop,—by the way, it was not a very long distance,—they talk about various matters, generally about the union. Kirsánof himself is now the most active helper there. Once there she occupies herself in giving directions, and he too has a good deal to do; for thirty girls ask not a few questions and favors, which it is most convenient for him to fulfil, isn't it? And during the intervals he sits and talks with the children; and here several of the young girls take part in this conversation about everything in the world,—about the beauty of the Arabian stories, the "Thousand and One Nights," a good many of which he had already told them, and about the white elephants which are so esteemed in India, just as in our country a good many love white cats; half the company think that this is not good taste—white elephants, cats, horses; for all these are albinos, a sickly

species; you can see by their eyes that they do not enjoy such good health as the colored ones; but the other part of the company stand up for the white cats.

“And don’t you know anything more about the life of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, whose novel we have all known because you told us?” asked one of the growing girls. No; Kirsánof, just now, does not know it, but he will find out about it; it is very interesting to him, but now he can tell them something about Howard who was almost as great as Mrs. Beecher Stowe. Thus pass Kirsánof’s talks, or Kirsánof’s discussions with the little flock; one half of the flock, consisting of children, has been constantly the same, but the older half unceasingly changes. But now Viéra Pavlovna has finished her business, and she returns home with him to tea, and they all three sit for a long time after tea; now Viéra Pavlovna and her husband spend a much longer time together than when Kirsánof was not there. Almost every evening that they spend together, they have music for an hour or two: Dmitri Sergéitch plays, Viéra Pavlovna sings, Kirsánof sits and listens; sometimes Kirsánof plays, and Dmitri Sergéitch and his wife sing duets. But now it often happens that Viéra Pavlovna hurries from the shop, so as to have time to dress for the opera: now very often they go to the opera, sometimes all together, and sometimes Viéra Pavlovna and Kirsánof go by themselves; and besides, the Lopukhófs have company more often than before,—before not counting the young folks; for what kind of guests are young folks? they are only like nephews,—the Mertsálofs were almost their only visitors,—now the Lopukhófs have made friends with two or three lovely families. The Mertsálofs and two other families made arrangements to have every week, in their own circle, little evening parties with dancing; there used to be six couples, and even eight couples, of dancers. Lopukhóf scarcely ever goes to the opera or to these parties without Kirsánof; but Kirsánof very often escorts Viéra Pavlovna to these entertainments. Lopukhóf says that he much prefers to stay at home in his every-day coat on his sofa. And therefore, only about half the evenings they spend together; but these evenings they are together with scarcely any interruptions; it is true, when the Lopukhófs have no company besides Kirsánof, the sofa often draws Lopukhóf from the parlor, where the grand piano stands; the piano has now been brought from Viéra Pavlovna’s room into the parlor; but this does not save Dmitri Sergéitch very much. In a quarter or a half hour, Kirsánof and Viéra Pavlovna give up the music, and sit by his sofa; however, Viéra Pavlovna does not sit long by the sofa; she quickly arranges herself comfortably on the sofa itself, but in such a way that there is plenty of room for her husband also; for the sofa is wide; that is, there is not any too much room, but she would throw her arm around her husband, and so it is comfortable for him to stay there.

And thus passed three months or more.

The idyl is no longer fashionable, and I myself do not like it at all; that is, personally I do not like it, just as I do not like sauntering, do not like asparagus—several things, aren’t there, that I am not fond of? but it is impossible for any one man to like all dishes and all ways of amusement. But I know that these things, which are not according to my personal taste, are very good things; that they are to the taste, or they would be to the taste of a vastly greater number of people than those who, like me, prefer chess-playing to sauntering, sauerkraut with hemp oil to asparagus. I even know that the tastes of the majority which does not share my enjoyment in chess-playing, would be glad not to share my taste for sauerkraut with hemp oil, are not worse than mine; and so I say: let there be in the world as many amusements as possible, or let them almost absolutely vanish from the world, but let sauerkraut with hemp oil remain, as an antiquarian rarity for a few such odd fellows as I.

And, likewise, I know that for the huge majority of people, who are not in the least worse than I am, happiness must have an idyllic character; and I exclaim: "Let the idyl begin to reign over all the other characters in life." For a few originals who are not fond of it there will be other forms of happiness; but the majority must have the idyl. As to the fact that the idyl is not in fashion, and therefore people shun it, that is no objection at all; they shun it just as the fox in the fable shunned the grapes. It seems to them that the idyl is inaccessible, and therefore they lay down their dictum: "Let it not be in fashion."

But it is pure absurdity that the idyl is inaccessible; it is not only a good thing for almost all people, but it is very feasible; there ought to be no hardship in arranging it, only it must not be for one person, or ten persons, but for all. Now the Italian opera is an impossible thing for five people; but for the whole city of Petersburg it is very possible, as all see and hear. And so, too, the "Collected Writings of N. V. Gogol, Moscow, 1861," would be an impossible thing for ten people; but for the whole public it is very possible, and not expensive, as we all know. But as long as there is no opera for the whole city, it is possible for only a few very music-mad people to enjoy themselves at second-class concerts; and as long as the second volume of "Dead Souls"¹ was not printed for the whole public, only a few of the most eager admirers of Gogol, not valuing the labor, prepared each for themselves manuscript copies. A manuscript is incomparably worse than a printed book; a second-class concert is very poor compared to an Italian opera; but both the one and the other are good in their way.

¹ One of Gogol's last acts was to burn up the concluding portion of his great story, "Dead Souls," the first part of which appeared in 1842. A few chapters of the second part were found after his death; but a certain Dr. Zakhartchenko, of Kief, wrote a conclusion, which was much ridiculed.

XVII.

If a stranger had consulted Kirsánof about the position in which Kirsánof found himself after he came to his senses, and if Kirsánof had been a perfect stranger to all the people who were concerned in the matter, he would have said to the one who came to consult with him: "To straighten out this affair by running away is too late. I do not know how the play will end, but for you to run or to stay is equally dangerous; but for those for whose peace you care, your running away would be still more dangerous than your remaining."

Of course Kirsánof would have said this only to a man like himself, or like Lopukhóf, to a man of firm character and undoubted virtue. To other people it would be useless to give advice about such a situation, because these other people invariably act in such cases meanly and contemptibly; they put the woman to shame; they dishonor themselves, and then go out into their own society, and whimper or boast, and take delight in their heroic virtue, or their amorous irresistibility. With such people neither Kirsánof nor Lopukhóf liked to talk about the way that men of generous character should act. But Kirsánof would have been right in telling any one his dictum that to run away now would be worse than to remain. It would have been to imply, "I know how you would act if you remained; you would act in such a way as not to expose your feelings, because only in this way you will not do ill by remaining. The task before you is so far as possible not to disturb the tranquillity of a woman whose life runs smoothly. But it appears that it is already impossible not to disturb it. The feeling that is incompatible with her present relations is already, according to all probability, or rather, to use simpler language, already, without any doubt, engendered in her, but as yet she does not know it. Whether it will spring up soon or not by herself without any interference on your part is uncertain. But your avoidance of her would be the very thing to call it out. Consequently your going away would only be to hasten the matter, a thing which you want to avoid."

But Kirsánof argued the case not as a stranger but as a participant. It seemed to him that to go away would be harder than to remain; the feeling impels him to remain; consequently would not to remain be the same thing as to yield to the feeling, to be tempted by its suggestions? What right had he to believe so absolutely that neither by words nor by looks he would not betray his feeling, would not bring it forth? And therefore it would be wiser to go away. In your own case it is very difficult to distinguish how far reason is tempted by the sophisms of inclination, because uprightness says, act, fight against temptation, then you have better chances for noble action. This is a translation from the language of theory into every-day speech; but the theory to which Kirsánof adhered, considers such lofty words as nobleness, to be ambiguous, obscure, and Kirsánof in his terminology would have expressed: himself thus: "Every man is an egotist; so am I; now the question comes up, 'Is it more profitable for me to go away, or to remain?' If I go away, I crush in me my personal feeling; if I remain, I am liable to disturb my feeling of human dignity by some stupid word or look which may be caused by this individual feeling. The individual feeling may be crushed; and by and by my peace of mind may be again restored; I may be again satisfied with my life. But if I once act against my human nature, I shall lose forever the

possibility of peace, the possibility of self-satisfaction; I shall poison all my life. My position is like this: I am fond of wine, and before me is a flask with very good wine; but I have a suspicion that this wine is poisoned. I cannot tell whether my suspicion is well founded or not. Must I drink this flask of wine, or shall I pour it out so as not to be tempted by it. I must not call my decision either noble or even virtuous, these are too high words; I must simply call it coldly calculating common sense. I throw away the flask. Thus I deprive myself of some pleasure; I cause myself some displeasure; but by doing so I secure my health, that is, the possibility of having a great deal of such wine to drink, which I shall surely know is not poisoned. I simply do not act foolishly, and that is all the praise that I deserve.”

XVIII.

But how could he withdraw? His former game of making believe offended, of exhibiting some mean feature of his character so as to depend upon it, would not work; twice to perform the same trick is impossible; a second performance like the first would only have revealed the design of the first, would have shown him up as the hero not only of the new, but also of the former affair. Yes; and generally speaking, it is necessary to avoid any abrupt cessation of relations. Such an avoidance would be easier, but it would be theatrical; it would arouse attention, that is, at the present time it would be mean and contemptible, or, according to Kirsánof's theory of egotism, it would be a stupid miscalculation. And so there remained only one, and the most tormenting means, that is, an unobtrusive renunciation carried out in a slow and unnoticeable manner, so that it might not be seen that he was giving them up. This action is very difficult; it requires great tact to disappear from sight so that your motion is not noticed, when you are watched by bright eyes; but it could not be helped; he had to do in this way. However, according to Kirsánof's theory, it was not tormenting at all, but rather agreeable; for the harder a deed is to accomplish, the gladder you are (on the selfish theory) at the strength and skill which you have shown while successfully accomplishing it.

And, indeed, he fulfilled it successfully; he did not betray his attention by one word too much or one word too little, or by a look; as before, he was free and jocular with Viéra Pavlovna; as before, he made it evident that he enjoyed her society, but there appeared various things to hinder his coming to the Lopukhófs' as often as before, or remaining there a whole evening as before, and the result was that Lopukhóf had to seize him more often than before, by his arm or the lappel of his coat, with the words, "No, old fellow, you can't get rid of this discussion so easily"; and by far the larger part of the time that Kirsánof spent at the Lopukhófs' he tried to stay by his friend's sofa. And everything was arranged so gradually that it was not noticed at all how the change was developing. Interruptions came along, and Kirsánof not only brought them up as excuses, but, moreover, was sorry (this did not happen every time, for too great show of sorrow would not do) that such an interruption happened. And these interruptions seemed to be so natural, so unavoidable, that the Lopukhófs themselves pushed him from the house reminding him that he had forgotten his promise to be at home, because such and such an acquaintance, whom he ought to see, was coming to his house. Or he forgot that if he did not call to-day on such and such a person, such and such a person would be offended; or he had forgotten that he ought to work for at least four hours, and ought he not to sleep a little to-night in preparation for it? Why, it's ten o'clock already, and he must not talk any more; he must go and take up his work. Kirsánof, moreover, did not always listen to them when they reminded him; he would not go to see his acquaintances, he would let his friend get angry, or the work would not run away, so he would spend the evening with them. But these interruptions kept growing more frequent, and scientific operations began to steal unmercifully one evening after another from Kirsánof. They might go to the deuce, according to his opinion (and sometimes he used to say this aloud); that is, his scientific occupations or his acquaintances have been imposing upon him more than

usual; how they did impose upon him! (This also he used to say aloud.) And so it seemed to him—and the Lopukhófs saw very well how it was—that he was getting to be very popular, and so there always came up more and more people to whom he was necessary; and then he must not treat his work carelessly, for there was no excuse for his being so lazy; and, indeed, he had been very lazy during the last few months, and it would be hard for him to begin work again; “But you must work, brother Aleksandr,” and she would say, “It’s time, Aleksandr Matvéitch.”

The manœuvre was a difficult one; for week after week it was necessary to prolong this wheeling “to the left and around,” and the turn was made so slowly, so steadily, like the hands of a clock. Look at it as attentively as you please; you cannot see that it is turning, but it does its work silently; it steadily goes away from its former position. And what pleasure Kirsánof, as a theorist, had in watching his skill in putting this into practice. Egotists and materialists act only for their own pleasure! And Kirsánof, laying his hand on his heart, could say that he was playing this game only for his own pleasure. He delighted in his skill and his boldness.

Thus passed a month, and maybe somewhat more; and if any one had reckoned, he would have found that during this month his friendliness to the Lopukhófs had not diminished a hair’s breadth; but fourfold less time he spent with them, and simultaneously he reduced to almost a half the time that he used to spend with Viéra Pavlovna. One month more, and while their former friendship still remained, the friends would see each other but little, and the thing would have its hat on.

Lopukhóf’s eyes were sharp; don’t they really see anything? No; not a thing.

But Viéra Pavlovna? and Viéra Pavlovna notices nothing. But does she notice no change in herself? Viéra Pavlovna notices no change in herself. Only Viéra Pavlovna dreams a dream.

XIX. VIÉRA PAVLOVNA'S THIRD DREAM.

And Viéra Pavlovna dreams a dream.

After tea, she had a talk with her *mílenki*, and went to her room to lie down,—not to sleep; it was too early to sleep. Why, it was only half-past nine; no, she did not even undress; she only lay down to read. And here she is reading as she lies on her little bed; but the book falls away from her eyes, and Viéra begins to think: “What is the reason that lately I have been feeling lonesome occasionally; or not ‘exactly lonesome, or does it merely seem so? No; it is not lonesome, but I only just happened to remember that I wanted to go to the opera this evening; but this Kirsánof, attentive fellow that he is, went too late to get tickets; he might have known that when Bosio¹ is singing, it is impossible to get two-ruble tickets at eleven o’clock. Of course he cannot be blamed; he must have been working till five o’clock, surely till five o’clock, though he didn’t confess it; and yet he *is* to blame. No; after this, I’d better ask the *mílenki* to get tickets, and I guess I’d better go to the opera with my *mílenki*, too; *mílenki* would never be so stupid as to let me go without tickets, and he is always glad to go with me; my *mílenki* is such a sweet fellow! And on account of this Kirsánof, I have missed hearing ‘Traviata.’ I would go every night to the opera, if there were opera, no matter how bad it might be, provided only Bosio sang the chief rôle; if I had such a voice as Bosio, it seems to me I would sing all day long. I wonder if I could get acquainted with her. How could I manage it? That artillerist is well acquainted with Tamberlík.² Could it be done through him? No; it is impossible; what an absurd thought! What is the good of getting acquainted with Bosio? Would she sing for me? Of course she has to save her voice.

“And how did Bosio succeed in learning Russian? How purely she pronounces! But what absurd words! Where could she have found such wretched poetry? Yes; she must have studied out of the same grammar which I did; those verses were quoted in it to illustrate the use of quotation marks. How stupid it is to quote such verses in a grammar! though it would not be so bad if the poetry were better; but there is no need of thinking about the meaning of the verses; all one needs to do is to hear her sing:—

‘The hours of pleasure
Make the most of;
The years of youth
Give up to love.’³

“What ridiculous poetry! wrong accent in the second line: *make the most of! of, uv!* But what a voice and what feeling she puts into her singing; and her voice is vastly sweeter than it used to be—incomparably better! It is wonderful! How could it improve so much? And here I was

¹ Angiolina Bosio (born in Turin in 1829), a famous mezzo-soprano, who was immensely popular in Petersburg, where she died in 1859.

² Enrico Tamberlík, the famous *tenore robusto*.

³ In the original, literally translated, “The hours of pleasure catch, catch; young years give to love,” the words wrongly accented are *mladuia* [young] and *lyéta* [years].

wondering how I could get acquainted with her, and she herself has come to call upon me. How did she find out that I wanted her to?"

"Yes; you came to call on me a long time ago," says Bosio, and she speaks Russian.

"I called upon you, Bosio? How could I have called upon you when I was not acquainted with you? But I am very, very glad to see you."

Viéra Pavlovna pushed aside her bed-curtain, so as to give Bosio her hand; but the cantatrice laughs, and it seems that it is not Bosio at all, but de Merrick in the rôle of the gypsy "Rigoletto"; only the gayety of the laughter is de Merrick's, but the voice is still Bosio's, and she runs away and hides herself behind the bed-curtain. How disagreeable, that this bed-curtain hides her—and before there was no bed-curtain at all: where did it come from?

"Do you know why I came to you?" And she laughs, as though she were de Merrick and at the same time Bosio.

"Who are you? You are not de Merrick, are you?"

"No."

"Are you Bosio?"

The songstress laughs. "You learn rapidly; but now it will be necessary for us to attend to what brought me here. I want to read your diary with you."

"I do not keep a diary; I never kept one."

"Look here; what is that lying on this little table?"

Viéra Pavlovna looks; on the table near the bedstead is lying a copy-book with the inscription, "V. L.'s Diary." Where did this copy-book come from? Viéra Pavlovna takes it, opens it; the book is written in her own hand—but when?

"Read the last page," says Bosio.

Viéra Pavlovna reads: "Again I am often obliged to stay alone whole evenings. But that's nothing; I am used to it."

"Is that all?" asks Bosio.

"That's all."

"No; you did not read it all."

"There is nothing more written there."

"You cannot deceive me," says the visitor. "What is this?"

From behind the bed-curtain comes forth a hand; what a handsome hand! No; this wonderful hand does not belong to Bosio, and how does this hand come out from the curtain without pushing it apart?

The hand of the new visitor touches the page; from under the hand appear new lines, which were not there before.

"Read," says the visitor.

And Viéra Pavlovna's heart begins to feel oppressed; she has never seen these lines before; she did not know that they were written, but her heart is oppressed. She does not wish to read the new lines. "Read," repeats the visitor.

Viéra Pavlovna reads: "No; it is tiresome for me to be alone. Once I did not feel the loneliness. Why is it tiresome for me now when it did not used to be?"

"Turn back a page," says the visitor. Viéra Pavlovna turns a page:—

"The summer of this year!"

“Who writes diaries like that?” thinks Viéra Pavlovna; “it should have been written, ‘1885, June or July,’ and have the day of the month; but here it stands: ‘The summer, of this year’; who keeps diaries in that way?”

“The summer of this year; we go picnicking in our usual way into the suburbs, to the islands, and this time *mílenki* goes along with us. How enjoyable it is to me!—*Akh!* so it is August, is it? What day of the month? the fifteenth; or, no, the twelfth? Yes, yes, it was about the fifteenth; it was after that excursion that my poor *mílenki* became sick,” thinks Viéra Pavlovna.

“Is that all?”

“That’s all.”

“No, you don’t read everything. What is this?” says the visitor, and again through the unparted bed-curtain comes the wonderful hand; and again it touches the pages, and again on the pages appear new words, and again Viéra Pavlovna reads against her will the new words, “Why doesn’t my *mílenki* come along with us oftener?”

“Turn one leaf more,” says the visitor.

“My *mílenki* has so much to do, and it is all for my sake; for my sake he is working, my *mílenki*;—and that is the answer,” thinks Viéra Pavlovna, happy at the thought.

“Turn one page more.”

“What honest, noble people these students are, and how they respect my *mílenki*. And I enjoy myself with them just as though they were brothers, and we have no ceremoniousness.”

“Is that all?”

“That is all!”

“No, read further.”

And again appears the hand and touches the page, and again come forth new lines, and again Viéra reads the new lines:—

“The sixteenth of August—that is on the second day after our visit to the island; no, it was exactly the fifteenth,” thinks Viéra Pavlovna: “all the time the *mílenki* spoke with that Rakhmétov,⁴ or as they called him out of jest, the rigorist, and his comrades, but he spent hardly quarter of an hour with me.—That is not true; he spent nearly half an hour with me,” thinks Viéra Pavlovna, “besides the time when we were sitting together in the boat.”

“The seventeenth of August; yesterday the students spent a whole evening with us.”—Yes, it was on the evening when the *mílenki* was taken sick—*Mílenki* talked with them the whole evening long. Why did he spend so much time with them and so little with me? He is not working all the time; he himself says that he is not working all the time; that without rest it is impossible to work; that he takes a great deal of rest, that he thinks about nothing else except taking a rest; why does he think by himself and not with me?”

“Turn over one leaf more.”

“July of the present year and every month of the present year, and until *mílenki* became sick, then last year and before that too. Five days ago the students called on us, and yesterday too. I carried on with them, it was so gay. To-morrow or day after to-morrow they will call again, and again it will be gay.”

“Is that all?”

⁴ As has been said before, nearly all the characters of this story are supposed to be drawn from real life. Rakhmétov, whom we shall meet again further on, is considered by many Russians to be a true picture of Karakózof, who in 1866 attempted to assassinate the Emperor Alexander II.

“That is all!”

“No, read further.”

Again appears the hand, touches the page, and again from under the hand come new lines; and again against her will Viéra Pavlovna is reading them:—

“The beginning of the present year, especially at the end of spring. Yes, it used to be gay with these students, but that was all. But now I often think it was childish nonsense; such nonsense will amuse me for a long time yet. Probably even when I have come to be an old woman, when I myself will not be of the age for playing, I shall delight in the youthful games which will remind me of my childhood; for even now I look upon the students as younger brothers, but I should not like to become a Viérotchka always when I want to rest from serious thoughts and labors. I am now Viéra Pavlovna, and to enjoy one’s self like Viérotchka is only agreeable at times, but not always. Viéra Pavlovna sometimes wants such happiness that she might still remain Viéra Pavlovna; and this happiness comes only with one’s equals in life.”

“Turn back several pages more.”

“I have opened a sewing union, and went to Julie to ask for orders. *Milenki* stopped at her rooms to get me. She kept us to breakfast and she ordered champagne, and she forced me to drink two glasses. We began to sing, run, shout, wrestle; how gay it was! *Milenki* looked on and laughed.”

“Is that really all?” asks the visitor, and again appears the hand, and again from under the hand appear new words, and again Viéra Pavlovna reads against her will:—

“*Milenki* only looked on and laughed. Why didn’t he join in with us? That would have made it still gayer. Was it that it was improper, or didn’t he care to take a part in our sport? No, it was not in the least improper, and he might have done it! But he has such a nature. He not only does not interfere; he also approves, but that is all.”

“Turn one page back.”

“I went with *milenki* for the first time since my marriage to see my parents. It was hard to see the life that oppressed and stifled me before my marriage. My *milenki*! from what a horrible life he saved me! and that night I had a horrible dream, and my *mámenka* reproached me for being ungrateful; and she spoke the truth, but such fearful truth that I began to groan. *Milenki* heard my groan and came into my room, and I was singing all the time (in my dream) because my loving ‘bride’ came and consoled me. The *milenki* wanted to act as my dressing-maid! How ashamed I was! But he is such a modest man? He only kissed my shoulder!”

“Is that all that is written? You cannot deceive me! read!” And again from under the visitor’s hand appear the new words, and Viéra Pavlovna reads them against her will:—

“This seems to me rather insulting!”

“Turn several pages back.”

“To-day I was waiting for my friend D. on the Boulevard, near the new bridge. There lives a lady, at whose house I expected to be a governess; but she was not willing to take me. I returned home with D. very despondent. I was thinking, in my room, before dinner, that it would be better to die than to live as I am living now; and suddenly, at dinner, D. says: ‘Viéra Pavlovna, let us drink to the health of my bride and your bridegroom.’ I could hardly refrain from tears, in the presence of all, from joy at such an unexpected salvation. After dinner, I talked a long time with D. about how we should live. How I love him! He is leading me out from the cellar!”

“Read it all.”

“There is nothing more to read.”

“Look!”

Again from under the visitor’s hand appear new lines.

“I do not want to read,” says Viéra Pavlovna, in fear. She has not yet distinguished what is written in those new lines, but already it is horrible to her.

“You cannot help reading, when I bid you to read. Read!”

Viéra Pavlovna reads:—

“Do I only love him because he led me out from the cellar—not himself, but my salvation from the cellar?”

“Just turn back once more, and read the very first page.”

“It is my birthday, to-day; to-day I spoke for the first time with D., and fell in love with him. I never before heard such noble and consoling words from any one. How he sympathizes with everything that demands sympathy, wants to help everything that needs help! How sure he is that happiness is possible for all people, that it must be, and that anger and woe are not forever; that a new and bright life is rapidly approaching us! How joyfully my heart expanded when I heard these assurances from this learned and serious man, for they confirmed my own thoughts. How kind he was when he spoke about us poor women! Every woman would love such a man. How clever he is! how generous! how kind!”

“Good! Turn again to the last page.”

“But I have read that page!”

“No; that is not the last one yet. Turn one leaf more.”

“But there is nothing on this leaf!”

“Just read! Do you see how much is written on it?” And again from the touch of the visitor’s hand appear lines which were not there before. Viéra Pavlovna’s heart grows cold.

“I do not want to read! I cannot read!”

“I command you. You must!”

“I cannot! I will not!”

“Then I will read for you what is written. Just listen.—‘He is a noble man, a generous man; he is my saviour! But generosity gives rise to respect, confidence, and readiness to act in unanimity, friendship. A saviour is requited by gratefulness, by devotion; that is all. His nature maybe is quicker than mine. When the blood is boiling, his caresses burn into the heart. But there is another demand; a demand for quiet, calm caresses; a demand for sweet dreams in a tender sentiment. Does he know it? Do our natures agree? our demands? He is ready to die for my sake, and I for his; but is that enough? Does he live in his thoughts for me? Do I live in my thoughts for him? Do I love him with such a love as my soul craves? Before, I did not realize the demand for a quiet, tender feeling. No, my feeling for him is not—’”

“I do not want to listen any more!”

Viéra Pavlovna throws away the diary with indignation:—“You wretch! you abomination! I never asked you to come! Leave me!”

Her visitor is laughing, with a still, good-humored laugh.

“No, you don’t love him; these words were written with your own hand.”

“I curse you!”

Viéra Pavlovna wakes up with this exclamation, and quicker than she could make out that it was only a dream that she had seen, and that she had waked up, she starts to run.

“My dear, take me in your arms! protect me! I dreamed such a terrible dream!” She snuggled up to her husband. “My dear, caress me! be tender to me! protect me!”

“Viérotchka, what is the matter with thee?” The husband embraces her. “Thou art all of a tremble!” Her husband kisses her. “Thou hast tears on thy dear cheeks! There is a cold sweat on thy brow! Thou wert running barefooted over the cold floor, darling. I am kissing thy little feet to put some warmth into them.”

“Yes, fondle me! save me! I dreamed a horrible dream; I dreamed that I did not love thee.”

“My dearest, whom dost thou love, if not me? No; it is an idle, absurd dream.”

“Yes, I love thee! Only caress me, fondle me, kiss me! I love thee—I want to love thee!”

She embraces her husband passionately; she clings to him, and when he has pacified her with his caresses, quietly falls asleep, kissing him.

XX.

The next morning, Dmitri does not go to call his wife to breakfast; she is there with him, clinging to him. She is still asleep, and he is looking at her, and thinking, "What can be the matter with her? what frightened her so? what caused that dream?"

"Stay here, Viérotchka; I will bring thee thy tea here. Don't get up, my dear little girl.¹ I will bring it to you, and you can wash your face and not get up."

"No, I will not get up; I will be awhile, it is so comfortable for me here. How smart you are, *mílenki!* and how I love thee! And now I have washed my face, and now thou canst bring the tea here. No; first take me into thy arms." And Viéra Pavlovna long holds her husband in her embrace. "Akh! my *mílenki*, how absurd I was! How did I happen to come running to your room? What will Masha think now? I shall hear from her how I woke up in your room. Kiss me, my *mílenki*, kiss me. I want to love thee; I must love thee. I am going to love thee as I never loved thee before."

Viéra Pavlovna's room is empty now. Viéra Pavlovna, without any concealment from Masha, has moved to her husband's apartment. "How tender he is, how kind, my *mílenki!* and I could imagine that I did not love thee! How absurd I am!"

"Viérotchka, now that you are calmed down, tell me what you dreamed day before yesterday."

"Akh! what nonsense! I only dreamed, as I told you, that you caressed me very little; but now it is good. Why didn't we always live this way? Then I should not have dreamed that horrible dream; it was dreadful, disgusting! I don't like to think about it."

"Yes, but if it had not been for it, we should not be living as we do now."

"That is true; I am very grateful to her; to that disgusting, no, not disgusting, I mean splendid, woman!"

"Whom do you mean by 'she'? Have you found some new friend beside your former 'beauty'?"

"Yes, I have. Some woman or other called on me with such a fascinating voice, much finer than Bosio's, and what lovely hands she had! *Akh!* what wonderful beauty! but all that I could see of her was her hand; she, herself, was hidden behind the bed-curtain; I dreamed that at my bedside, and that was the reason I gave up that bed; because I had such a dream in it. There was a bed-curtain, and that my 'visitor' hid herself behind it; but what a wonderful hand she had, my dear; and she sang about love, and she revealed to me what the meaning of love was: now, I understand, my dear. What a stupid little thing I was because I did not understand; I was a mere girl, a foolish little girl."

"My dear, my angel, everything has its time. The way we lived before was love, and the way that we live now is love; some people must have one kind of love, others another. Hitherto the one kind of love satisfied you; now you need another. Now you are a woman, my dear, and what you did not want then, you must have now."

¹ *Druzhõtchek*: literally, little friend. The Russian word *drüg* and its diminutives have the same force as the French *ami* and *amie*, which cannot be translated into English.

A week or two pass. Viéra Pavlovna makes herself comfortable. She is in her own room now, only when her husband is not at home, or when he is working, or rather when he is working she often sits in his library; when she sees that she disturbs him, that his work requires his full attention, then she does not interrupt him. But such work does not often come along; for the most part, it is scientific work, which is entirely mechanical, and accordingly three-fourths of the time he has his wife by his side, and at times they caress each other. But one contrivance was necessary; they had to buy another sofa a little smaller than the husband's. And so Viéra Pavlovna, after dinner, ensconces herself in her little sofa;² and her husband sits by her little sofa, and takes delight in looking at her.

"My dear, why do you kiss my hand? You know I don't like it."

"Oh! I forgot that you considered it an affront; well, [*nu*] I am going to keep on just the same."

"My *milenki*, you are saving me the second time; you saved me from bad people, and you have saved me from myself. Caress me, my dear; caress me!"

A month passes. Viéra Pavlovna after dinner ensconces herself comfortably on her wide, little, soft *divantchik* in her room and her husband's; that is, in her husband's library. He sat down on her little sofa, and she threw her arms around his neck; she bent her head to his bosom, but she is lost in thought; he kisses her, but her melancholy does not pass away, and her eyes are almost ready to shed tears.

"Viérotchka, my dear, what makes you so pensive?"

Viéra Pavlovna weeps, but she says nothing. "No,"—she wipes away her tears.—"No, don't caress me, dear! That's enough; thank thee." And she looks so affectionately and frankly at him. "Thank thee, thou art so kind to me!"

"Kind, Viérotchka? What is it? what do you mean?"

"Yes, kind, my dear; thou art kind."

Two days pass. Viéra Pavlovna again ensconces herself comfortably after dinner; no, she is not comfortable, but she is lying and thinking; and she is lying in her own room, on her own bed. Her husband is sitting near her with his arm around her; and he also is lost in thought.

"No, it is not this; it is not my fault," thinks Lopukhóf.

"How kind he is; how ungrateful I am!" thinks Viéra Pavlovna. And that is what they think.

She says, "My dear, go to your room and work, or else take a rest," and she tries to say, and succeeds in saying, these words in a natural and not melancholy tone.

"Why do you drive me away, Viérotchka? It is pleasant for me here," and he tries to say these words, and he succeeds in saying these words, in a natural and jocular tone.

"No, go away, my dear; you have done enough for me. Go, and get rested."

He kisses her, and she forgets her thoughts, and again it is sweet and easy for her to breathe.

"Thank you, dear," she says.

And Kirsánof is perfectly happy. The struggle has been pretty hard this time, but how much inward satisfaction it afforded him! and this satisfaction will never pass away, though the struggle will soon be over; but it will warm his heart for a long day, till the end of his life. He is honorable. Yes, he has harmonized them; yes, in reality, he has brought them into harmony. Kirsánof is lying on his sofa; he is smoking and thinking, "Be honest, that means be prudent; don't make any miscalculation; remember the axiom: remember that the whole is greater than any of its parts; that is, that your human nature is stronger, is more important for you than every other

² *Divantchik*.

individual tendency; and therefore treasure its benefits above those which may come from any separate tendency of thine, if they prove to be anyway inconsistent with the whole, and that's all; and that means be honest, and all will be well. One rule, and how commonplace it is, and that is the whole result of science; and that completely fills the volume of the laws of a happy life. Yes, happy are those who are born with the capability of understanding this simple rule. In this respect, I am very fortunate. Of course I am very much indebted to training, more probably than to nature. But gradually it will develop into a general rule, which will be the result of the universal training and circumstances of life. Yes, then it will be easy for everybody to live in this world, just as it is for me now. Yes, I am satisfied; yet I must go and call on them. I have not been there for three weeks; it's time, even though it may be unpleasant for me. I am not drawn there any more at all; but it's time. Some of these days I will stop in there for half an hour, or would it not be better to postpone it for a month? It seems to me that I can. Yes, my retreat has been well managed; my manœuvres are at an end; I have passed from their sight, and now they will not notice whether it's three weeks or three months since I have been to call on them. And it is agreeable to think, when you are away, about people towards whom you have acted uprightly. Now I shall rest on my laurels."

And Lopukhóf in two or three days later still, also after dinner, comes into Viérotchka's room, takes his wife in his arms and carries her to her ottoman in his room. "Rest here, dear!" And he takes delight in looking at her. She fell asleep smiling; he is sitting and reading; and she opened her eyes and thinks:—

"How his room is decorated! there is nothing in it except what is absolutely necessary. Yet he has his own tastes; there's a big box of cigars, which I gave him last year; he has not opened it yet; it's waiting its time. Yes, it's his only pleasure, his own only luxury—cigars. No, he has no other,—the photograph of that old man; what a splendid face that old man has! what a mixture of kindness and vigilance in his eyes and in the whole expression of his face! what trouble Dmitri took to get this photograph! for Owen's photographs are not to be had. He wrote three letters, two of his letters did not reach the old man; the third one reached him, and how long he tormented him before he succeeded in getting this really superb photograph, and how happy Dmitri was when he got it, together with a letter from the 'Saintly old man,' as he calls him, in which Owen, as he says, praised him. And here is still another luxury: my portrait; half a year he laid up money for the sake of getting a good artist, and how he and the young artist bothered me. Two pictures and that's all. Would it cost much to buy a few engravings and photographs just as I have in my room? And he has no flowers, while I have quantities in my room. Why shouldn't he like flowers as well as I do? Is it because I am a woman? What nonsense! Or is it because he is a serious and scientific man? But Kirsánof has flowers and engravings, and he too is a serious, scientific man. And why does he hate to give up his time to me? I know that it costs him a real effort! Is it because he is a serious, scientific man? But here's Kirsánof. No! no! he's kind, kind! he has done everything for me, he is always ready to do anything to gratify me. Who can love me as he does? And I love him and I am ready for anything for his sake—"

"Viérotchka! you are not sleeping, dear!"

"My *milenki*, why haven't you any flowers in your room?"

"Very well, dearest,³ I will get some to-morrow. It simply did not occur to me that it was a good thing. But it is very nice."

³ *Moï drüg.*

“And what was it that I wanted to ask you about besides? Oh, yes! do get some photographs; or rather, I’m going to buy you some flowers and photographs.”

“Then they will surely be agreeable to me. I like them for themselves, but then they will be still more delightful to me. But, Viérotchka, you are getting blue again; you have been thinking about your dream. Will you allow me to ask you to tell me something more about the dream that frightened you so much?”

“My dear,⁴ I have not been thinking about it at all. It is so painful for me to think about it.”

“But, Viérotchka, maybe it would be well for me to know about it.”

“Very well, my dearest! I dreamed that I was bored because I had not gone to the opera, and I was thinking about Bosio; some woman seemed to call on me, and at first I thought it was Bosio, but she kept hiding from me; she compelled me to read my diary; and there was nothing in it except how we loved each other; but when she touched her hand to the pages, new words seemed to be which said that I did not love you.”

“Forgive me, dearie,⁵ for asking one thing more. Was that all that you saw in your dream?”

“My dearest, if that had not been all, wouldn’t I have told thee so? And I have already told thee all.”

This was said so tenderly, so sincerely, so simply, that Lopukhóf felt in his heart a wave of warmth and sweetness, such as one who has once experienced this joy will never forget till his dying day. Oh, how pitiful that only a few, a very few, husbands can have this feeling! All the pleasures of happy love are nothing in comparison with it; it fills the human heart with the purest content, the holiest pride. In Viéra Pavlovna’s words, which were spoken with a shade of melancholy, rang a reproach, but the significance of the reproach was this: “My dear, don’t you know that I have perfect confidence in you? A wife may hide from her husband the mysterious motions of her soul; such are those very relations in which they stand to each other. But you, my dear, have so behaved that there has never been any need of hiding things from you, that my heart is open before you as before my own eyes.”

This is a great merit in a husband; this great reward is purchased only by a high moral worth, and whoever has deserved it has a right to look upon himself as a man of unquestionable nobility; he may boldly hope that his conscience is pure and will always remain pure, that his manhood will never play him false, that in all trials of every sort he will remain calm and firm, that fate is not reigning over the peace of his soul, that from the time that he has deserved this great honor, to the very last moment of his life, disregarding whatever shocks to which he may be subjected; he will be happy in the consciousness of his worthy manhood. Now we know enough of Lopukhóf to see that he was not a sentimental man, but he was so touched by these words of his wife that his face burned:—

“Viérotchka, my dearest, you have reproached me.” His voice for the second and last time in his life trembled. The first time that his voice trembled it was from doubt arising from conjecturing his position; now it trembled from pleasure. “You have reproached me, but this reproach is dearer to me than all the words of love. I offended you with my question, but how happy I am that my bad question gave me, brought me, such a reproach. Look, there are tears in my eyes, the first tears that I have shed since I was a boy!”

⁴ *Moï milui.*

⁵ *Moï drüg.*

The whole evening long he scarcely took his eyes from her, and she never once thought that he was making an effort to appear tender to her; and this evening was one of the happiest of her life, at least, up to the present time. Several years after the time of which I am now telling you about her, she will have a good many such days, months, years; this will be when her children shall have grown up, and she will find in them people worthy of happiness and sure of it. This pleasure is higher than all other individual pleasures; whatever may appear in any other personal pleasure is a rare and transitory loftiness; with her it is an ordinary, every-day level of happiness. But this is in the future which will come to her.

XXI.

But after his wife had gone to sleep sitting on his knees, after he laid her down on her little sofa, Lopukhóf began to think seriously about her dream. It was not his affair whether she loved him or not; that was her concern, over which he had no control, and over which as he himself plainly saw, he had no control. This will settle itself; there is no need of thinking about it to-day; let time tell; but now there is no time for it; it is now his business to find out what is the cause of her foreboding that she does not love him.

For the first time he sat a long while in these thoughts; already for the last few days he has seen that he is not retaining her love for him. A great loss; but what could be done about it? If he could exchange his nature, acquire a tendency towards that gentle fondness which her nature demanded, then of course it would be a different thing. But he saw that such an attempt would be in vain. If the inclination is not given by nature, and if it is not developed by life independently of the man himself, this man cannot create it in himself by force of will, and without this tendency nothing can be done as it ought to be done. Consequently the question about him was already decided. His former thoughts had been spent in this very direction. But now that he had finished his own side of the case (like an egotist, who always thinks first about himself, and about others only when there is none of his own business left to think about), he was able to think for some one else; that is, to think about her. What can he do for her? She does not yet understand what is going on in her; she has not had such experience of her heart as he has; well, that's natural; he is four years older than she is; at the beginning of youth four years is a long time. Can't he, who is more experienced, analyze what she is unable to analyze? How, then, to interpret her dream?

A supposition quickly presented itself to Lopukhóf; the cause of her thoughts may be found in the circumstance which gave rise to her dream. In the motive to her dream may lie the connection with its tenor. She said that she felt bored because she did not go to the opera. Lopukhóf began to examine his way and her way of living, and gradually everything appeared before him in its true light. The larger part of the time not occupied by her duties she used to spend, as he did, in solitude. Then a change began; she began to be always ready for amusement. Now once more their old way had been re-established. She cannot accept indifferently this renewal of their old mode of life; it was not in her nature, just as it would not be in the nature of the great majority of people. There is nothing mysterious about it. And from this it was a very short step to the supposition that the explanation of everything was her close relationship to Kirsánof and then Kirsánof's estrangement. Why does Kirsánof stay away? The reason seemed sufficient in itself: his lack of time and multiplicity of occupations. But an honest and intellectual man, who has had experience in life, and who is particularly able to put in practice the theory of which Lopukhóf was an advocate, it is impossible to deceive by any tricks or cunningness. He may be deceived through lack of attention; he may not pay any attention to the fact itself; thus Lopukhóf was deceived the first time when Kirsánof deserted them; at that time, to tell the plain truth, there was no reason and consequently no desire energetically to investigate the reason why Kirsánof became estranged. The only important thing for him was to see whether he were not the cause

for the severance of the friendship; it was plain that he was not, and so there was no cause for thinking of anything else; he was not Kirsánof's uncle and not his pedagogue, bound to lead in the paths of virtue the steps of a man who understands things as clearly as he does. Yes, and what necessity is there in reality for him to do so? Was there in his relations with Kirsánof anything particularly important for him? As long as you are friendly and you want me to like you, I am very willing; no, on the contrary, I am very sorry, but go wherever you please. Isn't it all the same to me? Whether there is one stupid fellow, more or less, in the world makes no difference to me. I took the stupid fellow to be a fine man; I am sorry, and that's all. If our interests are not connected with the actions of a person, his actions in reality interest us but little, if we are serious people, except in two cases, which, however, seem exceptions to the general rule only for those people who are accustomed to understand the word "interest" in the too narrow sense of every day's interpretation. The first case is where these actions are interesting for us from a theoretical standpoint, as psychological phenomena explaining the nature of a person, that is, if they have in them an intellectual interest: the other case is where the fate of a person depends upon us. Here we should be to blame in our own eyes for inattention to his actions; that is, if we take a conscientious interest in them. But in those former stupid actions of Kirsánof there was nothing that would not be known to Lopukhóf as a very ordinary peculiarity among people of the present day. There was nothing rare in a person having gentlemanly instincts giving himself over to triviality, resulting from the present state of things. And that Lopukhóf was destined to play an important part in Kirsánof's fate was beyond Lopukhóf's power of imagination. Why should Kirsánof be in need of his interference? Consequently, "Go ahead, my friend! go wherever you please without regarding me. What need have I of troubling about you?"

But now it is different. Kirsánof's actions suddenly seem to have an important bearing on the interests of a woman whom Lopukhóf loved. He could not refrain from thinking carefully about them. But to think carefully about a fact and understand its causes is almost one and the same thing for a person of such a turn of mind as Lopukhóf. Lopukhóf found that his theory affords unerring means for analyzing the motions of the human heart, and I confess I agree with him in this respect. In those long years since I have accepted it as true, it has never once led me into error, and it has never refused to reveal the truth to me, no matter how deep the truth, in regard to some human action, might have been hidden. It is also true that the theory itself is not easily acquired; it is necessary to have lived and thought to be able to understand it.

Half an hour's thinking was sufficient for Lopukhóf to understand the relations of Kirsánof to Viéra Pavlovna. But still he sat long thinking about the same thing; further explanation was needless, but it was interesting; the discovery was made with complete fulness of details, but it was so interesting that long he refrained from going to sleep.

However, what is the good of straining your nerves with sleeplessness? It is already three o'clock. "If I can't fall asleep, I shall have to take morphine." He took two pills. "I will just look at Viérotcha once more." But instead of walking over to her and looking at her, he removed his chair over to her sofa, took her hand and kissed it.

"*Milenki*, you have been working too hard, and all for my sake; how kind you are, and how I love you!" said she, half asleep. No shipwreck of the spirit can resist morphine in sufficient quantity; at this time, two pills proved to be enough; he is overcome by sleep. Consequently, the shipwreck of the soul by itself is approximately equal, according to Lopukhóf's materialistic views, to four glasses of strong coffee, to overcome, which one pill would not have been enough

in Lopukhóf's case; but three pills would have been too much. He fell asleep laughing at this comparison.

XXII. A THEORETICAL CONVERSATION.

On the following day, Kirsánof had just thrown himself down like a sybarite, with a cigar, intending to read and rest after his late dinner upon returning from the hospital, when Lopukhóf came in.

“A guest at the wrong time is worse than a Tartar,” said Lopukhóf, in a jocular tone; but his tone proved not to be very successfully jocular. “I disturb you, Aleksandr; but even if it is so, you must put up with it. I want to speak to you seriously. I meant to have come earlier, but I overslept this morning, and I should not have found you.” Lopukhóf was now speaking without joking.

“What does it mean? Has he really suspected?” wondered Kirsánof.

“Let us have a little talk,” continued Lopukhóf, seating himself. “Look me in the eye.”

“Yes, he is going to speak about it; there is no doubt about it.”

“Listen, Dmitri,” said Kirsánof, in a tone still more serious. “You and I are friends; but there are things which even friends must not allow themselves. I beg of you to cease this conversation. I am not inclined now to serious conversations, and I am never ready for it.” Kirsánof’s eyes looked keenly and angrily, as though a man were before him whom he suspected of committing a murder.

“It is impossible not to speak, Aleksandr,” continued Lopukhóf, in a calm, but rather dull voice. “I have understood your manœuvres.”

“Silence! I forbid you to speak, unless you want me to be your enemy forever,—if you don’t want to lose my respect.”

“Some time ago, you were not afraid of losing my respect; do you remember? Now I understand all. I did not understand it then.”

“Dmitri, I beg of you to leave the room, or I shall.”

“You cannot leave. What do you suppose,—that I do not have your interests at heart?”

Kirsánof did not reply.

“My situation is a good one. Yours, judging by your words, is not. I appear to you in the guise of a man doing a noble deed. But that’s nonsense. I cannot act otherwise, according to common sense. I beg of you, Aleksandr, to cease your manœuvres; they will lead to nothing.”

“How? was it really too late? Forgive me,” cried Kirsánof, impetuously; and he could not decide whether it was joy or grief excited in him by the words, “they will lead to nothing.”

“No; you have not understood me. It was not too late. So far there has been no harm done; we shall see whether there will be. But now there is nothing to be seen. However, Aleksandr, I do not understand what you are speaking about; neither do you understand what I mean. We do not understand each other; isn’t that so? There is not any need of our understanding each other, is there? These are little enigmas which you do not understand; they are unpleasant. There was nothing of the sort; I have not said anything. I have nothing to say to you. Give me a cigar; I forgot mine. I’m forgetful. I am going to smoke and have a talk with you about scientific questions; that was all that I came for. I wanted to spend a little time in scientific talk, as I had nothing

else to do. What do you think about these strange experiments on the mechanical production of albumen?" Lopukhóf moved from one chair to another, so as to have a comfortable place for his feet; he got into an easy position, and while he smoked his cigar he continued what he had to say. "According to my view it is a great discovery. Have you repeated the experiments?"

"No; but I shall have to."

"How fortunate you are to have such a splendid laboratory at your disposal. I beg of you, try them for yourself; try them more carefully. A complete revolution of the whole question of food, and of all human life—the artificial production of the principal element of nutrition, directly from inorganic matter. It is a most extraordinary thing; it is equal to Newton's discovery. Don't you think so?"

"Certainly. Only I greatly doubt the accuracy of the experiments. Sooner or later we shall reach this without doubt; science is going on in that direction, that is evident. But now we have hardly come to it."

"Do you think so? I think so myself. Then our conversation is ended. Good by, Aleksandr. But while I say good by, I will ask you to call on us often, just as you used to do. *Dō svidánya.*"

Kirsánof's eyes, which all the time had been looking fiercely and steadily at Lopukhóf, flashed with indignation. "It seems to me, Dmitri, that you want me to get the opinion that you have low thoughts."

"I don't want anything of the sort. But you must come to see us. There is nothing strange in that, is there? You and I are friends. What is there strange in my request?"

"I cannot. You are beginning a foolish piece of work, and, therefore, wretched."

"I do not understand what you mean. And I must tell you that what you say does not please me at all; just as two minutes ago what I said did not please you."

"I demand an explanation, Dmitri."

"There's none to give. There is nothing, and there is nothing to explain, and there is nothing to understand. You are getting excited over mere nothing."

"No, I cannot let you go so." Kirsánof took Lopukhóf by the arm as he started to leave. "Sit down; you began to speak when it was not necessary. You don't realize what you ask of me. You must hear me now to the end."

Lopukhóf sat down.

"What right have you"—Kirsánof began in a voice of greater indignation than before—"what right have you to ask of me what is hard for me? Is there anything that I owe you? What does this mean? It's absurd. Try to clear your brain of romantic nonsense. Whatever you and I regard as a normal life will come to be so, only after the ideas of general society have entirely changed. There must be absolute reorganization, that is true. It will be reorganized according as life is developed. Whoever gets the new training, helps others, that is true. But until this new education is accomplished, as long as things are not completely changed, you have no right to risk the happiness of another. This is a horrible thing; do you understand it, or have you lost your senses?"

"No; I do not understand anything at all, Aleksandr. I do not know what you are talking about. You are pleased to see a wonderful design in the simple request of a friend, not to forget him, because he likes to see you at his house. I don't understand why you need to get excited about it."

"No, Dmitri; in such talk you will not get rid of me with a jest. I must show you that you are crazy, in thinking about such a miserable piece of work. There are a good many things that you

and I don't acknowledge, aren't there? We don't acknowledge that a box on the ear carries with it something dishonorable; it is a stupid prejudice, a harmful prejudice, and nothing more. But have you the right now to subject a man to the risk of getting a boxing? That would be on your part, a mean, low abomination, for you would have taken away from a man the peace of his life. Do you understand what I mean, stupid? Do you understand that if I love this person, and you ask me to give him a box in the ear, which, according to my ideas and yours, is a trifle,—do you understand that if you asked me to do this, I should consider you a fool and a low fellow; and if you compelled me to do it, I should kill either you or myself, according to whose life were the less desirable—I would kill either you or myself, but I would not do this. Do you understand this, you stupid fellow? I am speaking about a man and a slap, which is a trifle, but which takes away the peace of life from a man. Besides men, there are in this world women, who are also human beings; besides slaps, there are other kinds of trifles, which, according to your idea and mine, and which are really trifles, but which also deprive people of the peace of life. Do you understand that to subject any person, even though it be a woman, to any such thing, which, according to your opinion and mine, and in reality are trifles,—well, to do any such thing, it does not matter what,—do you understand, that to subject any one to such a thing, is mean, contemptible, dishonest? Do you hear me? I say that you have dishonorable thoughts.”

“My friend, you speak the exact truth about what is honorable and dishonorable; only I do not know what you are saying these things for, and I do not understand what relation it may have to me. I have not told you anything at all, nor have I said anything about any intention of risking the peace of life of anybody in the world! nothing of the kind! You are indulging in fancies, and that's all there is of it. I ask of you, my friend, not to forget me, because it is agreeable to me, as your friend, to spend time with you, and that's all. Will you fulfil your friend's request?”

“It is dishonorable, I told you, and I don't act dishonorably.”

“It is very praiseworthy of you that you don't; but you got angry over some fancy or other, and you dashed off into theory. You apparently wanted to theorize without any reason, without any applicability to what we were talking about. Now I also am going to theorize, also absolutely without any direct intention, I will ask you a question that has no relation, whatever to anything except the explanation of an abstract truth, without any application to any one in particular. If any one without any distaste to himself can afford to give another pleasure, then common sense, according to my view, demands that he give it to him, because he himself will get pleasure from it; isn't that so?”

“That's nonsense, Dmitri! You are off the point.”

“I am not saying anything, Aleksandr; I am only indulging myself in theoretical speculations. Here is still another: If any desire, whatsoever, is awakened for anything, does our attempt to stifle this desire ever lead to anything good? Is not that so? No, such an attempt would lead to no good. It leads only to the necessity increasing threefold; it becomes injurious or takes a false direction; it is both harmful and miserable, or if the desire is stifled also, life is stifled; that is pitiful.”

“That is not the point, Dmitri. I am going to put your theoretical problem in another form: Has anybody a right to subject a person to a risk, if that person's life is happy without that risk? There will come a time when all the demands of every man's nature will be fully satisfied, that you and I know; but we both know equally well that this time has not yet come. Now a reasonable man is satisfied if he has enough to live upon, even though parts of his nature are not satisfied with the position in which he is satisfied to live. I shall suppose, by the way of

abstract hypothesis, that such a fortunate man is in existence. I shall suppose that this person is a woman; I shall suppose again, in the way of an abstract hypothesis, that the position in which she is satisfied to live is married life. I will suppose that she is satisfied with her position, and I say: given such facts according to this abstract hypothesis, who has a right to run the risk of destroying what is good, what she is satisfied with, in order to try to give this person something better, which she can easily manage to get along without. There will be a golden age; we know that it is coming, but it is far in the future. The age of iron is almost gone, but the golden age has not yet made its appearance. If according to my abstract hypothesis, some strong demand of this person, let us suppose—since it is only for an example, let us suppose, love—the necessity of love were not entirely satisfied or were ill satisfied, I would not say anything against the danger run by the person, but only against such danger itself, and not against the danger brought upon him by somebody else. And if this person finds perfect satisfaction after all for his demand, then he himself must not run the risk. Now I will say abstractly that he does not want to run the risk, and I will say further, he is right and sensible because he does not want to run the risk; and I say, mean and contemptible is the man who would subject to the risk the one who does not want to run the risk. What can you say against this hypothetical result? Nothing! Understand, then, that you have no right.”

“If I had been in your place, Aleksandr, I should have answered in the same way; I, like you, am speaking only in parables; I will imagine that you have a personal interest in this question. I know of course that it does not concern any one of us; we are speaking only as scientific men about certain interesting sides of universal scientific principles, which seem to us right; according to these views, everybody judges about every case from his own standpoint, which is formed by his individual relations to the thing. I only say in this sense of the word, that if I were in your place I should have spoken as you have, and you in my place would have said exactly what I have said. From the general scientific standpoint, this is an undisputable truth. A in B’s place is B; if A were not B when in B’s place, then he would not be in B’s place; he would somehow fail to be in B’s place; isn’t it so? Consequently you have nothing to say against this, just as I had nothing to say against what you said. But according to your example I will establish my hypothesis, which is also abstract, and which also has no application to anybody. Let us suppose that there are three people in existence—a supposition which contains nothing impossible; let us suppose that one of them has a secret which he would like to keep from the second, and particularly from the third; let us suppose that the second finds out the secret of the third, and says to him: Do as I tell you, else I shall expose your secret to the third. What do you think about this matter?”

Kirsánof grew rather pale and for a long time twisted his mustache. “Dmitri, you behave shamefully towards me,” he said at last.

“Have I any special necessity upon me to act well toward you? what interest do I take in you? And besides, I do not understand what you are talking about. You and I have been speaking as two scientific men speak among themselves. We offered each other various scientific hypotheses; at last I succeeded in offering one which brought you to terms, and my scientific self-respect is satisfied. And therefore I shall cease this theoretical conversation. I have a great deal of work to do, not less than you have, and so *dō svidánya*. By the way, I had almost forgotten; Aleksandr will you fulfil my request to come and see us; we are good friends, you know; and we shall be always glad to see you. Come just as you used to these last few months.”

Lopukhóf got up. Kirsánof was sitting, looking at his fingers as though each one were a abstract hypothesis. “You are acting cruelly towards me, Dmitri. I cannot help fulfilling your request. But

in my turn I shall impose one condition; I will come to see you; but if I leave your house not by myself, you must also go everywhere that I go, and I must have no necessity of asking you. Do you hear? You yourself, of your own free will, without my asking you. Without you I shall not take a step; not to the opera, not to call on friends or go anywhere.”

“Oughtn’t that condition to be offensive to me Aleksandr? Do you think I look upon you as a thief?”

“I didn’t speak in that sense of the word. I would not bring such an affront upon you as to think that you could take me for a thief. I would give my life into your hands without any hesitation. I hope I have a right to expect this from you also. But what I mean is for me to know. You do what I say, and that’s all.”

“Now I too know. Yes, you have done a great deal in this respect; you want now to guard against this even more solicitously. Well, in this respect you are in the right. Yes, you have a right to compel me. But no matter how thankful I am to you, my friend, this will amount to nothing. I myself tried to compel myself; I too have a will as well as you, and my scheme has been as clever as yours. But whatever is done through calculation, through a feeling of duty, by strength of will, and not by the drawing of nature, results lifelessly. Only to kill a thing is possible through these means, just as you have been doing with yourself, but to make a living thing is impossible.”

Lopukhóf had become sentimental over Kirsánof’s words, “what I mean is for me to know.” “Thank you, my friend. And since we have never kissed each other, maybe we have a desire to now?”

If Lopukhóf had examined his actions during this conversation, as a theorist, he would have noticed with satisfaction: “How true the theory is, Egotism makes sport of men. Now here the most important thing he entirely suppressed: ‘Let us suppose that this person is satisfied with his situation.’ Now when that was said, he ought to have replied: ‘Aleksandr, your supposition is not true.’ But I held my peace because it was not to my advantage to say it. It is pleasant for a man, as a theorist, to notice what tricks his egotism plays with him in practical life. You are retreating from the battle because the battle is lost for you, but egotism turns your gestures so that you are playing the man who is doing noble actions.”

Had Kirsánof examined his actions during this conversation, as a theorist, he would have noticed with pleasure “How true this theory is. I wanted to preserve my own peace, to rest upon my laurels, and here I was saying, ‘You have no right to risk a woman’s peace of mind’; and this means—be sure you yourself understand it—that I actually have done a noble action to my own detriment, for the sake of another’s peace, and for your sake, my friend, and therefore fall on your knees before the grandeur of my soul! It is pleasant for a man, as a theorist, to notice what tricks his egotism plays with him in practical life. He retreated from the battle so as not to be a fool, and gained glory because he had accomplished a heroic action of magnanimous nobility. You did not yield to the demand at the first word, so that you might not be troubled again about yourself, so that you might not be deprived of the sweet triumph in your nobility; but egotism turns your actions so that you are playing the man who presses forward into noble endeavor.”

But neither Lopukhóf nor Kirsánof had time to examine their actions as theorists, or to make these pleasant observations; and the practical solution of the question seemed to both pretty hard.

XXIII.

The renewal of Kirsánof's frequent visits could be explained very naturally; five months he had been interrupted in his occupations, and he had accumulated a great deal of work; and so it took him a month and a half to sit down at it, not straightening his back. Now he had finished his neglected work, and he was more at liberty in the use of his time. This was so clear that there was hardly any need of explaining it.

In fact, it was plain and all right, and did not arouse any suspicion in Viéra Pavlovna's mind. And on the other hand, Kirsánof played his part with the same undoubted artistic skill as before. He was afraid that, when he called at the Lopukhófs', after his scientific conversation with his friend, he would "lose his grip";¹ he would either blush from excitement at seeing Viéra Pavlovna for the first time, or would very noticeably avoid looking at her, or do something of the kind. But, no, he stood firm, and he had full right to feel satisfied from the moment that he met her; a pleasant, friendly smile, such as is natural in a person who is glad to get back among old friends, from whom he had been obliged to be absent for some time; a calm glance, a frank and unconcerned flow of speech, such as is natural to a person who has no other thoughts in his mind, beyond those he fearlessly speaks. If you had been the most ill-tempered, gossiping old woman, on the lookout to find something out of the way, you could not have found in him anything, except a man who seems very glad that he can pleasantly kill a leisure evening in the society of his good friends.

And if the first moment was so well accomplished, what prevented him from spending the rest of the evening just as well? And if he succeeded in spending the first evening so well, then was it hard for him to spend the evenings to come in the same way? Not a single word which was not free and natural, not one look which was not hearty and simple, straightforward, and friendly, and that was all there was of it.

But if he behaved himself no worse than of old, yet the eyes which were bent upon him were inclined to notice every action which no other eyes would have perceived. Yes; no other eyes would have seen anything. Lopukhóf himself, whom Marya Alekséyevna acknowledged to be born for a monopolist, was surprised at the self-possession which did not for one moment desert Kirsánof, and as a theorist, he derived great pleasure from such observations, contrary to the will of those who interested him by the psychological peculiarity of this phenomenon viewed from a scientific standpoint. But the "visitor" did not prophecy in vain when she compelled Viéra Pavlovna to read her diary. Eyes become too sharp, when such a "visitor" whispers in your ear.

But even these eyes could see nothing; but still the "visitor" whispered, "Is it impossible to find something here, even though there is nothing to be seen, as I myself perceive? but still we will try to see"; and the eyes tried to peer, and though they saw nothing, yet the very fact that the eyes tried to see was sufficient for them to observe that there was something peculiar.

¹ *Oprostovolitsa*: literally, become dishevelled.

Here, for instance, Viéra Pavlovna is going with her husband and Kirsánof to their regular weekly evening, which happens to be at the Mertsálofs'. Why doesn't Kirsánof waltz at this unceremonious party, when even Lopukhóf waltzes, because a general rule has been made: If you are an old man of threescore years and ten, and have found your way hither, then you must play the fool, together with the others; for here nobody looks at anybody else, everybody has one and the same idea about it,—“the more noise, the more stir, the better”; and that is equivalent to saying, the more enjoyment for all. Then, why does not Kirsánof waltz? Well, he has begun to waltz; but why did it take him several minutes to make up his mind? Was it worth while to spend several minutes in thinking whether to begin or not to begin such a very important matter? If he had not waltzed, the thing would have been half revealed here. If he had waltzed, but had not waltzed with Viéra Pavlovna, the thing would have been completely revealed here. But he was too clever an artist in his part. He did not want to waltz with Viéra Pavlovna, but he soon perceived that this would be noticed, and so, after a short hesitation, which apparently bore no relation to Viéra Pavlovna or anybody else in the world, he asked her to dance. There remained in her memory a slight, a very slight, wonderment, which in itself she would have not noticed, notwithstanding the whisper of the “visitor-songstress,” had not the “visitor” whispered a numberless quantity of just such little, insignificant questions.

Why, for instance, after they returned from the Mertsálofs', when they make an appointment to go to the opera, “I Puratani,” on the next evening, and when Viéra Pavlovna said to her husband, “*Mílenki*, you don't like this opera, you will be bored. I will go with Aleksandr Matvéitch, for he likes all the operas; and I believe that if you or I had written an opera, he would like it!” why didn't Kirsánof uphold Viéra Pavlovna's suggestion, and say, “Really, Dmitri, I am not going to get a ticket for you”; why was this? The fact that *mílenki* goes along also, this by itself would not have aroused any wonderment; for he escorts his wife everywhere, since she had once asked him to. “Devote more time to me,” she said. Since that time he had never forgotten it; consequently, there is nothing strange in his going with her: it simply shows always one and the same thing,—that he is kind and complaisant, that she ought to love him. That is true; but Kirsánof does not know this reason, and so why doesn't he support Viéra Pavlovna in her suggestion? Of course these trifles are almost unnoticeable, and Viéra Pavlovna scarcely gives them a passing thought; but these unnoticeable little grains of sand keep falling on the pan of the scales, though they were almost invisible. For example, a conversation like the following is not a little grain of sand, but a small pebble.

On the next day, as they were going to the opera in an *izvoshchik's* carriage (this was less expensive than two *izvoshchiks*), among other things they said several words about the Mertsálofs, where they had been the evening before. They praised their harmonious life; they remarked that this was a rare thing; they all said this, including Kirsánof, who added, “Yes, this alone is a good thing in Mertsálof, that his wife dares tell him all the secrets of her soul.” That was all that Kirsánof said, and each one of the three thought of saying the same thing; but it happened that Kirsánof alone said it. But why did he say it? What does it signify? if it contained an insinuation, what could it mean? It would be in praise of Lopukhóf; it would be in favor of Viéra Pavlovna's happiness with Lopukhóf. Of course, this could have been said with reference to no one else except the Mertsálofs; and if it could be supposed that he thought of the Lopukhófs together with the Mertsálofs, then, of course, it would show that it was directly for Viéra Pavlovna; but what was his purpose in saying it?

It always happens so that if a person has an inclination to look for something, he everywhere finds what he is looking for; even let there be not the slightest sign of it, still he sees the sign manifestly; let there be no shadow, but he not only finds the shadow of what he expects to find, but the whole substance of what he is looking for, with the most unmistakable features, and these features at every fresh thought become more clear.

And here, besides everything else, there was really a very substantial fact, which hid in itself a very complete solution of the matter. It is clear that Kirsánof respects the Lopukhófs; then why did he keep aloof from them for more than two years? It is clear that he is a thorough gentleman; how did it happen that he appeared before them in the character of a boor? As long as Viéra Pavlovna was not called upon to think about this, she did not think about it any more than Lopukhóf had done; but now she thinks about it in spite of herself.

XXIV.

Slowly, unobservably, this discovery began to evolve itself in her mind. All the time there accumulated small, almost undistinguishable, impressions made by Kirsánof's words and actions, to which no one else would have given any heed, which she herself scarcely noticed, for they were only supposed and suspected. Slowly this question, "Why did he avoid them almost three years?" began to interest her mind. Slowly the idea was confirmed that such a man could not have stayed away from any petty grounds of self-conceit, because he is absolutely free from it. And, moreover, not knowing why she thought of this, still more obscurely and slowly arose from the silent depths of her life into her consciousness, the question, "Why am I thinking about him? What is he to me?"

And here, one time after dinner, Viéra Pavlovna was sitting in her room, sewing and thinking, and she was thinking very calmly, and she was not thinking at all of him, but of something quite different, connected with her household, and about the shop and about her teaching, and gradually, gradually, her thoughts were drawn to the matter concerning which, without being conscious of it, her thoughts were more and more often drawn. There came up recollections, little questions began to present themselves; they multiplied, and here they are in thousands, finding place in her thoughts; and still they grow and grow, and they go to form one question, the form of which becomes clearer and clearer. "What has got into me? what am I thinking about? what am I feeling?" and Viéra Pavlovna's fingers forget to sew, and the sewing slips from her drooping hands, and Viéra Pavlovna grew a shade paler, then she blushed; she grew still paler, then the fire touched her flushed cheeks. The next moment they were white as snow, and with wandering eyes she ran in to her husband, sat herself on his knees, tremblingly threw her arms around his neck, laid her head on his shoulder, so that it might support her head and hide her face, and with choking voice she said, "My dear, I love him," and she began to weep.

"What of that, my dear? Why should you feel disturbed about it?"

"I do not want to offend you, my dear; I want to love you."

"Try. Look here: if you can, it will be well. Be calm; give time a chance, and you will see what you can do, and what you cannot do. You are so dear to me; how, then, can you offend me?"

He smoothed her hair, kissed her head, pressed her hand. She could not for a long time cease her convulsive weeping; but gradually she became calm. But he who had for a long time expected such a confession, was therefore able to take it coolly. However, even yet she could not bear to look at his face.

"I do not want to see him; I shall tell him to cease coming to see us," said Viéra Pavlovna.

"You must act, my love, in the way which you find will give you the greatest happiness. And when you have become calmer, we will talk the matter over; for you and I, no matter what may happen between us, will always be friends, won't we? Give me your hand; press mine. You see how warmly you press it."

Every one of these phrases were spoken at long intervals, and the intervals were filled by his smoothing her hair, fondling her, as a brother fondles a grieved sister.

“Do you remember, my dear, what you told me when we became engaged? ‘You are leading me into freedom.’”—Again silence and caresses. “Do you remember how you and I talked the first time about what it means to love a person? It means to feel gladness at whatever is good for that person, to feel pleasure in doing whatever may be to his advantage.”—Again silence and caresses—“Whatever is for your best good gives me joy also; but you must decide what is best for you. Why should you be grieved? If it brings you no misfortune, what misfortune can it bring me?”

In these laconic words, which were repeated a good many times, with the ordinary insignificant variations of repetition, passed considerable time, which was equally trying for Lopukhóf and Viéra Pavlovna. But while gradually getting calmer, Viéra Pavlovna began at last to breathe more freely. She embraced her husband tightly, and she kept repeating, “I want to love thee, my dear,¹ thee alone; I want to love no one else besides thee.”

He did not tell her that this was beyond her power; it was necessary to let the time pass until her strength could be restored by calmness, giving her some sort of decision, no matter what. Lopukhóf succeeded in writing a note for Masha to give Kirsánof in case he should come: “Aleksandr, don’t come in just now, and don’t come for some time; there is no particular reason, and there will be no particular reason; it is only necessary for her to rest.”

“It is necessary for her to rest; there is no particular reason.” A strange juxtaposition of contraries! Kirsánof read over the note, and told Masha that he only came to get it, and that he had no time now to stop in; that he had another place to go to; that he would stop on his way back, after he had done the errand which the note demanded.

The evening passed peacefully according to all appearances. Half the time Viéra Pavlovna sat quietly by herself in her room, without letting her husband stay; the other half of the time he sat near her, trying to calm her with the same laconic words, and of course, not so much by his words as by his voice, which was steady and reassuring; of course not with God-knows-what happiness, and of course, also, not melancholy; except that there was an undertone of melancholy in it, which was shown in his face. Viéra Pavlovna, after hearing such sounds, and looking at such an expression of face, began to think, not absolutely, but to a degree; no, not to a degree, but almost absolutely, that her fears had been overestimated; that she had mistaken for a great passion a mere imagination, which would vanish in a few days, without leaving any trace; or, she thought—she did think it, only she felt that it was not so: “No, this is not so; no, it is so”; or she firmly thinks that she thinks so: and she really thinks that it is so; and how can she help thinking so, while she listens to this calm, steady voice, which keeps repeating that there is nothing to be worried about. Peacefully she fell asleep under the influence of this voice; she slept soundly, and she did not dream of the “visitor,” and she woke up late, and after she woke up she felt renewed strength.

¹ *Moï milui.*

XXV.

“The best distraction for thoughts is work,” said Viéra Pavlovna to herself, and she was entirely right. “I shall spend every day in the shop until I am cured, and this will help me.” She began to spend the whole day in the shop. The first day she really succeeded in greatly distracting her thoughts; the second day she only tired herself out, but she could not entirely escape from them; on the third she could not get rid of them at all. Thus passed a week.

The struggle was hard. Viéra Pavlovna’s face grew pale, but, by outward appearances, she was entirely calm; she even tried to seem happy, and in this respect she succeeded almost without interruption. But if no one could notice anything, and her paleness were ascribed to some slight ailment, yet Lopukhóf was not deceived; he knew perfectly well how it was; he had no need to look.

“Viérotchka,” he began at the end of a week, “as we are living now, we carry out the old proverb that the cobbler has no boots, and the tailor’s clothes don’t fit him. We are teaching others to live according to our economical principles, but we, ourselves, don’t take it into our heads to arrange our own lives in accordance with them. Isn’t one large household more advantageous than several small ones? I should like to apply this law to our own housekeeping arrangements. If we had lived with somebody, we, and those who lived with us, would have saved almost half of our expenses. I should be able to give up those execrable lessons, which I detest so; my salary from the factory would be enough, and I should get time for relaxation. I could occupy my time with scientific work, and thus have taken up my career again. It is only necessary to find people such as it would be agreeable to live with. What do you think about this?”

Viéra Pavlovna had been looking at her husband with eyes full of suspicion, and burning with indignation just as Kirsánof had looked at him on the day of their theoretical conversation. After he stopped speaking, her face was on fire.

“I beg of you to cease this conversation; it is not becoming.”

“Why so, Viérotchka? I am only speaking about pecuniary advantages; such people as you and I, who are not rich, must not neglect them. My work is hard, and a part of it is even detestable to me.”

“You have no right to speak so to me.” Viéra Pavlovna got up. “I shall not allow you to speak to me in dark words. Dare to speak freely what you mean!”

“I only want to tell you this, Viérotchka: that taking into consideration our advantage, it would be good for us.”

“Again, silence! Who gave you the right to be master over me? I shall despise you!” She ran quickly to her own room and locked the door.

This was their first and their last quarrel.

Till late that night Viéra Pavlovna sat with her door locked; then she returned to her husband’s room.

“My dear,¹ I spoke to you very severe words, but do not be angry at them. You see that I am doing my best; instead of helping me, you began to help along what I am struggling against, hoping,—yes, hoping—to win the victory.”

“Forgive me, my love,² for beginning so roughly, but now we are reconciled, aren’t we? Let us talk reasonably.”

“Oh, yes, we are reconciled, my dear. Only don’t act against me. It is hard enough, even as it is, to struggle against myself.”

“And it is useless, Viérotchka; you have had plenty of time to examine your feeling: you have seen that it is more serious than you believed at first. Why torment yourself?”

“No, my dear,³ I want to love you, and I do not want to wrong you.”

“My dear,⁴ you wish me to be happy. What! do you think that it is pleasant for me to see you keep tormenting yourself?”

“My dear,⁵ but you love me so!”

“Of course I do, very dearly: there is no need of saying that; but we both understand what love means: does it not consist in the fact that you are happy in the happiness, that you suffer with the suffering, of the one whom you love. When you torment yourself, you torment me.”

“So it is, my dear,⁶ but you will suffer if I yield to this feeling, which—*akh!* I cannot understand why it should have come to me; I curse it!”

“It makes no difference how or why it came to you; you cannot help it. Now there is only one choice: either you should suffer, and I suffer also through it, or that you cease to suffer, and I too.”

“But, my dear,⁷ I am not going to suffer; this will pass away; you will see this pass.”

“Thank you for your efforts; I appreciate them, because you show a will to fulfil what you deem your duty. But know, Viérotchka, that it seems necessary only to you, and not to me. I am looking upon it as a stranger; and your position is clearer to me than it is to yourself. I know that this will be useless. Struggle as long as your strength holds out, but don’t think that you are going to wrong me. For you know how I look upon this; you know that my view of this matter cannot be shaken, and is founded in the nature of things: you know all this. Can you deceive me? Will you ever cease to respect me? I can say further: even if your disposition towards me changed its nature, will it grow weaker? Isn’t the contrary true? would it not grow stronger from the very fact that you did not find in me an enemy? Don’t pity me; my fate will not be in the least pitiful because you will not be deprived of happiness on my account. But that’s enough. It is hard to say much about it, and for you to hear is harder still. Only remember, Viérotchka, what I am saying now. Forgive me, Viérotchka. Go to your room and think it over, or, rather, go to sleep. Don’t think about me, but think about yourself. Only by thinking about yourself, you may not cause me useless sorrow.”

¹ *Moï milui.*

² *Moï drüg.*

³ *Moï milui.*

⁴ *Moï milui.*

⁵ *Moï milui.*

⁶ *Moï milui.*

⁷ *Moï milui.*

XXVI.

At the end of two weeks, while Lopukhóf was sitting in the counting-room of his factory, Viéra Pavlovna was spending the whole morning in extraordinary excitement. She threw herself down on her bed, she covered her face with her hands; and at the end of a quarter of an hour she jumped up, walked up and down the room, threw herself into one chair after another, and again walked with quick, unsteady steps, and then again threw herself on her bed, and then walked again; and several times she went to the writing-desk, and stood by it, and turned away, and finally she sat down, wrote a few words, sealed her note. Then, in half an hour, she seized the note, tore it up, burned it, and again she walked about excitedly. She wrote a second letter; this, also, she tore up and burned. Again she walked up and down, and again she wrote, and hastily, scarcely stopping to seal it; not giving herself time to write the address, she ran off with it to her husband's room, threw it on the table, and hurried back to her own room, fell into a chair, and sat motionless, hiding her face in her hands, half an hour, possibly an hour. There is the sound of the bell; it is he. She ran into the library to seize the letter, to tear it up, to burn it,—but where is it? It is not there! where is it? She hastily looked over the papers; where is it? But Masha is already opening the door, and Lopukhóf saw from the threshold how Viéra Pavlovna flashed out from his library into her own room, excited and pale.

He did not follow her, but went straight into his library; coolly, at his leisure, he examined the table and the space behind the table. Yes; he had been expecting for some days some such thing, either in the way of words or note. *Nu*, here it is, a letter without address, but her seal; *nu*, she must have been looking for it, so as to destroy it, or she may have just thrown it down. No, she must have been looking for it; the papers are in disorder. But how could she find it, while in throwing it down she had been in such a flurry of excitement that, in being thrown impetuously down, like a coal burning the hand, it slid across the whole width of the table, and fell on the window behind the table? There is hardly need of reading it; the contents are what he expects. However, it is impossible not to read it.

“My dear,¹ never was I so strongly attached to thee as I am now. If I could only die for thy sake! Oh, how happy I would be to die, if it would only make thee happier! but I cannot live without him. I wrong thee, my dear; I am killing thee, my dear.² I do not want to do so; I am acting contrary to my will. Forgive me! forgive me!”

For quarter of an hour, maybe more, Lopukhóf stood before the table, looking attentively down at the arm of the chair. Though it was a shock foreseen, still it was painful; though he had thought it all over, and decided what should be done, and how it was necessary to act, in case such a letter or confession came, still he could not at once collect his thoughts. But at last he collected them. He went into the kitchen to give an order to Masha.

¹ *Moï milui.*

² *Moï drüg.*

“Masha, you will please not set the table until I tell you. I am not quite well, and I must take some medicine before dinner. But don’t you wait; eat your dinner, and don’t hurry: you will have plenty of time before I shall want mine. I will tell when.”

From the kitchen he went to see his wife. She was lying down, hiding her face in the pillows; when he entered, she shuddered:—

“You found it, you read it! *bozhe moi!* how crazy I am! It is not true—what I wrote! it was fever!”

“Of course, my dear;³ your words must not be taken seriously, because you were too much excited. These things are not so easily decided. We shall have time to talk this matter over more than once, calmly, rationally, because it is a very important matter for us. And, meanwhile, my dear,⁴ I want to tell you something about my affairs. I have succeeded in making a good many changes in them,—everything that was needed; and I am very well content. Are you listening?”

Of course she did not herself know whether she was listening or not; she could only have said, however it was, whether she heard or not, that she heard something, but she was very far from understanding what she heard; however, something she did hear, and something could be drawn from what she heard, that something was being done about something, and that it had no connection with her letter; and gradually she began to listen, because her mind was led to it. Her nerves wanted to occupy themselves with something, not with the letter; and though it was long before she could understand what he was driving at, yet she was reassured by the cool and contented tone of her husband’s voice, and gradually she began to understand.

“Do listen! because it is about a very important matter for me.” Her husband kept repeating each question, “Do you hear?”—“Yes, very pleasant changes for me”—and he begins to tell her the whole story in detail. She realizes three-quarters of what he is telling her,—no, she knows it all; but it is all the same to her: “Let him speak! How kind he is!” And he keeps on with his story: that he has been tired of giving private lessons this long time, and why, or in what family, and of what special pupils he is tired, and how he is not tired of his occupation in the counting-room of the factory, because it is important, and he has a great influence over all the factory-hands, and how he has succeeded in doing something there; how he has enabled those who desired to learn to read and write; how he has taught them how to learn their letters; how he has succeeded in getting from the firm a salary for the teachers, by proving that the workmen would in this way ruin less machinery and less work, because in this way there would be less idleness and drunken eyes,—of course it was a trifling salary; and how he keeps the working people from drinking, and in order to do this he has often been to their saloons,—and a great deal of the same sort of talk. But the principal thing was this, that he has made himself solid with the firm as an active, energetic man, and he has been gradually getting the business into his own control, so that the conclusion of his story and the main flavor of it for Lopukhóf consisted in this: he has accepted the place as acting manager of the factory. The nominal manager would be an honorary person from the firm itself, with an honorary salary, but the active manager would be Lopukhóf himself: the member of the firm accepted the position of nominal manager only on this condition: “I,” says he, “cannot do it; how can I?”—“You take the name then, so that an honorable man may have it, and there will be no need for you to trouble yourself, for I will do everything.”—“If that is the case, all right then; I will take the position.” But the importance does not lie in his having the

³ *Moi drüg.*

⁴ *Moi drüg.*

power, but in the fact that he is to have a salary of three thousand five hundred rubles—nearly a thousand rubles more than all taken together that he had received from his occasional hard literary work and from his pupils and from his former place in the factory; consequently he can give up everything now except the factory, and that is splendid. And all this takes more than half an hour to relate; and at the end of the story Viéra Pavlovna is able to say that it is really good, and she is able to arrange her hair and go to dinner.

And after dinner Masha gets eight silver kopeks for an *izvoshchik*, to take her in four different directions, to carry notes from Lopukhóf, saying, “I am at leisure, gentlemen, and I should be glad to have you come to see me.” And some time later appears the terrible Rakhmétov, and after him, one by one, come a whole tribe of young people, and a formidable scientific conversation begins with immeasurable reproaches heaped up on each individual by all the rest with all possible inconsequentialities; but some traitors to this lofty discussion help Viéra Pavlovna somehow or other to kill the evening, and when half the evening is spent she guesses where Masha has been gone so long. How kind he is! Yes, this time Viéra Pavlovna had been absolutely glad on account of her young friends, though she did not get into a gale with them, but sat quietly, and she was ready to kiss even Rakhmétov himself.

The visitors went away towards three o’clock in the morning, and they did well in being so late. Viéra Pavlovna, weary from the excitement of the day, had only just lain down when her husband came in:—

“While telling you about the factory, my dear Viérotchka, I forgot to tell you one thing about my new place, and by the way, it is not very important, and I don’t know as it is worth while to speak about it, but I will tell you some time; but I have one favor to ask: I want to sleep, so do you; so if I do not tell you the rest of the story now, we will speak about it to-morrow; and now I will tell you in two words. You see when I took the place of acting manager I agreed upon this condition: that I can take the place any time that I want, within a month or two; and now I want to avail myself of this time: I have not seen my old folks in Riazan for five years. I am going to make them a visit. Good night,⁵ Viérotchka. Don’t get up. You will have time to-morrow. Go to sleep.”

⁵ *Dō svidánya.*

XXVII.

When Viéra Pavlovna came out from her room the next morning, her husband and Masha were already packing two valises with things. And all the time Masha was hard at work; Lopukhóf gave her so many things to wrap up, and fold, and stow away, that Masha really could not attend to it all. “Viérotchka, you, too, come and help us.” And all three of them were drinking tea, as they were taking down and stowing away things. Viéra Pavlovna had hardly time to collect her wits, when her husband said, “It is half-past eleven; it is time to go to the station.”

“My dear,¹ I am going with thee.”

“My love,² Viérotchka, I am going to take two valises; there will be no room for you; you can go with Masha.”

“I did not mean that; I mean to Riazan.”

“Ah! if that’s so, then Masha may bring along the valises, and we will go together.”

On the street you cannot well get sentimental in your talk. And besides, there is such a rattling over the pavement. Lopukhóf could not hear all that she said; he made a good many replies that could not be heard, or he would not reply at all.

“I am going with thee to Riazan,” repeated Viéra Pavlovna.

“But you have not got your things ready; how can you go? You can get ready if you want to; do just as seems best to you. But I would ask you one thing: wait till you get a letter from me. You will get it to-morrow; I shall write and mail it somewhere on my journey. To-morrow you will get it; wait, I beg of you.”

How she throws her arms around him at the gallery of the railway station! With what tears she kisses him, while seeing him into the car! And he speaks all the time about his business in the factory; how fine it is, and how glad his old folks will be to see him, and how everything in the world is dross compared with health, and how important it is for her to look out for her health; and just as he bids her good by, he says, speaking through the balustrade: “You wrote that you had never been so fond of me as you are now; this is true, my dear Viérotchka. And I am not less fond of you than you are of me. And the disposition towards a person,—the wishing his happiness,—this we both firmly believe in. But there is no happiness without freedom. You would not want to restrain me, nor I you. And if you began to use restraint on yourself on my account, you would grieve me; so don’t do it. Do whatever you think is for your best. But we will see about it by and by. Write me, when you want me to come back. Good by, my dear;³ the second bell has rung; it’s time for the train to start. Good by.”

¹ *Milui moi.*

² *Drüg moi.*

³ *Dō svidánya, moi drüg.*

XXVIII.

This was towards the end of April. Towards the middle of June Lopukhóf returned; lived three weeks in Petersburg, then he left for Moscow, on business for the factory, as he said. On the twenty-first of July he left; and on the twenty-third of July, in the morning, happened the misunderstanding in the hotel at the station of the Moscow railroad, on account of the stranger not getting up; and two hours later came the scene in the Kamennoi Ostrof *datcha*. Now the sapient reader will not fail to have guessed who shot himself. "I saw long ago that it was Lopukhóf," says the sapient reader, in triumph at his perspicacity. Where could he have hid himself, and how did his cap have a bullet-hole through the top? "There is no need of asking; it is only a trick of his, but he caught himself in a net, the rascal," says the sapient reader. *Nu!* God be with thee; decide it just as thou pleasest; there's no reasoning with thee.

XXIX. AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN.

Three hours after Kirsánof left, Viéra Pavlovna came to her senses, and almost her very first thought was, that it was impossible to leave the shop in such a way. Yes; though Viéra Pavlovna loved to assure herself that the shop was getting along by itself, yet in reality she knew that she is only flattering herself with this thought, and, as a matter of fact, the shop needed a director, else it would go astray. However, the business was now very well established, and it took but very little trouble to direct it. Mrs. Mertsálova had two children; but she might spare an hour, or an hour and a half, every day, or not even every day. She surely would not refuse, for already she has a great deal to do with the shop. Viéra Pavlovna began to look over her things, preparatory to the sale of them, and she herself sent Masha first to Mrs. Mertsálova, to ask her to come, and then to the old woman¹ who deals in second-hand clothes and other things of every sort, Rachel, one of the most business-like of Jewesses, and a very good friend of Viéra Pavlovna's, towards whom Rachel had proved herself absolutely honest, as almost all the small retail dealers among the Hebrews are, whether men or women, when they have to do with respectable people. Rachel and Masha had to stop at their city apartment to collect the remainder of the clothes and things, and on their way to stop at the furrier's, where Viéra Pavlovna's *shubas* were stored away for the summer, and then to come back to their summer *datcha* with the whole collection, so that Rachel might put a valuation on the things, and buy them all at once.

After Masha left the gate, she was met by Rakhmétov, who had been prowling for half an hour around the *datcha*.

"Are you going away, Masha? For long?"

"Yes; probably I shan't get back before late this evening; I have a great deal to attend to."

"Is Viéra Pavlovna all alone by herself?"

"She is alone."

"Then I will step in and stay with her, in your place, in case I can do anything to help her."

"If you only would; and I tremble on her account. And I forgot entirely, Mr. Rakhmétov; call some of the neighbors. There is a cook and a nurse-girl, friends of mine, to get dinner; for she has not had anything to eat yet."

"All right! I have not had any dinner myself. We'll help ourselves. Have you had your dinner?"

"Yes; Viéra Pavlovna would not let me go without it."

"Well, that's good. I imagined she would have forgotten this on account of her own trouble."

Except Masha, and those who were her equals or superiors in the simplicity of soul and dress, all people were rather afraid of Rakhmétov. Lopukhóf and Kirsánof, and all those who feared nobody and nothing, felt in his presence, at times, some trepidation. Towards Viéra Pavlovna he was very distant. She found him very tiresome. He never sought her society. But Masha liked him, though he was less sociable and polite to her than were any other of their visitors.

¹ *Torgovka*.

"I came without being invited, Viéra Pavlovna," he began. "But I have seen Aleksandr Matvéitch, and I know all, and so I came to the conclusion that I might be useful to you in some way; and I am going to spend the evening here."

His services might have been very useful, even now, to help Viéra Pavlovna in undoing the things. Any one in Rakhmétof's place would have been asked to do it, or would have offered his services. But he did not offer, and he was not asked. Viéra Pavlovna only pressed his hand, and, with sincere feeling said that she was very grateful to him for his attention.

"I shall remain in the library," he said. "If anything is needed, call me, and if anybody comes, I will open the door. Don't you trouble yourself."

With these words he went into the library; took from his pocket a big piece of ham and a hunk of black rye bread—all of which must have weighed four pounds; he sat down and ate it to the last crumb, striving to chew it all very fine; he drank half a pitcher of water; then he went to the book-shelves and began to pick out something to read. "I know that; not original, not original, not original, not original." This criticism, "not original," referred to such books as Macaulay, Guizot, Thiers, Ranke, Gervinus.

"Ah! but here's something good!"

This he said, after reading on the back of several huge tomes, "Complete works of Newton." He began hastily to turn over the pages; finally he found what he was looking for, and with a lovely smile cried: "Here it is, here it is!—Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John.² Yes, this side of knowledge has, till now, remained with me without any real foundation. Newton wrote this commentary when he was old, when he was half sane and half crazy. It is the classical fountain when one is on the question of the mixture of sense and insanity. Here is a question of world-wide historical interest; this mixture which is in almost all occurrences, in almost all books, and in almost all brains. But here it must be in a model form: in the first place, the most ingenious and normal brain that ever was known; in the second place, the acknowledged, undisputed insanity which was superinduced upon this brain. And so the book is capital in its way. The most obscure features of the general phenomenon must appear here more distinctly than anywhere else, and no one can have the least doubt that here you find these very features of this phenomenon, to which the features of the mixture of sanity and insanity are related. The book is worth studying."

With great energy he began to read the book, which for the last century had been scarcely read, except by those who wanted to set it right. For any one else to read it, except Rakhmétof, would be equivalent to eating sand or sawdust. But it was to his taste.

Such people as Rakhmétof are rare. So far in my life I have met with only eight examples of this species (and that number includes two women). They have no interrelation, except in one feature. Among them were people soft and severe, people melancholy and gay, energetic people and phlegmatic people, sentimental people (one of them had a severe face, sarcastic even to impudence; another one, with a wooden face, quiet and indifferent to everything; they both shed tears before me several times, like hysterical women, and not on their own account, but during talks on different topics. While by themselves, I am sure they wept often), and people who never, under any circumstances, lost their self-possession. There was no resemblance between them in any respect, with the exception of the one feature, but that feature, in itself, joined them into one species, and separated them from the rest of humanity. I used to laugh at those with whom

² This title is given in English in the original.

I have been intimately acquainted, when I was alone with them. They would either get angry or not, but they would also join in the laugh. And, really, there was so much that was amusing about them—the main characteristic was amusing—for this very reason, that they were people of a different species, I love to laugh at such people.

The one whom I met in the circle of Lopukhóf and Kirsánof, and about whom I am going to speak here, serves as a living proof that a reserve clause is necessary in the arguments between Lopukhóf and Mertsálof about the peculiarities of the soil in Viéra Pavlovna's second dream. Such a reserve clause is necessary to this effect, that no matter how bad the soil may be, it may have some very tiny portions which will produce healthy grain. The genealogies of the principal characters of my narrative, Viéra Pavlovna, Kirsánof, and Lopukhóf, to tell the truth, do not go back further than their grandfathers and grandmothers, and possibly by some tremendous straining, you may get back still further to some kind of great-grandmother; the great-grandfather is hidden by the darkness of oblivion; all that is known of him is probably that he was the husband of the great-grandmother, and that his name was Kirill, because the grandfather was Kirilluitch.³

Rakhmétof belonged to a family which has been known since the thirteenth century; that is, it is one of the most ancient, not only in Russia, but anywhere in Europe. In the number of the Tartar prisoners, tribal chiefs who were massacred in Tver, according to the words of the chroniclers, on account of their intention of converting the people to Mohammedanism (an intention which they probably did not have), but simply out of brutality, was a certain Rakhmet. The young son of this Rakhmet by a Russian wife, who was the niece of a nobleman of Tver—that is, the *oberhōf-marshal* or field-marshal—whom Rakhmet married by force, was saved on his mother's account, and he was baptized Mikhaïl instead of Latuif. From this Latuif-Mikhaïl Rakhmétofvitch sprang a good many Rakhmétofs. In Tver they were *boyars*; in Moscow they were crown-officers;⁴ in Petersburg, during the last century, they were generals-in-chief; of course not all of them: the family branched out very widely, so that there would not have been enough positions of general-in-chief to give them all. Our Rakhmétof's great-great-grandfather was a friend of Ivan Ivanovitch Shuválof's,⁵ and he put him on his feet again after his failure, which was caused by his friendship for Muennich.

His great-grandfather was a contemporary of Rumiantsof; he served till he reached the rank of general-in-chief, and he was killed at the battle near Novo. His grandfather escorted Alexander to Tilsit, and would have risen higher than any of them, but he early ruined his career by his friendship with Speransky. His father served without any success, and without any failures; at the age of forty he resigned with the rank of general-lieutenant, and made his home at one of his estates which were scattered about over the sources of the Medveditsa River.⁶ The estates were, however, not very large, all in all, probably about two thousand five hundred souls (serfs), and during the leisure which came to him in his country retirement, he had eight children; our Rakhmétof was the next to the youngest; he had one younger sister, and consequently our Rakhmétof did not have a large estate; he received about four hundred souls, and seven thousand *desyatins* of land.⁷ How he managed with his serfs, and his five thousand five hundred *desyatins*

³ The ending *vitch*, contracted into *uitch*, *itch*, is equivalent to *son* in English, or *Mac* in Scotch. Kirill Kirilluitch therefore means, Cyril the son of Cyril.

⁴ Okólnitchi.

⁵ Shuválof was the minister and lover of the Empress Elizabeth, and founded the University of Moscow.

⁶ The Medveditsa River rises in the province of Saratof, between the Don and the Volga.

⁷ 18,900 acres.

of land is not known to anybody, nor was it known that he kept for himself one thousand five hundred *desyatins*, and, moreover, generally it was not known, as long as he lived among us, that he was a proprietor,⁸ or that the land retained for himself gave him about three thousand rubles income. This we learned afterwards, but at that time we supposed, of course, that he was of the same family as those Rakhmétofs, many of whom were rich proprietors, and who, together bearing the same name, possessed about seventy-five thousand souls around the sources of the Medvyeditsa, Khoper, Sura, and Tsna rivers, who forever were the district marshals⁹ of those places, and one or the other of them is constantly the marshal of one or the other of the governmental cities through which run their feudatory rivers. And we knew that our friend Rakhmétof used to spend four hundred rubles a year; for a student of that time that was not very bad, but for a proprietor from among the Rakhmétofs it was too little; and so every one of us, though we cared really very little for such investigations, decided for himself, without making any inquiries, that our Rakhmétof must be from some impoverished or estateless branch of the Rakhmétofs, maybe the son of some kind of a governmental officer,¹⁰ who left his children a small fortune; but we did not bother ourselves about these things.

Now he was twenty-two years old, and he had been a student since he was sixteen; but for nearly three years he had given up the University. He left the second class, went to his estate, took charge of it, after defeating his guardian's resistance, and winning the anathemas of his brothers, and succeeding in making his sister's husbands forbid them to mention his name; then he wandered all over Russia in different guises, both by land and by water, and by one or the other, in a common and an uncommon way; for instance, by foot, and on rafts, and in slow boats; he had a good many adventures, which he brought upon himself. Among other things that he did, he sent two men to the University of Kazan, and five to the University of Moscow; these were his stipendiaries; but to Petersburg, where he, himself, intended to live, he had no students at his expense, and therefore no one of us knew that, instead of four hundred, he had three thousand rubles income. This became known only later on, but all we knew was that he often disappeared for some time, and two years before the time that he is sitting in Kirsánof's library, with Newton's "Commentaries on the Apocalypse," he returned to Petersburg, entered the philological faculty; before he had been in the department of natural science, and that's all.

But if none of Rakhmétof's Petersburg acquaintances were aware of his family and pecuniary standing, yet all who knew him knew him by two nicknames. One of them we have already used in this story,—“the rigorist”; he accepted it with his usual easy smile of gloomy satisfaction. But when he was called Nikitushka or Lomof, or by the full name, Nikitushka Lomof, he smiled broadly and sweetly, and he had just reason for it, because he was not endowed by nature, but gained by the firmness of his will, the right to this name which is so famous among millions of men. But it thunders with its fame only in a district of a hundred versts in width, running through eight provinces; but to the readers living in the rest of Russia it is necessary to explain what this name meant. Nikitushka Lomof was a river-boatman,¹¹ who went up and down the Volga twenty years or fifteen years ago; he was a giant of herculean strength; he was more than twenty-six feet high;¹² he was so broad across his chest and shoulders that he weighed fifteen

⁸ *Pomyeshchik*.

⁹ *Uyezdnoi predvoditel*.

¹⁰ *Sovyetnik*.

¹¹ *Burlak*, a rough boatman on the Volga. The name is often synonymous with boor.

¹² In the original, fifteen *vershoks*: a *vershok* is an inch and three-fourths.

puds (600 pounds avoirdupois). Though he was such a heavy man, he was not stout. To illustrate his strength it is necessary to give only one illustration: he used to receive the wages of four men. Whenever his vessel came to a city and he went to market, or, as it is called in the Volga dialect, the bazaar, the boys' were heard in the most distant corners of the streets, shouting: "Here comes Nikitushka Lomof! here comes Nikitushka Lomof!" and everybody ran into the street which led from the wharf to the bazaar, and crowds of people used to pour out after their favorite hero.

Rakhmétov, from the age of sixteen, when he first came to Petersburg, was, as regards strength, an ordinary lad of rather tall stature, rather strong, but by no means remarkable for his strength; certainly two out of ten of his comrades would have got the better of him. But when he was going on to seventeen, it occurred to him that it would be a good thing to acquire physical riches, and he began to work over himself: he energetically practised gymnastics. This was good; but gymnastics only perfect the material, and it is necessary to have a material basis; and so for a time, which was twice as long as he spent on his gymnastics, he used to work every day for several hours as a common laborer, where physical strength was required. He lugged water, he carried wood, chopped wood, sawed trees, cut stone, dug earth, hammered iron; he passed through a good many occupations, and he frequently changed them, because with every new work, with every change, some of his muscles would get a new development. He underwent the diet of a boxer. He began to nurse himself, in the full sense of the word, with the special things which had the reputation of strengthening the body,—beefsteaks, almost raw, more often than anything else; and since that time he always lived in such a way. In a year after he began such a regime, he started off on his wanderings, and here he had still better opportunities to develop his physical strength. He became a plowman, a carpenter, a ferryman, and a workingman—a laborer in every kind of healthy occupation whatever. Once he went the whole length of the Volga, from Dubovka to Ruibinsk, in the capacity of a *burlak*. To tell the master of the boat and the other *burlaks* that he wanted to join them would have been regarded as absurd, and he might not have been accepted. So he simply engaged passage as a traveller, and after making friends with the crew, he began to help tow the boat; and at the end of a week he put on the regular harness, as though he had been a genuine laborer. They quickly noticed how powerfully he was towing the boat; they began to put his strength to the test. He out-towed three, even four, of the strongest of his mates. At that time he was twenty years old, and his mates on the boat christened him Nikitushka Lomof, after the memory, of the hero, who at this time had left the stage. In the following summer he was travelling in a steamer. One of the second-class passengers who crowded the steamer's deck proved to be one of his last year's co-workers on the towpath; and in this way his companions, who were students, learned that he must be nicknamed Nikitushka Lomof. In fact, he acquired and, without sparing any time, he kept up his mighty strength. "This is necessary," he used to say; "it gives you respect and love among the common people. This is useful, and it may come handy sometime."

This entered his mind when he was half-way through his sixteenth year, because from that time his peculiarities began to develop themselves. At sixteen he came to Petersburg, as a commonplace, good-natured graduate of the gymnasium, a commonplace, kind, and honest youth, and he spent three or four months in an ordinary way, as all new students do. But he began to learn that there were among the students some very clever heads, who had different ideas from the rest, and he learned the names of half a dozen such students. At that time there were only a few; they interested him, and he began to try to make their acquaintance. He happened to get acquainted with Kirsánof, and from this time dated his regeneration into an extraordinary man,

the future Nikitushka Lomof and the rigorist. He listened eagerly to Kirsánof the first evening. He wept; he interrupted him with exclamations of curses against all that was to vanish, and blessings on all that must live. "What books shall I begin to read?" Kirsánof directed him. On the next day, at eight o'clock in the morning, he was walking down the Nevsky, from the Admiralty to the Police Bridge, wondering which German or French bookstore would be the first to open. He took what he wanted, and read steadily for more than seventy-two hours in succession,—from eleven o'clock on Thursday morning till nine o'clock Sunday evening,—eighty-two hours. The first two nights he did not sleep at all. On the third he drank eight cups of the strongest coffee; but on the fourth night coffee refused to support his strength. He fell down on the floor, and slept for fifteen hours. At the end of a week he came to Kirsánof, asked what books further he should read, and some explanations. They became friends; and through him he afterwards met the Lopukhófs. In six months, though he was only seventeen, while they were each one and twenty, they didn't look upon him as only a young fellow compared to themselves; and he had indeed become an extraordinary man.

What earnest was there in his past life for such a course? Not a very great one, but still there was something. His father was a man of despotic character, very clever, educated, and an ultra-conservative, in the very same way as Marya Alekséyevna was ultra-conservative; but he was honest. It was hard for him, of course. But that would not have made any difference to Rakhmétov. But his mother, a woman of very delicate nature, suffered much from her husband's severity; and his whole life was bounded by the village. And this, too, would not have made any difference; there was another thing. It happened that, when he was fifteen, he fell in love with one of his father's mistresses. Trouble ensued, which was, of course, trying to her. He pitied a woman who had suffered a great deal on his account. Thoughts began to stir in him, and Kirsánof stood in the same relation to him as Lopukhóf had stood to Viéra Pavlovna. There was an earnest in his past life; but in becoming such an extraordinary man the principal element is nature. For some time before he left the university and went back to his estate, and afterwards, while wandering over Russia, he adopted original principles in his material, moral, and intellectual life; and after he returned, they had been crystallized into a complete system, to which he unflinchingly adhered. He said to himself, "I am not going to drink a drop of wine; I shall not touch a woman." Yet his nature was passionate.

"What is the need? There is no good of going to such extremes." "It is necessary. We ask, demand, for all people the full enjoyment of life. We must bear witness with our own lives, that we are demanding this, not for the gratification of our personal passions, not for ourselves personally, but for humanity in general, that we speak only in accordance with principle and not from preference, according to conviction and not individual necessity."

Consequently, he began to lead a very severe and ascetic style of life. To become a Nikitushka Lomof, and keep up the character, he had to eat meat, a great deal of meat, and he ate a great deal. But he grudged every kopek that he spent on anything else but meat. He gave orders to his landlady¹³ to buy the very best meat that was to be had, and have the very best pieces for him; but all else that he ate at home was of the cheapest description. He gave up white bread and ate only black bread at his table. For weeks at a time he never had a piece of sugar in his mouth; for months at a time he never tasted fruit, or veal, or chicken. With his own money he never bought anything of the kind. "I have no right to spend money for luxuries which I can

¹³ *Khozyáika*.

easily get along without.” Yet he was brought up at a table where luxury reigned, and his taste was refined, as was seen by his remarks on dishes, when he used to dine at the table of others. He enjoyed a good many of the dishes of which he did not partake at his own table, but some dishes he would not eat at the table of a stranger. The cause for the distinction was a solid one: “What the common people eat now and then, I, also, may eat occasionally; but whatever is not in the reach of the common people, I, too, must not eat. This I must do, so as to appreciate how wretched the lives of the people are in comparison with mine.”

Therefore, if fruits were served, he actually ate apples, but he absolutely refused apricots; oranges he would eat in Petersburg, but he would not touch them in the provinces. Don’t you see, in Petersburg the people sometimes eat them, but never in the provinces. Pies he used to eat, “because a good *pirog* is not worse than a pie, and pie-crust is familiar to the common people”; but he never ate sardines. He used to dress very poorly, though at one time he liked finery; and in all other respects he led the life of a Spartan; for example, he never allowed a mattress, and he slept on a bag of straw, not even allowing it to be doubled.

He had one spot on his conscience,—he did not give up smoking. “I cannot think without a cigar. If that is really so, then I am right; but maybe it is from weakness of will power.” And he would not smoke bad cigars, for he was brought up amid aristocratic surroundings. Out of his four hundred roubles of income, he used to spend one hundred and fifty on cigars. “It is a detestable weakness,” as he used to express himself. And only this weakness afforded some possibility of getting the best of him. If he went too far with his reproaches of others, the one whom he reproached would say to him, “Yes, but perfection is impossible—even you smoke.” Then Rakhmétof would break out into reproaches of double strength; but the greater part he would pour out on his own head, the other would get the smaller share of them, though he would not be forgotten.

He succeeded in accomplishing a great deal, because in disposing of his time he put exactly as firm restrictions on himself as in material things. Not a quarter of an hour a month was lost in recreation; he did not take rest. “My occupations are various; change from one occupation to another is sufficient rest.” He did not join the circle of his friends, whose headquarters were at Kirsánof’s or the Lopukhófs’, more frequently than was necessary to keep him in close relations with this circle. “This is necessary; every-day occurrences prove the advantage of having close connection with some circle of men; it is necessary to have in your power open resources for various references.” With the exception of the meetings with this circle, he never called on anybody, except on business, and he never stayed five minutes longer than was necessary for his business; and he never allowed anybody to stay with him, except on the same conditions. Without beating around the bush he would say to the caller, “We have talked about this business; now you will allow me to take up other things, because my time is valuable.”

During the first months of his regeneration, he used to spend almost all his time reading; but this lasted only a little more than six months. When he saw that he had acquired a systematic style of thought in the spirit whose principles he found to be correct, he said to himself: “Reading is now a secondary matter: from this time forth I am ready for life;” and he began to give to reading only the time which was free from other occupations, and such time was very little. Notwithstanding this fact, he extended the circle of his knowledge with wonderful rapidity; now that he is twenty-two years old, he is a man of remarkably solid leaning. This was because he had made a rule also in this regard: luxury and pleasure there should be none; only what is needful. And what is needful? He used to say: “On every subject there are very few first-rate works; all

that you can find fuller and clearer in these few, in all the rest is repeated, spoiled, ruined. It is necessary to read only them, and all other reading is only an idle waste of time. Let us take Russian belles lettres. I say: I shall read Gogol before anything else. In the thousand and one other stories I see, from half a dozen lines on half a dozen different pages, that they contain nothing else but Gogol spoiled; why should I read them, then? The same thing in science; in science this limit is still more striking. If I have read Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, and Mill, I know the alpha and the omega of their theories, and I have no need of reading hundreds of other political economists, no matter how famous they may be: by half a dozen lines on half a dozen pages I see that I shall not find one single fresh thought which belongs to them; they are all borrowed and mutilated. I read only spontaneous works, and only to such a degree as to appreciate their spontaneity.” Therefore, it was impossible to make him read Macaulay; after spending a quarter of an hour on different pages, he decided: I know all the originals from which this matter is taken. He read Thackeray’s “Vanity Fair” with delight, and he began to read “Pendennis,” but he gave it up when he reached the twentieth page. “All this is said in ‘Vanity Fair’; apparently there will be nothing more, and so there is no need of reading it. Every book that I read in such a way spares me the necessity of reading hundreds of books,” he used to say.¹⁴

Gymnastics, work that served to increase his strength and reading,—these were Rakhmétov’s personal occupations; but after he returned to Petersburg, they took only the fourth part of his time; the rest of his time he spent in helping others, or in things that did not belong to any one in particular, constantly observing the same rule as in reading: not to waste any time on secondary matters and with secondary people, but to occupy himself only with things of essential importance, from which the secondary things and secondary people are influenced, without his interference. For instance, outside of his circle, he used to get acquainted only with people who had influence over others. Whoever was not an authority for several other people could not even begin a conversation with him; he used to say, “I beg you to excuse me,” and go away. But in the same way it was impossible for any one with whom he had a desire to become acquainted to avoid him in anywise. He simply used to come to you and say whatever he had to say, with such an introduction as this: “I want to be acquainted with you; it is necessary. If you have no time now, appoint another time.” To your trifling business he never paid the least heed, no matter if you were his closest friend, and begged him to help you out of your embarrassment. “I have no time,” he would say, and go away. But in important business he used to take a share, when it was necessary, as he expressed it, though no one may have asked his aid. “I must,” he used to say. What things he used to say and do on such occasions is beyond comprehension.

Here, for example, is my own experience with him. I was then not very young; I was living comfortably, and therefore oftentimes five or six young people from my province used to visit me. Consequently, I was a valuable man for his purposes; these young people were attached to me, because they saw that I had an attachment for them; in this manner he heard my name. And I, when I had met him for the first time, at Kirsánof’s, had never known anything about him; this was soon after his return from his wanderings. He came in after I did; I was the only one in the company whom he did not know. When he entered, he took Kirsánof aside, and indicating me with his eyes, said several words. Kirsánof answered him briefly, and they separated. In a minute Rakhmétov was sitting directly in front of me, with only a small table which stood by the sofa

¹⁴ Tchernuishevsky’s acumen as a critic is seen by this anticipation of the world’s judgment of Macaulay and Dickens.

dividing us, and from this distance, which was only an *arshín* and a half, he began to study my face with all his might. I was vexed; he examined me without any ceremony, as though I were not a man, but a picture: I grew angry. It was none of his business. After looking at me for two or three minutes, he said to me: "Mr. N., I must get acquainted with you; I know you, but you don't know me. Ask about me of the *khozyáin*, and anybody else whom you particularly trust, in this company." Having said this, he got up and went into the other room.

"Who is that crank¹⁵?"

"That is Rakhmétov; he wants you to ask whether he can be trusted,—without hesitation; and whether he deserves attention—he is more important than all the rest of us here taken together," said Kirsánov, and others corroborated it.

In about five minutes he returned to the room where we were all sitting. He did not say anything to me, and he spoke very little to the others. The conversation was not scientific and not important.

"Ah! it is already ten o'clock!" he exclaimed, after some little time. "At ten o'clock I have an engagement at such and such a place.—Mr. N.," he said, turning to me. "I have a few words that I want to say to you. When I took the *khozyáin* aside to ask him who you were, I pointed you out with my eyes, so that you must have seen that I was asking who you were; consequently, it would be useless not to make signs which would be natural at asking such a question. When will you be at home, so that I may call on you?"

I did not like new acquaintances at that time, and this imposition did not please me at all.

"I am only at home when I am asleep; I am out all day," I said.

"But you sleep at home? What time do you go to bed?"

"Very late."

"For example?"

"Two or three o'clock."

"That makes no difference to me; name your time."

"If it's absolutely necessary, I will set to-morrow, at half-past four in the morning."

"Of course I might take your words to be insulting and ridiculous; but maybe it is true that you have your own reasons, which, very likely, deserve approval. At all events, I shall call upon you to-morrow morning at half-past four."

"No; if you are so bent upon it, you may come a little later. I will be home all the morning till twelve o'clock."

"All right; I'll be there at ten o'clock. Will you be alone?"

"Yes."

"Very good."

He came; and without any beating around the bush, went straight at the matter, on account of which he felt it necessary to get acquainted with me. We talked for half an hour. What the subject was, makes no difference; suffice it to say, that he declared that such and such a thing must be done. I said, "No"; he said, "You must do it"; I said, "Not at all." In half an hour he said:—

"It is evidently useless to talk about this matter longer. Are you convinced that I am a man who deserves full trust?"

"Yes; I was told so by all, and now I see for myself."

"And after all, do you still stick to your decision?"

¹⁵ *Tchudak.*

“I do.”

“Do you know what conclusion one can draw from this?—that you are either a liar or a villain.”

What do you think of that? What would have been necessary to do to anybody else who said such words? Challenge him to a duel? But he speaks in such a tone, without any personal feeling, like a historian, who judges coolly, and with no intention of offending, but for the sake of truth; and he is so strange, that it would be ridiculous to take offence, and all I could do was to laugh. “But that is one and the same thing,” I said.

“In this case it is not one and the same thing.”

“*Nu*, but maybe I am both at once.”

“In this case, to be both is impossible, but one of the two things, surely: either you are thinking and acting not as you speak, and in such a case you are a liar; or, you are thinking and acting as you speak, in which case you must be a villain; one or the other must be so. I take it for granted that it is the first hypothesis.”

“Think as you please,” I said, still laughing.

“Good by.¹⁶ At all events, understand that I still preserve my trust in you, and I will be ready to renew our conversation whenever you please.”

With all the roughness of his behavior, Rakhmétof was entirely right; both in the very fact that he began as he did, because he first learned thoroughly about me, and only then undertook this business with me; and that he ended the conversation as he did. I really did not tell him what I thought, and he really was right in calling me a liar; and this could not be offensive at all; it was even flattering to me, “in the present case,” according to his expression, because there was such a case, and because he could preserve his former confidence in me, and possibly even respect.

Yes, with all the savageness of his manners, everybody remained satisfied that Rakhmétof acted as he did, because it was the most simple and common-sense way of acting; and the terrible extremes to which he went, and his horrible reproaches, he spoke in such a way, that no person of common sense could be offended with them; and with all his phenomenal roughnesses, he was at heart very gentle. His preliminary talk was always of this stamp. Every embarrassing explanation he began thus:—

“You know very well that I speak without any personal feeling. If my words prove to be disagreeable, I beg you to excuse them; but I find that there is no need of getting offended when anything is kindly meant, absolutely, without intention of offending, but from necessity. However, as soon as it shall seem to you useless to listen to my words, I will stop; my rule is, to offer my opinion everywhere and always, whenever I am impelled; but never to impose it upon any one.”

And actually he did not impose it; it was impossible to save one’s self from him expressing his opinion, if he found it necessary, but only so far that you might understand his view of it; but he did it in two or three words, and then he would add: “Now you know what the tenor of my conversation would be; do you find it useful to have such a talk?” If you said “No,” he bowed and went off.

This was the way that he spoke and managed his affairs, and he had a great many things to attend to, and none of them were matters that concerned him personally; he had no personal business, as everybody knew; but what affairs he attended to, no one in the circle knew. It could only be seen that he had a great deal of bother. He was at home very little; he was always on

¹⁶ *Proshchaite*.

the go; he was always travelling, but for the most part he walked. But there were always people calling upon him; either the same people, or new ones. And on this account, he made it a rule to be always at home between two and three; at this time he talked with them and had his dinner. But very often he would not be at home for several days; then in his place, one of his friends who was devoted to him soul and body, would be at his rooms and receive callers, silent as the grave.

Two years after this glimpse of him in Kirsánof's library with Newton's "Commentary on the Apocalypse," he left Petersburg, telling Kirsánof, and one or two of his most intimate friends, that he had nothing more to do there, that he has done all that he could, that he may be able to do more after three years, that these three years are free now, that he is thinking of availing himself of them, according as it may seem necessary for his future activity. We learned afterwards that he left for his former estate, sold the land which he had reserved, getting thirty-five thousand rubles for it, went to Kazan and Moscow, gave five thousand rubles or so to his stipendiaries, so that they might graduate, and that was all that we knew about him. Where he went after leaving Moscow is not known. After several months passed without any tidings from him, those who knew something more about him than all the rest knew ceased to hide things, about which, by his request, they had kept silent so long as he was among us. Then our little circle learned that he had stipendiaries, and also learned the larger part of his personal doings, which I have already told. We learned a great deal about his adventures, which, however, did not explain everything; in fact, explained nothing at all, but only made Rakhmétov a still more mysterious person for the whole circle; adventures, which, by their strangeness, surprised us, or entirely contradicted the opinion, which the circle entertained of him as a man who was entirely hard-hearted as far as personal feeling went; one who had not, if I may use the expression, a personal heart, beating with the sensation of personal life. To relate all of these adventures would not be in place here; I shall only quote two of them of two different kinds: one of a savage order; the other of a stamp which contradicted the former ideas entertained by the circle in his regard. I will select these histories from those told by Kirsánof.

About a year before he left Petersburg for the second, and probably the last, time, Rakhmétov said to Kirsánof, "Give me a good quantity of plaster for curing wounds from sharp weapons." Kirsánof gave him a big jar, supposing that Rakhmétov wanted to take this medicament to some society of carpenters or other laborers, who are frequently subjected to cuts. On the next morning, Rakhmétov's landlady came in great alarm to Kirsánof: "*Bátiushka!* doctor, I don't know what has happened to my tenant; he has not been out of his room for a long time; he has locked the door; I peeked through the crack; he was lying all in blood. I began to scream, and he says to me, says he, 'It's nothing, Agrafyéna Antonovna.' What does he mean by nothing? Save him *bátiushka*, doctor; I'm afraid it's suicide: he is so unmerciful to himself!"

Kirsánof ran in all haste. Rakhmétov opened the door with a melancholy broad smile; the caller saw the thing from which not Agrafyéna Antonovna alone might have been frightened; the back and shoulders of his underclothes (he was dressed only in his underclothes) were soaked with blood; there was blood on the bed; the straw bed on which he slept was also covered with blood; in the straw were thousands of little nails with heads down and points up; they penetrated out from the bag almost an inch:¹⁷ Rakhmétov had been lying on them all night long.

"For heaven's sake, what is the matter, Rakhmétov?" cried Kirsánof, in horror.

¹⁷ Half a *vershók*.

“It is a trial; it is necessary; it’s incredible, of course; however, it is necessary. I see that I can stand it.”

Besides what Kirsánof saw, it may be judged from this that the *khozyáika* also could relate a great many interesting things about Rakhmétov; but in her capacity of a simple-hearted and simply-dressed old woman, she was out of her wits in regard to him, and, of course, it was impossible to learn anything from her. This time she ran off to get Kirsánof only because Rakhmétov allowed her to do so to calm her. She wept so bitterly, thinking that he was going to commit suicide.

Two months after that was the end of May. Rakhmétov was away for a week or more, but at that time nobody noticed it, because it was a common occurrence for him to vanish in that way. Now Kirsánof told the following story of the way Rakhmétov spent those days. They constituted an erotic episode in Rakhmétov’s life. Love arose from an occurrence which was worthy of Nikitushka Lomof. Rakhmétov was going from the first Pargalof into town, lost in thoughts, and looking at the ground in his usual way. He was near the Forestry Institute; he was awakened from his thoughts by the desperate shrieks of a woman; he looked up: a horse attached to a *sharaban*, in which a lady was riding, was running away. The lady, herself, was driving, but she could not control him; the reins were trailing on the ground, and the horse was within two steps of Rakhmétov. He threw himself in the midst of the way, but the horse was already past him; he had no time to catch the reins; he had only time to catch the hind axle of the *sharaban*; he brought it to a stop, but it threw him down. A crowd gathered, helped the lady out of the *sharaban*, and lifted Rakhmétov to his feet. His chest was somewhat bruised, but the worst was that the wheel had torn out a large piece of flesh from his leg. The lady came to herself, and ordered him taken to her *datcha*, which was within half a verst. He consented because he felt weak from loss of blood, but he asked that Kirsánof should be sent for without fail, and no other doctor. Kirsánof found that the bruises on his chest were not serious, but Rakhmétov was weak from loss of blood. He lay there for ten days. The rescued lady, of course, took care of him herself. He could not do anything else in his weak condition, and so he talked with her—all the same the time would be wasted—he talked with her, and became quite friendly with her. The lady was a widow of nineteen; she was not poor, and, generally speaking, she was in an absolutely independent position, an intellectual and respectable woman. Rakhmétov’s fiery speeches, of course not on the subject of love, charmed her. “I see him in my dreams surrounded by a halo,” she said to Kirsánof. Rakhmétov also fell in love with her. She, judging by his dress, and by everything else, supposed that he was a man who had absolutely nothing, and therefore she was the first to confess her love, and she offered to marry him, when on the eleventh day he got up and said that he was able to go home.

“I have been more frank with you than with others. You see, such people as I have no right to unite the fate of any one else with their own.”

“Yes, that is true,” she said; “you have no right to marry. But till the time when you must renounce me, love me.”

“No, I cannot accept that,” he said. “I must suppress love in my heart; to love you would tie my hands. Even as it is, they cannot be free so soon, for they are already tied. But I shall untie them; I must not love.”

What became of the lady? A crisis must have come into her life. In all probability she also became an extraordinary person. I wanted to find out about it, but I cannot. Kirsánof did not tell me her name, and he himself did not know what became of her. Rakhmétov asked him not to see

her and not to inquire about her. "If I supposed that you knew anything about her, I could not refrain from asking, and that would not do."

After hearing this story, all remembered that for a month or two afterwards, and maybe more, Rakhmétov was more melancholy than usual, did not get angry with himself, no matter how his "eyes were pinched" by his low weakness,—that is, for cigars,—and did not smile sweetly and broadly when he was flattered with the name of Nikitushka Lomof. And I recollected also more, that summer, three or four times in conversations with me (some time after our first conversation he began to be fond of me, because I laughed at him), when I was alone with him, and in reply to my rallying him, would utter such words as these: "Yes, pity me; you are right. I myself am not an abstract idea; I am a man who would like to love. *Nu*, it is nothing though; it will pass," he would add. And in reality he got over it. Only once, after I had roused his spirits by some of my ridiculous speeches, even in the late fall, he still uttered these words.

The sapient reader, maybe, will guess from this that I know more about Rakhmétov than I am telling him. It may be; I do not dare to contradict him, because he is so sapient. But if I do not know, there are a good many other things that I know which thou, sapient reader, will not know, as long as thou shalt live. But there is one thing that I really do not know. I do not know this: where Rakhmétov is now, and what he is doing, or whether I shall ever see him again. I have no other information or conjectures, beyond what all of his acquaintances have. When three or four months had passed since his disappearance from Moscow, and there was no tidings at all about him, we all supposed that he went travelling over Europe. This conjecture apparently was true. At least, it was confirmed by the following circumstance. In a year after Rakhmétov disappeared, one of Kirsánov's acquaintances met, on a car between Vienna and Munich, a young Russian, who said that he had travelled all over the Slavonic lands. Everywhere he had made friends among all classes; and in every country he had stayed long enough to learn the ideas, habits, style of life, the local customs of self-government, the different degrees of welfare among all the classes of the population; and for this purpose he had lived in the cities and towns, and had gone on foot from one village to another. Then afterwards, in the same way, he had studied the Rumanians and Hungarians. He had travelled over Northern Germany; from there he had again made his way on foot to the South, in the German provinces of Austria. Now he was going to Bavaria, and from there to Switzerland, through Wurtemberg and Baden to France, which he intended to travel and walk through in the same way. From there, with the same purpose in view, he was going to England; and he intended to spend a year in this way. If any time should be left from this year, he would see the Spaniards and Italians. But if no time were left, then be it so, because this is "not so necessary"; but the other lands are necessary. "Why?" "For study."

And after a year it would be "necessary" for him to be, at all events, in the States of North America, to study, which was more "necessary" for him than any other land, and there he was going to stay a long time; maybe for more than a year, and maybe forever, if he should find anything to do there. But it was more probable that in three years he would return to Russia, because in Russia, if not now, still by that time, it will be "necessary" for him to be there.

All this seemed very much like Rakhmétov, especially the word "necessary," which was left in the narrator's memory. His age, his voice, his features, as far as the narrator could remember, of the traveller, also pointed to Rakhmétov; but the narrator did not pay much attention at that time to his travelling companion, who, moreover, was not with him very long, not more than two hours. He entered the train at some little town, and he got out at some village; therefore the

narrator could describe his appearance only in too general terms, and there was no full certainty possible; but in all probability it was Rakhmétov. Yet who can tell? Maybe it was not he.

There was still another rumor, that a young Russian, once a proprietor,¹⁸ appeared before one of the greatest European philosophers of the nineteenth century, the father of a new philosophy, a German. "I have thirty thousand thalers; all I need is five thousand. The balance I beg of you to accept from me." (The philosopher was living very wretchedly.) "Why?" "To publish your works." The philosopher naturally did not accept the offer; but the Russian was said to have left the money with a banker in the philosopher's name, and to have written him thus: "Use this money as you please. Throw it into the river, if you want, but you can't return it to me; you can't find me." And it is said that even now this money is at the banker's. If this rumor is true, then there is no doubt that it was Rakhmétov who appeared before the philosopher.

Such was the gentleman who was sitting in Kirsánov's library.

Yes, this gentleman is an extraordinary man, an example of a very rare species. I do not describe this example of a very rare species, with all this detail, for the sake of teaching thee, O sapient reader, how to treat people of this kind politely, for that is out of thy province. It is not likely that thou wilt see any such people; thy eyes, sapient reader, are not constituted so as to see such people; they are invisible to thee; only honest and courageous eyes see them; but the description of this man will serve thee, so thou canst know by hearsay what people there are in the world. For what purpose this description serves my lady readers and simple-hearted readers, they best know by themselves.

Yes, ridiculous people like Rakhmétov are very amusing. I say this for their own benefit, that they are ridiculous, because I feel pity for them. I say to those noble people who are fascinated by them, Don't follow their example. I say this because the path over which they call you to follow is barren of personal happiness. But noble people do not listen to me. They say, "No, it is not barren, it is very rich; though it may be barren in some places, yet these places are not long; we shall have strength enough to pass these places, and we shall come to places which are rich with endless happiness." So thou seest, sapient reader, that it is not for thy sake, but for the other part of the public, that I have said that such people as Rakhmétov are ridiculous. To thee, O sapient reader, I will declare that they are not bad people; otherwise, thou very likely wilt not understand for thyself. No, they are not bad people. There are few of them, but through them flourishes the life of all; without them life would become dead and putrid; there are few of them, but they help all people to breathe; without them people would suffocate. The mass of honest and kind people is great, but people like these are few; but they are in the midst, like theine in tea, like the bouquet in fine wine; from them come their strength and fragrance; it is the flower of the best people; they are the motive powers of motive powers, they are the salt of the salt of the earth.

¹⁸ *Pomyeshchik*.

XXX.

“Well [*nu!*],” thinks the sapient reader, “now the main character is to be Rakhmétov; and he will put everybody into his belt, and Viéra Pavlovna will fall in love with him; and soon the same story will begin with Kirsánov as happened to Lopukhóf.”

There will be nothing of the sort, O sapient reader. Rakhmétov will spend the evening, will speak with Viéra Pavlovna. I shall not hide one word of their conversation from thee, and thou shalt quickly see, that if I did not want to share this conversation with thee, it might have been very easy for me to hide it from thee, and the current of my narration would not have been altered in the least if I had kept silent; and I tell thee in advance, that after Rakhmétov speaks with Viéra Pavlovna, he will leave the house, and then he will disappear forever from this narrative; and that he will be neither the main nor a subordinate, or any character whatsoever in my novel. Then why was he brought into the novel at all, and described so minutely? Just try, sapient reader, if thou canst guess why. But this will be told thee in the following pages, immediately after Rakhmétov’s conversation with Viéra Pavlovna. As soon as he disappears, I will tell thee at the end of the chapter. Now just try to guess what will be said there; it is not very hard to guess if thou hast the least conception of the artistic, of which thou art so fond of talking. But how canst thou? *Nu!* I will tell thee more than half of the answer. Rakhmétov was brought in so as to fulfil the principal, the most radical demand of what is artistic; exclusively to give satisfaction to it. Well, well! Guess now. Try to guess this very minute what is that demand. What was it needful to do for its satisfaction? and how was it satisfied by showing thee Rakhmétov’s figure, which has no influence or part in the current of this narrative? Well (*nu-ko*), guess! The lady reader and the simple reader, who do not talk about the artistic, they understand. But do try to guess, thou wiseling! For this reason plenty of time is given thee, and for this purpose a long and thick dash is placed between the lines. Dost thou see how much pains I take on thy account? Stop for a moment, and just think if thou canst not guess!

Mrs. Mertsálova came, shed a few tears, offered some consolation, and said it would give her pleasure to take charge of the sewing shop, but she did not know as she had the ability; and again she shed a few tears and offered some more consolation, while helping to look over the things. Rakhmétov, after asking the servant at the next neighbor’s to go to the bakery, put up the *samovar*, set it on the table, and they began to drink their tea. Rakhmétov sat for half an hour with the ladies, drank half a dozen glasses of tea, and, together with them, he emptied half of a huge pitcher of cream and ate a terrible quantity of baked things, besides two simple loaves of white bread, which served as the foundation for the rest.

“I have a right to take this delectation, because I sacrificed twelve hours.”

He took his enjoyment, listened as the ladies tormented themselves to death, three times expressed his opinion that it was “nonsense”; not the fact that the ladies were tormenting themselves to death, but suicide for any cause whatsoever, except too painful and incurable physical disease, or the presentiment of some painful and unavoidable death; for instance, being broken

upon the wheel. He expressed this opinion in a few but strong words; according to his custom, he helped himself to a sixth glass of tea, poured the remainder of the cream into it, took what was left of the baked things,—the ladies had already long ago finished with their tea,—bowed, and went with these materials into the library again, to enjoy the finale of his material enjoyment, almost to make a sybarite of himself, to place himself on the sofa, on which everybody was free to take a nap, but which was for him something in the nature of genuine Capuan luxury.

“I have earned my right to this delectation, because I have sacrificed twelve or fourteen hours’ time.”

After he had finished his material enjoyment, he took up his intellectual feast again, the reading of the “Commentary of the Apocalypse.” At nine o’clock the police *tchinovnik* came to tell the suicide’s wife about the matter, which was now entirely cleared up. Rakhmétov told him that the widow knew all about it, and there was no need of her hearing anything more. The *tchinovnik* was very glad that he had escaped such a tormenting scene. Then Masha and Rachel put in appearance. They began to examine the things; Rachel found that everything, all told—except the good *shuba*, which she advised her not to sell, because in three months she would have to get a new one, and to this Viéra Pavlovna consented; that all the rest was worth four hundred and fifty rubles; and really she could not do better than that, even according to Mrs. Mertsálova’s inward conviction. Thus about ten o’clock, the commercial operation was brought to an end. Rachel paid down two hundred rubles; she had no more; the balance she would send in three days to Mertsálova: so she took the things and went off. Mertsálova stayed for an hour longer, and then it was time for her to go home and nurse her baby; and she went, saying that she would come on the next day to accompany her to the railroad station.

After Mertsálova went away, Rakhmétov closed Newton’s “Commentary on the Apocalypse,” put it carefully in its place, and sent Masha to ask Viéra Pavlovna if he might see her. He came in with his usual tranquillity and calmness.

“Viéra Pavlovna, I can now, to a great degree, console you. Now it is possible; before it was impossible. I will tell you in advance that the general result of my visit will be consoling to you; you know that I do not speak vain words, therefore, and in advance, you must become calm. I am going to lay the matter before you in due order: I told you that I met Aleksandr Matvéitch, and that I know all about it. This is really true; I really saw Aleksandr Matvéitch, and I really know everything. But I did not say that I knew all from him, and I could not have said so, because I do not know all from him; because, to tell the truth, I know all that I know, not from him, but from Dmitri Sergéitch, who spout two hours with me. I was told that he was coming to see me, and so I stayed at home; he was with me for two hours, and even longer, after he had written the little note which caused you so much pain, and he asked—”

“You heard what he intended to do, and you did not stop him?”

“I asked you to be calm, because the result of my call will be comforting to you. No; I did not stop him, because his decision was soundly based, as you yourself will acknowledge. I will begin again: he asked me to spend this evening with you, because he knew that you would be grieved, and he gave me a message to you. He naturally chose me to do this, because he knew me as a man who fulfils messages with minute exactness, if I undertake it; and cannot be turned aside by any feeling or by any requests, from the exact fulfilment of the obligation undertaken. He foresaw that you would implore any one to violate his will, and he knew that I, not being moved by your prayers, would fulfil it, and I shall fulfil it; and so I beg of you in advance, do not ask me

to yield in any degree from what I say. His commission was as follows: he, while going away, in order to 'leave these scenes'¹—”

“*Bozhe moi!* what has he done? How could it be that you did not stop him?”

“Just get the meaning of his expression, ‘to leave these scenes,’ and do not condemn me prematurely. He used that expression in the note which you received; didn’t he? and we must use this very same expression, because it is very strikingly chosen.”

Viéra Pavlovna’s eyes began to show some lack of comprehension; her whole face clearly implied the thought, “I do not know what he means! what am I to think about this?”

O Rakhmétof! with all the apparent absurdity of his circumstantial manner of laying the matter before her, was a master, a great master, in the art of management! He was a great psychologist; he knew and could fulfil the laws of gradual preparation.

“And so, while going away, in order, as he rightly expressed it, ‘to leave these scenes,’ he left in my hands a note for you.”

Viéra Pavlovna jumped up. “Where is it? Let me have it! and how could you sit a whole day without giving it to me?”

“I could, because I saw the necessity. Very soon you will appreciate my reasons; they are well founded. Before all, I want to explain to you the expression which I used when I began, ‘that the result will be comforting to you.’ I did not mean that this note would conduce to your comfort; for two reasons, the first of which is that the receipt of the note would not have been sufficiently comforting to deserve the name of consolation; isn’t that true? For consolation something more is required. And so the consolation must be in the very contents of the note.”

Viéra Pavlovna again jumped up.

“Be calm; I cannot say that you are in the wrong. Having mentioned to you the contents of the note, I shall ask you to listen to the second reason why I could not mean by the words ‘comforting result’ the mere act of your receiving the note, but that I had to mean its contents. These contents, the character of which we have insinuated, are so important that I can only show it to you, but I cannot give it to you. You may read it, but you cannot keep it.”

“What! You are not going to give it to me?”

“No! For this very reason I was chosen! for anyone else in my place would have given it to you. It cannot remain in your hands, because, from the extraordinary importance of its contents, which we have mentioned, it must not remain in any one’s hands. But you would certainly want to keep it if I were to give it to you. Therefore, rather than be compelled to take it away from you by main force, I shall not give it to you, but I shall only show it to you. But I shall only show it to you when you have sat down, put your hands on your knees, and given me your promise not to lift them.”

If there had been any stranger there, no matter with what a sentimental heart he had been gifted, he could not have helped laughing over the solemnity of all this procedure, and especially over the ceremonious ceremony of its final scene. It was ridiculous without doubt. But how good it would be for all nerves if, while imparting cruel tidings, you were able to preserve the tenth part of the ceremony of preparation which Rakhmétof did.

But Viéra Pavlovna, not being a stranger, of course could only feel the trying element of this torturing slowness, and she herself presented a figure at which the observer would have found no less cause for amusement, when, sitting down quickly, obediently folding her hands, and with

¹ Perhaps better translated, “to leave the stage.”

the most ludicrous voice, that is, with a voice of poignant impatience, she cried out, "I take my oath!"

Rakhmétov laid on the table a sheet of writing paper, on which were written ten or twelve lines.

Viéra Pavlovna had hardly cast her eyes upon them when, at the very same instant, flushing, forgetting all her oaths, she jumped up; like a lightning-flash her hand grasped for the note, but the note was already far in Rakhmétov's uplifted hand.

"I foresaw this, and therefore, if you were able to notice, as you may have noticed, I did not take my hand entirely from the note. The very same way I shall keep hold of this sheet by the corner so long as it lies on the table. Therefore, all your attempts to grab it will be in vain."

Viéra Pavlovna sat down again and folded her hands. Again Rakhmétov put the note before her eyes. She read it over twenty times in excitement. Rakhmétov stood very patiently behind her chair, keeping in his hand the corner of the sheet. Thus passed a quarter of an hour. Finally Viéra Pavlovna lifted her hand very quietly, evidently without any thieving intention, and covered her eyes with it: "How kind! how kind!" she exclaimed.

"I do not entirely share your opinion, and why, we shall see later on. This is not the fulfilment of his commission, but only the expression of my opinion, which I expressed also to him when we met last. His commission consisted in my showing you this note and then burning it up. Have you seen it as long as you want?"

"I want to see it more, more!"

Again she folded her hands; again he put down the note, and with patience as before he again stood a good quarter of an hour. Again she hid her face in her hands, and kept uttering, "Oh, how kind! how kind!"

"So far as you could learn this note by heart, you have done so. If you were in a calm state of mind you would not only have known it by heart, but the form of every letter would forever be engraved in your memory, so long and attentively you have been looking at it; but by such excitement as you are in, the laws of remembrance are violated, and your memory may fail you. Foreseeing this emergency, I made a copy of this note; whenever you want you can always see this copy, which I shall retain. Sometime I may even see the possibility of giving it to you. But now, I suppose, the original can be burned up, and then my errand will be ended."

"Show it to me again!"

Once more he laid the note down. This time Viéra Pavlovna kept continually lifting her eyes from the paper: it was evident that she was learning herself to see if she knew it perfectly. In a few minutes she sighed and ceased to lift her eyes from the note.

"Now, I see you have already seen it long enough. It is already twelve o'clock, and I want to give you the benefit of my thoughts about this affair, because I consider it useful for you to learn my opinion about it. Are you willing?"

"Yes."

At that very moment the note was burning in the flame of the candle.

"*Akh!*" cried Viéra Pavlovna; "I did not mean that! why did you?"

"Yes, you only said that you were willing to listen to me. But it does not make any difference now. It was necessary to burn it up some time." When he had said this, Rakhmétov sat down. "And besides, there is a copy of the note left. Now, Viéra Pavlovna, I am going to express my judgment on this whole matter. I am going to begin with you. You are going away. Why?"

"Because it would be very hard for me to stay here. The sight of places which would remind me of the past would drive me crazy!"

"Yes, it is a very disagreeable feeling. But would it be any easier in another place? For very few it is easy! And meantime, what have you done? For the sake of getting some trifling comfort for yourself, you have left to the mercy of chance the fate of fifty people whose lives depend upon you. Is that good?"

What had become of the melancholy solemnity of Rakhmétov's tone? He spoke lively, easily, simply, enthusiastically.

"Yes; but I was going to ask Mertsálova."

"'Tis not the same thing. You don't know whether she would be capable of taking your place in the shop; for her ability in regard to this has never yet been tried. But here a grade of ability is demanded which it is very hard to find. There are ten chances to one that you will not find anybody to take your place, and that your withdrawal will affect the shop injuriously. Is that good? You are going to subject to certain, almost unavoidable, injury the interests of fifty people; and for what? For a slight comfort to yourself. Is that good? What a tender solicitude for a trifling alleviation of your pain, and what heartlessness for the fate of others! What do you think of this part of your action?"

"But why didn't you stop me?"

"You would not have listened. And then, I knew that you would soon come back. Consequently the matter would not amount to anything important. Do you plead guilty?"

"Absolutely," said Viéra Pavlovna, partly jesting, but partly, and for the most part, in serious earnest.

"Now, this is only one part of your fault. All around you still greater will be found. But since you confess, you shall be rewarded by help towards correcting the other fault, which it is possible still to correct. Are you calm now, Viéra Pavlovna?"

"Yes, almost."

"All right. What do you think? is Masha asleep? Do you need her now for anything?"

"Of course not."

"But now you are calm; consequently, you might remember that you ought to tell her to go to bed, for it is one o'clock, and she gets up early in the morning. Who ought to have remembered about this, you or I? I am going to tell her to go to bed. And here, by the way, for your new confession—for you are sorry for your fault now—there shall be a new recompense. I am going to bring whatever I can find there for your supper. You have not had any dinner to-day, have you? and now I think you must be hungry."

"Yes, I am; I see that I am, now that you have reminded me of it," said Viéra Pavlovna, laughing heartily.

Rakhmétov brought the cold victuals which were left over from his dinner. Masha showed him the cheese, and a jar of mushrooms. The lunch was very excellent. He set the table for her, and did everything himself.

"Do you see, Rakhmétov, how ravenously I am eating? That shows that I was hungry; and I had not felt it before, and I had forgotten about myself, and not about Masha alone. So you see I am not such an ill-conditioned criminal as you thought."

"Neither am I such a miracle for taking care of others. When I remembered your appetite for you, I myself wanted something to eat; I did not have much for dinner. I suppose I ate enough to

fill anybody else up to the eyes, for a dinner and a half; but you know how much I eat—enough for two *muzhiks*.”

“*Akh!* Rakhmétov, you were a good angel, and not for my appetite alone. But why did you sit there all day, and not show me that note? Why did you torment me so long?”

“The reason was a very sensible one. It was necessary for others to see in what distress you were, so that the news about your terrible trouble should be carried around, so as to confirm the fact which caused you the trouble. You would not want to make believe. Yes, and it is impossible to make anybody’s nature different from what it is; nature acts more vigorously. Now, there are three ways by which the fact will be confirmed,—Masha, Mertsálova, and Rachel. Mertsálova is a particularly important source. She will be enough to take the news to all your friends. I was very glad that you thought of sending for her.”

“How shrewd you are, Rakhmétov!”

“Yes, that was not a bad thought—to wait till it was night; but it was not my thought. That was Dmitri Sergéitch’s own idea.”

“How kind he was!”

Viéra Pavlovna sighed; but, to tell the truth, she sighed not from grief, but from gratefulness.

“Eh! Viéra Pavlovna, we shall yet pick him to pieces. Lately he has thought of things very cleverly, and acted very well. But we shall find little faults in him, and very big ones, too.”

“Don’t dare to speak so about him, Rakhmétov! I shall get angry.”

“Do you mutiny? There’s a punishment for this. Shall I keep on executing you? for the list of your crimes has only begun.”

“Execute me! execute me, Rakhmétov!”

“For your humility, a reward. Humility is always rewarded. You must certainly have a bottle of wine. It will not be bad for you to drink some. Where shall I find it? on the sideboard or in the cupboard?”

“On the sideboard.”

On the sideboard he found a bottle of sherry. Rakhmétov compelled Viéra Pavlovna to drink two glasses, and he himself lighted a cigar.

“How sorry I am that I cannot drink three or four glasses; I should like it.”

“Do you really like it, Rakhmétov?”

“I envy you, Viéra Pavlovna, I envy you,” said he, laughing; “man is weak.”

“Are you weak? Thank God! But, Rakhmétov, you surprise me. You are not at all like what I supposed you were. Why are you always such a gloomy monster? But now you are a lovely, jovial man.”

“Viéra Pavlovna, I am now fulfilling a pleasant duty; so why should I not be happy? But this is a rare occasion. As a general rule, you see things about you that are not happy. How can you help being a gloomy monster? Only, Viéra Pavlovna, as you happen to see me in a mood such as I would like to be in all the time, and since there is such frankness between us, let it be a secret that I am not by my own will a gloomy monster. It is easier for me to fulfil my duty when I am not noticed, because I myself would like to fulfil my duty and still be happy in life. Now people do not try to entertain me any more, and I do not have to waste my time by refusing invitations. But that you may the more easily imagine me nothing else than a gloomy monster, it will be necessary to continue the inquisition of your crimes.”

“But why do you want to find more? You have already found two: heartlessness toward Masha and heartlessness towards the shop; I confess it.”

"Indifference to Masha is only a error, not a great crime. Masha has not been lost by rubbing her sleepy eyes an hour longer; on the contrary, she did it with the pleasant consciousness of fulfilling her duty; but for the shop, I really want to torture you."²

"Yes, but you have already tortured me."

"Not entirely; I want to finish it. How could you dare to give it out at the risk of its destruction?"

"But I have confessed already that I have not given out; Mertsálof promised to take my place."

"We have already said that your intention of putting her in your place was not a sufficient excuse, but by this remark you have only pleaded guilty to a new crime." Rakhmétof again gradually assumed a serious, though not a gloomy, tone. "You say that she takes your place; is that decided?"

"Yes," said Viéra Pavlovna, without her former jocular tone, anticipating that something really bad might result from this.

"Just look here. By whom was the matter decided? by you and by her, without any inquiry whether those fifty people would consent to the change or not, or whether they wanted somebody else, or might not find somebody else better? This is despotism, Viéra Pavlovna. So here are two great crimes on your part: heartlessness and despotism! but the third one is still more cruel. The establishment which, to a greater or less degree, corresponded with sound ideas of managing life, which should serve as a more or less important corroboration of their practicability—but practical proofs are so few, and every one of them is so valuable—this establishment you have subjected to the risk of going to destruction, of bringing it from a practical proof into an affidavit of impracticability; a refutation of your convictions, a means of showing the uselessness of ideas, which ought to be proved of real benefit to humanity. You have afforded the upholders of darkness and wickedness an argument against your holy principles. Now I am not speaking at all about the fact that you are going to injure the welfare of fifty people. What does fifty people mean? You have injured the chances of humanity; you have proved to be a traitor against progress. This, Viéra Pavlovna, in the language of the Church, is called a sin against the Holy Ghost,—a sin about which is said that any other sin may be forgiven to a person, but this, never, never. Isn't it true that you are a criminal? But it is well that every thing has ended as it has, and that your sins were committed only in your imagination; but, however, you are really blushing, Viéra Pavlovna. Good! I will give you some consolation. If you were not suffering so keenly, you would not have committed such horrible crimes, even in your imagination. Consequently the real criminal in things is the one who has caused you so much trouble; but you keep repeating, 'How kind he was! how kind he was!'"

"How do you make out that he is to blame for my suffering?"

"Who else? In regard to all this he has done well; I do not deny it; but why did it happen? Why all this disturbance? Nothing of the sort should have happened!"

"No, I oughtn't to have had this feeling, but I didn't ask for it; I did my best to overcome it."

"That sounds well, 'ought not to have had it'! The real cause of your sin you have not perceived; and, for what you are not to blame at all, you reproach yourself. This feeling was bound infallibly to arise as soon as your nature and Dmitri Sergéitch's came into contact; if not one way, then another, it would have been developed anyhow; for the root of the feeling does not lie in the fact that you love another; that is a consequence: the root of the feeling is the dissatisfaction with your former relations. In what form was this dissatisfaction bound to develop? If both you and

² *Gruizt vas*, literally, to chew you up.

he, or either one of you, had been people of no intelligence, not refined or even bad, it would have been developed in its usual form—a quarrel between husband and wife. You would have fought like cats and dogs, if both of you had been bad; or if one of you had been bad, one would have eaten the other up, and the other would have been eaten. At all events, there would have been a domestic galley, such as we are pleased to see almost universally in married life; and this, of course, would not have prevented the development of love for another; but the main thing would be the galley, and the eating each other up. Your dissatisfaction could not have taken such a form, because both of you were enlightened people, and therefore it was developed in only its easiest, gentlest, and least offensive form,—love towards another. Consequently there is no use in talking about love to another; that is not the main trouble at all. The essence of the matter lies in your dissatisfaction with your former position, and the cause of this dissatisfaction was the discordance of your characters. Both of you were good people, but after your character became mature, Viéra Pavlovna, and lost its childish indefiniteness, and acquired definite features, it proved that you and Dmitri Sergéitch were not very well adapted to each other. Is there anything reprehensible in either of you? Now, for example, I also am a decent man, but could you get along with me? You would hang yourself with weariness of me; how long do you suppose it would take you to come to that point?”

“A very few days,” said Viéra Pavlovna, laughing.

“He was not such a gloomy monster as I am, yet you and he are quite too little adapted to each other. Who ought to have noticed it first? Who was the older? Whose character settled sooner? Who had the more experience in life? He ought to have foreseen it, and have prepared your mind so that you would not get alarmed or worry; but he understood it only when the feeling, which he ought to have expected and did not expect, was developed; but when the feeling resulting from the other feeling developed, then he perceived it. Why had he not foreseen and noticed it? Was he stupid? He had enough sense for that. No; it was from inattention, from carelessness. He neglected his duties toward you, Viéra Pavlovna; that is the case; and you are declaring that he was kind, that he loved you.” Rakhmétov, gradually becoming excited, spoke with feeling; but Viéra Pavlovna stopped him.

“I must not listen to you, Rakhmétov,” she said, in a tone of extreme dissatisfaction. “You are pouring reproaches upon a man to whom I am endlessly indebted.”

“No, Viéra Pavlovna; if there had been no necessity of my saying that, I should not have said it. Did I notice it to-day only for the first time? Could I have said it if I had seen it only to-day for the first time? You know that it is impossible to avoid a conversation with me, if I think a conversation is necessary. Indeed, I could have told you this long ago, but I held my peace. So if I speak now, it is because it is necessary to speak. I do not say anything before it is necessary. You saw how I kept the note ten hours in my pocket, though it was pitiful to look at you; but it was necessary not to speak, and I did not speak. Consequently, if I speak now, it shows that I thought long ago about Dmitri Sergéitch’s relations towards you; thus, of course, it was necessary to speak about them.”

“No, I do not want to listen,” said Viéra Pavlovna, greatly stirred. “I ask you to be silent, Rakhmétov. I beg of you to go. I am very much obliged to you for wasting an evening on my account, but I beg you to leave me.”

“Are you in earnest?”

“In earnest.”

"Very well," he said laughing. "It's all right, Viéra Pavlovna, but you cannot get rid of me so easily; I foresaw that this would happen and I provided for it. The little note which I burned up, he wrote of his own accord; but this he wrote according to my request; this I can leave in your hands because it is not a proof. Here it is."

Rakhmétof gave Viéra Pavlovna this note:—

"Twenty-third of July; two o'clock in the morning. Dear friend Viérotchka, listen to everything that Rakhmétof will have to say to you. I do not know what he wants to tell you; I have not authorized him to say anything; he has not given me the least hint that he wants to speak to you, but I know that he never says anything but what he thinks is necessary. Yours, D. L."

Viéra Pavlovna kissed this note, God knows how many times.

"Why didn't you let me have it before. You probably have something else of his?"

"No, I have nothing more, because nothing more was necessary. Why didn't I let you have it? Until there was necessity, there was no need of giving it to you."

"*Bozhe moi!* Why so? For the sake of my own pleasure in having some lines from him, now that he has gone from me!"

"Well, if it was only for that reason, *nu*, that was not very important." He smiled.

"*Akh*, Rakhmétof, you want to tease me!"

"So this note is going to serve as another quarrel between us, is it?" he said, laughing again. "If that is the case, I shall take it away from you and burn it up, for you know that it is said about such people as you and me, that we consider nothing holy, for we are capable of all murderous deeds of violence. But how is it? may I continue?"

They both grew a little more subdued; she, on account of having seen the note; he, because he had been sitting a few minutes in silence while she was kissing it.

"Yes; I am obliged to listen."

"He did not notice that which he ought to have noticed," continued Rakhmétof, in a calm tone of voice, "and this brought about bad consequences. But if he could not be blamed for not having noticed it, still he could not be excused for it either. Let us suppose that he did not know that this was bound unavoidably to arise from the very nature of the given relations between your character and his, still he ought, at all events, to have given you some preparation for something of the kind, simply as a thing that might happen, which is not desirable and which it is not necessary to expect, but which still may arise; no one can guarantee what occurrences the future may bring. This axiom, that there are a good many contingencies, he certainly knew. How did he leave you in this state of mind, that when this happened you were not prepared for it? The very fact that he did not foresee it resulted only from neglectfulness which was insulting to you, but in itself is a matter of no importance, not a bad one, not a good one. That he did not prepare you at all for any such event came about from a very, very bad motive. Of course he acted unconsciously, but a man's nature is betrayed in those things which are done unconsciously. To prepare you for it would have been contradictory to his interests. But if you had been prepared, your resistance to the feeling which was contradictory to his interests would have been less violent. There was always such a strong feeling in you that the most energetic resistance on your part was useless, but it is a matter of mere chance that the feeling appealed in such a strength. If it had been caused by a man less deserving, but still a decent man, it would have been weaker. Such strong feelings, against which all struggles are useless, are rare exceptions. Many more are the chances for the appearance of feelings which it is possible to conquer, if the strength of the resistance is not weakened entirely. Now for these most likely chances he did not want to weaken your powers

of resistance. And this is the motive that he had in leaving you unprepared and subjecting you to so much suffering. How does this strike you?"

"It is not true, Rakhmétov. He has never hidden from me any of his thoughts. His convictions were as well known to me as they were to you."

"Of course, Viéra Pavlovna, to hide them would have been too much. To interfere with the development of your convictions, so as to gratify his own convictions, and for this reason to make believe think differently from what he really thinks,—this would have been an absolutely dishonorable thing. Such a man you could never love. Did I call him a bad man? He was a very good man; in what respect was he not good? Yes, I shall praise him to your heart's content. I only say that before this matter arose: after it arose, he behaved towards you very nobly; but before it arose, he acted unkindly towards you. Why did you torment yourself so? He said—and then there was no need of saying it, because it was self-evident—that you did it, so that you might not grieve him. How could this thought have occurred to you, that this would greatly grieve him? You ought not to have had such an idea. What kind of grief was that? It was stupid. What kind of jealousy is that?"

"Don't you recognize such a thing as jealousy, Rakhmétov?"

"In an intelligent person it has no right to exist. It is a mutilated feeling, it is a false feeling, a contemptible feeling; it is the result of that order of things, according to which I don't allow anybody to wear my underclothes, smoke my meerschaum; this is the result of viewing a person as personal property, as a chattel."

"But, Rakhmétov, if jealousy should not be acknowledged, then there would be a horrible state of things."

"For him who feels it there are horrible things, but for the one who does not feel it there is nothing horrible, or even important."

"But you are advocating an absolute immorality, Rakhmétov."

"Does it seem to you so, after living with him four years? In this respect he is to blame. How often do you dine every day? Once? Would anybody be offended if you dined twice? Of course not. Then why don't you do so? Is it because you are afraid of offending some one? In all probability, it is simply because you do not need it, because you do not care to. But a dinner is an agreeable thing. But reason, and principally the stomach, says, that one dinner is agreeable and the second may be disagreeable. But if you have a fancy or a morbid desire to dine twice a day, would you have been kept from it by your fear of offending somebody? No; if any one were offended, or forbade you to do it, you would only do it secretly; you would begin to eat the dishes in a bad style, you would soil your hands by your hurried seizing of the food, you would soil your dress by hiding victuals in your pockets, and that's all. The question here has nothing whatsoever to do with morality or immorality, but only whether the contraband is a good thing. Who has the idea that jealousy is a feeling worthy of respect and mercy, that the feeling says, "*Akh!* when I do this, I shall offend him"; and whom does it compel to suffer vainly in the strife? Only a few of the most noble, for whom it is impossible to fear that their nature would draw them into immorality. For the rest are not restrained by this nonsense, but are simply driven to be cunning, deceitful; that is, it makes them really bad. That is all. Is this not well known to you?"

"Of course it is."

"Now, how, henceforth, can you find any moral advantage in jealousy?"

"Yes, but we ourselves always used to speak together in this spirit."

“Probably not absolutely in this sense of the word, or you spoke words, but did not believe each other, when you heard these words on each other’s tongue; and of course you really did not believe, because you constantly heard about other subjects, and maybe this very subject, words in a different sense; else why should you have suffered so long?—God knows how long! And for what reason? and from what nonsense what a great rumpus! How much trouble for all three, and particularly for you, Viéra Pavlovna! Meantime, you all three might have lived together very calmly, just as you did afterwards for a year; or, somehow, you might have arranged to move into one apartment, or to have arranged it otherwise, however it might happen, only without the least trouble. In accordance with your former style, to drink tea all three together, and, as before, to go to the opera all three together. Why, then, this suffering? Why this catastrophe? All this because there was left in your mind, thanks to his bad method of preparing you for it, the thought, ‘I am killing him,’ which was entirely a fancy. Yes; he caused you entirely too much worriment.”

“No, Rakhmétov; you are speaking terrible things.”

“Again ‘terrible things’! Terrible to me are the awful sufferings from trifles and unnecessary catastrophes.”

“And so, then, according to your view, all our history is a stupid melodrama.”

“Yes; an entirely unnecessary melodrama, with an entirely unnecessary tragedy; and for the fact that, instead of a simple conversation of the calmest tenor, arose an exciting melodrama, Dmitri Sergéitch is to blame. His honest style of action in regard to it is hardly sufficient for covering his fault in not averting this melodrama, by preparing you and himself for very calm views in regard to all this, as a mere piece of nonsense, for which it is not worth while to drink one glass of tea more, or not to finish your glass of tea. He was very much to blame. *Nu*, but he has paid dearly enough for it. Drink one more glass of sherry, and go to bed. I have now reached the final purpose of my call. It is already three o’clock. If no one wakes you, you will sleep very long; and I told Masha not to wake you before half-past ten, so that to-morrow you will hardly have time enough to drink your tea; you will have to hurry to the railroad station. If you do not have time to put away all the things, it will not make any difference, for you will either return soon, or they will send them to you. What do you think is best to be done? Shall Aleksandr Matvéitch go after you, or will you return by yourself? It would be hard for you and Masha now, for it would not do for her to notice that you are entirely calm. And how could she notice it during the half an hour of hasty preparations? Mertsálova would be a great deal worse. But I will go to see her early in the morning, and tell her that she had better not come here, because you have not slept much, and you ought not to be wakened, but that she had better go straight to the station.”

“How much care you take for me,” said Viéra Pavlovna.

“Don’t, at least, ascribe this to him; it is of my own accord. But, except that which I reproach him for, as regards the things of the past (to his own face I told him more things. and more emphatically), except the fact that he was entirely to blame for the arising of this vain suffering, he behaved like a hero.”

XXXI. A COLLOQUY WITH THE SAPIENT READER, AND HIS BANISHMENT.

“Now tell me, O sapient reader, why Rakhmétov was introduced,¹ who has now vanished, and will not appear again in my story? I have already told thee that this figure has no part in my story—”

“That is not true,” says the sapient reader, interrupting me. “Rakhmétov is an important character, for he brought a note from which—”

“Thou art very poor, my dear sir, in æsthetical judgments, of which thou art so fond,” say I, interrupting him in my turn. “At this rate, according to your opinion, then Masha, also, is an important character, is she not? At the very beginning of the story, she, also, brought a letter, which startled Viéra Pavlovna. And is Rachel also an important character? for she advanced the money, without which Viéra Pavlovna would not have been able to leave. And is Professor N. an important character, because he recommended Viéra Pavlovna to Mrs. B., without which there would not have been any scene on returning from the Konno-Gvardéisky Boulevard? Possibly the Konno-Gvardéisky Boulevard is an active character also. How is it? Because without it there wouldn't have been any stage for the interview while returning from it. And the Gorokhovaïa Street would certainly be the most important main character, because without it there would be no houses standing on it, and so Storeshnikof's house would not be there; consequently there would be no manager of it, and the manager would not have any daughter, and then there would be no story at all. Well [*nu*], let us grant that, according to your opinion, all of these are active characters,—the Konno-Gvardéisky Boulevard, and Masha, and Rachel, and the Gorokhovaïa Street. But only half a dozen words are said about them, or even less, because their action is of such a nature that they are not worth more than half a dozen words; but see how many pages have been given to Rakhmétov.”

“Ah! now I know,” says the sapient reader; “Rakhmétov was introduced for the sake of pronouncing the sentence on Viéra Pavlovna and Lopukhóf. He was necessary for the talk with Viéra Pavlovna.”

“O how dull you are, my dear sir! You are quite wrong in your judgment. Was it necessary to introduce an extraordinary man just for the purpose of telling his opinion about other people? For such necessities, maybe, your great artists may introduce people into their works and take them away again; but I, though I am a wretched writer, still somewhat better understand the conditions of the artistic. No; my dear sir; Rakhmétov is not at all necessary for this purpose. How many times have not Viéra Pavlovna, Lopukhóf, and Kirsánof by themselves expressed the opinion about their actions and relations? They are not stupid people; they are able to judge for themselves what is good and what is bad, and therefore for this do not need a prompter. Do you really think that Viéra Pavlovna herself, when at leisure after a few days, would remember the past confusion and not condemn her forgetfulness about the interests of the shop just as

¹ Literally, brought out.

Rakhmétof had done? And don't you think that Lopukhóf himself thought about his relations in exactly the same way as Rakhmétof told Viéra Pavlovna? He had thought it all over. Honorable people themselves think about themselves, all that can be said to their discredit, and so, my dear sir, these are honorable people; didn't you know it? You are very ignorant, my dear sir, in regard to what honorable people think about themselves. I shall tell you further. Do you really suppose that Rakhmétof, in this conversation with Viéra Pavlovna, acted independently of Lopukhóf? No, my dear sir; he was only a tool for Lopukhóf, and he himself understood that he was only Lopukhóf's tool, and Viéra Pavlovna understood it also in a day or two, and she would have guessed it the very moment that Rakhmétof opened his mouth had she not been too much excited; that was really the state of things. Did not you really understand it? Of course Lopukhóf, in his second note, said, very truly, that he had not spoken a word to Rakhmétof, nor Rakhmétof to him, in regard to the character of the conversation to take place between Viéra Pavlovna and Rakhmétof. But Lopukhóf knew Rakhmétof very well and what Rakhmétof thinks about a certain matter and what Rakhmétof would say in regard to this certain matter, for honorable people understand each other without having any explanation beforehand. Lopukhóf might have written down beforehand almost every word that Rakhmétof was going to say to Viéra Pavlovna, and therefore that was the very reason that he asked Rakhmétof to be the mediator. Shall I not introduce you a little deeper into psychological mysteries? Lopukhóf very well knew everything which Rakhmétof, and he himself thought about himself, and what Mertsálof thought, and what Mrs. Mertsálova thought, and what the officer who wrestled with him at the picnic on the islands thought, and what Viéra Pavlovna would come to think about him, even if no one had told her about it. She would have quickly seen it as soon as the first access of gratefulness had passed; consequently, Lopukhóf calculated: 'I shall lose nothing by sending Rakhmétof to her, though he will blame me; for she herself would surely come to have just the same opinion of me. On the contrary, I shall rise in her estimation, for she will soon come to see that I foresaw Rakhmétof's conversation with her, and that I arranged for this conversation and why I arranged it, and so she will think: "What a splendid fellow he is! He knew that in the first days of my excitement, my gratefulness towards him would overwhelm me with its exaltations, and he took care that in my mind should enter as soon as possible thoughts which would make my trial easier for me; and though I was angry at Rakhmétof for his blaming him, yet I understood that in reality Rakhmétof spoke the truth. I myself should have come to that idea in a week; but by that time it would not be important to me, for I should have found peace without it, and for the reason that these thoughts were expressed to me the very first day I got rid of my mental burden, which I should otherwise have borne a whole week. That day these thoughts were very important for me and useful for me. Yes, he was a very noble man."

"This was a game that Lopukhóf arranged, and Rakhmétof was only his tool. Do you see, my dear sir? O sapient reader, how cunning these noble people are, and how egotism plays with them. Not as with you, my dear sir; because they find satisfaction, not as you do, my dear sir. They, as you see, find their highest satisfaction in having the people whom they respect think about them as noble people, and for this reason, my dear sir, they took trouble to play all kinds of games, not less energetically than you do for your own private ends; but your aims are different, and therefore the games that you and they bring about are not of the same character. You think of mean things which are injurious for others, but they think of those which are advantageous for others."

“Now, how do you dare to treat me in such a way?” exclaims the sapient reader, addressing me. “I shall bring a lawsuit against you for this; I shall proclaim you an unreliable man.”

“Have mercy, my dear sir,” I reply; “I dare to tell you such things because I have such lofty respect for your character as well as for your brains. And I only have the audacity to enlighten you in regard to the artistic, of which you are so fond. You are mistaken in regard to this, my dear sir, in supposing that Rakhmétof was introduced purposely for announcing the sentence upon Viéra Pavlovna and Lopukhóf. There was no such necessity in the thoughts which you expressed about them. There is nothing of the kind which I could not have imparted to you, my dear sir, as the thoughts of Lopukhóf in regard to himself, and as thoughts which, without Rakhmétof, Viéra Pavlovna herself would have had about Lopukhóf. Now, my dear sir, here is a question for you, Why do I relate to you this conversation between Rakhmétof and Viéra Pavlovna? Do you understand now that if I am imparting to you, not the thoughts of Lopukhóf and his Viéra Pavlovna, but the conversation between Rakhmétof and Viéra Pavlovna, then why it was necessary to impart not only these thoughts, which constituted the essence of their conversation, but the conversation itself? Why was it necessary to impart to you this conversation? Because it was a conversation between Rakhmétof and Viéra Pavlovna. Do you understand now? Not yet? You’re a fine fellow! You are bad as far as understanding goes, very bad. *Nu!* I am going to chew it for you. When two people speak, then from the conversation can be gathered, to a greater or less degree, the character of these two people. Now, do you see where this is leading you? Was Viéra Pavlovna’s character sufficiently known to you before this conversation took place? It was; you have learned nothing new about her; you knew already that she was hot-tempered, that she was fond of jesting, that she never failed to eat with appetite, and could even drink a glass of sherry; consequently, the conversation was not needed to characterize Viéra Pavlovna: but whom then? There are two who speak,—she and Rakhmétof. It is not to characterize her; guess, then, who is it.”

“Rakhmétof!” exclaims the sapient reader.

“Well,² you are a fine fellow, and I like you for it. So you see that it is entirely contrary to what you thought before. Rakhmétof was not introduced for the sake of carrying on the conversation, but the conversation was imparted to you for the sake of making you better acquainted with Rakhmétof. From this conversation you saw that Rakhmétof would like to drink sherry, though he does not take it. That Rakhmétof is not an absolutely gloomy monster, that, on the contrary, on pleasant occasions, he forgets his sorrowful humors, his burning grief, that then he jokes, and talks gayly, although he says it is very rarely that ‘I do it,’ and he says, that ‘is bitter to me that I do it so rarely’; he says, ‘I, myself, am not glad that I am such a gloomy monster, but my circumstances are such that a man, with such a burning love for the good, cannot help being a gloomy monster’; ‘And if it were not for this,’ he says, ‘I should probably joke, and laugh, and sing, and leap, all day.’

“Have you understood, now, sapient reader, that although a good many pages have been devoted to the fair description of the sort of man that Rakhmétof was, yet, in reality, still more pages have been devoted exclusively for the same purpose of making you acquainted with the very same person, who is not at all an active character in my novel? Tell me now, why this figure was brought out and introduced, and so minutely described? Do you remember I said then, ‘It is exclusively for satisfying the main demand of the artistic’? Think! how does it seem, and

² “*Nu.*”

how is it satisfied by placing before you Rakhmétof's figure? Was it hard for you? Have you succeeded in finding out? and yet, how could you? Well,³ listen, or rather, don't listen; you will not understand it. Leave me alone; I have amused myself enough at your expense. I am going to speak now not to you, but the public and I am going to speak seriously.

"The first demand of the artistic is this: it is necessary so to picture things that the reader may see them in their true light. For example, if I want to draw a picture of a house, then I must reach that excellence of drawing that it may look to the reader as a house only, not as a little hut or as a palace. If I want to picture an ordinary man, then I must be able to draw him in such a way that he will not appear to the reader either as a dwarf or as a giant.

"I wanted to picture ordinary decent people of the rising generation, people whom I meet by the hundreds; I took three such people, Viéra Pavlovna, Lopukhóf, and Kirsánof. I look upon them as ordinary people; they look upon themselves in the same way, and all their acquaintances and friends, who are also such people as they are, look upon them in the same way. Where have I spoken about them in any other spirit? What have I said about them that contradicted this? I introduced them with love and respect, because every honorable man is worthy of love and respect; but where have I bowed on my knees before them? Where does the least shadow of a thought show itself in my novel that they are God-knows-how high and beautiful characters, that I can imagine nothing higher and better than they are? that they are ideals of people? As I think of them, so they act for me; not more than ordinary honorable people of the rising generation. What do they do that is wonderful? They don't do any mean things; they are not cowards; they have ordinary honest convictions; they try to act in accordance with them, and that's all. What a heroism in reality! Yes, I wanted to represent people who act like ordinary people of their type, and I hope that I have succeeded in so doing. Those readers who accurately know live people of this type, I hope, have constantly seen, from the very first, that the main heroes of my story are not at all ideals, but are people not at all higher than the general level of people of their own type; that every one of my readers who belongs to their type has undergone two or three occurrences, in which he has acted not worse than my characters have acted. Let us suppose that other honorable people have had exactly such experiences as I have related. In this there is absolutely no going to extremes, and the idea that all wives and husbands should part is not presented as a charming ideal; for not every honorable woman feels a passionate love for her husband's best friend, and not every honorable man wrestles with passion for a married woman, and for three years at that; and moreover, not everybody is driven to commit suicide on the bridge, or to use the words of the sapient reader, to go away somewhere from that hotel. But no honorable man would consider it a heroic deed to act in the situation of those here described, exactly as they acted, but all would be ready to do, if there were any necessity for doing it, and many a time they have acted in situations not less, but probably more, difficult, but still have not looked upon themselves as extraordinary people, but each has said to himself, 'I am a commonplace man, a pretty honorable man, that's all there is of it.' And the good friends of such a man (all such good people as he himself is—for with others he has nothing to do in the way of friendship) also think in regard to him that he is a fine man, but they do not think of falling on their knees before him, but they say to themselves, 'We are just such people as he is.' I hope I have succeeded in reaching this point that every honorable man of the rising generation will recognize an ordinary type of his good acquaintances in my three principal characters.

³ "Nu."

“But these people, who from the very first beginning of my story will think about my Viéra Pavlovna, Kirsánof, and Lopukhóf, ‘Well, now [*nu da*], these are my good acquaintances, simple, ordinary people, like ourselves’; people who think so, I say, about my three leading characters, constitute the minority of the public. The majority is a great deal lower than this type. A man who never saw anything but little huts, would take an ordinary house drawn upon a piece of paper to be a palace. How can you go to work with such a person to show him that it is a house and not a palace? It is necessary on the same paper to draw at least a small corner of a palace; by this corner he will see that the palace must be something of quite different proportions from the structure which was represented on the paper, and that this structure must be only a simple, ordinary house, in which, or even in better ones, every one ought to live. Had I not shown Rakhmétov’s figure, the majority of my readers would have lost their senses of proportion in regard to the main characters of my story. I will wager that till the last part of this chapter, Viéra Pavlovna, Kirsánof, and Lopukhóf have seemed to the majority of the public as heroes, as persons of the highest nature, as even persons idealized, maybe, people such as it is not possible to find in real life, on account of their too grand nobility. No, my friends, my mean, bad, pitiful friends, it did not appear to you in the right way. It is not they that stand so high, but you that stand so low. Now you see that they are standing on the earth. If they appear to you flying in the clouds, it is because you are sitting in the bottom of a den; on the height upon which they stand all people can stand, and must. The highest natures, which you and I cannot attain, my pitiable friends, are different. I have shown you a slight sketch of the profile of one of them; you see very different features. But those people who are completely described, you can reach unto, if you want to work over your self-development. Whoever is lower than they are is low. Lift yourselves up, my friends; lift yourselves up! It is not very hard. Go out into the free, white world! It is good to live in it, and the path is easy and inviting. Try it; culture! culture! Observe, think, read the works of those who tell you about the pure enjoyments of life, about the fact that a man can be kind and happy! Read them; they are books which fill the heart with joy. Observe life; for it is interesting to observe. Think; for it is delightful to think. That is all. No sacrifices are required; no deprivations are asked; they are not necessary. Desire to be happy! that is all; only this desire is wanted. And for this sake with delight watch over your development; there is happiness in it. Oh, what an enjoyment there is for a fully developed man! Even that which another may look upon as a sacrifice, as a sorrow, he feels to be a satisfaction to himself, an enjoyment; and how open his heart is to happiness, and how many enjoyments he has! Try it; it is good.”

**PART FOURTH. SECOND
MARRIAGE.**

I.

Berlin, July 20, 1856.

Much Esteemed Lady, Viéra Pavlovna,—

My close relationship with the late Dmitri Sergéitch Lopukhóf gives me the hope that you will kindly include in the number of your acquaintances a person who is an absolute stranger to you, but who deeply respects you. At all events, I venture to think that you will not accuse me of imposing upon you. By entering into correspondence with you, I only fulfil the desire of the late Dmitri Sergéitch, and those tidings which I am going to impart about him you can look upon as absolutely true, because I shall speak of his thoughts in his own language as though he were speaking himself. And here are his words about a matter, the explanation of which is the aim of my letter.

“The thoughts which brought the conclusion so disturbing to the people nearest to me [I am quoting Dmitri Sergéitch’s original words, as I said before] gradually grew in my mind, and my mind was changed several times before it received its ultimate development. The circumstance which caused these thoughts came under my observation in an entirely unexpected way, only at the moment when she [Dmitri Sergéitch means you] with fear told me about a dream which horrified her. The dream appeared to me very significant; and, as a man who was accustomed to look upon the state of her feelings from without, I understood at that very moment that an episode was beginning in her life which, within a longer or shorter time, would change our relations. But a man tries till the very last to preserve the situation to which he has become accustomed. In the depths of our nature lies a conservative element from which we yield only out of necessity. This, according to my opinion, contains the explanation of my first supposition. I wanted to think, and I succeeded in thinking, that this episode might pass away after some time, and then our former relations would be restored. She wanted to avoid the very episode, by kindling the warmest friendship. This deceived me, and for several days I did not think it impossible for her hope to be realized. Soon I became convinced, however, that to hope for this would be in vain. The reason for this lies in my own character.

“I do not intend to stain my character by saying this. This is my idea of it:—

“To a man who spends his life as he ought, his time is divided into three parts,—labor, enjoyment, and rest or recreation. Enjoyment needs rest as much as labor does. In labor and in enjoyment, the general nature of a man takes precedence over his other personal peculiarities; in work, we act under the predominating external stimulus of rational necessities; in enjoyment, under the predominating stimulus of other necessities also common to the whole human race. Rest or recreation is an element in which a person seeks restorment of strength after this stimulus which exhausts the reserves of life materials—an element which is brought into life by the person himself. Here a person wants to give himself up to his own peculiarities, to his own individual comfort. In labor, and in enjoyment, people are drawn to people by a general mighty power, which is more influential than their personal peculiarities, by the calculation of profit in

labor; in enjoyment, by equal demands of the organism. Rest is different. This is not a thing that belongs to that general power which softens down personal peculiarities. Rest is more of a personal thing; here nature demands for itself more room; here a person becomes more individualized, and the character of a person shows itself from the kind of rest which appears more agreeable and more easy for him.

“In this regard people are divided into two categories. For those of the one, rest or recreation is more agreeable than the society of others. Everybody must have seclusion. For them it must be an exception; as a rule, life must be spent with others. This class is far more numerous than the other, which must have the contrary. While alone they feel much more comfortable than in the society of others. This difference is noticed by the common opinion, which is expressed by the words, ‘a social man and a reserved man.’ I belong to those who are not social; she to those who are social. That is the whole secret of our history. It is apparently clear that in this cause there is nothing reprehensible in either one of us; nor is the fact reprehensible that neither one of us had the strength to remove the cause. Against his own nature man is weak.

“It is very hard for any one to understand the nature of others. Every one measures the characters of everybody else by his own peculiarities. Whatever I do not want, according to my opinions, others will not want; so we are led to think by our individuality. Exceedingly noticeable signs are required to make me realize the contrary; and, on the other hand, whatever affords me comfort and ease I must think that others like. The naturalness of this arrangement of ideas is my excuse, in the fact that I recognized too late the difference between my nature and hers. The mistake was greatly aided by the fact that after we came to live together, she placed me too high. There was never any equality between us; but she showed me a great respect. My style of life seemed to her exemplary; she took for a universal human feature any peculiarity of mine, and for a time she was drawn away by it. There was another cause, a stronger one still.

“Among uncultured people the sanctity of the inner life is but very little respected. Every one of the family, particularly among the elders, will thrust his paw, without any ceremony, into the very depths of your soul. The trouble is not in the fact that your secrets are interfered with. Secrets of greater or less importance you are careful to hide or to watch; and then, not all have them. A great many have absolutely nothing to hide from nearest friends; but every one wants that, in his inner life, there should be a little corner where nobody has a right to enter, just as every one wants to have his own separate room for himself alone. Uncultured people regard neither of these things; if you have a separate room, everybody goes to it, not from a desire to act the spy or to impose upon you, but simply because there is no thought that this may disturb you. That may occur to them only in case there has been some disturbance between you, when you might have no desire to see them appearing before you quite unexpectedly. They do not understand that they may disturb you, even though you may be kindly inclined to them. The sanctity of the threshold over which no one has a right to step, without the permission of the person living on the other side, is recognized only in one room; that is the room belonging to the head of the family, because the head of the family can turn everybody out of his room who enters without asking permission. Into all the others, everybody who is older or contemporary with them enters without asking. The same which is true in regard to the room can be applied to your inner life. Into it everybody intrudes without any necessity, even without any thought, in search of any amusement, and, more often than not, simply to ‘scratch his tongue on your soul.’ A girl has two every-day dresses, one white and one pink. She puts on the pink one; and here comes a chance for some one to rub tongue over her soul. ‘You put on the pink dress, Aniuta;

what for?' Aniuta herself does not know why she put it on. It was necessary to put on some kind of a dress; and then, again, if she had put on the white one, it would have amounted to the same thing. So *mâmenka* (or 'sister') says, 'But you would have done better to put on the white one.' But why it would be better, the one who gives the advice does not herself know; she simply rubs her tongue. 'You don't look very happy to-day, Aniuta; what's the matter?' Aniuta is neither happy nor unhappy; however, why shouldn't they ask after what they neither see nor don't see? 'I don't know; there's nothing the matter that I know of.' 'No? you seem to be rather unhappy.' Two minutes pass. 'Aniuta, you had better sit down at the piano and play us a tune'; there is no reason why. And so it goes the whole day. Your soul is like a street, on which everybody who sits at the window is looking, not for the sake of seeing anything in particular,—no, they even know that they will see nothing useful and nothing curious,—but simply because they have nothing else to do. But it's all the same; so, then, why not look? For a street, of course it makes no difference; but people have no pleasure at all from people walking over them.

"Naturally, this imposition, without any aim or idea whatever, must bring a reaction; and as soon as a person places himself in such a situation that he can have seclusion, he for some time finds pleasure in such seclusion, though by nature he may be inclined to sociability and not to seclusion.

"She, in this regard till she was married, was placed in a singularly hard position; they walked on her; they intruded into her very soul, not simply because they had nothing else to do, accidentally, occasionally, and only out of indelicacy, but systematically, without cessation, every minute, too coarsely, too impudently, they pushed their way in like savages, and with mean intentions, they forced themselves, not simply with unceremonious hands, but with very hard and very dirty hands, and therefore the reaction was very strong.

"Therefore my mistake should not be severely judged. Several months, and maybe a year, I was not mistaken; seclusion was really necessary and pleasant for her, and during this time I formed an opinion about her character; this strong, temporary demand of hers corresponded with my constant demand, and is it to be wondered at that I took a temporary phenomenon for a constant feature of her character? And everybody is so much tempted to judge of others by his own standard; the mistake was very great: I do not blame myself for it, but I want to put myself in the right light; that means, I feel that others will not be as indulgent to me as I am towards myself. To modify their condemnation, I must say a few words more about that side of my character, which is entirely strange to her, and to a good many other people, and, which without explanations, may not be rightly understood.

"My only idea of rest is seclusion. To be with others means to occupy my mind with something,—to work or to enjoy myself. I feel myself entirely at liberty only when I am alone by myself. How shall I name it? Why is it? With some it comes from reserve; with others from bashfulness; with still others from a melancholy and thoughtful disposition; and with a fourth class from a lack of sympathy with others; but it seems to me that there is nothing of the kind in me. I am frank and straightforward; I am always ready to be gay, and I am never melancholy. To observe people is pleasant for me, but this is connected in my mind with the idea of work or enjoyment, and that is something which demands rest after it; that is,—in my way of looking at it,—seclusion. So far as I can understand, it is a peculiar development in me, a drawing towards independence and freedom.

"And thus the strength of the reaction against her former, too troublesome situation in her family compelled her for a time to adopt a style of life which did not correspond to her con-

stant disposition. Respect towards me kept alive in her this temporary disposition longer than it would have been by itself; but I long before had formed my opinion of her character; I took this temporary feature to be a constant one, and thus I was at ease, and that is the whole story. On my side, it was a mistake, but there was very little that was blameworthy in this mistake; on her part, there was absolutely nothing: but how much suffering did it not cause her! And what a catastrophe it brought upon me!

“After her fear, caused by the terrible dream, disclosed to me the state of her feelings, it was too late to correct my fault; but if I had, we had noticed it before; then, maybe, by constant efforts over ourselves, she and I might have succeeded in bringing our relations into a situation forever satisfactory for us both. Could we? I do not know, but I think that, even if we had succeeded, it would not have been particularly advantageous. Let us suppose that we had remodelled our characters sufficiently for our relations to each other to be free from all burdensomeness, but then the remodelling of characters is only good when it is directed against some bad side; but those sides which she and I would have had to remodel had nothing bad in them. Why should sociability be better or worse than a disposition to seclusion, or *vice versa*? But the remodelling of a character is, at all events, the forcing of it, the breaking of it; and in the breaking of a thing there is a great deal that is lost; in the forcing of a thing much energy is wasted. The result which she and I, maybe, only *maybe*, not *surely*, had reached was not worth the loss. We both would have partly spoiled our individuality, would both have destroyed the freshness of our lives. For what end? Only for the sake of preserving certain places in certain rooms. It would have been quite a different thing if we had had children; then it would have been necessary to think deeply as to the change in their fate if we separated. If the change would be for the worse, then the removal of the cause would have been worth the most desperate efforts, and the result would have been happiness; for we should have accomplished what was necessary for the preservation of the greatest happiness of those whom we loved, and such a result would have compensated for all our efforts; but, as it was, what rational end was to be gained?

“Therefore, as it happened, my mistake apparently led to something better; owing to it, both of us had less breaking of our natures to endure. It brought a great deal of worryment; but if it had not happened, surely there would have been a great deal more, and moreover, the result would have been far more unsatisfactory.”

Such were Dmitri Sergéitch’s words. From the energy with which he expressed himself so far, you can easily see that he, as he himself said, felt something embarrassing in it and unprofitable to himself. He straightway added:—

“I feel that I shall not be entirely justified in the opinion of those who review this matter without any sympathy for me; but I am sure of her sympathy. She will judge about me even more kindly than I myself, and I consider myself entirely in the right. Such is my opinion of the time until she had the dream.”

And now I am going to tell you how he felt and what he intended to do after you had the dream which revealed to him the unsatisfactory nature of your relations.

“I said [these again are Dmitri Sergéitch’s own words] that from the first words about her terrible dream, I understood the unavoidableness of some episode different from our former relations. I expected it would have a mighty power, for it was impossible otherwise, from the energy of her nature and by the former state of her dissatisfaction, which had already acquired great strength from a too prolonged restraint. Still, the expectation at first appeared in a form very easy and profitable for me. I reasoned thus: she will be drawn away for a time by a passionate love for

somebody else; a year or two will pass and she will return to her old allegiance. I am a very decent man. Her chances of finding another man like me are rare (I speak about myself just exactly as I think; I have no hypocritical fashion of depreciating myself). A feeling of love satisfied will lose a portion of its force; she will see that though one part of her nature is less satisfied by living with me, yet in the general sum of existence life with me will be easier and freer than with any other, and everything will be restored to its former state. I, taught by experience, shall be more attentive to her. She will acquire new respect for me; she will be more warmly attached to me than before, and we shall live more happily than ever.

“But (and this thing, though the explanation of it is very embarrassing for me, must nevertheless be said), but how did the prospect of our relationship being renewed appear to me? Did it make me happy? Of course it did! But did it bring only happiness? No; it appeared to me as a burden, a pleasant burden, but still a burden. ‘I love her very, very dearly, and I shall easily break myself in, so as better to attend to her; this will afford me pleasure, but still my life will be trying.’ Thus it came over me, after I regained my calmness after the first impression; and I saw that I was not mistaken. She allowed me to experience this when she wanted me to act so as to preserve her love. A month in which I satisfied this desire of hers was the most burdensome month of my life. There was no pain in it—such a word would hardly apply to the idea; it would be absurd here, as far as positive sensations are concerned. I experienced nothing but pleasure while pleasing her, but it was tiresome to me. Here is where the mystery lies, that her attempt to retain her love for me remained a failure. I was tired while pleasing her.

“At first sight it may seem strange why I did not feel tired of giving up numberless evenings to the students, for whom, of course, I would not put myself out seriously, and why I felt such a degree of weariness when I gave up only a few evenings to a woman whom I loved more than myself; for whom I would be ready not only to die, but to endure every imaginable torture. This may seem strange, but only for one who cannot appreciate my motives in having intimate relations with the young men to whom I devoted so much time. In the first place, I had no personal relations with these young people. When I was sitting with them I did not feel that I was in the presence of people, but I saw only several abstract types who were only exchanging thoughts. My talk with them varied but little from my own contemplations when alone. Here only one part of my nature was occupied, and the very one which less than all others demanded rest,—thought. Everything else was sleeping; and besides, our talk had a practical, useful aim,—the aiding the development of intellectual life, nobility, and energy in my young friends. This was work; but it was such an easy work that it was good for the restoration of strength, expended by other kinds of labor; it did not weary, but refreshed, and yet it was labor. Therefore my own person had no demands for taking rest. There I expected to get benefit, but not peace; here I allowed all the other parts of my being to sleep, except thought. But my thought acted without any mixture of personal relations towards people with whom I was speaking; therefore I felt as much liberty as though I had been alone. These conversations, I may say, did not take me out of my seclusion. Here there was nothing analogous to those relations in which the whole man takes part.

“I know how embarrassing it is to use the word ‘weariness,’ but my conscience does not allow me to keep it back. Yes, with all my love to her, I felt a great deal easier after I became convinced that, between her and me, relations could not comfortably be arranged as they had been before. I gradually became convinced of this about the time that she began to notice that the fulfilling of this desire was going to be tiresome to me. Then the future appeared to me under a new form,

which was more agreeable to me. After we saw that it would be impossible for us to remain in our former relations, I began to think how soon it would be possible—I must again use an embarrassing expression—to get rid of it—to free myself from a situation which had become burdensome to me. Here lies the secret of what must seem magnanimity to the man who might be willing to be blinded by acknowledgment of the outward appearances, or even to one who would be so shortsighted as not to see the whole depth of the motives. Yes, I simply wanted to get rid of an embarrassing situation. As I am not hypocritical enough to deny what is good in me, I shall also not deny that one of my motives was the desire for her good; but this was only a secondary motive, a very strong one, to be sure, yet it fell far behind the first, the main one, in strength; that is, the desire of getting free from weariness was the real prompter. Under its influence I began carefully to examine into her mode of life, and easily perceived that in the change of her feelings, which was the result of the change in her way of living, the main part was played by Aleksandr Matvéitch in his appearance and disappearance. This brought me to think about him: I understood the reasons of his strange behavior, to which before I had paid no attention, and after that my thoughts received a new form, which, as I have said already, was agreeable to me. After I saw that she had not only the desire for passionate love itself, although she was, as yet, unconscious of it herself; that this feeling was directed towards one who was absolutely worthy, and generally speaking, was absolutely able to fill my place; that this man also loved her passionately,—then I became extremely glad. It is true, however, that the first impression was very cruel; every important change carries with it some pain. I saw now that I could not, conscientiously speaking, look upon myself as a man necessary for her, and I had become accustomed to this, and to tell the truth, it had been pleasant to me. Consequently, the severance of this relation unavoidably had to have its painful side; but only for the first part of the time, and not for long, this feeling predominated over the other feelings, which were joyful in their nature. Now I was assured of her happiness, and calm in the contemplation of her fate: this was a source of great happiness. But it would be vain to think that this constituted the main source of pleasure; no, personal feeling was once more much more important. I saw that I became entirely free from compulsion. My words do not imply that the life of a bachelor would be easier or happier for me than family life; no, if man and wife are not compelled to any kind of restraint for the sake of pleasing each other; if they are content with each other without making effort; if they satisfy each other without thinking of the satisfaction, then, the closer the relations between them are, the freer and easier it is for both of them: but the relation between her and me was not of this kind; therefore to separate meant freedom for me.

“From this can be seen that I have acted for my own interests, after I decided not to interfere with her happiness. There was a lofty side to my action; but the motive power towards it was the inclination of my own nature to better myself alone. Therefore I had strength to act, and, I may say, I acted well. Not to drift this way and that, not to make unnecessary confusion and disturbance for others, not to be false to my duty,—this was easy, when the duty is the inclination of your own nature.

“I left for Riazan. After some time she called me back, saying that my presence would not interfere with her. But I saw that it would still interfere. So far as I can understand, there were two reasons for it. It was hard for her to see a man to whom she was exceedingly indebted, according to her idea. She was mistaken in this respect; she was not in the least indebted to me, because I acted much more for my own interests than hers. But it appeared to her different, and she felt a very deep gratefulness to me. This feeling was hard. There is a pleasant side to it; but

it predominates only when the feeling is not too strong. When it is strong it is valid. The second cause—this, again, is a rather embarrassing thing to explain, but I must say what I think—I find the second cause in the fact that her relations to society were abnormal and unpleasant; it was hard for her to endure the fact that society would not acknowledge formally her right to occupy such a position. And so I saw that my existence near her would be trying for her. I shall not hide that, in this new discovery, there was a side that was incomparably harder for me to endure than all feeling which I had experienced in the former stages of the case. I had preserved towards her a very strong inclination. I wanted to remain a very close and intimate friend of hers; I hoped that this would be so. And after I saw that this could not be, I was greatly grieved; and here there was no compensation for this grief in personal calculations of any sort whatever. I may say that here my final decision was adopted exclusively, because of my attachment to her, only for the desire of making her better, exclusively from unselfish motives. Consequently, never before, even in our happiest time, did my relations toward her afford me such deep inward satisfaction as this decision. Here I acted under the action of what I frankly call nobility, or, to use a more suitable term, noble calculation,—a calculation in which the general law of humanity acts exclusively by itself, without borrowing support from individual peculiarities. And here I learned what a great pleasure it is to feel yourself acting like a noble man; that is, as every man ought to act, not Ivan or Peter, but every man, every one, without distinction of names. What a lofty delight it is to feel yourself simply a man—not Ivan, not Peter, but a man,—simply and purely a man! This feeling is too strong. Ordinary natures like mine cannot endure too often an elevation to the height of this feeling; but happy is the one who has had the chance to experience it.

“There is no need of explaining that side of my mode of action which would have been most unreasonable in transactions with other people, but which here is very obviously justified by the character of the person to whom I yield. At the time when I left for Riazan, there had not a word passed between her and Aleksandr Matvéitch; at the time which I made my final decision there had not a word passed between him and me, or between her and me, on this subject. But I knew him very well; I had no need of studying his thoughts for the sake of learning them.”

I am giving you Dmitri Sergéitch's words, with liberal exactness, as I have already said.

I am an entire stranger to you; but the correspondence into which I enter with you, fulfilling the desire of the late Dmitri Sergéitch, bears such an intimate character that, in all probability, it will be interesting for you to learn who this strange correspondent is, who is so initiated into the inner life of the late Dmitri Sergéitch. I used to be a medical student, and I have nothing more to tell you about myself. During the last few years I have lived in Petersburg. Several days ago I decided to travel, and to create for myself a new career abroad. I left Petersburg on the second day after you learned about Dmitri Sergéitch's catastrophe. On a certain occasion I had no documents in my possession, and I had to take the papers belonging to a stranger, with which I was furnished by one of our common friends. He gave them to me on the condition that I should fulfil certain of his commissions on the way. If you happen to see Mr. Rakhmétov, be kind enough to tell him that all his commissions have been fulfilled as he desired. Now I suppose I shall have to set out on my travels through Germany, observing the customs. I have several hundred rubles, and I want to have a good time. When I shall get tired of idleness, I shall look out for something, no matter what. When? wherever chance may lead. I am as free as a bird, and I can be as unconcerned as a bird; such a situation delights me.

It is very probable that you may like to honor me with an answer, but I do not know where I shall be in a week from now: maybe in England, and maybe in Prague. I can go wherever fancy may lead me, and where it will lead me I know not; and therefore send your letters to the following address: Berlin, Friedrich Strasse 20, Agentur von H. Schmeidler. Your envelope should contain another envelope on which, in place of any address, you will write the cypher 12,345; that will show Schmeidler's agency that it should be forwarded to me.

Accept, honored lady, the assurance of deep respect from a man who is an entire stranger to you, who is endlessly devoted to you, and who signs himself,

A Former Medical Student.

Honored Sir, Aleksandr Matvéitch,—

According to the desire of the late Dmitri Sergéitch, I must send you the assurance that for him the best circumstance seemed the fact that he was compelled to leave his place to you. With those relations which brought about this change, relations which gradually formed, in the course of three years, from the time when you almost ceased coming to his house, and therefore were formed without your aid, exclusively from the lack of correspondence between the characters of the two people whom you afterwards tried in vain to reconcile; with such relations, the final scene which came was unavoidable. Evidently Dmitri Sergéitch could not feel right in blaming you; of course this explanation is unnecessary; however, merely for form's sake, he authorized me to make it. Thus it had to be either one way or the other: either you or he had to take the place which he could not fill, and which another could take only because Dmitri Sergéitch could not fill it; and the fact that you took this place, according to the opinion of the late Dmitri Sergéitch makes the best result that could be devised. I press your hand.

A Former Medical Student.

“Ah! I know.”

What is that? A familiar voice. I turn around; there he is! He, himself, the sapient reader, who was not long ago banished in disgrace for not knowing A from B,¹ in regard to the artistic, but here he is again and again with his former shrewdness. Again he knows something!

“Ah! I know who wrote it—”

But I hastily seize the first thing that comes most convenient for my purpose. I seize a napkin, because after I copied the former student's letter, I sat down to breakfast, and so I seize the napkin, and stuff it in his mouth, “Well, keep what you know to yourself; why do you shout it all over town?”

¹ *Aza* for *glaza*, literally, does not recognize *a* when he has it in his eyes.

II.

Petersburg, Aug. 25, 1856.

Dear Sir,—

You will understand what a degree of happiness your letter gave me. With all my soul I thank you for it. Your intimacy with the late Dmitri Sergéitch gives me the right to regard you as my friend. Allow me to use this appellation. In every word which you quoted can be seen Dmitri Sergéitch's character. He was constantly seeking for the most secret causes of his actions, and he took pleasure in ascribing them to his theory of egotism. By the way, this is the common custom of all our society. My Aleksandr is also fond of analyzing his motives in exactly the same spirit. If you had only heard how he explained his behavior towards me and Dmitri Sergéitch in the course of three years, you would learn, if his words were to be taken literally, that he did everything through egotistical calculation for his own pleasure. And I long ago learned this custom; it interests Aleksandr and me a trifle less than it interested Dmitri Sergéitch. We agree with him entirely; but he has a stronger drawing towards it. Yes, if one were to hear us, all three of us would be taken to be such egotists as the world has never seen. And maybe this is true; maybe there never were such egotists. What think you? Yes; it seems likely.

But besides this characteristic, common to us three, in Dmitri Sergéitch's words there is another, which belongs exclusively to his situation. Apparently the aim of his explanations was to give me peace. Not that his words lack sincerity,—no, he would never say what he does not think,—but he brings out too strongly only that element of the truth which can calm me. My friend, I am very grateful for it; but I, too, am an *egoistka*. I shall tell you that he vainly worried over my peace of mind. We justify ourselves much easier than we are justified by others; and I, to tell the truth, do not consider myself in any way blameworthy before him. I will say further, I do not even feel that I owe him any gratefulness. I prize his nobility, oh, how deeply! but I know that he was noble, not for my sake, but his own. For I, when I was not false to him, was not false, not for his sake, but for myself; not because falsity would be injurious to him, but to myself.

I said that I did not blame myself, just as he did. But, just as he did, I feel an inclination to justify myself. According to his words, which were very just, this means: I have a presentiment that others will not be as lenient as I am towards myself, in exempting me from the blame of certain parts of my behavior. I do not feel any desire whatsoever to justify myself for that part of the affair in which he justified himself; and, on the contrary, I want to justify myself for that part in which he had no need for giving justification. In all that happened until I had my dream there was nothing for which anybody will blame me, I am convinced. But afterwards, was not I the cause of the affair taking such a melodramatic course, and brought about such a terrible catastrophe? Ought I not to have looked much more rationally on that change of relations which was unavoidable, after my dream had for the first time revealed to me and Dmitri Sergéitch his situation and mine? The very evening of the day on which Dmitri Sergéitch committed suicide, I had a long talk with the formidable Rakhmétov—and what a kind, tender-hearted man he is!

He told me God-knows-what horrible things about Dmitri Sergéitch. But if I repeated them in a friendly tone to Dmitri Sergéitch, instead of in the harsh, as it were, unfriendly, tone which Rakhmétof used,—well, they may be true. I suspect that Dmitri Sergéitch understood well what Rakhmétof was going to say to me, and that this formed a part of his calculation. Yes, at that time it was necessary for me to listen to it; it calmed me greatly; and whoever might have arranged for that talk, I acknowledge my gratitude for it to you, my friend. But even the formidable Rakhmétof had to acknowledge that, in the last part of the affair, Dmitri Sergéitch acted finely. Rakhmétof blamed him only for the first half, and for this he was justifying himself. I am going to justify myself, though nobody has told me that I was to blame for it. But for every one of us—I am speaking about you and our friends, about all our circle—there is a severer than even Rakhmétof, and this is our own conscience.

Yes, I comprehend, my friend, that it would have been far easier for all concerned if I had looked at the matter more simply, and had not given to it a too tragical importance. According to Dmitri Sergéitch's view, it should have been put this way more strongly; although there would have been no need of having recourse to a conclusion so theatrical and trying for all of us, yet he was led to it only by the superfluous vehemence of my anxiety. I understand how it must have seemed so to him, although he did not charge you to put that view of it before me. So much the more I appreciate his kind disposition towards me, that it was not diminished even though he held such an opinion. But just listen a moment, my friend. It is not entirely just; it is not by any means unjust; it was not from my fault; it was not from my superfluous anxiety that the absolute necessity came upon Dmitri Sergéitch of examining into what he himself frequently called a trying situation. True, if I had not attributed an excessive importance to the change in our relations, it might have been possible to escape the difficulty without the journey to Riazan; but he said that it was not trying for him, and so there would not have been still greater misfortunes arising from my exalted views. Only the necessity of making way with himself was trying for Dmitri Sergéitch. He explained the unavoidableness of this decision of his by two reasons: I was suffering from an excessive feeling of gratitude towards him; I was suffering because I could not enter into those relations with Aleksandr which are demanded by the conditions of society. In reality, I was not thoroughly at ease; I was oppressed by the situation, until he made way with himself; but he did not suspect the essential reason. The thought that his appearance oppressed me with an excessive burden of gratitude was not absolutely true. A person is very much inclined to seek for reasons which may lighten a trying situation, and at the time when Dmitri Sergéitch saw the necessity of making way with himself, this reason for it was no longer in existence. My gratitude to him had long before been modified to such a degree that it became a pleasant feeling; and only this reason was connected with my previous exalted view of the matter. The other reason which Dmitri Sergéitch adduced,—the desire to give to my relations with Aleksandr a character such as is recognized,—that reason had nothing to do with my view of the matter; it resulted from the ideas of society. I was powerless over it. But Dmitri Sergéitch was entirely mistaken in thinking that his presence would have been hard for me on account of that reason. No; it might have been arranged otherwise even without the necessity of his committing suicide, if it had been necessary and had been satisfactory to me. Our position had that rare peculiarity that all the three persons who were concerned in it were of equal strength. If Dmitri Sergéitch had felt that Aleksandr were his superior in intellect, culture, or character; if, while yielding his place to Aleksandr, he would through a superiority of mental strength; if his refusal had not been from good will, instead of the yielding of a stronger to a weaker,—then, of course, I should have

had no cause to be burdened. Likewise, if I had been in intellect or character much stronger than Dmitri Sergéitch; if until my relations with Aleksandr had received their full development he had been what has been well characterized by a story over which you will remember we were at one time all greatly amused—the story of how two gentlemen met in the foyer of the opera, engaged in conversation with each other, took a fancy to each other, and wanted to get better acquainted. “I am Lieutenant So-and-so,” says the one, introducing himself; “And I am the husband of Madame Tedesco,” said the other, introducing himself. If Dmitri Sergéitch had been the husband of Madame Tedesco, then, of course, there would have been no necessity of his committing suicide. He would have been under such subjection and humiliation; and if he had been a noble man, he would see in the fact of his humiliation nothing offensive to himself, and all would be well. But Dmitri’s relation towards me and Aleksandr was in no respect analogous. He was not a hair’s breadth lower or weaker than either of us, and we knew it and he knew it. His concession was not the result of weakness. Oh, not at all. It was merely the result of his good will. Wasn’t that so, my friend? You cannot deny it. Therefore, in what situation did I find myself placed! And this, my friend, contains the whole essence of the matter. I saw myself in a situation of dependence on his good will, and so my situation was trying to me, and therefore he saw himself compelled to the heroic decision of putting himself out of the way. Yes, my friend, the cause of my feeling, which compelled him to it, lay much deeper than his explanation given in your letter. The overwhelming weight of gratefulness was no longer in existence. To satisfy the claims of society would have been easy in the way that Dmitri Sergéitch suggested. Yes; the claims of society would never affect me living in my own little circle, which is entirely free from such claims; but I was still dependent upon Dmitri Sergéitch. My situation had as its foundation only his good will, and that was not self-existent, and that was the reason why it was hard for me. Now, judge you: could this cause be removed by this view of a change in our relations, or by the other. The importance lay not in my views of it, but in the fact that Dmitri Sergéitch was a man of independence, who acted according to his own will, though it was a good will. Yes, my friend, you know and you approve of my feeling. I do not want to be dependent upon the good will of any one, no matter who it may be, though it were a man most devoted to me, though I respected him, though I might trust him as I do myself, though I absolutely knew that he would always rejoice to do whatever I needed, that my happiness was as dear to him as to myself. Yes, my friend, I do not need your assurance; I know that you approve of it.

But after all, why all this talk, this self-analysis, which reveals the most hidden motives of feelings which could not be penetrated by any one? Yet, with me as with Dmitri Sergéitch, this self-confession is made for my own benefit, so that I might say, “I am not to blame here; the matter depended on something that was beyond my control.” I make this remark because Dmitri Sergéitch was fond of such remarks. I want to praise myself before you, my friend.

But enough of this.¹ You felt so much sympathy for me that you did not grudge spending several hours’ time in writing your long letter—and oh, how precious it was to me! I see from this letter how diplomatically I have learned to write—in a style like Dmitri Sergéitch’s or yours; yes, from this, and only from this, I see how interesting it will be for you to know what happened to me after Dmitri Sergéitch took leave from me, on his way to Moscow, with the intention of returning and disappearing. After his return from Riazan he saw that I was disturbed. This disturbance was manifested only on his return. While he was staying in Riazan, I, to tell you the

¹ Perhaps the sapient reader will heartily agree.

truth, did not think about him much; no, not as much as you might suppose, judging by what he saw after his return. But when he left for Moscow, I saw that he had something particular in view. It was noticeable that he wound up his business in Petersburg; it was evident that for a week he was waiting for their final issue in order to go, and then—how could it happen otherwise? During the last days I noticed the melancholy in his face—that face which was so clever at hiding mysteries; I anticipated that something decisive was in prospect, and when he took his place in the car, I felt so sad, so sad! On the next day I was melancholy; on the third day I got up still more oppressed, and suddenly Masha brought me a letter. What a tormenting moment it was, what a tormenting hour, what a tormenting day, you can imagine!

And so, my friend, now more than before, I know my attachment to Dmitri Sergéitch. I myself did not realize that it was so powerful. Yes, my friend, I now know its strength. You, too, know, because you must certainly know that on that very day I decided to give up Aleksandr. All day I felt that my life was ruined—poisoned forever. Can you imagine my childish exultation when I saw my kind friend's note, which entirely changed the current of my thoughts (you see how careful my expressions are; I want you to be satisfied with me, my friend). You know all this, because Rakhmétov went to escort me to the train. Dmitri Sergéitch and he were right in saying that it was necessary for me to leave Petersburg for the accomplishment of the effect, for the sake of which Dmitri Sergéitch did not scruple to leave me all day a prey to the most terrible tortures: how thankful I am to him for this unmercifulness! He and Rakhmétov were also right in advising Aleksandr not to come to me, nor to escort me. But I had no necessity of going to Moscow; it was only necessary for me to go as far as Moscow, so I stopped at Novgorod. A few days later Aleksandr came there, and brought the documents in regard to Dmitri Sergéitch's suicide. We were married a week after the suicide, and we lived a month on the railroad in Tchudof, so that Aleksandr might be enabled to go three or four times a week to the hospital. Yesterday we returned to Petersburg, and here is the reason that I have been so long answering your letter: it lay in Masha's drawer, and she had entirely forgotten about it. And you must have thought—God knows what—at not having received an answer during all this time.

I salute you, dear friend, yours,
Viéra Kirsánova.

I press your hand, my dear. But please don't write any compliments to me, else I shall pour out before you my whole soul, and a perfect flood of encomiums on your nobleness, which would be the worst thing imaginable, and do you know what I think? Does it not prove the presence of a pretty good amount of stupidity, both in you and in me, by writing each other only a few lines. It seems as though it proved that both of us felt ourselves embarrassed. However, on my part, it is excusable; but what excuse have you? But the next time we shall be able to argue freely, and I shall write you a heap of news.

Yours,
Aleksandr Kirsánof.

III.

These letters, absolutely sincere, were really somewhat warped, as Viéra Pavlovna herself noticed. Both correspondents of course were trying to diminish for each other the strength of the heavy shocks which they experienced. Oh, these people are shrewd! I have often heard from them—that is, from them and people of their stamp—such things as made me laugh in spite of their pathetic assurances that, such and such a thing was easy to endure. Of course I laughed when the assurances were made before me who was a stranger to them and talking with them in tête-à-tête. And when the very same thing was said to a man who had to listen to it, then I used to admit that such and such things were really trifles. An honorable man is a most amusing creature. I always used to laugh at all the honorable men with whom I was acquainted. A most amusing creature, even to the point of absurdity! Here, let us take these letters. I am partially used to tricks of this sort, even while entertaining friendship with such gentlemen and ladies. Well (*nu*), but what effect can they have on a man who is inexperienced and as yet unspoiled, as, for instance, the sapient reader?

The sapient reader already is clearing his mouth of the napkin, and, while shaking his head, says:—

“Immorality!”

“You are a fine fellow! You have hit it!” I reply in praise of him. “Well [*nu*], make me happy with another little word!”

“Yes, the author himself is an immoral man,” declares the sapient reader. “Just see what things he approves of!”

“No, my precious,¹ you are mistaken. There are many things that I do not approve of here. Possibly I do not approve of any of it, if you desire to hear the truth. All this is too much idealized, too ecstatic! Life is much simpler.”

“Then you must be still more immoral, must you not?” demands the sapient reader, opening wide eyes of astonishment at the incomprehensible degree of immorality to which humanity has fallen in my personage!

“Much more immoral,” I say, uncertain whether the sapient reader will accept it as truth or will ridicule it.

This correspondence lasted for three or four months,—actively on the part of Kirsánof, but carelessly and briefly on the part of their correspondent. Afterwards he entirely ceased to answer their letters, and it could be seen by all that his sole idea was to impart to Viéra Pavlovna and her husband thoughts of Lopukhóf, which made up the long letter which he wrote first, and after fulfilling this obligation he considered the further correspondence unnecessary. After two or three of Kirsánof’s letters remained unanswered, he understood it so and ceased to write.

¹ *Moï milashka.*

IV.

Viéra Pavlovna is resting on her soft lounge, expecting her husband home to dinner from the hospital. To-day she has been busying herself very little in the kitchen over the sweet additions to dinner. She wanted to lie down even sooner, so as to rest, because she worked very hard this morning; and it had been so for a long time, and it will be so for a long time to come: she has had much to do in the mornings. Here she is trying to establish another union shop in another part of the town. Viéra Pavlovna Lopukhóva lived on the Vasilyevsky Island; Viéra Pavlovna Kirsánova lives on Syérgievskaiia Street, because her husband had to have an apartment near the Vinborgsky Side. Mrs. Mertsálova proved to be very capable in her management of the shop on the Vasilyevsky Island; and that was not to be wondered at, for she and the members of the union had been very good friends. After Viéra Pavlovna returned to Petersburg, she saw that, though she had to be at the shop, it was only for short visits; that if she continued to go there every day, it was simply because she was drawn there by her attachment, and that her friends liked to have her come. Perhaps for some time her calls did not prove to be useless, since Mertsálova at times found it necessary to consult with her. But it took so little time and becomes continually more and more rare, and soon Mertsálova will gain so much experience that she will cease to need Viéra Pavlovna. Yes, even the first time after her return to Petersburg that she was at the shop on the Vasilyevsky Island, she was more like a loving friend than an important factor. What had she to do? It is evident what. It was necessary for her to start another shop in the new neighborhood where she lived, at the other end of the city.

And so the new shop is established in one of the short streets which runs between Basséinaia and Syérgievskaiia streets. There was much less bother with it than with the former. The five girls who formed the fundamental staff came over from the old shop, while new girls took their places. The balance of the force was selected from among the good acquaintances of those seamstresses who worked in the other shop, and that shows that everything was more than half prepared. The aim and order of the shop were well known to all the members of the union, and new girls entered the shop with the desire that the arrangement so slowly developed in the other shop should be immediately begun. Oh, yes, now the arrangement progresses tenfold quicker than before, and there is three times less worry. But still there is a great deal of work, and Viéra Pavlovna is just as tired to-day as she was yesterday and the day before, as she was two months ago, only two months, though half a year has passed since her marriage. Well, it was necessary for her to enjoy a wedding festival, and she enjoyed it long, but afterwards she gave herself up to work.

Yes, she has been working hard to-day, and now she is resting, and she is thinking about many things, and, above all, about the present; it is full of all good! It is so full of life that she has scarcely time to have recollections. Recollections will come later, oh, much later; and not even in ten years, nor, perhaps, in a score of years, but later. Now it is not time for them, and it will not be for many years to come. But still she has a few even now; seldom, to be sure. Here, for example, she recollects something which seldom comes to her mind. Here is what she recollects:—

V.

“*Milenki*, I am going with thee.”

“But you have not your things ready.”

“*Milenki* mine, then I will go with you to-morrow, if you do not want to take me to-day.”

“Think it over; consider it. Wait for my letter; it will reach you to-morrow.”

Here she returns home. How did she feel when she went home with Masha? How did she feel and think all the long way from the Moscow railway station to the Middle Prospekt? She herself does not know, so shocked was she by the abrupt turn in the affair. Twenty-four hours have not passed—no, in two hours it will be a full day—since he found her letter in his room, and now he is already gone. How quick! how sudden! At two o’clock she had not anticipated anything of the sort. He waited until she, wearied by the excitement of the morning, could no longer resist the power of sleep, came in, said a few words, and in these few words there was an almost incomprehensible preface to what he meant; and in what brief words he said what he meant! He said: “I have not seen my old folks for a long time. I am going to see them, and they will be glad to have me come.” That was all, and he left immediately; and she hastened after him, though, when he came in, he asked her to promise not to do it. She hastened after him; but where was he? “Masha, where is he? where is he?”

Masha, who was still putting away the things after the departure of the guests, says, “Dmitri Sergéitch has gone out. He said, after he came out from your room, ‘I am going to take a walk.’” And she had to go to bed; and how could she go to sleep? But she did not know that this was going to take place on the very morning which was now beginning to dawn. He said that they would have abundant time to talk everything over. And she had barely time to open her eyes before it was time to go to the railway station. Yes, all this had flashed by her eyes, as though nothing of the sort had happened to her, as though some one had told her of something that happened to some one else. Only now, while returning home from the railway station, she came to herself, and began to think, “What is the matter with me, and what is going to happen to me?”

Yes, she is going to Riazan. She is going; it is impossible not to go. But this letter; what will be in that letter? No; why wait for the letter before deciding? She knows what it will contain: still she must postpone her decision till the letter comes. Why postpone it? She will go; yes, she will go! She thinks about it one hour; she thinks two; she thinks three, four hours. But Masha was getting hungry, and for the third time has summoned her to dinner; and this time she commands her, rather than summons her. Well, this is another recollection. “Poor Masha! how I compelled her to get hungry!”

“Why did you wait for me, Masha! Why did not you have your dinner long ago, without waiting for me?”

“How could I, Viéra Pavlovna?”

And she thinks again for one hour, two hours. “I am going; yes, I am going to-morrow. I shall only wait for the letter because he asked me to. But whatever may be written in it,—and I know what will be in it,—it does not make any difference what it says, I shall go.”

On this she thinks an hour, two hours. Yes, she deliberates over it an hour; but does she deliberate over it two hours? No, though she thinks about it; but she thinks five little words more, "He does not wish it." And more and more she deliberates over these five little words. And here the sun is already setting; but she still thinks the same thoughts, and, above all, the five little words; and suddenly, just at the very instant that the indefatigable Masha was demanding that Viéra Pavlovna should come out to tea, at that very moment, out from those five little words arise six little words, "I do not wish it either." How well the indefatigable Masha acted in coming in! She drove away these six new little words. But even the beneficent Masha did not long succeed in driving away these six little words. At first they did not dare to appear by themselves; they sent in their place a refutation of themselves, "But I must go." And they sent them for the sake of returning themselves, under the cover of this refutation. At one instant appeared with them their carrier, "He does not wish it"; and at that very instant these five little words changed into the six little words, "I do not wish it either."

And she goes over these thoughts for half an hour; and in half an hour these five little words, the six little words, begin to work over, according to their own will, even the former words, the most important words of all. And from the three words, most important of all, "I shall go," grow four words, not the same as before, though they are the same, "But shall I go?" Thus it is that words grow, and transform themselves. But here comes Masha again. "I gave him a silver ruble, Viéra Pavlovna; here it is written, 'If he brings it at nine o'clock, give him a silver ruble; but if later, give him half a ruble.' The conductor brought it, Viéra Pavlovna. He came down on the evening train. He said, 'I did as I promised; to make it quicker, I took an *izvoshchik*.'"

The letter is from him! Yes, she knows what is in the letter; "Don't go." But still she means to go. She does not want to listen to this letter,-to him; she intends to go; she is going. No, there is something different in the letter; here is something to which it is impossible not to listen: "I am going to Riazan, but not directly to Riazan. I have a great deal to do for the factory on the way. Besides Moscow, where I shall have to stay a week, I shall have to stop at two towns this side of Moscow, and three on the other side before I reach Riazan. How long I shall stay at my various halting-points I cannot tell you, for the very reason, that among other things, I shall have to receive money from our mercantile correspondents, and you know, my dear friend"—yes; it was in the letter. "*My dear friend* was used several times in the letter that I might see that he felt towards me as before; that he had no ill towards me," thinks Viéra Pavlovna. "At that time I kissed those words *my dear friend*; yes, it was so: 'My dear friend, you know that, when it is necessary to receive money, you are often compelled to stay several days, when you intended to stay only a few hours; and so I really do not know when I shall be able to reach Riazan; by all probability, not very soon.'"

She remembers this letter almost word for word. What does it mean? Yes, he has entirely deprived her of the possibility of clinging to him, so as to preserve her relations to him. What is left for her to do? And her former words, "I must go to him," change into the words, "No, I must not see *him*," and this *him*, does not refer to the one of whom she was just thinking. These words change all her former words, and she thinks one hour; she thinks two, "I must not see him"; and how and when did they succeed in changing? but they have already changed into the words: "Shall I really ever want to see him again? No!" and when she falls asleep these words have changed into other words, "Shall I really ever see him?" and where is the answer? Where is he gone? And these again change, yes, they grew into the words, "Shall I never see him again?" And

when she falls asleep at daybreak she falls asleep with these same words, “Shall I really never see him again?”

And when she wakes late in the morning already, instead of all other words, only five words are wrestling with two, “I shall not see him; I shall see him”¹; and thus passes the whole morning. Everything is forgotten; everything is forgotten in this struggle, and the more powerful word *no* tries to conquer the little word *yes*; it tackles it; it clutches it. “I shall not see him”; and the little word glances aside and vanishes, glances aside and vanishes. “Yes, I shall see him.” Everything is forgotten; everything is forgotten in the effort of the stronger word *no* to conquer the smaller one *yes*. Yes, and it does conquer, and it calls to its aid other little words, so that the former little word may have no refuge. “No, I shall not see him; no, I shall not see him!” Yes, now the stronger words hold firmly in their grasp the little word *yes*, which has no refuge from them; they press it between them: “No, I shall not see—no, I shall see him—no, I shall not see him!” But what is she doing now? Her bonnet was already on her head; instinctively she looked at the mirror to see if her hair is in order; yes, in the mirror she saw that her bonnet is on straight, and from these words, which have grown together so firmly, one remained, and to this a new one was added, “No return! no return!”

“Masha, don’t expect me back to dinner! I shall not dine at home to-day.” “Aleksandr Matvéitch has not returned yet from the hospital,” calmly replied Stepan; and how could he help speaking calmly with a phlegmatic lady? In her appearance there is nothing out of the ordinary; not very long ago she used to be here.

“I did not think he was; it’s all right; I will wait; you need not tell him that I am here.”

She unfolds some newspaper or other—yes, she can read; she sees that she can read; yes, as long as there is “no return”; as long as the decision is made, she feels herself quite calm. Of course she can read little; she scarcely read at all; she looked at the room; she began to put it in order, as though she were its *khzoyáika*. Of course she did not arrange it much, scarcely at all: but how calm she feels, and she can read, and she can occupy herself with something. She noticed that the ashes had not been emptied from the ash-tray, and that the table-cloth needed adjustment, and that the chair was out of its place. She is sitting and thinking: “There is no return—no choice! A new life is beginning.” She thinks an hour, two hours: “A new life is beginning. How surprised he will be! how happy he will be! A new life is beginning! how happy we are!”

A tinkling bell! she flushed a little, and smiled; steps—the door opens!

“Viéra Pavlovna!”

“My love [*drŭg moi*], I could not live without thee. How long thou didst love me, and said not a word. How noble thou art! How noble he is, Sasha!”

“Tell me, Viérotchka, how it happened.”

“I told him that I could not live without thee: on the very next evening he had already gone; I wanted to follow him; I talked all day yesterday about following him, but now thou seest that I have been here a long time.”

“But how thin thou hast grown these past two weeks, Viérotchka! How pale thy hands are!”

He kisses her hands.

“Yes, my dear, this has been a hard struggle. Now I can appreciate how much you suffered, so as not to disturb my peace. How could you be so self-possessed as to hide it from me? How thou must have suffered!”

¹ In the original, two words wrestle with one: *Nyé uvizhus* with *uvizhus*.

"No, Viérotchka; it was not an easy task."

He still kisses her hands, looking at them, and suddenly she burst into laughter.

"*Akh!* how inattentive I am to you. You are tired, Sasha; you must be hungry."

She frees herself from him, and runs away.

"Where are you going, Viérotchka?"

But she answers never a word, but goes to the kitchen, and hurriedly, gayly, says to Stepan: "Hurry up; let us have dinner for two! hurry up—where are the plates and things! Let me have them; I will set the table myself, and you bring the victuals. Aleksandr is so tired from his hospital that we must give him something to eat."

She comes back with the plates, and the knives, forks, and spoons rattle on the plates.

Stepan puts the soup on the table. At dinner she relates how it all happened. Stepan comes in with the last dish.

"Stepan, seems to me that we shall not leave you any dinner."

"Yes, Viéra Pavlovna; I shall have to buy something for myself in the little grocery store."

"That's all right, Stepan; henceforth you must know that you must prepare for two besides yourself."

And after she remembers all this, Viéra Pavlovna smiles and "now how prosaic our story is!" Tea was not over when we heard a terrible ringing of the bell, and in came a couple of students, and in their excitement they did not even notice her.

"Aleksandr Matvéitch, there is an interesting subject," say they, all out of breath; "it was brought just now—a very rare complication; it's very interesting, Aleksandr Matvéitch, and immediate help is wanted. Every moment is precious; we even took an *izvoshchik* to come here."

"Make haste, my dear," she says; and here for the first time the students notice her. They bow to her, and at that very moment they hurry away their professor with them. His preparations did not take very long; he was still in his army coat, and she hurried him away. "Will you come right to me afterwards?" she asked, as she said good by.

"Yes."

Long she waits for him through the evening; here it is ten o'clock, and he hasn't come yet; now it is eleven; now there is no use waiting; still what can be the reason? She, of course, did not worry at all. Nothing could have happened to him; but it shows how long he was detained by the interesting subject, and is the poor interesting subject alive now, and does Sasha succeed in saving him? Yes, Sasha was detained very long. He came in the next morning at ten o'clock. He stayed till four at the hospital.

"It was a very hard and interesting case, Viérotchka."

"Did you save him?"

"Yes."

"How did you get up so early?"

"I didn't go to bed at all."

"You didn't go to bed? So as not to be late coming to see me? You didn't sleep all night? You impious fellow! Please go right home and sleep clear till dinner-time without fail; so that I shall find you sleeping when I come."

In two minutes he was already sent off.

Those were our two first interviews. But this second dinner goes with proper dignity. They tell each other their stories sensibly; they laugh, they think, and they pity each other. To each

of them it seems that the other has suffered the more. In a week and a half a little *datcha* on the Kamennoi Ostrof is rented, and they move there.

VI.

Viéra Pavlovna does not very often recollect the past days of their present love. Yes, in the present there is so much life that there is little recollection; but whenever she recalls the past,—as sometimes, at first, of course, only *sometimes*, but afterwards more frequently,—at every recollection she feels a dissatisfaction, at first, weak and like a flash, indefinite. At whom? at what? and then it appears to her. At whom? She is dissatisfied with herself. For what? And now she sees from what part of her character arises her dissatisfaction. Yes; she is very proud. But is it only in her past that she is dissatisfied with herself? At first, yes; but then she begins to observe that the dissatisfaction with herself is connected with the present also. And what a strange peculiarity could be noticed in this feeling, after it became clear to her, as though she, Viéra Pavlovna Kirsánova, did not feel a personal dissatisfaction, but as though the dissatisfaction of thousands and millions were not reflected in her; and as though she were not dissatisfied with herself personally, but as though these thousands and millions were dissatisfied with her. But who are these thousands and millions? Why are they dissatisfied with themselves? If I had lived alone by myself as before, she thought to herself, that then, by all probability, this feeling would not have been made manifest so quickly to her. But now she is constantly with her husband. They both think together all the time, and the thought about him interferes with every other thought. This assisted greatly in the evolution of this feeling. He could not directly explain this puzzle to her; as long as this feeling was obscure in her own mind, it was still darker for him. For him it was hard to think how it is possible to feel dissatisfaction which should not interfere with your personal satisfaction, which does not in the least bear upon personality. This was strange to him, a hundred-fold darker than for her; but still it helped her a great deal that she was constantly thinking about her husband and constantly thinking with him. She began to notice that whenever this dissatisfaction came to her, it was always accompanied by comparisons. It consisted in the fact that she compares herself with her husband, and here flashed before her a real word expressing her thought, “a difference, an insulting difference.” Now she understands.

VII.

“Sasha, how lovely this N. N. is (Viéra Pavlovna named the officer with whom she wanted to become acquainted with Tambulik and Bosio in her dream); he brought me a new poem, which is not soon going to be published,” said Viéra Pavlovna at dinner. “Shall we set ourselves to reading it right after dinner? Yes? I have been waiting for you, and I am going to read it all with you, Sasha. And I have been longing to read it.”

“What poem is it?”

“Now you shall hear. Let us see if he succeeded in this thing. N. N. says that he—I mean the author—is pretty well satisfied with it.”

And so they settle themselves comfortably in her room, and she begins to read:—

“Oi! full, full the little basket is
With brocades and calicoes!
Sweetheart, pity! what a task it is
For the young lad as he goes!”¹

“Now I see,” said Kirsánof, after listening to a score or so of stanzas; “this is a new style with him; but it is evidently his. Nekrásof’s?”² Yes? I am very grateful to you for waiting for me.”

“You ought to be,” replied Viéra Pavlovna. Twice they read the little poem over, which, owing to their acquaintance with one of the author’s acquaintances, came into their hands three years before it was published.

“Do you know what verses affected me the most?” asked Viéra Pavlovna, after she had read several times with her husband certain parts of the poem. “These verses are not from the main part of the poem, but oh! my thoughts are greatly drawn to them. When Katya was waiting for the return of her bridegroom, she was very melancholy:—

‘Had I only time for worrying
I should die, thou heartless one!
Harvest time, and time is hurrying;
Scores of things must now be done!
‘Though it often to the maiden comes
That she suffers and must sigh,
Still the hay-cart heavy laden comes,
Still the sickle burns the rye.
‘She must thresh with all her might alas!—

¹ The original metre. The literal translation is as follows: Oi! full, full, the little basket; There is calicoes and brocades. Have pity, my little chilblain. On the young fellow’s shoulder.

² Nikolai Alekseyevitch Nekrásof (1821–1878), editor of several periodicals, known as the “people’s poet” (*narod nui poet*).

Thresh the grain the morning through;
Spread the flax at gloomy night, alas!
On the meadows wet with dew.³

These verses are not the principal ones in that episode: they are only a preface to the fact how this lovely Katya is dreaming about her life with Vanja; but my thoughts are greatly drawn to them.”

“Yes, that is a perfect picture,—one of the very best in the poem. But they do not hold the best place in it, so they must have corresponded very closely to the thoughts which occupied you. What are these thoughts?”

“They are these, Sasha. You and I have often said that the organization of woman is almost higher than that of man, and that therefore woman may force man to take second rank in intellectual life, when the rough force which predominates at the present time shall pass. We both have come to this conclusion by observation of life; you meet more women in life than men who are intellectual by nature. So it seems to us both. You confirmed this by various facts drawn from anatomy and physiology.”

“What offensive things you are speaking about man, and you say a great deal more than I do about it, Viérotchka. It is insulting to me! It is good that the time which you predict is very far off, else I should entirely change my opinion, so as not to go into the second rank. However, Viérotchka, this is only a probability; science has not collected enough data to settle this question positively.”

“Of course, my dear. We said that until this time the facts of history point to a different conclusion, though it is very probable, as we observe private life and the arrangement of the organism, woman has until lately played such a trifling part in intellectual life, because the predominating force deprived her of the means of culture and the motives for reaching development. This explanation is sufficient. But here is another similar case. If woman is measured by her physical strength, her organism is much weaker; but her organism is stronger. Isn’t that so?”

“This is much less dubious than the question as to the natural endowment of intellectual strength. Yes, a woman’s organism offers a much stronger resistance to material forces of destruction,—climate, weather, and unhealthy food. Medicine and physiology have occupied themselves very little with the detailed investigation of this; but statistics have given an indisputable general answer that the average length of woman’s life is more than man’s. From this it can be seen that woman’s organism is stronger.”

“So much the more strikingly can it be seen that the style of woman’s life is generally far less healthful than man’s!”

“There is another important consideration by which the clearness of the result is made more manifest, and that is offered by physiology. Full maturity is reached rather sooner by woman than by man. Let us suppose that a woman’s growth ends at twenty and a man’s at twenty-five,—approximately in our climate and in our race. Let us suppose also, approximately, that the same proportion of women reach the age of seventy as of men who reach the age of sixty-five. If we consider the difference in the periods of growth, the preponderance of strength in woman’s

³ Literally: I should be ruined, unconsoling one, had I time to worry. Yes, now ‘tis harvest, pressing; it is necessary to finish ten things, however often it happens beyond the young woman’s endurance. Under the scythe the grass falls: under the reaping-hook the rye burns. With all her strength and might she has threshed in the morning. The flax, she spreads the flax, till the dark little night, over the dewy meadows.

organism will appear much more strikingly even than statistics grant, which, do not take into consideration the difference in the periods of maturity. Seventy years means three and a half times twenty years. Sixty-five should be divided by twenty-five: how much will it be? Yes, it will go two and a half times, with a remainder—that is, two and three-fifths. Therefore a woman lives three and a half periods of her full development as easily as a man lives only two and a half periods of his. And by this proportion is measured the strength of her organism.”

“Indeed, there is a greater difference than I had believed.”

“Yes, but I mentioned this only for example; I took round numbers, and depended on my memory. However, the conclusion is exactly as I said. Statistics show that woman’s organism is stronger. You got your conclusions only from the tables of life averages. But if the physiological facts are added to the statistical, the difference will be still greater.”

“That is so, Sasha; just consider what I was thinking, and now it comes over me more strongly still. I was thinking, if a woman’s organism resists more powerfully the destructive impressions of matter, then it is altogether likely that woman should have greater strength in bearing mental shocks. But in reality we see that she is different.”

“Yes, this is likely. Of course, so far this is only a supposition; this has not been studied; no special facts have been gathered. But really, your conclusion results so closely from the fact which is already undisputed that it is hard to distrust it. The strength of the organism is too closely connected with the strength of the nerves. In all likelihood woman’s nerves are more elastic, have a stronger structure; and if that is so, then they must more easily and firmly endure shocks and painful feelings. But in reality we see many examples of the contrary. A woman very often suffers torments over what a man bears easily. The analysis of the cause by which we see in real life such phenomena, contradicting what we ought to expect from the structure itself of her organism, has not yet been made with sufficient accuracy. But one of these causes is evident; it pervades all historical phenomena, and all the sides of our actual existence. This is a strength of prejudice, a bad habit, a false expectation, a false fear. If a man thinks, ‘I can’t,’ then he really can’t. It is constantly drummed into women’s ears, ‘You are weak,’ and so they feel that they are weak, and they really become weak. We have seen examples where people, absolutely healthy, have drooped till they really died, from the one idea that they were bound to grow weak and die. But there are examples which affect whole masses, nations, humanity in general. One of the most remarkable of these is the history of war. In the Middle Ages, the infantry imagined that it could not stand against cavalry—and really it could not. Whole armies of infantry were driven about, like flocks of sheep, by a few hundred men on horseback. Till that time, when the continent first beheld the English infantry, consisting of proud, independent gentry, without fear, who were not accustomed to yield to any one without a fight, such an idea was not known. As soon as these people, who had no tradition that it was necessary to yield to cavalry, entered France, the cavalry, which even excelled them in numbers, was beaten by them at every engagement. You remember the remarkable victories gained by the small army of English infantry over the French cavalry at Cressy, at Poitiers, and at Agincourt. The very same history was repeated when the Swedish infantry took it into their heads that they had no reason to look upon themselves as weaker than the feudal cavalry. The Austrian, and afterwards the Burgundian, cavalry, superior in numbers, began to suffer defeats at every engagement; then all the other cavalry tried to battle with them, and all of them were defeated. Then all said, ‘Yes, the infantry seems to be stronger than cavalry.’ Of course it was stronger. But whole centuries have passed considering that the infantry was weak compared with cavalry, simply because they looked upon themselves as weak.”

“Yes, Sasha, this is true. We are weak because we regard ourselves as weak; but it seems to me that there is still another cause. I want to speak about myself and you. Tell me, my dear, did I change much in those two weeks that you did not see me? You were too much worried then. It may have seemed to you more than it really was, or, in fact, the change was great. How does it seem to you now?”

“Yes, you really were very thin and pale then.”

“Now, you see, my dear, I have learned that this is the very thing that touches my pride. You see, you love me very dearly. Why didn’t the struggle show itself in you in such evident signs as it did in me? For nobody saw you become pale or thin in those months when you were separated from me. How did you bear it so easily?”

“This is why the verses interested you so much, where Katya overcomes her melancholy by work. You want to know whether I have experienced the truth of this remark, in regard to myself. Yes: it is absolutely true. I kept up the struggle easily, because I had no time to spend over it. Always, when I paid attention to it, I suffered keenly; but every-day necessities compelled me, for the large part of the time, to forget about it. I had to attend to my patients; to get ready for my lectures. At that time, not by my own will either, I freed myself from my thoughts. Those days when I had a good many leisure hours I felt that my strength was failing me. It seems to me that if I had remained a week a prey to my thoughts, I should have lost my mind.”

“It is so, my dear; and I at last came to understand that in this lay the whole secret of the difference between me and you. You must have such activity that you can postpone it, that you cannot refuse it; then a person is incomparably firmer.”

“But you had a great deal of activity then, and the same thing is true now.”

“*Akh*, Sasha, are they things of such imperative importance? I devote myself to them as much as I please, and when I please. Whenever it seems good to me, I can devote less time to them, or put them off entirely. At a time when my mind is disturbed, it takes a special effort of the will, and only in that way can I compel myself to attend to them. There is no support in the necessity of them. For example, I busy myself with my household duties,⁴ and I spend a great deal of time in them; but nine-tenths of this time I spend in this way only because I want to. With a good servant, shouldn’t I spend just as much time, even though there was less necessity to work? And who feels the necessity of wasting double time for the sake of the slight improvement over what he, with a less expenditure of time which might be my own? The only necessity upon me is my own will. When the mind is at ease, you give yourself up to these things; but when your mind is disturbed, you neglect them, because you can manage without them. You are apt to give up the less important for more important things. As soon as your feelings get greatly stirred up, they drive away the thoughts about other things. I give lessons, which are things of somewhat more importance; I cannot give them up at the dictate of my will. But this is not the point. I give them closer attention at one time than at another; if during the lesson my mind wanders somewhat, the lesson may go only a little worse than before, because teaching is very easy, and does not absorb the mind. And, after all, do I really make my living by my lessons? does my position depend on them? do they afford me the principal means for living as I do? No; these means were afforded me by Dmitri’s work, now by yours. Giving lessons flatters my feeling of independence; and really they are not unprofitable. Still, there is no vital necessity upon me for keeping them up. At that time I tried to drive away my tormenting thoughts by giving myself

⁴ *Khozyáistvo*.

up to the shop more than usual; but again I did it more from the impulse of my will. You see, I understood that my presence at the shop was needed only for an hour or an hour and a half; that if I stayed there longer, I adopt an artificial occupation, that may be useful, but is not indispensable for the business. And then, again, this very thing, can it serve as a support for such ordinary mortals as we? Rakhmétof belongs to a different species. They take hold of common affairs in such a way that the necessity of it fills their existence; for them it even forms a substitute for personal existence. But for us, Sasha, this is unattainable. We are not eagles, like him; we can live only in our personal lives. Is the shop my personal life? This affair is not my affair, but others'. I occupy myself with it, not for my own sake, but for theirs. Let us admit that it is for my own satisfaction; but can those such as we—not eagles—bother themselves about others when they are themselves in trouble? Can they give themselves up to their convictions when they are tormented by their feelings? No; a personal interest, an unavoidable necessity on which your life depends, is required; a necessity which for my own self, for my style of life, my means of life, for my whole situation in life, for my entire fate, would be more powerful than all my drawings towards passion. Only such a stimulus can serve as a support in battle with passion; only such a thing cannot be conquered by passion, but by itself overwhelms passions; only such a thing gives strength and rest. I want such a stimulus."

"You are right, my dear, you are right," said Kirsánof, kissing his wife, whose eyes were flashing with enthusiasm. "You are right; and I never thought of it before, though it is so evident; I had not noticed it. Yes, Viérotchka, no one else can think for another. Whoever wants to enjoy life must think for himself, look out for himself; no one else is going to do it for him. But what necessity do you feel upon you now? Are you going to fall in love with some one else, Viérotchka?"

Viéra Pavlovna laughed heartily, and for some time neither of them could say a word from laughing.

"Yes, now we both can appreciate that," she said finally. "Now I can be perfectly sure, and so can you, that nothing of the sort can possibly happen. But seriously, do you know how it seems to me, my dear? If my love for Dmitri was not the love of a fully developed woman, neither did he love me in the sense of the word as we understand it. His feeling for me was a combination of a very warm attachment to me as a friend, with occasional outbursts of passion towards me as a woman. He felt a personal friendship for me, for me particularly; but these outbursts were only the attraction towards woman; they had no personal relation to me. No, that was not love. Was he much concerned with thoughts about me? No; they did not interest him. No, on his side, as well as on mine, there was no real love."

"You are unjust to him, Viérotchka."

"No, Sasha; this is so. In talk between you and me there is no use in flattering him. Both of us know how highly we prize him. We also know that, no matter how he protested that it was easy for him, in reality it was not easy. You may also declare that it was an easy matter to struggle with your passion. All this is well, and it is not put on; but such keen assurances must not be taken in the literal sense of the word."

VIII.

“Sasha, let us finish talking about what we left yesterday. It is necessary; for I have made up my mind to go with you: and you must know why,” said Viéra Pavlovna, the next morning.

“With me? You are going with me?”

“Certainly. You asked me, Sasha, why I wanted to do something on which my life could depend, in real earnest, which I could hold as dear as you hold your profession; which would be just as imperative upon me, which would demand all my attention, just as yours does you! My dear, I must have such a thing, for I am proud. It has been a burden and a shame upon me for a long time, when I remembered that my struggle with my feeling reflected itself upon me so plainly, that it was so unendurable for me. You know that I do not mean the difficulty of it—for your struggle was just as hard for you; that depends on the strength of the feeling, and I must not be sorry now that it was very hard, for that would be equivalent to saying that I was sorry that the feeling was strong. No! but why didn't I have as firm a support against its strength as you had? I want to have such a support. But this only brought me to think; but the real necessity is, of course, at the present time; and it is this: I want to be your equal in all things; that is the main thing. I have found something. After we parted yesterday, I thought for a long time about it; I thought about it all yesterday morning, while you were away; and yesterday I wanted to consult you like a good fellow, but you disappointed my hope by your resistance. Now it is too late for your advice; I have already made up my mind. Yes, Sasha, you will have a great deal of trouble on account of me. My dear, how happy I shall be if I find I have the ability for it.”

Yes; now Viéra Pavlovna has found a sphere of activity in which she could not have succeeded before. Her Aleksandr's hand was always in hers, and so it was easy for her to go ahead. Lopukhóf placed no restriction upon her, nor did she upon him; and that was all. No, of course there was more; far more. She was sure, always sure, that in whatever case necessity compelled her to take his hand, his hand and his life were at her service. And just as his life was always at her service, so he would not grudge stretching out his hand to help her; that is, in important circumstances; in critical moments his hand was as ready and as reliable as Kirsánof's, and he proved it very satisfactorily by his marriage, when he sacrificed for her sake, all his expectations for a scientific career, which at that time was so attractive to him; and he was not afraid even to run the risk of starvation. Yes; when there was an important matter, his hand was ready. But, as a general thing, his hand held aloof from her. Viéra Pavlovna was starting her sewing union; if his aid had been needed for anything, he would have given it ungrudgingly. But why was it that he did almost nothing at all? He did not interfere; he approved; he was glad, and that was all. She lived her life; he lived his. But now it is different. Kirsánof did not even wait to be asked to take part in anything that she was doing. He was as much interested as she was in all her every-day life, just as she was in his. It was quite a different relation from that with her first husband, and so she felt drawn to new activity, and therefore thoughts arose in her, and began to assume practical shape, which before were known to her only theoretically, and did not, in reality, touch her inner life; what it is impossible to do, you do not think of seriously.

Here follow the thoughts which now stirred in Viéra Pavlovna's mind, and served as motives to activity.

IX.

“Almost all the channels of civilized life are closed to us by law.”¹ A good many are closed to us practically—almost all paths of public activity—even those which are not closed to us by legal hindrances. Out of all the spheres of life we are compelled to content ourselves with only one—the sphere of domestic life—to be members of a family; and that is all. Besides this, what occupations are open for us? Scarcely more than to become governesses; and besides, perhaps to give private lessons which men do not care to deprive us of. There is scarcely room enough for us in this narrow path; we interfere with each other, because too many of us crowd into it; it scarcely affords us any independence, because there are too many of us who offer our services; not one is needed, for the very reason that we are too many. Who has any regard for a governess? If you merely hint that you want a governess, they flock to you by the tens and hundreds, each trying to get the place away from the others.

“No; as long as women do not strive to branch out in different ways, women cannot expect to have any independence in life. Of course it is hard to break out a new path. But my position in this respect is very advantageous, and I should be ashamed if I did not avail myself of it. We are not ready for serious occupations. I do not know how far a leader may be needed to prepare for this change. But I know that to whatever degree I may need his help every day, he is here at my side. And this will be no burden to him; it will be as pleasant to him as to me.

“Custom has shut us out of these paths of independent activity which are not closed to us by law. But out of all these paths from which we are shut by custom, I can select the one that I want, if I can only make up my mind to meet the first resistance of custom. One of them is far more convenient to me than the others. My husband is a doctor. He devotes all his leisure time to me. With such a husband, it is an easy matter for me to try to be a doctor.

“It would be a very striking thing if there should spring up at last a class of women doctors. They would be very useful for all women. It is much easier for a woman to talk with a woman than with a man. How much suffering, death, and misfortune would be removed. I must try it.”²

¹ Literally, formally.

² This argument, which is comparatively familiar to the American public, though even now there is an absurd prejudice in some quarters against women doctors, was absolutely novel in Russia at the time that this book was written. It gave an immense stimulus to the study of medicine by women. As is well known, all the medical schools of Europe, especially Switzerland, draw scores of Russian women to their halls. Viéra Pavlovna was the pioneer.

X.

Viéra Pavlovna finished her conversation with her husband by putting on her bonnet, and going with him to the hospital to put her nerves to the test, to find if she could bear the sight of blood, or be able to study anatomy. With Kirsánof's position in the hospital, of course there could be no obstacle to her experiment.

I, without the least sense of shame, have seriously compromised Viéra Pavlovna on the side of sentiment. For example, I have not concealed the fact that she dined every day, and for the most part with good appetite, and, moreover, twice a day drank tea. But I have reached such an occurrence that, in spite of all the shameless degradation of my conceptions, I am overtaken by fear; and I wonder, would it not be better to hide this thing? What will be thought of a woman who gave herself up to medicine? What coarse nerves she must have! What an unfeeling heart! She is not a woman, but a butcher. But, considering that I do not represent the characters of my story as ideals of perfection, I become calmer. Let folks judge as they please about the heartlessness of Viéra Pavlovna's nature. What business is it of mine? If she is coarse, let her be coarse.

And so I say in cold blood that she found a great difference between idle observation of things and active work in them for her own benefit and the benefit of others.

I remember that when I was a boy, twelve years old, I who had never seen fire was frightened by being wakened by the loud noise of a fire alarm. The whole sky became red and fiery; over all the city, which was a large provincial town, flew great burning cinders. Over all the city there was a great tumult, running to and fro, shrieks. I breathed as though I had been in a fever. Fortunately I succeeded in getting to the fire, availing myself of the chance that all the domestics were in a great state of excitement. The fire was along the shore; that is, simply the bank, because what kind of a shore could there be? The bank was filled with wood and with wooden posts. Such boys as I were taking hold and carrying off things from the burning houses. I joined them. What became of my fear? I worked very energetically till we were told, "That'll do; the danger is over"; and from that time I understood that if you have any fear of a great fire, you must run to it and work, and you will not fear at all.

Whoever works has no time to fear, or to feel disgust or squeamishness. And so Viéra Pavlovna gave herself up to medicine; and she was one of the first women whom I knew to enter this new field of activity. After this she really began to feel herself a different person. Her thought was, "In a few years I shall actually stand on my feet." This is a great thought. There can be no full happiness without full independence. Poor women, how few among you have this happiness!

XI.

And thus a year passes; and another year will pass, and still another since her marriage to Kirsánof; and thus all of Viéra Pavlovna's days will pass as they pass now, a year after the wedding, as they have passed since the wedding; and a good many years will pass; and they will all pass in this way unless something extraordinary happens. Who knows what the future will bring forth? But till the time that I am writing these lines nothing extraordinary has happened; and Viéra Pavlovna's days are passing just as they passed a year or two years after her marriage to Kersáuof.

After this terrible compromising circumstance that Viéra Pavlovna made up her mind to study medicine, and found herself capable of doing so, I can speak without fear of everything else; all that remains cannot injure her so much in the estimation of the public. And I must say that now, on Syergievskáia Street as before on Vasilyevsky Island, Viéra Pavlovna's meals were constituted as follows: tea in the morning, dinner, and tea in the evening. Yes; she has preserved the unpoetical peculiarities of dining every day, and taking tea twice a day, and finds it agreeable; and, generally speaking, she preserves all her unpoetical and ungraceful and far from high-toned peculiarities.

And many other details remain in this new time of contentment just as they were in the former time of contentment; they kept the rule for the division of the rooms into neutral and private; the rule also remained in force that they should not enter each other's private rooms without permission; and another, that a question should not be repeated if the first time it was met by the words, "Do not ask me." It was agreed between them, that such an answer best allows no thinking about the question propounded, and that thus it is more speedily forgotten; this agreement was made because they were sure that if it deserved an answer, there would be need of repeating; everything would be explained without the need of asking, and what one keeps silent is surely nothing interesting. All this was left during this new peaceful time, as it used to be in the old peaceful time, only at this peaceful time everything has changed to a certain degree, or rather it has not changed, but yet it is not as it used to be in the former time; and their life is different.

For example, there is a strict distinction made between the neutral and the private rooms, but the permission for admittance into the private rooms has been decided for good and all once at a certain hour in the day. This was arranged because two out of three of their meals were taken each day in the private rooms. A custom has been made of drinking morning tea in her room, and evening tea in his room. The evening tea is conducted without any ceremony; the old servant, Stepan, brings into Aleksandr's room the *samovar* and the tea service, and that is all. But at morning tea they arrange it differently. Stepan puts the *samovar* and the tea service on the table in that neutral room, which is nearest Viéra Pavlovna's room, and tells Aleksandr Matvéitch that the *samovar* is ready; that is, he tells Aleksandr Matvéitch in his room. But supposing he does not find him? Then Stepan takes no trouble about finding him; they must know for themselves that it is tea-time. And, in accordance with this custom they made a rule, that in the morning Viéra Pavlovna expects her husband without asking permission.

After she wakes up she lies comfortably in her warm little bed; she is too lazy to rise. She thinks and she does not think, and she half dreams and she does not dream at all; to think means for her to plan something about the day or the days to come, something about the household,¹ about the shop, about her acquaintances, about her plans for spending the day; this, of course, is not dreaming; but besides all this, there are two other objects, and three years after their marriage still a third appears, which she holds in her arms; that is Mitya; the name Mitya is of course in honor of their friend Dmitri; but the two other objects—one was a sweet thought about her occupation, which is going to give her full independence of life, and the second thought is Sasha! This thought it is impossible to call a special thought, because it forms the basis of all that she thinks, because he takes part in all her life, and this thought which is not a special thought but a constant thought remains alone in her heart. Now you yourselves see that often the moments pass without Viéra Pavlovna having time to take a bath. (This was very conveniently arranged; it cost them a great deal of trouble; it was necessary to introduce a faucet into her room, with water from the kitchen boiler, and to take a great deal of wood for this luxury; but, however, they could afford it, and so they allowed it.) Yes, very often Viéra Pavlovna has time to take a bath and to lie down again comfortably until Sasha should come and take upon himself the duty of attending to the morning tea.

Yes, it could not be otherwise; Sasha is perfectly right when he declared that this must be arranged so because to drink morning tea, that is, tea mostly made of cream warmed with a very small dose of very strong tea, and to drink it in her bed, is wonderfully agreeable. Sasha goes for the tea service: yes, this happens oftener than his coming in directly with the tea service, and he makes himself busy, and she still takes her ease, and after she drinks the tea she still reclines, not in her little bed, but on her little sofa. She reclines till ten or eleven o'clock, till Sasha has to leave for the hospital or the clinic or to his medical lecture, and with his last cup Sasha takes a cigar, and either one of them reminds the other, "Now let us go to work"; or, "That's enough; now let us go to work." What work? Whatever happens—lessons or reviews, in Viéra Pavlovna's course of study. Sasha is her instructor in the study of medicine, but his aid is still more essential for the preparation of those subjects in the gymnasium course in which it was necessary for her to pass the examination, the study of which would be too tedious by herself; the most terrible thing of all was mathematics; yes, the Latin was if anything more tedious; but it can't be helped, she must endure the tediousness of it; not very long, however. In the examination which serves in place of the gymnasium certificate² there is very little required in the medical school; for instance, I cannot guarantee that Viéra Pavlovna will ever reach such a perfection in the Latin language as to translate two lines of Cornelius Nepos, but she is already able to explain such phrases as she finds in medical books, because this knowledge is indispensable, though it is not very deep. No—but we have said enough about this. I see already that I am irreconcilably compromising Viéra Pavlovna; probably, the sapi—.

¹ *Khozyáistvo*.

² *Gémnazitcheski attestat*.

XII. A DIGRESSION CONCERNING BLUE STOCKINGS.

“A blue stocking! an extreme case of blue stocking! I can’t endure a blue stocking. A blue stocking is dull and tedious!” cries the sapient reader, losing his temper, and not without reason.

After all, what warm friends the sapient reader and I have become! He insulted me once; twice I took him by the throat and put him out, and yet we cannot help exchanging our inmost thoughts; it comes from a secret drawing of heart to heart. What can you do about it?

“O sapient reader!” I say to him, “you are right; the blue stocking is really dull and tedious, and it is beyond endurance to put up with him. You have fathomed it! But you have not guessed who the blue stocking is! Now you shall soon see as plain as in a mirror. The blue stocking, with an unreasonable affectation, talks with great self-satisfaction about literary and scientific matters of which he does not know beans, and speaks not because he is interested, but because he wants to show off wits (which nature never endowed him with), lofty aspirations (of which he has as much as the chair on which he is sitting), and education (of which he has as much as a parrot). Do you see whose rough physiognomy or chastened figure is in the mirror? ‘Tis your own, my friend! Yes, no matter how long a beard you may grow, or how closely shaven you may be, still you are, undoubtedly, indisputably, the original blue stocking, and that was the reason I twice took you by the throat and put you out—simply for the reason that I cannot bear blue stockings, who among our brethren, the men, are ten times as numerous as among women.

“And those with a live purpose who occupy themselves with anything, no matter what, no matter how they may be dressed, whether they wear a woman’s dress or a man’s, these are simply people who attend to their own affairs, and that’s all there is of it.”

XIII.

The talk about Blue Stockings, so useful for the sapient reader, who was shown to be one, took me away from my description of Viéra Pavlovna's manner of spending her days. Now that when—when—whenever you please; from the time that she moved from Syergievskaiia Street till this moment. But however, what is the use of spinning out this description? To give a general idea, that change which began to take place in the way Viéra Pavlovna spent her evenings, after her renewal of Kirsánof's acquaintance while she still lived with Vasilyevsky Ostrof, is entirely developed now that the Kirsánofs, from the centre of a rather extensive number of young families, living just as harmoniously and happily as they themselves do, and agreeing with them also in their sentiments, and that music and singing, the opera and poetry, and all sorts of amusements and dances, fill all the free evenings of this circle of families; because every evening there is some gathering at one house or another, or some other arrangement for spending the evening for people of various tastes. As a general thing, at these gatherings, or whenever any other way of spending the time is devised, at least half the circle is present, and the Kirsánofs, as well as their friends, spend half their evenings in this social way. But there is no need of going into details here; it is understood, of course. But there is one thing about which, unfortunately, it is necessary to be very explicit for the sake of a very large number who would not otherwise understand. All of us, even if we have not ourselves experienced such a thing, but have only read about it, know how different for a boy or girl is an evening which is simply a party and an evening on which his dear or her dear comes to see her or him; between an opera which we merely see and an opera which we see sitting next him or her with whom we are in love. There is a very great difference. This is well known; but what is experienced by very few is that the charm which love gives to everything is not necessarily, as is common according to the present state of things, a transitory phenomenon in a person's life; that this bright light of life does not necessarily illumine alone the epoch of searching and attaining, or, let us name the epoch thus: the epoch of attention, of wooing. No, this epoch, according to the present state of things, is only the morning star, gentle, beautiful, but the harbinger of a day which has incomparably more light and warmth than its harbinger; a light and warmth, and particularly a warmth, which grow more and more even beyond the noon, and still keeps growing. It used to be different. After the loving pair were united, quickly the poetry of love vanished. Now, among those whom we call the people of the present, it is quite different. They, after being united by love, become brightened and warmed more and more by the poetry of it the longer they live together, until late evening, when the care of growing children may partially divert their thoughts from themselves. Then care is more sweet than personal enjoyment; it becomes more absorbing, but till that time it keeps on growing. What people used to know as honeymoons, the people of the present generation keep for long years.

Why is this so? This is a secret; I may tell you though. It is a grand secret; it is good to avail oneself of it, and it does not take great skill to do so. All that is required is a pure heart and an honest soul, and the present idea of the rights of a human being with regard to the freedom of

the one with whom you live. That is all. There is no further secret about it. Look upon your wife as you looked upon your bride; know that she has the right to tell you any moment, "I am dissatisfied with you; leave me." Look upon her so, and nine years after your marriage she will inspire in you the same poetical feeling as she did when she was a bride—no, more poetical, more ideal, in the proper sense of the word. Acknowledge her liberty as openly and formally and without any circumlocutions, just as you acknowledge the freedom of your friends, to feel or not to feel friendship towards you, and then in ten years, in twenty years, after your wedding, you will be as much in love with her as when you were a bridegroom. So live husbands and wives of the new dispensation. It is much to be desired. And for that very reason, that they are honest towards each other, they love each other ten years after marriage more warmly and poetically than on the wedding-day, and just for the very reason that during these ten years neither he nor she gave each other a dissembling kiss or said one hypocritical word. "A lie has never passed his lips," was said about somebody in a certain book; "There is no hypocrisy in his heart" was said about somebody, maybe in the very same book. They read the book and think, "What a wonderful moral height is ascribed to him!" When they wrote the book they thought, "Here we are describing a man who will fill every one with surprise." They know not who wrote the book, do not realize who is going to read it; but the people of the new dispensation do not receive among the number of their acquaintances anybody who does not possess such a soul, and they have no lack of such a soul, and they have no lack of such acquaintance, and they look upon their acquaintances as nothing more than people of the new dispensation, good, but ordinary people.

One thing calls for pity: at the present time, to every one man of the new dispensation there are a dozen or more antediluvians. This, however, is natural. In an antediluvian world you expect an antediluvian population.

XIV.

“And so here we have been living together three years” (before, it used to be said *a year, two years*, and later it will be said four years, and so on), “and yet we are still like lovers, who see each other rarely and secretly. Where did people get the idea that love grows weak, when there is nothing to hinder people from belonging wholly to each other? These people did not know true love. They felt only an erotic selfishness, or an erotic fancy. Real love begins only when people begin to live together.”

“Do you notice that in me?”

“I notice in you something that is much more interesting. In three years you will forget that you have studied medicine, and in three years you will forget to read, and from all your senses, which are needful for intellectual life, you will use only one,—that of sight; and sight, too, will forget to see anything else but me.”

Such conversations do not last long, and are not frequent; but still, occasionally, they have such conversations.

“Yes, it grows stronger every year.”

“In the nature of man does attachment grow weaker? does it fail to be developed by time? When does friendship become stronger and firmer? in a week, or a year, or twenty years after it began? It is only necessary that people should choose the right friends; that they should be suited to each other.”

These conversations take place, but they are not frequent. They are brief, and not frequent. In fact, what reason have they to talk about this subject very often?

But this kind come oftener and last longer:—

“Sasha, how greatly your love supports me! Through it I am becoming independent; I am getting rid of all dependence upon anybody, even upon you. But what has my love brought to you?”

“For me? not less than for you! It is a constant, powerful, healthy stimulus of the nerves; it essentially develops the nervous system!” (“Coarse materialism!” declare the sapient reader and I together.) “And therefore the intellectual and moral strength grow in me from my love.”

“Yes, Sasha, I hear from everybody—I myself am a bad witness in the case; my eyes are blinded—but everybody sees the same thing; your eyes are growing brighter, your views become clearer and keener.”

“Viérotchka, why should I praise or not praise myself before you? We are one. But this must really be reflected in the eyes. My mind has become far stronger; when I make conclusions from observations, or a general examination of the facts, I finish now in an hour what used to take me several hours. And I can grasp with my mind many more facts than before, and the conclusions drawn from them are broader and fuller. Viérotchka, if I had the slightest germ of genius with this feeling, I should become a great genius. If I had been endowed by nature with the power of creating something new in science, with this feeling I should have the power of reorganizing science. But I was born merely to be a rough laborer, a swarthy little toiler, who works over little

special questions. Such I was before I knew you; now you know I am different. More is expected of me; it is supposed that I am going to reorganize the most important branch of science, the whole teaching about the functions of the nervous system; and I feel that I am going to fulfil this expectation. At the age of twenty-four a man's views are wider and bolder and more original, than when he reaches the age of twenty-nine, and the same is true at the age of thirty and thirty-two, and so on; but then it was not true of me as it is now, and I feel that I am still progressing, while without you I should long ago have ceased to grow. Yes, and I did cease to grow the last two or three years before we began to live together. You brought back to me the freshness of my early youth, the power of going vastly further than where I should have stopped, if it had not been for you. And the energy of work, Viérotchka, does that signify little! An immense stimulus of strength is brought into labor when your whole life is so inclined. You know how the energy of intellectual labor is simulated by a glass of coffee; what they afford others for an hour after, which follows a reaction proportionate to these outward and transitory stimuli, this I find constantly; my nerves are constantly attuned to finer, more vital energies." ("Again coarse materialism!" we remark, etc.)

These conversations are more frequent and longer.

"He who has not experienced how love stimulates all the powers of a man knows not what real love is."

"Love consists in elevating others, and in being elevated."

"He who has no stimulus to activity without it finds such stimulus in love; and if a man has a stimulus, love gives him strength to use it to advantage."

"Only he loves who helps a lovely woman to rise to independence."

"Only he loves whose mind grows brighter and hands grow stronger from love."

And the following conversations are very frequent:—

"My dear, I am reading Boccaccio now" ("What immorality!" we remark with the sapient reader—"a woman reading Boccaccio; only he and I have a right to read it." But I, apart from him, also make this remark, "A woman will hear more veiled nastiness from the sapient reader in five minutes than she will find in all Boccaccio, and she will not hear from him a single fresh, bright, pure thought, while Boccaccio has hosts of them!"); "you are right, my dear; he has great talent. Some of his stories I think can be put in the same rank with the best of Shakespeare's dramas, from their depth and keenness of psychological analysis."

"But how do you like the comical stories, in which he is so unceremonious?"

"Some of them are amusing, but for the most part they are dull, like any other coarse farce."

"But that may be forgiven him, for he lived five hundred years before us; what seems to us too vile, too cheap, was not then considered out of the way."

"Just as all our habits and all our style will seem dirty to those who will live much less than five hundred years after us—but this is not interesting. I was speaking about those splendid stories of his in which he seriously pictures a passionate, lofty love. In those more than in others his talent lies; but this is what I wanted to say, Sasha: he draws very admirable and powerful pictures of love, but I should judge that he did not understand that tenderness of love which we see nowadays. Love was not felt at that time so keenly, though they say that was the period when love was most fully enjoyed. No, how could it be? They did not enjoy it half so deeply as we do. Their feelings were too superficial; their raptures were too feeble and too transitory."

"The strength of sensation is proportionate to the depth of the organism from which it takes its rise. If it is stirred exclusively by an outward object, by an outward motive, then it is transitory,

and develops only one special side of its life. He who drinks only because he is given a glass understands only very little the taste of wine; it affords him very little pleasure. Enjoyment is vastly stronger when its root is in the imagination; but this is still very weak in comparison to when the root of the relations which are connected with the enjoyment finds its soil in the very depth of the moral life.”

“I am very glad that I gave up before it was too late, that unprofitable way of living. It is true; it is important for the circulation of the blood not to be checked by any hindrances. But why after all should we care if the complexion of the skin does become more tender? It must be so. And how delighted we are at trifles! Trifles, but how you feel them in your feet! The stocking must be put on smooth, and should not be too light; the seam gets in the proper place, and the hurt vanishes.

“It does not pass so quick! I wore corsets only three years; I gave them up before we were married. But it is a fact they still confine the waist too much even without corsets. Isn't it likely that this deformity will also pass like the pain in the foot? It is likely: even now it is going out of fashion somewhat; it will pass. How glad I am! What a horrible cut of dresses. It is full time that the Russian women had better sense. The dress ought to be wide from the very shoulders, just as the Greeks used to be dressed! How the cut of our dresses ruins our figures! But this line is beginning to be normal in me, and how glad I am!”

“How lovely you are, Viérotchka!”

“How happy I am, Sasha!”

And sweet discourses.
Like rivers of bliss
Spreading and flowing;
His smile and his kiss!¹

¹ Literally: And sweet talk Like streams of words His smile and kiss.

XV. VIÉRA PAVLOVNA'S FOURTH DREAM.

And Viéra Pavlovna dreams a dream as though:—

A voice familiar to her—oh, how familiar to her!—from afar, then nearer, nearer.

*Wie herrlich leuchtet
Mir die Natur
Wie glänzet die Sonne
Wie lacht die Flur.*

And Viéra Pavlovna sees that it is so, absolutely so... The cornfield shines with golden hues. The meadow is decked with flowers; hundreds, thousands of blossoms are waving on the copse encircling the meadow, and the forest which rises behind the copse grows green, and whispers and gleams with flowers; fragrance is wafted from the cornfield, from the meadow, from the copse, from the flowers that fill the forest. Little birds are flying from twig to twig, and thousands of voices come forth from the branches with the fragrance; and beyond the cornfield, the meadow, the copse, the forest, are other cornfields shining in gold, other meadows decked with flowers, other copses thick with blossoms, stretching away to the distant mountains covered with forests, gleaming in the sun, and on their summits, here and there, bright, silvery, golden, purple, translucent clouds, changing and casting on the horizon their brilliant blue shadows; the sun mounts on high; it rejoices, and nature rejoices; it pours forth light and warmth, fragrance and song, love and tenderness, into the heart; a song of joy and tenderness poureth forth; of love and goodness from the heart: "Oh, earth! oh, sun! oh, happiness! oh, joy! oh, love! oh, love so golden-beautiful, like morning clouds on yonder heights!"

*"O Erd'! O Sonne!
O Glück! O Lust!
O Lieb! O Liebe,
So golden Schön
Wie Morgenwolken
Auf jenen Höhn!"*

"Now dost thou know me? Dost thou know that I am beautiful? But thou dost not know yet; none of you yet know me in all my beauty. Look at the past, the present, and the future! Listen and look:—

*Wohl perlet in Glase der purpurne Wein
Wohl glänzen die Augen der Gäste."*

At the foot of the mountain, at the edge of the forest, amid the blooming copse, surrounded by lofty trees, a palace is built.

“Let us go there.”

They go, they fly.

A magnificent festival. The wine is foaming in the glasses; the eyes of the guests gleam bright. A noise and a whispering undertone, laughter, and a secret, silent pressing of hands, and now and then a stealthy, inaudible kiss.—“A song! a song! without song joy is not complete!” And the poet rises. His face and mind are lighted by inspiration; nature whispers to her secrets; history reveals her significance; and the life of thousands’ of years passes by in his song like a series of pictures.

1.

The poet’s words resound, and a picture appears.

The tents of nomads. Around the tents are grazing sheep, horses, camels. Afar lies the forest, olives, and fig-trees. Still further, further, at the edge of the horizon, towards the north-west, is a double chain of lofty mountains. The summits of the mountains are covered with snow; their slopes are covered with cedars. But the shepherds are straighter than the cedars; their wives are straighter than the palm-trees, and their days are free from care in this soft, idle existence. They have one concern,—love; all their lives pass, day by day, in caresses and songs of love.

“No,” says the shining one; “this is not about me; I did not exist then. Yonder woman was a slave. Where there is no equality I am not found. That tsaritsa was Astarte. Lo, there she is!”

A beautiful woman. On her hands and feet are heavy golden bracelets; a heavy necklace of pearls and corals with golden links upon her neck. Her hair is moistened with myrrh. Her face betrays sensuality and servility. Her eyes are full of voluptuousness and insipidity.

“Be obedient to thy lord; sweeten his idleness during the intervals of his forays; thou must love him because he bought thee; and if thou dost not love him, he will kill thee,” says she to a woman who lies before her in the dust.

“Thou seest that it is not I,” says the beauty.

2.

Again resound the inspired words of the poet. A new picture arises:—

A city. At the distance, towards the north and east, are the mountains; towards the east and south, and further to the west, the sea. A wonderful city. The houses there are small, mean in their outward show. But how many wonderful temples are there! especially on the hill, where the steps, with gates of wondrous grandeur, lead. The whole height is filled with temples and public edifices, any one of which alone would now be sufficient to increase the glory and fame of the finest of our capitals. Thousands of statues decorate these temples and the city everywhere,—statues, one of which alone would be sufficient to make the museum where it was placed the first museum of the world. And how beautiful the people are, as they come crowding into the squares, into the streets! Each of these young youths, each of these young girls, could serve as a model for a statue. Indeed, it is an active, lively, joyous people, a people whose life is bright and beautiful. These houses, which are not luxurious to look upon, what riches of beauty and lofty power of enjoyment they show within! With everything of furnishing or household ware one might fall in love. And all these people are so beautiful; they have such solid understanding of

beauty; they live for love; they serve the beautiful. Here comes an exile back to the city whose power he destroyed; he returns to rule, and all know it. Why is not one hand raised against him? On the chariot with him goes a woman of marvellous beauty, even in a city of beautiful women, pointing him to the people, begging the people to accept him, assuring the people that she supports him. And bowing low before her beauty, the people entrust their fate to Peisistratos, their favorite. Here is a court; the judges are stern old men,—the people may be drawn away, but they yield not to impulses. The Areopagos is famous for its merciless severity, by its implacable honesty. Gods and goddesses came before it to ask decision in their cases. And here a woman must appear before them, whom all consider guilty of horrible crimes; she must die, the destroyer of Athens; each of the judges has already decided in his soul; Aspasia appears before them, she who is doomed, and they all kneel down before her on the earth, and they say, “Thou shalt not be judged. Thou art too beautiful. Isn’t this the kingdom of beauty? isn’t this the kingdom of love?”

“No,” says the radiant one; “at that time I was not in existence. They bowed to a woman, but they did not consider her their equal. They subjected themselves to her only as to a source of enjoyment; human dignity they did not acknowledge in her. Where respect to a woman is not the same as to man, I am not to be found. That tsaritsa was called Aphrodite. Here she is.”

That tsaritsa has no adornments whatsoever. She is so beautiful that her admirers did not wish her to wear any dress. Her wonderful lines must not be hidden from delighted eyes.

What does she say to a woman who is almost as beautiful as she is, who throws frankincense upon her altars?

“Be a source of enjoyment for mankind. He is thy master. Thou livest not for thyself, but for him.”

And in her eyes there is only the tenderness of physical enjoyment. Her bearing is haughty; in her face there is pride, but pride only in its physical beauty. And to what a life a woman was doomed during her reign! Man locked his wife in the gynecium, so that no one but him, her master, might enjoy her beauty, which belonged to him alone. She had no liberty. There were other women who called themselves free, but they sold the enjoyment of their beauty, they sold their liberty. No, they had no liberty. This tsaritsa was half a slave. Where there is no liberty there is no happiness, there I am not found.

3.

Again resound the poet’s words. A new picture appears:—

Before the castle, an arena. Around is an amphitheatre, with a shining host of spectators. On the arena are knights. Over the arena, on the balcony of the castle, sits a maiden. She has her scarf in her hands. Whosoever conquers shall get the scarf and the kiss of her hand. The knights fight to the death. Toggenburg is victorious. “Knight, I love thee like a sister. Ask no other sort of love. My heart does not beat faster when you come; it beats not faster when you depart. My fate is decided,” says he, and departs for Palestine. And throughout all Christendom the glory of his doughty deeds is spread. But he cannot live without seeing the tsaritsa of his soul. He returns; he has not found forgetfulness in battles. “Do not rap at the door, O knight; she is now in the nunnery.” He builds for himself a little hut, from the window of which, unseen by her, he can see her when she opens the window of her cell. And all his life is one longing for her to

appear at the window, beautiful as the sun. He has no other life than to see the tsaritsa of his soul. There was no other life in life, for life was dead in him; and as life was ebbing away, he sat still at the window of his hut and thought one thought alone, "Shall I ever see her again?"

"This is not all about me," says the radiant one. "He loved her as long as he did not touch her. If she had become his wife, she would have become his slave; she would have been obliged to tremble before him; he would have locked her up; he would have ceased to love her. He would have gone out hunting; he would have gone to the war; he would have caroused with his comrades; he would have seduced the daughters of his vassals; his wife would have been cast aside, locked up, despised. When once a man had enjoyed a woman, then he ceased to love her from that time forth. No, I was not there, then. That tsaritsa was called 'Chastity.' Here she is."

Modest, humble, tender, beautiful,—more beautiful than Astarte; more beautiful than Aphrodite herself, but melancholy, gloomy, sorrowful. Before her they bowed their knees; they bring her bouquets of roses. She says: "My soul is sad with deathly sorrow. A dagger is plunged into my heart. Be ye also sorrowful. Ye are unfortunate. The earth is a vale of sorrow."

"No, no! I was not in existence then," says the radiant one.

4.

"No, those tsaritsas did not resemble me. They are all still reigning, but the kingdoms are crumbling. With the birth of each of them the reign of her predecessor began to crumble. I was born only when the kingdom of the last began to crumble. And since I was born, their kingdom began to crumble more rapidly; and soon they will vanish entirely; the successor of each could not take the place left by the others, since the others still existed. I shall take the place of all of them; they shall vanish; I shall remain the mistress of the world. But they had to reign before me; without their reign, mine could not come.

"People used to be like beasts. They ceased to be like beasts when man began to value the beauty of woman. But woman's physical strength is less than man's; and man then was rude. Everything then was decided by strength. Man took unto himself that wife, whose beauty he began to value. She became his property, his chattel. That was Astarte's reign.

"When he became further developed, he began to value her beauty more than before, and he began to worship her beauty. But her conscience was not yet developed. He valued in her only beauty. She could get her ideas from him alone. He said he only was a man, while she was not. She saw in herself only a beautiful, beautiful object, belonging to him; she did not look upon her as belonging to humanity. That was the reign of Aphrodite.

"But here the consciousness that she, too, was a human being, began to awake in her. What grief must have seized her at the very faintest appearance of this thought, that she was an independent human being! For she was not recognized as such. A man did not want her in any other relation than that of slave. And she said, 'I do not want to be your friend on this condition.' Then his passion compelled him to implore her and to humiliate himself, and he forgot that he did not look upon her as a human being, and he loved her, the resistant, the unapproachable, the virtuous maiden. But as soon as she put trust in his prayers, as soon as he touched her,—woe to her! She was in his clutches; his hands were stronger than her hands, and he made her his slave, and despised her. Woe to her! This was the sorrowful reign of the virgin.

“But ages past: my sister—dost thou know her? The one that before I appeared, did her work for thee. She always existed, she was before all, she was in existence as soon as man came upon earth, and she always worked untiringly. Hard was her task, slow her success, but she worked, worked, and her success increased. Man became more rational, woman more and more firmly recognized her equality with man, and the time came when I was born.

“This was not long ago; Oh, far from long ago. Do you know who first recognized that I was born, and told it to others? It was Rousseau, in his ‘Nouvelle Eloïse.’ From it, from him, people for the first time heard of me.

“Since then my kingdom has been spreading. But I am not yet tsaritsa over many. But it spreads rapidly, and you can foresee the time when I shall reign over all the earth. Only then people will perfectly appreciate how beautiful I am. Now, those who acknowledge my power, are not yet able to obey my will. They are girt about by a throng opposed to all my will. The throng would tear them in pieces, would poison their lives, if they confessed and fulfilled my will. And I must have happiness; I desire that there should be no suffering, and I tell them, ‘Don’t do that which will bring torment upon you; fulfil my will only so far as it will not cause yourselves harm.’”

“But can I know thee perfectly?”

“Yes, thou canst. Thy position is very fortunate. Thou hast naught to fear. Thou canst do whatsoever thou pleasest; and if thou wishest to know all my will, from my will no harm will come to thee: thou must not desire, and thou wilt not desire, anything on account of which ignorant people may torment thee. Thou art now perfectly content with what thou hast. Thou dost not desire, and thou wilt not desire, anything or anybody else. I can declare myself to thee entirely.”

“Reveal to me thy name; thou hast told me the names of the former tsaritsas, but thy own name thou hast never declared to me.”

“Dost thou want me to tell thee my name? Look at me, hearken to me.”

5.

“Look at me, hearken to me! Dost thou recognize my voice? Dost thou know my face? Hast thou ever seen my face?”

No; she had never seen her face, had ne’er seen it in her life. Yet how did it seem to her as though she had seen it? It is a year since she was speaking with him, since he looked upon her, kissed her, and now she sees her so often, this radiant beauty; and the radiant one does not hide from her, neither does she hide from him; she appears to her in all her radiant beauty.

“No, I have never seen thee; I have never seen thy face: thou didst appear to me; I saw thee; but thou wert girt with brightness. I could not see thee; I only saw that thou wert more beautiful than all. Thy voice, I hear it, but I hear only that thy voice is more beautiful than all.”

“Look; for thy sake at this moment, I shall diminish the brightness of my aureole, and my voice shall sound for thee at this moment without the enchanting power which I always lend to it; for one moment I cease to be a tsaritsa. Hast thou seen? hast thou heard? hast thou learned? That will suffice; again am I tsaritsa, and tsaritsa I shall be for all time to come.”

She was again girt about with the ineffable brightness of her halo, and again her voice is inexpressibly intoxicating. But for that moment when she ceased to be the tsaritsa, so as to

declare herself unto thee, was it really so? Did Viéra Pavlovna really see this countenance? really hear this voice?

“Yes,” says the tsarita, “thou hast wanted to know who I am; now thou knowest. Thou hast wanted to hear my name; I have no name different from the one to whom I appear; my name is her name. Thou hast seen who I am. No, there is nothing loftier than man; there is nothing loftier than woman. I am the one to whom I appear, who loves and is loved.”

Yes, Viéra Pavlovna saw. It was herself; it was herself, but a goddess. The goddess’ countenance is her own countenance, her living countenance, the features of which are so far from perfection; every day she sees more than one face more beautiful than hers. This was her own face, kindled with the brightness of love; more beautiful than all ideals left to us by sculptors of the ancient time, and by the great artists of the great age of art. Yes, it is she herself, but kindled by the brightness of life; it is she, more beautiful than whom are hundreds of faces in Petersburg, which is so poor in beauty. She is more beautiful than the Aphrodite of the Louvre, more beautiful than all the beauties of the past.

“Thou seest thyself in the mirror just as thou art without me. In me thou seest thyself just as the one who loves thee, sees thee. For his sake thou and I art one; for him there is no one more beautiful than thou; for him all ideals grow obscure in thy presence. Is it not so?”

“Yes! oh, yes!”

6.

“Now, thou knowest who I am; know what I am. I have all the enjoyment of sense which Astarte had; she is the original mother¹ of all of the rest of us tsaritsas who succeeded her. I have the rapture at the sight of beauty no less than Aphrodite had; I have the reverence for purity which ‘Chastity’ possessed.

“But in me it is not as it was in them, but fuller, loftier, keener. The virtue possessed by ‘Chastity’ is combined in me with the quality which distinguished Astarte and that which distinguished Aphrodite. And while I combine in me these other powers, each of them becomes greater and better from the union. But more, far more power is given to each of these qualities by that new power which I have, and which none of the former tsaritsas had. This new power in me serves to distinguish me from them,—the equal rights of those who love, equality in the relations between them as men,—and from this new power it comes that there is far more beauty in me than in them.

“When a man recognizes the equal rights of a woman with himself, he ceases to regard her as his personal property. Then she loves him as he loves her, only because she wants to love; but if she does not want to love, he has no right over her, as she has none over him. Therefore in me is freedom.

“Aside from equal rights and freedom, all that in me, which was also possessed by the former tsaritsas, gets a new character, a loftier charm, a charm which had not been known until I appeared, and in comparison with which all else which was known till I came is nothing.

“Till I appeared, people had no idea of perfect enjoyment of freedom, because, without free inclinations on both sides, no one who loves can have a keen rapture. Till I appeared, people had no idea of the full enjoyment in the contemplation of beauty, because if beauty is revealed not

¹ *Rodonatchálnitsa.*

by a free inclination, there can be no keen rapture in its contemplation. Without free inclination, both enjoyment and rapture are dull, in comparison with what they are in me. My chastity is purer than that 'Chastity' which spoke only of the purity of the body; I possess purity of heart. I am free, because there is no deceit in me, no hypocrisy. I shall say not a word which does not express what I feel; I shall give no kiss which is not from the heart. But all that which is new in me, which gives a loftier charm to all that was in the former tsaritsas, that in itself constitutes in me a charm which is loftier than all else. A master is embarrassed before his servant; a servant before his master. Only in the presence of his equals is a man entirely at his ease. With a lower nature one feels dull; only with an equal is there happiness. Therefore, till I appeared, man did not know full happiness or love. All that he felt before I came is not worthy of being called happiness; it was only a momentary excitement. And woman! how pitiful woman was before I appeared! She was then an abject, servile person. She was in fear; until I came, she knew too little what love is. Where there is fear there can be no love.

"Therefore, if you want to express in one word what I am, this word is "Equal Rights."² Without its enjoyment of the body, delight in beauty, are tedious, gloomy, wretched; without it there is no purity of heart; there is fallacious purity of body. From it, as from equality, originates my freedom, without which I were not.

"I have told all things to thee, and thou canst tell them to others, all things that I am now. But my kingdom now is small. I must guard those who are under my allegiance from the slander of those who do not know me; I cannot yet express all my will to all people, to all men. I shall express it to all, when my kingdom shall embrace all men, when all men shall be beautiful in body and pure in heart. Then I shall show them all my beauty. But thou! thy fate is specially fortunate. I shall not disturb thee, I shall not harm thee, by telling thee what I shall be when not a few, as now, but all, shall be worthy of recognizing me as their tsaritsa. To thee alone I shall tell the secrets of my fortune. Swear that thou will be silent, and listen."

7.³

8.

"Oh, my love! now I know all thy will. I know that it will come to pass, but how will it come to pass? How will people live then?"

"I by myself cannot tell thee that. For this I must have the aid of my older sister, the one who appeared to thee long ago. She is my mistress and my servant. I can only be what she makes me; but she is working for me. Sister, come to my aid."

² In Russian, *ravnopravnost*.

³ It is probable that Tchernuishevsky hesitated about revealing the secret of the radiant one, not from the fear of shocking the public so much as from the danger of the censor's red pencil. The sky which so soon was covered with black clouds, from which flashed the bolt that deprived the world of a genius, was just at this time comparatively clear, but still there were ominous mutterings of thunder. The theory which Tchernuishevsky hints at, and which is regarded with such terror, proves, when regarded fairly in the face, to be like one of the lions bound, which frightened Bunyan's Christian.

The sister of her sisters, the bride of her bridegrooms. "Good morning, sister," she says to the tsaritsa. "Thou, too, art here, sister?" she says to Viéra Pavlovna. "Thou wishest to see how men are going to live when this adopted tsaritsa of mine shall reign over all. Behold!"

An edifice; an enormous, enormous edifice, such as can be seen only in the largest capitals—or, no, at the present time there is none such in the world. It stands amid fields of grain, meadows, gardens, and groves. The fields of grain—this is our grain—they are not such as we have now, but rich, rich, abundant, abundant. Is it wheat? Who ever saw such heads? Who ever saw such grain? Only in forcing-houses is it possible to make such heads of wheat, such royal grain! The meadows are our meadows; but such flowers as these are now found only in flower-gardens. Orchards are full of lemon-trees, oranges, peaches, and apricots. How can they grow in the open air? O yes, there are columns around them; they are opened in summer; yes, these orangeries are opened for the summer. Groves; these are our groves—oak and linden, maple and elm; yes, just the same groves as now. Very great care is taken of them. There are sickly trees among them, but the groves are the same: they are the same trees as now. But this edifice! what is it? what style of architecture? There is nothing like it now; no, but there is one that points toward it,—the palace which stands on Sydenham Hill, built of cast-iron and glass—cast-iron and glass, and that is all. No, not all; that is only the integument of an edifice,—the outside walls. But inside of this palace is a real house, a tremendous house! This integument of cast-iron and glass only covers it as by a sheath; it forms around it wide galleries on all the floors. How simple is the architecture of the inward house! What narrow spaces between the windows! and the windows are huge and lofty, the whole height from floor to floor; its stone walls, like rows of pilasters, forming the frame for the windows which open out into the galleries. But what floors and ceilings these are! What are these doors and window-frames made of? What is it? Silver? Platinum? And the furniture is almost all of the same metal; wooden furniture is little more than a caprice here—only for the sake of variety. But what are all the rest of the furniture, the ceilings and floors, made of? "Try to move this chair," says the elder sister. "This metallic furniture is lighter than ours made of walnut. But what is this metal? *Akh!* I know now. Sasha showed me a little board like this; it was light, like glass; and now ear-rings and brooches are made out of it. Yes, Sasha said that sooner or later aluminum would take the place of wood, or maybe even of stone. But how rich everything is! Everywhere is aluminum and aluminum, and all the spaces between the windows are adorned by large mirrors. And what carpets on the floors! Here in this parlor half of the floor is bare, and so you can see that it is made of aluminum. Here you see that it is unpolished, lest it should be too slippery. Here children are playing, and together with them their elders; and here in this other hall the floor is also bare, for the dancers. And everywhere are tropical trees and flowers; the whole house is a large winter garden."

But who lives in this house which is more magnificent than palaces? "Here live many, very many. Come, we will see." They go to the balcony which corresponds with the upper floor of the gallery. How is it that Viéra Pavlovna did not notice it before? On these fields groups of people are scattered; men and women everywhere, young folks and old together; but the majority are young; a few old men, still less old women; there are more children than old men, but still few. More than half the children are indoors, attending to the housework. They do almost everything in the house; they like it very much. There are a few old women with them; but there are few old men and old women here, because here they grow old very late. "Here is a healthful and peaceful life; it preserves the freshness."

The groups which are working in the fields are almost all singing. What work are they doing? *Akh*, it is harvest-time. They are getting in the grain. How quick the work goes on! But how can it help going on quickly, and how can they help singing? Almost all the work is done by machines, which are reaping and binding the sheaves, and carrying them away. The men have scarcely more to do than look on, drive and manage the machines, and how well everything is arranged for themselves! It is a hot day, but they of course don't mind it. Over that part of the field where they are working is stretched a huge awning; as the work advances, this also moves. What a fine shadow they have manufactured! How can they help working quickly and gayly? How can they help singing? In such a way I too would become a harvest hand. And all songs, all songs,—unfamiliar ones, new ones; and here they have remembered ours also: I know it:—

“We shall live with thee like nobles;
All these people are our friends;
Whatsoe'er thy soul desireth,
We shall all attain our ends.”⁴

But here the work is done, and all go to the edifice. “Let us again go into the hall; let us see how they will dine,” says the elder sister. They enter the very largest of the mighty halls. Half of it is occupied with tables; the tables are already laid—how many of them there are! How many people are going to dine here! Yes, a thousand or more: not all are, for those who please dine privately.” The old women, the old men, and the children who did not go out into the field got all this ready. “To cook the meals, to keep the house in order, to clean the rooms, this is very easy work for other hands,” says the other sister. “Those who are not able to do anything else must do this.”

What magnificent dishes! All of aluminum and glass. On the middle aisle are vases of flowers. The dishes are already on the table; the workingmen have come; all sit down at the table, both they and those who got ready the dinner. But who will be the waiters? “When? At dinner-time? Why? There are only five courses: those which must be kept hot are placed where they will not get cold. Do you see these recesses? These are pans filled with boiling water,” says the elder sister. “You live comfortably, you like a good table; do you often have such a dinner as this?” “Several times a year. This is an every-day dinner with these people; whoever pleases has a better one, with whatever he may prefer. But then a different account is kept, and whoever does not ask for anything beyond what the rest have, no special account is kept, and all is arranged this way: all which the whole company can afford to enjoy is given without special accounts, but for every special thing or luxury a special account is kept.”

“Are these really our people? Is this really our country? I heard their song; they speak Russian.”

“Yes, you see not far from here is a river—it is the Oka; these people belong to us; for when I am with you I am a Russian!”

“Did you bring about all this?”

“All this was done for my sake, and I gave the inspiration for the accomplishment of it; I inspired the completion of it, but she, my older sister, is doing this. She is a worker, but I only enjoy the fruits of her work.”

“And will all people live this way?”

⁴ Literally: We shall live with thee like *panski* (Polish lords); these people are friends to us; whatever to thy soul is pleasant I shall attain it all with them.

“Yes,” replied the elder sister. “For all an everlasting spring and summer, an everlasting joy! But we have shown you only the end of my half-day—the work and the beginning of their indoor life; now we see them in the evening, a little later.”

9.

“The flowers have wilted, and the leaves begin to fall from the trees; the picture grows gloomy; it would be too melancholy to look upon; here it would be gloomy to live,” says the elder sister. “I do not like it. The halls are deserted; there is no one in the fields,” says the elder sister. “I have arranged this according to my sister, the tsaritsa’s desire.”

“Is the palace really deserted?”

“Yes, it is cold and damp here. Here, out of two thousand people, only ten or twenty of those originals for whom it seemed a pleasant variety to remain here for the present, in this solitude, in seclusion, to look at the northern autumn. After some time during the winter there will be constant change: small parties will come—lovers of winter sports—to spend several days here in winter fashion.”

“But where are they now?”

“Everywhere that is warm and comfortable,” says the elder sister. “In summer when there is much work here and it is pleasant, many different guests come here from the south; we were in the house when the whole company consisted of guests like you; but a good many houses are built for the guests in other places; and the guests belonging to different nations and the housekeepers live together, each one selecting the company which best pleases him. But while taking a good many guests in summer as helpers in the work, you, yourself, during seven or eight bad months of your year, leave for the south wherever you please. But you have in the south a special portion where the main portion of you live. That part is called New Russia.”

“Is that Odessa and Kherson?”

“That is in your time; but behold where the New Russia is.”

Mountains clad in gardens; amid the mountains narrow ravines, wide valleys. “These mountains used to be naked crags,” says the elder sister. “Now they are covered with a thick layer of earth, and often amid the garden grow copses of lofty trees, beneath which, on the damp hollows, are plantations of coffee-trees; higher up, date-palms, fig-trees, vineyards mingled with plantations of sugarcane; in the fields grow wheat, but there is more of rice.”

“What land is this?”

“Let us for a moment rise a little higher, and you shall see that it is boundless.” Far to the northwest are wide rivers, which unite and flow towards those eastern and southern places from which Viéra Pavlovna is looking. Farther, in that same southeasterly direction, she sees long, wide bays; on the south the land stretches far away between these bays, and the long, narrow sea which forms its western boundary. Between the narrow bays and the sea, which opens out towards the west is a narrow isthmus. “But we are in the centre of the desert,” says the astonished Viéra Pavlovna.

“Yes, the centre of what used to be a desert, but now, as you see, everything has been changed, all the space from the Green River on the northeast has been turned into a fertile land, just as it was in olden times; and again it has become that zone, extending to the north, which in olden times was said to ‘overflow with milk and honey.’

“We are not very far, as you see, from the southern boundary of the cultivated land; the mountainous part of the peninsula remains, as yet, a sandy, fruitless steppe, such as, in your day, the whole peninsula used to be. Every year the people, you Russians, are pushing away the boundary of the desert to the south; others are working in other lands; all have sufficient room, and enough to do to live comfortably and abundantly; yes, from the great northeastern rivers. All the region towards the south, till you come to the great peninsula, is green, and full of flowers; over the whole region stand built grand palaces, as in the north, three versts apart, like numberless, great chessmen on a mighty chessboard. Let us descend to one of them,” says the elder sister.

The same kind of grand crystal house, but its columns are white.

“They are made of aluminum,” says the elder sister; “because it is hot here, and white becomes less heated in the sun; it is somewhat dearer than cast-iron, but it is better suited to the climate.”

But besides, they have devised this plan: at a long distance, around the crystal palace, are placed rows of lofty, thin pillars, and upon them, high over the palace, over the whole *dvor*, and for half a verst around it is stretched a white awning.

“It is kept ever moistened with water.” says the elder sister; “you see from every column a little fountain rises higher than the awning, and scatters its drops around, and therefore it is comfortable to live here for the varying temperature to suit themselves.”

“But who likes heat and the bright southern sun?”

“You see at a distance there are tents and pavilions; every one can live as he pleases: I lead the world, and I work with no other end in view.”

“So these cities remain for those who like cities?”

“Such people are few. There are less towns than before—almost only those which on the best harbors are needed as centres of communication, and the interchange of commodities with other centres of exchange. But these cities are larger and more beautiful than the former; people go there sometimes for recreation; the greater part of the inhabitants are all the time changing, and they remain there for work but a short time.”

“But who wants to live there constantly?”

“They live just as you do in your Petersburgs, Parises, Londons. Whose affair is that? Who is to interfere? Let everybody live as he pleases; but the greatest majority, ninety-nine out of every hundred, live just as I and my sister have showed you, because it is more pleasant, and more profitable to them. But go into the palace; it is quite late; it is time to see them.”

“But no, first I want to know how this happened.”

“What?”

“That a fruitless desert became a most fruitful land, where almost all of us spend two-thirds of our year.”

“How this happened? Is there anything miraculous in it? This happened not in the course of one year, not in ten; they have been bringing it about gradually. They brought clay from north-east, from the shores of the great river; from the north-west, from the shores of the great sea. They possess a great number of such powerful machines: the clay solidified the sand; they constructed canals; they arranged for irrigation; verdure made its appearance; the atmosphere became more moist; the work went forward step by step, for many versts, but sometimes only a verst a year, just as they are going towards the south; is there anything miraculous in this? They only became intelligent; they used for their own advancement a great many powers and expedients which had been expended before without utility or directly for their injury. It is not in vain that I am laboring and teaching. It was only hard for people to learn what was useful;

they were in your time such savages, such ruffians, such barbarians, such idiots, but I kept on teaching them, teaching them; and as soon as they began to comprehend, then it was not hard to fulfil my teachings. I demand nothing difficult; you know it. You are doing some for my sake in my method, even now; is it difficult?"

"No."

"Of course not. Remember your shop, your sewing union. Did you have great means? Did you have more than others?"

"No; what means did we have?"

"And yet your seamstresses have tenfold more conveniences, twenty-fold more happiness in life, and they experience a hundred-fold less unpleasantness than others with such small means as you had. You yourself have proved that even in your time people can live very comfortably. It is only necessary to be reasonable, to make a good start, to know how to use your means to the best advantage."

"Yes, yes, I know it."

"Now go and see a little more carefully how these people are living some time after they began to understand what you understood long ago."

10.

They enter a house; again the same sort of enormous, magnificent parlors. A party is in progress, full of gayety and joy. It is three hours since sunset; it is the very tide of joy. How bright the parlor is lighted! With what? no candelabra are to be seen anywhere, nor gas-jets. *Akh!* it is from here—in the rotunda of the hall is a great pane through which the light falls; of course it must be such—just like sunlight, white, bright, and soft; this is the electric light.⁵ There are a thousand people in the hall, but there is room enough for thrice as many. "And there are thrice as many when they have company," says the radiant one, "and sometimes even more."

"What is it? Is it not a ball? Is it a mere every-day gathering?"

"Certainly."

At the present day this would have been a court ball, so bright, so magnificent are the costumes of the women. Yes, it is other times, as you can see by the cut of the dresses. There are some ladies in the dress of our time; but it is evident that they wear them for variety's sake, as a joke; yes, they are masquerading, making sport of this kind of dress. Others wear most varied costumes of different eastern and southern cuts, but all of them are more graceful than ours. But the predominating costume seems like the one worn by the Grecian women during the artistic age of Athens, very easy and comfortable; and the men also wear wide and flowing garments without waists,—something like mantles or cloaks,—evidently their every-day house-dress. But how tasteful and beautiful this dress! How soft and exquisitely it outlines the form! how it adds to the grace of the motions! And what an orchestra! There are more than a hundred musicians, both men and women; but above all what a choir!

"No, in all Europe in your day there were not ten such voices as you find here by the hundred, and in every other house it is the same. But the style of life is very different from that of old; it is very healthy, and at the same time very elegant, and therefore the chest becomes broader and

⁵ Here too Tchernuishevsky shows himself as a prophet. The electric light is now a fact. The day of aluminum is yet to come; when it comes, as come it will, the world will be revolutionized.

the voice better,” says the radiant tsaritsa. But the people in the orchestra and in the choir are constantly changing; some leave, and others take their place. Some go to dance, and some from among the dancers release them.

This evening is an every-day, ordinary evening; they dance and enjoy themselves every evening in this way. But did I ever see such energetic joy? And how can their joy help having an energy unknown to ours? They work well in the morning. Whoever has not worked enough does not give his nervous system the zest, and so cannot feel the fulness of the enjoyment. And even now the happiness of the common people, if by chance they succeed in living happy, is more intense, keen, and fresh than ours; but the chances for our common people to be happy are very poor. But here the means of happiness are richer than for us; and the happiness of our common people is disturbed by the remembrance of the inconveniences and deprivations, misfortunes and sufferings in the past, and by the anticipation of similar things to come. Their happiness is a transitory forgetfulness of want and woe. But can want and woe be absolutely forgotten? Do not the sands of the desert spread? Do not the miasmas of the swamp bring contagion upon the small plan of the good land which may have good air between the desert and the swamp?

But here there are no remembrances, no dangers of want and woe; there are only remembrances of free labor with full satisfaction, of abundance, of good, and of enjoyment. Here the expectations of the time to come are the same. What a comparison! And again, the nerves only of our working people are strong, and therefore they are able to endure a great deal of enjoyment; but they are coarse, obtuse; but here the nerves are strong as those of our laborers, and developed, susceptible, just as with us. The preparation for enjoyment, a healthy, keen thirst for it, such as none of our day have, such as is given only by perfect and physical labor, are combined in people here with all the delicacy of sense such as we have. They have all our mental culture together with the physical development of our strong working people. It is comprehensible that their enjoyment, that their pleasure, that their passion, are more lively, keener, wider, and sweeter than with us. Happy people!

No; people now do not know what enjoyment means, because as yet there is no sort of life adapted to it, and there are no such people. Only such people can be fully happy and know all the glory of enjoyment. How they flourish in health and strength! how slender and graceful they are! how full of energy and expression are their features! All of them are joyous and beautiful men and women, living free lives of labor and enjoyment. Happy are they! happy are they!

With a joyous noise half of them meet together in the mighty hall—but where are the other half?

“Where are the others?” asks the radiant tsaritsa; “they are everywhere: some of them are in the theatre, some are actors, some are musicians, others are spectators, just as it may please them; some of them are scattered in the lecture-halls, museums, or in the libraries; some of them are in the alleys of the garden; some in their rooms, or are taking rest in seclusion, or are with their children; but more, more than all, and this is my secret...”

“This is my kingdom. Here everything is for me! Labor—the readiness for enjoyment of feelings and strength for me—enjoyment is the readiness for me and rest after me. Here I am the aim of life; here I am the whole of life.”

11.

“In my sister, the tsaritsa, lies the loftiest enjoyment of life,” says the oldest sister; “but you shall see that every happiness here is suited to every one’s special faculty. All live here in the way that it is best for each to live; there is a full volition, a free volition for every one here.

“What you have been shown here will not soon reach its full development as you have just seen it. A good many generations will pass before your presentiment of it will be realized. No, not many generations: my work is now advancing rapidly, more rapidly with every year; but still you will never see the full sway of my sister, at least you have seen it; you know the future. It is bright, it is beautiful. Tell everybody. Here is what is to be! The future is bright and beautiful. Love it! seek to reach it! work for it! bring it nearer to men! transfer from it into the present whatever you may be able to transfer. Your life will be bright, beautiful, rich with happiness and enjoyment, in proportion as you are able to transfer into it the things of the future. Strive to reach it! work for it! bring it nearer to man. Transfer from it into the present all that you are able to transfer.”⁶

⁶ Comment on this epic vision is hardly necessary. But those who object to idealized socialism as presented by Tchernuishevsky must be both enchained by selfishness and the slaves of Antichrist. Only he who is selfish can wish that the best that he wishes for should not be shared by all the world; and how many millions and billions of dollars, how many lives of labor and sadness, are wasted every year because each family and each man and woman is trying vainly by himself to do what might be done better, more easily, and more happily by systematic union. The great corporations which pour useless wealth into the hoards of the few monopolists who control them, the great bazaars which are now seen in all our cities, point to what, in the future, will be the physical salvation of the world. The great hotels and flats are but the practical realization of the homes of the men and women of the future. But is Tchernuishevsky after all such a rabid radical? Is not his ideal what all men want when they pray for the coming of the kingdom of Heaven?—not the republic of Heaven, by the way.

XVI.

A year later the new union was in perfect running order. Both shops were closely connected; one shop would give the other orders when there was slack work and the other had time to fill them. A running account was kept between them. Their means proved sufficient to enable them to open a sale-shop on the Nevsky, when once they had knit the bonds between them closer still. The arrangement of this cost Viéra Pavlovna and Mertsálova a great deal of trouble. Although the two unions were friendly, although one often gave receptions to the other, although they often united for picnics out of town, still the idea of the union of accounts of two different shops was a new idea, of which it was necessary to give long and careful explanations. However, the benefit of having their own sale-shop on the Nevsky was evident, and in a few months of labor in joining the two accounts, Viéra Pavlovna succeeded in accomplishing it: on the Nevsky appeared a new sign. "*Au Bon Travail: Magasin des Nouveautés.*" After this sale-shop was opened, the business began to increase more rapidly than before, and the profits were much larger. Mertsálova and Viéra Pavlovna already began to dream that in two years, instead of two shops, there would be four, five, and then soon ten and twenty.

Three months after the sale-shop was opened, one of Kirsánof's friends, or rather one of his acquaintances at the medical school, came to him, told him a great deal about his various medical experiences, and still more about his wonderfully successful cures, which were performed by laying across the chest and abdomen two small bags filled with crashed ice, each of which was wrapped up in four napkins; and, at the conclusion of all, he said that one of his acquaintances wanted to make Kirsánof's acquaintance.

Kirsánof granted his request; it was pleasant acquaintance; they talked about a good many subjects, among others about the shop. He explained that the shop was opened exclusively for mercantile purposes. They talked about the sign of the shop, whether it was a good thing to put upon the sign the word *travail*. Kirsánof said that *travail* meant *work*, and *Au Bon Travail* meant a shop that did good work. They discussed the question whether it would not be better to put a proper name on instead of such a device. Kirsánof said that his wife's Russian name would cause a mercantile failure. Finally he devised the following expedient: His wife's name was Viéra; in French Viéra means *foi*. If on the sign could be put the words *A la Bonne Foi*, instead of *Au Bon Travail*, would not that be sufficient? There would be nothing suspicious about "a shop of good faith," and the *khozyáika's* name would still be on the sign. After arguing the matter over, they decided that it could be done. Kirsánof, with special eagerness, turned the conversation to questions like this, and he generally succeeded in obtaining his purpose. So that, when he returned home, he was very well content with himself.

But, at all events, Mertsálova and Viéra Pavlovna considerably clipped the wings of their imaginations, and they began to work hard to go ahead with their present enterprise.

Thus, after their superfluous enthusiasm about opening a good many shops had cooled down, the sewing union and the sale-shop still lived, not developing with too great rapidity, but rejoicing

in the very fact of existence. Kirsánof's new acquaintance continued to afford him much pleasure. Thus passed two years or more, without any events of special importance.

XVII. A LETTER FROM EKATERINA VASILYEVNA PÓLOZOVA.

St. Petersburg, Aug. 29, 1860.

My Dear Paulina,—

I have been so delighted with an absolute novelty which I have lately discovered, and to which I am now devoting all my energies, that I want to describe it to you. I am sure that you too will become interested in it. But the main thing is, you yourself may find it possible to undertake something of the same sort. It is so delightful, my dear.

The thing which I am going to describe to you is a sewing shop, or rather two shops, both arranged on one plan by a woman with whom I became acquainted only two weeks ago, and who is already a real friend. I am now helping her, on condition that she should help me by and by to arrange a similar shop. This Madame Viéra Pavlovna Kirsánova is still young, gay, kind, and—entirely to my taste; that is, she is more like you, Paulina, than your Katya, who is such a queer soul—is an open-hearted, lively lady. After I heard accidentally about her sewing shop, I was told only about one of them. I went directly to her without any introduction or subterfuges, and simply said that I had become interested in her shop. We were drawn to each other from the very first; all the more, because Kirsánof, her husband, I found the very same Doctor Kirsánof who, five years ago, did me, you remember, such magnificent service.

After we talked half an hour, and she saw that I really sympathized with such things, Viéra Pavlovna took me over her shop, the one in which she has an active part (the first one which she established was taken in charge by one of her acquaintances, a very nice young married lady), and I am going to tell you the impressions of my first visit. They were so new and striking, that I took them down at that time in my diary, though I had long before ceased to keep it, but which I have begun again for a special reason, which maybe I will tell you about at some other time. I am very, very glad that I put these impressions on paper, for by this time I should have forgotten a good many impressions which surprised me then; and to-day, only two weeks after, it seems to me the most ordinary thing in the world,—indeed, as though it could not be otherwise. But the more commonplace this thing becomes to me, the more I get attached to it, because it is a very good thing. And so, Paulina, I shall begin the quotation from my diary, adding such particulars as I have since learned.

A sewing shop—what do you think that I saw there? We stopped at the main entrance. Viéra Pavlovna led me up a very nice flight of stairs, such stairs as you often find decorated with Switzers. We went in on the third floor; Viéra Pavlovna rang the bell, and I found myself in a great parlor with a grand piano and handsome furniture—in a word, the parlor seemed like that of a private family spending for their living four or five thousand rubles a year. Is that the shop? Is this one of the rooms occupied by the seamstresses? “Yes. This is the reception room and parlor for evening gatherings; let us go to those rooms where the seamstresses live. They are

now in the working rooms, and we shall disturb no one.” Here is what I saw as I went from room to room, and Viéra Pavlovna explained to me.

The whole establishment of the shop is composed of three apartments, which open upon one landing and which was made into one apartment after the doors which led between them were taken away. These apartments used to be rented for seven hundred, five hundred and fifty, and four hundred and twenty-five rubles a year, a total of one thousand six hundred and seventy-five rubles. But when they were rented all together on a five years’ lease, the landlord agreed to let them have it for twelve hundred and fifty. All in all, there are twenty-one rooms in the shop, two of which are very large, having four windows; one is the reception room, the other the dining-room; in two others, also large ones, the work is carried on. They use the rest for living-rooms. We went through six or seven rooms, in which the girls were living. (I am still referring to my first visit.) These rooms are nicely furnished in mahogany or walnut. Some of them have tall mirrors; in others there are very handsome pier glasses; a good many well-made chairs and sofas. The furniture in each room varies, nearly all of it at bargains for low prices. These rooms in which they live are like the apartments such as middle-class *tchinovniks* occupy, the families of old *natcholniks* of departments or young office *natcholniks* who are on the road to becoming *natcholniks* of departments. The larger rooms are occupied by three girls; in one, live as many as four, but in the other, only two.

We went into the working rooms, and the girls busy there seemed to be dressed like the daughters, sisters, or young wives of *tchinovniks*; some wore silk dresses of simple stuffs; some barège, some of muslin. The faces had that softness and freshness which are developed only by comfort. You can imagine how all this surprised me. We stayed quite a while in the working rooms, and I got acquainted here with some of the girls. Viéra Pavlovna told them why I called. The degree of their accomplishments was unequal. Some of them spoke with the language of cultured society, were acquainted with literature like our *bariushnas*, had a good idea of history and about foreign lands, and about all sorts of things which go to make up the ordinary run of ideas among the young ladies of our society. Two of them were really well read. Some of them who entered the shop recently were less developed, but still you could speak with each of them as with a girl of some culture. As a general thing the degree of development was proportionate to the time the girl had been in the shop.

Viéra Pavlovna attended to various things; occasionally she came back to me, and I talked with the girls, and thus we spent the time till dinner. Dinner every day is composed of three courses. On that day they had rice soup, boiled fish, and veal. After dinner, tea and coffee were brought on. The dinner was so good that I ate with real appetite, and I should consider it no deprivation if I had to eat such dinners always.

But you know that my father even now has a good cook. This was the general impression of my first visit. I was told and I knew that I was going to a shop occupied by sewing girls, that I should see sewing girls, that I should be shown the room of sewing girls, that I should eat dinner with sewing girls; instead of that I saw the apartments of people of moderate means, living together in one establishment; I saw girls of the middle class of *tchinovniks*, or of the low ranks of the nobility; I ate dinner, not a very grand one, to be sure, but satisfying to me—what about it? How is it possible?

After we got back to Viéra Pavlovna’s house, she and her husband explained to me that there was nothing wonderful at all about it. By the way, Kirsánof wrote me as an example a little

account of the experiment which has remained between the leaves of my diary. I am going to copy it for you; but first I want to say a few words more.

Instead of poverty, comfort; instead of filth, not only cleanliness, but even some luxury; instead of rudeness, is considerable culture. All this is the result of two causes. On the one hand, the number of the sewing girls is increasing; on the other, a great economy in expenditure.

You see why they get more income; they are working on their own account; they are their own mistresses; and therefore they receive that part which would be kept as profit by the head of the shop. But this is not all; while working for their own benefit and on their own account, they are much more careful in using what they are working upon, and of their time; the work is done more rapidly, and there are less expenses in it.

Naturally there is also a great deal of economy in regard to their living expenses. They buy all things in large quantities; they pay ready cash for everything, and so they get things cheaper than if they bought on credit and at retail. The things are carefully selected because they understand their business; and so everything is bought not only cheaper but also better than poor people generally have a chance to buy.

Besides this, many of their expenses are greatly diminished, or become entirely unnecessary. Think, for instance, to go every day two or three visits to the shop, how much wear and tear comes on the shoes and clothes! I shall give you one little example which can be applied in everything of this sort. Not to have an umbrella means to spoil a dress from the rain. Now listen to what Viéra Pavlovna told me. A simple linen umbrella costs, let us suppose, two rubles. There are twenty-five sewing girls who live in the shop. An umbrella for each would cost fifty rubles; and whoever had no umbrella would lose more than two rubles by the destruction of clothes. But they live together; no one of them leaves the house unless she pleases, and so it happens that in stormy weather only a few go out. So they found that five umbrellas were enough. These umbrellas are nice silk ones; they cost five rubles apiece. All the cost of umbrellas is twenty-five rubles, or a ruble apiece for each girl. You see that each one of them is using a good one instead of a bad one, and at the same time has only a half of the expense. And so it is with a good many trifles which amount to a good deal in the long run. Just as it is with their rent, so it is with the table. For instance, this dinner which I told you about cost five rubles and fifty kopeks, or five rubles and seventy-five kopeks, with bread, but without tea and coffee. At the table were thirty-seven people besides me and Viéra Pavlovna. Of course several children were included in that number. Five rubles and seventy-five kopeks for thirty-seven people makes less than sixteen kopeks¹ apiece, less than five rubles a month. And Viéra Pavlovna says that if a person dines by himself, he can have scarcely anything for this money except bread and such wretched stuff as you find at small stores. At a restaurant, a dinner like this, only not so nicely served, would cost forty kopeks, according to Viéra Pavlovna. For thirty kopeks it would be much worse. This difference can be appreciated; a restaurant keeper, while preparing a dinner for twenty people or less, must support himself on this money, must have a house, and have a servant. But here these extra expenses are entirely done away with, or are greatly diminished. The wages of two old women, who are relations of two of the sewing girls, and that is the whole expense of the kitchen stuff. Now you render the calculation which Kirsánof made for me by way of example, when I called upon them for the first time. After he wrote it, he said:—

¹ Eight cents.

“Of course I can’t give exact figures, as it would be hard to get at them, because you know each mercantile enterprise, each selling shop, each sewing shop, has its own income and expense account, just as each family has its own degree of economy in incurring expenses with special proportions between their various expenditures. I am giving you the figures only by way of example; but to make the account more impressive, I shall make the figures less than the real profits of our concern, in comparison with the real expenses of almost every commercial enterprise and almost every poor family.

“The receipts of a commercial enterprise from the sale of goods,” continued Kirsánof, “is divided into three main portions: one goes for the salary of the employees; the second for the other expenses of the concern, say the rent of the building, lights, materials for works; the third makes the *khozyáin*’s income. Let us suppose that the receipts are divided in this proportion: for the wages of the employees, half of the receipts; for the other expenses, one-fourth; the last quarter is profit. This means that if the employees receive one hundred rubles, then the other expenses rate fifty rubles; the *khozyáin* has also fifty rubles. Now let us see what the employees receive according to our system.” Kirsánof began to read his scale of figures:—

They receive their salary100rubles

They are themselves employers, and thus they receive the income of the *khozyáin*
50 rubles

Their working rooms are joined to their own private rooms, and so they get them at a cheaper rate; they are careful about materials; in this way the saving is greatly increased, I think a full half, but let us say a third part: from the 60 rubles which would go towards this expense they save for their income16 rubles, 67 kopeks
_____ 166 rubles, 67 kopeks

“Here we have already,” continued Kirsánof, “brought it about that our working people receive one hundred and sixty-six rubles and sixty-seven kopeks, when, according to the other order of things, they would have only a hundred rubles. But they gain still more: working for their own benefit, they work more industriously, and therefore more successfully, quicker. Let us suppose that in an ordinary, uninspired work they would succeed in making five things—in our trade, five dresses; now they succeed in making six. This proportion is too small; but let us adopt it. Then, at a time when an ordinary enterprise is earning five rubles, ours earns six:—

From the rapidity of energetic work the receipts and the income are increased one-fifth part of 166 rubles, 67 kopeks, thus33 rubles, 33 kopeks

Plus the former100 rubles, 67 kopeks _____ 200 rubles

“Therefore ours have larger profits than others,” continued Kirsánof. “Now, as to the use of this profit. Having double as much means, we can use them to much better advantage. Here is a double profit, as you know. In the first place, from the fact that everything is bought wholesale, let us suppose that from this a third part is gained. Things which at retail and on credit would cost three rubles now cost two. In reality the profit is greater. Let us take, for example, the house: if these rooms were rented singly,² there would live in these seventeen rooms—each with its two

² *Uglanai*. Literally, by corners, referring to the custom of putting a number of people into one room.

windows, three and four persons—a total (say) of fifty-five; in two rooms with three windows, six persons each; and in the two with four windows, nine persons each. Twelve and eighteen make thirty, and fifty-five in the little rooms; thus the whole apartment would contain eighty-five people. Each of them would pay three and a half rubles a month, which makes forty-two rubles a year. And so these petty landlords, who make a business of renting out ‘corners,’ take for such an establishment forty-two multiplied by eighty-five,—3,570 rubles. Our members have this same establishment for 1,250 rubles, almost three times as cheap. So it is in a good many things, almost all, everything. Probably I should not reach the true proportion, if I estimated the saving at one-half; but I shall place it also at a third. And this is not all. With such a mode of life they are freed from the necessity of incurring many expenses, or, rather, they need many less things.”

Viérotchka here offered, as an example, shoes and dresses. Let us suppose that from this the quantity of things bought is diminished by one-fourth; instead of four pairs of shoes, three are sufficient, or three dresses are worn as long as four used to be. This proportion is also too small; but see what results these proportions give:—

The cheapness of the things purchased is reckoned as causing a saving of one-third part; that is, suppose that for three things two rubles are spent instead of three; but, according to our system, these three things satisfy as many necessities as in the old system would have been satisfied by not less than four: that is equivalent to saying that for our 200 rubles our seamstresses have as many things as, according to the old system, they got for 300 rubles; and that these things, according to our system, afford them as many comforts as in the old system would have been afforded by a sum of 400 rubles

“Compare the life of a family spending 1,000 rubles a year with the life of a family spending 4,000 rubles a year. Isn’t it true that you would find a great difference?” continued Kirsánof. “According to our system, there is just this proportion, if not even larger. With this system there are double receipts, and the profits are used to twice as great advantage. Is it surprising that you found the life of our sewing girls quite different from what seamstresses had according to the old system?”

Here is the marvel which I saw, my dear Paulina, and this is its simple explanation. I am so used to it now that it seems strange to me how it ever did seem strange to me that I did never expect to find such a state of things as I found. Write me, if ever you have the chance of devoting yourself to what I am getting ready to do; that is, the establishment of a sewing shop, or another shop on the same system.

It is so delightful, Paulina!

Yours, K. Pólozova.

P.S. I forgot entirely to speak about the other shop; but no matter; let it go till next time. Now I will only say that the older shop has branched out more, and therefore in all respects higher, than the one which I described to you. In the details of the arrangements there is a great difference between them, because everything is made to suit circumstances.

**PART FIFTH. NEW PEOPLE, AND
THE FINALE.**

I.

Miss Pólozova, in her letter to her friend, referred to her gratitude to Viéra Pavlovna's husband. To explain this it is necessary to explain what kind of a man her father was.

Pólozof was a retired cavalry captain, or second captain of horse,¹ who, while in service, according to the custom of the olden time, had squandered and gambled away quite a large patrimonial estate. But after he had squandered it all, he resigned, and settled down to the creation of a new fortune. Having gathered the last crumbs which were left, he found that he had ten thousand rubles in assignats. He went into the retail grain business; he began to undertake all sorts of small contracts; he made the most of every profitable enterprise which was within his means, and at the end of ten years he had a good property. With the reputation of being such a substantial and enterprising man, with his rank and famous name in his neighborhood, he was able to choose from among the merchants' daughters of the two districts where his business transactions were carried on; and he selected very discretely one with a dowry of half a million, all in assignats. He was then fifty years old, and this was twenty years before we see his daughter entering into friendly relations with Viéra Pavlovna. Adding such a pile to his former wealth, he extended his business on a wider scale, and ten years later he became a millionaire in silver rubles, as at this time silver began to replace paper. His wife died. As she was used to provincial life, she had kept him from moving to Petersburg. Now he moved to Petersburg, "pushed up the hill" more rapidly still, and in ten years was regarded as the possessor of three or four million rubles. Girls and widows, young and old, set their caps² at him; but he had no wish to marry the second time, partly because he preserved a genuine feeling for his wife's memory, and, moreover, because he did not want to give Kátja, whom he loved very warmly, a stepmother.

Pólozof pushed and pushed up the mountain; he would have had not three, not four millions, but ten, if he had given himself to monopolies; but he despised them, and he considered contracts and supplies the only honest business. His confreres in the millionocracy laughed at such a slight and delicate distinction, and they were not wrong; but he, though he was not in the right, kept repeating his pet phrase, "I am a commercial man, and I do not want to get rich by robbery." But a year or a year and a half before his daughter made Viéra Pavlovna's acquaintance there appeared too clear proof that there was very little difference between his trade and monopoly, as far as the facts of the matter were concerned, though there was a great difference according to his ideas. He undertook a great contract; whether it was linen, or provisions, or boot-leather, I am not sure; but as he had been becoming every year more stubborn and supercilious on account of his age and his constant success, and the increasing respect with which he was regarded, he quarrelled with an important personage, got rather angry, berated him, and the job proved to be a bad one. At the end of a week they bade him eat humble pie: he said, "I won't"; "You will collapse"; "All right, but I won't give in." In a month he was told the same thing; he made the same reply; and really, as far as eating humble pie was concerned, he ate no humble pie; but as

¹ *Rotmistr*, or *shtabs-rotmistr*, titles taken from the German army; it gives personal, not hereditary, nobility.

² "Laid hens for him" in the original.

far as collapsing went—he collapsed! His goods were rejected; moreover, whether there were actual faults, or whether it came from ill will, at all events, his three or four millions vanished. And Pólozof, at the age of seventy, found himself a beggar; that is, a beggar compared to what he had been; but still, without any comparison with what he had been, he lived well; he had some shares in a stearine factory, and without hanging down his nose, accepted the position of manager of this factory, at a good salary. Besides that, there remained, by some chance, a few tens of thousands of rubles. If such remnants of his fortune had been in his hands fifteen or ten years before, they would have been enough to help him push himself up a respectable mountain. But being over sixty, it was hard for him to push himself, and Pólozof argued that it was too late for him to try such a thing, and not within his strength. Now he thought only about arranging as quickly as possible the sale of the factory, the shares of which gave him scarcely any income, or any credit, and the affairs of which it was difficult to bring into a better order. He argued the case cleverly, and he succeeded in explaining to the other chief shareholders that a quick sale was the only way of saving the money buried in the shares. Another thing which occupied his mind was a suitable marriage for his daughter. But the main thing was to sell the factory, turn all the money into five per cent governmental bonds, which were at that time in vogue, and to live the remainder of his days peacefully, remembering his past grandeur, the loss of which he bore bravely, preserving all his gayety and firmness.

II.

The father loved his Kátya; he did not allow ultra-high-society's governesses to train the girl too severely. "That is nonsense," he used to say at all straightenings of the figure, straightening of the manners, and everything of this sort; and when Kátya was fifteen years old, he agreed with her that she could do without English and French governesses. Thus Kátja was entirely at her ease; she felt full freedom in the house. And freedom for her at that time was not to be disturbed in her reading and dreaming. She had few friends among girls, though two or three were very intimate; but suitors for her hand she had without number. She is Pólozof's only daughter; it's terrible to speak of: four millions!

But Kátya read and dreamed, and the suitors remained in despair. And Kátya reached the age of seventeen. Thus she read and dreamed, and did not fall in love; but she suddenly began to grow thin, and pale, and languid.

III.

Kirsánof did not care to practise, but he did not consider it right for him to refuse consultations. But at this time—it was a year after he became professor, and a year before he married Viéra Pavlovna—the Big Wigs of the Petersburg medical world began to invite him very often to consultations. There were two reasons for it. The first was that there happened to be in the courts a certain Claude Bernard who had lived in Paris. One of the Big Wigs, who went to Paris for some reason, scientific or other, saw with his own eyes Claude Bernard,—the real living Claude Bernard. He introduced himself with his rank, his name, his decorations, and his famous patient; and Claude Bernard, after listening to him for half an hour, said, “It was idle for you to come to Paris to learn the successes of medicine; you had no need of leaving Petersburg for that purpose.” The Big Wig took this as an attestation of his own fame, and after he came back to Petersburg mentioned Claude Bernard’s name no less than ten times in the course of twenty-four hours, adding to it no less than five times, “my learned friend” or “my famous comrade in science.” How could he help calling Kirsánof to consultations after that? It was impossible not to! And the second reason was still more important: all the Big Wigs saw that Kirsánof was not trying to get away their practice. He not only did not take cases, but even when eagerly requested did not take them. It is known that many of the Big Wigs who practise have this custom: if death, according to the opinion of the Big Wig, is inevitably approaching the patient, and if, by unfortunate change, they cannot get rid of the patient by sending him to any mineral springs or to any place abroad, then it is necessary to place him in the hands of some other medical man; and in these circumstances the Big Wig is willing to offer money from his own pocket for his colleague to take the case. Kirsánof, in these cases where the Big Wig, with the intention of running away, asked him to take a patient, was rarely willing; he generally recommended such of his friends as were in active practice, and he took for himself only a few cases which were interesting from a scientific point of view. But how could they help inviting to their consultations this *confrère* who was recognized by Claude Bernard, and who did not take away their practice?

Pólozof the millionaire had a doctor who was the very ace of trumps among the Big Wigs, and when Katerina Vasílyevna became dangerously ill, the consultations for a long time were held by the Big Wigs exclusively. Finally the case became so serious that the Big Wigs decided to invite Kirsánof; and really the task was very tough for the Big Wigs. The sick girl had no evident disease, but her strength was rapidly, failing. It is necessary to get at the root of the trouble. The attending doctor called it *atrophia nervorum*—innutrition of the nerves. Whether there is any such disease as that in the world I do not know; but if there is, then even I can understand that it must be incurable. But if, notwithstanding its incurableness, she still must be cured, then let Kirsánof do it, or some of his friends,—those impudent little boys!

And so a new consultation with Kirsánof was arranged. They examined the patient; they asked her questions. The patient answered readily, without excitement. But Kirsánof, after the first words, stopped questioning her and merely watched the Big Wigs making the investigation. And

after they had exhausted their ingenuity and tormented the girl as much as propriety requires in such cases, they turned to Kirsánof, "What do you think, Aleksandr Matvéitch?"

He replied, "I have not sufficiently examined the patient. I shall stay here. This is an interesting case. If a new consultation should be needed, I shall tell Karl Feodorvitch." (That was the name of the attendant physician, who shone with glory because he was saved from his *atrophia nervorum*.)

After they left, Kirsánof sat down by the patient's bedside. The sick girl smiled satirically.

"I am sorry that we are not better acquainted," he began. "A doctor must win confidence, and maybe I shall succeed in winning yours. They do not understand your troubles here; some sagacity is needed. To sound your lungs, to give you medicines, is absolutely useless. Only one thing is necessary: to know your general condition, and to think with you whether it is possible to do anything. You will help me in regard to this?"

The sick girl said not a word.

"You do not want to talk with me?"

The sick girl said not a word.

"You probably even want me to leave. I ask of you only ten minutes. If in ten minutes you find, as you think now, that my presence is useless, I shall go. Don't you know well that you have no other disease than sorrow? Don't you know that if this state of mind lasts, it will be impossible in three weeks or a fortnight, or even sooner, to save you? and that maybe you will not live two weeks? As yet you are not in consumption at all, but it is very, very near, and at your age under such conditions it develops with unusual rapidity; it may end in a few days."

The sick girl said not a word.

"You do not reply. But you do not care at all. Therefore my words were not new to you. By the very fact of your silence you say 'yes.' Do you know what almost any other man would know in my place? He would go and speak with your *bátushka*. Maybe my talk with him would save you; but if you do not want me to, I shall not do it. Why? I make it a rule, nothing should ever be done for a person against his will; liberty is above everything, even life. Therefore if you don't want me to know the cause of your very dangerous condition, I shall not know it. If you tell me that you want to die, I would only ask you to explain to me the causes of this wish. If they should appear to me groundless, I still have no right to interfere with you; if they appear to me reasonable, I am bound to help you, and I am ready. I am ready to give you poison. Under this condition I ask you to tell me the cause of your illness."

The sick girl said not a word.

"You do not want to answer me; I have no right to continue these questions. But may I ask you to allow me to tell you something about myself which may serve to increase the confidence between us. Yes? Thank you. Whatever the reason may be, you are suffering. I am too. I passionately love a woman who must never know that I love her. Do you pity me?"

The sick girl said not a word, but she smiled sorrowfully.

"You are silent, but still you could not hide that you noticed these words of mine more than those that I spoke before. That is sufficient of itself. I see that you and I have one cause of suffering. Do you want to die? I understand it very well. But to die of consumption is long, is hard; I am ready to help you to die, if I cannot help you to something better. I say that I am ready to give you poison—a delightful something that kills quick, without causing pain. Will you please let me know on this condition whether your position is so intolerable as it seems to you?"

"Won't you deceive me?" demanded the sick girl.

"Look me straight in the eye; you see that I will not deceive you."

The sick girl hesitated for some time. "No; I know you very little."

"Any one else in my place might have said that the feeling from which you are suffering is good. I shall not say so. Does your *bátiushka* know about it? I beg you to remember that I am not going to speak with him without your permission."

"He does not know."

"Does he love you?"

"Yes."

"What do you think that I am going to tell you now? You say that he loves you; I have heard that he was a stupid. What makes you think that it will be useless for you to reveal to him your feeling, that he will not consent? If the obstacle had lain simply in the poverty of the man whom you love, this would not have kept you from trying to persuade your father to give his consent; that is what I think about it. Therefore I must think that you entertain an exceedingly poor opinion of him; there could be no other reason for you to hide the matter from your father. Isn't it so?"

The sick girl said not a word.

"It is evident that I am not mistaken. What shall I think now? Your *bátiushka* is a man of experience in life, who knows human nature; you are inexperienced; if any person seems bad to him, and good to you, then according to all probabilities it is you who are mistaken, and not he. You see that I must think so? Do you want to know why I tell you such a disagreeable thing? I will tell you. You may get angry at my words, you may hate me because of them, but still you will say to yourself, 'He is saying what he thinks; he is not hypocritical, he does not want to deceive me.' You are gaining confidence in me. Isn't it true that I am speaking sincerely with you?"

The sick girl was hesitating whether to answer or not. "You are a strange man, doctor," she said, at last.

"No, not strange; but I am not like one who deceives. I have told you straightforwardly what I think. But this is only my supposition. Maybe I am mistaken. Let me know whether I am. Tell me the name of the man towards whom you feel this inclination. Then—but again, only with your permission—I will speak about him to your *bátiushka*."

"What will you tell him?"

"Does he know him intimately?"

"Yes."

"In that case, I shall tell him that he must consent to your marriage, but only on one condition, that the time of the wedding be appointed not immediately, but in two or three months, so that you may have time to think coolly, whether you may not be right."

"He will not consent."

"He will consent in all probability. But if not, I will help you, as I said."

Kirsánof spoke long in this style. Finally he succeeded in getting the sick girl to tell him the man's name, and to let him talk with her father. But to bring the old man to terms was a harder matter than to manage her. Pólozof was greatly surprised to hear that his daughter's strength had been failing on account of hopeless love; and still more surprised to hear the name of the man with whom she was in love, and he firmly declared: "Let her die sooner than marry him. Her death would be a lesser grief for both her and me." It was a very hard case, all the more because Kirsánof hearing Pólozof's reasons saw that the truth was really on the side of the old man, and not his daughter.

IV.

Bridegrooms had swarmed by the hundred around the heiress of the great fortune; but the society which flocked to Pólozof's dinners and suppers was a society of that excessively dubious type, of that excessively dubious refinement, which is generally found crowding the parlors of all such rich people as Pólozof, lifted above the more or less polite but still not fashionable circle in which they are born, without having any relationship or connection in the more or less genuinely polite society of the fashionable world. They become the benefactors of cunning adventurers and dandies who are absolutely indecent in their outward appearance, without speaking of their inward qualities. Therefore, Katerina Vasílyevna became interested when among the number of admirers came a genuine society man of absolutely good breeding; he behaved with so much more refinement; he spoke so much more sensibly and wittily than the others. Her father soon noticed that she was going to prefer him above the others; and, as an active, decided, substantial man, he immediately had a talk with his daughter:—

“My dear Katya—Sólovtsof, look out for him; he is a very bad man, a perfectly heartless man; you would be so unhappy with him, that I would rather see you dead than his wife. It would be easier for both me and you.”

Katerina Vasílyevna loved her father; she was accustomed to respect his opinion; he never put restrictions upon her; she knew that he was speaking thus because he loved her; and above all, her character was inclined more to regard the wishes of those who loved her than of her caprices; she was one of those who liked to say to her friends, “I will do as you think best.”

She answered her father: “I like Sólovtsof; but if you think it is better for me to keep at a distance from him, I shall do so.”

Of course she would not have done so; and as her nature was opposed to falsehood, she would not have said so if she had loved him. Her attachment to Sólovtsof was as yet very weak. At that time it had hardly taken root; he was merely more interesting to her than others. She began to grow cool towards him; and maybe everything would have ended satisfactorily; but the father in his zeal put in too much salt; and, though in reality he did not put on much, yet it was enough to salt off the polite Sólovtsof. He saw that he must play the part of a victim, but how to find a pretext for becoming a victim. Pólozof somehow stepped on his toes; Sólovtsof, with a sense of self-respect and pain on his face, took leave of them, and ceased his calls. A week later, Katerina Vasílyevna received from him a passionate and exceedingly humble letter, to the effect that he never expected that his love would be returned, that for his happiness it would be sufficient for him to see her occasionally, even though he did not speak with her but only saw her; that he was willing to sacrifice even this happiness, and yet he would be happy or unhappy, and so on, without a single request or wish. He did not even ask for a reply. Such letters kept coming; and finally they had their effect.

But it took a long time before they had their effect. Katerina Vasílyevna, at first after Sólovtsof left, was neither melancholy nor sorrowfully inclined, and even before that she had been cool to him; and she accepted so calmly her father's advice to look out for him, that consequently

when, after too months, she began to grow despondent, what could make her father think that Sóloltsof was at the bottom of it, when he had forgotten all about him?

“It seems to me you’re under the weather, Kátya.”

“No; it’s nothing—nothing; it’ll pass.”

In a week or two the old man was already asking, “Are you ill, Kátya?”

“No, not at all.”

Two weeks later the old man said, “You must see the doctor, Kátya.”

Kátya begins to consult the doctor; and the old man is entirely at ease because the doctor finds no cause of alarm. “It is only a weakness, some exhaustion”; and he very sensibly ascribed it to weariness, arising from Katerina’s style of life the past winter. Every night she had been up at parties till two or three, or even five o’clock, in the morning. “This exhaustion will pass.” But it did not pass; it rather increased.

Why did not Katerina Vasilyevna tell her father? She was convinced that this would have been in vain. Her father had told her before very firmly, and he does not speak unmeaning words. He does not like to express opinions about people without being sure of what he says; and he will never consent to her marrying a man whom he considers to be bad.

And so Katerina Vasilyevna kept on dreaming and dreaming while reading Sóloltsof’s humble and hopeless letters; and after half a year’s such reading, she was within half a step of consumption. And not by a single word could her father perceive that her disease originated from a matter in which he was partly to blame; his daughter had been as tender towards him as before.

“Is there anything that isn’t to your mind?”

“Nothing, papa.”

And it is evident that there is nothing; she is only out of spirits, but this is from her weakness, from illness. And the doctor declares that it is the result of her illness. But what is the cause of the illness? As soon as the doctor regarded the illness as trifling, he contented himself with laying the blame on dances and corsets; but when he saw that it was getting dangerous, then appeared his “innutrition of the nerves,—*atrophia nervorum*.”

V.

But if the practising Big Wigs agreed that Mademoiselle Pólozova's *atrophia nervorum*, which had been developed by a weakening mode of life, with the natural inclination towards dreaminess and melancholy, then not much was left for Kirsánof to study in the sick girl in order to see that her decline in strength originated from some mental causes. Before the consultation, the attending physician explained to him all the relations which she had had; family sorrows there were none; father and daughter are very dear to each other; at the same time the father does not know the reason of the illness, because the attending physician does not know it. But it is evident that the girl must have a strong character, if she has been able to conceal so long the illness itself, and has not given her father a single chance to conjecture the cause. A strong character was also evident by the quiet tone of her answers during the consultation. She shows no sign of irritability; she firmly endures her lot. Kirsánof saw that such a girl deserved attention. Can't something be done for her? Interference seemed to him essential; of course the thing will be revealed some time, but won't it be too late? Consumption is very near at hand, and then no care can help it. And so he wrestled with the patient for two hours; and he succeeded in conquering her suspicion; he learned the secret; and he obtained her permission to speak about it with her father.

The old man was startled when he heard from Kirsánof that the cause of his daughter's illness was love for Sólovtsof. How is this? Kátya accepted so coolly at that time his advice to beware of him; she remained so indifferent after he ceased to call upon them: how then is she dying of love for him? Yes, and is it even possible for people to die of love? Such exaltations could not appear likely to a person who was accustomed to lead an exclusively practical life, and to look upon everything with cool reason. Kirsánof had a tough subject in him; he kept repeating, "It's a child's fancy tormenting her, but soon forgotten." Kirsánof explained and explained; finally he told him plainly, "It is just because she is a child that she does not forget it, and is dying." Pólozof was persuaded and convinced, but instead of concession, he pounded the table with his fist, and said in a tone of concentrated decision, "If she is to die, let her die; it is better than for her to be unhappy: it would be easier for both her and me!" The very same words he had said to his daughter six months before. Katerina Vasílyevna was not mistaken in thinking that it was idle to talk with him.

"But what makes you so stubborn? I am perfectly convinced that he is a bad man; but is he really so bad that death is better than to live with him?"

"He is; he has no heart. She is delicate, gentle, but he is a beastly wretch!" And Pólozof went on to describe Sólovtsof, and in such a way that Kirsánof had nothing to say. And really how could he help agreeing with Pólozof?

Sólovtsof was the very same Jean who, at the time before Storeshnikof's courtship, ate supper with Serge and Julia after the opera. It is absolutely true that it is better for a respectable girl to die than to become the wife of such a man. He will pollute, he will chill, he will consume with his wretchedness a respectable woman; it is far better for her to die.

Kirsánof was lost in thought for some minutes. “No,” he said at length. “Well, am I really carried away by your earnestness? This case is without danger just because he is so bad. She cannot help seeing it; only give her time to look at it calmly.”

He began persistently to assure Pólozof what he had expressed to his daughter only as a suggestion, as possible—nay, even probable—that she would refuse this man whom she loved if he was really bad; and now he was absolutely sure of it, because the man she loved was very bad.

“I shall not tell you that marriage does not present such an importance if we look upon it coolly. If a woman is unhappy, then why should she not leave her husband? You consider this improper: your daughter has been brought up with the very same ideas; for you and her it seems really an irremediable loss, and before she would ever adopt new ideas, she would suffer with such a man till she died a death worse than consumption. But it is necessary to view the matter from another standpoint. Why should you not depend upon your daughter’s reason? She is not a fool, is she? Always count on reason; only allow it to act freely, and it will never prove fallacious when any cause is right. You yourself are to blame for your daughter’s attachment to him. Let him have free course, and he will bring your daughter round on your side, if the right is on your side. Passion blinds, especially if obstacles are put in the way of it; remove them, and your daughter will become reasonable. Give her liberty to love or not to love, and she will see whether this man is worthy of her love. Let him be her ‘bridegroom,’ and after some time she herself will dismiss him.”

Such a way of looking upon things was entirely new to Pólozof. He answered sharply that he did not believe any such nonsense; that he knows life too well; that he has seen too many examples of foolish people, to depend upon their reason; and so much the more absurd was it to trust the reason of a seventeen-year-old girl. Kirsánof tried in vain to prove to him that follies were committed only on two occasions,—either under the momentary influence of excitement, or from restraint, in which case he is irritated by resistance. Such ideas seemed entirely ridiculous to Pólozof. “She has no sense; it would be foolish to trust such a child with this fate; sooner let her die.” From such reasoning it was impossible to stir him.

It is a fact, that no matter how set may be the ideas of a man who is in the wrong, when a man who is better developed, who knows more, who understands things more wisely, works constantly with the purpose of removing his errors, the errors must give way. It is so; but how long does a logical battle with him last? Of course all the conversation here recorded will fail of its result, though so far its influence upon Pólozof is not appreciable yet. The old man is beginning to think over Kirsánof’s words. This is unavoidable, and if such conversation should be kept up with him, he will come to himself. But he is proud of his experience; he looks upon himself as infallible; he is set and stubborn; it is possible to bring him to terms, without doubt, but it takes time, and all delay is dangerous. A long delay is surely fatal; and a long delay is inevitable when a methodical manner of conducting the logical battle with him is employed.

It was necessary to employ radical means. It is risky without doubt; but if it is employed, it is only a risk; without, it is sure death. And the risk in it is, in reality, not nearly so great as it may seem to a person who is less solid in his comprehension of the laws of life than this Kirsánof. The risk is not great at all, but it is serious. From the whole lottery only one ticket is a blank. And there is no probability of its being drawn—but supposing it were drawn? Whoever runs a risk must be ready not to wink if he draws the blank. Kirsánof saw the girl’s calm, quiet firmness, and he was sure of her. But had he the right to subject her to the risk? Of course he had. Now, out of a hundred chances, there is only one that she will not lose her health in this case. More

than half of them are that she will lose it rapidly. But here, out of a thousand chances, one would be against her. Let her risk the lottery, though it is apparently more terrible because it is more rapid, but in reality it is incomparably less dangerous.

“All right,” said Kirsánof. “You do not want to cure her by those means which are in your power; I shall cure her with mine. To-morrow I shall have another consultation.”

After he returned to the sick girl, he told her that her father was stubborn, more stubborn than he expected, and that it would be necessary to act towards him with severe measures.

“No; it is of no use,” said the sick girl, despondently.

“Are you sure of it?”

“Yes.”

“Are you ready to die?”

“Yes.”

“Now supposing that I decide to subject you to the risk of death. I told you briefly, in order to gain your confidence, to show you that I am ready for everything that may be for your good; now I speak positively. Supposing that it be necessary to administer poison?”

“I have seen this long time that my death is inevitable; that I have only a few days longer to live.”

“Supposing it were to-morrow morning?”

“So much the better.” She spoke with perfect calmness.

“When there is only one salvation left, and that is your readiness to die, this support will almost always save you. If you say to any one, ‘Give in, or I shall die,’ you almost always gain what you wish. But you know that one should not play with such a lofty principle; and besides, it is impossible for you to lower your self-respect if they don’t yield. And therefore it is necessary to die.” He explained to her the plan, which was perfectly comprehensible from this conversation.

VI.

Of course in other cases of this sort Kirsánof would not have thought of running such a risk; it would be more simple to take the girl from home, and let her marry whomsoever she pleased. But here the affair was complicated by the girl's ideas, and the peculiarities of the man whom she loved. With her ideas of the inseparability of husband and wife, she would have clung to the wretched man even if she had found that to live with him was a torment. To unite them would be worse than to kill. Therefore there remained one choice, either to kill, or to give her the possibility of coming to reason.

On the next day the consultation was held, composed of some of the practitioners in the high world. There are five doctors, the most renowned; it is impossible not to have the best; how otherwise could they bend Pólozof? It was necessary that the sentence should be without appeal in his eyes. Kirsánof spoke; they listened with great condescension to what he said, and they all confirmed it with an air of great importance. It could not be otherwise, because, you remember, there is in existence a certain Claude Bernard, and he lives in Paris; and besides that, Kirsánof says such things which—but the plague take these boys! You can't understand them! Then how can you help agreeing with them?

Kirsánof said that he had examined the invalid very carefully, and he entirely agreed with Karl Feodorvitch that the illness is incurable, and the agony of this disease is torture; and, generally speaking, every additional hour that the sick girl shall live is an additional hour of suffering. Therefore he considers that it is the duty of the consulting physicians to decide according to the dictates of humanity to shorten the sick girl's sufferings by a dose of morphine, from which she would not awaken. The consulting physicians investigated the case, blinking their eyes under the hailstones of incomprehensible explanations on the part of Kirsánof; they came back from the sick girl's room to the one where they had been sitting; and they decided to shorten the sick girl's sufferings by a fatal dose of morphine.

After the decision was made, Kirsánof rang for the servant, and asked him to call Pólozof into the parlor, where the consultation was held. Pólozof came in. The most important of the sages, in appropriately gloomily solemn language and in a majestically funereal voice, announced the decision of the consulting physicians.

Pólozof started back as though struck on the forehead by a hammer. To be waiting for death, when death is at hand, but uncertain how soon it may come, or whether it may come at all, and to hear that in half an hour she will not be among the living, are two absolutely different things. Kirsánof looked at Pólozof with an intense gaze; he was absolutely sure of the effect, but still the thing was a strain on his nerves. Two minutes the old man stood silent, horror-stricken.

"No; it must not be! She is dying from my stubbornness. I am ready for anything. Can she get well?"

"Of course," said Kirsánof.

The famous practitioners would have been greatly stirred to wrath, if they had had time for it; that is, to exchange glances, and to see that "my colleagues also like me understand that I have

been a doll in the hands of this young boy.” But Kirsánof allowed them no time to turn their attention to the thought, “how others looked on me.” Kirsánof told the servant to conduct the frightened Pólozof from the room; thanked them for their shrewdness, which they had displayed in fathoming his intentions, for their understanding that the cause of the illness was mental suffering; that it was necessary to frighten the stubborn old man, who would otherwise have lost his daughter. The famous practitioners went each his way, satisfied that his scientific knowledge and shrewdness was recognized by all the others.

But having given them this brief testimony of their skill, Kirsánof went to tell the sick girl that the plan had succeeded. At the first words she seized his hand, and he had hardly time to take it away from her before she would have kissed it. “But I shall not let your father come quite yet, to tell you the same thing,” he said. “I shall first give him a lecture as to the way that he should behave himself towards you.” He told her that he was going to give her father some good advice, and that he should not leave him until he had firmly implanted it.

Shocked by the result of the consultation, the old man became very pliable; and he regarded Kirsánof, not with the same eyes as the day before, but with such as Marya Alekséyevna looked upon Lopukhóf, after dreaming of Lopukhóf as a monopolist.

Yesterday a natural thought was always in Pólozof’s mind, “I am older than you, and more experienced. Yes, there is no one in the world smarter than I am; and as for you, milk-sucker and bubby, so much the less reason have I to listen to you, since I, with my own reason, have made four millions” (although in reality they were only two, and not four). “You try to make two millions, and then talk.” But now he thought, “What a bear he is! how he routed me! He knows how to break one in.” And the more he spoke with Kirsánof, the more lively arose before him, in addition to the quality of “bear,” another picture—an old and forgotten recollection of his life as a hussar: his riding-master,¹ Zakhártchenko, was sitting on his horse, “Gromoboï” (at that time Zhukóvsky’s² ballads were fashionable among young ladies, and therefore to a certain extent among young cavaliers, both in the army and civil life), and “Gromoboï” was prancing under Zakhártchenko, only “Gromoboï’s” lips were covered with blood. Pólozof was somewhat horrified, as he heard Kirsánof’s answer to his first question.

“Would you really have given her a fatal dose?”

“Certainly I should,” replied Kirsánof, with absolute *sang-froid*.

“What a murderer! He talks like a cook about a dead chicken! And you would have courage for it?”

“Of course I should. What a clout I should be if I hadn’t!”

“You are a terrible man!” said Pólozof again.

“It shows that you have never seen any terrible men.” said Kirsánof, with an indulgent smile, thinking to himself, “I should like to show you Rakhmétov.”

“But how did you manage all those doctors?”

“As though it were hard to manage such men!” said Kirsánof, with a slight grimace.

Pólozof recollected Zakhártchenko, who said to the second-captain, Volutnof: “Did you bring me this lop-eared beast for me to ride on, your eminence? I am ashamed to mount him.”

¹ *Beréitor*.

² *Zhukóvsky* was the tutor of Alexander the Second, and the author of many popular poems; among others, the national hymn, “God save the Tsar.” The Gromoboï was the thunderbolt, personified as a horse.

After settling all of Pólozof's endlessly repeated questions, Kirsánof began to suggest to him how he should comport himself.

"Remember that a person is able to reason only when he is entirely undisturbed; that he is not excited only when he is not stirred up; that he does not value his fancies except when they are taken from him, when he is allowed to find out for himself whether they are good or not. If Sólovtsof is as bad as you describe him,—and I fully believe it,—your daughter will see it herself. But only if you don't interfere; if you don't excite the thought in her mind that you are in any way intriguing against him, that you are trying to block them. One word on your part, one hostile word, will injure the case for two weeks; a few words may ruin it forever. You must keep yourself entirely apart."

This course of conduct was inculcated with words like these: "It isn't easy to compel you to do what you don't like, is it? and yet I have brought you to it. This shows that I understand how to take charge of a case. Then believe that whatever I say must be done. Whatever I say; you only take it second-hand."

With such people as Pólozof it was impossible at that time, otherwise than by force, and by stepping on his throat. Pólozof became more amenable to reason, and he promised to comport himself as he was told. But even after he became convinced that Kirsánof was saying the right thing, and that it was necessary to listen to him, Pólozof could not yet comprehend what kind of a man he was. He at one and the same time took both his side and his daughter's. He compels him to yield to his daughter, and he wants his daughter to change; how to reconcile this?

"Very simply. I want you not to hinder her return to reason, and that is all."

Pólozof wrote Sólovtsof a note, in which he asked him to come to see him about a very important matter. That same evening Sólovtsof came; he made the old man a gentle explanation, full of self-respect; he was acknowledged as "bridegroom," on condition that the wedding should be in three months

VII.

Kirsánof could not give up the case; it was necessary to help Katerina Vasílyevna emerge from her blindness, and it was still more necessary to manage her father, to keep him up to his promise of not interfering. But he made it inconvenient to call upon the Polovtsófs, during the first few days after the crisis. Katerina Vasílyevna was still feeling exalted; if he saw, as was to be infallibly expected, that the “bridegroom” was a scoundrel, then, even his silent dissatisfaction with the “bridegroom,” and not alone his upright and downright opinion, would be prejudicial; would still further kindle her excitement. Kirsánof called there one morning, after a week and a half, so as not directly to seek a meeting with the “bridegroom,” but to secure Katerina Vasílyevna’s permission. Katerina Vasílyevna was already beginning to look better; she was as yet very thin and pale, but was entirely well, though the former famous practitioner still prescribed for her; for, when Kirsánof again put her in his hands, he said, “Ask his advice; now none of his medicines will do you any harm, even if you should take them.”

Katerina Vasílyevna met Kirsánof enthusiastically, and looked at him with wondering eyes, when he told her what he had come for.

“You saved my life, and yet you want to ask my permission to call on us!”

“But my calling upon you, without your consent, while he is here, might seem to you as an attempt, on my part, to interfere in your relations, if I came. You know my rule: not to do anything against the will of a person for whose benefit I would like to work.”

Kirsánof came on the second or third evening, and found the “bridegroom” to be exactly what Pólozof described him, and Pólozof himself, in a proper state of mind; the well-trained old man did not interfere. Kirsánof spent the evening, giving no sign of what he thought of the “bridegroom,” and as he said good night to Katerina Vasílyevna, he did not hint at all how the bridegroom pleased him.

This was quite enough to wake her curiosity and doubt. On the next day she kept thinking: “Kirsánof did not say a word about him. If he had made a good impression on him, Kirsánof would have told me so. Is it possible that he didn’t please him? What can there be that Kirsánof disliked in him?” When the “bridegroom” came in the evening, she scrutinized his behavior, she pondered over his words. She said to herself, “What is he doing this for,” in order to convince herself that Kirsánof had no right or reason in finding any blemish in him. And she did convince herself; but the necessity of proving to yourself that there are no blemishes in the being you love leads to the quick discovery of such blemishes.

After a few days Kirsánof called again, and again he said not a word about his impression of the “bridegroom”; but this time she could not restrain herself, and at the end of the evening, she said:—

“Your opinion? Why are you so silent?”

“I am afraid that you won’t enjoy hearing my opinion; I am afraid that you will think that I am partial.”

“Don’t you like him?”

Kirsánof did not reply.

“You don’t like him, do you?”

“I did not say so.”

“It is evident. Why don’t you like him?”

“I am going to wait till it is also evident to you why I don’t like him.”

On the following evening Katerina Vasilyevna began to scrutinize Sólovtsof still more particularly. “Everything about him is lovely. Kirsánof is not fair; but why can’t I see what there is in him that Kirsánof does not like?” She was vexed at her inability to observe. She asked herself, “Am I really so simple?” Her self-respect was aroused in her in a direction most dangerous for her bridegroom.

When Kirsánof came again a few days later, he perceived the possibility of acting more energetically. Till now he had avoided talk with Sólovtsof, in order to avoid stirring up Katerina Vasilyevna by a premature interference; now he joined the group surrounding her and Sólovtsof, and led the conversations to topics in which Sólovtsof’s character would be shown forth as soon as he was drawn into the current. The conversation turned on riches, and it appeared to Katerina Vasilyevna that Sólovtsof was greatly interested in riches. The conversation turned upon “bridegrooms,” and it seemed to her that Sólovtsof spoke rather slightly about them. The conversation turned upon family life, and she tried in vain to banish from her mind the impression that possibly it might be cold and hard for a wife to live with such a husband.

A crisis occurred. Katerina Vasilyevna could not go to sleep for a long while; her face was bathed in tears from being vexed at herself for insulting Sólovtsof with such thoughts about him. “No, he is not a cold man; he does not despise women; he loves me and not my money.” If these objections had been given as an answer to the words of somebody else, they would have firmly clung to her memory. But she objected to her own self, and it is impossible long to resist the truth which you yourself have discovered. It is your own; you cannot suspect any trickery. The next evening she examined Sólovtsof just as Kirsánof had done the evening before. She said to herself that she only wanted to be convinced that she insulted him without reason; but she herself felt that a distrust of him had sprung up in her. And again she could not sleep, but she was vexed at him. Why didn’t he speak so as to allay her doubts instead of corroborating them? She was vexed at herself, but in her vexation clearly appeared the motive. “How could I be so blind!”

Naturally, in a day or two, she began to be exclusively absorbed by the fear arising from the thought, “I shall soon lose the possibility of correcting my mistake, if I have been mistaken in him.”

When Kirsánof came the next time, he saw that he could speak with her.

“You asked my opinion about him,” said he; “it is not so important as your own. What do you think of him?”

Now *she* had nothing to reply.

“I have no right to be inquisitive,” said he; talked about something else, and soon left her to herself.

But in half an hour she herself came to him.

“Give me some counsel; you see my thoughts are disturbed.”

“Why do you want the advice of a stranger when you yourself know what ought to be done when your thoughts are disturbed.”

“Wait till they cease to be disturbed at all?”

“Do according to your best knowledge.”

“I shall postpone the wedding.”

“Why shouldn’t you postpone it if it seems to you better?”

“But how will he take it?”

“When you see how he takes it, then you can decide what is best to be done.”

“But it is hard for me to tell him.”

“If that is the case, then let your bátiushka tell him.”

“I don’t want to get behind anybody’s back; I shall tell him myself.”

“If you feel strong enough to tell him yourself, then it would be much better.”

Of course, with others, Viéra Pavlovna for example, it would not have done to drag out the affair so tediously; but every temperament has its own demands. If a hot-tempered man is irritated by slow methods, then a slow man is vexed by an abrupt measure.

Katerina Vasílyevna’s success in dealing with her “bridegroom” exceeded Kirsánof’s expectations. He thought that Sólovtsof would be able to guard his interests, that he would prolong the matter by humiliation and gentle entreaties. No, with all his tact, Sólovtsof could not control himself when he saw that great wealth was slipping out of his hands, and he himself let go of the slight chances which he still had. He poured out sharp reproaches on Pólozof, who he declared was intriguing against him, and he said to Katerina Vasílyevna that she gave her father too great power over her, that she was afraid of him, and was acting now at his command. But Pólozof did not know as yet about his daughter’s decision to delay the wedding; the daughter constantly felt that he gave her perfect freedom. The reproaches heaped upon her father grieved her by their unfairness, and they insulted her because by them Sólovtsof expressed his views in regard to her as a being deprived of will and character.

“It seems to me that you take me to be a plaything in the hands of others.”

“Yes,” said he in his irritation.

“I was ready to die, not regarding my father’s will, and you don’t appreciate it. From this moment everything is ended between us,” said she, and quickly left the room.

VIII.

After these occurrences, Katerina Vasilyevna was long melancholy; but her melancholy, though developed by this state of things, was not at all attributable to this special state of things. There are characters to whom a special fact in itself has very little interest, and serves only to engender general ideas which act upon them with much greater power. If such people possess remarkably strong minds, they become reformers nowadays just as in ancient times they became great philosophers. Kant, Fichte, Hegel, never worked out private questions; it was too tedious for them. This, of course, is true only of men; women, according to the prevailing idea, have very little understanding. Nature did not give it them, just as she did not give a clean face to blacksmiths, straight backs to tailors, a delicate sense of smell to shoemakers; all this is nature. It is for this reason that there are no women of great intellect. People of weak minds and with tendency of character become phlegmatic even to apathy. People of ordinary brains are inclined to melancholy, to a quiet life, and are generally imaginative. This does not signify that they are chimerical. In a good many cases the imagination is weak and they are very positive people. They simply love a quiet revery.

Katerina Vasilyevna had been in love with Jean Sólovtsov on account of his letters. She was dying with love founded only on her imagination. It may readily be seen that she was inclined to be very romantic, and frivolous life led by the trivial people who frequented Pólozof's house did not at all dispose her to an exalted idealism. This shows that this feature of her character arose from her own nature. She had long been burdened by the frivolity of that kind of life; she loved to read and dream. And now she was troubled not only by its frivolity, but by the wealth with which she was surrounded. It must not be thought that because she had this feeling, she had an extraordinary nature; it is common among all wealthy women of a humble and retiring character. In her it developed earlier than ordinary, simply because she had early received a powerful lesson.

"Whom shall I believe? What shall I believe?" she asked herself after the episode with Sólovtsov, and it seemed to her that nobody and nothing were worthy of her faith. Her father's riches attracted the envious, cunning, deceitful, from the whole city. She was surrounded by avaricious men, by liars, by flatterers; every word that was said to her was calculated with a view to her father's millions.

Her thoughts kept growing more serious. She began to get interested in the general questions arising from the wealth that troubled her so much, as well as in those arising from the poverty which troubled others. Her father gave her plenty of pin money, but like any other good woman she used it in helping the poor. But she read and thought and began to notice that such help as she could give did less good than she had reason to expect. She began to see that she was constantly deceived by feigned or knavish poverty; that people worthy of aid, able to make good use of such money, scarcely ever got any solid good from it; it lifts them temporarily out of their poverty, but in half a year or a year those people are in the same situation again. She began to

think: “Why should money ruin people? Why does this importunate poverty never leave the poor? And why are there so many poor who are as unreasonable and bad as the rich?”

She was a person of imagination, but her imaginations were gentle, like her character, and there was just as little brilliancy about them as there was in herself. Her favorite author was George Sand, but she never imagined herself to be Lélia or Indiana or Cavalcanti or Consuelo; she more often imagined herself to be Jeannette or Geneviève. Geneviève was her favorite heroine. Here she is going through the field and is gathering flowers which will serve as models of her handiwork; here she meets André—such quiet meetings! Here they discover that they love each other; such were her imaginations, and she knew that they were only imaginations. And she loved to dream how enviable was the lot of Miss Nightingale, that quiet, unostentatious little woman, of whom scarcely anything was known except that she was loved by all England. Was she young? Was she rich or poor? Was she happy or unhappy? About this nothing is said, about this nothing is thought; every one blesses the little woman, who was a ministering angel in the English hospitals of the Crimea and Skutari, and who at the end of the war, while returning to her native land with hundreds saved by her, still continued to take care of the sick. Such were the dreams whose fulfilment Katerina Vasílyevna would have liked to see. Her fancy did not carry her beyond the thoughts of Geneviève and Miss Nightingale. Can one say that she was fanciful? Can one call her imaginative?

Geneviève in a frivolous, contemptible society of fops and empty-headed dandies, Miss Nightingale in idle grandeur, would not they be lonesome? wouldn't they be melancholy? And therefore Katerina Vasílyevna was rather more glad than sorry when her father failed. She was sorry to see him who had been so strong growing prematurely old; she was sorry also that her ability to help others was curtailed. At first it was offensive to see the scorn of the crowd which had crawled and cringed before her and her father. But she was also glad that this mean, pitiable, wretched crowd had deserted them, had ceased to burden her life, to arouse her indignation by their falsehood and degradation; she felt so free now! Hopes of happiness arose in her heart. “Now if any one shows me any devotion, it will be for myself alone, and not for my father's millions.”

IX.

Pólozof was anxious to arrange for the sale of the stearine factory of which he was part owner and had been the manager. After more than half a year of energetic effort, he found a purchaser. On the purchaser's visiting-cards was engraved the name Charles Beaumont, not pronounced *Sharl Bomon*, as the ignorant might suppose, but in the true English fashion, *Beemont*; and it was entirely natural that it was pronounced so, for the purchaser was the agent of the London house of Hodgson, Lotter and Company, for the purchase of tallow and stearine. The factory could not exist under the wretched financial and administrative conduct of its shareholders; but in the hands of a solid firm it would be sure to bring great profits. After spending on it five or six hundred thousand rubles, the firm could count on having one hundred thousand rubles of profits. The agent was a conscientious man; he looked over the factory with great care, and examined the books in detail before he advised the firm to buy the property. Then followed negotiations with the stockholders in regard to the selling of the factory. They were excessively long and according to the nature of Russian business transactions; even the patient Greeks who spent ten years in the siege of Troy would have found them tedious. And Pólozof all this time was with the agent, according to the old custom of being hospitable to people who are of use, and he invited him to dinner every day. The agent tried to get out of his way, and persistently refused to stay to dinner. But one day, after he had been having an unusually long session with the directors of the company and was tired and hungry, he consented to go to dinner with Pólozof, who lived in a flat in the factory.

X.

Charles Beaumont, like the average Charles, John, James, and William, did not care to indulge in intimacies or personal confidences; but on being asked, he related his story briefly, but very plainly. His family, he said, was from Canada; and in Canada almost half the population consisted of the descendants of French colonists; his family was one of these, and therefore his name was of French origin, and his face was more like a Frenchman's than an Englishman's or Yankee's. But, he continued, his grandfather emigrated from the vicinity of Quebec to New York; it often happened so. At the time of this emigration his father was a child. Afterwards, of course, he grew up and became a grown-up man; and at this time a certain rich man, with advanced ideas of agriculture, determined to establish on the southern shores of the Krimea instead of vineyards a cotton plantation; he commissioned some one to find him a manager in North America. James Beaumont was recommended to him—a Canadian by birth, a resident of New York, and a man who had all his life been as many versts from a cotton plantation as you or I, reader, who live at Petersburg or Kursk, have been from Mount Ararat. This is the usual experience of such progressionists. It is true that it was not the fault of the American manager's absolute ignorance of cotton plantations that his plan was ruined, because to plant cotton in the Krimea is as absurd as it would be to establish vineyards in Petersburg. And when this was found out, the American manager was discharged from the cotton plantation, and found a position as distiller in a factory in the government of Tambof. Here he lived all his life; here his son Charles was born, and soon after that he buried his wife. When he was about sixty-five years old, having accumulated a little money for his declining years, he determined to return to America, and he left. Charles was then twenty years old. When his father died, Charles made up his mind to come back to Russia, because, since he had been born and had lived twenty years in a village of the government of Tambof, he felt that he was a Russian. He had lived with his father in New York and had been a clerk in a merchant's office. When his father died, he went to the New York office of the London firm of Hodgson, Lotter and Company, because he knew that this house had business with Petersburg, and after he had succeeded in making himself useful, he expressed a desire to get a place in Russia, explaining that he knew Russia, it being his native land. To have such an agent in Russia was of course advantageous for the firm; he was transferred to the London office for a trial, and some six months before his dinner with Pólozof, he came to Petersburg as an agent for the firm for the purchase of stearine and tallow, with a salary of five hundred pounds. In perfect agreement with this tale, Beaumont, who was born and had lived in the government of Tambof till he was twenty years old, with only one American or Englishman in a circle of twenty or fifty or one hundred versts around, with his father, who had been all day long in the factory; in conformity with this tale, Charles Beaumont spoke Russian like a native Russian, and English fairly well, very well, but not distinctly, as is likely to be the case with a man who has lived in the land of the English tongue only a few years after reaching maturity.

XI.

Beaumont found himself at the dinner-table, sitting with only two others, the old man and a very genteel, but somewhat melancholy blondinka, his daughter.

"Did I ever think," said Pólozof at dinner, "that the shares in this factory would ever have such importance for me? It is hard for a man of my years to have such a shock come upon him, but it is good that Kátya cares so little that I have lost her fortune; for, even while I live, it is more her property than mine: her mother had property, and I had little. Of course I made every ruble grow into twenty; it shows that, on the other hand, it grew more from my labor than by inheritance; and how hard I worked! and how much one has to know!" The old man talked long in this self-flattering tone. "And everything was gained by my sweat and blood, but most of all by my brains," he said in conclusion, and he repeated what he said at first: that such a shock was very hard to bear, and that if Kátya too were worried by it, it seemed to him that he would lose his senses; but Kátya not only does not worry, but even consoles him.

Either according to the American custom of not seeing anything extraordinary in a rapid accumulation of wealth, or in a failure, or because it was his natural character, Beaumont had no desire either to be overpowered by the greatness of the mind that could make three or four millions, or to feel great concern for the failure which left sufficient means to allow the maintenance of a good cook; but nevertheless it was necessary to offer some consolation after this long speech, and therefore he said, "Yes, it is a great solace when a family faces its troubles courageously."

"Yes? you speak rather doubtfully, Karl Yakovlitch. You think that Kátya is melancholy on account of her lost riches? No, Karl Yakovlitch, no; you judge her unfairly; she and I have a different trouble; she and I have lost our confidence in men," said Pólozof in that half-jesting, half-serious tone in which old and experienced people speak of the good and inexperienced thoughts of their children.

Katerina Vasílyevna blushed; it was disagreeable to her that her father turned the conversation to her feelings: but besides her father's love there was another certain circumstance, for which her father was not to blame; if there is nothing to talk about, and there happens to be in the room a cat or a dog, the conversation will seize upon the animal; and if there is no cat or dog, then it goes to the children. The weather is the third and the extremity of resourcelessness.

"No, papa, it is hardly necessary to explain my melancholy by any motive so high; you know that I have a reserved nature, and I am lonesome."

"One need not be melancholy unless he pleases," said Beaumont; "but to be bored is in my opinion unpardonable. Loneliness is a fashion among our brethren, the English, but we Americans know nothing about it; we have no time to be melancholy. We have too much to do to allow of it, I think; I mean, it *seems to me*" (he corrected his Americanism) "that the Russian people ought to see themselves in the same situation: according to my way of looking at it, they too have too much to do; but, in reality, I see exactly the opposite in the Russians; they are very much disposed to reserve. Even the English cannot equal them in this respect. Englishmen are known all over Europe, including Russia, to be the most gloomy people in the world, but they are as

much more sociable, lively, and gay than the Russians, as they themselves are behind the French in this respect, and your tourists tell you how reserved English society is. I don't understand where their eyes are when they look at themselves."

"And the Russians are right in being gloomy," said Katerina Vasilyevna; "what chance do they have for activity? They have nothing to do! They have to sit and fold their hands. Give me something to do, and the chances are that I shall not be melancholy."

"You want to find something to do? Oh, there ought not to be any obstacle to that; you see all around you such ignorance; excuse me for speaking so about your country, *about your fatherland*" (again he corrected his Anglicism); "but I was born here myself, and grew up here; I look upon it as my own, and therefore I don't stand upon ceremony; you see in it genuine Turkish ignorance, Chinese helplessness. 'I detest your fatherland because I love it as my own,' I will say, imitating your poet; but there are great opportunities."

"Yes, but what can a man, much less, what can a woman, do?"

"But you are doing something, Kátya," said Pólozof.—"I am going to expose her secret, Karl Yakovlitch. She teaches little girls because she hasn't anything else to do. Every day she has her pupils, and she is busy with them from ten o'clock till one, and sometimes even longer."

Beaumont looked up at Katerina Vasilyevna with respect. "This is our style in America; of course by America I mean only the Northern free States. The Southern States are worse than Mexico, almost as bad as Brazil." Beaumont was an ardent abolitionist. "This is in our style," he repeated; "and if this is so, why be lonesome?"

"Is this a serious undertaking, Mr. Beaumont? It seems to me merely a recreation; perhaps I may be mistaken; maybe you will call me a materialist."

"Do you expect such a reproach from a man belonging to a nation whose sole aim and thought, as every one asserts, is dollars?"

"Those are idle words, but I really fear to express my opinion; it may seem analogous to what the *obskurants* are agitating about the uselessness of education."

"Now I see,¹" thought Beaumont; "has she really come to that? This is getting interesting.—I myself am an *obskurant*" said he; "I am in favor of the illiterate colored people against their civilized owners in the Southern States. Excuse me; I am drawn away by my American prejudices; but I am very curious to know your opinion."

"It is very prosaic, Mr. Beaumont, but life brought me to it. It seems to me that the thing that I am doing is too one-sided; and that side to which it is directed is not the most important side, if those who want to do good to the people want really to do the best for them; this is what I think: give men bread, and they themselves will get education. It is necessary to begin with bread; otherwise, we are simply wasting our time."

"Then why don't you begin where you ought to begin?" asked Beaumont, in a somewhat excited manner. "It is possible that I know instances at home in America," he added.

"I told you that I was alone, and what can I do? I don't know how to begin; and if I did know, what chance have I? A girl is tied in every way. I am not independent even in my own room. What can I do in my room? Lay a book down on the table, and teach children how to read. Where can I go alone by myself? Whom can I see alone? What action can I take by myself?"

"It seems to me that you represent me as a despot, Kátya," said her father. "I am not to blame in this case, and have not been since you taught me my lesson."

¹ *Vot kak.*

"Papa, I am still blushing for that; I was only a child then. No, papa, you are kind; you don't restrain me; it is society that restrains. Is it true, Mr. Beaumont, that a girl in America is freer in her actions?"

"Yes; we have that to be proud of. To be sure, we are far from being what we ought to be; but still, what a comparison between us and you Europeans! All that you have been told about the emancipation of women there, is true."

"Papa, let us go to America, as soon as Mr. Beaumont has bought your factory," said Katerina Vasílyevna, gayly. "There I should accomplish something. *Akh!* how happy I should be!"

"One can find something to do in Petersburg," said Beaumont.

"I should like to see it."

Beaumont hesitated two or three seconds. "Why did I come here?" he asked himself; "who would be better to find out for me?—Haven't you heard? An experiment has been tried of putting into practice the principles of political economy, which have recently been established; do you know them?"

"Yes, I have read about them. It must be very interesting and profitable; and I can take a part in them. Where can I find them?"

"It was established by a Mrs. Kirsánova."

"Who is she? Is her husband a doctor?"

"Do you know him? And didn't he tell you about this experiment?"

"I knew him long before he was married. I was very ill; he called on us several times, and saved me. *Akh!* what a fine man he is! Is she like him?"

But how could she get acquainted with Mrs. Kirsánova? Will Beaumont give Katerina Vasílyevna a letter to Mrs. Kirsánova? No; the Kirsánofs had never even heard his name, but no introduction is necessary. Mrs. Kirsánova will certainly be glad to meet such sympathy. Her address can easily be found where Kirsánof is employed.

XII.

It thus came about that Miss Pólozova became acquainted with Viéra Pavlovna. She went to see her the very next morning; and Beaumont was so much interested, that he came back in the evening to find out how Katerina Vasílyevna liked her new acquaintance and the new enterprise.

Katerina Vasílyevna was greatly inspired. Her melancholy had entirely disappeared; her dreaminess had given way to enthusiasm. She eagerly related to Beaumont—and she had already told her father, but once telling of it was not enough—what she had seen that morning, and there seemed to be no end to her story; yes, now her heart was full. She had found a lively enterprise. Beaumont listened to her attentively; but can one be satisfied with listening only? And she said, almost with vexation, “Mr. Beaumont, I am disappointed in you. Does it have so little effect on you, that it only interests you, and nothing more?”

“Katerina Vasílyevna, you forget that I have seen all this at home in America; some of the details may be interesting to me; but the enterprise itself is too familiar to me. Only the people who carry it on with such success are of interest to me, while to you the thing is a novelty. For instance, what can you tell me about Madame Kirsánova?”

“*Akh! Bozhe moi!* Of course I liked her very much indeed. She was so lovely in describing everything to me.”

“You told me that before.”

“What else do you want? What more can I tell you? What attention could I give to her when I had such a novel thing before my eyes?”

“That is so,” said Beaumont; “I understand we entirely forget about persons when we are interested in things; however, can’t you tell me something else about Madame Kirsánova?”

Katerina Vasílyevna tried to gather all her recollections about Viéra Pavlovna, but she could only bring back the first impression which Viéra Pavlovna made upon her; she gave a very lively picture of her personal appearance, her way of speaking, all, in fact, that the eye takes in when meeting a stranger for the first time; but further, there was absolutely nothing in her recollections of Viéra Pavlovna that was of special interest: it was her work-shop, work-shop, work-shop, and Viéra Pavlovna’s explanations about the work-shop. She understood the explanations perfectly, but Viéra Pavlovna herself, from the time that followed their first meeting, made no impression upon her.

“And so this time I am disappointed in my expectations in learning about Madame Kirsánova; but I am not going to give you up; in a few days I shall ask you again about her.”

“But why don’t you yourself make her acquaintance, if she interests you so?”

“I should like to do so; maybe I will do so some time. But before, I must learn more about her.”—Beaumont was silent for a moment.—“I was wondering whether to ask you or not; but it seems better to ask you, if you should happen to mention my name in your conversation with her, please don’t tell her that I have made any inquiries about her, or that I want to make her acquaintance some time.”

“That’s very mysterious, Mr. Beaumont,” said Katerina Vasílyevna in a serious tone. “You want to find out about them, and yet you yourself want to be concealed.”

“Yes, Katerina Vasílyevna; how can I explain that to you? I am *afraid* to make their acquaintance.”

“This is very strange, Mr. Beaumont.”

“It is true. I will speak plainer; I am afraid that it would be disagreeable to her. They have never heard my name. But I might have had some intercourse with some of the people that are friends of theirs, or even with themselves; it is all the same. In a word, I must know first whether it would be agreeable to them to make my acquaintance.”

“All this is strange, Mr. Beaumont.”

“I am an honest man, Katerina Vasílyevna; let me assure you that I would never think of putting you into a false position; this is only the second time that I have ever seen you, but I have a great respect for you.”

“I also see, Mr. Beaumont, that you are a man worthy of respect, but—”

“If you think that I am a man worthy of respect, you will allow me to call upon you, so that when you know me well enough, I can ask you again about the Kirsánofs. Or, rather, you will speak about them yourself when it will seem to you that you can fulfil my request which I shall make now, and which I shall not repeat. Do you agree?”

“All right, Mr. Beaumont,” said Katerina Vasílyevna, slightly shrugging her shoulders. “But you must confess that—”

Again she did not want to finish her sentence.

“That my action seems rather suspicious? True; but I will wait till you get over your suspicions.”

XIII.

Beaumont got into the way of making frequent calls at the Pólozofs'. "Why not?" thought the old man. "He is an excellent match. Of course in other days Kátya could have had a better husband. But even then she did not care for money or for flattery. And now nothing better could be desired."

Indeed, Beaumont was an excellent match. He said that he intended to live the rest of his life in Russia because he looked upon it as his native land. He was a man of character; he was thirty years old, a self-made man; and he had a good situation. If he had been a Russian, Pólozof would have liked him to belong to the nobility.¹ But as he was a foreigner, this was of no consequence, especially as he was of French origin, and, above all, an American citizen. Among the Americans, a man who may be to-day a journeyman shoemaker, or a plowman, to-morrow will be a general, and the next day president; and after that he may be a lawyer, or in a counting-house. It is a peculiar people altogether; they care only for a man's money or his brains. This is the right way of looking at it," continued Pólozof. "I myself am that kind of man. I entered mercantile life; I married a merchant's widow. The main thing is money, and brains, because without brains you can't get any money. And this man is on the road to it. He will buy the factory, will become manager; then the firm will take him as a partner. And their firms are not like ours. He too will roll in his millions."

It is very possible that Pólozof's imagination about his son-in-law becoming a millionaire in the commercial line will not be realized any more than Marya Alekséyevna's imaginations in regard to her chosen son-in-law becoming a great monopolist were realized. But for all that, Beaumont was an excellent match for Katerina Vasílyevna.

But, after all, was not Pólozof mistaken in thinking that Beaumont was going to be his son-in-law? If the old man had a shadow of a doubt about this, it vanished when Beaumont, in the course of a fortnight, said to him, that the purchase of the factory might be delayed for several days, the delay was unavoidable; even if Mr. Lotter were not coming, it would take at least a week to bring it to a conclusion, and Mr. Lotter would not be in Petersburg for a week. "Before I was personally acquainted with you," said Beaumont, "I wanted to finish the business myself. Now it would not look well, because we are so well acquainted. In order that there should be no misunderstanding by and by, I have written about it to the firm to this effect: that during the business transaction I have made the acquaintance of the manager whose whole property is invested in the factory, and I asked the firm to send some one to conclude the bargain in my place, and now, as you see, Mr. Lotter is coming."

Shrewd and clever! At the same time it shows plainly Beaumont's intention of marrying Kátya; a mere acquaintance would not be sufficient reason to take such a careful step.

¹ Literally, to be a noble (*dvoryanin*).

XIV.

For the next two or three visits Beaumont was met very coolly by Katerina Vasílyevna. In truth, she began to feel a certain distrust in this person with whom her acquaintance was so slight, and who expressed a puzzling desire to learn about a family where he was not acquainted, and at the same time, according to his own words, he feared to become acquainted because he feared that his acquaintance might not be agreeable there. But although Katerina Vasílyevna met him suspiciously during these first calls, yet she was soon drawn into a lively conversation with him. In her former life, before she had ever known Kirsánof, she had never met such a man; he was so sympathetic in regard to all that interested her; he understood her so well, even among her dearest friends—by the way, there was only one who was a real friend, Paulina, who had long ago moved to Moscow, and there married a Muscovite manufacturer, and even with Paulina she could not speak with as much ease as with him.

And he, at first he came not so much on her account as for the purpose of learning through her about the Kirsánofs; but from the very beginning of their acquaintance, from the very moment when they spoke about melancholy and the means of curing it, it could be seen that he respected her, that he sympathized with her. At his second call he was still more attracted to her by her enthusiasm at finding a new field of activity. Now, with every new meeting, his inclination to her was more and more evident to her. Very soon there arose between them most simple and friendly relations. At the end of a week Katerina Vasílyevna told him about the Kirsánofs; she was sure that this man could have no unworthy thoughts.

It is true that when she began to speak about the Kirsánofs, he stopped her: “Why so soon? You know me too slightly.”

“No; sufficiently, Mr. Beaumont; I see that if you did not want to explain to me what seemed strange in your desire, you must have had good reason; and there are so many mysteries in this world.”

And he replied, “You see that I have no longer that great impatience to know what I wanted to know about them.”

XV.

Katerina Vasílyevna's enthusiasm continued without diminution, but changed into a constant, habitual mood, earnest, eager, and bright. And, as it seemed to her, this enthusiasm drew Beaumont closer to her. And he thought a great deal about her; this was sufficiently apparent. Having heard two or three times what she had to tell about the Kirsánofs, on the fourth time he said: "I now know everything that I wanted to know about them. Thank you."

"But what do you know? I only told you that they love each other, and are perfectly happy in their married life."

"More than that I did not care to know. However, all that I knew already."

The conversation turned on something else.

Of course Katerina Vasílyevna's first thought was when he asked about Mrs. Kirsánova, that he was in love with Viéra Pavlovna. But no; it was perfectly evident that such was not the case. So far as Katerina Vasílyevna was able to judge him now, she thought that Beaumont was not even able to fall in love. Truly, to love was in his power; that is true. But if he loves any one now, it is I," thought Katerina Vasílyevna.

XVI.

But the main thing was, did they love each other? Let us begin with her. There was one case when she showed some solicitude about Beaumont; but how did this case end? Quite otherwise from what might have been expected at the beginning. Beaumont got into the habit of calling at the Pólozofs' literally every day, sometimes making longer calls than at others, but every day just the same. And this caused Pólozof to think that he was going to offer himself to Katerina Vasílyevna; he had no other foundations for such a belief. But one evening it happened that Beaumont did not come. "You don't know what is the matter with him, do you, papa?"

"I have not heard; I guess there is nothing the matter. He probably did not have time."

A second evening passed, and still there was no Beaumont. On the following morning, Katerina Vasílyevna was evidently going somewhere. "Where are you going, Kátya?"

"Somewhere, papa, on my own business." She went to find about Beaumont. He was sitting in his wide-sleeved overcoat, and was reading; he lifted his eyes from the book when the door opened.

"Katerina Vasílyevna, is this you? I am very glad and very grateful to you," he said in the same tone as he would have addressed her father; possibly the tone was a little more cordial.

"What is the matter, Mr. Beaumont, that you have not been to see us for so long? You made me worry about you, and besides, you made me feel my lonesomeness."

"It was nothing particular, Katerina Vasílyevna; as you see, I am well. Won't you take some tea with me? You see I am just having mine."

"Of course I will; but why have you stayed away from us so long?"

"Piotr, bring a glass. You see I am well; a mere trifle; this is the reason: I was at the factory with Mr. Lotter, and while I was explaining something to him, I was rather careless; and putting my arm on a screw, it turned around and scratched my arm through the sleeve, and so I have not been able to put on my coat for the last three days."

"Let me see it; else I shall be worried lest it is not a scratch, but a serious wound."

"Yes, it must be a big one" (here Piotr comes in with a glass for Katerina Vasílyevna)—"when I make use of both my hands. However, I will show it to you." He rolled up his sleeve to the elbow. "Piotr, throw the ashes out of the tray, and give me my cigar-holder; it's on the library table. See, it is a mere trifle; nothing but an English plaster was necessary."

"Yes; but there is still some swelling, and it is inflamed."

"Yesterday there was considerably more, and by to-morrow there will be none at all."

Piotr, after cleaning out the ash-tray and bringing the cigar-holder, leaves the room.

"I did not want to appear before you as a wounded hero."

"Why didn't you write me, then?"

"*Da!* I thought that I should be able to put on my coat right away; that is, day before yesterday; and day before yesterday, I expected to put it on yesterday; and yesterday, to-day. I thought it was not worth while to worry you."

“Yes, and you have worried me all the more. It was not nice of you, Mr. Beaumont. And when shall you finish this business of yours?”

“*Da!* probably in a day or two; the delay is not our fault. Mr. Lotter and I are all ready, but it is the stockholders.”

“And what have you been reading?”

“A new novel by Thackeray. How can a man write himself out so when he has such a talent! It is because his fund of ideas is getting low.”

“I have read it; it is quite true.” And she went on to speak of Thackeray’s failing powers. Then they so spoke about half an hour on various other topics in the very same manner.

“Well, it is almost time for me to go to Viéra Pavlovna. When do you want to make her acquaintance? They are lovely people.”

“I will try to arrange to do it soon; I will ask you to introduce me. I am very grateful to you for your visit. Is that your horse?”

“Yes, it is mine.”

“That’s the reason why your bátiushka never rides him. It is a very good horse.”

“I think he is; I don’t know much about them.”

“It’s a beautiful horse, sir; cost three hundred and fifty rubles,” said the coachman.

“How old is he?”

“Six years, sir.”

“Let us start, Zakhár; I am all ready. Good by, Mr. Beaumont; will you come to-day?”

“Hardly likely, no; to-morrow, sure.”

XVII.

Does it ever happen that people do such things? Do young girls who are in love ever make such visits? Not to speak of the fact that no well-trained young lady would allow herself to do such a thing; but if she did, the conversation would be quite different. If the action performed by Katerina Vasílyevna was contrary to morality, then still more contrary to the generally accepted ideas as to the relations between men and young women, would be the character, so to speak, of this immoral action. Isn't it clear that Katerina Vasílyevna and Beaumont were not human beings, but fish? and if they were human beings, that they had the blood of fishes in their veins? The way that she usually behaved towards him in her own house, also absolutely corresponded with this theory.

"I am too tired to talk, Mr. Beaumont," she used to say when he stayed late. "You stay with papa, but I am going to bed"; and she used to leave him.

Sometimes he used to reply, "Stay quarter of an hour more, Katerina Vasílyevna."

"All right," she would say in such cases; but more often he replied, "Then good by,"¹ Katerina Vasílyevna."

What kind of people are these, I should like to know; and I should like to know if they are not simply excellent people, whose meetings are disturbed by nobody, who are free to see each other when and as much as they please, whose marriage no one will hinder as soon as they make up their minds, and who, therefore, have no reason to be possessed of devils. But still I am vexed at their cool treatment of each other, and I am not as much ashamed for them as for myself. Is it really my fate as a novelist, to compromise in the eyes of all well-bred readers, all my heroes and heroines? Some of them eat and drink; others are not possessed of devils without cause; what uninteresting people!

¹ *Dō svidánya.*

XVIII.

Meantime, so far as the old man Pólozof could judge, the affair was coming to a marriage. When the probable bride and probable bridegroom were getting to be so intimate, it was evident that there would be a marriage. Has he not heard their talk? To be sure, his daughter and the probable bridegroom were not always under his eyes. More often than not they would sit by themselves or walk together by themselves; but this did not change in the least the tenor of their conversations. Even the shrewdest student of the human heart would have never suspected, had he heard them talk, that Beaumont would marry Katerina Vasílyevna. Not that they never spoke about their feelings. They spoke about them as they spoke about everything else in the world; but they said excessively little about them; and even this little counted as nothing from the tone in which they spoke. The tone was vexatious from its very calmness, and what they said would have seemed terribly absurd to any one in society. Now, for example, it happened that in about a week after the visit for which Beaumont was so grateful to Katerina Vasílyevna, and in about two months after their acquaintance had begun, the sale of the factory was accomplished. Mr. Lotter was intending to leave on the following day. (And he left; don't imagine that he is going to bring a catastrophe. He, as is common with business men in transacting commercial operations, told Beaumont that the firm would make him the manager of the factory, at the salary of a thousand pounds, as might have been expected, and nothing more. What need had he, as a business man, to interfere with Beaumont's love affairs?) The shareholders, including Pólozof, were to receive, on the following day (and they did receive all that they expected. Here, again, you must not expect a catastrophe; for the firm of Hodgson, Lotter and Company is a very reliable one) half in ready cash, and half in notes payable in three months. Pólozof, full of satisfaction at this turn of affairs, was sitting at his table in the reception-room, and was counting over the banknotes. He overheard in part the conversation that was going on between his daughter and Beaumont, as they passed through the reception-room. They were walking through the four rooms of the flat that faced on the street.

"If a woman, a girl, is embarrassed with prejudices," said Beaumont (not committing any Americanisms or Anglicisms), "then a man—I speak of respectable men—is subject to great inconveniences on that account. Tell me, how can one marry a girl who has not been trained in the simple duties of life, who does not realize what relations may arise after she has accepted an offer? She may not be able to judge whether she will enjoy her life with the man who is to be her husband."

"But, Mr. Beaumont, if her relations to this man are of a sincere character, such as they had been before he proposed to her, then I think that this would be some guarantee that they would be contented with each other."

"Some guarantee, certainly; but it would be much surer if the trial were longer and more thorough. She cannot know in any way the character of the relation into which she is going to enter; and so marriage is for her a terrible risk. So much for her; and the honorable man who is to marry her has to run the same risk. He can generally judge whether he will be satisfied. He

knows intimately women of various natures; he has made trial of what nature suits him the best. She has not that chance."

"But she can observe the lives and characters of those in her own family and in the families of her friends; she can think a great deal."

"All that is good, so far as it goes, but it is not sufficient. Nothing can take the place of a personal trial."

"Would you have only widows get married?" asked Katerina Vasílyevna, laughing.

"You have expressed yourself quite to the point. Only widows; girls should be prohibited from marrying."

"That is true," said Katerina Vasílyevna, seriously.

Such talk as this seemed very wild to Pólozof at first, as he caught fragments of it. But gradually he got accustomed to the thought, and he said to himself, "Well, I myself am a man without prejudices. I started in business, and I, too, married a widow, a merchant's widow."

What he heard was only a little episode in their conversation, which was also devoted to other affairs; but on the following day this subject of their yesterday's conversation was continued in this way:—

"You have told me the story of your love for Sólovtsof. But what was it? It was—"

"Let us sit down, if it is just the same to you; I am tired of walking."

"Very well. It was a childish feeling, such as gives no guarantee. You remember it only as a subject to laugh over, or, rather, to feel gloomy about; for it certainly has its melancholy side. You were saved only by a strange and rare piece of good fortune, because your case fell into the hands of a man like Aleksandr."

"Who?"

"Aleksandr Matvéitch Kirsánof," he added, as though not to say merely his first name. "If it had not been for Kirsánof, you would have died, either by consumption or by that wretch. One can draw very sensible conclusions about the unhappy position that you held in society. You yourself have drawn such conclusions. All this is good enough, and it has only in the end made you a far more sensible and excellent girl; but it did not in the slightest degree give you any further experience for making up your mind what sort of a man would satisfy you as a husband."

"Not a miserable but an honorable man; that is all that you can decide. So far so good; but would it be enough for any honorable woman to know that the character of the man that she had chosen for her husband was honorable, if she did not know him any more than that? It is necessary to have a more exact knowledge of a man's character; that is, you must have a very different experience from what you have already had. We decided yesterday that according to your expression it is only widows who should be allowed to marry. But what sort of a widow are you?"

All this was said by Beaumont in a tone expressing dissatisfaction, and his last words were spoken actually in a grieved tone.

"That is true," said Katerina Vasílyevna rather gloomily, "for all that, I could not be easily deceived."

"And you could not if you tried, because it is impossible to affect experience if you have it not."

"You are always speaking about the lack of ways that we girls have for making a satisfactory choice. As a general thing it is absolutely true; but there are exceptional cases when so much experience is not necessary for making a satisfactory choice. If a girl is not so very young, she may understand her own character very well. For instance, I know my character, and it is evident

to me that it is not going to change. I am twenty-two years old. I know what is necessary for my happiness: to live quietly so as not to be stirred up, that is all.”

“That is true. That is evident.”

“And is it so very hard to see whether this man or that has the marks of character sufficient to satisfy this want? This can be seen in a few conversations.”

“That is true; but you said that this is an exceptional case. The general rule is different.”

“Of course the rule is different. But, Mr. Beaumont, in the conditions of our lives, according to our understandings and habits, it is impossible to wish that a girl should have the knowledge of those every-day relations about which we were speaking, while without it, in most cases, a girl runs the risk of making an unsatisfactory choice. Her position is inextricable under present conditions. As things are now, let her enter into whatever relations she pleases; it will in no case give her experience: she might not get any advantage, and her dangers would be vastly multiplied. A girl can easily lower herself, can learn wickedness and deceit. She would be obliged to deceive her friends and society, to hide from their eyes, and from this there is an easy transition to falsehood, which is sure to ruin her character. It is even very possible that she may learn to look superficially upon life. And if this should not result, yet if she is going to be a good woman, then her heart may be broken. In the mean time, she will gain nothing in the experience of every day’s life, because these relations which are so dangerous to her character or so tormenting to her heart are theatrical, idle, and out of the ordinary. You see that it is impossible to advise in the conditions of our life.”

“Of course, Katerina Vasilyevna; but for that very reason our life is bad.”

“Yes, indeed, we are agreed on that point.”

“What does this mean? Leaving out the fact that the deuce knows what it means, what has it to do with their personal relations? The man says, ‘I doubt whether you will make me a good wife’; and the girl replies, ‘Just make me an offer and see!’

“What extraordinary impertinence! Or is it not so, perhaps? Maybe the man says: ‘I have no need of questioning whether I am going to be happy with you; but be careful even though you choose me. You have chosen me, but I beg of you, think, think carefully. This is a very serious matter. Don’t put your confidence even in me, who love you so dearly, without a serious and attentive making up of your mind.’

“And maybe the girl answers: ‘My friend, I see that you think not about yourself, but about me. It is your truthfulness; we are to be pitied, we are deceived, we are lead blindfolded, so as to be more easily deceived. But don’t fear on my account; you cannot deceive me. My happiness is sure. Just as you are tranquil on your part, so am I on mine.’”

“I wonder at one thing,” continued Beaumont on the following day. Again they were walking through the rooms, and Pólozof was sitting in one of them. “I wonder at one thing—that there are any happy marriages under such conditions.”

“You speak in a tone as though you were sorry that there were such things as happy marriages,” replied Katerina Vasilyevna laughingly. She now, as may have been observed, laughs frequently in a tranquil and joyous way.

“And in fact they generally do inspire gloomy thoughts: if with such scanty means of judging the necessities and characters of men, girls very often succeed in making satisfactory choices, what a brightness and soundness of wit it shows that women possess! What a true, strong, vigilant mind nature has gifted them withal! And this mind remains without advantage for society,

society dismisses it, oppresses it, chokes it, and the history of mankind would have advanced tenfold quicker if this intellect had not been dismissed, oppressed, and killed.”

“You are the panegyrist of women, Mr. Beaumont! Is there no way of explaining it in a simpler way, by opportunity?”

“By opportunity? Explain it by opportunity if you want to; but when the opportunities are numerous, you know that besides chance which originates one part of them, there must be another cause originating the other part. It is impossible to suppose any other general cause, beyond my explanation—soundness of choice arising from the strength and vigilance of mind.”

“You are quite like Mrs. Beecher Stowe, on the woman question, Mr. Beaumont. She proves that the negroes are the most talented of all the races, that they stand above the white race by their intellect.”

“You are joking, but I am serious.”

“It seems that you are provoked at me because I don’t bow before a woman. But accept as my excuse at least the difficulty of getting on my knees before myself.”

“Joke! but I am seriously provoked.”

“But not at me, I hope? I am not in the least to blame for the fact that women and girls cannot accomplish what is necessary according to your opinion. However, if you want, I will tell you seriously what I think—only not on the woman question: I don’t want to be a judge in my own case, but exclusively about you, Mr. Beaumont. You are a man of reserved nature, but you get excited when you speak on this subject. What should follow from this? The fact that you must have some personal interest in this question. Evidently you must have suffered from some mistake in the choice made by a girl who was, as you say, inexperienced.”

“Maybe I, maybe somebody else who was nearer me. However, consider, Katerina Vasilyevna. I shall tell you when I hear your answer. I shall ask your answer in three days.”

“To a question which has not been asked? Do I know you so little as to be compelled to think three days?” Katerina Vasilyevna stopped, put her arm around Beaumont’s neck, drew his head towards her, and kissed his forehead.

According to all the examples of the past, and according to the demands of propriety itself, Beaumont would have to take her in his arms and kiss her lips; but he did no such thing, but only pressed her hand, which had dropped down from his head. “Yes, Katerina Vasilyevna, still think the matter over.” And they began to walk again.

“But who told you, Charlie, that I have been thinking about it for more than three days?” she replied, not letting go his hand.

“Yes, of course, I saw it; but still I will tell you now,—I have a secret; let us go to that room, and sit down there, so that he can’t hear.”

The end of this began to take place when they passed the old man. The old man saw that they were walking hand in hand, which had never happened to them before, and he thought: “He has asked her hand, and she has promised. Good!”

“Tell me your secret, Charlie; papa will not hear from there.”

“It seems absurd, Katerina Vasilyevna that I appear to be afraid of you; of course there is nothing to be afraid of. But you will understand why I caution you when I tell you that I have an example in mind. Of course you see that we shall be able to live together; but I pitied her. How much she suffered, and how long she was deprived of life which was necessary to her! It was pitiful; I saw with my own eyes. Where it was makes no difference—New York, Boston, Philadelphia—you know—it’s no matter; but she was a very excellent woman, and she looked

upon her husband as an excellent man. They were exceedingly attached to each other; yet, still she had to suffer a great deal. He was ready to give his life for the least increase of her happiness, but, for all that, she could not live happily with him. It was well that it ended as it did, but it was hard for her. You have not experienced any such thing, and so I shall not accept your answer.”

“Could I hear this story from anybody?”

“Perhaps so.”

“From the woman herself?”

“Perhaps so.”

“And I have not given you any answer yet?”

“No.”

“Do you know what it will be?”

“I do,” said Beaumont, and then began an ordinary scene, proper between “bridegroom” and “bride,” with kisses.

XIX.

On the next day at three o'clock Katerina Vasilyevna went to Viéra Pavlovna.

"I am to be married day after to-morrow, Viéra Pavlovna," she said as she entered; "and this evening I am going to bring my bridegroom to see you."

"Beaumont, of course, whom you have been crazy over this long time."

"I, crazy? When everything passed off so quietly and reasonably!"

"I thoroughly believe that you talked with him very quietly and sensibly; but with me, quite otherwise."

"Really, this is interesting! But here is something more interesting: he loves you very much—both of you; but you, Viéra Pavlovna, much more than Aleksandr Matvéitch."

"Is there anything interesting in that? If you have spoken to him about me with a thousandth part of the enthusiasm with which you have spoken about him to me then, of course—"

"Do you think that he knows you through me? Here's where the fun comes in, that he knows you personally, not through me, but far better than I do."

"That's news! How is that?"

"How? I am going to tell you right away. The very first day that he came to Petersburg he was very anxious to see you, but it seemed to him that it would be better to postpone the acquaintance till he should come to you, not by himself, but with a 'bride' or a wife. It seemed to him that it would be pleasanter for you to see him with a wife than single. You see that our engagement came about through his desire to make your acquaintance."

"He marries you so as to get acquainted with me!"

"The idea! who says that he marries me for your sake? Oh, no! we get married, of course, not from love to you. But did we know of each other's existence until he came to Petersburg, and if he had not come, how should we have got acquainted? But he came to Petersburg for your sake! How absurd you are!"

"Does he speak Russian better than English?" asked Viéra Pavlovna, in excitement.

"He speaks Russian just as I do, and English just as I do."

"My dear Kátenka, how glad I am!" Viéra Pavlovna threw her arms around her guest.—"Sasha, come here! hurry, hurry!"

"What is it, Viérotchka? How d'ye do, Katerina Vas—"

He had no chance to speak her whole name before the young lady was kissing him.

"To-day is Easter, Sasha. Say to Kátenka, '*Indeed, he is risen.*'"¹

"But what is this all about?"

¹ On Easter Sunday, which comes in Russia twelve days later than in the West, it is the custom among the people, especially among the peasantry, when they meet, to say, "*Kristos voskres*" (Christ is risen), to which the answer is made, "*Voistinu voskres*" (He is risen indeed). It is also permissible to bestow kisses promiscuously, and many avail themselves of this privilege wherever a pretty girl gives them occasion. The Russian peasant believes that Christ is actually on earth during the six weeks of Easter.

“Sit down, and she will tell you everything. And I myself have not heard all I want about it. That’ll do; you have had enough kisses! and before me too! Now tell us, Kátenka!”

XX.

There was still more riotous conduct during the evening; but when order was restored, Beaumont, by the request of his new acquaintance, began to tell the story of his life after he came to the United States.

“As soon as I got there,” said he, “I took pains to become naturalized. For that purpose, I had to make friends with some party. What do you suppose it was? Naturally, the Abolitionists. I wrote several articles for the *Tribune* about the influence of slavery upon the whole state of society in Russia. This, a new argument, was not a bad one, for the Abolitionists to use against slavery in the Southern States, and I became a citizen of Massachusetts. Soon after my arrival, I found a position in the office of one of the few large firms belonging to that party in New York.” Further, he told them the same story which we already know. At least, this part of Beaumont’s biography cannot be doubted.

XXI.

That very evening they made an agreement that the two families should look for apartments which should be adjoining. In the expectation of finding and arranging suitable apartments, the Beaumonts lived in the factory, where, according to the orders given by the firm, rooms for the manager were prepared. This temporary departure from the city might be regarded as akin to the beautiful English custom of a wedding journey, which is now common all over Europe.

When, in six weeks, two convenient adjoining flats were found, the Kirsánofs suited in the one, the Beaumonts in the other, the old Pólozof preferred to remain in his factory apartment, the rooms of which reminded him, though to a limited degree, of his former grandeur. It was also pleasant for him to stay there because he was popular within a distance of three or four versts around. There was no limit to the signs of respect offered him by his own clerks and those of the neighborhood, by the porters, and all the other suburban brethren of higher or lower dignity in this society which gathered around the factory, and there was no measure to the pleasure with which the patriarch accepted these signs of the general respect in which he was held as the most important person of the district. His son-in-law came to the factory every day; and almost every day his daughter came with her husband. In summer they moved down there entirely, and lived in the factory, which took the place of a datcha. The rest of the year, the old man, besides receiving his daughter and son-in-law, who still was known as the North American, often—every week, and oftener—had the pleasure of receiving guests, who came to spend an evening with Katerina Vasílyevna and her husband. Sometimes only the Kirsánofs and some young folks, sometimes the party was larger. The factory served the general purpose of frequent out-of-town picnics for the circle in which the Kirsánofs and Beaumonts lived. Pólozof was greatly delighted at such invasion of guests, and how could he help it? The part of host belonged to him, and it was not deprived of its patriarchal worshipfulness.

XXII.

The two families each lived according to the style that best pleased them. On ordinary days there was much noise in one apartment, much quiet in the other. They met like kinsfolks; some days they met as often as ten times, and each time for only a minute or two; sometimes for a whole day one of the apartments would be empty, and its inhabitants would be found in the other part. All this was according to circumstances. And when there were gatherings of guests, it was again as it happened; sometimes the doors between the apartments would be locked, because the doors which opened from the parlor of one apartment into the reception-room of the other were generally locked; but the doors between the rooms occupied by Viéra Pavlovna and Katerina Vasílyevna were constantly open. And so, sometimes the doors connecting the reception-rooms were locked; that was when the company was small. But if the party was large, these doors were opened, and the guests would not know whether they were at Viéra Pavlovna's or Katerina Vasílyevna's; and the *khozyáikas* themselves could hardly distinguish. The young people, when they wanted to take a rest, generally found themselves in Katerina Vasílyevna's rooms; but when they did not come to rest, they would be with Viéra Pavlovna. But the young people could not be considered as guests, they are so intimate, and Viéra Pavlovna, without any ceremony, would drive them off to see Katerina Vasílyevna.

"I am tired of you boys! Go to Kátenka; she never gets tired of you. Why are you always quieter with her than with me? here I am older than she is."

"Don't you trouble yourself; we like her better than we do you."

"Kátenka, why do they like you better than they do me?"

"Because I scold them less than you do."

"*Da!* Katerina Vasílyevna treats us like men, and so we behave like men when we are with her."

Not bad was the effect of the game which was repeated very often last winter in the home circle, when the young folks and their intimate friends alone used to gather; the pianos from the two apartments were brought together; the young folks would cast lots, and divide into two choirs, making their benefactresses sit one at the one, the other at the other, grand piano, facing each other; each choir would stand near its prima donna, and at one and the same time they would sing: Viéra Pavlovna with her choir, "La Donna é Mobile"; and Katerina Vasílyevna with her choir would sing "Long cast off by Thee"; or Viéra Pavlovna with her choir would sing Lizette's Song from Béranger; and Katerina Vasílyevna, "Eramushkás' Song." This winter something became popular: the former prima donnas, with the aid of all, adapted to their own liking "the discussion of two Grecian philosophers about the beautiful." It began this way: Katerina Vasílyevna would lift her eyes to heaven, and sighing languishingly, would say, "Divine Schiller, the rapture of my soul!" Viéra Pavlovna would answer with dignity. "But the prunella shoes from Koralof's shop are just beautiful!" and she would thrust out her foot. Whoever of the young folks laugh at such a discussion would be put into the corner; at the end of the discussion there would remain two or three people out of ten or twelve, who were not in the corner. But an immeasurable excitement

would be aroused if they managed to inveigle Beaumont into this game, and get him into the corner.

What else? The sewing shops, continuing to agree, continued to exist. Now there are three of them. Katerina Vasílyevna has arranged hers long ago. Now she very often takes Viéra Pavlovna's place in the shop, and soon she will have to take her place entirely. This year—forgive her—she will pass her examinations as a doctor; and then she will have no time at all to occupy herself in the shop.

“It is a pity that there is no chance for these sewing unions to develop as they might have been developed,” says Viéra Pavlovna sometimes. Katerina Vasílyevna does not answer a word, only her eyes flash with indignation.

“What a quick temper you have, Kátya. You are worse than I,” says Viéra Pavlovna. “It is good that your father has something; it is very good.”

“Yes, Viérotchka; it is good. I have less anxiety for my son.” (You see, she has a son.)

“However, Kátya, I don't know what you make me think of. We will always live quietly and peacefully, won't we?”

Katerina Vasílyevna makes no reply.

“Yes, Kátya; say *yes* for my sake.”

Katerina Vasílyevna laughs.

“It does not depend on my *yes* or *no*; and so for your satisfaction, I will say *yes*, we will always live peacefully.”

And indeed they all live peacefully. They live harmoniously and cordially and quietly and happily and gayly and actively. But it does not follow from this that my story is at end. All four of them are as yet young, active; and if their lives are arranged harmoniously and cordially, beautifully and solidly, still it has not ceased to be interesting: far from it; and I have a good many things yet to tell about them; and I vouch for it that the continuation of my story about them will be much more interesting than what I have related till now.

XXIII.

They live gayly and cordially; they work and they rest; they enjoy life; and look forward to the future if not without thought, yet with a firm and substantial assurance that the further they go, the better it will be. Thus passed with them the time of the third year and last year; and thus the present year is passing, and the winter of the present year is almost passed; the snow has begun to melt, and Viéra Pavlovna inquired, "There will be one more frosty day yet, won't there, so that we can have another winter picnic?"

And nobody could answer her; but one day passes after another, growing warmer and warmer, and every day the probability of a winter picnic grew less. But lo! at last, when hope was lost, a snow-storm came such as we have in midwinter, without warmth, but with a fine gentle frost: the sky became bright. "It will be a splendid evening—picnic! the picnic,—hurry up; don't stop for the rest—a little one without formality."

Two sleighs dashed away that evening. One was filled with talk and jokes, but the other was really beyond control. As soon as they left town, they sang with all their voices, and this was what they sang:—

"From the gate the maiden went,
From the gate of maple bent,
Hurried from the new-made gate,
With its new-made checkered grate.
'Angry is my *bátiushka*.
Has no mercy on his daughter;
Will not let me wander late,
With the young lad gayly wait;
Yet I do not heed my sire,
But will sport to heart's content."¹

The idea of singing such a song! Is that all? Some of the time they go slow and drop a quarter of a verst behind, and then suddenly they catch up with the others, and race; they dash by with shouts and screams of laughter, and after they have passed them, they fling snowballs at the gay but not riotous sleigh. The more decorous sleighful, after two or three such insults, determined to defend themselves. They let the riotous sleigh get ahead of them, they collected handfuls of new-fallen snow as secretly as possible, so that the riotous sleigh might not discover them. When the riotous sleigh slowed up again and fell behind, the decorous sleigh was creeping along stealthily, and gave no sign that they had procured weapons; and when the riotous sleigh bore down upon them again with shouts and shrieks, the decorous sleigh offered most unexpectedly

¹ Literally: Forth went the young (girl) Out the new gate, Out the new, the maple, Out the grated (gate). "Own father is stern And unmerciful to me, Does not let me divert myself With a bachelor fellow to sport. I don't heed (my) father; I shall amuse the young (fellow)."

a brave defence. But what does this mean? The riotous sleigh turns out to the right, even across gutters; they don't care for anything; they dash by a distance of a few rods.² "Yes, she must have suspected something; she has taken the reins herself; she is standing up and driving," says the decorous sleigh. "No, no, we'll catch up with them and pay them back." It is a desperate race. Will they overtake them or not? "We shall," says the decorous sleigh with enthusiasm. "No," it cries in despair; then, with new enthusiasm says, "Yes, we shall."

"They are gaining on us," says the riotous sleigh in despair. "They won't catch up with us," it says in enthusiasm. "Will they catch us or not?"

In the decorous sleigh were seated the Kirsánofs and Beaumonts; in the riotous sleigh were four young men and one lady, and it was she who was the ringleader in the riotous sleigh.

"Your health, mesdames and messieurs. We are very glad to see you again," she says from the platform of the factory stairs.—"Gentlemen, help the ladies out of the sleighs," she adds, addressing her companions.

Hurry up! hurry up into the parlors! The cold has reddened all their cheeks.

"How do you do, you dear old man?"³

"He isn't an old man at all, Katerina Vasílyevna. What made you tell me that he was old? He will be flirting with me next thing. Will you do it, you dear little old man?" asks the lady of the riotous sleigh.

"I will," says Pólozof, delighted because she gently caressed his gray whiskers.

"Children, will you let him flirt with me?"

"Of course we will," says one of the young men.

"No, no!" say the three others.

But why is the lady of the riotous sleigh dressed all in black? Is it mourning or caprice?

"O dear me, I am tired!" she said, throwing herself on the Turkish divan which occupied the whole length of the side of the parlor. "Children, more cushions! Not for me alone, but I think the other ladies are tired."

"Yes; you have tired us all out!" says Katerina Vasílyevna.

"The race with you over the rough road broke me all up!" says Viéra Pavlovna.

"It was a good thing that there was only one more visit to the factory," added Katerina Vasílyevna.

They both settled themselves on the divan among the cushions, in weariness.

"You weren't sharp enough! you can't have had much practice in racing. You ought to have stood up as I did; then the ups and downs amount to nothing."

"Even we are rather tired," says Beaumont to Kirsánof. They sat down by their wives. Kirsánof threw his arm around Viéra Pavlovna. Beaumont took Katerina Vasílyevna's hand. It was an idyllic picture. It is pleasant to see happy unions. But a shadow crossed the face of the lady in mourning for one moment, so that none except one of her young companions noticed it. He went to the window and began to study the arabesques made by the frost on the glass.

"Mesdames, your stories are very interesting, but I can't hear what you say; all I know is that they are very pathetic but that they end happily; I like that! But where is my dear little old man?"

"He is busy about the house; he is getting lunch ready; this always amuses him," said Katerina Vasílyevna.

² Literally: Five *sázhens*, or about thirty-five feet.

³ *Starikashka*, affectionate diminutive of *starik*.

“Well, in that case, God be with him! Tell me your story, please, but briefly; I like to be told things in few words.”

“I shall relate very briefly,” says Viéra Pavlovna; let me begin. When it is the others’ turn, let them tell theirs. But I will tell you beforehand that there are secrets at the end of my story.”

“Well, then we’ll drive out these gentlemen. Or perhaps it would be better to drive them out now!”

“No; now they can listen.”

Viéra Pavlovna began her story.

“Ha! ha! ha! This sweet Julie, I love her dearly!” and she throws herself down on her knees and she carries on and behaves herself terribly. She is lovely!”

Bravo, Viéra Pavlovna! “I am going to jump out of the window! Bravo, gentlemen!” The lady in mourning clapped her hands. At this command the young people applauded deafeningly, with shouts of “hurrah!” and “bravo!”

“What’s got into you? What’s got into you?” said Katerina Vasílyevna, in affright two or three minutes later.

“No, it’s nothing much! it’ll pass. Give me a glass of water! Don’t bother yourself; Mosolof is bringing me some. Thank you, Mosolof!” She took the water brought her by her young companion who had been standing by the window. “Do you see how I have taught him? He knows everything beforehand. Now I feel all well again. Go ahead, please; I’m listening!”

“No, but I am tired,” she said, five minutes later, calmly getting up from the divan. “I must have a nap for an hour or so. You see I am going without any ceremony. Come, Mosolof, let us find the dear little old man; he will give me a place.”

“Excuse me, why shouldn’t I do it?” asked Katerina Vasílyevna.

“Is it worth while to trouble you?”

“Are you going to give us up entirely?” asked one of the young men, taking a tragical pose. “If we had foreseen it, we should have brought daggers with us. But now we have nothing to stab ourselves with.”

“When lunch is ready, we will take the forks for daggers!” shouted another, with the enthusiasm of unexpected salvation.

“Oh, no, I do not want the hope of our fatherland should be prematurely destroyed,” said the lady in mourning, in the same excess of enthusiasm. “Be consoled, my children!—Mosolof, put the small cushion on the table.”

Mosolof put the cushion on the table. The lady in mourning was standing by the table, in a graceful position, and slowly dropped her hand to the cushion.

The young folks kissed her hand.

Katerina Vasílyevna went to find a room for the weary guest.

“Poor girl!” said the three young men, who had been with her in the shop, with one accord, when she left the parlor.

“She is a brave woman!” said the three young men.

“I should say she was,” said Mosolof, with a sense of satisfaction.

“Have you known her long?”

“Three years.”

“Do you know her well?”

“Yes.—Don’t be disturbed,” he added, addressing those who were in the sleigh; “it’s only because she is tired.”

Viéra Pavlovna exchanged significant glances with her husband and Beaumont, and shook her head.

“It’s absurd to say she is tired,” said Kirsánof.

“I assure you she is tired, that’s all. She will fall asleep, and it will all pass,” repeated Mosolof, in a calm and indifferent tone.”

In ten minutes Katerina Vasílyevna came back.

“How is she?” asked six voices. Mosolof did not ask.

“She went to bed and shut her eyes, and now she must be asleep.”

“I told you so,” said Mosolof; “it’s a mere trifle.”

“Still, I am sorry for her,” said Katerina Vasílyevna. “We will watch her by turns: you and I, Viérotchka, and Charlie and Sasha.”

“Don’t let this interfere with our fun,” said Mosolof. “We can dance, and shout, and sing; she sleeps very sound.”

If she sleeps, if it is a mere trifle, then what does it mean? The disturbing impression caused for quarter of an hour, by the lady in mourning, vanished and was forgotten,—not absolutely, but almost. The party, even in her absence, little by little took the character of all the similar parties which had been held during the winter, and it became gay. Gay, but not without restraint. At least, the ladies half a dozen times exchanged looks of serious solemnity. Twice Viéra Pavlovna whispered stealthily, “Sasha, suppose something of this sort should happen to me?”

Kirsánof, the first time, could not find an answer. But the second time he succeeded. “No, Viéra, nothing of this sort could happen to you.”

“Cannot? Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

And Katerina Vasílyevna twice whispered to her husband stealthily, “Charlie, this could not happen to me, could it?”

The first time Beaumont only smiled, not gayly and not reassuringly; the second time he also succeeded in saying, “By all probability, it could not.”

And these were only occasional echoes, and then only at first. But for the most part the evening was spent gayly; in half an hour it was quite gay. They talked, played, sang. “She is sound asleep,” says Mosolof, and he takes the lead. And really, it was impossible to disturb her. The room where she was lying down was a long way from the parlor, separated by three rooms, a corridor, and a flight of stairs, and then another room. It was at the further side of the apartment.

And so the evening was a great success. The young folks, as usual, either joined the others, or were by themselves. Beaumont joined them a couple of times; a couple of times Viéra Pavlovna would draw him from them and their serious conversation.

They talked a great deal; but there was, after all, very little serious discussion. All were sitting together.

“Well, what was the result? Was it good or bad?” asked one of the young men, who had taken the tragical attitude.

“She is rather worse than better,” said Viéra Pavlovna.

“What do you mean, Viérotchka?” asked Katerina Vasílyevna.

“At all events, it is unavoidable in life,” said Beaumont.

“It is an inevitable fate,” said Kirsánof, in affirmation.

“It is an excellently bad thing; consequently, it is excellent,” said the one who asked.

The other three young fellows nodded their heads, and said, “Bravo, Nikítin!”

The young folks were by themselves.

“I did not know him, Nikítin; but you knew him, didn’t you?” asked Mosolof.

“I was a little boy then, but I saw him.”

“But how does it seem to you now, as you look back? do they tell the truth? Would he accept her friendship?”

“No.”

“And haven’t you seen him since?”

“No. However, Beaumont was at that time in America.”

“Really! Karl Yakovlich, come here just a moment. Did you meet in America that Russian of whom we are speaking?”

“No.”

“It should be time for him to come back.”

“Yes.”

“What an idea came into my head,” said Nikítin; “he would make a nice match for her.”

“Gentlemen, some of you come and sing with me,” said Viéra Pavlovna.—“So two of you want to come? So much the better!”

Mosolof and Nikítin stayed behind.

“I can show you an interesting thing, Nikítin,” said Mosolof.—“What do you think—is she sleeping?”

“No.”

“Only don’t tell! You can tell her after you get better acquainted with her; but nobody else. She would not like it.”

The windows of the apartment were low.

“This window, you see, is near the fire.” Mosolof looked.

“That’s it; do you see?”

The lady in mourning had moved her chair to the table, and was sitting down: with her left elbow she leaned on the table, the palm of her hand supported her drooping head, hiding her cheek and part of her hair. Her right hand was resting on the table, and her fingers were drumming mechanically, as though she were playing some tune. The lady’s face had a fixed expression of melancholy, sorrowful but still more stern. Her eyebrows were lifting and drooping, lifting, drooping.

“Is it always so, Mosolof?”

“You see. However, let us come away, else we’ll catch cold. It’s already quarter-past ten.”

“What a heartless fellow you are!” said Nikítin, looking keenly into his comrade’s eyes as they passed by the lamp in the entry.

“You are getting sentimental, little brother. Is this your experience?”

Lunch was ready.

“What splendid *vodka* this is,” said Nikítin; “how strong it is! It takes away your breath.”

“*Ekh!* little winch! your eyes are already red,” said Mosolof. All began to make fun of Nikítin in the same way.

“It’s only because it choked me, but I can generally drink,” said he, in justification. They began to look at their watches. “It’s only eleven o’clock; we can count on half an hour more; we shall have time.”

In half an hour Katerina Vasilyevna went to wake the lady in mourning. She was met by her on the threshold, stretching herself after her nap.

“Did you sleep well?”

“Splendidly.”

“And how do you feel?”

“Magnificently. I told you it was a mere trifle; I got tired because I fooled too much. Now I shall be more staid.”

But, no, she could succeed in being staid. In five minutes she was already charming Pólozof, and ordering round the young men, and was drumming out a march, or something of the sort, with the handles of two forks on the table. Then she was in a hurry to leave; but the others, who had got into a gale from her renewed riot, did not want to go.

“Are the horses ready?” she asked, getting up from the lunch table.

“Not yet. We have just sent to have them put in.”

“You good-for-nothings! But if this is so, come, Viéra Pavlovna, sing us something; I have been told that you have a splendid voice.”

Viéra Pavlovna sang.

“I shall often ask you to sing,” said the lady in mourning.

“Now it’s your turn! now it’s your turn!” they all cried. But they had hardly time to urge her before she was seated at the piano.

“Well, all right, only I can’t sing; but that makes no difference. I don’t care for anything. Now, mesdames and messieurs, I am not going to sing for your sake, but for my children. Children, don’t you laugh at your ma!” At the same time she struck the chords which lead to the accompaniment. “Children, don’t you dare to laugh, for I shall sing with feeling.” And, trying to bring out the notes as squeaky as possible, she sang:—

“Moans the dark blue—”

The young people roared with laughter at such an unexpected method, and the rest of the company also laughed. And the songstress herself could not refrain from joining; but, suppressing her merriment, she continued, twice as squeaky as before:—

“Moans the dark blue little pigeon,⁴
Moans all day and moans all night
For his sweetheart—”

But at this word her voice really trembled and choked. “It doesn’t go, and it’s just as well that it doesn’t go. But if this doesn’t go, something else will—something better? Listen, children, to your mother’s advice: Don’t fall in love, and know that you have no right to marry.”

Then she sang in a strong, full contralto:—

⁴ *Golubótchek.*

“In our towns, a host of beauties are;
In each twilight eye there shines a star.
Happy fate regards them all sincerely,
But—

“This *but* is stupid, children, —

But the brave young fellow loves too dearly.

There’s no sense in that,—its perfect nonsense,—but you, why,—

Do not wed her, gallant youth;
Hear my warning words.⁵

“Still more nonsense, children, and maybe this is also nonsense. You can fall in love, you can wed, but it must be only through choice, and without deceiving yourselves, children. I am going to sing to you how I married. It is an old romance, but I am also old. I am sitting on the balcony of our castle, Dalton, for I am Scotch; I am beautiful and pale. Further down is the forest and the river Bringal. To the balcony slowly, stealthily, comes my lover; he is poor, and I am rich; I am the daughter of a baron and a lord, but I love him dearly, and I am singing to him,—

How beauteous Bringal’s rugged shore.
Its forests green and tall!
My love and I, we love it more—

Because I know he hides there in the daytime, and every day he changes his retreat, —

Than e’en my father’s hall.

However, the father’s hall is not so lovely in reality. And so I sing to him, ‘I am going with thee.’ What do you suppose he answers me?”

Woulds’t thou be willing, maiden, tell,
To lose their rank and race?

Because I was high born.

But ere thou yieldest, weigh it well,
What fate thou hast to face!

“‘Art thou a huntsman?’ I ask. ‘No.’ ‘A poacher?’ ‘You have almost guessed,’ said he;

When we, the sons of night, have met,

—because you know that all of us, children, mesdames and and messieurs, are very wicked people,—

⁵ Literally, Many beauties are in our *aûls*. Stars gleam in the darkness of their eyes. Dearly loves them, enviable fate. But the young man’s will is happier. Don’t marry, young fellow. Heed me.

We take a solemn vow.
What once we were we must forget,
Forget what we are now.

“He sings, ‘I guessed it long ago.’ I say, ‘Thou art a brigand.’ Well, it is true; he is a brigand. Yes, he is a brigand. Well, gentlemen, he says, ‘Don’t you see I am a poor match for you?’

O maiden, I was born for strife,
In forests dark I wend.’

“Absolutely true; dark forests; so he says, ‘Don’t go with me.’

How terrible will be my life!

Because in the dark forests are wild beasts.

How pitiful my end!

“That is not true, children; it will not be pitiful. But then, he and I have thought, and he has thought, and still I answer as before:—

How beauteous Bringal’s rugged shore.
Its forests green and tall!
My love and I, we love it more
Than e’en my father’s hail.

“In reality, it was so. Consequently, I must not be sorry. I was told what to expect. Thus you can marry and love, children, without deceit, and know how to make your choice.

The moon climbs the sky
Serenely and brightly.
The soldier lad knightly
To the battle must hie.
His gun is loaded all with care;
And to him says the maiden fair,
My dearest, with courage
Go forth e’en to die.⁶

“With such girls as that you can fall in love, and such you can marry.”

(“Forget what I told you, Sasha; listen to her,” whispers Viéra Pavlovna, and presses her husband’s hand, “Why didn’t I tell thee this? now I shall tell thee,” whispers Katerina Vasílyevna.)

“I allow you to love such, and I bless you, my children.

My dearest, with courage
Go forth e’en to die!

⁶ Literally: The moon rises Both quiet and calm. But the soldier lad Goes to battle. He loads his gun, And the girl tells him, My dear, boldly Trust thyself to fate.

“I have had a perfectly lovely time with you; and where there is enjoyment, you must have something to drink.

Hey! my little ale-house maiden.
Pour me out the mead and wine!

“Mead is simply because you can’t lose a word out of the song. Is there any champagne left? is there? Capital! open the bottle.

Hey! my little ale-house maiden.
Pour me out the mead and wine!
So that gay and joyous feelings
May fill full this heart of mine.

“Who is the ‘ale-house maiden’? I am the ‘ale-house maiden.’

Black as night the maiden’s brows are,
Bright as steel her heel!”⁷

She jumped up, rubbed her forehead with her hand and pounded with her heels.

“I have found it out already! Mesdames and messieurs, and you dear little old man, and you, children, help yourselves; your little heads should be gay and happy.”

“To the *shinkárka*’s health! to the *shinkárka*’s health!”

“Thank you; I drink to my health, and again she flew to the piano and sang:—

May sorrow vanish in dust!

And it will vanish.

And to our hearts reborn,
Come endless joy like morn!

And it will be so! This is sure.

Gloomy fear shall pass away
Like the shades when sun brings day;
Light and warmth and fragrance rare
Drive out darkness and despair.
Faint corruption’s odor grows;
Strong the fragrance of the rose.”

⁷ These last six lines are in the Malo-Russian dialect; almost every noun a diminutive. The last two lines read literally, And the little *shonkárka* has black little brows. Hammered little heel-rings (*podkivki*).

PART SIXTH. CHANGE OF SCENES.

“Let us start,” said the lady in mourning; but now she was no longer in mourning; a bright pink dress, a pink hat, a white mantilla, and a handsome bouquet. She was not alone, but with Mosolof. Mosolof and Nikítin were sitting on the front seat of the carriage; on the coachman’s box was a third youth, and next the lady was a man of thirty years. How old was the lady? Was she only twenty, as she said, and not twenty-five? but this is a matter of conscience if she exaggerates.

“Yes, my dear, I have waited for this day more than two years. When I first got acquainted with him (she indicated Nikítin with her eyes), I only anticipated; but I cannot say that I expected it. It was only a hope; but soon came assurance.”

“Excuse me, excuse me,” says the reader, and not alone the sapient reader, but every reader, growing more and more astonished as he thinks it over. “For more than two years since she got acquainted with Nikítin!”

“Yes,” I say.

“She got acquainted with Nikítin at the same time that she got acquainted with the Kirsánofs and Beaumonts on that sleighing picnic which took place at the end of this winter?”

“Absolutely true,” I say.

“What does it all mean? Do you tell about things taking place in 1865?”

“Yes.”

“Is it possible? have mercy!”

“Why is it impossible, when I know?”

“That is enough! Who will listen to you?”

“Doesn’t it really please you?”

“Whom do you take me for? Of course it doesn’t!”

“If you don’t care to listen now, of course I must postpone the rest of my story till you are ready to listen; I hope it will be very soon.”

April 4 (16), 1863.

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Nikolay Chernyshevsky
What Is to Be Done?
A Vital Question
1863

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Translation from the Russian by Nathan Haskell Dole and Simon S. Skidelsky (1886). This translation follows the Russian text very closely, frequently introducing or commenting on the Russian vocabulary, to the point that the English occasionally becomes hard to follow. It is much fuller than Benjamin R. Tucker's translation, which seems to be based on an 1875 French translation. One short section of Part Four, however, has been omitted, and is found in the Tucker translation.

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