

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

THE FÊTE—FIRST PART

I

THE fête took place in spite of all the perplexities of the preceding "Shpigulin" day. I believe that even if Lembke had died the previous night, the fête would still have taken place next morning—so peculiar was the significance Yulia Mihailovna attached to it. Alas! up to the last moment she was blind and had no inkling of the state of public feeling. No one believed at last that the festive day would pass without some tremendous scandal, some "catastrophe" as some people expressed it, rubbing their hands in anticipation. Many people, it is true, tried to assume a frowning and diplomatic countenance; but, speaking generally, every Russian is inordinately delighted at any public scandal and disorder. It is true that we did feel something much more serious than the mere craving for a scandal: there was a general feeling of irritation, a feeling of implacable resentment; every one seemed thoroughly disgusted with everything. A kind of bewildered cynicism, a forced, as it were, strained cynicism was predominant in every one. The only people who were free from bewilderment were the ladies, and they were clear on only one point: their remorseless detestation of Yulia Mihailovna. Ladies of all shades of opinion were agreed in this. And she, poor dear, had no suspicion; up to the last hour she was persuaded that she was "surrounded by followers," and that they were still "fanatically devoted to her."

I have already hinted that some low fellows of different sorts had made their appearance amongst us. In turbulent times of upheaval or transition low characters always come to the front

everywhere. I am not speaking now of the so-called "advanced" people who are always in a hurry to be in advance of every one else (their absorbing anxiety) and who always have some more or less definite, though often very stupid, aim. No, I am speaking only of the riff-raff. In every period of transition this riff-raff, which exists in every society, rises to the surface, and is not only without any aim but has not even a symptom of an idea, and merely does its utmost to give expression to uneasiness and impatience. Moreover, this riff-raff almost always falls unconsciously under the control of the little group of "advanced people" who do act with a definite aim, and this little group can direct all this rabble as it pleases, if only it does not itself consist of absolute idiots, which, however, is sometimes the case. It is said among us now that it is all over, that Pyotr Stepanovitch was directed by the *Internationale*, and Yulia Mihailovna by Pyotr Stepanovitch, while she controlled, under his rule, a rabble of all sorts. The more sober minds amongst us wonder at themselves now, and can't understand how they came to be so foolish at the time.

What constituted the turbulence of our time and what transition it was we were passing through I don't know, nor I think does anyone, unless it were some of those visitors of ours. Yet the most worthless fellows suddenly gained predominant influence, began loudly criticising everything sacred, though till then they had not dared to open their mouths, while the leading people, who had till then so satisfactorily kept the upper hand, began listening to them and holding their peace, some even simpered approval in a most shameless way. People like Lyamshin and Telyatnikov, like Gogol's Tentyotnikov, drivelling home-bred editions of Radishtchev, wretched little Jews with a mournful but haughty smile, guffawing foreigners, poets of advanced tendencies from the capital, poets who made up with peasant coats and tarred boots for the lack of tendencies or talents, majors and colonels who ridiculed the senselessness of the service, and who would have been ready for an extra rouble to unbuckle their swords, and take jobs as railway clerks; generals who had abandoned their duties to become lawyers; advanced mediators, advancing merchants, innumerable divinity students, women who were the embodiment

of the woman question—all these suddenly gained complete sway among us and over whom? Over the club, the venerable officials, over generals with wooden legs, over the very strict and inaccessible ladies of our local society. Since even Varvara Petrovna was almost at the beck and call of this rabble, right up to the time of the catastrophe with her son, our other local Minervas may well be pardoned for their temporary aberration. Now all this is attributed, as I have mentioned already, to the *Internationale*. This idea has taken such root that it is given as the explanation to visitors from other parts. Only lately councillor Kubrikov, a man of sixty-two, with the Stanislav Order on his breast, came forward uninvited and confessed in a voice full of feeling that he had beyond a shadow of doubt been for fully three months under the influence of the *Internationale*. When with every deference for his years and services he was invited to be more definite, he stuck firmly to his original statement, though he could produce no evidence except that "he had felt it in all his feelings," so that they cross-examined him no further.

I repeat again, there was still even among us a small group who held themselves aloof from the beginning, and even locked themselves up. But what lock can stand against a law of nature? Daughters will grow up even in the most careful families, and it is essential for grown-up daughters to dance.

And so all these people, too, ended by subscribing to the governesses' fund.

The ball was assumed to be an entertainment so brilliant, so unprecedented; marvels were told about it; there were rumours of princes from a distance with lorgnettes; of ten stewards, all young dandies, with rosettes on their left shoulder; of some Petersburg people who were setting the thing going; there was a rumour that Karmazinov had consented to increase the subscriptions to the fund by reading his *Merci* in the costume of the governesses of the district; that there would be a literary quadrille all in costume, and every costume would symbolise some special line of thought; and finally that "honest Russian thought" would dance in costume—which would certainly be a complete novelty in itself. Who could resist subscribing? Every one subscribed.

II

The programme of the fête was divided into two parts: the literary matinée from midday till four o'clock, and afterwards a ball from ten o'clock onwards through the night. But in this very programme there lay concealed germs of disorder. In the first place, from the very beginning a rumour had gained ground among the public concerning a luncheon immediately after the literary matinée, or even while it was going on, during an interval arranged expressly for it—a free luncheon, of course, which would form part of the programme and be accompanied by champagne. The immense price of the tickets (three roubles) tended to confirm this rumour. "As though one would subscribe for nothing! The fête is arranged for twenty-four hours, so food must be provided. People will get hungry." This was how people reasoned in the town. I must admit that Yulia Mihailovna did much to confirm this disastrous rumour by her own heedlessness. A month earlier, under the first spell of the great project, she would babble about it to anyone she met, and even sent a paragraph to one of the Petersburg papers about the toasts and speeches arranged for her fête. What fascinated her most at that time was the idea of these toasts; she wanted to propose them herself and was continually composing them in anticipation. They were to make clear what was their banner (what was it? I don't mind betting that the poor dear composed nothing after all), they were to get into the Petersburg and Moscow papers, to touch and fascinate the higher powers and then to spread the idea over all the provinces of Russia, rousing people to wonder and imitation.

But for toasts, champagne was essential, and as champagne can't be drunk on an empty stomach, it followed that a lunch was essential too. Afterwards, when by her efforts a committee had been formed and had attacked the subject more seriously, it was proved clearly to her at once that if they were going to dream of banquets there would be very little left for the governesses, however well people subscribed. There were two ways out of the difficulty: either Belshazzar's feast with toasts and speeches, and ninety roubles for the governesses, or a consider-

able sum of money with the fête only as a matter of form to raise it. The committee, however, only wanted to scare her, and had of course worked out a third course of action, which was reasonable and combined the advantages of both, that is, a very decent fête in every respect only without champagne, and so yielding a very respectable sum, much more than ninety roubles. But Yulia Mihailovna would not agree to it: her proud spirit revolted from paltry compromise. She decided at once that if the original idea could not be carried out they should rush to the opposite extreme, that is, raise an enormous subscription that would be the envy of other provinces. "The public must understand," she said at the end of her flaming speech to the committee, "that the attainment of an object of universal human interest is infinitely loftier than the corporeal enjoyments of the passing moment, that the fête in its essence is only the proclamation of a great idea, and so we ought to be content with the most frugal German ball simply as a symbol, that is, if we can't dispense with this detestable ball altogether," so great was the aversion she suddenly conceived for it. But she was pacified at last. It was then that "the literary quadrille" and the other æsthetic items were invented and proposed as substitutes for the corporeal enjoyments. It was then that Karmazinov finally consented to read *Merci* (until then he had only tantalised them by his hesitation) and so eradicate the very idea of victuals from the minds of our incontinent public. So the ball was once more to be a magnificent function, though in a different style. And not to be too ethereal it was decided that tea with lemon and round biscuits should be served at the beginning of the ball, and later on "orchade" and lemonade and at the end even ices—but nothing else. For those who always and everywhere are hungry and, still more, thirsty, they might open a buffet in the farthest of the suite of rooms and put it in charge of Prohorovitch, the head cook of the club, who would, subject to the strict supervision of the committee, serve whatever was wanted, at a fixed charge, and a notice should be put up on the door of the hall that refreshments were extra. But on the morning they decided not to open the buffet at all for fear of disturbing the reading, though the buffet would have been five rooms off the White Hall in which Karmazinov had consented to read *Merci*.

It is remarkable that the committee, and even the most practical people in it, attached enormous consequence to this reading. As for people of poetical tendencies, the marshal's wife, for instance, informed Karmazinov that after the reading she would immediately order a marble slab to be put up in the wall of the White Hall with an inscription in gold letters, that on such a day and year, here, in this place, the great writer of Russia and of Europe had read *Merci* on laying aside his pen, and so had for the first time taken leave of the Russian public represented by the leading citizens of our town, and that this inscription would be read by all at the ball, that is, only five hours after *Merci* had been read. I know for a fact that Karmazinov it was who insisted that there should be no buffet in the morning on any account, while he was reading, in spite of some protests from members of the committee that this was rather opposed to our way of doing things.

This was the position of affairs, while in the town people were still reckoning on a Belshazzar feast, that is, on refreshments provided by the committee; they believed in this to the last hour. Even the young ladies were dreaming of masses of sweets and preserves, and something more beyond their imagination. Every one knew that the subscriptions had reached a huge sum, that all the town was struggling to go, that people were driving in from the surrounding districts, and that there were not tickets enough. It was known, too, that there had been some large subscriptions apart from the price paid for tickets: Varvara Petrovna, for instance, had paid three hundred roubles for her ticket and had given almost all the flowers from her conservatory to decorate the room. The marshal's wife, who was a member of the committee, provided the house and the lighting; the club furnished the music, the attendants, and gave up Prohorovitch for the whole day. There were other contributions as well, though lesser ones, so much so indeed that the idea was mooted of cutting down the price of tickets from three roubles to two. Indeed, the committee were afraid at first that three roubles would be too much for young ladies to pay, and suggested that they might have family tickets, so that every family should pay for one daughter only, while the other young ladies of the family, even if there were a dozen specimens, should be admitted free. But all their apprehensions

turned out to be groundless: it was just the young ladies who did come. Even the poorest clerks brought their girls, and it was quite evident that if they had no girls it would never have occurred to them to subscribe for tickets. One insignificant little secretary brought all his seven daughters, to say nothing of his wife and a niece into the bargain, and every one of these persons held in her hand an entrance ticket that cost three roubles.

It may be imagined what an upheaval it made in the town! One has only to remember that as the fête was divided into two parts every lady needed two costumes for the occasion—a morning one for the *matinée* and a ball dress for the evening. Many middle-class people, as it appeared afterwards, had pawned everything they had for that day, even the family linen, even the sheets, and possibly the mattresses, to the Jews, who had been settling in our town in great numbers during the previous two years and who became more and more numerous as time went on. Almost all the officials had asked for their salary in advance, and some of the landowners sold beasts they could ill spare, and all simply to bring their ladies got up as marchionesses, and to be as good as anybody. The magnificence of dresses on this occasion was something unheard of in our neighbourhood. For a fortnight beforehand the town was overflowing with funny stories which were all brought by our wits to Yulia Mihailovna's court. Caricatures were passed from hand to hand. I have seen some drawings of the sort myself, in Yulia Mihailovna's album. All this reached the ears of the families who were the source of the jokes; I believe this was the cause of the general hatred of Yulia Mihailovna which had grown so strong in the town. People swear and gnash their teeth when they think of it now. But it was evident, even at the time, that if the committee were to displease them in anything, or if anything went wrong at the ball, the outburst of indignation would be something surprising. That's why every one was secretly expecting a scandal; and if it was so confidently expected, how could it fail to come to pass?

The orchestra struck up punctually at midday. Being one of the stewards, that is, one of the twelve "young men with a rosette," I saw with my own eyes how this day of ignominious memory began. It began with an enormous crush at the doors

How was it that everything, including the police, went wrong that day? I don't blame the genuine public: the fathers of families did not crowd, nor did they push against anyone, in spite of their position. On the contrary, I am told that they were disconcerted even in the street, at the sight of the crowd shoving in a way unheard of in our town, besieging the entry and taking it by assault, instead of simply going in. Meanwhile the carriages kept driving up, and at last blocked the street. Now, at the time I write, I have good grounds for affirming that some of the lowest rabble of our town were brought in without tickets by Lyamshin and Liputin, possibly, too, by other people who were stewards like me. Anyway, some complete strangers, who had come from the surrounding districts and elsewhere, were present. As soon as these savages entered the hall they began asking where the buffet was, as though they had been put up to it beforehand, and learning that there was no buffet they began swearing with brutal directness, and an unprecedented insolence; some of them, it is true, were drunk when they came. Some of them were dazed like savages at the splendour of the hall, as they had never seen anything like it, and subsided for a minute gazing at it open-mouthed. This great White Hall really was magnificent, though the building was falling into decay: it was of immense size, with two rows of windows, with an old-fashioned ceiling covered with gilt carving, with a gallery with mirrors on the walls, red and white draperies, marble statues (nondescript but still statues) with heavy old furniture of the Napoleonic period, white and gold, upholstered in red velvet. At the moment I am describing, a high platform had been put up for the literary gentlemen who were to read, and the whole hall was filled with chairs like the parterre of a theatre with wide aisles for the audience.

But after the first moments of surprise the most senseless questions and protests followed. "Perhaps we don't care for a reading. . . . We've paid our money. . . . The audience has been impudently swindled. . . . This is our entertainment, not the Lembkes'!" They seemed, in fact, to have been let in for this purpose. I remember specially an encounter in which the princeling with the stand-up collar and the face of a Dutch doll, whom I had met the morning before at Yulia Mihailovna's, distinguished himself. He had, at her urgent request, con-

sented to pin a rosette on his left shoulder and to become one of our stewards. It turned out that this dumb wax figure could act after a fashion of his own, if he could not talk. When a colossal pock-marked captain, supported by a herd of rabble following at his heels, pestered him by asking "which way to the buffet?" he made a sign to a police sergeant. His hint was promptly acted upon, and in spite of the drunken captain's abuse he was dragged out of the hall. Meantime the genuine public began to make its appearance, and stretched in three long files between the chairs. The disorderly elements began to subside, but the public, even the most "respectable" among them, had a dissatisfied and perplexed air; some of the ladies looked positively scared.

At last all were seated; the music ceased. People began blowing their noses and looking about them. They waited with too solemn an air—which is always a bad sign. But nothing was to be seen yet of the Lembkes. Silks, velvets, diamonds glowed and sparkled on every side; whiffs of fragrance filled the air. The men were wearing all their decorations, and the old men were even in uniform. At last the marshal's wife came in with Liza. Liza had never been so dazzlingly charming or so splendidly dressed as that morning. Her hair was done up in curls, her eyes sparkled, a smile beamed on her face. She made an unmistakable sensation: people scrutinised her and whispered about her. They said that she was looking for Stavrogin, but neither Stavrogin nor Varvara Petrovna were there. At the time I did not understand the expression of her face: why was there so much happiness, such joy, such energy and strength in that face? I remembered what had happened the day before and could not make it out.

But still the Lembkes did not come. This was distinctly a blunder. I learned that Yulia Mihailovna waited till the last minute for Pyotr Stepanovitch, without whom she could not stir a step, though she never admitted it to herself. I must mention, in parenthesis, that on the previous day Pyotr Stepanovitch had at the last meeting of the committee declined to wear the rosette of a steward, which had disappointed her dreadfully, even to the point of tears. To her surprise and, later on, her extreme discomfiture (to anticipate things) he vanished for the whole morning and did not make his appear-

ance at the literary *matinée* at all, so that no one met him till evening. At last the audience began to manifest unmistakable signs of impatience. No one appeared on the platform either. The back rows began applauding, as in a theatre. The elderly gentlemen and the ladies frowned. "The Lembkes are really giving themselves unbearable airs." Even among the better part of the audience an absurd whisper began to gain ground that perhaps there would not be a *fête* at all, that Lembke perhaps was really unwell, and so on and so on. But, thank God, the Lembkes at last appeared, she was leaning on his arm; I must confess I was in great apprehension myself about their appearance. But the legends were disproved, and the truth was triumphant. The audience seemed relieved. Lembke himself seemed perfectly well. Every one, I remember, was of that opinion, for it can be imagined how many eyes were turned on him. I may mention, as characteristic of our society, that there were very few of the better-class people who saw reason to suppose that there was anything wrong with him; his conduct seemed to them perfectly normal, and so much so that the action he had taken in the square the morning before was accepted and approved.

"That's how it should have been from the first," the higher officials declared. "If a man begins as a philanthropist he has to come to the same thing in the end, though he does not see that it was necessary from the point of view of philanthropy itself"—that, at least, was the opinion at the club. They only blamed him for having lost his temper. "It ought to have been done more coolly, but there, he is a new man," said the authorities.

All eyes turned with equal eagerness to Yulia Mihailovna. Of course no one has the right to expect from me an exact account in regard to one point: that is a mysterious, a feminine question. But I only know one thing: on the evening of the previous day she had gone into Andrey Antonovitch's study and was there with him till long after midnight. Andrey Antonovitch was comforted and forgiven. The husband and wife came to a complete understanding, everything was forgotten, and when at the end of the interview Lembke went down on his knees, recalling with horror the final incident of the previous night, the exquisite hand, and after it the lips of his wife,

checked the fervent flow of penitent phrases of the chivalrously delicate gentleman who was limp with emotion. Every one could see the happiness in her face. She walked in with an open-hearted air, wearing a magnificent dress. She seemed to be at the very pinnacle of her heart's desires, the *fête*—the goal and crown of her diplomacy—was an accomplished fact. As they walked to their seats in front of the platform, the Lembkes bowed in all directions and responded to greetings. They were at once surrounded. The marshal's wife got up to meet them.

But at that point a horrid misunderstanding occurred; the orchestra, apropos of nothing, struck up a flourish, not a triumphal march of any kind, but a simple flourish such as was played at the club when some one's health was drunk at an official dinner. I know now that Lyamshin, in his capacity of steward, had arranged this, as though in honour of the Lembkes' entrance. Of course he could always excuse it as a blunder or excessive zeal. . . . Alas! I did not know at the time that they no longer cared even to find excuses, and that all such considerations were from that day a thing of the past. But the flourish was not the end of it: in the midst of the vexatious astonishment and the smiles of the audience there was a sudden "hurrah" from the end of the hall and from the gallery also, apparently in Lembke's honour. The hurrahs were few, but I must confess they lasted for some time. Yulia Mihailovna flushed, her eyes flashed. Lembke stood still at his chair, and turning towards the voices sternly and majestically scanned the audience. . . . They hastened to make him sit down. I noticed with dismay the same dangerous smile on his face as he had worn the morning before, in his wife's drawing-room, when he stared at Stepan Trofimovitch before going up to him. It seemed to me that now, too, there was an ominous, and, worst of all, a rather comic expression on his countenance, the expression of a man resigned to sacrifice himself to satisfy his wife's lofty aims. . . . Yulia Mihailovna beckoned to me hurriedly, and whispered to me to run to Karmazinov and entreat him to begin. And no sooner had I turned away than another disgraceful incident, much more unpleasant than the first, took place.

On the platform, the empty platform, on which till that moment all eyes and all expectations were fastened, and where

nothing was to be seen but a small table, a chair in front of it, and on the table a glass of water on a silver salver—on the empty platform there suddenly appeared the colossal figure of Captain Lebyadkin wearing a dress-coat and a white tie. I was so astounded I could not believe my eyes. The captain seemed confused and remained standing at the back of the platform. Suddenly there was a shout in the audience, "Lebyadkin! You?" The captain's stupid red face (he was hopelessly drunk) expanded in a broad vacant grin at this greeting. He raised his hand, rubbed his forehead with it, shook his shaggy head and, as though making up his mind to go through with it, took two steps forward and suddenly went off into a series of prolonged, blissful, gurgling, but not loud guffaws, which made him screw up his eyes and set all his bulky person heaving. This spectacle set almost half the audience laughing, twenty people applauded. The serious part of the audience looked at one another gloomily; it all lasted only half a minute, however. Liputin, wearing his steward's rosette, ran on to the platform with two servants; they carefully took the captain by both arms, while Liputin whispered something to him. The captain scowled, muttered "Ah, well, if that's it!" waved his hand, turned his huge back to the public and vanished with his escort. But a minute later Liputin skipped on to the platform again. He was wearing the sweetest of his invariable smiles, which usually suggested vinegar and sugar, and carried in his hands a sheet of note-paper. With tiny but rapid steps he came forward to the edge of the platform.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, addressing the public, "through our inadvertency there has arisen a comical misunderstanding which has been removed; but I've hopefully undertaken to do something at the earnest and most respectful request of one of our local poets. Deeply touched by the humane and lofty object . . . in spite of his appearance . . . the object which has brought us all together . . . to wipe away the tears of the poor but well-educated girls of our province . . . this gentleman, I mean this local poet . . . although desirous of preserving his incognito, would gladly have heard his poem read at the beginning of the ball . . . that is, I mean, of the matinée. Though this poem is not in the programme . . . for it has only been received half an hour ago

. . . yet it has seemed to *us*"—(Us? Whom did he mean by us? I report his confused and incoherent speech word for word) —"that through its remarkable naïveté of feeling, together with its equally remarkable gaiety, the poem might well be read, that is, not as something serious, but as something appropriate to the occasion, that is to the idea . . . especially as some lines . . . And I wanted to ask the kind permission of the audience."

"Read it!" boomed a voice at the back of the hall.

"Then I am to read it?"

"Read it, read it!" cried many voices.

"With the permission of the audience I will read it," Liputin minced again, still with the same sugary smile. He still seemed to hesitate, and I even thought that he was rather excited. These people are sometimes nervous in spite of their impudence. A divinity student would have carried it through without winking, but Liputin did, after all, belong to the last generation.

"I must say, that is, I have the honour to say by way of preface, that it is not precisely an ode such as used to be written for fêtes, but is rather, so as to say, a jest, but full of undoubted feeling, together with playful humour, and, so to say, the most realistic truthfulness."

"Read it, read it!"

He unfolded the paper. No one of course was in time to stop him. Besides, he was wearing his steward's badge. In a ringing voice he declaimed:

"To the local governesses of the Fatherland from the poet at the fête:

*Governesses all, good morrow,
Triumph on this festive day.
Retrograde or vowed George-Sander—
Never mind, just frisk away!"*

"But that's Lebyadkin's! Lebyadkin's!" cried several voices. There was laughter and even applause, though not from very many.

*Teaching French to wet-nosed children,
You are glad enough to think*

*You can catch a worn-out sexton—
Even he is worth a wink!!*

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

*"But in these great days of progress,
Ladies, to your sorrow know,
You can't even catch a sexton,
If you have not got a 'dot'."*

"To be sure, to be sure, that's realism. You can't hook a husband without a 'dot'!"

*"But, henceforth, since through our feasting
Capital has flowed from all,
And we send you forth to conquest
Dancing, dowered from this hall—
Retrograde or vowed George-Sander,
Never mind, rejoice you may,
You're a governess with a dowry,
Spit on all and frisk away!"*

I must confess I could not believe my ears. The insolence of it was so unmistakable that there was no possibility of excusing Liputin on the ground of stupidity. Besides, Liputin was by no means stupid. The intention was obvious, to me, anyway; they seemed in a hurry to create disorder. Some lines in these idiotic verses, for instance the last, were such that no stupidity could have let them pass. Liputin himself seemed to feel that he had undertaken too much; when he had achieved his exploit he was so overcome by his own impudence that he did not even leave the platform but remained standing, as though there were something more he wanted to say. He had probably imagined that it would somehow produce a different effect; but even the group of ruffians who had applauded during the reading suddenly sank into silence, as though they, too, were overcome. What was silliest of all, many of them took the whole episode seriously, that is, did not regard the verses as a lampoon but actually thought it realistic and true as regards the governesses—a poem with a tendency, in fact. But the excessive freedom of the verses struck even them at last; as for the general public they were not only scandalised but obviously offended. I am

sure I am not mistaken as to the impression. Yulia Mihailovna said afterwards that in another moment she would have fallen into a swoon. One of the most respectable old gentlemen helped his old wife on to her feet, and they walked out of the hall accompanied by the agitated glances of the audience. Who knows, the example might have infected others if Karmazinov himself, wearing a dress-coat and a white tie and carrying a manuscript in his hand, had not appeared on the platform at that moment. Yulia Mihailovna turned an ecstatic gaze at him as on her deliverer. . . . But I was by that time behind the scenes. I was in quest of Liputin.

"You did that on purpose!" I said, seizing him indignantly by the arm.

"I assure you I never thought . . ." he began, cringing and lying at once, pretending to be unhappy. "The verses had only just been brought and I thought that as an amusing pleasantry. . . ."

"You did not think anything of the sort. You can't really think that stupid rubbish an amusing pleasantry?"

"Yes, I do."

"You are simply lying, and it wasn't brought to you just now. You helped Lebyadkin to compose it yourself, yesterday very likely, to create a scandal. The last verse must have been yours, the part about the sexton too. Why did he come on in a dress-coat? You must have meant him to read it, too, if he had not been drunk?"

Liputin looked at me coldly and ironically.

"What business is it of yours?" he asked suddenly with strange calm.

"What business is it of mine? You are wearing the steward's badge, too. . . . Where is Pyotr Stepanovitch?"

"I don't know, somewhere here; why do you ask?"

"Because now I see through it. It's simply a plot against Yulia Mihailovna so as to ruin the day by a scandal. . . ."

Liputin looked at me askance again.

"But what is it to you?" he said, grinning. He shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

It came over me with a rush. All my suspicions were confirmed. Till then, I had been hoping I was mistaken! What was I to do? I was on the point of asking the advice of Stepan

Trofimovitch, but he was standing before the looking-glass trying on different smiles, and continually consulting a piece of paper on which he had notes. He had to go on immediately after Karmazinov, and was not in a fit state for conversation. Should I run to Yulia Mihailovna? But it was too soon to go to her: she needed a much sterner lesson to cure her of her conviction that she had "a following," and that every one was "fanatically devoted" to her. She would not have believed me, and would have thought I was dreaming. Besides, what help could she be? "Eh," I thought, "after all, what business is it of mine? I'll take off my badge and go home *when it begins*." That was my mental phrase, "when it begins"; I remember it.

But I had to go and listen to Karmazinov. Taking a last look round behind the scenes, I noticed that a good number of outsiders, even women among them, were flitting about, going in and out. "Behind the scenes" was rather a narrow space completely screened from the audience by a curtain and communicating with other rooms by means of a passage. Here our readers were awaiting their turns. But I was struck at that moment by the reader who was to follow Stepan Trofimovitch. He, too, was some sort of professor (I don't know to this day exactly what he was) who had voluntarily left some educational institution after a disturbance among the students, and had arrived in the town only a few days before. He, too, had been recommended to Yulia Mihailovna, and she had received him with reverence. I know now that he had only spent one evening in her company before the reading; he had not spoken all that evening, had listened with an equivocal smile to the jests and the general tone of the company surrounding Yulia Mihailovna, and had made an unpleasant impression on every one by his air of haughtiness, and at the same time almost timorous readiness to take offence. It was Yulia Mihailovna herself who had enlisted his services. Now he was walking from corner to corner, and, like Stepan Trofimovitch, was muttering to himself, though he looked on the ground instead of in the looking-glass. He was not trying on smiles, though he often smiled rapaciously. It was obvious that it was useless to speak to him either. He looked about forty, was short and bald, had a greyish beard, and was decently dressed. But what was most interesting about him was that at every turn he took he threw

up his right fist, brandished it above his head and suddenly brought it down again as though crushing an antagonist to atoms. He went through this by-play every moment. It made me uncomfortable. I hastened away to listen to Karmazinov.

III

There was a feeling in the hall that something was wrong again. Let me state to begin with that I have the deepest reverence for genius, but why do our geniuses in the decline of their illustrious years behave sometimes exactly like little boys? What though he was Karmazinov, and came forward with as much dignity as five *Kammerherrns* rolled into one? How could he expect to keep an audience like ours listening for a whole hour to a single paper? I have observed, in fact, that however big a genius a man may be, he can't monopolise the attention of an audience at a frivolous literary *matinée* for more than twenty minutes with impunity. The entrance of the great writer was received, indeed, with the utmost respect: even the severest elderly men showed signs of approval and interest, and the ladies even displayed some enthusiasm. The applause was brief, however, and somehow uncertain and not unanimous. Yet there was no unseemly behaviour in the back rows, till Karmazinov began to speak, not that anything very bad followed then, but only a sort of misunderstanding. I have mentioned already that he had rather a shrill voice, almost feminine in fact, and at the same time a genuinely aristocratic lisp. He had hardly articulated a few words when some one had the effrontery to laugh aloud—probably some ignorant simpleton who knew nothing of the world, and was congenitally disposed to laughter. But there was nothing like a hostile demonstration; on the contrary people said "sh-h!" and the offender was crushed. But Mr. Karmazinov, with an affected air and intonation, announced that "at first he had declined absolutely to read." (Much need there was to mention it!) "There are some lines which come so deeply from the heart that it is impossible to utter them aloud, so that these holy things cannot be laid before the public"—(Why lay them then?)—"but as he had been begged to do so, he was doing so, and as he was, more

over, laying down his pen for ever, and had sworn to write no more, he had written this last farewell; and as he had sworn never, on any inducement, to read anything in public," and so on, and so on, all in that style.

But all that would not have mattered; every one knows what authors' prefaces are like, though, I may observe, that considering the lack of culture of our audience and the irritability of the back rows, all this may have had an influence. Surely it would have been better to have read a little story, a short tale such as he had written in the past—over-elaborate, that is, and affected, but sometimes witty. It would have saved the situation. No, this was quite another story! It was a regular oration! Good heavens, what wasn't there in it! I am positive that it would have reduced to rigidity even a Petersburg audience, let alone ours. Imagine an article that would have filled some thirty pages of print of the most affected, aimless prattle; and to make matters worse, the gentleman read it with a sort of melancholy condescension as though it were a favour, so that it was almost insulting to the audience. The subject. . . . Who could make it out? It was a sort of description of certain impressions and reminiscences. But of what? And about what? Though the leading intellects of the province did their utmost during the first half of the reading, they could make nothing of it, and they listened to the second part simply out of politeness. A great deal was said about love, indeed, of the love of the genius for some person, but I must admit it made rather an awkward impression. For the great writer to tell us about his first kiss seemed to my mind a little incongruous with his short and fat little figure. . . . Another thing that was offensive; these kisses did not occur as they do with the rest of mankind. There had to be a framework of gorse (it had to be gorse or some such plant that one must look up in a flora) and there had to be a tint of purple in the sky, such as no mortal had ever observed before, or if some people had seen it, they had never noticed it, but he seemed to say, "I have seen it and am describing it to you, fools, as if it were a most ordinary thing." The tree under which the interesting couple sat had of course to be of an orange colour. They were sitting somewhere in Germany. Suddenly they see Pompey or Cassius on the eve of a battle, and both are penetrated by a chill of

ecstasy. Some wood-nymph squeaked in the bushes. Gluck played the violin among the reeds. The title of the piece he was playing was given in full, but no one knew it, so that one would have had to look it up in a musical dictionary. Meanwhile a fog came on, such a fog, that it was more like a million pillows than a fog. And suddenly everything disappears and the great genius is crossing the frozen Volga in a thaw. Two and a half pages are filled with the crossing, and yet he falls through the ice. The genius is drowning—you imagine he was drowned? Not a bit of it; this was simply in order that when he was drowning and at his last gasp, he might catch sight of a bit of ice, the size of a pea, but pure and crystal "as a frozen tear," and in that tear was reflected Germany, or more accurately the sky of Germany, and its iridescent sparkle recalled to his mind the very tear which "dost thou remember, fell from thine eyes when we were sitting under that emerald tree, and thou didst cry out joyfully: 'There is no crime!' 'No,' I said through my tears, 'but if that is so, there are no righteous either.' We sobbed and parted for ever." She went off somewhere to the sea coast, while he went to visit some caves, and then he descends and descends and descends for three years under Suharev Tower in Moscow, and suddenly in the very bowels of the earth, he finds in a cave a lamp, and before the lamp a hermit. The hermit is praying. The genius leans against a little barred window, and suddenly hears a sigh. Do you suppose it was the hermit sighing? Much he cares about the hermit! Not a bit of it, this sigh simply reminds him of her first sigh, thirty-seven years before, "in Germany, when, dost thou remember, we sat under an agate tree and thou didst say to me, 'Why love? See ochra is growing all around and I love thee; but the ochra will cease to grow, and I shall cease to love.' " Then the fog comes on again, Hoffman appears on the scene, the wood-nymph whistles a tune from Chopin, and suddenly out of the fog appears Ancus Marcius over the roofs of Rome, wearing a laurel wreath. "A chill of ecstasy ran down our backs and we parted for ever"—and so on and so on.

Perhaps I am not reporting it quite right and don't know how to report it, but the drift of the babble was something of that sort. And after all, how disgraceful this passion of our great intellects for jesting in a superior way really is! The

great European philosopher, the great man of science, the inventor, the martyr—all these who labour and are heavy laden, are to the great Russian genius no more than so many cooks in his kitchen. He is the master and they come to him, cap in hand, awaiting orders. It is true he jeers superciliously at Russia too, and there is nothing he likes better than exhibiting the bankruptcy of Russia in every relation before the great minds of Europe, but as regards himself, no, he is at a higher level than all the great minds of Europe; they are only material for his jests. He takes another man's idea, tacks on to it its antithesis, and the epigram is made. There is such a thing as crime, there is no such thing as crime; there is no such thing as justice, there are no just men; atheism, Darwinism, the Moscow bells. . . . But alas, he no longer believes in the Moscow bells; Rome, laurels. . . . But he has no belief in laurels even. . . . We have a conventional attack of Byronic spleen, a grimace from Heine, something of Petchorin—and the machine goes on rolling, whistling, at full speed. "But you may praise me, you may praise me, that I like extremely; it's only in a manner of speaking that I lay down the pen; I shall bore you three hundred times more, you'll grow weary reading me. . . ."

Of course it did not end without trouble; but the worst of it was that it was his own doing. People had for some time begun shuffling their feet, blowing their noses, coughing, and doing everything that people do when a lecturer, whoever he may be, keeps an audience for longer than twenty minutes at a literary *matinée*. But the genius noticed nothing of all this. He went on lisping and mumbling, without giving a thought to the audience, so that every one began to wonder. Suddenly in a back row a solitary but loud voice was heard:

"Good Lord, what nonsense!"

The exclamation escaped involuntarily, and I am sure was not intended as a demonstration. The man was simply worn out. But Mr. Karmazinov stopped, looked sarcastically at the audience, and suddenly lisped with the deportment of an agrieved *kammerherr*.

"I'm afraid I've been boring you dreadfully, gentlemen?"

That was his blunder, that he was the first to speak; for provoking an answer in this way he gave an opening for the rabble to speak, too, and even legitimately, so to say, while if

he had restrained himself, people would have gone on blowing their noses and it would have passed off somehow. Perhaps he expected applause in response to his question, but there was no sound of applause; on the contrary, every one seemed to subside and shrink back in dismay.

"You never did see Ancus Marcius, that's all brag," cried a voice that sounded full of irritation and even nervous exhaustion.

"Just so," another voice agreed at once. "There are no such things as ghosts nowadays, nothing but natural science. Look it up in a scientific book."

"Gentlemen, there was nothing I expected less than such objections," said Karmazinov, extremely surprised. The great genius had completely lost touch with his Fatherland in Karlsruhe.

"Nowadays it's outrageous to say that the world stands on three fishes," a young lady snapped out suddenly. "You can't have gone down to the hermit's cave, Karmazinov. And who talks about hermits nowadays?"

"Gentlemen, what surprises me most of all is that you take it all so seriously. However . . . however, you are perfectly right. No one has greater respect for truth and realism than I have. . . ."

Though he smiled ironically he was tremendously overcome. His face seemed to express: "I am not the sort of man you think, I am on your side, only praise me, praise me more, as much as possible, I like it extremely. . . ."

"Gentlemen," he cried, completely mortified at last, "I see that my poor poem is quite out of place here. And, indeed, I am out of place here myself, I think."

"You threw at the crow and you hit the cow," some fool, probably drunk, shouted at the top of his voice, and of course no notice ought to have been taken of him. It is true there was a sound of disrespectful laughter.

"A cow, you say?" Karmazinov caught it up at once, his voice grew shriller and shriller. "As for crows and cows, gentlemen, I will refrain. I've too much respect for any audience to permit myself comparisons, however harmless; but I did think . . ."

"You'd better be careful, sir," some one shouted from a back row.

"But I had supposed that laying aside my pen and saying farewell to my readers, I should be heard . . ."

"No, no, we want to hear you, we want to," a few voices from the front row plucked up spirit to exclaim at last.

"Read, read!" several enthusiastic ladies' voices chimed in, and at last there was an outburst of applause, sparse and feeble, it is true.

"Believe me, Karmazinov, every one looks on it as an honour . . ." the marshal's wife herself could not resist saying.

"Mr. Karmazinov!" cried a fresh young voice in the back of the hall suddenly. It was the voice of a very young teacher from the district school who had only lately come among us, an excellent young man, quiet and gentlemanly. He stood up in his place. "Mr. Karmazinov, if I had the happiness to fall in love as you have described to us, I really shouldn't refer to my love in an article intended for public reading. . . ."

He flushed red all over.

"Ladies and gentlemen," cried Karmazinov, "I have finished. I will omit the end and withdraw. Only allow me to read the six last lines:

"Yes, dear reader, farewell!" he began at once from the manuscript without sitting down again in his chair. "Farewell, reader; I do not greatly insist on our parting friends; what need to trouble you, indeed. You may abuse me, abuse me as you will if it affords you any satisfaction. But best of all if we forget one another for ever. And if you all, readers, were suddenly so kind as to fall on your knees and begin begging me with tears, 'Write, oh, write for us, Karmazinov—for the sake of Russia, for the sake of posterity, to win laurels,' even then I would answer you, thanking you, of course, with every courtesy, 'No, we've had enough of one another, dear fellow-countrymen, *merci!* It's time we took our separate ways!' *Merci, merci, merci!*"

Karmazinov bowed ceremoniously, and, as red as though he had been cooked, retired behind the scenes.

"Nobody would go down on their knees; a wild idea!"

"What conceit!"

"That's only humour," some one more reasonable suggested.

"Spare me your humour."

"I call it impudence, gentlemen!"

"Well, he's finished now, anyway!"

"Ech, what a dull show!"

But all these ignorant exclamations in the back rows (though they were confined to the back rows) were drowned in applause from the other half of the audience. They called for Karmazinov. Several ladies with Yulia Mihailovna and the marshal's wife crowded round the platform. In Yulia Mihailovna's hands was a gorgeous laurel wreath resting on another wreath of living roses on a white velvet cushion.

"Laurels!" Karmazinov pronounced with a subtle and rather sarcastic smile. "I am touched, of course, and accept with real emotion this wreath prepared beforehand, but still fresh and unwithered, but I assure you, mesdames, that I have suddenly become so realistic that I feel laurels would in this age be far more appropriate in the hands of a skilful cook than in mine. . . ."

"Well, a cook is more useful," cried the divinity student, who had been at the "meeting" at Virginsky's.

There was some disorder. In many rows people jumped up to get a better view of the presentation of the laurel wreath.

"I'd give another three roubles for a cook this minute," another voice assented loudly, too loudly; insistently, in fact.

"So would I."

"And I."

"Is it possible there's no buffet? . . ."

"Gentlemen, it's simply a swindle. . . ."

It must be admitted, however, that all these unbridled gentlemen still stood in awe of our higher officials and of the police superintendent, who was present in the hall. Ten minutes later all had somehow got back into their places, but there was not the same good order as before. And it was into this incipient chaos that poor Stepan Trofimovitch was thrust.

IV

I ran out to him behind the scenes once more, and had time to warn him excitedly that in my opinion the game was up,

that he had better not appear at all, but had better go home at once on the excuse of his usual ailment, for instance, and I would take off my badge and come with him. At that instant he was on his way to the platform; he stopped suddenly, and haughtily looking me up and down he pronounced solemnly:

"What grounds have you, sir, for thinking me capable of such baseness?"

I drew back. I was as sure as twice two make four that he would not get off without a catastrophe. Meanwhile, as I stood utterly dejected, I saw moving before me again the figure of the professor, whose turn it was to appear after Stepan Trofimovitch, and who kept lifting up his fist and bringing it down again with a swing. He kept walking up and down, absorbed in himself and muttering something to himself with a diabolical but triumphant smile. I somehow almost unintentionally went up to him. I don't know what induced me to meddle again.

"Do you know," I said, "judging from many examples, if a lecturer keeps an audience for more than twenty minutes it won't go on listening. No celebrity is able to hold his own for half an hour."

He stopped short and seemed almost quivering with resentment. Infinite disdain was expressed in his countenance.

"Don't trouble yourself," he muttered contemptuously and walked on. At that moment Stepan Trofimovitch's voice rang out in the hall.

"Oh, hang you all," I thought, and ran to the hall.

Stepan Trofimovitch took his seat in the lecturer's chair in the midst of the still persisting disorder. He was greeted by the first rows with looks which were evidently not over-friendly. (Of late, at the club, people almost seemed not to like him, and treated him with much less respect than formerly.) But it was something to the good that he was not hissed. I had had a strange idea in my head ever since the previous day: I kept fancying that he would be received with hisses as soon as he appeared. They scarcely noticed him, however, in the disorder. What could that man hope for if Karmazinov was treated like this? He was pale; it was ten years since he had appeared before an audience. From his excitement and from all that I knew

so well in him, it was clear to me that he, too, regarded his present appearance on the platform as a turning-point of his fate, or something of the kind. That was just what I was afraid of. The man was dear to me. And what were my feelings when he opened his lips and I heard his first phrase?

"Ladies and gentlemen," he pronounced suddenly, as though resolved to venture everything, though in an almost breaking voice. "Ladies and gentlemen! Only this morning there lay before me one of the illegal leaflets that have been distributed here lately, and I asked myself for the hundredth time, 'Wherein lies its secret?'"

The whole hall became instantly still, all looks were turned to him, some with positive alarm. There was no denying, he knew how to secure their interest from the first word. Heads were thrust out from behind the scenes; Liputin and Lyamshin listened greedily. Yulia Mihailovna waved to me again.

"Stop him, whatever happens, stop him," she whispered in agitation. I could only shrug my shoulders: how could one stop a man resolved to venture everything? Alas, I understood what was in Stepan Trofimovitch's mind.

"Ha ha, the manifestoes!" was whispered in the audience; the whole hall was stirred.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I've solved the whole mystery. The whole secret of their effect lies in their stupidity." (His eyes flashed.) "Yes, gentlemen, if this stupidity were intentional, pretended and calculated, oh, that would be a stroke of genius! But we must do them justice: they don't pretend anything. It's the barest, most simple-hearted, most shallow stupidity. *C'est la bêtise dans son essence la plus pure, quelque chose comme un simple chimique.* If it were expressed ever so little more cleverly, every one would see at once the poverty of this shallow stupidity. But as it is, every one is left wondering: no one can believe that it is such elementary stupidity. 'It's impossible that there's nothing more in it,' every one says to himself and tries to find the secret of it, sees a mystery in it, tries to read between the lines—the effect is attained! Oh, never has stupidity been so solemnly rewarded, though it has so often deserved it . . . For, *en parenthèse*, stupidity is of as much service to humanity as the loftiest genius. . . ."

seizing her husband by the arm and pulling him up too. . . . The scene was beyond all belief.

"Stepan Trofimovitch!" the divinity student roared gleefully. "There's Fedka the convict wandering about the town and the neighbourhood, escaped from prison. He is a robber and has recently committed another murder. Allow me to ask you: if you had not sold him as a recruit fifteen years ago to pay a gambling debt, that is, more simply, lost him at cards, tell me, would he have got into prison? Would he have cut men's throats now, in his struggle for existence? What do you say, Mr. *Æsthete*?"

I decline to describe the scene that followed. To begin with there was a furious volley of applause. The applause did not come from all—probably from some fifth part of the audience—but they applauded furiously. The rest of the public made for the exit, but as the applauding part of the audience kept pressing forward towards the platform, there was a regular block. The ladies screamed, some of the girls began to cry and asked to go home. Lembke, standing up by his chair, kept gazing wildly about him. Yulia Mihailovna completely lost her head—for the first time during her career amongst us. As for Stepan Trofimovitch, for the first moment he seemed literally crushed by the divinity student's words, but he suddenly raised his arms as though holding them out above the public and yelled:

"I shake the dust from off my feet and I curse you. . . . It's the end, the end. . . ."

And turning, he ran behind the scenes, waving his hands menacingly.

"He has insulted the audience! . . . Verhovensky!" the angry section roared. They even wanted to rush in pursuit of him. It was impossible to appease them, at the moment, any way, and—a final catastrophe broke like a bomb on the assembly and exploded in its midst: the third reader, the maniac who kept waving his fist behind the scenes, suddenly ran on to the platform.

He looked like a perfect madman. With a broad, triumphant smile, full of boundless self-confidence, he looked round at the agitated hall and he seemed to be delighted at the disorder. He was not in the least disconcerted at having to speak in such an

uproar, on the contrary, he was obviously delighted. This was so obvious that it attracted attention at once.

"What's this now?" people were heard asking. "Who is this? Sh-h! What does he want to say?"

"Ladies and gentlemen," the maniac shouted with all his might, standing at the very edge of the platform and speaking with almost as shrill, feminine a voice as Karmazinov's, but without the aristocratic lisp. "Ladies and gentlemen! Twenty years ago, on the eve of war with half Europe, Russia was regarded as an ideal country by officials of all ranks! Literature was in the service of the censorship; military drill was all that was taught at the universities; the troops were trained like a ballet, and the peasants paid the taxes and were mute under the lash of serfdom. Patriotism meant the wringing of bribes from the quick and the dead. Those who did not take bribes were looked upon as rebels because they disturbed the general harmony. The birch copses were extirpated in support of discipline. Europe trembled. . . . But never in the thousand years of its senseless existence had Russia sunk to such ignominy. . . ."

He raised his fist, waved it ecstatically and menacingly over his head and suddenly brought it down furiously, as though pounding an adversary to powder. A frantic yell rose from the whole hall, there was a deafening roar of applause; almost half the audience was applauding: their enthusiasm was excusable. Russia was being put to shame publicly, before every one. Who could fail to roar with delight?

"This is the real thing! Come, this is something like! Hurrah! Yes, this is none of your *æsthetics*!"

The maniac went on ecstatically:

"Twenty years have passed since then. Universities have been opened and multiplied. Military drill has passed into a legend; officers are too few by thousands, the railways have eaten up all the capital and have covered Russia as with a spider's web, so that in another fifteen years one will perhaps get somewhere. Bridges are rarely on fire, and fires in towns occur only at regular intervals, in turn, at the proper season. In the law courts judgments are as wise as Solomon's, and the jury only take bribes through the struggle for existence, to escape starvation. The serfs are free, and flog one another instead of

being flogged by the land-owners. Seas and oceans of vodka are consumed to support the budget, and in Novgorod, opposite the ancient and useless St. Sophia, there has been solemnly put up a colossal bronze globe to celebrate a thousand years of disorder and confusion; Europe scowls and begins to be uneasy again. . . . Fifteen years of reforms! And yet never even in the most grotesque periods of its madness has Russia sunk . . ."

The last words could not be heard in the roar of the crowd. One could see him again raise his arm and bring it down triumphantly again. Enthusiasm was beyond all bounds: people yelled, clapped their hands, even some of the ladies shouted: "Enough, you can't beat that!" Some might have been drunk. The orator scanned them all and seemed revelling in his own triumph. I caught a glimpse of Lembke in indescribable excitement, pointing something out to somebody. Yulia Mihailovna, with a pale face, said something in haste to the prince, who had run up to her. But at that moment a group of six men, officials more or less, burst on to the platform, seized the orator and dragged him behind the scenes. I can't understand how he managed to tear himself away from them, but he did escape, darted up to the edge of the platform again and succeeded in shouting again, at the top of his voice, waving his fist:

"But never has Russia sunk . . ."

But he was dragged away again. I saw some fifteen men dash behind the scenes to rescue him, not crossing the platform but breaking down the light screen at the side of it. . . . I saw afterwards, though I could hardly believe my eyes, the girl student (Virginsky's sister) leap on to the platform with the same roll under her arm, dressed as before, as plump and rosy as ever, surrounded by two or three women and two or three men, and accompanied by her mortal enemy, the schoolboy. I even caught the phrase:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I've come to call attention to the sufferings of poor students and to rouse them to a general protest . . ."

But I ran away. Hiding my badge in my pocket I made my way from the house into the street by back passages which I knew of. First of all, of course, I went to Stepan Trofimovitch's.

CHAPTER II

THE END OF THE FÊTE

I

HE WOULD not see me. He had shut himself up and was writing. At my repeated knocks and appeals he answered through the door:

"My friend, I have finished everything. Who can ask anything more of me?"

"You haven't finished anything, you've only helped to make a mess of the whole thing. For God's sake, no epigrams, Stepan Trofimovitch! Open the door. We must take steps; they may still come and insult you. . . ."

I thought myself entitled to be particularly severe and even rigorous. I was afraid he might be going to do something still more mad. But to my surprise I met an extraordinary firmness.

"Don't be the first to insult me then. I thank you for the past, but I repeat I've done with all men, good and bad. I am writing to Darya Pavlovna, whom I've forgotten so unpardonably till now. You may take it to her to-morrow, if you like, now *merci*."

"Stepan Trofimovitch, I assure you that the matter is more serious than you think. Do you think that you've crushed some one there? You've pulverised no one, but have broken yourself to pieces like an empty bottle." (Oh, I was coarse and discourteous; I remember it with regret.) "You've absolutely no reason to write to Darya Pavlovna . . . and what will you do with yourself without me? What do you understand about practical life? I expect you are plotting something else? You'll simply come to grief again if you go plotting something more. . . ."

He rose and came close up to the door.

"You've not been long with them, but you've caught the infection of their tone and language. *Dieu vous pardonne, mon ami, et Dieu vous garde.* But I've always seen in you the germs of delicate feeling, and you will get over it perhaps—*après le temps*, of course, like all of us Russians. As for what you say about my impracticability, I'll remind you of a recent idea of mine: a whole mass of people in Russia do nothing whatever but attack other people's impracticability with the utmost fury and with the tiresome persistence of flies in the summer, accusing every one of it except themselves. *Cher*, remember that I am excited, and don't distress me. Once more *merci* for everything, and let us part like Karmazinov and the public; that is, let us forget each other with as much generosity as we can. He was posing in begging his former readers so earnestly to forget him; *quant à moi*, I am not so conceited, and I rest my hopes on the youth of your inexperienced heart. How should you remember a useless old man for long? 'Live more,' my friend, as Nastasya wished me on my last name-day (*ces pauvres gens ont quelquefois des mots charmants et pleins de philosophie*). I do not wish you much happiness—it will bore you. I do not wish you trouble either, but, following the philosophy of the peasant, I will repeat simply 'live more' and try not to be much bored; this useless wish I add from myself. Well, good-bye, and good-bye for good. Don't stand at my door, I will not open it."

He went away and I could get nothing more out of him. In spite of his "excitement," he spoke smoothly, deliberately, with weight, obviously trying to be impressive. Of course he was rather vexed with me and was avenging himself indirectly, possibly even for the yesterday's "prison carts" and "floors that give way." His tears in public that morning, in spite of a triumph of a sort, had put him, he knew, in rather a comic position, and there never was a man more solicitous of dignity and punctilio in his relations with his friends than Stepan Trofimovitch. Oh, I don't blame him. But this fastidiousness and irony which he preserved in spite of all shocks reassured me at the time. A man who was so little different from his ordinary self was, of course, not in the mood at that moment for anything tragic or extraordinary. So I reasoned at the time, and,

heavens, what a mistake I made! I left too much out of my reckoning.

In anticipation of events I will quote the few first lines of the letter to Darya Pavlovna, which she actually received the following day:

"Mon enfant, my hand trembles, but I've done with everything. You were not present at my last struggle; you did not come to that matinée, and you did well to stay away. But you will be told that in our Russia, which has grown so poor in men of character, one man had the courage to stand up and, in spite of deadly menaces showered on him from all sides, to tell the fools the truth, that is, that they are fools. *Oh, ce sont—des pauvres petits vauriens et rien de plus, des petits—fools—voilà le mot!* The die is cast; I am going from this town for ever and I know not whither. Every one I loved has turned from me. But you, you are a pure and naïve creature; you, a gentle being whose life has been all but linked with mine at the will of a capricious and imperious heart; you who looked at me perhaps with contempt when I shed weak tears on the eve of our frustrated marriage; you, who cannot in any case look on me except as a comic figure—for you, for you is the last cry of my heart, for you my last duty, for you alone! I cannot leave you for ever thinking of me as an ungrateful fool, a churlish egoist, as probably a cruel and ungrateful heart—whom, alas, I cannot forget—is every day describing me to you. . . ."

And so on and so on, four large pages.

Answering his "I won't open" with three bangs with my fist on the door, and shouting after him that I was sure he would send Nastasya for me three times that day, but I would not come, I gave him up and ran off to Yulia Mihailovna.

II

There I was the witness of a revolting scene: the poor woman was deceived to her face, and I could do nothing. Indeed, what could I say to her? I had had time to reconsider things a little and reflect that I had nothing to go upon but certain feelings

and suspicious presentiments. I found her in tears, almost in hysterics, with compresses of eau-de-Cologne and a glass of water. Before her stood Pyotr Stepanovitch, who talked without stopping, and the prince, who held his tongue as though it had been under a lock. With tears and lamentations she reproached Pyotr Stepanovitch for his "desertion." I was struck at once by the fact that she ascribed the whole failure, the whole ignominy of the *matinée*, everything in fact, to Pyotr Stepanovitch's absence.

In him I observed an important change: he seemed a shade too anxious, almost serious. As a rule he never seemed serious; he was always laughing, even when he was angry, and he was often angry. Oh, he was angry now! He was speaking coarsely, carelessly, with vexation and impatience. He said that he had been taken ill at Gaganov's lodging, where he had happened to go early in the morning. Alas, the poor woman was so anxious to be deceived again! The chief question which I found being discussed was whether the ball, that is, the whole second half of the *fête*, should or should not take place. Yulia Mihailovna could not be induced to appear at the ball "after the insults she had received that morning"; in other words, her heart was set on being compelled to do so, and by him, by Pyotr Stepanovitch. She looked upon him as an oracle, and I believe if he had gone away she would have taken to her bed at once. But he did not want to go away; he was desperately anxious that the ball should take place and that Yulia Mihailovna should be present at it.

"Come, what is there to cry about? Are you set on having a scene? On venting your anger on somebody? Well, vent it on me; only make haste about it, for the time is passing and you must make up your mind. We made a mess of it with the *matinée*; we'll pick up on the ball. Here, the prince thinks as I do. Yes, if it hadn't been for the prince, how would things have ended there?"

The prince had been at first opposed to the ball (that is, opposed to Yulia Mihailovna's appearing at it; the ball was bound to go on in any case), but after two or three such references to his opinion he began little by little to grunt his acquiescence.

I was surprised too at the extraordinary rudeness of Pyotr Stepanovitch's tone. Oh, I scout with indignation the contemp-

tible slander which was spread later of some supposed liaison between Yulia Mihailovna and Pyotr Stepanovitch. There was no such thing, nor could there be. He gained his ascendancy over her from the first only by encouraging her in her dreams of influence in society and in the ministry, by entering into her plans, by inventing them for her, and working upon her with the grossest flattery. He had got her completely into his toils and had become as necessary to her as the air she breathed. Seeing me, she cried, with flashing eyes:

"Here, ask him. He kept by my side all the while, just like the prince did. Tell me, isn't it plain that it was all a preconcerted plot, a base, designing plot to damage Andrey Antonovitch and me as much as possible? Oh, they had arranged it beforehand. They had a plan! It's a party, a regular party."

"You are exaggerating as usual. You've always some romantic notion in your head. But I am glad to see Mr. . . ." (He pretended to have forgotten my name.) "He'll give us his opinion."

"My opinion," I hastened to put in, "is the same as Yulia Mihailovna's. The plot is only too evident. I have brought you these ribbons, Yulia Mihailovna. Whether the ball is to take place or not is not my business, for it's not in my power to decide; but my part as steward is over. Forgive my warmth, but I can't act against the dictates of common sense and my own convictions."

"You hear! You hear!" she clasped her hands.

"I hear, and I tell you this." He turned to me. "I think you must have eaten something which has made you all delirious. To my thinking, nothing has happened, absolutely nothing but what has happened before and is always liable to happen in this town. A plot, indeed! It was an ugly failure, disgracefully stupid. But where's the plot? A plot against Yulia Mihailovna, who has spoiled them and protected them and fondly forgiven them all their schoolboy pranks! Yulia Mihailovna! What have I been hammering into you for the last month continually? What did I warn you? What did you want with all these people—what did you want with them? What induced you to mix yourself up with these fellows? What was the motive, what was the object of it? To unite society? But mercy on us! will they ever be united?"

"Well, I shouldn't have burnt, but have cooked him instead. The audience was right, you know. Who was to blame for Karmazinov, again? Did I foist him upon you? Was I one of his worshippers? Well, hang him! But the third maniac, the political—that's a different matter. That was every one's blunder, not only my plot."

"Ah, don't speak of it! That was awful, awful! That was my fault, entirely my fault!"

"Of course it was, but I don't blame you for that. No one can control them, these candid souls! You can't always be safe from them, even in Petersburg. He was recommended to you, and in what terms too! So you will admit that you are bound to appear at the ball to-night. It's an important business. It was you put him on to the platform. You must make it plain now to the public that you are not in league with him, that the fellow is in the hands of the police, and that you were in some inexplicable way deceived. You ought to declare with indignation that you were the victim of a madman. Because he is a madman and nothing more. That's how you must put it about him. I can't endure these people who bite. I say worse things perhaps, but not from the platform, you know. And they are talking about a senator too."

"What senator? Who's talking?"

"I don't understand it myself, you know. Do you know anything about a senator, Yulia Mihailovna?"

"A senator?"

"You see, they are convinced that a senator has been appointed to be governor here, and that you are being superseded from Petersburg. I've heard it from lots of people."

"I've heard it too," I put in.

"Who said so?" asked Yulia Mihailovna, flushing all over.

"You mean, who said so first? How can I tell? But there it is, people say so. Masses of people are saying so. They were saying so yesterday particularly. They are all very serious about it, though I can't make it out. Of course the more intelligent and competent don't talk, but even some of those listen."

"How mean! And . . . how stupid!"

"Well, that's just why you must make your appearance, to show these fools."

"I confess I feel myself that it's my duty, but . . . what if

there's another disgrace in store for us? What if people don't come? No one will come, you know, no one!"

"How hot you are! They not come! What about the new clothes? What about the girls' dresses? I give you up as a woman after that! Is that your knowledge of human nature?"

"The marshal's wife won't come, she won't."

"But, after all, what has happened? Why won't they come?" he cried at last with angry impatience.

"Ignominy, disgrace—that's what's happened. I don't know what to call it, but after it I can't face people."

"Why? How are you to blame for it, after all? Why do you take the blame of it on yourself? Isn't it rather the fault of the audience, of your respectable residents, your paters-familias? They ought to have controlled the roughs and the rowdies—for it was all the work of roughs and rowdies, nothing serious. You can never manage things with the police alone in any society, anywhere. Among us every one asks for a special policeman to protect him wherever he goes. People don't understand that society must protect itself. And what do our patersfamilias, the officials, the wives and daughters, do in such cases? They sit quiet and sulk. In fact there's not enough social initiative to keep the disorderly in check."

"Ah, that's the simple truth! They sit quiet, sulk and . . . gaze about them."

"And if it's the truth, you ought to say so aloud, proudly, sternly, just to show that you are not defeated, to those respectable residents and mothers of families. Oh, you can do it; you have the gift when your head is clear. You will gather them round you and say it aloud. And then a paragraph in the *Voice* and the *Financial News*. Wait a bit, I'll undertake it myself, I'll arrange it all for you. Of course there must be more superintendence: you must look after the buffet; you must ask the prince, you must ask Mr. . . . You must not desert us, monsieur, just when we have to begin all over again. And finally, you must appear arm-in-arm with Andrey Antonovitch. . . . How is Andrey Antonovitch?"

"Oh, how unjustly, how untruly, how cruelly you have always judged that angelic man!" Yulia Mihailovna cried in a sudden outburst, almost with tears, putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

Pyotr Stepanovitch was positively taken aback for the moment.

"Good heavens! I . . . What have I said? I've always . . ."

"You never have, never! You have never done him justice."

"There's no understanding a woman," grumbled Pyotr Stepanovitch, with a wry smile.

"He is the most sincere, the most delicate, the most angelic of men! The most kind-hearted of men!"

"Well, really, as for kind-heartedness . . . I've always done him justice. . . ."

"Never! But let us drop it. I am too awkward in my defence of him. This morning that little Jesuit, the marshal's wife, also dropped some sarcastic hints about what happened yesterday."

"Oh, she has no thoughts to spare for yesterday now, she is full of to-day. And why are you so upset at her not coming to the ball to-night? Of course, she won't come after getting mixed up in such a scandal. Perhaps it's not her fault, but still her reputation . . . her hands are soiled."

"What do you mean; I don't understand? Why are her hands soiled?" Yulia Mihailovna looked at him in perplexity.

"I don't vouch for the truth of it, but the town is ringing with the story that it was she brought them together."

"What do you mean? Brought whom together?"

"What, do you mean to say you don't know?" he exclaimed with well-simulated wonder. "Why Stavrogin and Lizaveta Nikolaevna."

"What? How?" we all cried out at once.

"Is it possible you don't know? Phew! Why, it is quite a tragic romance: Lizaveta Nikolaevna was pleased to get out of that lady's carriage and get straight into Stavrogin's carriage, and slipped off with 'the latter' to Skvoreshniki in full daylight. Only an hour ago, hardly an hour."

We were flabbergasted. Of course we fell to questioning him, but to our wonder, although he "happened" to be a witness of the scene himself, he could give us no detailed account of it. The thing seemed to have happened like this: when the marshal's wife was driving Liza and Mavriky Nikolaevitch from the *matinée* to the house of Praskovya Ivanovna (whose legs were still bad) they saw a carriage waiting a short distance, about twenty-five paces, to one side of the front door. When

Liza jumped out, she ran straight to this carriage; the door was flung open and shut again; Liza called to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, "Spare me," and the carriage drove off at full speed to Skvoreshniki. To our hurried questions whether it was by arrangement? Who was in the carriage? Pyotr Stepanovitch answered that he knew nothing about it; no doubt it had been arranged, but that he did not see Stavrogin himself; possibly the old butler, Alexey Yegorytch, might have been in the carriage. To the question "How did he come to be there, and how did he know for a fact that she had driven to Skvoreshniki?" he answered that he happened to be passing and, at seeing Liza, he had run up to the carriage (and yet he could not make out who was in it, an inquisitive man like him!) and that Mavriky Nikolaevitch, far from setting off in pursuit, had not even tried to stop Liza, and had even laid a restraining hand on the marshal's wife, who was shouting at the top of her voice: "She is going to Stavrogin, to Stavrogin." At this point I lost patience, and cried furiously to Pyotr Stepanovitch:

"It's all your doing, you rascal! This was what you were doing this morning. You helped Stavrogin, you came in the carriage, you helped her into it . . . it was you, you, you! Yulia Mihailovna, he is your enemy; he will be your ruin too! Beware of him!"

And I ran headlong out of the house. I wonder myself and cannot make out to this day how I came to say that to him. But I guessed quite right: it had all happened almost exactly as I said, as appeared later. What struck me most was the obviously artificial way in which he broke the news. He had not told it at once on entering the house as an extraordinary piece of news, but pretended that we knew without his telling us which was impossible in so short a time. And if we had known it, we could not possibly have refrained from mentioning it till he introduced the subject. Besides, he could not have heard yet that the town was "ringing with gossip" about the marshal's wife in so short a time. Besides, he had once or twice given a vulgar, frivolous smile as he told the story, probably considering that we were fools and completely taken in.

But I had no thought to spare for him; the central fact I believed, and ran from Yulia Mihailovna's, beside myself. The catastrophe cut me to the heart. I was wounded almost to

respectable officers with their wives, some of the most docile fathers of families, like that secretary, for instance, the father of his seven daughters. All these humble, insignificant people had come, as one of these gentlemen expressed it, because it was "inevitable." But, on the other hand, the mass of free-and-easy people and the mass too of those whom Pyotr Stepanovitch and I had suspected of coming in without tickets, seemed even bigger than in the afternoon. So far they were all sitting in the refreshment bar, and had gone straight there on arriving, as though it were the meeting-place they had agreed upon. So at least it seemed to me. The refreshment bar had been placed in a large room, the last of several opening out of one another. Here Prohoritch was installed with all the attractions of the club cuisine and with a tempting display of drinks and dainties. I noticed several persons whose coats were almost in rags and whose get-up was altogether suspicious and utterly unsuitable for a ball. They had evidently been with great pains brought to a state of partial sobriety which would not last long; and goodness knows where they had been brought from, they were not local people. I knew, of course, that it was part of Yulia Mihailovna's idea that the ball should be of the most democratic character, and that "even working people and shopmen should not be excluded if any one of that class chanced to pay for a ticket." She could bravely utter such words in her committee with absolute security that none of the working people of our town, who all lived in extreme poverty, would dream of taking a ticket. But in spite of the democratic sentiments of the committee, I could hardly believe that such sinister-looking and shabby people could have been admitted in the regular way. But who could have admitted them, and with what object? Lyamshin and Liputin had already been deprived of their steward's rosettes, though they were present at the ball, as they were taking part in the "literary quadrille." But, to my amazement, Liputin's place was taken by the divinity student, who had caused the greatest scandal at the *matinée* by his skirmish with Stepan Trofimovitch; and Lyamshin's was taken by Pyotr Stepanovitch himself. What was to be looked for under the circumstances?

I tried to listen to the conversation. I was struck by the wildness of some ideas I heard expressed. It was maintained in

one group, for instance, that Yulia Mihailovna had arranged Liza's elopement with Stavrogin and had been paid by the latter for doing so. Even the sum paid was mentioned. It was asserted that she had arranged the whole *fête* with a view to it, and that that was the reason why half the town had not turned up at the ball, and that Lembke himself was so upset about it that "his mind had given away," and that, crazy as he was, "she had got him in tow." There was a great deal of laughter too, hoarse, wild and significant. Every one was criticising the ball, too, with great severity, and abusing Yulia Mihailovna without ceremony. In fact it was disorderly, incoherent, drunken and excited babble, so it was difficult to put it together and make anything of it. At the same time there were simple-hearted people enjoying themselves at the refreshment-bar; there were even some ladies of the sort who are surprised and frightened at nothing, very genial and festive, chiefly military ladies with their husbands. They made parties at the little tables, were drinking tea, and were very merry. The refreshment-bar made a snug refuge for almost half of the guests. Yet in a little time all this mass of people must stream into the ballroom. It was horrible to think of it!

Meanwhile the prince had succeeded in arranging three skimpy quadrilles in the White Hall. The young ladies were dancing, while their parents were enjoying watching them. But many of these respectable persons had already begun to think how they could, after giving their girls a treat, get off in good time before "the trouble began." Absolutely every one was convinced that it certainly would begin. It would be difficult for me to describe Yulia Mihailovna's state of mind. I did not talk to her though I went close up to her. She did not respond to the bow I made her on entering; she did not notice me (really did not notice). There was a painful look in her face and a contemptuous and haughty though restless and agitated expression in her eyes. She controlled herself with evident suffering—for whose sake, with what object? She certainly ought to have gone away, still more to have got her husband away, and she remained! From her face one could see that her eyes were "fully opened," and that it was useless for her to expect anything more. She did not even summon Pyotr Stepanovitch (he seemed to avoid her; I saw him in the refreshment-room, he was ex-

tremely lively). But she remained at the ball and did not let Andrey Antonovitch leave her side for a moment. Oh, up to the very last moment, even that morning she would have repudiated any hint about his health with genuine indignation. But now her eyes were to be opened on this subject too. As for me, I thought from the first glance that Andrey Antonovitch looked worse than he had done in the morning. He seemed to be plunged into a sort of oblivion and hardly to know where he was. Sometimes he looked about him with unexpected severity—at me, for instance, twice. Once he tried to say something; he began loudly and audibly but did not finish the sentence, throwing a modest old clerk who happened to be near him almost into a panic. But even this humble section of the assembly held sullenly and timidly aloof from Yulia Mihailovna and at the same time turned upon her husband exceedingly strange glances, open and staring, quite out of keeping with their habitually submissive demeanour.

"Yes, that struck me, and I suddenly began to guess about Andrey Antonovitch," Yulia Mihailovna confessed to me afterwards.

Yes, she was to blame again! Probably when after my departure she had settled with Pyotr Stepanovitch that there should be a ball and that she should be present she must have gone again to the study where Andrey Antonovitch was sitting, utterly "shattered" by the *matinée*; must again have used all her fascinations to persuade him to come with her. But what misery she must have been in now! And yet she did not go away. Whether it was pride or simply she lost her head, I do not know. In spite of her haughtiness, she attempted with smiles and humiliation to enter into conversation with some ladies, but they were confused, confined themselves to distrustful monosyllables, "Yes" and "No," and evidently avoided her.

The only person of undoubted consequence who was present at the ball was that distinguished general whom I have described already, the one who after Stavrogin's duel with Gaganov "opened the door to public impatience" at the marshal's wife's. He walked with an air of dignity through the rooms, looked about, and listened, and tried to appear as though he had come rather for the sake of observation than for the sake of enjoying himself. . . . He ended by establishing himself beside Yulia

Mihailovna and not moving a step away from her, evidently trying to keep up her spirits, and reassure her. He certainly was a most kind-hearted man, of very high rank, and so old that even compassion from him was not wounding. But to admit to herself that this old gossip was venturing to pity her and almost to protect her, knowing that he was doing her honour by his presence, was very vexatious. The general stayed by her and never ceased chattering.

"They say a town can't go on without seven righteous men . . . seven, I think it is, I am not sure of the number fixed. . . . I don't know how many of these seven, the certified righteous of the town . . . have the honour of being present at your ball. Yet in spite of their presence I begin to feel unsafe. *Vous me pardonnez, charmante dame, n'est-ce pas?* I speak allegorically, but I went into the refreshment-room and I am glad I escaped alive. . . . Our priceless Prohoritch is not in his place there, and I believe his bar will be destroyed before morning. But I am laughing. I am only waiting to see what the 'literary quadrille' is going to be like, and then home to bed. You must excuse a gouty old fellow. I go early to bed, and I would advise you too to go 'by-by,' as they say *aux enfants*. I've come, you know, to have a look at the pretty girls . . . whom, of course, I could meet nowhere in such profusion as here. They all live beyond the river and I don't drive out so far. There's a wife of an officer . . . in the *chasseurs* I believe he is . . . who is distinctly pretty, distinctly, and . . . she knows it herself. I've talked to the sly puss; she is a sprightly one . . . and the girls too are fresh-looking; but that's all, there's nothing but freshness. Still, it's a pleasure to look at them. There are some rosebuds, but their lips are thick. As a rule there's an irregularity about female beauty in Russia, and . . . they are a little like buns. . . . *vous me pardonnez, n'est-ce pas?* . . . with good eyes, however, laughing eyes. . . . These rosebuds are charming for two years when they are young . . . even for three . . . then they broaden out and are spoilt for ever . . . producing in their husbands that deplorable indifference which does so much to promote the woman movement . . . that is, if I understand it correctly. . . . H'm! It's a fine hall; the rooms are not badly decorated. It might be worse. The music might be much worse. . . . I don't say it ought to

have been. What makes a bad impression is that there are so few ladies. I say nothing about the dresses. It's bad that that chap in the grey trousers should dare to dance the cancan so openly. I can forgive him if he does it in the gaiety of his heart, and since he is the local chemist. . . . Still, eleven o'clock is a bit early even for chemists. There were two fellows fighting in the refreshment-bar and they weren't turned out. At eleven o'clock people ought to be turned out for fighting, whatever the standard of manners. . . . Three o'clock is a different matter; then one has to make concessions to public opinion—if only this ball survives till three o'clock. Varvara Petrovna has not kept her word, though, and hasn't sent flowers. H'm! She has no thoughts for flowers, *pauvre mère!* And poor Liza! Have you heard? They say it's a mysterious story . . . and Stavrogin is to the front again. . . . H'm! I would have gone home to bed . . . I can hardly keep my eyes open. But when is this 'literary quadrille' coming on?"

At last the "literary quadrille" began. Whenever of late there had been conversation in the town on the ball it had invariably turned on this literary quadrille, and as no one could imagine what it would be like, it aroused extraordinary curiosity. Nothing could be more unfavourable to its chance of success, and great was the disappointment.

The side doors of the White Hall were thrown open and several masked figures appeared. The public surrounded them eagerly. All the occupants of the refreshment-bar trooped to the last man into the hall. The masked figures took their places for the dance. I succeeded in making my way to the front and installed myself just behind Yulia Mihailovna, Von Lembke, and the general. At this point Pyotr Stepanovitch, who had kept away till that time, skipped up to Yulia Mihailovna.

"I've been in the refreshment-room all this time, watching," he whispered, with the air of a guilty schoolboy, which he, however, assumed on purpose to irritate her even more. She turned crimson with anger.

"You might give up trying to deceive me now at least, insolent man!" broke from her almost aloud, so that it was heard by other people. Pyotr Stepanovitch skipped away extremely well satisfied with himself.

It would be difficult to imagine a more pitiful, vulgar, dull

and insipid allegory than this "literary quadrille." Nothing could be imagined less appropriate to our local society. Yet they say it was Karmazinov's idea. It was Liputin indeed who arranged it, with the help of the lame teacher who had been at the meeting at Virginsky's. But Karmazinov had given the idea and had, it was said, meant to dress up and to take a special and prominent part in it. The quadrille was made up of six couples of masked figures, who were not in fancy dress exactly, for their clothes were like every one else's. Thus, for instance, one short and elderly gentleman wearing a dress-coat—in fact, dressed like every one else—wore a venerable grey beard, tied on (and this constituted his disguise). As he danced he pounded up and down, taking tiny and rapid steps on the same spot with a stolid expression of countenance. He gave vent to sounds in a subdued but husky bass, and this huskiness was meant to suggest one of the well-known papers. Opposite this figure danced two giants, X and Z, and these letters were pinned on their coats, but what the letters meant remained unexplained. "Honest Russian thought" was represented by a middle-aged gentleman in spectacles, dress-coat and gloves, and wearing fetters (real fetters). Under his arm he had a portfolio containing papers relating to some "case." To convince the sceptical a letter from abroad testifying to the honesty of "honest Russian thought" peeped out of his pocket. All this was explained by the stewards, as the letter which peeped out of his pocket could not be read. "Honest Russian thought" had his right hand raised and in it held a glass as though he wanted to propose a toast. In a line with him on each side tripped a crop-headed Nihilist girl; while *vis-à-vis* danced another elderly gentleman in a dress-coat with a heavy cudgel in his hand. He was meant to represent a formidable periodical (not a Petersburg one), and seemed to be saying, "I'll pound you to a jelly." But in spite of his cudgel he could not bear the spectacles of "honest Russian thought" fixed upon him and tried to look away, and when he did the *pas de deux*, he twisted, turned, and did not know what to do with himself—so terrible, probably, were the stings of his conscience! I don't remember all the absurd tricks they played, however; it was all in the same style, so that I felt at last painfully ashamed. And this same expression, as it were, of shame was reflected in the whole

public, even on the most sullen figures that had come out of the refreshment-room. For some time all were silent and gazed with angry perplexity. When a man is ashamed he generally begins to get angry and is disposed to be cynical. By degrees a murmur arose in the audience.

"What's the meaning of it?" a man who had come in from the refreshment-room muttered in one of the groups.

"It's silly."

"It's something literary. It's a criticism of the *Voice*."

"What's that to me?"

From another group:

"Asses!"

"No, they are not asses; it's we who are the asses."

"Why are you an ass?"

"I am not an ass."

"Well, if you are not, I am certainly not."

From a third group:

"We ought to give them a good smacking and send them lying."

"Pull down the hall!"

From a fourth group:

"I wonder the Lembkes are not ashamed to look on!"

"Why should they be ashamed? You are not."

"Yes, I am ashamed, and he is the governor."

"And you are a pig."

"I've never seen such a commonplace ball in my life," a lady observed viciously, quite close to Yulia Mihailovna, obviously with the intention of being overheard. She was a stout lady of forty with rouge on her cheeks, wearing a bright-coloured silk dress. Almost every one in the town knew her, but no one received her. She was the widow of a civil councillor, who had left her a wooden house and a small pension; but she lived well and kept horses. Two months previously she had called on Yulia Mihailovna, but the latter had not received her.

"That might have been foreseen," she added, looking insolently into Yulia Mihailovna's face.

"If you could foresee it, why did you come?" Yulia Mihailovna could not resist saying.

"Because I was too simple," the sprightly lady answered in-

stantly, up in arms and eager for the fray; but the general intervened.

"*Chère dame*"—he bent over to Yulia Mihailovna—"you'd really better be going. We are only in their way and they'll enjoy themselves thoroughly without us. You've done your part, you've opened the ball, now leave them in peace. And Andrey Antonovitch doesn't seem to be feeling quite satisfactorily . . . To avoid trouble."

But it was too late.

All through the quadrille Andrey Antonovitch gazed at the dancers with a sort of angry perplexity, and when he heard the comments of the audience he began looking about him uneasily. Then for the first time he caught sight of some of the persons who had come from the refreshment-room; there was an expression of extreme wonder in his face. Suddenly there was a loud roar of laughter at a caper that was cut in the quadrille. The editor of the "menacing periodical, not a Petersburg one," who was dancing with the cudgel in his hands, felt utterly unable to endure the spectaclled gaze of "honest Russian thought," and not knowing how to escape it, suddenly in the last figure advanced to meet him standing on his head, which was meant, by the way, to typify the continual turning upside down of common sense by the menacing non-Petersburg gazette. As Lyamshin was the only one who could walk standing on his head, he had undertaken to represent the editor with the cudgel. Yulia Mihailovna had had no idea that anyone was going to walk on his head. "They concealed that from me, they concealed it," she repeated to me afterwards in despair and indignation. The laughter from the crowd was, of course, provoked not by the allegory, which interested no one, but simply by a man's walking on his head in a swallow-tail coat. Lembke flew into a rage and shook with fury.

"Rascal!" he cried, pointing to Lyamshin, "take hold of the scoundrel, turn him over . . . turn his legs . . . his head . . . so that his head's up . . . up!"

Lyamshin jumped on to his feet. The laughter grew louder.

"Turn out all the scoundrels who are laughing!" Lembke prescribed suddenly.

There was an angry roar and laughter in the crowd.

"You can't do like that, your Excellency."

"You mustn't abuse the public."

"You are a fool yourself!" a voice cried suddenly from a corner.

"Filibusters!" shouted some one from the other end of the room.

Lembke looked around quickly at the shout and turned pale. A vacant smile came on to his lips, as though he suddenly understood and remembered something.

"Gentlemen," said Yulia Mihailovna, addressing the crowd which was pressing round them, as she drew her husband away—"gentlemen, excuse Andrey Antonovitch. Andrey Antonovitch is unwell . . . excuse . . . forgive him, gentlemen."

I positively heard her say "forgive him." It all happened very quickly. But I remember for a fact that a section of the public rushed out of the hall immediately after those words of Yulia Mihailovna's as though panic-stricken. I remember one hysterical, tearful feminine shriek:

"Ach, the same thing again!"

And in the retreat of the guests, which was almost becoming a crush, another bomb exploded exactly as in the afternoon.

"Fire! All the riverside quarter is on fire!"

I don't remember where this terrible cry rose first, whether it was first raised in the hall, or whether some one ran upstairs from the entry, but it was followed by such alarm that I can't attempt to describe it. More than half the guests at the ball came from the quarter beyond the river, and were owners or occupiers of wooden houses in that district. They rushed to the windows, pulled back the curtains in a flash, and tore down the blinds. The riverside was in flames. The fire, it is true, was only beginning, but it was in flames in three separate places—and that was what was alarming.

"Arson! The Shpigulin men!" roared the crowd.

I remember some very characteristic exclamations:

"I've had a presentiment in my heart that there'd be arson, I've had a presentiment of it these last few days!"

"The Shpigulin men, the Shpigulin men, no one else!"

"We were all lured here on purpose to set fire to it!"

This last most amazing exclamation came from a woman; it was an unintentional involuntary shriek of a housewife

whose goods were burning. Every one rushed for the door. I won't describe the crush in the vestibule over sorting out cloaks, shawls, and pelisses, the shrieks of the frightened women, the weeping of the young ladies. I doubt whether there was any theft, but it was no wonder that in such disorder some went away without their wraps because they were unable to find them, and this grew into a legend with many additions, long preserved in the town. Lembke and Yulia Mihailovna were almost crushed by the crowd at the doors.

"Stop, every one! Don't let anyone out!" yelled Lembke, stretching out his arms menacingly towards the crowding people. "Every one without exception to be strictly searched at once!"

A storm of violent oaths rose from the crowd.

"Andrey Antonovitch! Andrey Antonovitch!" cried Yulia Mihailovna in complete despair.

"Arrest her first!" shouted her husband, pointing his finger at her threateningly. "Search her first! The ball was arranged with a view to the fire. . . ."

She screamed and fell into a swoon. (Oh, there was no doubt of its being a real one.) The general, the prince, and I rushed to her assistance; there were others, even among the ladies, who helped us at that difficult moment. We carried the unhappy woman out of this hell to her carriage, but she only regained consciousness as she reached the house, and her first utterance was about Andrey Antonovitch again. With the destruction of all her fancies, the only thing left in her mind was Andrey Antonovitch. They sent for a doctor. I remained with her for a whole hour; the prince did so too. The general, in an access of generous feeling (though he had been terribly scared), meant to remain all night "by the bedside of the unhappy lady," but within ten minutes he fell asleep in an arm-chair in the drawing-room while waiting for the doctor, and there we left him.

The chief of the police, who had hurried from the ball to the fire, and succeeded in getting Andrey Antonovitch out of the hall after us, and attempted to put him into Yulia Mihailovna's carriage, trying all he could to persuade his Excellency "to seek repose." But I don't know why he did not insist. Andrey Antonovitch, of course, would not hear of repose, and was set

on going to the fire; but that was not a sufficient reason. It ended in his taking him to the fire in his droshky. He told us afterwards that Lembke was gesticulating all the way and "shouting orders that it was impossible to obey owing to their unusualness." It was officially reported later on that his Excellency had at that time been in a delirious condition "owing to a sudden fright."

There is no need to describe how the ball ended. A few dozen rowdy fellows, and with them some ladies, remained in the hall. There were no police present. They would not let the orchestra go, and beat the musicians who attempted to leave. By morning they had pulled all Prohoritch's stall to pieces, had drunk themselves senseless, danced the Kamarinsky in its unexpurgated form, made the rooms in a shocking mess, and only towards daybreak part of this hopelessly drunken rabble reached the scene of the fire to make fresh disturbances there. The other part spent the night in the rooms dead drunk, with disastrous consequences to the velvet sofas and the floor. Next morning, at the earliest possibility, they were dragged out by their legs into the street. So ended the fête for the benefit of the governesses of our province.

IV

The fire frightened the inhabitants of the riverside just because it was evidently a case of arson. It was curious that at the first cry of "fire" another cry was raised that the Shpigulin men had done it. It is now well known that three Shpigulin men really did have a share in setting fire to the town, but that was all; all the other factory hands were completely acquitted, not only officially but also by public opinion. Besides those three rascals (of whom one has been caught and confessed and the other two have so far escaped), Fedka the convict undoubtedly had a hand in the arson. That is all that is known for certain about the fire till now; but when it comes to conjectures it's a very different matter. What had led these three rascals to do it? Had they been instigated by anyone? It is very difficult to answer all these questions even now.

Owing to the strong wind, the fact that the houses at the riverside were almost all wooden, and that they had been set

fire to in three places, the fire spread quickly and enveloped the whole quarter with extraordinary rapidity. (The fire burnt, however, only at two ends; at the third spot it was extinguished almost as soon as it began to burn—of which later.) But the Petersburg and Moscow papers exaggerated our calamity. Not more than a quarter, roughly speaking, of the riverside district was burnt down; possibly less indeed. Our fire brigade, though it was hardly adequate to the size and population of the town, worked with great promptitude and devotion. But it would not have been of much avail, even with the zealous co-operation of the inhabitants, if the wind had not suddenly dropped towards morning. When an hour after our flight from the ball I made my way to the riverside, the fire was at its height. A whole street parallel with the river was in flames. It was as light as day. I won't describe the fire; every one in Russia knows what it looks like. The bustle and crush was immense in the lanes adjoining the burning street. The inhabitants, fully expecting the fire to reach their houses, were hauling out their belongings, but had not yet left their dwellings, and were waiting meanwhile sitting on their boxes and feather beds under their windows. Part of the male population were hard at work ruthlessly chopping down fences and even whole huts which were near the fire and on the windward side. None were crying except the children, who had been waked out of their sleep, though the women who had dragged out their chattels were lamenting in sing-song voices. Those who had not finished their task were still silent, busily carrying out their goods. Sparks and embers were carried a long way in all directions. People put them out as best they could. Some helped to put the fire out while others stood about, admiring it. A great fire at night always has a thrilling and exhilarating effect. This is what explains the attraction of fireworks. But in that case the artistic regularity with which the fire is presented and the complete lack of danger give an impression of lightness and playfulness like the effect of a glass of champagne. A real conflagration is a very different matter. Then the horror and a certain sense of personal danger, together with the exhilarating effect of a fire at night, produce on the spectator (though of course not in the householder whose goods are being burnt) a certain concussion of the brain and, as it were, a challenge to those destruc-

The day dawned at last, gloomy and sullen. The fire was abating; the wind was followed by a sudden calm, and then a fine drizzling rain fell. I was by that time in another part, some distance from where Lembke had fallen, and here I overheard very strange conversations in the crowd. A strange fact had come to light. On the very outskirts of the quarter, on a piece of waste land beyond the kitchen gardens, not less than fifty paces from any other buildings, there stood a little wooden house which had only lately been built, and this solitary house had been on fire at the very beginning, almost before any other. Even had it burnt down, it was so far from other houses that no other building in the town could have caught fire from it, and, *vice versa*, if the whole riverside had been burnt to the ground, that house might have remained intact, whatever the wind had been. It followed that it had caught fire separately and independently and therefore not accidentally. But the chief point was that it was not burnt to the ground, and at daybreak strange things were discovered within it. The owner of this new house, who lived in the neighbourhood, rushed up as soon as he saw it in flames and with the help of his neighbours pulled apart a pile of faggots which had been heaped up by the side wall and set fire to. In this way he saved the house. But there were lodgers in the house—the captain, who was well known in the town, his sister, and their elderly servant, and these three persons—the captain, his sister, and their servant—had been murdered and apparently robbed in the night. (It was here that the chief of police had gone while Lembke was rescuing the feather bed.)

By morning the news had spread and an immense crowd of all classes, even the riverside people who had been burnt out, had flocked to the waste land where the new house stood. It was difficult to get there, so dense was the crowd. I was told at once that the captain had been found lying dressed on the bench with his throat cut, and that he must have been dead drunk when he was killed, so that he had felt nothing, and he had "bled like a bull"; that his sister Marya Timofeyevna had been "stabbed all over" with a knife and she was lying on the floor in the doorway, so that probably she had been awake and had fought and struggled with the murderer. The servant, who had also probably been awake, had her skull broken. The owner

of the house said that the captain had come to see him the morning before, and that in his drunken bragging he had shown him a lot of money, as much as two hundred roubles. The captain's shabby old green pocket-book was found empty on the floor, but Marya Timofeyevna's box had not been touched, and the silver setting of the ikon had not been removed either; the captain's clothes, too, had not been disturbed. It was evident that the thief had been in a hurry and was a man familiar with the captain's circumstances, who had come only for money and knew where it was kept. If the owner of the house had not run up at the moment the burning faggot stack would certainly have set fire to the house and "it would have been difficult to find out from the charred corpses how they had died."

So the story was told. One other fact was added: that the person who had taken this house for the Lebyadkins was no other than Mr. Stavrogin, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, the son of Varvara Petrovna. He had come himself to take it and had had much ado to persuade the owner to let it, as the latter had intended to use it as a tavern; but Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was ready to give any rent he asked and had paid for six months in advance.

"The fire wasn't an accident," I heard said in the crowd.

But the majority said nothing. People's faces were sullen, but I did not see signs of much indignation. People persisted however, in gossiping about Stavrogin, saying that the murdered woman was his wife; that on the previous day he had "dishonourably" abducted a young lady belonging to the best family in the place, the daughter of Madame Drozdov, and that a complaint was to be lodged against him in Petersburg; and that his wife had been murdered evidently that he might marry the young lady. Skvoreshniki was not more than a mile and a half away, and I remember I wondered whether I should not let them know the position of affairs. I did not notice, however, that there was anyone egging the crowd on and I don't want to accuse people falsely, though I did see and recognised at once in the crowd at the fire two or three of the rowdy lot I had seen in the refreshment-room. I particularly remember one thin, tall fellow, a cabinet-maker, as I found out later, with an emaciated face and a curly head, black as though grimed with soot. He was not drunk, but in contrast to the gloomy passiv-

"'Calendars always tell lies,'" he observed with a polite smile, but, a little ashamed, he made haste to add: "It's dull to live by the calendar, Liza."

And he relapsed into silence, vexed at the ineptitude of the second sentence. Liza gave a wry smile.

"You are in such a melancholy mood that you cannot even find words to speak to me. But you need not trouble, there's a point in what you said. I always live by the calendar. Every step I take is regulated by the calendar. Does that surprise you?"

She turned quickly from the window and sat down in a low chair.

"You sit down, too, please. We haven't long to be together and I want to say anything I like. . . . Why shouldn't you, too, say anything you like?"

Nikolay Vsevolodovitch sat beside her and softly, almost timidly took her hand.

"What's the meaning of this tone, Liza? Where has it suddenly sprung from? What do you mean by 'we haven't long to be together'? That's the second mysterious phrase since you waked, half an hour ago."

"You are beginning to reckon up my mysterious phrases?" she laughed. "Do you remember I told you I was a dead woman when I came in yesterday? That you thought fit to forget. To forget or not to notice."

"I don't remember, Liza. Why dead? You must live."

"And is that all? You've quite lost your flow of words. I've lived my hour and that's enough. Do you remember Christopher Ivanovitch?"

"No I don't," he answered, frowning.

"Christopher Ivanovitch at Lausanne? He bored you dreadfully. He always used to open the door and say, 'I've come for one minute,' and then stay the whole day. I don't want to be like Christopher Ivanovitch and stay the whole day."

A look of pain came into his face.

"Liza, it grieves me, this unnatural language. This affectation must hurt you, too. What's it for? What's the object of it?"

His eyes glowed.

"Liza," he cried, "I swear I love you now more than yesterday when you came to me!"

"What a strange declaration! Why bring in yesterday and to-day and these comparisons?"

"You won't leave me," he went on, almost with despair; "we will go away together, to-day, won't we? Won't we?"

"Aie, don't squeeze my hand so painfully! Where could we go together to-day? To 'rise again' somewhere? No, we've made experiments enough . . . and it's too slow for me; and I am not fit for it; it's too exalted for me. If we are to go, let it be to Moscow, to pay visits and entertain—that's my ideal, you know; even in Switzerland I didn't disguise from you what I was like. As we can't go to Moscow and pay visits since you are married, it's no use talking of that."

"Liza! What happened yesterday!"

"What happened is over!"

"That's impossible! That's cruel!"

"What if it is cruel? You must bear it if it is cruel."

"You are avenging yourself on me for yesterday's caprice," he muttered with an angry smile. Liza flushed.

"What a mean thought!"

"Why then did you bestow on me . . . so great a happiness? Have I the right to know?"

"No, you must manage without rights; don't aggravate the meanness of your supposition by stupidity. You are not lucky to-day. By the way, you surely can't be afraid of public opinion and that you will be blamed for this 'great happiness'? If that's it, for God's sake don't alarm yourself. It's not your doing at all and you are not responsible to anyone. When I opened your door yesterday, you didn't even know who was coming in. It was simply my caprice, as you expressed it just now, and nothing more! You can look every one in the face boldly and triumphantly!"

"Your words, that laugh, have been making me feel cold with horror for the last hour. That 'happiness' of which you speak frantically is worth . . . everything to me. How can I lose you now? I swear I loved you less yesterday. Why are you taking everything from me to-day? Do you know what it has cost me, this new hope? I've paid for it with life."

"Your own life or another's?"

He got up quickly.

"What does that mean?" he brought out, looking at her steadily.

"Have you paid for it with your life or with mine? is what I mean. Or have you lost all power of understanding?" cried Liza, flushing. "Why did you start up so suddenly? Why do you stare at me with such a look? You frighten me? What is it you are afraid of all the time? I noticed some time ago that you were afraid and you are now, this very minute . . . Good heavens, how pale you are!"

"If you know anything, Liza, I swear I don't . . . and I wasn't talking of *that* just now when I said that I had paid for it with life. . . ."

"I don't understand you," she brought out, faltering apprehensively.

At last a slow brooding smile came on to his lips. He slowly sat down, put his elbows on his knees, and covered his face with his hands.

"A bad dream and delirium. . . . We were talking of two different things."

"I don't know what you were talking about. . . . Do you mean to say you did not know yesterday that I should leave you to-day, did you know or not? Don't tell a lie, did you or not?"

"I did," he said softly.

"Well then, what would you have? You knew and yet you accepted 'that moment' for yourself. Aren't we quits?"

"Tell me the whole truth," he cried in intense distress. "When you opened my door yesterday, did you know yourself that it was only for one hour?"

She looked at him with hatred.

"Really, the most sensible person can ask most amazing questions. And why are you so uneasy? Can it be vanity that a woman should leave you first instead of your leaving her? Do you know, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, since I've been with you I've discovered that you are very generous to me, and it's just that I can't endure from you."

He got up from his seat and took a few steps about the room.

"Very well, perhaps it was bound to end so. . . . But how can it all have happened?"

"That's a question to worry about! Especially as you know the answer yourself perfectly well, and understand it better than anyone on earth, and were counting on it yourself. I am a young lady, my heart has been trained on the opera, that's how it all began, that's the solution."

"No."

"There is nothing in it to fret your vanity. It is all the absolute truth. It began with a fine moment which was too much for me to bear. The day before yesterday, when I 'insulted' you before every one and you answered me so chivalrously, I went home and guessed at once that you were running away from me because you were married, and not from contempt for me which, as a fashionable young lady, I dreaded more than anything. I understood that it was for my sake, for me, mad as I was, that you ran away. You see how I appreciate your generosity. Then Pyotr Stepanovitch skipped up to me and explained it all to me at once. He revealed to me that you were dominated by a 'great idea,' before which he and I were as nothing, but yet that I was a stumbling-block in your path. He brought himself in, he insisted that we three should work together, and said the most fantastic things about a boat and about maple-wood oars out of some Russian song. I complimented him and told him he was a poet, which he swallowed as the real thing. And as apart from him I had known long before that I had not the strength to do anything for long, I made up my mind on the spot. Well, that's all and quite enough, and please let us have no more explanations. We might quarrel. Don't be afraid of anyone, I take it all on myself. I am horrid and capricious, I was fascinated by that operatic boat, I am a young lady . . . but you know I did think that you were dreadfully in love with me. Don't despise the poor fool, and don't laugh at the tear that dropped just now. I am awfully given to crying with self-pity. Come, that's enough, that's enough. I am no good for anything and you are no good for anything; it's as bad for both of us, so let's comfort ourselves with that. Anyway, it eases our vanity."

"Dream and delirium," cried Stavrogin, wringing his hands.

and pacing about the room. "Liza, poor child, what have you done to yourself?"

"I've burnt myself in a candle, nothing more. Surely you are not crying, too? You should show less feeling and better breeding. . . ."

"Why, why did you come to me?"

"Don't you understand what a ludicrous position you put yourself in in the eyes of the world by asking such questions?"

"Why have you ruined yourself, so grotesquely and so stupidly, and what's to be done now?"

"And this is Stavrogin, 'the vampire Stavrogin,' as you are called by a lady here who is in love with you! Listen! I have told you already, I've put all my life into one hour and I am at peace. Do the same with yours . . . though you've no need to: you have plenty of 'hours' and 'moments' of all sorts before you."

"As many as you; I give you my solemn word, not one hour more than you!"

He was still walking up and down and did not see the rapid penetrating glance she turned upon him, in which there seemed a dawning hope. But the light died away at the same moment.

"If you knew what it costs me that I can't be sincere at this moment, Liza, if I could only tell you . . ."

"Tell me? You want to tell me something, to me? God save me from your secrets!" she broke in almost in terror.

He stopped and waited uneasily.

"I ought to confess that ever since those days in Switzerland I have had a strong feeling that you have something awful, loathsome, some bloodshed on your conscience . . . and yet something that would make you look very ridiculous. Beware of telling me, if it's true: I shall laugh you to scorn. I shall laugh at you for the rest of your life. . . . Aie, you are turning pale again? I won't, I won't, I'll go at once." She jumped up from her chair with a movement of disgust and contempt.

"Torture me, punish me, vent your spite on me," he cried in despair. "You have the full right. I knew I did not love you and yet I ruined you! Yes, I accepted the moment for my own; I had a hope . . . I've had it a long time . . . my last hope. . . . I could not resist the radiance that flooded my heart when you came to me yesterday, of yourself, alone, of your

own accord. I suddenly believed. . . . Perhaps I have faith in it still."

"I will repay such noble frankness by being as frank. I don't want to be a Sister of Mercy for you. Perhaps I really may become a nurse unless I happen appropriately to die to-day; but if I do I won't be your nurse, though, of course, you need one as much as any crippled creature. I always fancied that you would take me to some place where there was a huge wicked spider, big as a man, and we should spend our lives looking at it and being afraid of it. That's how our love would spend itself. Appeal to Dashenka; she will go with you anywhere you like."

"Can't you help thinking of her even now?"

"Poor little spaniel! Give her my greetings. Does she know that even in Switzerland you had fixed on her for your old age? What prudence! What foresight! Aie, who's that?"

At the farther end of the room a door opened a crack; a head was thrust in and vanished again hurriedly.

"Is that you, Alexey Yegorytch?" asked Stavrogin.

"No, it's only I." Pyotr Stepanovitch thrust himself half in again. "How do you do, Lizaveta Nikolaevna? Good morning, anyway. I guessed I should find you both in this room. I have come for one moment literally, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. I was anxious to have a couple of words with you at all costs . . . absolutely necessary . . . only a few words!"

Stavrogin moved towards him but turned back to Liza at the third step.

"If you hear anything directly, Liza, let me tell you I am to blame for it!"

She started and looked at him in dismay; but he hurriedly went out.

II

The room from which Pyotr Stepanovitch had peeped in was a large oval vestibule. Alexey Yegorytch had been sitting there before Pyotr Stepanovitch came in but the latter sent him away. Stavrogin closed the door after him and stood expectant. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked rapidly and searchingly at him.

"Well?"

"If you know already," said Pyotr Stepanovitch hurriedly, his eyes looking as though they would dive into Stavrogin's soul, "then, of course, we are none of us to blame, above all not you, for it's such a concatenation . . . such a coincidence of events . . . in brief, you can't be legally implicated and I've rushed here to tell you so beforehand."

"Have they been burnt? murdered?"

"Murdered but not burnt, that's the trouble, but I give you my word of honour that it's not been my fault, however much you may suspect me, eh? Do you want the whole truth: you see the idea really did cross my mind—you hinted it yourself, not seriously, but teasing me (for, of course, you would not hint it seriously), but I couldn't bring myself to it, and wouldn't bring myself to it for anything, not for a hundred roubles—and what was there to be gained by it, I mean for me, for me. . . ." (He was in desperate haste and his talk was like the cracking of the rattle.) "But what a coincidence of circumstances: I gave that drunken fool Lebyadkin two hundred and thirty roubles of my own money (do you hear, my own money, there wasn't a rouble of yours and, what's more, you know it yourself) the day before yesterday, in the evening—do you hear, not yesterday after the *matinée*, but the day before yesterday, make a note of it: it's a very important coincidence for I did not know for certain at that time whether Lizaveta Nikolaevna would come to you or not; I gave my own money simply because you distinguished yourself by taking it into your head to betray your secret to every one. Well, I won't go into that . . . that's your affair . . . your chivalry . . . but I must own I was amazed, it was a knock-down blow. And forasmuch as I was exceeding weary of these tragic stories—and let me tell you, I talk seriously though I do use Biblical language—as it was all upsetting my plans in fact, I made up my mind at any cost, and without your knowledge, to pack the Lebyadkins off to Petersburg, especially as he was set on going himself. I made one mistake: I gave the money in your name; was it a mistake or not? Perhaps it wasn't a mistake, eh? Listen now, listen how it has all turned out . . ."

In the heat of his talk he went close up to Stavrogin and took hold of the revers of his coat (really, it may have been on

purpose). With a violent movement Stavrogin struck him on the arm.

"Come, what is it . . . give over . . . you'll break my arm . . . what matters is the way things have turned out," he rattled on, not in the least surprised at the blow. "I forked out the money in the evening on condition his sister and he should set off early next morning; I trusted that rascal Liputin with the job of getting them into the train and seeing them off. But that beast Liputin wanted to play his schoolboy pranks on the public—perhaps you heard? At the *matinée*? Listen, listen: they both got drunk, made up verses of which half are Liputin's; he rigged Lebyadkin out in a dress-coat, assuring me meanwhile that he had packed him off that morning, but he kept him shut somewhere in a back room, till he thrust him on the platform at the *matinée*. But Lebyadkin got drunk quickly and unexpectedly. Then came the scandalous scene you know of, and then they got him home more dead than alive, and Liputin filched away the two hundred roubles, leaving him only small change. But it appears unluckily that already that morning Lebyadkin had taken that two hundred roubles out of his pocket, boasted of it and shown it in undesirable quarters. And as that was just what Fedka was expecting, and as he had heard something at Kirillov's (do you remember, your hint?) he made up his mind to take advantage of it. That's the whole truth. I am glad, anyway, that Fedka did not find the money, the rascal was reckoning on a thousand, you know! He was in a hurry and seems to have been frightened by the fire himself . . . Would you believe it, that fire came as a thunderbolt for me. Devil only knows what to make of it! It is taking things into their own hands. . . . You see, as I expect so much of you I will hide nothing from you: I've long been hatching this idea of a fire because it suits the national and popular taste; but I was keeping it for a critical moment, for that precious time when we should all rise up and . . . And they suddenly took it into their heads to do it, on their own initiative, without orders, now at the very moment when we ought to be lying low and keeping quiet! Such presumption! . . . The fact is, I've not got to the bottom of it yet, they talk about two Shpigulin men . . . but if there are any of our fellows in it, if any one of them has had a hand in it—so

much the worse for him! You see what comes of letting people get ever so little out of hand! No, this democratic rabble, with its quintets, is a poor foundation; what we want is one magnificent, despotic will, like an idol, resting on something fundamental and external. . . . Then the quintets will cringe into obedience and be obsequiously ready on occasion. But, anyway, though, they are all crying out now that Stavrogin wanted his wife to be burnt and that that's what caused the fire in the town, but . . ."

"Why, are they all saying that?"

"Well, not yet, and I must confess I have heard nothing of the sort, but what one can do with people, especially when they've been burnt out! *Vox populi vox Dei*. A stupid rumour is soon set going. But you really have nothing to be afraid of. From the legal point of view you are all right, and with your conscience also. For you didn't want it done, did you? There's no clue, nothing but the coincidence. . . . The only thing is Fedka may remember what you said that night at Kirillov's (and what made you say it?) but that proves nothing and we shall stop Fedka's mouth. I shall stop it to-day. . . ."

"And weren't the bodies burnt at all?"

"Not a bit; that ruffian could not manage anything properly. But I am glad, anyway, that you are so calm . . . for though you are not in any way to blame, even in thought, but all the same. . . . And you must admit that all this settles your difficulties capitally: you are suddenly free and a widower and can marry a charming girl this minute with a lot of money, who is already yours, into the bargain. See what can be done by a crude, simple, coincidence—eh?"

"Are you threatening me, you fool?"

"Come, leave off, leave off! Here you are, calling me a fool, and what a tone to use! You ought to be glad, yet you . . . I rushed here on purpose to let you know in good time. . . . Besides, how could I threaten you? As if I cared for what I could get by threats! I want you to help from goodwill and not from fear. You are the light and the sun. . . . It's I who am terribly afraid of you, not you of me! I am not Mavriky Nikolaevitch. . . . And only fancy, as I flew here in a racing droshky I saw Mavriky Nikolaevitch by the fence at the farthest corner of your garden . . . in his greatcoat, drenched

through, he must have been sitting there all night! Queer goings on! How mad people can be!"

"Mavriky Nikolaevitch? Is that true?"

"Yes, yes. He is sitting by the garden fence. About three hundred paces from here, I think. I made haste to pass him, but he saw me. Didn't you know? In that case I am glad I didn't forget to tell you. A man like that is more dangerous than anyone if he happens to have a revolver about him, and then the night, the sleet, or natural irritability—for after all he is in a nice position, ha ha! What do you think? Why is he sitting there?"

"He is waiting for Lizaveta Nikolaevna, of course."

"Well! Why should she go out to him? And . . . in such rain too . . . what a fool!"

"She is just going out to him!"

"Eh! That's a piece of news! So then . . . But listen, her position is completely changed now. What does she want with Mavriky now? You are free, a widower, and can marry her to-morrow. She doesn't know yet—leave it to me and I'll arrange it all for you. Where is she? We must relieve her mind too."

"Relieve her mind?"

"Rather! Let's go."

"And do you suppose she won't guess what those dead bodies mean?" said Stavrogin, screwing up his eyes in a peculiar way.

"Of course she won't," said Pyotr Stepanovitch with all the confidence of a perfect simpleton, "for legally . . . Ech, what a man you are! What if she did guess? Women are so clever at shutting their eyes to such things, you don't understand women! Apart from it's being altogether to her interest to marry you now, because there's no denying she's disgraced herself; apart from that, I talked to her of 'the boat' and I saw that one could affect her by it, so that shows you what the girl is made of. Don't be uneasy, she will step over those dead bodies without turning a hair—especially as you are not to blame for them; not in the least, are you? She will only keep them in reserve to use them against you when you've been married two or three years. Every woman saves up something of the sort out of her husband's past when she gets married, but by that time . . . what may not happen in a year? Ha ha!"

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"If you've come in a racing droshky, take her to Mavriky Nikolaevitch now. She said just now that she could not endure me and would leave me, and she certainly will not accept my carriage."

"What! Can she really be leaving? How can this have come about?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, staring stupidly at him.

"She's guessed somehow during this night that I don't love her . . . which she knew all along, indeed."

"But don't you love her?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, with an expression of extreme surprise. "If so, why did you keep her when she came to you yesterday, instead of telling her plainly like an honourable man that you didn't care for her? That was horribly shabby on your part; and how mean you make me look in her eyes!"

Stavrogin suddenly laughed.

"I am laughing at my monkey," he explained at once.

"Ah! You saw that I was putting it on!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, laughing too, with great enjoyment. "I did it to amuse you! Only fancy, as soon as you came out to me I guessed from your face that you'd been 'unlucky.' A complete fiasco, perhaps. Eh? There! I'll bet anything," he cried, almost gasping with delight, "that you've been sitting side by side in the drawing-room all night wasting your precious time discussing something lofty and elevated . . . There, forgive me, forgive me; it's not my business. I felt sure yesterday that it would all end in foolishness. I brought her to you simply to amuse you, and to show you that you wouldn't have a dull time with me. I shall be of use to you a hundred times in that way. I always like pleasing people. If you don't want her now, which was what I was reckoning on when I came, then . . ."

"So you brought her simply for my amusement?"

"Why, what else?"

"Not to make me kill my wife?"

"Come. You've not killed her? What a tragic fellow you are!"

"It's just the same; you killed her."

"I didn't kill her! I tell you I had no hand in it. . . . You are beginning to make me uneasy, though. . . ."

"Go on. You said, 'if you don't want her now, then . . .'"

"Then, leave it to me, of course. I can quite easily marry

her off to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, though I didn't make him sit down by the fence. Don't take that notion into your head. I am afraid of him, now. You talk about my droshky, but I simply dashed by. . . . What if he has a revolver? It's a good thing I brought mine. Here it is." He brought a revolver out of his pocket, showed it, and hid it again at once. "I took it as I was coming such a long way. . . . But I'll arrange all that for you in a twinkling: her little heart is aching at this moment for Mavriky; it should be, anyway. . . . And, do you know, I am really rather sorry for her? If I take her to Mavriky she will begin about you directly; she will praise you to him and abuse him to his face. You know the heart of a woman! There you are, laughing again! I am awfully glad that you are so cheerful now. Come, let's go. I'll begin with Mavriky right away, and about them . . . those who've been murdered . . . hadn't we better keep quiet now? She'll hear later on, anyway."

"What will she hear? Who's been murdered? What were you saying about Mavriky Nikolaevitch?" said Liza, suddenly opening the door.

"Ah! You've been listening?"

"What were you saying just now about Mavriky Nikolaevitch? Has he been murdered?"

"Ah! Then you didn't hear? Don't distress yourself. Mavriky Nikolaevitch is alive and well, and you can satisfy yourself of it in an instant, for he is here by the wayside, by the garden fence . . . and I believe he's been sitting there all night. He is drenched through in his greatcoat! He saw me as I drove past."

"That's not true. You said 'murdered.' . . . Who's been murdered?" she insisted with agonising mistrust.

"The only people who have been murdered are my wife, her brother Lebyadkin, and their servant," Stavrogin brought out firmly.

Liza trembled and turned terribly pale.

"A strange brutal outrage, Lizaveta Nikolaevna. A stupid case of robbery," Pyotr Stepanovitch rattled off at once. "Simply robbery, under cover of the fire. The crime was committed by Fedka the convict, and it was all that fool Lebyadkin's fault for showing every one his money. . . . I rushed

here with the news . . . it fell on me like a thunderbolt. Stavrogin could hardly stand when I told him. We were deliberating here whether to tell you at once or not?"

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, is he telling the truth?" Liza articulated faintly.

"No; it's false."

"False!" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, starting. "What do you mean by that?"

"Heavens! I shall go mad!" cried Liza.

"Do you understand, anyway, that he is mad now!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried at the top of his voice. "After all, his wife has just been murdered. You see how white he is. . . . Why, he has been with you the whole night. He hasn't left your side a minute. How can you suspect him?"

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, tell me, as before God, are you guilty or not, and I swear I'll believe your word as though it were God's, and I'll follow you to the end of the earth. Yes, I will. I'll follow you like a dog."

"Why are you tormenting her, you fantastic creature?" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch in exasperation. "Lizaveta Nikolaevna, upon my oath, you can crush me into powder, but he is not guilty. On the contrary, it has crushed him, and he is raving, you see that. He is not to blame in any way, not in any way, not even in thought! . . . It's all the work of robbers who will probably be found within a week and flogged. . . . It's all the work of Fedka the convict, and some Shpigulin men, all the town is agog with it. That's why I say so too."

"Is that right? Is that right?" Liza waited trembling for her final sentence.

"I did not kill them, and I was against it, but I knew they were going to be killed and I did not stop the murderers. Leave me, Liza," Stavrogin brought out, and he walked into the drawing-room.

Liza hid her face in her hands and walked out of the house. Pyotr Stepanovitch was rushing after her, but at once hurried back and went into the drawing-room.

"So that's your line? That's your line? So there's nothing you are afraid of?" He flew at Stavrogin in an absolute fury, muttering incoherently, scarcely able to find words and foaming at the mouth.

Stavrogin stood in the middle of the room and did not answer a word. He clutched a lock of his hair in his left hand and smiled helplessly. Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled him violently by the sleeve.

"Is it all over with you? So that's the line you are taking? You'll inform against all of us, and go to a monastery yourself, or to the devil. . . . But I'll do for you, though you are not afraid of me!"

"Ah! That's you chattering!" said Stavrogin, noticing him at last. "Run," he said, coming to himself suddenly, "run after her, order the carriage, don't leave her. . . . Run, run! Take her home so that no one may know . . . and that she mayn't go there . . . to the bodies . . . to the bodies. . . . Force her to get into the carriage . . . Alexey Yegorytch! Alexey Yegorytch!"

"Stay, don't shout! By now she is in Mavriky's arms. . . . Mavriky won't put her into your carriage. . . . Stay! There's something more important than the carriage!"

He seized his revolver again. Stavrogin looked at him gravely.

"Very well, kill me," he said softly, almost conciliatorily.

"Foo. Damn it! What a maze of false sentiment a man can get into!" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, shaking with rage. "Yes, really, you ought to be killed! She ought simply to spit at you! Fine sort of 'magic boat,' you are; you are a broken-down, leaky old hulk! . . . You ought to pull yourself together if only from spite! Ech! Why, what difference would it make to you since you ask for a bullet through your brains yourself?"

Stavrogin smiled strangely.

"If you were not such a buffoon I might perhaps have said yes now. . . . If you had only a grain of sense . . ."

"I am a buffoon, but I don't want you, my better half, to be one! Do you understand me?"

Stavrogin did understand, though perhaps no one else did. Shatov, for instance, was astonished when Stavrogin told him that Pyotr Stepanovitch had enthusiasm.

"Go to the devil now, and to-morrow perhaps I may wring something out of myself. Come to-morrow."

"Yes? Yes?"



But, hang it; it's no consequence! You'll see, Mavriky Nikolaevitch will make you an offer before you get home. He doesn't see us yet."

"Ach! Don't let him see us!" Liza cried suddenly, like a mad creature. "Come away, come away! To the woods, to the fields!"

And she ran back.

"Lizaveta Nikolaevna, this is such cowardice," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, running after her. "And why don't you want him to see you? On the contrary, you must look him straight in the face, with pride. . . . If it's some feeling about *that* . . . some maidenly . . . that's such a prejudice, so out of date. . . . But where are you going? Where are you going? Ech! she is running! Better go back to Stavrogin's and take my droshky. . . . Where are you going? That's the way to the fields! There! She's fallen down! . . ."

He stopped. Liza was flying along like a bird, not conscious where she was going, and Pyotr Stepanovitch was already fifty paces behind her. She stumbled over a mound of earth and fell down. At the same moment there was the sound of a terrible shout from behind. It came from Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had seen her flight and her fall, and was running to her across the field. In a flash Pyotr Stepanovitch had retired into Stavrogin's gateway to make haste and get into his droshky.

Mavriky Nikolaevitch was already standing in terrible alarm by Liza, who had risen to her feet; he was bending over her and holding her hands in both of his. All the incredible surroundings of this meeting overwhelmed him, and tears were rolling down his cheeks. He saw the woman for whom he had such reverent devotion running madly across the fields, at such an hour, in such weather, with nothing over her dress, the gay dress she wore the day before now crumpled and muddy from her fall. . . . He could not utter a word; he took off his great-coat, and with trembling hands put it around her shoulders. Suddenly he uttered a cry, feeling that she had pressed her lips to his hand.

"Liza," he cried, "I am no good for anything, but don't drive me away from you!"

"Oh, no! Let us make haste away from here. Don't leave me!" and, seizing his hand, she drew him after her. "Mavriky

Nikolaevitch," she suddenly dropped her voice timidly, "I kept a bold face there all the time, but now I am afraid of death. I shall die soon, very soon, but I am afraid, I am afraid to die . . ." she whispered, pressing his hand tight.

"Oh, if there were some one," he looked round in despair. "Some passer-by! You will get your feet wet, you . . . will lose your reason!"

"It's all right; it's all right," she tried to reassure him. "That's right. I am not so frightened with you. Hold my hand, lead me. . . . Where are we going now? Home? No! I want first to see the people who have been murdered. His wife has been murdered they say, and he says he killed her himself. But that's not true, is it? I want to see for myself those three who've been killed . . . on my account . . . it's because of them his love for me has grown cold since last night. . . . I shall see and find out everything. Make haste, make haste, I know the house . . . there's a fire there. . . . Mavriky Nikolaevitch, my dear one, don't forgive me in my shame! Why forgive me? Why are you crying? Give me a blow and kill me here in the field, like a dog!"

"No one is your judge now," Mavriky Nikolaevitch pronounced firmly. "God forgive you. I least of all can be your judge."

But it would be strange to describe their conversation. And meanwhile they walked hand in hand quickly, hurrying as though they were crazy. They were going straight towards the fire. Mavriky Nikolaevitch still had hopes of meeting a cart at least, but no one came that way. A mist of fine, drizzling rain enveloped the whole country, swallowing up every ray of light, every gleam of colour, and transforming everything into one smoky, leaden, indistinguishable mass. It had long been daylight, yet it seemed as though it were still night. And suddenly in this cold foggy mist there appeared coming towards them a strange and absurd figure. Picturing it now I think I should not have believed my eyes if I had been in Lizaveta Nikolaevna's place, yet she uttered a cry of joy, and recognised the approaching figure at once. It was Stepan Trofimovitch. How he had gone off, how the insane, impracticable idea of his flight came to be carried out, of that later. I will only mention that he was in a fever that morning, yet even illness did not pre-

vent his starting. He was walking resolutely on the damp ground. It was evident that he had planned the enterprise to the best of his ability, alone with his inexperience and lack of practical sense. He wore "travelling dress," that is, a greatcoat with a wide patent-leather belt, fastened with a buckle, and a pair of new high boots pulled over his trousers. Probably he had for some time past pictured a traveller as looking like this, and the belt and the high boots with the shining tops like a hussar's, in which he could hardly walk, had been ready some time before. A broad-brimmed hat, a knitted scarf, twisted close round his neck, a stick in his right hand, and an exceedingly small but extremely tightly packed bag in his left, completed his get-up. He had, besides, in the same right hand, an open umbrella. These three objects—the umbrella, the stick, and the bag—had been very awkward to carry for the first mile, and had begun to be heavy by the second.

"Can it really be you?" cried Liza, looking at him with distressed wonder, after her first rush of instinctive gladness.

"*Lise*," cried Stepan Trofimovitch, rushing to her almost in delirium too. "*Chère, chère*. . . . Can you be out, too . . . in such a fog? You see the glow of fire. *Vous êtes malheureuse, n'est-ce pas?* I see, I see. Don't tell me, but don't question me either. *Nous sommes tous malheureux mais il faut les pardonner tous. Pardonnons, Lise*, and let us be free for ever. To be quit of the world and be completely free. *Il faut pardonner, pardonner, et pardonner!*"

"But why are you kneeling down?"

"Because, taking leave of the world, I want to take leave of all my past in your person!" He wept and raised both her hands to his tear-stained eyes. "I kneel to all that was beautiful in my life. I kiss and give thanks! Now I've torn myself in half; left behind a mad visionary who dreamed of soaring to the sky. *Vingt-deux ans*, here. A shattered, frozen old man. A tutor *chez ce marchand, s'il existe pourtant ce marchand*. . . . But how drenched you are, *Lise!*" he cried, jumping on to his feet, feeling that his knees too were soaked by the wet earth. "And how is it possible . . . you are in such a dress . . . and on foot, and in these fields? . . . You are crying! *Vous êtes malheureuse*. Bah, I did hear something. . . . But where have you come from now?" He asked hurried questions

with an uneasy air, looking in extreme bewilderment at Mavriky Nikolaevitch. "*Mais savez-vous l'heure qu'il est?*"

"Stepan Trofimovitch, have you heard anything about the people who've been murdered? . . . Is it true? Is it true?"

"These people! I saw the glow of their work all night. They were bound to end in this. . . ." His eyes flashed again. "I am fleeing away from madness, from a delirious dream. I am fleeing away to seek for Russia. *Existe-t-elle, la Russie? Bah! C'est vous, cher capitaine!* I've never doubted that I should meet you somewhere on some high adventure. . . . But take my umbrella, and—why must you be on foot? For God's sake, do at least take my umbrella, for I shall hire a carriage somewhere in any case. I am on foot because Stasie (I mean, Nastasya) would have shouted for the benefit of the whole street if she'd found out I was going away. So I slipped away as far as possible incognito. I don't know; in the *Voice* they write of there being brigands everywhere, but I thought surely I shouldn't meet a brigand the moment I came out on the road. *Chère Lise*, I thought you said something of some one's being murdered. Oh, *mon Dieu!* You are ill!"

"Come along, come along!" cried Liza, almost in hysterics, drawing Mavriky Nikolaevitch after her again. "Wait a minute, Stepan Trofimovitch!" she came back suddenly to him. "Stay, poor darling, let me sign you with the cross. Perhaps, it would be better to put you under control, but I'd rather make the sign of the cross over you. You, too, pray for 'poor' Liza—just a little, don't bother too much about it. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, give that baby back his umbrella. You must give it him. That's right. . . . Come, let us go, let us go!"

They reached the fatal house at the very moment when the huge crowd, which had gathered round it, had already heard a good deal of Stavrogin, and of how much it was to his interest to murder his wife. Yet, I repeat, the immense majority went on listening without moving or uttering a word. The only people who were excited were bawling drunkards and excitable individuals of the same sort as the gesticulatory cabinet-maker. Every one knew the latter as a man really of mild disposition, but he was liable on occasion to get excited and to fly off at a tangent if anything struck him in a certain way. I did not see Liza and Mavriky Nikolaevitch arrive. Petrified with amaze-

ment, I first noticed Liza some distance away in the crowd, and I did not at once catch sight of Mavriky Nikolaevitch. I fancy there was a moment when he fell two or three steps behind her or was pressed back by the crush. Liza, forcing her way through the crowd, seeing and noticing nothing round her, like one in a delirium, like a patient escaped from a hospital, attracted attention only too quickly, of course. There arose a hubbub of loud talking and at last sudden shouts. Some one bawled out, "It's Stavrogin's woman!" And on the other side, "It's not enough to murder them, she wants to look at them!"

All at once I saw an arm raised above her head from behind and suddenly brought down upon it. Liza fell to the ground. We heard a fearful scream from Mavriky Nikolaevitch as he dashed to her assistance and struck with all his strength the man who stood between him and Liza. But at that instant the same cabinet-maker seized him with both arms from behind. For some minutes nothing could be distinguished in the scrimmage that followed. I believe Liza got up but was knocked down by another blow. Suddenly the crowd parted and a small space was left empty round Liza's prostrate figure, and Mavriky Nikolaevitch, frantic with grief and covered with blood, was standing over her, screaming, weeping, and wringing his hands. I don't remember exactly what followed after; I only remember that they began to carry Liza away. I ran after her. She was still alive and perhaps still conscious. The cabinet-maker and three other men in the crowd were seized. These three still deny having taken any part in the dastardly deed, stubbornly maintaining that they have been arrested by mistake. Perhaps it's the truth. Though the evidence against the cabinet-maker is clear, he is so irrational that he is still unable to explain what happened coherently. I too, as a spectator, though at some distance, had to give evidence at the inquest. I declared that it had all happened entirely accidentally through the action of men perhaps moved by ill-feeling, yet scarcely conscious of what they were doing—drunk and irresponsible. I am of that opinion to this day.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST RESOLUTION

I

THAT morning many people saw Pyotr Stepanovitch. All who saw him remembered that he was in a particularly excited state. At two o'clock he went to see Gaganov, who had arrived from the country only the day before, and whose house was full of visitors hotly discussing the events of the previous day. Pyotr Stepanovitch talked more than anyone and made them listen to him. He was always considered among us as a "chatterbox of a student with a screw loose," but now he talked of Yulia Mihailovna, and in the general excitement the theme was an enthralling one. As one who had recently been her intimate and confidential friend, he disclosed many new and unexpected details concerning her; incidentally (and of course unguardedly) he repeated some of her own remarks about persons known to all in the town, and thereby piqued their vanity. He dropped it all in a vague and rambling way, like a man free from guile driven by his sense of honour to the painful necessity of clearing up a perfect mountain of misunderstandings, and so simple-hearted that he hardly knew where to begin and where to leave off. He let slip in a rather unguarded way, too, that Yulia Mihailovna knew the whole secret of Stavrogin and that she had been at the bottom of the whole intrigue. She had taken him in too, for he, Pyotr Stepanovitch, had also been in love with this unhappy Liza, yet he had been so hoodwinked that he had *almost* taken her to Stavrogin himself in the carriage. "Yes, yes, it's all very well for you to laugh, gentlemen, but if only I'd known, if I'd known how it would end!" he concluded. To various excited inquiries

about Stavrogin he bluntly replied that in his opinion the catastrophe to the Lebyadkins was a pure coincidence, and that it was all Lebyadkin's own fault for displaying his money. He explained this particularly well. One of his listeners observed that it was no good his "pretending"; that he had eaten and drunk and almost slept at Yulia Mihailovna's, yet now he was the first to blacken her character, and that this was by no means such a fine thing to do as he supposed. But Pyotr Stepanovitch immediately defended himself.

"I ate and drank there not because I had no money, and it's not my fault that I was invited there. Allow me to judge for myself how far I need to be grateful for that."

The general impression was in his favour. "He may be rather absurd, and of course he is a nonsensical fellow, yet still he is not responsible for Yulia Mihailovna's foolishness. On the contrary, it appears that he tried to stop her."

About two o'clock the news suddenly came that Stavrogin, about whom there was so much talk, had suddenly left for Petersburg by the midday train. This interested people immensely; many of them frowned. Pyotr Stepanovitch was so much struck that I was told he turned quite pale and cried out strangely, "Why, how could they have let him go?" He hurried away from Gaganov's forthwith, yet he was seen in two or three other houses.

Towards dusk he succeeded in getting in to see Yulia Mihailovna though he had the greatest pains to do so, as she had absolutely refused to see him. I heard of this from the lady herself only three weeks afterwards, just before her departure for Petersburg. She gave me no details, but observed with a shudder that "he had on that occasion astounded her beyond all belief." I imagine that all he did was to terrify her by threatening to charge her with being an accomplice if she "said anything." The necessity for this intimidation arose from his plans at the moment, of which she, of course, knew nothing; and only later, five days afterwards, she guessed why he had been so doubtful of her reticence and so afraid of a new outburst of indignation on her part.

Between seven and eight o'clock, when it was dark, all the five members of the quintet met together at Ensign Erkel's lodgings in a little crooked house at the end of the town. The

meeting had been fixed by Pyotr Stepanovitch himself, but he was unpardonably late, and the members waited over an hour for him. This Ensign Erkel was that young officer who had sat the whole evening at Virginsky's with a pencil in his hand and a notebook before him. He had not long been in the town; he lodged alone with two old women, sisters, in a secluded by-street and was shortly to leave the town; a meeting at his house was less likely to attract notice than anywhere. This strange boy was distinguished by extreme taciturnity: he was capable of sitting for a dozen evenings in succession in noisy company, with the most extraordinary conversation going on around him, without uttering a word, though he listened with extreme attention, watching the speakers with his childlike eyes. His face was very pretty and even had a certain look of cleverness. He did not belong to the quintet; it was supposed that he had some special job of a purely practical character. It is known now that he had nothing of the sort and probably did not understand his position himself. It was simply that he was filled with hero-worship for Pyotr Stepanovitch, whom he had only lately met. If he had met a monster of iniquity who had incited him to found a band of brigands on the pretext of some romantic and socialistic object, and as a test had bidden him rob and murder the first peasant he met, he would certainly have obeyed and done it. He had an invalid mother to whom he sent half of his scanty pay—and how she must have kissed that poor little flaxen head, how she must have trembled and prayed over it! I go into these details about him because I feel very sorry for him.

"Our fellows" were excited. The events of the previous night had made a great impression on them, and I fancy they were in a panic. The simple disorderliness in which they had so zealously and systematically taken part had ended in a way they had not expected. The fire in the night, the murder of the Lebyadkins, the savage brutality of the crowd with Liza, had been a series of surprises which they had not anticipated in their programme. They hotly accused the hand that had guided them of despotism and duplicity. In fact, while they were waiting for Pyotr Stepanovitch they worked each other up to such a point that they resolved again to ask him for a definite explanation, and if he evaded again, as he had done

before, to dissolve the quintet and to found instead a new secret society "for the propaganda of ideas" and on their own initiative on the basis of democracy and equality. Liputin, Shigalov, and the authority on the peasantry supported this plan; Lyamshin said nothing, though he looked approving. Virginsky hesitated and wanted to hear Pyotr Stepanovitch first. It was decided to hear Pyotr Stepanovitch, but still he did not come; such casualness added fuel to the flames. Erkel was absolutely silent and did nothing but order the tea, which he brought from his landladies in glasses on a tray, not bringing in the samovar nor allowing the servant to enter.

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not turn up till half-past eight. With rapid steps he went up to the circular table before the sofa round which the company were seated; he kept his cap in his hand and refused tea. He looked angry, severe, and supercilious. He must have observed at once from their faces that they were "mutinous."

"Before I open my mouth, you've got something hidden; out with it."

Liputin began "in the name of all," and declared in a voice quivering with resentment "that if things were going on like that they might as well blow their brains out." Oh, they were not at all afraid to blow their brains out, they were quite ready to, in fact, but only to serve the common cause (a general movement of approbation). So he must be more open with them so that they might always know beforehand, "or else what would things be coming to?" (Again a stir and some guttural sounds.) To behave like this was humiliating and dangerous. "We don't say so because we are afraid, but if one acts and the rest are only pawns, then one would blunder and all would be lost." (Exclamations. "Yes, yes." General approval.)

"Damn it all, what do you want?"

"What connection is there between the common cause and the petty intrigues of Mr. Stavrogin?" cried Liputin, boiling over. "Suppose he is in some mysterious relation to the centre, if that legendary centre really exists at all, it's no concern of ours. And meantime a murder has been committed, the police have been roused; if they follow the thread they may find what it starts from."

"If Stavrogin and you are caught, we shall be caught too," added the authority on the peasantry.

"And to no good purpose for the common cause," Virginsky concluded despondently.

"What nonsense! The murder is a chance crime; it was committed by Fedka for the sake of robbery."

"H'm! Strange coincidence, though," said Liputin, wriggling.

"And if you will have it, it's all through you."

"Through us?"

"In the first place, you, Liputin, had a share in the intrigue yourself; and the second chief point is, you were ordered to get Lebyadkin away and given money to do it; and what did you do? If you'd got him away nothing would have happened."

"But wasn't it you yourself who suggested the idea that it would be a good thing to set him on to read his verses?"

"An idea is not a command. The command was to get him away."

"Command! Rather a queer word. . . . On the contrary, your orders were to delay sending him off."

"You made a mistake and showed your foolishness and self-will. The murder was the work of Fedka, and he carried it out alone for the sake of robbery. You heard the gossip and believed it. You were scared. Stavrogin is not such a fool, and the proof of that is he left the town at twelve o'clock after an interview with the vice-governor; if there were anything in it they would not let him go to Petersburg in broad daylight."

"But we are not making out that Mr. Stavrogin committed the murder himself," Liputin rejoined spitefully and unceremoniously. "He may have known nothing about it, like me; and you know very well that I knew nothing about it, though I am mixed up in it like mutton in a hash."

"Whom are you accusing?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, looking at him darkly.

"Those whose interest it is to burn down towns."

"You make matters worse by wriggling out of it. However, won't you read this and pass it to the others, simply as a fact of interest?"

He pulled out of his pocket Lebyadkin's anonymous letter to Lembke and handed it to Liputin. The latter read it, was

evidently surprised, and passed it thoughtfully to his neighbour; the letter quickly went the round.

"Is that really Lebyadkin's handwriting?" observed Shigalov.

"It is," answered Liputin and Tolkatchenko (the authority on the peasantry).

"I simply brought it as a fact of interest and because I knew you were so sentimental over Lebyadkin," repeated Pyotr Stepanovitch, taking the letter back. "So it turns out, gentlemen, that a stray Fedka relieves us quite by chance of a dangerous man. That's what chance does sometimes! It's instructive, isn't it?"

The members exchanged rapid glances.

"And now, gentlemen, it's my turn to ask questions," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, assuming an air of dignity. "Let me know what business you had to set fire to the town without permission."

"What's this! We, we set fire to the town? That is laying the blame on others!" they exclaimed.

"I quite understand that you carried the game too far," Pyotr Stepanovitch persisted stubbornly, "but it's not a matter of petty scandals with Yulia Mihailovna. I've brought you here, gentlemen, to explain to you the greatness of the danger you have so stupidly incurred, which is a menace to much besides yourselves."

"Excuse me, we, on the contrary, were intending just now to point out to you the greatness of the despotism and unfairness you have shown in taking such a serious and also strange step without consulting the members," Virginsky, who had been hitherto silent, protested, almost with indignation.

"And so you deny it? But I maintain that you set fire to the town, you and none but you. Gentlemen, don't tell lies; I have good evidence. By your rashness you exposed the common cause to danger. You are only one knot in an endless network of knots—and your duty is blind obedience to the centre. Yet three men of you incited the Shpigulin men to set fire to the town without the least instruction to do so, and the fire has taken place."

"What three? What three of us?"

"The day before yesterday, at three o'clock in the night,

you, Tolkatchenko, were inciting Fomka Zavvalov at the 'Forget-me-not.'"

"Upon my word!" cried the latter, jumping up, "I scarcely said a word to him, and what I did say was without intention, simply because he had been flogged that morning. And I dropped it at once; I saw he was too drunk. If you had not referred to it I should not have thought of it again. A word could not set the place on fire."

"You are like a man who should be surprised that a tiny spark could blow a whole powder magazine into the air."

"I spoke in a whisper in his ear, in a corner; how could you have heard of it?"

Tolkatchenko reflected suddenly.

"I was sitting there under the table. Don't disturb yourselves, gentlemen; I know every step you take. You smile sarcastically, Mr. Liputin? But I know, for instance, that you pinched your wife black and blue at midnight, three days ago, in your bedroom as you were going to bed."

Liputin's mouth fell open and he turned pale. (It was afterwards found out that he knew of this exploit of Liputin's from Agafya, Liputin's servant, whom he had paid from the beginning to spy on him; this only came out later.)

"May I state a fact?" said Shigalov, getting up.

"State it."

Shigalov sat down and pulled himself together.

"So far as I understand—and it's impossible not to understand it—you yourself at first and a second time later, drew with great eloquence, but too theoretically, a picture of Russia covered with an endless network of knots. Each of these centres of activity, proselytising and ramifying endlessly, aims by systematic denunciation to injure the prestige of local authority, to reduce the villages to confusion, to spread cynicism and scandals, together with complete disbelief in everything and an eagerness for something better, and finally, by means of fires, as a pre-eminently national method, to reduce the country at a given moment, if need be, to desperation. Are those your words which I tried to remember accurately? Is that the programme you gave us as the authorised representative of the central committee, which is to this day utterly unknown to us and almost like a myth?"

"It's correct, only you are very tedious."

"Every one has a right to express himself in his own way. Giving us to understand that the separate knots of the general network already covering Russia number by now several hundred, and propounding the theory that if every one does his work successfully, all Russia at a given moment, at a signal . . ."

"Ah, damn it all, I have enough to do without you!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, twisting in his chair.

"Very well, I'll cut it short and I'll end simply by asking if we've seen the disorderly scenes, we've seen the discontent of the people, we've seen and taken part in the downfall of local administration, and finally, we've seen with our own eyes the town on fire? What do you find amiss? Isn't that your programme? What can you blame us for?"

"Acting on your own initiative!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried furiously. "While I am here you ought not to have dared to act without my permission. Enough. We are on the eve of betrayal, and perhaps to-morrow or to-night you'll be seized. So there. I have authentic information."

At this all were agape with astonishment.

"You will be arrested not only as the instigators of the fire, but as a quintet. The traitor knows the whole secret of the network. So you see what a mess you've made of it!"

"Stavrogin, no doubt," cried Liputin.

"What . . . why Stavrogin?" Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed suddenly taken aback. "Hang it all," he cried, pulling himself together at once, "it's Shatov! I believe you all know now that Shatov in his time was one of the society. I must tell you that, watching him through persons he does not suspect, I found out to my amazement that he knows all about the organisation of the network and . . . everything, in fact. To save himself from being charged with having formerly belonged, he will give information against all. He has been hesitating up till now and I have spared him. Your fire has decided him: he is shaken and will hesitate no longer. To-morrow we shall be arrested as incendiaries and political offenders."

"Is it true? How does Shatov know?"

The excitement was indescribable.

"It's all perfectly true. I have no right to reveal the source

from which I learnt it or how I discovered it, but I tell you what I can do for you meanwhile: through one person I can act on Shatov so that without his suspecting it he will put off giving information, but not more than for twenty-four hours."

All were silent.

"We really must send him to the devil!" Tolkachchenko was the first to exclaim.

"It ought to have been done long ago," Lyamshin put in malignantly, striking the table with his fist.

"But how is it to be done?" muttered Liputin.

Pyotr Stepanovitch at once took up the question and unfolded his plan. The plan was the following day at nightfall to draw Shatov away to a secluded spot to hand over the secret printing press which had been in his keeping and was buried there, and there "to settle things." He went into various essential details which we will omit here, and explained minutely Shatov's present ambiguous attitude to the central society, of which the reader knows already.

"That's all very well," Liputin observed irresolutely, "but since it will be another adventure . . . of the same sort . . . it will make too great a sensation."

"No doubt," assented Pyotr Stepanovitch, "but I've provided against that. We have the means of averting suspicion completely."

And with the same minuteness he told them about Kirillov, of his intention to shoot himself, and of his promise to wait for a signal from them and to leave a letter behind him taking on himself anything they dictated to him (all of which the reader knows already).

"His determination to take his own life—a philosophic, or as I should call it, insane decision—has become known *there*," Pyotr Stepanovitch went on to explain. "*There* not a thread, not a grain of dust is overlooked; everything is turned to the service of the cause. Foreseeing how useful it might be and satisfying themselves that his intention was quite serious, they had offered him the means to come to Russia (he was set for some reason on dying in Russia), gave him a commission which he promised to carry out (and he had done so), and had, moreover, bound him by a promise, as you already know, to commit suicide only when he was told to. He promised everything. You

must note that he belongs to the organisation on a particular footing and is anxious to be of service; more than that I can't tell you. To-morrow, *after Shatov's affair*, I'll dictate a note to him saying that he is responsible for his death. That will seem very plausible: they were friends and travelled together to America, there they quarrelled; and it will all be explained in the letter . . . and . . . and perhaps, if it seems feasible, we might dictate something more to Kirillov—something about the manifestoes, for instance, and even perhaps about the fire. But I'll think about that. You needn't worry yourselves, he has no prejudices; he'll sign anything."

There were expressions of doubt. It sounded a fantastic story. But they had all heard more or less about Kirillov; Liputin more than all.

"He may change his mind and not want to," said Shigalov; "he is a madman anyway, so he is not much to build upon."

"Don't be uneasy, gentlemen, he will want to," Pyotr Stepanovitch snapped out. "I am obliged by our agreement to give him warning the day before, so it must be to-day. I invite Liputin to go with me at once to see him and make certain, and he will tell you, gentlemen, when he comes back—to-day if need be—whether what I say is true. However," he broke off suddenly with intense exasperation, as though he suddenly felt he was doing people like them too much honour by wasting time in persuading them, "however, do as you please. If you don't decide to do it, the union is broken up—but solely through your insubordination and treachery. In that case we are all independent from this moment. But under those circumstances, besides the unpleasantness of Shatov's betrayal and its consequences, you will have brought upon yourselves another little unpleasantness of which you were definitely warned when the union was formed. As far as I am concerned, I am not much afraid of you, gentlemen. . . . Don't imagine that I am so involved with you. . . . But that's no matter."

"Yes, we decided to do it," Liputin pronounced.

"There's no other way out of it," muttered Tolkatchenko, "and if only Liputin confirms about Kirillov, then . . ."

"I am against it; with all my soul and strength I protest against such a murderous decision," said Virginsky, standing up.

"But?" asked Pyotr Stepanovitch. . . .

"But what?"

"You said *but* . . . and I am waiting."

"I don't think I did say *but* . . . I only meant to say that if you decide to do it, then . . ."

"Then?"

Virginsky did not answer.

"I think that one is at liberty to neglect danger to one's own life," said Erkel, suddenly opening his mouth, "but if it may injure the cause, then I consider one ought not to dare to neglect danger to one's life. . . ."

He broke off in confusion, blushing. Absorbed as they all were in their own ideas, they all looked at him in amazement—it was such a surprise that he too could speak.

"I am for the cause," Virginsky pronounced suddenly.

Every one got up. It was decided to communicate once more and make final arrangements at midday on the morrow, though without meeting. The place where the printing press was hidden was announced and each was assigned his part and his duty. Liputin and Pyotr Stepanovitch promptly set off together to Kirillov.

II

All our fellows believed that Shatov was going to betray them; but they also believed that Pyotr Stepanovitch was playing with them like pawns. And yet they knew, too, that in any case they would all meet on the spot next day and that Shatov's fate was sealed. They suddenly felt like flies caught in a web by a huge spider; they were furious, but they were trembling with terror.

Pyotr Stepanovitch, of course, had treated them badly; it might all have gone off far more harmoniously and *easily* if he had taken the trouble to embellish the facts ever so little. Instead of putting the facts in a decorous light, as an exploit worthy of ancient Rome or something of the sort, he simply appealed to their animal fears and laid stress on the danger to their own skins, which was simply insulting; of course there was a struggle for existence in everything and there was no other principle in nature, they all knew that, but still . . .

But Pyotr Stepanovitch had no time to trot out the Romans; he was completely thrown out of his reckoning. Stavrogin's flight had astounded and crushed him. It was a lie when he said that Stavrogin had seen the vice-governor; what worried Pyotr Stepanovitch was that Stavrogin had gone off without seeing anyone, even his mother—and it was certainly strange that he had been allowed to leave without hindrance. (The authorities were called to account for it afterwards.) Pyotr Stepanovitch had been making inquiries all day, but so far had found out nothing, and he had never been so upset. And how could he, how could he give up Stavrogin all at once like this! That was why he could not be very tender with the quintet. Besides, they tied his hands: he had already decided to gallop after Stavrogin at once; and meanwhile he was detained by Shatov; he had to cement the quintet together once for all, in case of emergency. "Pity to waste them, they might be of use." That, I imagine, was his way of reasoning.

As for Shatov, Pyotr Stepanovitch was firmly convinced that he would betray them. All that he had told the others about it was a lie: he had never seen the document nor heard of it, but he thought it as certain as that twice two makes four. It seemed to him that what had happened—the death of Liza, the death of Marya Timofyevna—would be too much for Shatov, and that he would make up his mind at once. Who knows? perhaps he had grounds for supposing it. It is known, too, that he hated Shatov personally; there had at some time been a quarrel between them, and Pyotr Stepanovitch never forgave an offence. I am convinced, indeed, that this was his leading motive.

We have narrow brick pavements in our town, and in some streets only raised wooden planks instead of a pavement. Pyotr Stepanovitch walked in the middle of the pavement, taking up the whole of it, utterly regardless of Liputin, who had no room to walk beside him and so had to hurry a step behind or run in the muddy road if he wanted to speak to him. Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly remembered how he had lately splashed through the mud to keep pace with Stavrogin, who had walked, as he was doing now, taking up the whole pavement. He recalled the whole scene, and rage choked him.

But Liputin, too, was choking with resentment. Pyotr Stepanovitch might treat the others as he liked, but him! Why, he

knew more than all the rest, was in closer touch with the work and taking more intimate part in it than anyone, and hitherto his services had been continual, though indirect. Oh, he knew that even now Pyotr Stepanovitch might ruin him if it came to the worst. But he had long hated Pyotr Stepanovitch, and not because he was a danger but because of his overbearing manner. Now, when he had to make up his mind to such a deed, he raged inwardly more than all the rest put together. Alas! he knew that next day "like a slave" he would be the first on the spot and would bring the others, and if he could somehow have murdered Pyotr Stepanovitch before the morrow, without ruining himself, of course, he would certainly have murdered him.

Absorbed in his sensations, he trudged dejectedly after his tormentor, who seemed to have forgotten his existence, though he gave him a rude and careless shove with his elbow now and then. Suddenly Pyotr Stepanovitch halted in one of the principal thoroughfares and went into a restaurant.

"What are you doing?" cried Liputin, boiling over. "This is a restaurant."

"I want a beefsteak."

"Upon my word! It is always full of people."

"What if it is?"

"But . . . we shall be late. It's ten o'clock already."

"You can't be too late to go there."

"But I shall be late! They are expecting me back."

"Well, let them; but it would be stupid of you to go to them. With all your bobbery I've had no dinner. And the later you go to Kirillov's the more sure you are to find him."

Pyotr Stepanovitch went to a room apart. Liputin sat in an easy chair on one side, angry and resentful, and watched him eating. Half an hour and more passed. Pyotr Stepanovitch did not hurry himself; he ate with relish, rang the bell, asked for a different kind of mustard, then for beer, without saying a word to Liputin. He was pondering deeply. He was capable of doing two things at once—eating with relish and pondering deeply. Liputin loathed him so intensely at last that he could not tear himself away. It was like a nervous obsession. He counted every morsel of beefsteak that Pyotr Stepanovitch put into his mouth; he loathed him for the way he opened it, for the way he chewed, for the way he smacked his lips over the fat morsels,

he loathed the steak itself. At last things began to swim before his eyes; he began to feel slightly giddy; he felt hot and cold run down his spine by turns.

"You are doing nothing; read that," said Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly, throwing him a sheet of paper. Liputin went nearer to the candle. The paper was closely covered with bad handwriting, with corrections in every line. By the time he had mastered it Pyotr Stepanovitch had paid his bill and was ready to go. When they were on the pavement Liputin handed him back the paper.

"Keep it; I'll tell you afterwards. . . . What do you say to it, though?"

Liputin shuddered all over.

"In my opinion . . . such a manifesto . . . is nothing but a ridiculous absurdity."

His anger broke out; he felt as though he were being caught up and carried along.

"If we decide to distribute such manifestoes," he said, quivering all over, "we'll make ourselves contemptible by our stupidity and incompetence."

"H'm! I think differently," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, walking on resolutely.

"So do I; surely it isn't your work?"

"That's not your business."

"I think too that doggerel, 'A Noble Personality,' is the most utter trash possible, and it couldn't have been written by Herzen."

"You are talking nonsense; it's a good poem."

"I am surprised, too, for instance," said Liputin, still dashing along with desperate leaps, "that it is suggested that we should act so as to bring everything to the ground. It's natural in Europe to wish to destroy everything because there's a proletariat there, but we are only amateurs here and in my opinion are only showing off."

"I thought you were a Fourierist."

"Fourier says something quite different, quite different."

"I know it's nonsense."

"No, Fourier isn't nonsense. . . . Excuse me, I can't believe that there will be a rising in May."

Liputin positively unbuttoned his coat, he was so hot.

"Well, that's enough; but now, that I mayn't forget it," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, passing with extraordinary coolness to another subject, "you will have to print this manifesto with your own hands. We're going to dig up Shatov's printing press, and you will take it to-morrow. As quickly as possible you must print as many copies as you can, and then distribute them all the winter. The means will be provided. You must do as many copies as possible, for you'll be asked for them from other places."

"No, excuse me; I can't undertake such a . . . I decline."

"You'll take it all the same. I am acting on the instructions of the central committee, and you are bound to obey."

"And I consider that our centres abroad have forgotten what Russia is like and have lost all touch, and that's why they talk such nonsense. . . . I even think that instead of many hundreds of quintets in Russia, we are the only one that exists, and there is no network at all," Liputin gasped finally.

"The more contemptible of you, then, to run after the cause without believing in it . . . and you are running after me now like a mean little cur."

"No, I'm not. We have a full right to break off and found a new society."

"Fool!" Pyotr Stepanovitch boomed at him threateningly all of a sudden, with flashing eyes.

They stood facing one another for some time. Pyotr Stepanovitch turned and pursued his way confidently.

The idea flashed through Liputin's mind, "Turn and go back; if I don't turn now I shall never go back." He pondered this for ten steps, but at the eleventh a new and desperate idea flashed into his mind: he did not turn and did not go back.

They were approaching Filipov's house, but before reaching it they turned down a side street, or, to be more accurate, an inconspicuous path under a fence, so that for some time they had to walk along a steep slope above a ditch where they could not keep their footing without holding the fence. At a dark corner in the slanting fence Pyotr Stepanovitch took out a plank, leaving a gap, through which he promptly scrambled. Liputin was surprised, but he crawled through after him; then they replaced the plank after them. This was the secret way by which Fedka used to visit Kirillov.

"Shatov mustn't know that we are here," Pyotr Stepanovitch whispered sternly to Liputin.

III

Kirillov was sitting on his leather sofa drinking tea, as he always was at that hour. He did not get up to meet them, but gave a sort of start and looked at the new-comers anxiously.

"You are not mistaken," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, "it's just what I've come about."

"To-day?"

"No, no, to-morrow . . . about this time." And he hurriedly sat down at the table, watching Kirillov's agitation with some uneasiness. But the latter had already regained his composure and looked as usual.

"These people still refuse to believe in you. You are not vexed at my bringing Liputin?"

"To-day I am not vexed; to-morrow I want to be alone."

"But not before I come, and therefore in my presence."

"I should prefer not in your presence."

"You remember you promised to write and to sign all I dictated."

"I don't care. And now will you be here long?"

"I have to see one man and to remain half an hour, so whatever you say I shall stay that half-hour."

Kirillov did not speak. Liputin meanwhile sat down on one side under the portrait of the bishop. That last desperate idea gained more and more possession of him. Kirillov scarcely noticed him. Liputin had heard of Kirillov's theory before and always laughed at him; but now he was silent and looked gloomily round him.

"I've no objection to some tea," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, moving up. "I've just had some steak and was reckoning on getting tea with you."

"Drink it. You can have some if you like."

"You used to offer it to me," observed Pyotr Stepanovitch sourly.

"That's no matter. Let Liputin have some too."

"No, I . . . can't."

"Don't want to or can't?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, turning quickly to him.

"I am not going to here," Liputin said expressively.

Pyotr Stepanovitch frowned.

"There's a flavour of mysticism about that; goodness knows what to make of you people!"

No one answered; there was a full minute of silence.

"But I know one thing," he added abruptly, "that no superstition will prevent any one of us from doing his duty."

"Has Stavrogin gone?" asked Kirillov.

"Yes."

"He's done well."

Pyotr Stepanovitch's eyes gleamed, but he restrained himself.

"I don't care what you think as long as every one keeps his word."

"I'll keep my word."

"I always knew that you would do your duty like an independent and progressive man."

"You are an absurd fellow."

"That may be; I am very glad to amuse you. I am always glad if I can give people pleasure."

"You are very anxious I should shoot myself and are afraid I might suddenly not?"

"Well, you see, it was your own doing—connecting your plan with our work. Reckoning on your plan we have already done something, so that you couldn't refuse now because you've let us in for it."

"You've no claim at all."

"I understand, I understand; you are perfectly free, and we don't come in so long as your free intention is carried out."

"And am I to take on myself all the nasty things you've done?"

"Listen, Kirillov, are you afraid? If you want to cry off, say so at once."

"I am not afraid."

"I ask because you are making so many inquiries."

"Are you going soon?"

"Asking questions again?"

Kirillov scanned him contemptuously.

"You see," Pyotr Stepanovitch went on, getting angrier and

angrier, and unable to take the right tone, "you want me to go away, to be alone, to concentrate yourself, but all that's a bad sign for you—for you above all. You want to think a great deal. To my mind you'd better not think. And really you make me uneasy."

"There's only one thing I hate, that at such a moment I should have a reptile like you beside me."

"Oh, that doesn't matter. I'll go away at the time and stand on the steps if you like. If you are so concerned about trifles when it comes to dying, then . . . it's all a very bad sign. I'll go out on to the steps and you can imagine I know nothing about it, and that I am a man infinitely below you."

"No, not infinitely; you've got abilities, but there's a lot you don't understand because you are a low man."

"Delighted, delighted. I told you already I am delighted to provide entertainment . . . at such a moment."

"You don't understand anything."

"That is, I . . . well, I listen with respect, anyway."

"You can do nothing; even now you can't hide your petty spite, though it's not to your interest to show it. You'll make me cross, and then I may want another six months."

Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at his watch.

"I never understood your theory, but I know you didn't invent it for our sakes, so I suppose you would carry it out apart from us. And I know too that you haven't mastered the idea but the idea has mastered you, so you won't put it off."

"What? The idea has mastered me?"

"Yes."

"And not I mastered the idea? That's good. You have a little sense. Only you tease me and I am proud."

"That's a good thing, that's a good thing. Just what you need, to be proud."

"Enough. You've drunk your tea; go away."

"Damn it all, I suppose I must"—Pyotr Stepanovitch got up—"though it's early. Listen, Kirillov. Shall I find that man—you know whom I mean—at Myasnitchiha's? Or has she too been lying?"

"You won't find him, because he is here and not there."

"Here! Damn it all, where?"

"Sitting in the kitchen, eating and drinking."

"How dared he?" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, flushing angrily.

"It was his duty to wait . . . what nonsense! He has no passport, no money!"

"I don't know. He came to say good-bye; he is dressed and ready. He is going away and won't come back. He says you are a scoundrel and he doesn't want to wait for your money."

"Ha ha! He is afraid that I'll . . . But even now I can . . . if . . . Where is he, in the kitchen?"

Kirillov opened a side door into a tiny dark room; from this room three steps led straight to the part of the kitchen where the cook's bed was usually put, behind the partition. Here, in the corner under the ikons, Fedka was sitting now, at a bare deal table. Before him stood a pint bottle, a plate of bread, and some cold beef and potatoes on an earthenware dish. He was eating in a leisurely way and was already half drunk, but he was wearing his sheep-skin coat and was evidently ready for a journey. A samovar was boiling the other side of the screen, but it was not for Fedka, who had every night for a week or more zealously blown it up and got it ready for "Alexey Nilitch, for he's such a habit of drinking tea at nights." I am strongly disposed to believe that, as Kirillov had not a cook, he had cooked the beef and potatoes that morning with his own hands for Fedka.

"What notion is this?" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, whisking into the room. "Why didn't you wait where you were ordered?"

And swinging his fist, he brought it down heavily on the table.

Fedka assumed an air of dignity.

"You wait a bit, Pyotr Stepanovitch, you wait a bit," he began, with a swaggering emphasis on each word, "it's your first duty to understand here that you are on a polite visit to Mr. Kirillov, Alexey Nilitch, whose boots you might clean any day, because beside you he is a man of culture and you are only—foo!"

And he made a jaunty show of spitting to one side. Haughtiness and determination were evident in his manner, and a certain very threatening assumption of argumentative calm that suggested an outburst to follow. But Pyotr Stepanovitch had no time to realise the danger, and it did not fit in with his preconceived ideas. The incidents and disasters of the day had

quite turned his head. Liputin, at the top of the three steps, stared inquisitively down from the little dark room.

"Do you or don't you want a trustworthy passport and good money to go where you've been told? Yes or no?"

"D'you see, Pyotr Stepanovitch, you've been deceiving me from the first, and so you've been a regular scoundrel to me. For all the world like a filthy human louse—that's how I look on you. You've promised me a lot of money for shedding innocent blood and swore it was for Mr. Stavrogin, though it turns out to be nothing but your want of breeding. I didn't get a farthing out of it, let alone fifteen hundred, and Mr. Stavrogin hit you in the face, which has come to our ears. Now you are threatening me again and promising me money—what for, you don't say. And I shouldn't wonder if you are sending me to Petersburg to plot some revenge in your spite against Mr. Stavrogin, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, reckoning on my simplicity. And that proves you are the chief murderer. And do you know what you deserve for the very fact that in the depravity of your heart you've given up believing in God Himself, the true Creator? You are no better than an idolater and are on a level with the Tatar and the Mordva. Alexey Nilitch, who is a philosopher, has expounded the true God, the Creator, many a time to you, as well as the creation of the world and the fate that's to come and the transformation of every sort of creature and every sort of beast out of the Apocalypse, but you've persisted like a senseless idol in your deafness and your dumbness and have brought Ensign Erkel to the same, like the veriest evil seducer and so-called atheist. . . ."

"Ah, you drunken dog! He strips the ikons of their setting and then preaches about God!"

"D'you see, Pyotr Stepanovitch, I tell you truly that I have stripped the ikons, but I only took out the pearls; and how do you know? Perhaps my own tear was transformed into a pearl in the furnace of the Most High to make up for my sufferings, seeing I am just that very orphan, having no daily refuge. Do you know from the books that once, in ancient times, a merchant with just such tearful sighs and prayers stole a pearl from the halo of the Mother of God, and afterwards, in the face of all the people, laid the whole price of it at her feet, and the Holy Mother sheltered him with her mantle before all the

people, so that it was a miracle, and the command was given through the authorities to write it all down word for word in the Imperial books. And you let a mouse in, so you insulted the very throne of God. And if you were not my natural master, whom I dandled in my arms when I was a stripling, I would have done for you now, without budging from this place!"

Pyotr Stepanovitch flew into a violent rage.

"Tell me, have you seen Stavrogin to-day?"

"Don't you dare to question me. Mr. Stavrogin is fairly amazed at you, and he had no share in it even in wish, let alone instructions or giving money. You've presumed with me."

"You'll get the money and you'll get another two thousand in Petersburg, when you get there, in a lump sum, and you'll get more."

"You are lying, my fine gentleman, and it makes me laugh to see how easily you are taken in. Mr. Stavrogin stands at the top of the ladder above you, and you yelp at him from below like a silly puppy dog, while he thinks it would be doing you an honour to spit at you."

"But do you know," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch in a rage, "that I won't let you stir a step from here, you scoundrel, and I'll hand you straight over to the police."

Fedka leapt on to his feet and his eyes gleamed with fury. Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled out his revolver. Then followed a rapid and revolting scene: before Pyotr Stepanovitch could take aim, Fedka swung round and in a flash struck him on the cheek with all his might. Then there was the thud of a second blow, a third, then a fourth, all on the cheek. Pyotr Stepanovitch was dazed; with his eyes starting out of his head, he muttered something, and suddenly crashed full length to the ground.

"There you are; take him," shouted Fedka with a triumphant swagger; he instantly took up his cap, his bag from under the bench, and was gone. Pyotr Stepanovitch lay gasping and unconscious. Liputin even imagined that he had been murdered. Kirillov ran headlong into the kitchen.

"Water!" he cried, and ladling some water in an iron dipper from a bucket, he poured it over the injured man's head. Pyotr Stepanovitch stirred, raised his head, sat up, and looked blankly about him.

"Well, how are you?" asked Kirillov. Pyotr Stepanovitch

looked at him intently, still not recognising him; but seeing Liputin peeping in from the kitchen, he smiled his hateful smile and suddenly got up, picking up his revolver from the floor.

"If you take it into your head to run away to-morrow like that scoundrel Stavrogin," he cried, pouncing furiously on Kirillov, pale, stammering, and hardly able to articulate his words, "I'll hang you . . . like a fly . . . or crush you . . . if it's at the other end of the world . . . do you understand!"

And he held the revolver straight at Kirillov's head; but almost at the same minute, coming completely to himself, he drew back his hand, thrust the revolver into his pocket, and without saying another word ran out of the house. Liputin followed him. They clambered through the same gap and again walked along the slope holding to the fence. Pyotr Stepanovitch strode rapidly down the street so that Liputin could scarcely keep up with him. At the first crossing he suddenly stopped.

"Well?" He turned to Liputin with a challenge.

Liputin remembered the revolver and was still trembling all over after the scene he had witnessed; but the answer seemed to come of itself irresistibly from his tongue:

"I think . . . I think that . . ."

"Did you see what Fedka was drinking in the kitchen?"

"What he was drinking? He was drinking vodka."

"Well then, let me tell you it's the last time in his life he will drink vodka. I recommend you to remember that and reflect on it. And now go to hell; you are not wanted till to-morrow. But mind now, don't be a fool!"

Liputin rushed home full speed.

IV

He had long had a passport in readiness made out in a false name. It seems a wild idea that this prudent little man, the petty despot of his family, who was, above all things, a sharp man of business and a capitalist, and who was an official too (though he was a Fourierist), should long before have conceived the fantastic project of procuring this passport in case of emergency, that he might escape abroad by means of it *if* . . .

Liputin

he did admit the possibility of this *if*, though no doubt he was never able himself to formulate what this *if* might mean.

But now it suddenly formulated itself, and in a most unexpected way. That desperate idea with which he had gone to Kirillov's after that "fool" he had heard from Pyotr Stepanovitch on the pavement, had been to abandon everything at dawn next day and to emigrate abroad. If anyone doubts that such fantastic incidents occur in everyday Russian life, even now, let him look into the biographies of all the Russian exiles abroad. Not one of them escaped with more wisdom or real justification. It has always been the unrestrained domination of phantoms and nothing more.

Running home, he began by locking himself in, getting out his travelling bag, and feverishly beginning to pack. His chief anxiety was the question of money, and how much he could rescue from the impending ruin—and by what means. He thought of it as "rescuing," for it seemed to him that he could not linger an hour, and that by daylight he must be on the high road. He did not know where to take the train either; he vaguely determined to take it at the second or third big station from the town, and to make his way there on foot, if necessary. In that way, instinctively and mechanically he busied himself in his packing with a perfect whirl of ideas in his head—and suddenly stopped short, gave it all up, and with a deep groan stretched himself on the sofa.

He felt clearly, and suddenly realised that he might escape, but that he was by now utterly incapable of deciding whether he ought to make off before or after Shatov's death; that he was simply a lifeless body, a crude inert mass; that he was being moved by an awful outside power; and that, though he had a passport to go abroad, that though he could run away from Shatov (otherwise what need was there of such haste?), yet he would run away, not from Shatov, not before his murder, but after it, and that that was determined, signed, and sealed.

In insufferable distress, trembling every instant and wondering at himself, alternately groaning aloud and numb with terror, he managed to exist till eleven o'clock next morning locked in and lying on the sofa; then came the shock he was awaiting, and it at once determined him. When he unlocked his door and

went out to his household at eleven o'clock they told him that the runaway convict and brigand, Fedka, who was a terror to every one, who had pillaged churches and only lately been guilty of murder and arson, who was being pursued and could not be captured by our police, had been found at daybreak murdered, five miles from the town, at a turning off the high road, and that the whole town was talking of it already. He rushed headlong out of the house at once to find out further details, and learned, to begin with, that Fedka, who had been found with his skull broken, had apparently been robbed and, secondly, that the police already had strong suspicion and even good grounds for believing that the murderer was one of the Shpigulin men called Fomka, the very one who had been his accomplice in murdering the Lebyadkins and setting fire to their house, and that there had been a quarrel between them on the road about a large sum of money stolen from Lebyadkin, which Fedka was supposed to have hidden. Liputin ran to Pyotr Stepanovitch's lodgings and succeeded in learning at the back door, on the sly, that though Pyotr Stepanovitch had not returned home till about one o'clock at night, he had slept there quietly all night till eight o'clock next morning. Of course, there could be no doubt that there was nothing extraordinary about Fedka's death, and that such careers usually have such an ending; but the coincidence of the fatal words that "it was the last time Fedka would drink vodka," with the prompt fulfilment of the prediction, was so remarkable that Liputin no longer hesitated. The shock had been given; it was as though a stone had fallen upon him and crushed him for ever. Returning home, he thrust his travelling-bag under the bed without a word, and in the evening at the hour fixed he was the first to appear at the appointed spot to meet Shatov, though it's true he still had his passport in his pocket.

CHAPTER V

A WANDERER

I

THE catastrophe with Liza and the death of Marya Timofeyevna made an overwhelming impression on Shatov. I have already mentioned that that morning I met him in passing; he seemed to me not himself. He told me among other things that on the evening before at nine o'clock (that is, three hours before the fire had broken out) he had been at Marya Timofeyevna's. He went in the morning to look at the corpses, but as far as I know gave no evidence of any sort that morning. Meanwhile, towards the end of the day there was a perfect tempest in his soul, and . . . I think I can say with certainty that there was a moment at dusk when he wanted to get up, go out and tell everything. What that *everything* was, no one but he could say. Of course he would have achieved nothing, and would have simply betrayed himself. He had no proofs whatever with which to convict the perpetrators of the crime, and, indeed, he had nothing but vague conjectures to go upon, though to him they amounted to complete certainty. But he was ready to ruin himself if he could only "crush the scoundrels"—his own words. Pyotr Stepanovitch had guessed fairly correctly at this impulse in him, and he knew himself that he was risking a great deal in putting off the execution of his new awful project till next day. On his side there was, as usual, great self-confidence and contempt for all these "wretched creatures" and for Shatov in particular. He had for years despised Shatov for his "whining idiocy," as he had expressed it in former days abroad, and he was absolutely confident that he could deal with such a guileless creature, that is, keep an eye on

chair yourself. Just as you like though; you are in the way standing there. I have come to you for a time, till I can get work, because I know nothing of this place and I have no money. But if I shall be in your way I beg you again, be so good as to tell me so at once, as you are bound to do if you are an honest man. I could sell something to-morrow and pay for a room at an hotel, but you must take me to the hotel yourself. . . . Oh, but I am tired!"

Shatov was all of a tremor.

"You mustn't, Marie, you mustn't go to an hotel? An hotel! What for? What for?"

He clasped his hands imploringly. . . .

"Well, if I can get on without the hotel . . . I must, anyway, explain the position. Remember, Shatov, that we lived in Geneva as man and wife for a fortnight and a few days; it's three years since we parted, without any particular quarrel though. But don't imagine that I've come back to renew any of the foolishness of the past. I've come back to look for work, and that I've come straight to this town is just because it's all the same to me. I've not come to say I am sorry for anything; please don't imagine anything so stupid as that."

"Oh, Marie! This is unnecessary, quite unnecessary," Shatov muttered vaguely.

"If so, if you are so far developed as to be able to understand that, I may allow myself to add, that if I've come straight to you now and am in your lodging, it's partly because I always thought you were far from being a scoundrel and were perhaps much better than other . . . blackguards!"

Her eyes flashed. She must have had to bear a great deal at the hands of some "blackguards."

"And please believe me, I wasn't laughing at you just now when I told you you were good. I spoke plainly, without fine phrases and I can't endure them. But that's all nonsense. I always hoped you would have sense enough not to pester me. . . . Enough, I am tired."

And she bent on him a long, harassed and weary gaze. Shatov stood facing her at the other end of the room, which was five paces away, and listened to her timidly with a look of new life and unwonted radiance on his face. This strong, rugged man, all bristles on the surface, was suddenly all softness and shin-

ing gladness. There was a thrill of extraordinary and unexpected feeling in his soul. Three years of separation, three years of the broken marriage had effaced nothing from his heart. And perhaps every day during those three years he had dreamed of her, of that beloved being who had once said to him, "I love you." Knowing Shatov I can say with certainty that he could never have allowed himself even to dream that a woman might say to him, "I love you." He was savagely modest and chaste, he looked on himself as a perfect monster, detested his own face as well as his character, compared himself to some freak only fit to be exhibited at fairs. Consequently he valued honesty above everything and was fanatically devoted to his convictions; he was gloomy, proud, easily moved to wrath, and sparing of words. But here was the one being who had loved him for a fortnight (that he had never doubted, never!), a being he had always considered immeasurably above him in spite of his perfectly sober understanding of her errors; a being to whom he could forgive everything, *everything* (of that there could be no question; indeed it was quite the other way, his idea was that he was entirely to blame); this woman, this Marya Shatov, was in his house, in his presence again . . . it was almost inconceivable! He was so overcome, there was so much that was terrible and at the same time so much happiness in this event that he could not, perhaps would not—perhaps was afraid to—realise the position. It was a dream. But when she looked at him with that harassed gaze he suddenly understood that this woman he loved so dearly was suffering, perhaps had been wronged. His heart went cold. He looked at her features with anguish: the first bloom of youth had long faded from this exhausted face. It's true that she was still good-looking—in his eyes a beauty, as she had always been. In reality she was a woman of twenty-five, rather strongly built, above the medium height (taller than Shatov), with abundant dark brown hair, a pale oval face, and large dark eyes now glittering with feverish brilliance. But the light-hearted, naïve and good-natured energy he had known so well in the past was replaced now by a sullen irritability and disillusionment, a sort of cynicism which was not yet habitual to her herself, and which weighed upon her. But the chief thing was that she was ill, that he could see clearly. In spite of the awe in which he stood of

"So I shall come for you to-morrow at exactly six o'clock in the evening, and we'll go there on foot. There will be no one there but us three."

"Will Verhovensky be there?"

"No, he won't. Verhovensky is leaving the town at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Just what I thought!" Shatov whispered furiously, and he struck his fist on his hip. "He's run off, the sneak!"

He sank into agitated reflection. Erkel looked intently at him and waited in silence.

"But how will you take it? You can't simply pick it up in your hands and carry it."

"There will be no need to. You'll simply point out the place and we'll just make sure that it really is buried there. We only know whereabouts the place is, we don't know the place itself. And have you pointed the place out to anyone else yet?"

Shatov looked at him.

"You, you, a chit of a boy like you, a silly boy like you, you too have got caught in that net like a sheep? Yes, that's just the young blood they want! Well, go along. E-ech! that scoundrel's taken you all in and run away."

Erkel looked at him serenely and calmly but did not seem to understand.

"Verhovensky, Verhovensky has run away!" Shatov growled fiercely.

"But he is still here, he is not gone away. He is not going till to-morrow," Erkel observed softly and persuasively. "I particularly begged him to be present as a witness; my instructions all referred to him (he explained frankly like a young and inexperienced boy). But I regret to say he did not agree on the ground of his departure, and he really is in a hurry."

Shatov glanced compassionately at the simple youth again, but suddenly gave a gesture of despair as though he thought "they are not worth pitying."

"All right, I'll come," he cut him short. "And now get away, be off."

"So I'll come for you at six o'clock punctually." Erkel made a courteous bow and walked deliberately downstairs.

"Little fool!" Shatov could not help shouting after him from the top.

"What is it?" responded the lad from the bottom.

"Nothing, you can go."

"I thought you said something."

II

Erkel was a "little fool" who was only lacking in the higher form of reason, the ruling power of the intellect; but of the lesser, the subordinate reasoning faculties, he had plenty—even to the point of cunning. Fanatically, childishly devoted to "the cause" or rather in reality to Pyotr Verhovensky, he acted on the instructions given to him when at the meeting of the quintet they had agreed and had distributed the various duties for the next day. When Pyotr Stepanovitch gave him the job of messenger, he succeeded in talking to him aside for ten minutes.

A craving for active service was characteristic of this shallow, unreflecting nature, which was for ever yearning to follow the lead of another man's will, of course for the good of "the common" or "the great" cause. Not that that made any difference, for little fanatics like Erkel can never imagine serving a cause except by identifying it with the person who, to their minds, is the expression of it. The sensitive, affectionate and kind-hearted Erkel was perhaps the most callous of Shatov's would-be murderers, and, though he had no personal spite against him, he would have been present at his murder without the quiver of an eyelid. He had been instructed, for instance, to have a good look at Shatov's surroundings while carrying out his commission, and when Shatov, receiving him at the top of the stairs, blurted out to him, probably unaware in the heat of the moment, that his wife had come back to him—Erkel had the instinctive cunning to avoid displaying the slightest curiosity, though the idea flashed through his mind that the fact of his wife's return was of great importance for the success of their undertaking.

And so it was in reality; it was only that fact that saved the "scoundrels" from Shatov's carrying out his intention, and at the same time helped them "to get rid of him." To begin with, it agitated Shatov, threw him out of his regular routine, and deprived him of his usual clear-sightedness and caution. Any

idea of his own danger would be the last thing to enter his head at this moment when he was absorbed with such different considerations. On the contrary, he eagerly believed that Pyotr Verhovensky was running away the next day: it fell in exactly with his suspicions! Returning to the room he sat down again in a corner, leaned his elbows on his knees and hid his face in his hands. Bitter thoughts tormented him. . . .

Then he would raise his head again and go on tiptoe to look at her. "Good God! she will be in a fever by to-morrow morning; perhaps it's begun already! She must have caught cold. She is not accustomed to this awful climate, and then a third-class carriage, the storm, the rain, and she has such a thin little pelisse, no wrap at all. . . . And to leave her like this, to abandon her in her helplessness! Her bag, too, her bag—what a tiny, light thing, all crumpled up, scarcely weighs ten pounds! Poor thing, how worn out she is, how much she's been through! She is proud, that's why she won't complain. But she is irritable, very irritable. It's illness; an angel will grow irritable in illness. What a dry forehead, it must be hot—how dark she is under the eyes, and . . . and yet how beautiful the oval of her face is and her rich hair, how . . ."

And he made haste to turn away his eyes, to walk away as though he were frightened at the very idea of seeing in her anything but an unhappy, exhausted fellow-creature who needed *help*—"how could he think of *hopes*, oh, how mean, how base is man!" And he would go back to his corner, sit down, hide his face in his hands and again sink into dreams and reminiscences . . . and again he was haunted by hopes.

"Oh, I am tired, I am tired," he remembered her exclamations, her weak broken voice. "Good God! Abandon her now, and she has only eighty kopecks; she held out her purse, a tiny old thing! She's come to look for a job. What does she know about jobs? What do they know about Russia? Why, they are like naughty children, they've nothing but their own fancies made up by themselves, and she is angry, poor thing, that Russia is not like their foreign dreams! The luckless, innocent creatures! . . . It's really cold here, though."

He remembered that she had complained, that he had promised to heat the stove. "There are logs here, I can fetch them if only I don't wake her. But I can do it without waking her. But

what shall I do about the veal? When she gets up perhaps she will be hungry. . . . Well, that will do later: Kirillov doesn't go to bed all night. What could I cover her with, she is sleeping so soundly, but she must be cold, ah, she must be cold!" And once more he went to look at her; her dress had worked up a little and her right leg was half uncovered to the knee. He suddenly turned away almost in dismay, took off his warm overcoat, and, remaining in his wretched old jacket, covered it up, trying not to look at it.

A great deal of time was spent in lighting the fire, stepping about on tiptoe, looking at the sleeping woman, dreaming in the corner, then looking at her again. Two or three hours had passed. During that time Verhovensky and Liputin had been at Kirillov's. At last he, too, began to doze in the corner. He heard her groan; she waked up and called him; he jumped up like a criminal.

"Marie, I was dropping asleep. . . . Ah, what a wretch I am, Marie!"

She sat up, looking about her with wonder, seeming not to recognise where she was, and suddenly leapt up in indignation and anger.

"I've taken your bed, I fell asleep so tired I didn't know what I was doing; how dared you not wake me? How could you dare imagine I meant to be a burden to you?"

"How could I wake you, Marie?"

"You could, you ought to have! You've no other bed here, and I've taken yours. You had no business to put me into a false position. Or do you suppose that I've come to take advantage of your charity? Kindly get into your bed at once and I'll lie down in the corner on some chairs."

"Marie, there aren't chairs enough, and there's nothing to put on them."

"Then simply on the floor. Or you'll have to lie on the floor yourself. I want to lie on the floor at once, at once!"

She stood up, tried to take a step, but suddenly a violent spasm of pain deprived her of all power and all determination, and with a loud groan she fell back on the bed. Shatov ran up, but Marie, hiding her face in the pillow, seized his hand and gripped and squeezed it with all her might. This lasted a minute.

anything for childbearing . . . or . . . no, I don't know how to say it."

"You mean you can't assist at a confinement yourself? But that's not what I've come for. An old woman, I want a woman, a nurse, a servant!"

"You shall have an old woman, but not directly, perhaps . . . If you like I'll come instead. . . ."

"Oh, impossible; I am running to Madame Virginsky, the midwife, now."

"A horrid woman!"

"Oh, yes, Kirillov, yes, but she is the best of them all. Yes, it'll all be without reverence, without gladness, with contempt, with abuse, with blasphemy in the presence of so great a mystery, the coming of a new creature! Oh, she is cursing it already!"

"If you like I'll . . ."

"No, no, but while I'm running (oh, I'll make Madame Virginsky come), will you go to the foot of my staircase and quietly listen? But don't venture to go in, you'll frighten her; don't go in on any account, you must only listen . . . in case anything dreadful happens. If anything very bad happens, then run in."

"I understand. I've another rouble. Here it is. I meant to have a fowl to-morrow, but now I don't want to, make haste, run with all your might. There's a samovar all the night."

Kirillov knew nothing of the present design against Shatov, nor had he had any idea in the past of the degree of danger that threatened him. He only knew that Shatov had some old scores with "those people," and although he was to some extent involved with them himself through instructions he had received from abroad (not that these were of much consequence, however, for he had never taken any direct share in anything), yet of late he had given it all up, having left off doing anything especially for the "cause," and devoted himself entirely to a life of contemplation. Although Pyotr Stepanovitch had at the meeting invited Liputin to go with him to Kirillov's to make sure that the latter would take upon himself, at a given moment, the responsibility for the "Shatov business," yet in his interview with Kirillov he had said no word about Shatov nor alluded to him in any way—probably considering it impolitic

to do so, and thinking that Kirillov could not be relied upon. He put off speaking about it till next day, when it would be all over and would therefore not matter to Kirillov; such at least was Pyotr Stepanovitch's judgment of him. Liputin, too, was struck by the fact that Shatov was not mentioned in spite of what Pyotr Stepanovitch had promised, but he was too much agitated to protest.

Shatov ran like a hurricane to Virginsky's house, cursing the distance and feeling it endless.

He had to knock a long time at Virginsky's; every one had been asleep a long while. But Shatov did not scruple to bang at the shutters with all his might. The dog chained up in the yard dashed about barking furiously. The dogs caught it up all along the street, and there was a regular babel of barking.

"Why are you knocking and what do you want?" Shatov heard at the window at last Virginsky's gentle voice, betraying none of the resentment appropriate to the "outrage." The shutter was pushed back a little and the casement was opened.

"Who's there, what scoundrel is it?" shrilled a female voice which betrayed all the resentment appropriate to the "outrage." It was the old maid, Virginsky's relation.

"I am Shatov, my wife has come back to me and she is just confined. . . ."

"Well, let her be, get along."

"I've come for Arina Prohorovna; I won't go without Arina Prohorovna!"

"She can't attend to every one. Practice at night is a special line. Take yourself off to Maksheyev's and don't dare to make that din," rattled the exasperated female voice. He could hear Virginsky checking her; but the old maid pushed him away and would not desist.

"I am not going away!" Shatov cried again.

"Wait a little, wait a little," Virginsky cried at last, overpowering the lady. "I beg you to wait five minutes, Shatov. I'll wake Arina Prohorovna. Please don't knock and don't shout. . . . Oh, how awful it all is!"

After five endless minutes, Arina Prohorovna made her appearance.

"Has your wife come?" Shatov heard her voice at the window and to his surprise it was not at all ill-tempered, only as

and held it out to him, for him to look in her bag. As his hands shook he was longer than he should have been opening the unfamiliar lock. Marie flew into a rage, but when Arina Prohorovna rushed up to take the key from him, she would not allow her on any account to look into her bag and with peevish cries and tears insisted that no one should open the bag but Shatov.

Some things he had to fetch from Kirillov's. No sooner had Shatov turned to go for them than she began frantically calling him back and was only quieted when Shatov had rushed impetuously back from the stairs, and explained that he should only be gone a minute to fetch something indispensable and would be back at once.

"Well, my lady, it's hard to please you," laughed Arina Prohorovna, "one minute he must stand with his face to the wall and not dare to look at you, and the next he mustn't be gone for a minute, or you begin crying. He may begin to imagine something. Come, come, don't be silly, don't blubber, I was laughing, you know."

"He won't dare to imagine anything."

"Tut, tut, tut, if he didn't love you like a sheep he wouldn't run about the streets with his tongue out and wouldn't have roused all the dogs in the town. He broke my window-frame."

V

He found Kirillov still pacing up and down his room so preoccupied that he had forgotten the arrival of Shatov's wife, and heard what he said without understanding him.

"Oh, yes!" he recollected suddenly, as though tearing himself with an effort and only for an instant from some absorbing idea, "yes . . . an old woman. . . . A wife or an old woman? Stay a minute: a wife and an old woman, is that it? I remember. I've been, the old woman will come, only not just now. Take the pillow. Is there anything else? Yes. . . . Stay, do you have moments of the eternal harmony, Shatov?"

"You know, Kirillov, you mustn't go on staying up every night."

Kirillov came out of his reverie and, strange to say, spoke far more coherently than he usually did; it was clear that he had formulated it long ago and perhaps written it down.

"There are seconds—they come five or six at a time—when you suddenly feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained. It's something not earthly—I don't mean in the sense that it's heavenly—but in that sense that man cannot endure it in his earthly aspect. He must be physically changed or die. This feeling is clear and unmistakable; it's as though you apprehend all nature and suddenly say, 'Yes, that's right.' God, when He created the world, said at the end of each day of creation, 'Yes, it's right, it's good.' It . . . it's not being deeply moved, but simply joy. You don't forgive anything because there is no more need of forgiveness. It's not that you love—oh, there's something in it higher than love—what's most awful is that it's terribly clear and such joy. If it lasted more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish. In those five seconds I live through a lifetime, and I'd give my whole life for them, because they are worth it. To endure ten seconds one must be physically changed. I think man ought to give up having children—what's the use of children, what's the use of evolution when the goal has been attained? In the gospel it is written that there will be no child-bearing in the resurrection, but that men will be like the angels of the Lord. That's a hint. Is your wife bearing a child?"

"Kirillov, does this often happen?"

"Once in three days, or once a week."

"Don't you have fits, perhaps?"

"No."

"Well, you will. Be careful, Kirillov. I've heard that's just how fits begin. An epileptic described exactly that sensation before a fit, word for word as you've done. He mentioned five seconds, too, and said that more could not be endured. Remember Mahomet's pitcher from which no drop of water was spilt while he circled Paradise on his horse. That was a case of five seconds too; that's too much like your eternal harmony, and Mahomet was an epileptic. Be careful, Kirillov, it's epilepsy!"

"It won't have time," Kirillov smiled gently.

VI

The night was passing. Shatov was sent hither and thither, abused, called back. Marie was reduced to the most abject ter-

ror for life. She screamed that she wanted to live, that "she must, she must," and was afraid to die. "I don't want to, I don't want to!" she repeated. If Arina Prohorovna had not been there, things would have gone very badly. By degrees she gained complete control of the patient—who began to obey every word, every order from her like a child. Arina Prohorovna ruled by sternness not by kindness, but she was first-rate at her work. It began to get light . . . Arina Prohorovna suddenly imagined that Shatov had just run out on to the stairs to say his prayers and began laughing. Marie laughed too, spitefully, malignantly, as though such laughter relieved her. At last they drove Shatov away altogether. A damp, cold morning dawned. He pressed his face to the wall in the corner just as he had done the evening before when Erkel came. He was trembling like a leaf, afraid to think, but his mind caught at every thought as it does in dreams. He was continually being carried away by day-dreams, which snapped off short like a rotten thread. From the room came no longer groans but awful animal cries, unendurable, incredible. He tried to stop up his ears, but could not, and he fell on his knees, repeating unconsciously, "Marie, Marie!" Then suddenly he heard a cry, a new cry, which made Shatov start and jump up from his knees, the cry of a baby, a weak discordant cry. He crossed himself and rushed into the room. Arina Prohorovna held in her hands a little red wrinkled creature, screaming, and moving its little arms and legs, fearfully helpless, and looking as though it could be blown away by a puff of wind, but screaming and seeming to assert its full right to live. Marie was lying as though insensible, but a minute later she opened her eyes, and bent a strange, strange look on Shatov: it was something quite new, that look. What it meant exactly he was not able to understand yet, but he had never known such a look on her face before.

"Is it a boy? Is it a boy?" she asked Arina Prohorovna in an exhausted voice.

"It is a boy," the latter shouted in reply, as she bound up the child.

When she had bound him up and was about to lay him across the bed between the two pillows, she gave him to Shatov for a minute to hold. Marie signed to him on the sly as

though afraid of Arina Prohorovna. He understood at once and brought the baby to show her.

"How . . . pretty he is," she whispered weakly with a smile.

"Foo, what does he look like," Arina Prohorovna laughed gaily in triumph, glancing at Shatov's face. "What a funny face!"

"You may be merry, Arina Prohorovna. . . . It's a great joy," Shatov faltered with an expression of idiotic bliss, radiant at the phrase Marie had uttered about the child.

"Where does the great joy come in?" said Arina Prohorovna good-humouredly, bustling about, clearing up, and working like a convict.

"The mysterious coming of a new creature, a great and inexplicable mystery; and what a pity it is, Arina Prohorovna, that you don't understand it."

Shatov spoke in an incoherent, stupefied and ecstatic way. Something seemed to be tottering in his head and welling up from his soul apart from his own will.

"There were two and now there's a third human being, a new spirit, finished and complete, unlike the handiwork of man; a new thought and a new love . . . it's positively frightening. . . . And there's nothing grander in the world."

"Ech, what nonsense he talks! It's simply a further development of the organism, and there's nothing else in it, no mystery," said Arina Prohorovna with genuine and good-humoured laughter. "If you talk like that, every fly is a mystery. But I tell you what: superfluous people ought not to be born. We must first remould everything so that they won't be superfluous and then bring them into the world. As it is, we shall have to take him to the Foundling, the day after to-morrow. . . . Though that's as it should be."

"I will never let him go to the Foundling," Shatov pronounced resolutely, staring at the floor.

"You adopt him as your son?"

"He is my son."

"Of course he is a Shatov, legally he is a Shatov, and there's no need for you to pose as a humanitarian. Men can't get on without fine words. There, there, it's all right, but look here, my friends," she added, having finished clearing up at last,

"it's time for me to go. I'll come again this morning, and again in the evening if necessary, but now, since everything has gone off so well, I must run off to my other patients, they've been expecting me long ago. I believe you got an old woman somewhere, Shatov; an old woman is all very well, but don't you, her tender husband, desert her; sit beside her, you may be of use; Marya Ignatyevna won't drive you away, I fancy. . . . There, there, I was only laughing."

At the gate, to which Shatov accompanied her, she added to him alone.

"You've given me something to laugh at for the rest of my life; I shan't charge you anything; I shall laugh at you in my sleep! I have never seen anything funnier than you last night."

She went off very well satisfied. Shatov's appearance and conversation made it as clear as daylight that this man "was going in for being a father and was a ninny." She ran home on purpose to tell Virginsky about it, though it was shorter and more direct to go to another patient.

"Marie, she told you not to go to sleep for a little time, though, I see, it's very hard for you," Shatov began timidly. "I'll sit here by the window and take care of you, shall I?"

And he sat down by the window behind the sofa so that she could not see him. But before a minute had passed she called him and fretfully asked him to arrange the pillow. He began arranging it. She looked angrily at the wall.

"That's not right, that's not right. . . . What hands!"

Shatov did it again.

"Stoop down to me," she said wildly, trying hard not to look at him.

He started but stooped down.

"More . . . not so . . . nearer," and suddenly her left arm was impulsively thrown round his neck and he felt her warm moist kiss on his forehead.

"Marie!"

Her lips were quivering, she was struggling with herself, but suddenly she raised herself and said with flashing eyes:

"Nikolay Stavrogin is a scoundrel!" And she fell back helplessly with her face in the pillow, sobbing hysterically, and tightly squeezing Shatov's hand in hers.

From that moment she would not let him leave her; she insisted on his sitting by her pillow. She could not talk much but

she kept gazing at him and smiling blissfully. She seemed suddenly to have become a silly girl. Everything seemed transformed. Shatov cried like a boy, then talked of God knows what, wildly, crazily, with inspiration, kissed her hands; she listened entranced, perhaps not understanding him, but caressingly ruffling his hair with her weak hand, smoothing it and admiring it. He talked about Kirillov, of how they would now begin "a new life" for good, of the existence of God, of the goodness of all men. . . . She took out the child again to gaze at it rapturously.

"Marie," he cried, as he held the child in his arms, "all the old madness, shame, and deadness are over, aren't they? Let us work hard and begin a new life, the three of us, yes, yes! . . . Oh, by the way, what shall we call him, Marie?"

"What shall we call him?" she repeated with surprise, and there was a sudden look of terrible grief in her face.

She clasped her hands, looked reproachfully at Shatov and hid her face in the pillow.

"Marie, what is it?" he cried with painful alarm.

"How could you, how could you . . . Oh, you ungrateful man!"

"Marie, forgive me, Marie . . . I only asked you what his name should be. I don't know. . . ."

"Ivan, Ivan." She raised her flushed and tear-stained face. "How could you suppose we should call him by another *horrible* name?"

"Marie, calm yourself; oh, what a nervous state you are in!"

"That's rude again, putting it down to my nerves. I bet that if I'd said his name was to be that other . . . horrible name, you'd have agreed at once and not have noticed it even! Oh, men, the mean ungrateful creatures, they are all alike!"

A minute later, of course, they were reconciled. Shatov persuaded her to have a nap. She fell asleep but still kept his hand in hers; she waked up frequently, looked at him, as though afraid he would go away, and dropped asleep again.

Kirillov sent an old woman "to congratulate them," as well as some hot tea, some freshly cooked cutlets, and some broth and white bread for Marya Ignatyevna. The patient sipped the broth greedily, the old woman undid the baby's wrappings and swaddled it afresh, Marie made Shatov have a cutlet too.

Time was passing. Shatov, exhausted, fell asleep himself in

brain had not hatched a new idea at that moment, a new plan of conciliation for further action, he might have taken to his bed like Lyamshin. But this new idea sustained him; what's more, he began impatiently awaiting the hour fixed, and set off for the appointed spot earlier than was necessary.

It was a very gloomy place at the end of the huge park. I went there afterwards on purpose to look at it. How sinister it must have looked on that chill autumn evening! It was at the edge of an old wood belonging to the Crown. Huge ancient pines stood out as vague sombre blurs in the darkness. It was so dark that they could hardly see each other two paces off, but Pyotr Stepanovitch, Liputin, and afterwards Erkel, brought lanterns with them. At some unrecorded date in the past a rather absurd-looking grotto had for some reason been built here of rough unhewn stones. The table and benches in the grotto had long ago decayed and fallen. Two hundred paces to the right was the bank of the third pond of the park. These three ponds stretched one after another for a mile from the house to the very end of the park. One could scarcely imagine that any noise, a scream, or even a shot, could reach the inhabitants of the Stavrogins' deserted house. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's departure the previous day and Alexey Yegorytch's absence left only five or six people in the house, all more or less invalided, so to speak. In any case it might be assumed with perfect confidence that if cries or shouts for help were heard by any of the inhabitants of the isolated house they would only have excited terror; no one would have moved from his warm stove or snug shelf to give assistance.

By twenty past six almost all of them except Erkel, who had been told off to fetch Shatov, had turned up at the trysting-place. This time Pyotr Stepanovitch was not late; he came with Tolkatchenko. Tolkatchenko looked frowning and anxious; all his assumed determination and insolent bravado had vanished. He scarcely left Pyotr Stepanovitch's side, and seemed to have become all at once immensely devoted to him. He was continually thrusting himself forward to whisper fussily to him, but the latter scarcely answered him, or muttered something irritably to get rid of him.

Shigalov and Virginsky had arrived rather before Pyotr

Stepanovitch, and as soon as he came they drew a little apart in profound and obviously intentional silence. Pyotr Stepanovitch raised his lantern and examined them with unceremonious and insulting minuteness. "They mean to speak," flashed through his mind.

"Isn't Lyamshin here?" he asked Virginsky. "Who said he was ill?"

"I am here," responded Lyamshin, suddenly coming from behind a tree. He was in a warm greatcoat and thickly muffled in a rug, so that it was difficult to make out his face even with a lantern.

"So Liputin is the only one not here?"

Liputin too came out of the grotto without speaking. Pyotr Stepanovitch raised the lantern again.

"Why were you hiding in there? Why didn't you come out?"

"I imagine we still keep the right of freedom . . . of our actions," Liputin muttered, though probably he hardly knew what he wanted to express.

"Gentlemen," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, raising his voice for the first time above a whisper, which produced an effect, "I think you fully understand that it's useless to go over things again. Everything was said and fully thrashed out yesterday, openly and directly. But perhaps—as I see from your faces—some one wants to make some statement; in that case I beg you to make haste. Damn it all! there's not much time, and Erkel may bring him in a minute. . . ."

"He is sure to bring him," Tolkatchenko put in for some reason.

"If I am not mistaken, the printing press will be handed over, to begin with?" inquired Liputin, though again he seemed hardly to understand why he asked the question.

"Of course. Why should we lose it?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, lifting the lantern to his face. "But, you see, we all agreed yesterday that it was not really necessary to take it. He need only show you the exact spot where it's buried; we can dig it up afterwards for ourselves. I know that it's somewhere ten paces from a corner of this grotto. But, damn it all! how could you have forgotten, Liputin? It was agreed that you

should meet him alone and that we should come out afterwards. . . . It's strange that you should ask—or didn't you mean what you said?"

Liputin kept gloomily silent. All were silent. The wind shook the tops of the pine-trees.

"I trust, however, gentlemen, that every one will do his duty," Pyotr Stepanovitch rapped out impatiently.

"I know that Shatov's wife has come back and has given birth to a child," Virginsky said suddenly, excited and gesticulating and scarcely able to speak distinctly. "Knowing what human nature is, we can be sure that now he won't give information . . . because he is happy. . . . So I went to every one this morning and found no one at home, so perhaps now nothing need be done. . . ."

He stopped short with a catch in his breath.

"If you suddenly became happy, Mr. Virginsky," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, stepping up to him, "would you abandon—not giving information; there's no question of that—but any perilous public action which you had planned before you were happy and which you regarded as a duty and obligation in spite of the risk and loss of happiness?"

"No, I wouldn't abandon it! I wouldn't on any account!" said Virginsky with absurd warmth, twitching all over.

"You would rather be unhappy again than be a scoundrel?"

"Yes, yes. . . . Quite the contrary. . . . I'd rather be a complete scoundrel . . . that is no . . . not a scoundrel at all, but on the contrary completely unhappy rather than a scoundrel."

"Well, then, let me tell you that Shatov looks on this betrayal as a public duty. It's his most cherished conviction, and the proof of it is that he runs some risk himself; though, of course, they will pardon him a great deal for giving information. A man like that will never give up the idea. No sort of happiness would overcome him. In another day he'll go back on it, reproach himself, and will go straight to the police. What's more, I don't see any happiness in the fact that his wife has come back after three years' absence to bear him a child of Stavrogin's."

"But no one has seen Shatov's letter," Shigalov brought out all at once, emphatically.

"I've seen it," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch. "It exists, and all this is awfully stupid, gentlemen."

"And I protest . . ." Virginsky cried, boiling over suddenly. "I protest with all my might. . . . I want . . . this is what I want. I suggest that when he arrives we all come out and question him, and if it's true, we induce him to repent of it; and if he gives us his word of honour, let him go. In any case we must have a trial; it must be done after trial. We mustn't lie in wait for him and then fall upon him."

"Risk the cause on his word of honour—that's the acme of stupidity! Damnation, how stupid it all is now, gentlemen! And a pretty part you are choosing to play at the moment of danger!"

"I protest, I protest!" Virginsky persisted.

"Don't bawl, anyway; we shan't hear the signal. Shatov, gentlemen. . . . (Damnation, how stupid this is now!) I've told you already that Shatov is a Slavophil, that is, one of the stupidest set of people. . . . But, damn it all, never mind, that's no matter! You put me out! . . . Shatov is an embittered man, gentlemen, and since he has belonged to the party, anyway, whether he wanted to or no, I had hoped till the last minute that he might have been of service to the cause and might have been made use of as an embittered man. I spared him and was keeping him in reserve, in spite of most exact instructions. . . . I've spared him a hundred times more than he deserved! But he's ended by betraying us. . . . But, hang it all, I don't care! You'd better try running away now, any of you! No one of you has the right to give up the job! You can kiss him if you like, but you haven't the right to stake the cause on his word of honour! That's acting like swine and spies in government pay!"

"Who's a spy in government pay here?" Liputin filtered out.

"You, perhaps. You'd better hold your tongue, Liputin; you talk for the sake of talking, as you always do. All men are spies, gentlemen, who funk their duty at the moment of danger. There will always be some fools who'll run in a panic at the last moment and cry out, 'Aie, forgive me, and I'll give them all away!' But let me tell you, gentlemen, no betrayal would win you a pardon now. Even if your sentence were mitigated it would mean Siberia; and, what's more, there's no es-

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caping the weapons of the other side—and their weapons are sharper than the government's."

Pyotr Stepanovitch was furious and said more than he meant to. With a resolute air Shigalov took three steps towards him.

"Since yesterday evening I've thought over the question," he began, speaking with his usual pedantry and assurance. (I believe that if the earth had given way under his feet he would not have raised his voice nor have varied one tone in his methodical exposition.) "Thinking the matter over, I've come to the conclusion that the projected murder is not merely a waste of precious time which might be employed in a more suitable and befitting manner, but presents, moreover, that deplorable deviation from the normal method which has always been most prejudicial to the cause and has delayed its triumph for scores of years, under the guidance of shallow thinkers and pre-eminently men of political instead of purely socialistic leanings. I have come here solely to protest against the projected enterprise, for the general edification, intending then to withdraw at the actual moment, which you, for some reason I don't understand, speak of as a moment of danger to you. I am going—not from fear of that danger nor from a sentimental feeling for Shatov, whom I have no inclination to kiss, but solely because all this business from beginning to end is in direct contradiction to my programme. As for my betraying you and my being in the pay of the government, you can set your mind completely at rest. I shall not betray you."

He turned and walked away.

"Damn it all, he'll meet them and warn Shatov!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, pulling out his revolver. They heard the click of the trigger.

"You may be confident," said Shigalov, turning once more, "that if I meet Shatov on the way I may bow to him, but I shall not warn him."

"But do you know, you may have to pay for this, Mr. Fourier?"

"I beg you to observe that I am not Fourier. If you mix me up with that mawkish theoretical twaddler you simply prove that you know nothing of my manuscript, though it has been in your hands. As for your vengeance, let me tell you that it's a mistake to cock your pistol: that's absolutely against your in-

terests at the present moment. But if you threaten to shoot me to-morrow, or the day after, you'll gain nothing by it but unnecessary trouble. You may kill me, but sooner or later you'll come to my system all the same. Good-bye."

At that instant a whistle was heard in the park, two hundred paces away from the direction of the pond. Liputin at once answered, whistling also as had been agreed the evening before. (As he had lost several teeth and distrusted his own powers, he had this morning bought for a farthing in the market a child's clay whistle for the purpose.) Erkel had warned Shatov on the way that they would whistle as a signal, so that the latter felt no uneasiness.

"Don't be uneasy, I'll avoid them and they won't notice me at all," Shigalov declared in an impressive whisper; and thereupon deliberately and without haste he walked home through the dark park.

Everything, to the smallest detail of this terrible affair, is now fully known. To begin with, Liputin met Erkel and Shatov at the entrance to the grotto. Shatov did not bow or offer him his hand, but at once pronounced hurriedly in a loud voice:

"Well, where have you put the spade, and haven't you another lantern? You needn't be afraid, there's absolutely no one here, and they wouldn't hear at Skvoreshniki now if we fired a cannon here. This is the place, here this very spot."

And he stamped with his foot ten paces from the end of the grotto towards the wood. At that moment Tolkachenko rushed out from behind a tree and sprang at him from behind, while Erkel seized him by the elbows. Liputin attacked him from the front. The three of them at once knocked him down and pinned him to the ground. At this point Pyotr Stepanovitch darted up with his revolver. It is said that Shatov had time to turn his head and was able to see and recognise him. Three lanterns lighted up the scene. Shatov suddenly uttered a short and desperate scream. But they did not let him go on screaming. Pyotr Stepanovitch firmly and accurately put his revolver to Shatov's forehead, pressed it to it, and pulled the trigger. The shot seems not to have been loud; nothing was heard at Skvoreshniki, anyway. Shigalov, who was scarcely three paces away, of course heard it—he heard the shout and the shot, but, as he testified afterwards, he did not turn nor

even stop. Death was almost instantaneous. Pyotr Stepanovitch was the only one who preserved all his faculties. but I don't think he was quite cool. Squatting on his heels, he searched the murdered man's pockets hastily, though with steady hand. No money was found (his purse had been left under Marya Ignatyevna's pillow). Two or three scraps of paper of no importance were found: a note from his office, the title of some book, and an old bill from a restaurant abroad which had been preserved, goodness knows why, for two years in his pocket. Pyotr Stepanovitch transferred these scraps of paper to his own pocket, and suddenly noticing that they had all gathered round, were gazing at the corpse and doing nothing, he began rudely and angrily abusing them and urging them on. Tolkatchenko and Erkel recovered themselves, and running to the grotto brought instantly from it two stones which they had got ready there that morning. These stones, which weighed about twenty pounds each, were securely tied with cord. As they intended to throw the body in the nearest of the three ponds, they proceeded to tie the stones to the head and feet respectively. Pyotr Stepanovitch fastened the stones while Tolkatchenko and Erkel only held and passed them. Erkel was foremost, and while Pyotr Stepanovitch, grumbling and swearing, tied the dead man's feet together with the cord and fastened the stone to them—a rather lengthy operation—Tolkatchenko stood holding the other stone at arm's-length, his whole person bending forward, as it were, deferentially, to be in readiness to hand it without delay. It never once occurred to him to lay his burden on the ground in the interval. When at last both stones were tied on and Pyotr Stepanovitch got up from the ground to scrutinise the faces of his companions, something strange happened, utterly unexpected and surprising to almost every one.

As I have said already, all except perhaps Tolkatchenko and Erkel were standing still doing nothing. Though Virginsky had rushed up to Shatov with the others he had not seized him or helped to hold him. Lyamshin had joined the group after the shot had been fired. Afterwards, while Pyotr Stepanovitch was busy with the corpse—for perhaps ten minutes—none of them seemed to have been fully conscious. They grouped themselves around and seemed to have felt amazement rather than anxiety

or alarm. Liputin stood foremost, close to the corpse. Virginsky stood behind him, peeping over his shoulder with a peculiar, as it were unconcerned, curiosity; he even stood on tiptoe to get a better view. Lyamshin hid behind Virginsky. He took an apprehensive peep from time to time and slipped behind him again at once. When the stones had been tied on and Pyotr Stepanovitch had risen to his feet, Virginsky began faintly shuddering all over, clasped his hands, and cried out bitterly at the top of his voice:

"It's not the right thing, it's not, it's not at all!" He would perhaps have added something more to his belated exclamation, but Lyamshin did not let him finish: he suddenly seized him from behind and squeezed him with all his might, uttering an unnatural shriek. There are moments of violent emotion, of terror, for instance, when a man will cry out in a voice not his own, unlike anything one could have anticipated from him, and this has sometimes a very terrible effect. Lyamshin gave vent to a scream more animal than human. Squeezing Virginsky from behind more and more tightly and convulsively, he went on shrieking without a pause, his mouth wide open and his eyes starting out of his head, keeping up a continual patter with his feet, as though he were beating a drum. Virginsky was so scared that he too screamed out like a madman, and with a ferocity, a vindictiveness that one could never have expected of Virginsky. He tried to pull himself away from Lyamshin, scratching and punching him as far as he could with his arms behind him. Erkel at last helped to pull Lyamshin away. But when, in his terror, Virginsky had skipped ten paces away from him, Lyamshin, catching sight of Pyotr Stepanovitch, began yelling again and flew at him. Stumbling over the corpse, he fell upon Pyotr Stepanovitch, pressing his head to the latter's chest and gripping him so tightly in his arms that Pyotr Stepanovitch, Tolkatchenko, and Liputin could all of them do nothing at the first moment. Pyotr Stepanovitch shouted, swore, beat him on the head with his fists. At last, wrenching himself away, he drew his revolver and put it in the open mouth of Lyamshin, who was still yelling and was by now tightly held by Tolkatchenko, Erkel, and Liputin. But Lyamshin went on shrieking in spite of the revolver. At last Erkel, crushing his silk hand-

kerchief into a ball, deftly thrust it into his mouth and the shriek ceased. Meantime Tolkatchenko tied his hands with what was left of the rope.

"It's very strange," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, scrutinising the madman with uneasy wonder. He was evidently struck. "I expected something very different from him," he added thoughtfully.

They left Erkel in charge of him for a time. They had to make haste to get rid of the corpse: there had been so much noise that some one might have heard. Tolkatchenko and Pyotr Stepanovitch took up the lanterns and lifted the corpse by the head, while Liputin and Virginsky took the feet, and so they carried it away. With the two stones it was a heavy burden, and the distance was more than two hundred paces. Tolkatchenko was the strongest of them. He advised them to keep in step, but no one answered him and they all walked anyhow. Pyotr Stepanovitch walked on the right and, bending forward, carried the dead man's head on his shoulder while with the left hand he supported the stone. As Tolkatchenko walked more than half the way without thinking of helping him with the stone, Pyotr Stepanovitch at last shouted at him with an oath. It was a single, sudden shout. They all went on carrying the body in silence, and it was only when they reached the pond that Virginsky, stooping under his burden and seeming to be exhausted by the weight of it, cried out again in the same loud and wailing voice:

"It's not the right thing, no, no, it's not the right thing!"

The place to which they carried the dead man at the extreme end of the rather large pond, which was the farthest of the three from the house, was one of the most solitary and unfrequented spots in the park, especially at this late season of the year. At that end the pond was overgrown with weeds by the banks. They put down the lantern, swung the corpse and threw it into the pond. They heard a muffled and prolonged splash. Pyotr Stepanovitch raised the lantern and every one followed his example, peering curiously to see the body sink, but nothing could be seen: weighted with the two stones, the body sank at once. The big ripples spread over the surface of the water and quickly passed away. It was over.

"Now we can separate, gentlemen," said Pyotr Stepanovitch,

addressing them. "You must certainly be feeling that pride of a free spirit which is inseparable from the fulfilment of a duty freely undertaken. If you are unhappily at this moment too much agitated for such feelings, you will certainly feel them to-morrow, when, in fact, it would be shameful not to feel them. As for Lyamshin's too disgraceful over-excitement, I am willing to put it down to delirium, especially as they say he has been really ill all day. And one instant of free reflection will convince you, Virginsky, that in the interests of the cause we could not have trusted to any word of honour, but had to act as we did. Subsequent events will convince you that he was a traitor. I am ready to overlook your exclamations. As for danger, there is no reason to anticipate it. It would occur to no one to suspect any of us if you'll behave sensibly; so that it really depends on yourselves and on the conviction in which I hope you will be fully confirmed to-morrow. One of the reasons why you have banded yourselves together into a separate branch of a free organisation representing certain views was to support each other in the cause by your energy at any crisis and if need be to watch over one another. The highest responsibility is laid upon each of you. You are called upon to bring new life into the party which has grown decrepit and stinking with stagnation. Keep that always before your eyes to give you strength. All that you have to do meanwhile is to bring about the downfall of everything—both the government and its moral standards. None will be left but us, who have prepared ourselves beforehand to take over the government. The intelligent we shall bring over to our side, and as for the fools, we shall mount upon their shoulders. You must not be shy of that. We've got to re-educate a generation to make them worthy of freedom. We shall have many thousands of Shatovs to contend with. We shall organise to control public opinion; it's shameful not to snatch at anything that lies idle and gaping at us. I'm going at once to Kirillov, and by the morning a document will be in existence in which he will as he dies take it all on himself by way of an explanation to the police. Nothing can be more probable than such a solution. To begin with, he was on bad terms with Shatov; they had lived together in America, so they've had time to quarrel. It was well known that Shatov had changed his convictions, so there was hostility between them on that

ground and fear of treachery—that is, the most relentless hostility. All that will be stated in writing. Finally, it will be mentioned that Fedka had been lodging with him at Filipov's, so all this will completely avert all suspicion from you, because it will throw all those sheep's-heads off the scent. We shall not meet to-morrow, gentlemen; I am going into the country for a very short time, but the day after you will hear from me. I should advise you to spend to-morrow at home. Now we will separate, going back by twos by different paths. You, Tolkatchenko, I'll ask to look after Lyamshin and take him home. You may have some influence over him; and above all make him understand what harm he is doing himself by his cowardice. Your kinsman Shigalov, Virginsky, I am as unwilling to distrust as I am you; he will not betray us. I can only regret his action. He has not, however, announced that he will leave the society, so it would be premature to bury him. Well, make haste, gentlemen. Though they are sheep's-heads, there's no harm in prudence. . . ."

Virginsky went off with Erkel, who before giving up Lyamshin to Tolkatchenko brought him to Pyotr Stepanovitch, reporting to the latter that Lyamshin had come to his senses, was penitent and begged forgiveness, and indeed had no recollection of what had happened to him. Pyotr Stepanovitch walked off alone, going round by the farther side of the pond, skirting the park. This was the longest way. To his surprise Liputin overtook him before he got half-way home.

"Pyotr Stepanovitch! Pyotr Stepanovitch! Lyamshin will give information!"

"No, he will come to his senses and realise that he will be the first to go to Siberia if he did. No one will betray us now. Even you won't."

"What about you?"

"No fear! I'll get you all out of the way the minute you attempt to turn traitors, and you know that. But you won't turn traitors. Have you run a mile and a half to tell me that?"

"Pyotr Stepanovitch, Pyotr Stepanovitch, perhaps we shall never meet again!"

"What's put that into your head?"

"Only tell me one thing."

"Well, what? Though I want you to take yourself off."

"One question, but answer it truly: are we the only quintet in the world, or is it true that there are hundreds of others? It's a question of the utmost importance to me, Pyotr Stepanovitch."

"I see that from the frantic state you are in. But do you know, Liputin, you are more dangerous than Lyamshin?"

"I know, I know; but the answer, your answer!"

"You are a stupid fellow! I should have thought it could make no difference to you now whether it's the only quintet or one of a thousand."

"That means it's the only one! I was sure of it . . ." cried Liputin. "I always knew it was the only one, I knew it all along." And without waiting for any reply he turned and quickly vanished into the darkness.

Pyotr Stepanovitch pondered a little.

"No, no one will turn traitor," he concluded with decision, "but the group must remain a group and obey, or I'll . . . What a wretched set they are though!"

II

He first went home, and carefully, without haste, packed his trunk. At six o'clock in the morning there was a special train from the town. This early morning express only ran once a week, and was only a recent experiment. Though Pyotr Stepanovitch had told the members of the quintet that he was only going to be away for a short time in the neighbourhood, his intentions, as appeared later, were in reality very different. Having finished packing, he settled accounts with his landlady, to whom he had previously given notice of his departure, and drove in a cab to Erkel's lodgings, near the station. And then just upon one o'clock at night he walked to Kirillov's, approaching as before by Fedka's secret way.

Pyotr Stepanovitch was in a painful state of mind. Apart from other extremely grave reasons for dissatisfaction (he was still unable to learn anything of Stavrogin), he had, it seems—for I cannot assert it for a fact—received in the course of that day, probably from Petersburg, secret information of a danger awaiting him in the immediate future. There are, of course,

many legends in the town relating to this period; but if any facts were known, it was only to those immediately concerned. I can only surmise as my own conjecture that Pyotr Stepanovitch may well have had affairs going on in other neighbourhoods as well as in our town, so that he really may have received such a warning. I am convinced, indeed, in spite of Liputin's cynical and despairing doubts, that he really had two or three other quintets; for instance, in Petersburg and Moscow, and if not quintets at least colleagues and correspondents, and possibly was in very curious relations with them. Not more than three days after his departure an order for his immediate arrest arrived from Petersburg—whether in connection with what had happened among us, or elsewhere, I don't know. This order only served to increase the overwhelming, almost panic terror which suddenly came upon our local authorities and the society of the town, till then so persistently frivolous in its attitude, on the discovery of the mysterious and portentous murder of the student Shatov—the climax of the long series of senseless actions in our midst—as well as the extremely mysterious circumstances that accompanied that murder. But the order came too late: Pyotr Stepanovitch was already in Petersburg, living under another name, and, learning what was going on, he made haste to make his escape abroad. . . . But I am anticipating in a shocking way.

He went in to Kirillov, looking ill-humoured and quarrelsome. Apart from the real task before him, he felt, as it were, tempted to satisfy some personal grudge, to avenge himself on Kirillov for something. Kirillov seemed pleased to see him; he had evidently been expecting him a long time with painful impatience. His face was paler than usual; there was a fixed and heavy look in his black eyes.

"I thought you weren't coming," he brought out drearily from his corner of the sofa, from which he had not, however moved to greet him.

Pyotr Stepanovitch stood before him and, before uttering a word, looked intently at his face.

"Everything is in order, then, and we are not drawing back from our resolution. Bravo!" He smiled an offensively patronising smile. "But, after all," he added with unpleasant jocosity,

"if I am behind my time, it's not for you to complain: I made you a present of three hours."

"I don't want extra hours as a present from you, and you can't make me a present . . . you fool!"

"What?" Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled, but instantly controlled himself. "What huffiness! So we are in a savage temper?" he rapped out, still with the same offensive superciliousness. "At such a moment composure is what you need. The best thing you can do is to consider yourself a Columbus and me a mouse, and not to take offence at anything I say. I gave you that advice yesterday."

"I don't want to look upon you as a mouse."

"What's that, a compliment? But the tea is cold—and that shows that everything is topsy-turvy. Bah! But I see something in the window, on a plate." He went to the window. "Oh, oh, boiled chicken and rice! But why haven't you begun upon it yet? So we are in such a state of mind that even chicken . . ."

"I've dined, and it's not your business. Hold your tongue!"

"Oh, of course; besides, it's no consequence—though for me at the moment it is of consequence. Only fancy, I scarcely had any dinner, and so if, as I suppose, that chicken is not wanted now . . . eh?"

"Eat it if you can."

"Thank you, and then I'll have tea."

He instantly settled himself at the other end of the sofa and fell upon the chicken with extraordinary greediness; at the same time he kept a constant watch on his victim. Kirillov looked at him fixedly with angry aversion, as though unable to tear himself away.

"I say, though," Pyotr Stepanovitch fired off suddenly, while he still went on eating, "what about our business? We are not crying off, are we? How about that document?"

"I've decided in the night that it's nothing to me. I'll write it. About the manifestoes?"

"Yes, about the manifestoes too. But I'll dictate it. Of course, that's nothing to you. Can you possibly mind what's in the letter at such a moment?"

"That's not your business."

"It's not mine, of course. It need only be a few lines, though:

that you and Shatov distributed the manifestoes and with the help of Fedka, who hid in your lodgings. This last point about Fedka and your lodgings is very important—the most important of all, indeed. You see, I am talking to you quite openly.”

“Shatov? Why Shatov? I won’t mention Shatov for anything.”

“What next! What is it to you? You can’t hurt him now.”

“His wife has come back to him. She has waked up and has sent to ask me where he is.”

“She has sent to ask you where he is? H’m . . . that’s unfortunate. She may send again; no one ought to know I am here.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch was uneasy.

“She won’t know, she’s gone to sleep again. There’s a midwife with her, Arina Virginsky.”

“So that’s how it was. . . . She won’t overhear, I suppose? I say, you’d better shut the front door.”

“She won’t overhear anything. And if Shatov comes I’ll hide you in another room.”

“Shatov won’t come; and you must write that you quarrelled with him because he turned traitor and informed the police . . . this evening . . . and caused his death.”

“He is dead!” cried Kirillov, jumping up from the sofa.

“He died at seven o’clock this evening, or rather, at seven o’clock yesterday evening, and now it’s one o’clock.”

“You have killed him! . . . And I foresaw it yesterday!”

“No doubt you did! With this revolver here.” (He drew out his revolver as though to show it, but did not put it back again and still held it in his right hand as though in readiness.) “You are a strange man, though, Kirillov; you knew yourself that the stupid fellow was bound to end like this. What was there to foresee in that? I made that as plain as possible over and over again. Shatov was meaning to betray us; I was watching him, and it could not be left like that. And you too had instructions to watch him; you told me so yourself three weeks ago. . . .”

“Hold your tongue! You’ve done this because he spat in your face in Geneva!”

“For that and for other things too—for many other things; not from spite, however. Why do you jump up? Why look like that? Oh, oh, so that’s it, is it?”

He jumped up and held out his revolver before him. Kirillov had suddenly snatched up from the window his revolver, which had been loaded and put ready since the morning. Pyotr Stepanovitch took up his position and aimed his weapon at Kirillov. The latter laughed angrily.

“Confess, you scoundrel, that you brought your revolver because I might shoot you. . . . But I shan’t shoot you . . . though . . . though . . .”

And again he turned his revolver upon Pyotr Stepanovitch, as it were rehearsing, as though unable to deny himself the pleasure of imagining how he would shoot him. Pyotr Stepanovitch, holding his ground, waited for him, waited for him till the last minute without pulling the trigger, at the risk of being the first to get a bullet in his head; it might well be expected of “the maniac.” But at last “the maniac” dropped his hand, gasping and trembling and unable to speak.

“You’ve played your little game and that’s enough.” Pyotr Stepanovitch, too, dropped his weapon. “I knew it was only a game; only you ran a risk, let me tell you: I might have fired.”

And he sat down on the sofa with a fair show of composure and poured himself out some tea, though his hand trembled a little. Kirillov laid his revolver on the table and began walking up and down.

“I won’t write that I killed Shatov . . . and I won’t write anything now. You won’t have a document!”

“I shan’t?”

“No, you won’t.”

“What meanness and what stupidity!” Pyotr Stepanovitch turned green with resentment. “I foresaw it, though. You’ve not taken me by surprise, let me tell you. As you please, however. If I could make you do it by force, I would. You are a scoundrel, though.” Pyotr Stepanovitch was more and more carried away and unable to restrain himself. “You asked us for money out there and promised us no end of things. . . . I won’t go away with nothing, however: I’ll see you put the bullet through your brains first, anyway.”

“I want you to go away at once.” Kirillov stood firmly before him.

“No, that’s impossible.” Pyotr Stepanovitch took up his revolver again. “Now in your spite and cowardice you may think

"Yes, scoundrels if you like. But you know that that's only words."

"All my life I wanted it not to be only words. I lived because I did not want it to be. Even now every day I want it to be not words."

"Well, every one seeks to be where he is best off. The fish . . . that is, every one seeks his own comfort, that's all. That's been a commonplace for ages and ages."

"Comfort, do you say?"

"Oh, it's not worth while quarrelling over words."

"No, you were right in what you said; let it be comfort. God is necessary and so must exist."

"Well, that's all right, then."

"But I know He doesn't and can't."

"That's more likely."

"Surely you must understand that a man with two such ideas can't go on living?"

"Must shoot himself, you mean?"

"Surely you must understand that one might shoot oneself for that alone? You don't understand that there may be a man, one man out of your thousands of millions, one man who won't bear it and does not want to."

"All I understand is that you seem to be hesitating. . . . That's very bad."

"Stavrogin, too, is consumed by an idea," Kirillov said gloomily, pacing up and down the room. He had not noticed the previous remark.

"What?" Pyotr Stepanovitch pricked up his ears. "What idea? Did he tell you something himself?"

"No, I guessed it myself: if Stavrogin has faith, he does not believe that he has faith. If he hasn't faith, he does not believe that he hasn't."

"Well, Stavrogin has got something else wiser than that in his head," Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered peevishly, uneasily watching the turn the conversation had taken and the pallor of Kirillov.

"Damn it all, he won't shoot himself!" he was thinking. "I always suspected it; it's a maggot in the brain and nothing more; what a rotten lot of people!"

"You are the last to be with me; I shouldn't like to part on bad terms with you," Kirillov vouchsafed suddenly.

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not answer at once. "Damn it all, what is it now?" he thought again.

"I assure you, Kirillov, I have nothing against you personally as a man, and always . . ."

"You are a scoundrel and a false intellect. But I am just the same as you are, and I will shoot myself while you will remain living."

"You mean to say, I am so abject that I want to go on living."

He could not make up his mind whether it was judicious to keep up such a conversation at such a moment or not, and resolved "to be guided by circumstances." But the tone of superiority and of contempt for him, which Kirillov had never disguised, had always irritated him, and now for some reason it irritated him more than ever—possibly because Kirillov, who was to die within an hour or so (Pyotr Stepanovitch still reckoned upon this), seemed to him, as it were, already only half a man, some creature whom he could not allow to be haughty.

"You seem to be boasting to me of your shooting yourself."

"I've always been surprised at every one's going on living," said Kirillov, not hearing his remark.

"H'm! Admitting that's an idea, but . . ."

"You ape, you assent to get the better of me. Hold your tongue; you won't understand anything. If there is no God, then I am God."

"There, I could never understand that point of yours: why are you God?"

"If God exists, all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. If not, it's all my will and I am bound to show self-will."

"Self-will? But why are you bound?"

"Because all will has become mine. Can it be that no one in the whole planet, after making an end of God and believing in his own will, will dare to express his self-will on the most vital point? It's like a beggar inheriting a fortune and being afraid of it and not daring to approach the bag of gold, thinking himself too weak to own it. I want to manifest my self-will. I may be the only one, but I'll do it."

"Do it by all means."

"I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands."

"But you won't be the only one to kill yourself; there are lots of suicides."

"With good cause. But to do it without any cause at all, simply for self-will, I am the only one."

"He won't shoot himself," flashed across Pyotr Stepanovitch's mind again.

"Do you know," he observed irritably, "if I were in your place I should kill some one else to show my self-will, not myself. You might be of use. I'll tell you whom, if you are not afraid. Then you needn't shoot yourself to-day, perhaps. We may come to terms."

"To kill some one would be the lowest point of self-will, and you show your whole soul in that. I am not you: I want the highest point and I'll kill myself."

"He's come to it of himself," Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered malignantly.

"I am bound to show my unbelief," said Kirillov, walking about the room. "I have no higher idea than disbelief in God. I have all the history of mankind on my side. Man has done nothing but invent God so as to go on living, and not kill himself; that's the whole of universal history up till now. I am the first one in the whole history of mankind who would not invent God. Let them know it once for all."

"He won't shoot himself," Pyotr Stepanovitch thought anxiously.

"Let whom know it?" he said, egging him on. "It's only you and me here; you mean Liputin?"

"Let every one know; all will know. There is nothing secret that will not be made known. *He* said so."

And he pointed with feverish enthusiasm to the image of the Saviour, before which a lamp was burning. Pyotr Stepanovitch lost his temper completely.

"So you still believe in Him, and you've lighted the lamp; 'to be on the safe side,' I suppose?"

The other did not speak.

"Do you know, to my thinking, you believe perhaps more thoroughly than any priest."

"Believe in whom? In *Him*? Listen." Kirillov stood still, gazing before him with fixed and ecstatic look. "Listen to a great idea: there was a day on earth, and in the midst of the earth there stood three crosses. One on the Cross had such faith that he said to another, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' The day ended; both died and passed away and found neither Paradise nor resurrection. His words did not come true. Listen: that Man was the loftiest of all on earth, He was that which gave meaning to life. The whole planet, with everything on it, is mere madness without that Man. There has never been any like Him before or since, never, up to a miracle. For that is the miracle, that there never was or never will be another like Him. And if that is so, if the laws of nature did not spare even Him, have not spared even their miracle and made even Him live in a lie and die for a lie, then all the planet is a lie and rests on a lie and on mockery. So then, the very laws of the planet are a lie and the vaudeville of devils. What is there to live for? Answer, if you are a man."

"That's a different matter. It seems to me you've mixed up two different causes, and that's a very unsafe thing to do. But excuse me, if you are God? If the lie were ended and if you realised that all the falsity comes from the belief in that former God?"

"So at last you understand!" cried Kirillov rapturously. "So it can be understood if even a fellow like you understands. Do you understand now that the salvation for all consists in proving this idea to every one? Who will prove it? I! I can't understand how an atheist could know that there is no God and not kill himself on the spot. To recognise that there is no God and not to recognise at the same instant that one is God oneself is an absurdity, else one would certainly kill oneself. If you recognise it you are sovereign, and then you won't kill yourself but will live in the greatest glory. But one, the first, must kill himself, for else who will begin and prove it? So I must certainly kill myself, to begin and prove it. Now I am only a god against my will and I am unhappy, because I am *bound* to assert my will. All are unhappy because all are afraid to express their will. Man has hitherto been so unhappy and so poor because he has been afraid to assert his will in the highest point and has shown his self-will only in little things, like a school-

boy. I am awfully unhappy, for I'm awfully afraid. Terror is the curse of man. . . . But I will assert my will, I am bound to believe that I don't believe. I will begin and will make an end of it and open the door, and will save. That's the only thing that will save mankind and will re-create the next generation physically; for with his present physical nature man can't get on without his former God, I believe. For three years I've been seeking for the attribute of my godhead and I've found it; the attribute of my godhead is self-will! That's all I can do to prove in the highest point my independence and my new terrible freedom. For it is very terrible. I am killing myself to prove my independence and my new terrible freedom."

His face was unnaturally pale, and there was a terribly heavy look in his eyes. He was like a man in delirium. Pyotr Stepanovitch thought he would drop on to the floor.

"Give me the pen!" Kirillov cried suddenly, quite unexpectedly, in a positive frenzy. "Dictate; I'll sign anything. I'll sign that I killed Shatov even. Dictate while it amuses me. I am not afraid of what the haughty slaves will think! You will see for yourself that all that is secret shall be made manifest! And you will be crushed. . . . I believe, I believe!"

Pyotr Stepanovitch jumped up from his seat and instantly handed him an inkstand and paper, and began dictating, seizing the moment, quivering with anxiety.

"I, Alexey Kirillov, declare . . ."

"Stay; I won't! To whom am I declaring it?"

Kirillov was shaking as though he were in a fever. This declaration and the sudden strange idea of it seemed to absorb him entirely, as though it were a means of escape by which his tortured spirit strove for a moment's relief.

"To whom am I declaring it? I want to know to whom?"

"To no one, every one, the first person who reads it. Why define it? The whole world!"

"The whole world! Bravo! And I won't have any repentance. I don't want penitence and I don't want it for the police!"

"No, of course, there's no need of it, damn the police! Write, if you are in earnest!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried hysterically.

"Stay! I want to put at the top a face with the tongue out."

"Ech, what nonsense," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch crossly, "you can express all that without the drawing, by—the tone."

"By the tone? That's true. Yes, by the tone, by the tone of it. Dictate, the tone."

"I, Alexey Kirillov," Pyotr Stepanovitch dictated firmly and peremptorily, bending over Kirillov's shoulder and following every letter which the latter formed with a hand trembling with excitement, "I, Kirillov, declare that to-day, the —th October, at about eight o'clock in the evening, I killed the student Shatov in the park for turning traitor and giving information of the manifestoes and of Fedka, who has been lodging with us for ten days in Filipov's house. I am shooting myself to-day with my revolver, not because I repent and am afraid of you, but because when I was abroad I made up my mind to put an end to my life."

"Is that all?" cried Kirillov with surprise and indignation.

"Not another word," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, waving his hand, attempting to snatch the document from him.

"Stay." Kirillov put his hand firmly on the paper. "Stay, it's nonsense! I want to say with whom I killed him. Why Fedka? And what about the fire? I want it all and I want to be abusive in tone, too, in tone!"

"Enough, Kirillov, I assure you it's enough," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch almost imploringly, trembling lest he should tear up the paper; "that they may believe you, you must say it as obscurely as possible, just like that, simply in hints. You must only give them a peep of the truth, just enough to tantalise them. They'll tell a story better than ours, and of course they'll believe themselves more than they would us; and you know, it's better than anything—better than anything! Let me have it, it's splendid as it is; give it to me, give it to me!"

And he kept trying to snatch the paper. Kirillov listened open-eyed and appeared to be trying to reflect, but he seemed beyond understanding now.

"Damn it all," Pyotr Stepanovitch cried all at once, ill-humouredly, "he hasn't signed it! Why are you staring like that? Sign!"

"I want to abuse them," muttered Kirillov. He took the pen, however, and signed. "I want to abuse them."

"Write '*Vive la république*,' and that will be enough."

"Bravo!" Kirillov almost bellowed with delight. "*Vive la république démocratique sociale et universelle ou la mort!*" No,

the slight shivers that spasmodically ran down his spine—such as always occur in particularly nervous people when they are feverish and have suddenly come into a warm room from the cold—became all at once strangely agreeable. He raised his head and the delicious fragrance of the hot pancakes with which the woman of the house was busy at the stove tickled his nostrils. With a childlike smile he leaned towards the woman and suddenly said:

"What's that? Are they pancakes? *Mais . . . c'est charmant.*"

"Would you like some, sir?" the woman politely offered him at once.

"I should like some, I certainly should, and . . . may I ask you for some tea too," said Stepan Trofimovitch, reviving.

"Get the samovar? With the greatest pleasure."

On a large plate with a big blue pattern on it were served the pancakes—regular peasant pancakes, thin, made half of wheat, covered with fresh hot butter, most delicious pancakes. Stepan Trofimovitch tasted them with relish.

"How rich they are and how good! And if one could only have *un doigt d'eau de vie.*"

"It's a drop of vodka you would like, sir, isn't it?"

"Just so, just so, a little, *un tout petit rien.*"

"Five farthings' worth, I suppose?"

"Five, yes, five, five, five, *un tout petit rien,*" Stepan Trofimovitch assented with a blissful smile.

Ask a peasant to do anything for you, and if he can, and will, he will serve you with care and friendliness; but ask him to fetch you vodka—and his habitual serenity and friendliness will pass at once into a sort of joyful haste and alacrity; he will be as keen in your interest as though you were one of his family. The peasant who fetches vodka—even though you are going to drink it and not he and he knows that beforehand—seems, as it were, to be enjoying part of your future gratification. Within three minutes (the tavern was only two paces away), a bottle and a large greenish wineglass were set on the table before Stepan Trofimovitch.

"Is that all for me!" He was extremely surprised. "I've always had vodka but I never knew you could get so much for five farthings."

He filled the wineglass, got up and with a certain solemnity crossed the room to the other corner where his fellow-traveller, the black-browed peasant woman, who had shared the sack with him and bothered him with her questions, had ensconced herself. The woman was taken aback, and began to decline, but after having said all that was prescribed by politeness, she stood up and drank it decorously in three sips, as women do, and, with an expression of intense suffering on her face, gave back the wineglass and bowed to Stepan Trofimovitch. He returned the bow with dignity and returned to the table with an expression of positive pride on his countenance.

All this was done on the inspiration of the moment: a second before he had no idea that he would go and treat the peasant woman.

"I know how to get on with peasants to perfection, to perfection, and I've always told them so," he thought complacently, pouring out the rest of the vodka; though there was less than a glass left, it warmed and revived him, and even went a little to his head.

"*Je suis malade tout à fait, mais ce n'est pas trop mauvais d'être malade.*"

"Would you care to purchase?" a gentle feminine voice asked close by him.

He raised his eyes and to his surprise saw a lady—*une dame, et elle en avait l'air*, somewhat over thirty, very modest in appearance, dressed not like a peasant, in a dark gown with a grey shawl on her shoulders. There was something very kindly in her face which attracted Stepan Trofimovitch immediately. She had only just come back to the cottage, where her things had been left on a bench close by the place where Stepan Trofimovitch had seated himself. Among them was a portfolio, at which he remembered he had looked with curiosity on going in, and a pack, not very large, of American leather. From this pack she took out two nicely bound books with a cross engraved on the cover, and offered them to Stepan Trofimovitch.

"*Et . . . mais je crois que c'est l'Evangile . . .* with the greatest pleasure. . . . Ah, now I understand. . . . *Vous êtes ce qu'on appelle* a gospel-woman; I've read more than once. . . . Half a rouble?"

"Thirty-five kopecks," answered the gospel-woman.

my love, is it possible that He should extinguish me and my joy and bring me to nothingness again? If there is a God, then I am immortal. *Voilà ma profession de foi.*"

"There is a God, Stepan Trofimovitch, I assure you there is," Varvara Petrovna implored him. "Give it up, drop all your foolishness for once in your life!" (I think she had not quite understood his *profession de foi*.)

"My friend," he said, growing more and more animated, though his voice broke frequently, "as soon as I understood . . . that turning of the cheek, I . . . understood something else as well. *J'ai menti toute ma vie*, all my life, all! I should like . . . but that will do to-morrow. . . . To-morrow we will all set out."

Varvara Petrovna burst into tears. He was looking about for some one.

"Here she is, she is here!" She seized Sofya Matveyevna by the hand and led her to him. He smiled tenderly.

"Oh, I should dearly like to live again!" he exclaimed with an extraordinary rush of energy. "Every minute, every instant of life ought to be a blessing to man . . . they ought to be, they certainly ought to be! It's the duty of man to make it so; that's the law of his nature, which always exists even if hidden. . . . Oh, I wish I could see Petrusha . . . and all of them . . . Shatov . . ."

I may remark that as yet no one had heard of Shatov's fate—not Varvara Petrovna nor Darya Pavlovna, nor even Salzfish, who was the last to come from the town.

Stepan Trofimovitch became more and more excited, feverishly so, beyond his strength.

"The mere fact of the ever-present idea that there exists something infinitely more just and more happy than I am fills me through and through with tender ecstasy—and glorifies me—oh, whoever I may be, whatever I have done! What is far more essential for man than personal happiness is to know and to believe at every instant that there is somewhere a perfect and serene happiness for all men and for everything. . . . The one essential condition of human existence is that man should always be able to bow down before something infinitely great. If men are deprived of the infinitely great they will not go on living and will die of despair. The Infinite and the Eternal are as

essential for man as the little planet on which he dwells. My friends, all, all: hail to the Great Idea! The Eternal, Infinite Idea! It is essential to every man, whoever he may be, to bow down before what is the Great Idea. Even the stupidest man needs something great. Petrusha . . . oh, how I want to see them all again! They don't know, they don't know that that same Eternal, Grand Idea lies in them all!"

Doctor Salzfish was not present at the ceremony. Coming in suddenly, he was horrified, and cleared the room, insisting that the patient must not be excited.

Stepan Trofimovitch died three days later, but by that time he was completely unconscious. He quietly went out like a candle that is burnt down. After having the funeral service performed, Varvara Petrovna took the body of her poor friend to Skvoreshniki. His grave is in the precincts of the church and is already covered with a marble slab. The inscription and the railing will be added in the spring.

Varvara Petrovna's absence from town had lasted eight days. Sofya Matveyevna arrived in the carriage with her and seems to have settled with her for good. I may mention that as soon as Stepan Trofimovitch lost consciousness (the morning that he received the sacrament) Varvara Petrovna promptly asked Sofya Matveyevna to leave the cottage again, and waited on the invalid herself unassisted to the end, but she sent for her at once when he had breathed his last. Sofya Matveyevna was terribly alarmed by Varvara Petrovna's proposition, or rather command, that she should settle for good at Skvoreshniki, but the latter refused to listen to her protests.

"That's all nonsense! I will go with you to sell the gospel. I have no one in the world now."

"You have a son, however," Salzfish observed.

"I have no son!" Varvara Petrovna snapped out—and it was like a prophecy.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

ALL the crimes and villainies that had been perpetrated were discovered with extraordinary rapidity, much more quickly than Pyotr Stepanovitch had expected. To begin with, the luckless Marya Ignatyevna waked up before daybreak on the night of her husband's murder, missed him and flew into indescribable agitation, not seeing him beside her. The woman who had been hired by Arina Prohorovna, and was there for the night, could not succeed in calming her, and as soon as it was daylight ran to fetch Arina Prohorovna herself, assuring the invalid that the latter knew where her husband was, and when he would be back. Meantime Arina Prohorovna was in some anxiety too; she had already heard from her husband of the deed perpetrated that night at Skvoreshniki. He had returned home about eleven o'clock in a terrible state of mind and body; wringing his hands, he flung himself face downwards on his bed and shaking with convulsive sobs kept repeating, "It's not right, it's not right, it's not right at all!" He ended, of course, by confessing it all to Arina Prohorovna—but to no one else in the house. She left him on his bed, sternly impressing upon him that "if he must blubber he must do it in his pillow so as not to be overheard, and that he would be a fool if he showed any traces of it next day." She felt somewhat anxious, however, and began at once to clear things up in case of emergency: she succeeded in hiding or completely destroying all suspicious papers, books, manifestoes perhaps. At the same time she reflected that she, her sister, her aunt, her sister-in-law the student, and perhaps even her long-eared brother had really nothing much to be afraid of. When the nurse ran to her in the morning she went without a second thought to Marya Ignat-

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yevna's. She was desperately anxious, moreover, to find out whether what her husband had told her that night in a terrified and frantic whisper, that was almost like delirium, was true—that is, whether Pyotr Stepanovitch had been right in his reckoning that Kirillov would sacrifice himself for the general benefit.

But she arrived at Marya Ignatyevna's too late: when the latter had sent off the woman and was left alone, she was unable to bear the suspense; she got out of bed, and throwing round her the first garment she could find, something very light and unsuitable for the weather, I believe, she ran down to Kirillov's lodge herself, thinking that he perhaps would be better able than anyone to tell her something about her husband. The terrible effect on her of what she saw there may well be imagined. It is remarkable that she did not read Kirillov's last letter, which lay conspicuously on the table, overlooking it, of course, in her fright. She ran back to her room, snatched up her baby, and went with it out of the house into the street. It was a damp morning, there was a fog. She met no passers-by in such an out-of-the-way street. She ran on breathless through the wet, cold mud, and at last began knocking at the doors of the houses. In the first house no one came to the door, in the second they were so long in coming that she gave it up impatiently and began knocking at a third door. This was the house of a merchant called Titov. Here she wailed and kept declaring incoherently that her husband was murdered, causing a great flutter in the house. Something was known about Shatov and his story in the Titov household; they were horror-stricken that she should be running about the streets in such attire and in such cold with the baby scarcely covered in her arms, when, according to her story, she had only been confined the day before. They thought at first that she was delirious, especially as they could not make out whether it was Kirillov who was murdered or her husband. Seeing that they did not believe her she would have run on farther, but they kept her by force, and I am told she screamed and struggled terribly. They went to Filipov's, and within two hours Kirillov's suicide and the letter he had left were known to the whole town. The police came to question Marya Ignatyevna, who was still conscious, and it appeared at once that she had not read Kirillov's letter, and they

could not find out from her what had led her to conclude that her husband had been murdered. She only screamed that if Kirillov was murdered, then her husband was murdered, they were together. Towards midday she sank into a state of unconsciousness from which she never recovered, and she died three days later. The baby had caught cold and died before her.

Arina Prohorovna not finding Marya Ignatyevna and the baby, and guessing something was wrong, was about to run home, but she checked herself at the gate and sent the nurse to inquire of the gentleman at the lodge whether Marya Ignatyevna was not there and whether he knew anything about her. The woman came back screaming frantically. Persuading her not to scream and not to tell anyone by the time-honoured argument that "she would get into trouble," she stole out of the yard.

It goes without saying that she was questioned the same morning as having acted as midwife to Marya Ignatyevna; but they did not get much out of her. She gave a very cool and sensible account of all she had herself heard and seen at Shatov's, but as to what had happened she declared that she knew nothing, and could not understand it.

It may well be imagined what an uproar there was in the town. A new "sensation," another murder! But there was another element in this case: it was clear that a secret society of murderers, incendiaries, and revolutionists did exist, did actually exist. Liza's terrible death, the murder of Stavrogin's wife, Stavrogin himself, the fire, the ball for the benefit of the governesses, the laxity of manners and morals in Yulia Mihailovna's circle. . . . Even in the disappearance of Stepan Trofimovitch people insisted on scenting a mystery. All sorts of things were whispered about Nikolay Vsevolodovitch. By the end of the day people knew of Pyotr Stepanovitch's absence too, and, strange to say, less was said of him than of anyone. What was talked of most all that day was "the senator." There was a crowd almost all day at Filipov's house. The police certainly were led astray by Kirillov's letter. They believed that Kirillov had murdered Shatov and had himself committed suicide. Yet, though the authorities were thrown into perplexity, they were not altogether hoodwinked. The word "park," for instance, so vaguely inserted in Kirillov's letter, did not puzzle anyone as

Pyotr Stepanovitch had expected it would. The police at once made a rush for Skvoreshniki, not simply because it was the only park in the neighbourhood, but also led thither by a sort of instinct because all the horrors of the last few days were connected directly or indirectly with Skvoreshniki. That at least is my theory. (I may remark that Varvara Petrovna had driven off early that morning in chase of Stepan Trofimovitch, and knew nothing of what had happened in the town.)

The body was found in the pond that evening. What led to the discovery of it was the finding of Shatov's cap at the scene of the murder, where it had been with extraordinary carelessness overlooked by the murderers. The appearance of the body, the medical examination and certain deductions from it roused immediate suspicions that Kirillov must have had accomplices. It became evident that a secret society really did exist of which Shatov and Kirillov were members and which was connected with the manifestoes. Who were these accomplices? No one even thought of any member of the quintet that day. It was ascertained that Kirillov had lived like a hermit, and in so complete a seclusion that it had been possible, as stated in the letter, for Fedka to lodge with him for so many days, even while an active search was being made for him. The chief thing that worried every one was the impossibility of discovering a connecting-link in this chaos.

There is no saying what conclusions and what disconnected theories our panic-stricken townspeople would have reached, if the whole mystery had not been suddenly solved next day, thanks to Lyamshin.

He broke down. He behaved as even Pyotr Stepanovitch had towards the end begun to fear he would. Left in charge of Tolkatchenko, and afterwards of Erkel, he spent all the following day lying in his bed with his face turned to the wall, apparently calm, not uttering a word, and scarcely answering when he was spoken to. This is how it was that he heard nothing all day of what was happening in the town. But Tolkatchenko, who was very well informed about everything, took into his head by the evening to throw up the task of watching Lyamshin which Pyotr Stepanovitch had laid upon him, and left the town, that is, to put it plainly, made his escape; the fact is, they lost their heads as Erkel had predicted they would

I may mention, by the way, that Liputin had disappeared the same day before twelve o'clock. But things fell out so that his disappearance did not become known to the authorities till the evening of the following day, when the police went to question his family, who were panic-stricken at his absence but kept quiet from fear of consequences. But to return to Lyamshin: as soon as he was left alone (Erkel had gone home earlier, relying on Tolkatchenko) he ran out of his house, and, of course, very soon learned the position of affairs. Without even returning home he too tried to run away without knowing where he was going. But the night was so dark and to escape was so terrible and difficult, that after going through two or three streets, he returned home and locked himself up for the whole night. I believe that towards morning he attempted to commit suicide but did not succeed. He remained locked up till mid-day—and then suddenly he ran to the authorities. He is said to have crawled on his knees, to have sobbed and shrieked, to have kissed the floor crying out that he was not worthy to kiss the boots of the officials standing before him. They soothed him, were positively affable to him. His examination lasted, I am told, for three hours. He confessed everything, everything, told every detail, everything he knew, every point, anticipating their questions, hurried to make a clean breast of it all, volunteering unnecessary information without being asked. It turned out that he knew enough, and presented things in a fairly true light: the tragedy of Shatov and Kirillov, the fire, the death of the Lebyadkins, and the rest of it were relegated to the background. Pyotr Stepanovitch, the secret society, the organisation, and the network were put in the first place. When asked what was the object of so many murders and scandals and dastardly outrages, he answered with feverish haste that "it was with the idea of systematically undermining the foundations, systematically destroying society and all principles; with the idea of nonplussing every one and making hay of everything, and then, when society was tottering, sick and out of joint, cynical and sceptical though filled with an intense eagerness for self-preservation and for some guiding idea, suddenly to seize it in their hands, raising the standard of revolt and relying on a complete network of quintets, which were actively, meanwhile, gathering recruits and seeking out the weak spots

which could be attacked." In conclusion, he said that here in our town Pyotr Stepanovitch had organised only the first experiment in such systematic disorder, so to speak as a programme for further activity, and for all the quintets—and that this was his own (Lyamshin's) idea, his own theory, "and that he hoped they would remember it and bear in mind how openly and properly he had given his information, and therefore might be of use hereafter." Being asked definitely how many quintets there were, he answered that there were immense numbers of them, that all Russia was overspread with a network, and although he brought forward no proofs, I believe his answer was perfectly sincere. He produced only the programme of the society, printed abroad, and the plan for developing a system of future activity roughly sketched in Pyotr Stepanovitch's own handwriting. It appeared that Lyamshin had quoted the phrase about "undermining the foundations," word for word from this document, not omitting a single stop or comma, though he had declared that it was all his own theory. Of Yulia Mihailovna he very funnily and quite without provocation volunteered the remark, that "she was innocent and had been made a fool of." But, strange to say, he exonerated Nikolay Stavrogin from all share in the secret society, from any collaboration with Pyotr Stepanovitch. (Lyamshin had no conception of the secret and very absurd hopes that Pyotr Stepanovitch was resting on Stavrogin.) According to his story Nikolay Stavrogin had nothing whatever to do with the death of the Lebyadkins, which had been planned by Pyotr Stepanovitch alone and with the subtle aim of implicating the former in the crime, and therefore making him dependent on Pyotr Stepanovitch; but instead of the gratitude on which Pyotr Stepanovitch had reckoned with shallow confidence, he had roused nothing but indignation and even despair in "the generous heart of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch." He wound up by a hint, evidently intentional, volunteered hastily, that Stavrogin was perhaps a very important personage, but that there was some secret about that, that he had been living among us, so to say, incognito, that he had some commission, and that very possibly he would come back to us again from Petersburg (Lyamshin was convinced that Stavrogin had gone to Petersburg), but in quite a different capacity and in different surroundings, in the suite of

persons of whom perhaps we should soon hear, and that all this he had heard from Pyotr Stepanovitch, "Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's secret enemy."

Here I will note that two months later, Lyamshin admitted that he had exonerated Stavrogin on purpose, hoping that he would protect him and would obtain for him mitigation in the second degree of his sentence, and that he would provide him with money and letters of introduction in Siberia. From this confession it is evident that he had an extraordinarily exaggerated conception of Stavrogin's powers.

On the same day, of course, the police arrested Virginsky and in their zeal took his whole family too. (Arina Prohorovna, her sister, aunt, and even the girl student were released long ago; they say that Shigalov too will be set free very shortly because he cannot be classed with any of the other prisoners. But all that is so far only gossip.) Virginsky at once pleaded guilty. He was lying ill with fever when he was arrested. I am told that he seemed almost relieved; "it was a load off his heart," he is reported to have said. It is rumoured that he is giving his evidence without reservation, but with a certain dignity, and has not given up any of his "bright hopes," though at the same time he curses the political method (as opposed to the Socialist one), in which he had been unwittingly and heedlessly carried "by the vortex of combined circumstances." His conduct at the time of the murder has been put in a favourable light, and I imagine that he too may reckon on some mitigation of his sentence. That at least is what is asserted in the town.

But I doubt whether there is any hope for mercy in Erkel's case. Ever since his arrest he has been obstinately silent, or has misrepresented the facts as far as he could. Not one word of regret has been wrung from him so far. Yet even the sternest of the judges trying him has been moved to some compassion by his youth, by his helplessness, by the unmistakable evidence that he is nothing but a fanatical victim of a political impostor, and, most of all, by his conduct to his mother, to whom, as it appears, he used to send almost the half of his small salary. His mother is now in the town; she is a delicate and ailing woman, aged beyond her years; she weeps and positively grovels on the ground imploring mercy for her son. Whatever may happen, many among us feel sorry for Erkel.

Liputin was arrested in Petersburg, where he had been living for a fortnight. His conduct there sounds almost incredible and is difficult to explain. He is said to have had a passport in a forged name and quite a large sum of money upon him, and had every possibility of escaping abroad, yet instead of going he remained in Petersburg. He spent some time hunting for Stavrogin and Pyotr Stepanovitch. Suddenly he took to drinking and gave himself up to a debauchery that exceeded all bounds, like a man who had lost all reason and understanding of his position. He was arrested in Petersburg drunk in a brothel. There is a rumour that he has not by any means lost heart, that he tells lies in his evidence and is preparing for the approaching trial hopefully (?) and, as it were, triumphantly. He even intends to make a speech at the trial. Tolkatchenko, who was arrested in the neighbourhood ten days after his flight, behaves with incomparably more decorum; he does not shuffle or tell lies, he tells all he knows, does not justify himself, blames himself with all modesty, though he, too, has a weakness for rhetoric; he tells readily what he knows, and when knowledge of the peasantry and the revolutionary (?) elements among them is touched upon, he positively attitudinises and is eager to produce an effect. He, too, is meaning, I am told, to make a speech at the trial. Neither he nor Liputin seem very much afraid, curious as it seems.

I repeat that the case is not yet over. Now, three months afterwards, local society has had time to rest, has recovered, has got over it, has an opinion of its own, so much so that some people positively look upon Pyotr Stepanovitch as a genius or at least as possessed of "some characteristics of a genius." "Organisation!" they say at the club, holding up a finger. But all this is very innocent and there are not many people who talk like that. Others, on the other hand, do not deny his acuteness, but point out that he was utterly ignorant of real life, that he was terribly theoretical, grotesquely and stupidly one-sided, and consequently shallow in the extreme. As for his moral qualities all are agreed; about that there are no two opinions.

I do not know whom to mention next so as not to forget anyone. Mavriky Nikolaevitch has gone away for good, I don't know where. Old Madame Drozdov has sunk into dotage. . . .

mediately led the way. Near a little flight of steps, at the end of the long two-story monastery building, a stout, grizzled monk encountered them, and with bold dispatch snatched Stavrogin from the servant. The monk led him through a long, narrow corridor, bowing perpetually (although, because of his stoutness, he could not make a low obeisance, but simply kept jerking his head up and down) and continually inviting him to follow, in spite of the fact that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch followed him anyhow. The monk kept on asking questions and talking about Father Archimandrite, but getting no response, he became more and more deferential. Stavrogin noticed that he was known here, although as far as he could recall he had only visited the place as a child.

When they reached the door at the very end of the passage, the monk opened it with an authoritative hand, as it were, inquired with a show of familiarity of the novice who sprang up at their appearance, whether they could come in, and without waiting for his answer threw the door wide open and bowing, let in the "dear" visitor. Upon receiving Stavrogin's thanks, he vanished precipitately as though fleeing. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch entered a smallish room, and there appeared almost simultaneously in the doorway of the adjoining room a tall, lean man, about fifty-five years old, in a plain indoor garment which is usually worn under the cassock. He looked somewhat sickly, and had a vague smile and a strange, rather shy expression. This was Tihon, of whom Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had first heard from Shatov, and about whom he himself had in the meantime collected some information by the way.

The information was varied and contradictory, but one fact stood out, namely, that both the people who loved him and those who did not (and such there were) spoke of him with a certain reserve: those who disliked him, perhaps out of contempt, and his admirers, even ardent ones—because of discretion, as though they wished to conceal something, perhaps a weakness of his, possibly something like saintly folly. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had learned that Tihon had been living in the monastery for some six years and that he was visited by people of both the lowest and the highest ranks, that even in distant Petersburg he had most ardent admirers, chiefly women. On the other hand, from one of our personable old men, a clubman

who was yet devout, he heard that "this Tihon is half crazy, and undoubtedly drinks." Anticipating upon the course of events, let me add for my own part that this assertion was sheer nonsense, and that if Tihon suffered from anything it was from a rheumatic pain in his legs which was of long standing, and at times from obscure nervous spasms. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch also learned that, whether because of weakness of character or "an unpardonable absent-mindedness inappropriate to his rank," the retired bishop failed to command any unusual degree of respect in the monastery itself. It was said that Father Archimandrite, an austere man, rigid in the performance of his duties as prior, and furthermore, known for his learning, cherished something like an animosity, as it were, against Tihon, and condemned him, not to his face but indirectly, for his careless way of living and for being all but a heretic. Furthermore, the brethren treated the invalid prelate not exactly disrespectfully, but rather with easy familiarity. The two rooms which formed Tihon's cell were oddly furnished. Alongside of clumsy, old-fashioned furniture upholstered in shabby leather, stood three or four elegant pieces; a luxurious easy-chair, a large writing-table of excellent finish, an exquisitely carved book-case, little tables, what-nots—all, of course, gifts. There was a costly Bokhara rug, and side by side with it, ordinary mats. There were engravings representing both secular and mythological subjects, and in the corner, a large shrine as well, holding ikons gleaming with gold and silver, one of them an ancient piece containing saintly relics. The library too, it was said, was of an all too varied and conflicting character: besides the works of the great saints and worthies of the Church, there were theatrical compositions and novels and "maybe something much worse."

After the first greetings, spoken for some reason with obvious mutual embarrassment in hasty and indistinct syllables, Tihon led the visitor to his study, and with the same apparent haste made him sit on a sofa before a table, while he himself took a seat nearby in a wicker armchair. Here, surprisingly enough, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch completely lost his composure. It seemed as if he were making a violent effort to bring himself to do something extraordinary, something incontrovertible and yet almost impossible for him to execute. For a few

moments he let his eyes wander over the room, obviously without seeing what he was looking at; then he grew thoughtful, but perhaps did not know what he was thinking about. The quiet roused him, and suddenly it seemed to him that Tihon looked down bashfully, as it were, and with an odd and altogether irrelevant smile. For an instant this moved him to disgust and rebellion; he wanted to rise and go; he fancied that Tihon was actually drunk. But the latter suddenly lifted his eyes and looked at him with a glance so firm and full of thought and, at the same time, so unexpected and puzzling that Stavrogin almost started. And now suddenly another notion occurred to him, namely, that Tihon already knew why he had come, that he had already been forewarned (although no one in the world could have known the reason) and that if he had not spoken first, it was in order to spare him, it was for fear of humiliating him.

"Do you know me?" he asked abruptly. "Did I introduce myself when I came in? Excuse me, I am so absent-minded."

"You did not introduce yourself, but I had the pleasure of seeing you once, some four years ago, here in the monastery . . . by chance." Tihon spoke in an unhurried, soft, even voice, articulating the words clearly and distinctly.

"I wasn't at the monastery four years ago," retorted Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with unnecessary rudeness. "I was here only as a child, before you had come at all."

"Perhaps you have forgotten," observed Tihon cautiously and without insistence.

"No, I haven't forgotten. And it would be ridiculous if I had," insisted Stavrogin on his part, with excessive emphasis. "Perhaps you have only heard about me and formed an idea of me, and then you imagined that you had seen me yourself."

Tihon did not answer. It was only then that Stavrogin noticed that Tihon's features twitched from time to time, a symptom of a nervous disorder of long standing.

"I see only that you are not well to-day," he said, "and perhaps I had better leave." He even made a motion as if to rise from his seat.

"Yes, to-day and yesterday I have had severe pains in my legs, and I had little sleep last night."

Tihon stopped. His guest suddenly fell into a vague reverie. The silence lasted a long time, some two minutes.

"Have you been watching me?" he asked suddenly, alarmed and suspicious.

"I was looking at you, and I recalled your mother's features. Although there is no external likeness, there is much internal, spiritual resemblance."

"No resemblance, particularly spiritual. Not the slightest," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, needlessly alarmed and with an over-emphasis for which he could not account to himself. "You say this just like that . . . out of pity for my situation," he suddenly blurted out. "Bah! Does my mother come to you?"

"She does."

"Didn't know it. Never heard about it from her. Often?"

"Almost every month, and oftener."

"Never, never heard of it. Haven't heard of it." (This seemed to upset him terribly.) "And of course she has told you that I am mad," he blurted out again.

"No, not exactly mad. Still, I have heard others say so."

"You must have a good memory to recall such trifles. And did you hear about the slap?"

"I heard something."

"You mean all about it. You must have plenty of time to listen to such things. And about the duel?"

"About the duel, too."

"You don't need newspapers here. Has Shatov warned you about me?"

"No; I am acquainted with Mr. Shatov, though, but I haven't seen him for a long time."

"H'm! What's that map there? Bah! a map of the last war. What good is that to you?"

"I used the map in connection with this text. A most interesting account."

"Let me see; yes, fairly good style. But this is rather odd reading for you."

He drew the volume toward him and glanced at it. It was a comprehensive and able account of the circumstances of the late war, presented rather from the purely literary than from the military angle. He turned the book about and suddenly with an impatient movement tossed it aside.

"I certainly don't know why I have come here," he said with disgust, looking straight into Tihon's eyes as though expecting an answer from him.

"You, too, seem to be somewhat indisposed."

"Yes, perhaps."

And suddenly, in words so brief and disconnected as to be somewhat obscure, he began to speak of how he suffered, especially at night, from certain strange hallucinations; how he sometimes saw or felt close beside him an evil being, derisive and "rational": "it shows different faces and assumes different characters, and yet is always the same and always infuriates me . . ."

These disclosures were wild and incoherent, and really seemed to come from a madman. And yet Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch spoke with such strange, unaccustomed frankness, with a candor so entirely foreign to him that it seemed as though his former self had suddenly and unexpectedly disappeared. He was not at all ashamed to show the terror with which the apparition inspired him. But all this lasted only a moment, and vanished as quickly as it had come.

"It's all nonsense," he caught himself up swiftly and with awkward chagrin. "I will go to see a doctor."

"No doubt you should," Tihon agreed.

"You speak so confidently. . . . Have you met people who had hallucinations like mine?"

"Yes, but very rarely. I remember only one case, an army officer; it happened after he had lost his spouse, his irreplaceable life companion. Of another case I know only by hearsay. Both men went abroad for treatment. . . . And how long have you been subject to this?"

"About a year, but it's all nonsense. I'll go to see a doctor. It's all nonsense, frightful nonsense. It's myself in various forms, nothing else. Since I have just added this last . . . phrase, you must surely think that I still have some doubt as to whether it's I or whether it's not really the devil."

Tihon looked at him inquiringly.

"And . . . and do you really see him?" he asked, thereby putting aside all doubt of its plainly being no more than a false and morbid hallucination, "do you really see a definite image?"

"It is strange that you should persist in asking me when I

have already told you that I do." Again Stavrogin became more and more irritated with each word. "Of course I see him. I see him just as plainly as I see you . . . and sometimes I see him but I am not certain that I see him, although I do see him. . . . And sometimes I do not know who is real, he or I. . . . It's all nonsense. And you, can't you imagine that it really is the devil?" he added, laughing, and passing too abruptly into a derisive tone. "It would be more in keeping with your calling."

"It's more likely a disease, although . . ."

"Although what?"

"Devils undoubtedly exist, but our conceptions of them differ widely."

"Just now you dropped your eyes again," said Stavrogin with an irritable laugh. "Because you were ashamed for me, since, while I believe in the devil, by pretending I don't, I am slyly putting a question to you: does he really exist, or not?"

Tihon smiled vaguely.

"Well then, let me tell you plainly that I am not at all ashamed, and to make up for my rudeness I will say boldly and in all seriousness: I do believe in the devil, I believe canonically, in a personal devil, not in an allegory, and I don't need confirmation from anybody. That's the whole story."

He gave a nervous, unnatural laugh. Tihon looked at him interestedly, but with a timid and withal gentle glance.

"You believe in God?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch blurted out.

"I do believe."

"It is written, isn't it, that if you have faith and bid a mountain remove itself hence, it will do so. . . . However, pardon this nonsense. Still, I am curious to know: can you remove a mountain or can't you?"

"If God commands, I will remove it," said Tihon in a low, restrained voice, dropping his eyes again.

"Well, but that would be the same as if God Himself removed it. No, you—you—will you be able to do it, as a reward for your faith in God?"

"Perhaps I shall not."

"'Perhaps'! That's not bad. Ha! ha! You are still a doubter, ~~then?~~"

"I doubt, because my faith is imperfect."

of Transfiguration of Christ in the desert

"What! Even *your* faith is imperfect? Well, I wouldn't have supposed it, to look at you." He suddenly stared at Tihon with wholly naïve amazement, which did not at all harmonise with the derisive tone of the previous questions.

"Yes . . . Perhaps my faith is imperfect," answered Tihon.

"At any rate, you believe that, though if only with God's help, you could remove it, and that's no small matter. At least you wish to believe. And you take the mountain literally. That is a great deal. A good principle. I have noticed that the more advanced of our Levites are strongly inclined toward Lutheranism, and are quite ready to explain miracles by natural causes. Anyhow that is more than the '*très peu*' of one archbishop, who said it, true enough, at the sword's point. And of course you are a Christian, too."

Stavrogin spoke rapidly, his fluent words now serious, now derisive; perhaps he did not himself know why he was talking as he did, asking questions, getting excited, growing curious.

"Let me not be ashamed of Thy cross, O Lord," Tihon muttered in a strange, passionate whisper, bowing his head still lower.

"Is it possible to believe in the devil without believing in God?" asked Stavrogin with a laugh.

"That's quite possible. It's done right and left." Tihon lifted his eyes and smiled.

"And I am sure that you consider such a faith more estimable than utter lack of faith . . ." Stavrogin burst out laughing.

"On the contrary, outright atheism is more to be respected than worldly indifference," answered Tihon, with ostensible gaiety and candor; at the same time he scrutinised his guest carefully and uneasily.

"Aha! so that's where you stand! Decidedly you astonish me."

"Say what you may, but the complete atheist stands on the penultimate step to most perfect faith (he may or he may not take a further step), but the indifferent person has no faith whatever except a bad fear, and that but rarely, and only if he is sensitive."

"H'm . . . Have you read the Apocalypse?"

"I have."

"Do you remember: 'And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write . . .'"

"I remember."

"Where is the book?" Stavrogin grew strangely impatient and alarmed, his eyes wandering over the table in search of the Bible—"I'd like to read to you . . . Have you a Russian translation?"

"I know the passage. I remember it," said Tihon.

"Do you know it by heart? Say it. . . ."

He quickly dropped his eyes, leaned his wrists on his knees, and impatiently prepared to listen. Tihon began reciting, recalling word after word:

"'And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked . . .'"

"Enough!" Stavrogin cut him short. "Do you know, I love you very much."

"And I love you," replied Tihon in a low voice.

Stavrogin grew silent, and suddenly again fell into a reverie. This occurred fitfully, as it were, now for the third time. He was practically in this state when he said to Tihon, "I love you," at least his words came as a surprise to himself. More than a minute passed.

"Do not be angry," whispered Tihon, touching Stavrogin's elbow lightly with his finger and appearing to grow timid himself.

The latter started and frowned fiercely. "How did you know that I was going to get angry?" he said quickly. Tihon was about to speak, but Stavrogin, suddenly overcome with inexplicable agitation, interrupted him:

"Why did you fancy that I must necessarily become angry? Yes, I did get angry. You were right. And angry precisely because I told you I loved you. You're right. But you are a coarse cynic, you have a low opinion of human nature. There might

have been no anger if it had been anyone but me. However, we're not dealing with anyone else, but with me. And still you're an odd fellow and a saintly fool. . . ."

He grew more and more irritable and, strangely enough, he did not choose his words:

"Listen, I don't like spies and psychologists, at least such as pry into my soul. I don't invite anybody into my soul, I do not need anybody, I can shift for myself. Perhaps you think I am afraid of you." He raised his voice and threw his head back defiantly. "Perhaps you are fully convinced now that I have come to disclose a 'terrible' secret to you, and you are waiting for it with all the monkish curiosity of which you are capable. Well, then, let me tell you that I will disclose nothing, no secret whatever, because I can very well get along without you . . . because there is no mystery whatever . . . it exists only in your imagination."

Tihon looked at him steadily. "You were struck by the fact that the Lamb loves those who are cold better than He does the lukewarm," he said; "you do not wish to be merely lukewarm. I have a foreboding that you are struggling with an extraordinary, perhaps a fearful intention. I implore you, do not torment yourself, and tell everything."

"And you were certain that I had come with a story."

"I . . . guessed it," whispered Tihon, looking down.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was somewhat pale. His hands trembled slightly. For several seconds he stared, motionless and silent, as if coming to a final decision. At length he drew several printed sheets of paper from the side pocket of his jacket and laid them on the table.

"Here are the sheets intended for the public," he said in a breaking voice. "If only one man reads them, then you may be sure that I will not conceal them, and everyone will read them. That's my decision. And I do not . . . need you at all, because I have made up my mind. But read . . . Say nothing while you're reading. Tell me everything when you are through."

"Shall I really read them?" asked Tihon, hesitatingly.

"Do; I am calm."

"No, I can't make it out without my spectacles, the print is small, foreign"

"Here are your glasses." Stavrogin took them up from the table, handed them to Tihon and leaned against the back of the sofa. Tihon did not look at him and plunged into the reading.

II

It was indeed foreign print—three sheets of ordinary small-size note-paper, sewn together. It must have been printed secretly at some Russian printing-press abroad, and at first blush the pamphlet looked very much like a revolutionary leaflet. It bore the heading: "From Stavrogin."

I insert this document verbatim into my chronicle. I have allowed myself only to correct the mistakes in spelling, which are rather numerous and which somewhat surprised me, for the author was, after all, an educated and even well-read man (of course, relatively speaking). As for the style, I made no changes in it, in spite of the errors. At any rate, it is obvious that the author is by no means a man of letters.

I shall allow myself one more remark, in anticipation of what is to follow.

In my opinion, the document is a morbid thing, the work of the devil who had taken possession of this gentleman. Thus a man suffering from acute pain tosses in his bed, eager to find a position which would bring him relief, at least momentarily—indeed, not to find relief, but merely to exchange one kind of suffering for another, if only for a minute. And, of course, in a case like that, one doesn't care how graceful or sensible the position is. The fundamental idea of the document is a terrible, undisguised need of punishment, the need of the cross, of public chastisement. Meanwhile, this need of the cross in a man who doesn't believe in the cross—why "that in itself is an idea," as Stepan Trofimovitch once expressed himself, on an occasion of a different sort, however.

On the other hand, the entire document is at the same time something wild and reckless, although ostensibly written with a different purpose. The author declares that he "couldn't help" writing it, that he was "forced" to do it, and this is fairly plausible: he would have been glad to have had this cup pass

from him if he could, but he seems really to have been unable to avoid it, and he took advantage of this opportunity to engage in a fresh outburst of violence. Yes, the sick man tosses in his bed, and wants to exchange one kind of suffering for another—fighting society seems to him the least uncomfortable position and so he flings down a challenge to it.

Indeed, in the very existence of such a document one senses a new, unexpected and irreverent challenge to society. Just for the sake of finding an enemy. . . .

And, who knows, perhaps all that, to wit, those sheets intended for publication, are nothing else but another way of nipping the governor's ear. Why this occurs to me now, after so much has been explained already, I cannot understand. But I'm not bringing forward any proofs, nor do I assert at all that it is a false document, that it is an invention and a fabrication. Most likely, the truth must be sought somewhere in the middle. . . . However, I have gone too far ahead of my story; it is safer to turn to the document itself. Here is what Tihon read:

FROM STAVROGIN

"In the year 186—, I, Nikolay Stavrogin, a retired army officer, was living in Petersburg, indulging in dissipation in which I found no pleasure. In those days, for quite some time I kept three lodgings. I myself was living in a shabby hotel where I got board and service and where Marya Lebyadkin, now my lawful wife, was also staying. The other two places I rented by the month for assignation purposes: in one I received a lady who was in love with me, and in the other, her maid, and for quite a time I was preoccupied with the scheme of bringing the two together, so that mistress and maid would meet in my rooms. Knowing the character of both, I expected to get some entertainment out of this silly joke.

"While I was gradually arranging for that meeting I had to visit one of the two lodgings, which was in a large house on Gorokhovaya Street, more frequently than the other, because it was there that the maid used to come. Here I had a single room on the fourth floor, which I rented from a Russian family of the lower middle class. They occupied the adjacent room, which was smaller, and the door between the two was always open, a fact which fell in with my desires. The husband, who

wore a beard and a long coat, was employed in some office and was absent from morning till night. The wife, a woman of forty, was generally busy making over old clothes and she too often went out to dispose of these. I remained all alone with their daughter, who, by the looks of her, was quite a child. Her name was Matryosha. Her mother loved her, but would often beat her, and had a way of screaming at her on every occasion, as is the manner of women of her class. This little girl waited on me, and tidied up behind the screen. I declare that I have forgotten the house-number. On inquiry I found out that the old house has been torn down and where two or three buildings used to stand, there is now one large new one. I have also forgotten the surname of the people from whom I rented the room (perhaps I didn't even know it at the time). I recall that the woman's name was, if I am not mistaken, Stepanida. The husband's I don't remember at all. What has become of the woman I do not know. I fancy that it might be possible to trace them with the aid of the Petersburg police. It was a corner flat, opening onto the courtyard. It all happened in June. The house was painted pale blue.

"One day a penknife which I didn't need and which was just lying around disappeared from my table. I mentioned the matter to the woman, without thinking that she would whip her daughter for it. She had just been screaming at the child on account of the loss of a scrap of cloth, suspecting that she had taken it for her dolls, and had pulled her hair for her. When the scrap was found under the tablecloth the little girl chose not to say a word of reproach for having been unjustly punished, but just looked at her mother silently. I noticed this and fixed it in my memory, and it was now for the first time that I remarked the little girl's face which had been a blank to me before. She was a fair-skinned and freckled little girl, with an ordinary face, but a child's face, and gentle, exceedingly gentle. The mother didn't like the little girl's failure to reproach her for the unmerited beating, and then the matter of the penknife came up. The woman flew into a passion, especially because she had just beaten the child unjustly. She plucked some twigs from the broom, and whipped the girl so that she raised welts on her, before my very eyes, although the child was already in her twelfth year. Matryosha did not

scream under the strokes, obviously because I was present, but she gasped strangely at each blow. And afterward she continued to sob gaspingly for a whole hour. As soon as the whipping was over, I suddenly found the penknife on my bed, in the folds of the blanket. Then I quietly put the penknife into my vest pocket, went out, and on the street threw the penknife away, far from the house so that no one should discover it. Immediately I felt that I had done something vile. At the same time I experienced a pleasurable sensation because suddenly a certain desire pierced me like a blade, and I began to busy myself with it. Let me note here that often various base feelings took possession of me to the point of making me utterly unreasonable or, better still, exceedingly stubborn, though they never made me forget myself. Though such a feeling mounted to frenzy in me, I could always overcome it, even stop it at its height, but I very seldom wished to do so. And I declare that I do not wish to claim freedom from responsibility for my crimes on the grounds of either environment or disease.

"Then I waited two days. The little girl, having cried her fill, became even more silent, yet I am convinced that she cherished no ill feeling toward me. However, she certainly felt ashamed because she had been punished in such a way in my presence. But being an obedient child, she undoubtedly blamed herself even for her shame. I note this, because it is important for the story. . . . Then I spent three days in my main apartment.

"These crowded lodgings, reeking of stale food, housed many people, mostly government clerks out of employment or on the lowest possible salary, doctors looking for an out-of-town position, all manner of Poles, who always hung around me. I remember everything clearly. In this hell-hole I lived a lonely life, that is, in the spiritual sense, for all day long I was surrounded by a whole crew of 'pals' who were terribly devoted to me and almost worshipped me for my purse. I believe we did many vile things and the other tenants were afraid of us, that is, they were polite, in spite of the revolting pranks and silly jokes which we perpetrated. I repeat: at that time I was not at all averse to being deported to Siberia. I was so utterly bored that I could have hanged myself, and if I didn't, it was

because I was still looking forward to something, as I have all my life. I recall that at that time I was seriously engaged in the study of theology. This somewhat distracted me, but afterwards I grew more bored than ever. I was in a state where I wanted to put powder under the four corners of the earth and blow it all up, but it didn't seem worth the effort. Yet there was no malice in my heart, it was merely that I was bored. I am no Socialist. I fancy it must have been sickness. In jest I once asked the unemployed Dr. Dobrolubov who was starving in the lodgings with his family, 'Are there no drops to stimulate one's civic energy?' 'For civil energy,' he answered, 'maybe not, but for criminal—perhaps, yes!' And he was pleased with his shabby pun, although he and his pregnant wife and his two little girls were without anything to eat. But if people didn't have this capacity for being satisfied with themselves, they wouldn't want to live.

"It was in the course of those two days that I once put to myself the question, as to whether I could give up my intention, and I immediately felt that I could, at any time, even that very minute.

"Three days later I went back to the Gorokhovaya Street place. The mother was getting ready to leave with a bundle; the man, as usual, was not at home, so I remained alone with Matryosha. The windows were open. The house was occupied mostly by artisans and all day long the place was filled with songs and the sound of hammers. An hour passed. Matryosha was sitting in the next room on a little stool, with a bit of sewing, her back turned toward me. After a while she began to hum, softly, very softly. She did that sometimes. I took out my watch; it was two o'clock. My heart began to beat fast. I rose and stole toward her. On their window-sills there were many geranium pots and the sun was shining very brightly. I quietly sat down on the floor beside her. She started, and at first was incredibly frightened and jumped to her feet. I took her hand and kissed it, drew her down to the stool again, and began looking into her eyes. The fact that I kissed her hand, suddenly made her laugh like a baby. But her amusement lasted only an instant: she quickly jumped up again and this time in such fright that her face was convulsed. She stared at me, her eyes motionless with terror, and her lips began to twitch as though

she were going to cry, but she did not. I kissed her hand again and seated her on my knees. She suddenly pulled away from me with a jerk of her whole body and smiled as though ashamed, but it was a strangely wry smile. Her whole face reddened with shame. I was whispering to her and laughing. Suddenly something happened that astonished me—a thing so odd that I shall never forget it: the little girl threw her arms around my neck and suddenly began to kiss me violently of her own accord. Her face expressed perfect rapture. I got up, almost indignant—this behavior in so young a creature repelled me, the more so because my repulsion was born of the pity which I suddenly felt . . . ”

Here the sheet ended and the sentence broke off abruptly.

What occurred next cannot be passed over. Of the five sheets of which the document consisted, one, which Tihon had just read and which ended abruptly in mid-sentence, was in his hands, the other four remaining in Stavrogin's hands. As Tihon looked at him inquiringly, Stavrogin, who held himself in readiness, instantly gave him further sheets.

“But there is a gap here,” said Tihon, looking closely at the sheet he held. “Bah, this is the third sheet, I need the second.”

“Yes, the third, but that sheet . . . the second sheet has been confiscated for the present,” Stavrogin answered quickly, with an awkward smile. He was sitting motionless in the corner of the sofa and watching Tihon feverishly as he read. “You will get it later when . . . you deserve it,” he added, with an unsuccessful gesture of familiarity. He was laughing, but it was pitiful to look at him.

“Well, sheet two or three—it's all the same now,” Tihon began.

“What do you mean—all the same? Why?” Stavrogin made a sudden eager movement toward Tihon. “Not at all. Ah, in your monkish way you are ready to suspect the worst. A monk would be the best criminal prosecutor!”

Tihon watched him narrowly in silence.

“Calm down. It's not my fault if the little girl was foolish and misunderstood me. . . . Nothing happened. Nothing.”

“Well, God be praised,” Tihon crossed himself.

“It would take too long to explain . . . it was . . . simply a psychological misunderstanding. . . . ”

He suddenly blushed. An expression of disgust, anxiety, despair, slowly passed over his face. Abruptly he grew silent. For a long time, for more than a minute, the two were silent and avoided looking at each other.

“Well, you had better go on reading,” he said mechanically wiping the cold sweat off his forehead with his fingers. “And . . . better not look at me at all. . . . It seems to me I am dreaming. . . . And . . . do not try my patience. . . . ” he added in a whisper.

Tihon quickly looked away, took up the third sheet and continued reading to the end without stopping. In the three sheets handed to him by Stavrogin there were no more gaps. The third sheet also began in mid-sentence. I transcribe verbatim:

“ . . . for a moment I was really frightened, though not intensely. I was in very good spirits that morning, and awfully kind toward everyone, and the whole crew was very well pleased with me. But I left them all and went to the place on Gorokhovaya Street. I met her downstairs in the hall. She was coming from the grocery where she had been sent for some chicory. Seeing me, she shot up the stairs in a terrible fright. It was not just fright, but a dumb, paralysing terror. When I came in, her mother had already given her a slap because she had entered the room at ‘breakneck speed,’ and this incident covered the true cause of her fear. And so for the present all was well. She had retired to a corner and did not show herself all the time I was there. I stayed for an hour and then left.

“Toward evening I felt afraid again, but this time the fear was incomparably more intense. The main thing was that I was afraid and that I was so conscious of being afraid. Oh, I know of nothing more absurd and more abominable! I had never experienced fear before, never before and never afterwards, but this one time in my life I was afraid, and in fact, I literally trembled. The intense consciousness of it was a profound humiliation. If I could, I would have killed myself, but I felt myself unworthy of death. However, if I did not kill myself it was not because of that, but again, because I was afraid. People kill themselves out of fear, but out of fear, too, people remain alive: a time comes when a man no longer dares kill himself and the act itself becomes unthinkable. Besides, in the evening, when I was in my lodgings, I began to hate her so

that I decided to kill her. At dawn I ran with that purpose to Gorokhovaya Street. On my way I kept imagining myself in the act of killing and defiling her. My hatred rose especially at the memory of her smile: my contempt mixed with measureless disgust as I remembered the way she had thrown herself on my neck with heaven knows what notion. But when I reached Fontanka, I felt ill. Furthermore, I conceived a new and terrible thought, terrible because I was so conscious of my feelings. When I came home I lay down in a fever. But I was so completely overcome by fear that I even stopped hating the little girl. I no longer wanted to kill her, and that was the new thought that occurred to me on Fontanka. I realized that fear at its height banishes hatred, even the desire to avenge an insult.

"I woke up around noon feeling relatively well and I was even astonished at the violence of my sensations the day before. I was ashamed of my desire to kill her. But I was in a bad humor and in spite of my disgust was again compelled to go to Gorokhovaya Street. I remember I had an intense desire at that moment to pick a serious quarrel with somebody on my way there. On reaching my room I found Nina Savelyevna there, the maid. She had been waiting for me for an hour. I didn't care for her at all, so that she came with some fear that I might be angry because of her uninvited presence. She always came that way. But this time I suddenly found myself glad to see her and that made her ecstatic. She was rather pretty, modest, and had the manners which the lower middle class prizes, so that my landlady had for a long time been singing her praises to me. I found the two of them having coffee and my landlady was hugely enjoying the pleasant chat. I noticed Matryosha in a corner of the other room. She stood there without stirring, staring at her mother and the visitor with a frown. When I came in she did not hide as before, nor did she run away. I remember that distinctly—it rather struck me. Only it seemed to me at first blush that she had grown very haggard and that she was feverish. I was very tender to Nina, so that she left in a most contented mood. We went out together, and for two days I did not return to Gorokhovaya Street. I was already fed up with the whole thing.

"Finally I decided to put an end to everything, and leave

Petersburg: I'd come to that stage. But when I came there in order to give up the room I found the woman worried and distressed: Matryosha had been ill for three days now, and every night she had been delirious. Of course I immediately asked what she said in her delirium (we talked in whispers in my room), and the woman whispered back that her ravings were terrible; she kept saying: 'I killed God.' I offered to send for the doctor at my expense, but she would not let me. 'With God's mercy it will pass. She isn't in bed all the time. She has just been to the grocer's on an errand.' I decided to find Matryosha alone, and, since the woman let fall that she had to leave the house at five, I made up my mind to come back in the evening.

"I didn't know why, or what I wanted to do when I got there.

"I had dinner at a restaurant. At a quarter past five sharp I returned. I let myself in as usual, with my own key. There was nobody there but Matryosha. She lay in her mother's bed behind the screen, and I noticed that she peeked out, but I pretended that I didn't see her. The windows were open. The air was warm, hot, in fact. I paced up and down for a while and then sat down on the sofa. I remember everything up to the last minute. It positively gave me pleasure—I do not know why—not to say a word to Matryosha and to keep her in suspense. I waited a whole hour, when suddenly she jumped out from behind the screen. I heard her feet strike the floor, the noise as she got out of bed, then her rapid steps, and there she was standing on the threshold of my room. I was so mean that I was glad to know that she was the first to yield. Oh, how base it all was, and how humiliated I was! She stood and looked at me silently.

"In these days when I hadn't seen her at close range she had really grown terribly thin. Her face had shrunk and her head must have been hot with fever. Her eyes had grown big and she stared at me fixedly with dull curiosity, as it seemed to me at first. I sat, looking at her and did not budge. And now suddenly I was moved to hatred again. But very soon I noticed that she was not afraid of me at all, and that she was perhaps delirious. But that was not the case. Suddenly she began to shake her head at me as naïve and ill-mannered people do by

way of reproach. And suddenly she raised her little fist at me and began to threaten me from where she stood. For a moment this gesture seemed ridiculous to me, but instantly I could not bear it. I got to my feet and stirred in terror. Her face betrayed such despair as was intolerable to see in a creature so small. She kept on threatening me with her little fist and shaking her head in reproach. I began to talk to her kindly in a low, cautious voice, out of cowardice, but saw immediately that she wouldn't understand me, and my terror increased. Then suddenly she covered her face with her hands as she had done before, moved away and stood at the window with her back turned toward me. I also turned away and sat down by my own window. I cannot possibly understand why I did not leave then and there, but remained. I must have been waiting for something to happen. Perhaps I would have sat a while and then would have gotten up and killed her, to put an end to everything in my despair.

"Soon I heard her quick steps again. She passed through the door on to a wooden gallery which led to the stairs. I hurried to my door and got there just in time to notice that Matryosha had stepped into a tiny cubicle, something like a hen-coop, adjacent to a privy. When I retraced my steps and sat down at the window again, a fateful thought flashed through my mind. Even now I cannot understand why this rather than any thought suddenly occurred to me; things must have led me to it. Of course it was still an incredible thought—nevertheless . . ." (I remember everything perfectly and my heart beat violently.)

"A minute later I looked at my watch again and noted the time with great care. Why I had to be so precise I do not know. Generally at that moment I wanted to notice everything. As a result, I still remember everything and see all that took place as if it were happening before my very eyes. Evening was coming on. A fly was buzzing overhead and kept settling on my face. I caught it, held it awhile in my fingers, and let it fly out of the window. A cart rumbled noisily into the courtyard. In the corner of the courtyard a tailor at his window had been singing a song in a loud voice for some time. He was sitting at his work and I could see him plainly. It occurred to me that

since nobody had met me when I was passing through the gates and while I was going upstairs, it would be best if nobody saw me as I went downstairs, and I cautiously moved my chair away from the window so that the tenants could not see me. Oh, how abominable it was! I took up a book, but soon cast it aside and began to look at a tiny red spider on a geranium leaf, and dozed off. I remember everything down to the last moment.

"Suddenly I whipped out my watch. Twenty minutes had passed since she went out. I decided to wait exactly another quarter of an hour. I made up my mind to that. It also occurred to me that perhaps she had returned without my having heard her, but this was impossible: there was a dead silence, and I could hear the buzzing of every fly. Suddenly my heart began to beat violently again. I took out my watch: three minutes more to wait. I sat through them, although my heart beat so violently that it hurt. Then I got up, put on my hat, buttoned my coat, and looked about the room to see if I were leaving any traces of my having been there. I moved the chair nearer to the window, where it had stood before. At last I opened the door, quietly locked it with my key, and went to the cubicle. The door was shut but not locked; I knew that it didn't lock, but I didn't want to open it, so I stood on tiptoe and looked through a crack high up. At the very moment when I was rising on the tips of my toes I recalled that when I was sitting by the window, looking at the little red spider, and was about to doze off, I had thought of how I would lift myself on my toes so that my eye would be on a level with that crack. I insert this detail to prove without fail that I was in full possession of my faculties, and that consequently I was not a madman, and that I am responsible for everything. I stood peering through the crack for a long time, because it was dark inside, yet not altogether, so that at length I saw what I had to see.

"Then I decided that I could leave and I went down the stairs. I did not meet anybody and nobody could offer any evidence against me. About three hours later we were all in our shirt-sleeves, drinking tea and playing with an old pack of cards, while Lebyadkin recited poetry. Many stories were told, and it so happened that they were related well and amusingly

and not stupidly as usual. Kirillov was also there. Nobody drank, except Lebyadkin, although there was a bottle of rum on the table.

"Prokhor Malov said: 'When Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch is contented and doesn't sulk, all of us are in good spirits and talk cleverly.' The phrase stuck in my memory, and so it seems that I was gay and contented then, and did not sulk, and talked cleverly. I remember that I knew perfectly well, however, at the time, that I was a low and vile coward rejoicing in his deliverance, and that I would never be decent again, either here on earth or after my death or ever. And one more thing: I was reminded of the Jewish proverb: 'one's own may be bad, but it does not smell.' For although at heart I felt that I was a scoundrel, I was not ashamed of it and, in general, I was not much distressed. On that occasion, sitting at tea and chatting with the crew, for the first time in my life I clearly formulated the following for myself: I have neither the feeling nor the knowledge of good and evil, and not only have I lost the sense of good and evil, but good and evil really do not exist (and this pleased me) and are but a prejudice; I can be free of all prejudices, but at the very moment when I achieve that freedom I shall perish. For the first time I put it thus clearly to myself, and that happened just then at tea when I was fooling and laughing with my companions. I remember everything clearly. Old, familiar thoughts sometimes take on the appearance of brand-new ones, even after you have lived fifty years.

"All the time I kept waiting for something to happen. Indeed, about eleven o'clock the little daughter of the janitor on Gorokhovaya Street brought me the news from my landlady that Matryosha had hanged herself. I went with the child and discovered that the woman herself did not know why she had sent for me. Of course she screamed and carried on very loudly, as they all do on such occasions. There was a crowd, too, and policemen. I stood about for a while and then left.

"I was hardly disturbed the whole time, except to be asked the usual questions. I said nothing but that the girl had been ill and delirious, and that on my part, I had offered to call a doctor at my own expense. The penknife too was mentioned. I said that my landlady whipped the child but that this was

nothing. No one found out about my visit in the evening. That was the end of it.

"For about a week I did not return to the place. I only went there in order to give up the room. My landlady still cried, although she was already busy again with her scraps of cloth and sewing. 'It was because of your penknife that I hurt her feelings so,' she said, but without much bitterness. It was as though she had been waiting for the chance to say that to me. I gave up the room on the pretext that naturally this was now no place in which to receive Nina Savelyevna. When I took leave she again spoke in praise of Nina Savelyevna. I gave her five roubles in addition to what I owed her for the room.

"The main thing was that life bored me to the point of stupefaction. The danger having passed, I would have wholly forgotten the Gorokhovaya Street affair, if it hadn't been that, for some time, I kept remembering the attendant circumstances with vexation. I vented my anger on whomever I could. It was at this time that, for no apparent reason at all, I conceived the idea of somehow crippling my life, in the most repulsive manner possible. The year before I had already had the idea of shooting myself; now something better presented itself.

"One day as I was watching the lame Marya Timofeyevna Lebyadkin, who was more or less of a servant in my lodgings, I suddenly decided to marry her—at that time she was not yet insane, but simply a rapturous idiot, and secretly head over heels in love with me. (The gang found that out.) The thought of Stavrogin's marriage to a creature like that, the lowest of the low, tickled my nerves. It would be impossible to imagine anything more monstrous. But this was in those days, it happened in those days, and so it is intelligible. At any rate, I married her, not solely 'for a bet, after a drunken dinner.' It was in those days, in those days, and I couldn't have known yet—that's the main thing. The ceremony was witnessed by Kirillov and Pyotr Verhovensky, who at that time happened to be in Petersburg; also by Lebyadkin himself and Prokhor Malov (he is dead now). Nobody else ever discovered it, and they promised to keep quiet about it. This secrecy has always seemed abominable to me, but it hasn't been violated even yet, al-

though I had the intention of making the fact public; now I am making it public with the rest.

"After the wedding I went to the provinces to see my mother. I went there to distract myself. In our town I left behind me the reputation of being a madman—a reputation which has endured to this very day and which, no doubt, is harmful to me, as I shall explain below. I mention this merely to make this confession fuller. Then I went abroad and remained there for four years.

"I visited the Orient, at Mt. Athos I stood through night services which lasted for eight hours, I was in Egypt, stayed in Switzerland, travelled as far as Iceland, attended the University of Göttingen for a whole academic year. In the course of the last year I became intimate with a Russian family of high rank that was living in Paris, and with two Russian girls in Switzerland. Some two years ago at Frankfort, passing by a stationery store, I noticed among the photographs on sale a small picture of a little girl elegantly dressed, but very closely resembling Matryosha. I immediately bought the photograph, and coming to the hotel, placed it on the mantelpiece. There it lay for a week, untouched, and I didn't look at it even once, and when I left Frankfort I forgot to take it along.

"I note this precisely in order to show to what extent I was able to master my memories and to what extent I became callous to them. I would spurn the whole lot of them, and they would all vanish obediently every time I so desired. It has always bored me to recall the past, and I could never long for the past as almost everyone else does, the more so because I hated it as I did everything else that was part of me. As for Matryosha, I even forgot her photograph on the mantelpiece.

"About a year ago, in the spring, travelling in Germany, I absent-mindedly passed the railway station at which I had to change for my destination, and so found myself on another line. I got off at the next station; it was between two and three in the afternoon, the day was clear. It was a tiny German town. A hotel was pointed out to me. It was necessary to wait. The next train was due at eleven at night. As a matter of fact, I was rather pleased with this adventure, for I wasn't in a hurry to get anywhere. The hotel proved to be a small, mean place, but with shrubs and flower-beds all about it. I was given a

small room. I made a good meal and as I had spent all of the previous night on the road, I fell sound asleep around four o'clock.

"I had a dream which was totally surprising to me because I had never dreamed anything like it before. All my dreams have always been either silly or terrifying. In the Dresden gallery there is a painting by Claude Lorraine, called in the catalogue *Acis and Galatea*, if I am not mistaken, but which I always called *The Golden Age*, I don't know why. I had seen it before and just three days earlier I saw it again in passing. As a matter of fact, I went to the gallery simply in order to look at it and it was perhaps for that reason alone that I stopped at Dresden. It was this picture that appeared to me in a dream, yet not as a picture but as though it were an actual scene.

"I cannot quite tell, however, what I dreamed of. As in the picture, I saw a corner of the Greek archipelago the way it was some three thousand years ago: caressing azure waves, rocks and islands, a shore in blossom, afar a magic panorama, a beckoning sunset—words fail one. European mankind remembers this place as its cradle, and the thought filled my soul with the love that is bred of kinship. Here was mankind's earthly paradise, gods descended from heaven and united with mortals, here occurred the first scenes of mythology. Here lived beautiful men and women! They rose, they went to sleep, happy and innocent; the groves rang with their merry songs, the great overflow of unspent energies poured itself into love and simple-hearted joys, and I sensed all that, and at the same time I envisaged as with second sight, their great future, the three thousand years of life which lay unknown and unguessed before them, and my heart was shaken with these thoughts. Oh, how happy I was that my heart was shaken and that at last I loved! The sun poured its rays upon these isles and this sea, rejoicing in its fair children. Oh, marvellous dream, lofty illusion! The most improbable of all visions, to which mankind throughout its existence has given its best energies, for which it has sacrificed everything, for which it has pined and been tormented, for which its prophets were crucified and killed, without which nations will not desire to live, and without which they cannot even die! All these sensations I lived

through, as it were, in this dream; I repeat. I do not know exactly what I dreamed about, my dream was only of sensation, but the cliffs, and the sea, and the slanting rays of the setting sun, all that I still seemed to see when I woke up and opened my eyes, for the first time in my life literally wet with tears. I remember these tears, I remember that I was glad of them, that I was not ashamed of them. A feeling of happiness, hitherto unknown to me, pierced my heart till it ached. Evening had already set in; a sheaf of bright slanting sunrays pierced the green foliage in the window-boxes of my little room and flooded me with light. I quickly closed my eyes again, as if sager to call back the vanished dream, but suddenly I noticed a tiny dot in the centre of bright, bright light. That's exactly how it all was and that's how it started. Suddenly this dot began to assume a shape, and all of a sudden I saw clearly a tiny red spider. I remembered it at once as it had looked on the geranium leaf, when the rays of the setting sun were pouring down in the same way. It was as if something had stabbed me, I sat up in bed. That is the way it all happened!

"I saw before me (O not that I really saw her! If only it had been a genuine apparition! If she had appeared only for an instant, for one instant, in the flesh and alive, so that I could have spoken to her!), I saw Matryosha, grown haggard and with feverish eyes, precisely as she had looked at the moment when she stood on the threshold of my room, and shaking her head, had lifted her tiny fist against me. The pitiful despair of a helpless creature with an immature mind, who threatened me (with what? what could she do to me, O God?) but who, of course, blamed herself alone! Never has anything like that happened to me. I sat until nightfall, motionless, forgetful of time. I should like to explain myself now, and clearly express exactly what went on. Was this what is called remorse or repentance? I do not know and cannot tell even now. But what is intolerable to me is only this image, namely, the little girl on the threshold with her little fist lifted threatening me, only the way she looked then, only that moment, neither before nor after, only that shaking of the head. This threatening gesture of hers no longer seemed ridiculous to me, but terrifying. Pity for her stabbed me, a maddening pity, and I would have given my body to be torn to pieces if that would have erased what

had happened. What I regret is not the crime, not her death. I'm not sorry for her, what I cannot bear is just that one instant, I can't, I can't, because I see her that way every day, and I know for a certainty that I am doomed. It is precisely that which I have not been able to bear since then, and I couldn't bear it before either, but I didn't know it. Since then I see the vision almost every day. It does not appear to me of itself, yet I summon it of my own accord, but I cannot help summoning it, although I cannot live with it. Oh, if I could only see her sometimes in the flesh, even if it were only a hallucination. I wish that she would look at me again at least once, with her eyes big and feverish as they were then, look into my eyes and see . . . Foolish dream, it will never come true!

"Why does no other memory of mine arouse any such feelings in me? And yet I have memories of deeds which people would condemn as much worse. Such memories arouse only hatred in me, and at that, the feeling is caused by my present condition; formerly, I used to forget them cold-bloodedly, shove them into the background, and remain unnaturally easy in my mind.

"After that I roamed about nearly all that year and tried to divert myself. I know that even now I can get rid of Matryosha if I so desire. I am in complete possession of my will, as before. But the whole point is that I never wanted to do it, that I do not want to do it now and that I never shall. It will continue like this until I go mad.

"In Switzerland two months later I was seized by a fit of passion, accompanied by an impulse toward violence, such as I had experienced only in my early years. It was a kind of contrast, a measure of self-defence, as it were, on the part of the organism. I felt terribly tempted to commit a new crime, namely, bigamy (because I was already married), but I fled on the advice of another girl, to whom I confessed practically everything, even the fact that I did not love the one I desired so much, and that I could never love any one, and that there was nothing here but lust. Besides, this new crime would not by any means have freed me from Matryosha.

"Consequently I have decided to have these sheets printed and to import three hundred copies of them into Russia; when the time comes, I shall send them to the police and to the local

authorities; at the same time I shall send them to the editorial offices of all the newspapers with a request to publish them, and also to my many acquaintances in Petersburg and elsewhere in Russia. My confession will also appear in translation abroad. Perhaps this makes no sense, but I will publish it nevertheless. I know that legally I shall probably not get into trouble, at least not to any serious extent: I alone denounce myself, and have no accuser; besides, there is little or no evidence. Finally, there is the generally credited notion of my mental derangement, of which my relatives will surely take advantage and thus stop any legal prosecution that may seriously threaten me. One of my purposes in making this statement is to prove that I am now in full possession of my mental faculties and that I understand my situation. But there will remain those who will know everything and who will look at me, and I will look at them. I wish everyone would look at me. I do not know whether or not this will relieve me. I resort to it as the last measure.

"I repeat: if a thorough search is made in the Petersburg police records, perhaps something may be discovered. The people from whom I rented the room may still be in the capital. Of course, they will remember the house. It was painted a pale blue. As for me, I shall not leave my present place of residence but for some time (a year or two) I shall stay at Skvoreshniki, my mother's estate. If I am summoned, I shall present myself, wherever it may be.

"Nikolay Stavrogin."

III

The reading lasted about an hour. Tihon read slowly and possibly read some passages twice. All the time, ever since the interruption caused by the confiscation of the second sheet, Stavrogin sat silent and motionless in the corner of the sofa, pressed against its back, and in an obviously expectant attitude. Tihon took off his spectacles, paused, and finally looked up at Stavrogin hesitatingly. The latter started and jerked his whole body forward.

"I forgot to warn you," said Stavrogin quickly and sharply, "that all your words will be useless; I will not delay carrying

out my intention; do not trouble to dissuade me. I will publish it."

He reddened and grew silent.

"But you didn't forget to warn me just now, even before I began reading."

There was a note of irritation in Tihon's voice. "The document" had apparently made a strong impression on him. His Christian sentiment was wounded, and he was not the man to keep himself always in hand. Let me observe that not for naught did he have the reputation of a man "incapable of cutting a proper figure in public," as the monastery people said of him. In spite of all his Christian meekness, great indignation was heard in his voice.

"It doesn't matter," Stavrogin continued brusquely and without noticing any change in his host's tone. "However strong your objections may be, I won't give up my intention. Note that by this awkward or perhaps shrewd remark, take it as you please, I'm not trying in any way to induce you to start arguing with me and coaxing me," he concluded with a crooked smile.

"I could hardly attempt to argue with you, let alone beg you to give up your intention. Your idea is a lofty idea, and a Christian thought could not express itself more amply. Repentance can go no further than the admirable act, the self-chastisement which you have in mind, if only . . ."

"If only what?"

"If only it is really repentance and really a Christian thought."

"Quibbling," mumbled Stavrogin, pensively and absent-mindedly. He got to his feet and began to pace the floor without noticing what he was doing.

"It is as though you purposely wished to represent yourself as a coarser man than your heart would desire . . .," Tihon was more and more outspoken.

"Represent?" I repeat, I didn't represent myself, I did not pose. 'Coarser,' what is 'coarser?'" he grew flushed again and got enraged in consequence. "I know that what is described there—" he nodded in the direction of the sheets—"is vile, crawling and abominable, but let its very vileness serve to redouble . . ."

He suddenly broke off, as if he were ashamed to go on and considered it humiliating to enter into explanations. At the same time he was aching and unconsciously obeying a compulsion to remain, and precisely for the sake of offering explanations. Curiously enough, in all he said then and thereafter not a word was uttered that bore out his explanation of why he had confiscated the second sheet—indeed, what he had said about it seemed to have been forgotten by both of them. Meanwhile, Stavrogin stopped at the writing-table, and taking up a small ivory crucifix, began to turn it about in his fingers, and suddenly broke it in half. Coming to himself, he looked at Tihon in surprise, and suddenly his upper lip trembled as if he were insulted but also proudly defiant.

"I thought that you would really tell me something, that's why I came," he said in an undertone, as if making every effort to control himself, and he threw the fragments of the crucifix on the table.

Tihon quickly looked down.

"This document is born of the need of a heart wounded unto death. Am I not right?" he asked with insistence and almost with heat. "Yes, it is repentance and the natural need for it which has overcome you. You were pierced to the quick by the suffering of a creature whom you wronged. Therefore there is still hope for you, and you have taken a great road, an unheard of road, that of inflicting upon yourself before the whole people the shameful punishment you so amply deserve. You have appealed to the judgment of the whole Church, although you do not believe in the Church; am I not right? But it is as though you were already hating and despising in advance all those who will read what you have written, and challenging them to an encounter."

"I? Challenging?"

"Since you are not ashamed to confess your crime, why are you ashamed of repentance?"

"I? Ashamed?"

"Yes, you are ashamed and afraid."

"Afraid?" Stavrogin smiled convulsively and again his upper lip trembled, as it were.

"Let them look at me," you say; and you, how will you look at them? You are waiting for their malice, to respond

with greater malice. Some of the passages in your account are couched in exaggerated language; it is as if you were admiring your own psychologising, and you cling to each detail so as to amaze the reader by a callousness and shamelessness which isn't really in you. On the other hand, evil passions and the habit of idleness render you really callous and stupid."

"Stupidity is no vice," Stavrogin smiled, beginning to blanch.

"Sometimes it is," Tihon continued rigorously and passionately. "Wounded unto death by the vision on the threshold and tormented by it, you do not see, to judge by this document, what your chief crime is, and of what to be most ashamed before the people whose judgment you invoke: whether of the callousness of the act of violence that you committed, or of the cowardice you exhibited. In one place you hasten, as it were, to assure your reader that the maiden's threatening gesture was no longer 'ridiculous' to you, but annihilating. But how, even for a moment, could it have seemed 'ridiculous' to you? And yet it did, I bear witness to it."

Tihon grew silent. He had spoken as a man not wishing to restrain himself.

"Speak, speak," Stavrogin urged him. "You are irritated and you . . . do not choose your words; I like this coming from a monk. But let me ask you one thing: we have been talking for some ten minutes since you read this," he nodded at the sheets, "and although you do scold me, I do not see you showing any particular disgust or shame . . . Apparently, you are not squeamish and you speak to me as to an equal."

He added this in a very low voice, and the phrase "as to an equal" escaped him quite unexpectedly, as a surprise to himself. Tihon looked at him closely.

"You astonish me," he said after a pause, "for your words are unfeigned, I see, and if such is the case . . . I am guilty before you. Be advised then, that I was uncivil to you, as well as squeamish, and you, in your passion for self-punishment, did not even notice it, although you did become aware of my impatience and called it 'scolding.' You believe that you deserve incomparably greater contempt, and your remark that I speak to you 'as to an equal' is an admirable, if involuntary, phrase. I shall conceal nothing from you: I was horrified at so

much idle power deliberately spent on abominations. Apparently one does not become a foreigner in one's own country with impunity. There is one punishment that falls upon those who divorce themselves from their native soil: boredom and a tendency toward idleness even where there is a desire for work. But Christianity insists upon responsibility irrespective of the environment. The Lord has not deprived you of intelligence.

Judge for yourself; if you can put the question: am I or am I not responsible for my acts? then you are unquestionably responsible. It is written: 'Temptation cannot but enter the world, but woe unto him through whom temptation cometh.' As for your . . . transgression itself, many sin in like fashion, but live in peace and quiet with their conscience, even considering what they have done an inevitable sin of youth. There are old men who smell of the grave who sin likewise, and even playfully and with comfort. The world is full of such horrors. You at least have felt the enormity of it to a degree which is very rare."

"Is it possible that you have begun to respect me after reading these sheets?" Stavrogin grinned crookedly. "No, Reverend Father Tihon, you are not, as I have heard said, you are not fit to be a spiritual guide," he added, continuing to smile with an even more forced and inappropriate smile. "You are severely criticised here in the monastery. They say that as soon as you see a sign of sincerity and humility in a sinner, you break into ecstasies, you repent and humble yourself and fawn upon and flatter the sinner."

"I shall not answer your question directly. But of course it is true that I do not know how to approach people. I have always been aware of that great defect," Tihon said with a sigh, and so simply that Stavrogin looked at him with a smile. "As for this," he continued, glancing at the sheets, "of course there is not and there cannot be, a greater and more fearful crime than your sin against the little girl."

"Let's give up this measuring by the yard-stick," said Stavrogin with some annoyance, after a pause. "Perhaps I do not suffer as much as I set down here. And perhaps I lied a lot about myself," he added unexpectedly.

Tihon passed this over in silence. Stavrogin was pacing the room, deep in thought and with his head down.

"And this young lady," Tihon asked suddenly, "with whom you broke off in Switzerland, where is she at present?"

"Here."

Another pause.

"Perhaps I lied to you a good deal about myself," Stavrogin repeated insistently. "I myself do not know even yet. Well, what if I have defied them by the crudeness of my confession, if you *did* notice the challenge? That's the right way. They deserve it. I will only force them to hate me more, that's all. It will only make it easier for me."

"That is, hating them, you will feel more comfortable than if you had to accept pity from them."

"You're right; I am not in the habit of being frank, but since I have started . . . with you . . . know that I despise them all, just as much as I do myself, as much if not more, infinitely more. No one can be my judge . . . I wrote this nonsense," he nodded at the sheets, "just so, because the thought popped into my head, just to be shameless . . . perhaps I simply made up a story, I exaggerated in a fanatical moment . . .," he broke off angrily and again reddened as before because of what he had said against his will. He turned to the table, and, with his back to Tihon, again took up a piece of the crucifix.

"Answer a question, but sincerely, speak to me alone, as you would speak to yourself in the darkness of night," Tihon began in a poignant voice. "If someone were to forgive you for this" (Tihon pointed to the pamphlet), "and not any one whom you respect or fear, but a stranger, a man whom you will never know, who would forgive you mutely, in his own heart, while reading your terrible confession, would the thought of this make it easier for you, or would it be all the same to you? If it would injure your amour-propre to answer, do not speak, but only think to yourself."

"It would be easier," answered Stavrogin under his breath. "If you were to forgive me, it would make it much easier for me," he added quickly and in a half-whisper, with his back still toward Tihon.

"I will forgive you, if you forgive me also," said Tihon, in a voice betraying deep emotion.

"What shall I forgive you for?" Stavrogin faced him, "what

have you done to me? Oh, yes, that is your monastic formula. Bad humility. Do you know, these ancient monkish formula of yours are quite inelegant. Do you really think they are elegant?" he grumbled irritably. "I do not know why I am here," he added, suddenly looking around. "Bah, I have broken this thing. Is it worth about twenty-five roubles?"

"Never mind," said Tihon.

"Or fifty? Why shouldn't I mind? Why should I break your things, and you forgive me the damage? Here, take these fifty roubles." He produced money and placed it on the table. "If you do not wish to take it for yourself, take it for the poor, for the Church . . ." He grew more and more irritable. "Listen, I will tell you the whole truth: I want to have you forgive me. And perhaps to have another man, and even a third, do so too, but by all means let everybody else hate me!" His eyes flashed.

"And universal pity, couldn't you bear that with humility?"

"I couldn't. I do not want universal pity; besides, there can be no universal pity, it is an idle question. Listen, I do not want to wait, I will publish the statement without fail . . . do not try to dissuade me . . . I cannot wait, I cannot . . ." he added fiercely.

"I fear for you," Tihon said, almost timidly.

"You are afraid that I shan't be able to endure it, to endure their hatred?"

"Not hatred alone."

"What else?"

"Their . . . laughter," the words escaped from Tihon as though with difficulty, in a half-whisper.

The poor man could not control himself and broached a subject which he knew it would have been better to pass over in silence.

Stavrogin was taken aback. His face betrayed uneasiness.

"I had a foreboding of it. Do you too find me very ridiculous, after having read my document? Don't let it trouble you, don't be embarrassed. I expected it."

Tihon really seemed embarrassed and hastened to offer explanations, which of course merely made matters worse.

"For such heroic acts one needs moral serenity, even in suffering one needs spiritual enlightenment . . . but nowadays

moral serenity is nowhere to be had. A great conflict is going on everywhere. Men do not understand each other as in the time of the confusion of Babel."

"This is all very dull, I know it, it has been said a thousand times . . ." Stavrogin interrupted.

"But consider that you will not achieve your purpose," Tihon began, coming straight to the point; "legally you are well-nigh invulnerable—that is what people will say first of all—with sarcasm. Some will be puzzled. Who will understand the true reasons for the confession? Indeed, people will purposely refuse to understand it, for such unconventional acts are feared; they rouse alarm, people hate one and take revenge on one for them, for the world loves its abomination and does not wish to see it threatened; for that reason people will turn it to ridicule, for ridicule is the world's strongest weapon."

"Speak more precisely, say everything," Stavrogin urged him.

"At first, of course, people will express horror, but it will be more sham than real, just to save appearances. I do not speak of the pure souls: they will be horrified privately and will blame themselves, but they will not be noticed, because they will keep silent. The rest, the worldlings, fear only what directly threatens their personal interests. After the first puzzlement and feigned horror, they will soon begin to laugh. There will be curiosity about this madman, for you will be considered a madman, that is, not quite a madman, one sufficiently responsible for his actions to allow them to smile at him. Will you be able to bear it? Will not your heart be filled with such hatred that you will inevitably end by blaspheming and so perish . . . That is what I fear!"

"But you . . . you yourself . . . I am surprised to see what a low opinion you have of people, how much they disgust you," Stavrogin dropped, in a somewhat embittered tone.

"And will you believe me, I judged more by myself than by what I know of others," exclaimed Tihon.

"Really? Is it possible that there is that in your soul which rejoices in my misfortune?"

"Who knows? Perhaps there is. Oh, yes, perhaps there is."

"Enough. Tell me then, exactly what is there in my manuscript that is ridiculous? I know it myself, but I want you

finger to point it out. And say it as cynically as possible, because you are a great cynic . . . you holy men are terrible cynics; you do not suspect to what extent you despise people! Speak with all the frankness of which you are capable. And let me tell you again that you are an awfully queer fellow."

"Even in the very intention of this great penitence there is something ridiculous, something false, as it were . . . not to speak of the form, which is loose, vague, unsustained because it is weakened by fear, as it were. Oh, don't doubt but that you'll conquer," he suddenly exclaimed, almost rapturously. "Even this form," he pointed to the pamphlet again, "will avail, if only you will sincerely accept the blows and the spit-tle, if you will endure it! It was always thus, that the most degrading cross became a great glory and a great power, if only the humility of the act was sincere. But is it? Is it? Will it be sincere? Oh, what you should have is not a challenging attitude, but measureless humility and self-abasement! What you should do is not despise your judges, but sincerely believe in them, as in a great Church, then you would conquer them and draw men to you and unite them in love . . . Oh, if only you could endure it!"

"Tell me, what, in your opinion, is the most ridiculous thing in these sheets?"

"Why this concern about the ridiculous, why such morbid curiosity?" exclaimed Tihon sorrowfully, shaking his head.

"Never mind. Just tell me what's laughable."

"The ugliness of it will kill it," whispered Tihon, lowering his eyes.

"The ugliness? What ugliness?"

"Of the crime. It is a truly unbeautiful crime. Crimes, no matter what they are, are the more imposing, the more picturesque, so to speak, the more blood, the more horror there is; but there are truly shameful, disgraceful crimes which are not redeemed by horror . . ."

Tihon did not finish his sentence.

"That is, you find I cut a very ridiculous figure when I kissed the nasty little girl's hand . . . and then trembled with fear . . . and . . . and all the rest . . . I understand. I understand you very well. And you fear that I shall not be able to bear it?"

Tihon was silent. Stavrogin's face blanched and something like a spasm passed over it.

"Now I think I know why you asked whether the young lady from Switzerland was here," he said quietly, as if to himself.

"You aren't prepared, you are not steeled," added Tihon.

"Listen to me, Father Tihon: I want to forgive myself. That's my chief object, that's my whole aim!" Stavrogin said suddenly, with gloomy rapture in his eyes. "This is my entire confession, the whole truth; all the rest is a lie. I know that only then will the apparition vanish. That is why I seek measureless suffering, I seek it myself. So, do not frighten me, or I shall perish in my viciousness," he added, as if the words had again issued from his mouth against his will.

These words so surprised Tihon that in his amazement he rose to his feet.

"If you believe that you can forgive yourself, and if you seek to attain to that forgiveness in this world by your suffering, then you have complete faith!" exclaimed Tihon rapturously. "How then could you have said that you didn't believe in God?"

Stavrogin did not answer.

"God will forgive your unfaith, for in truth even in ignorance of the Holy Ghost, you honour it."

"There is no forgiveness for me," Stavrogin said gloomily; "in your book it is written that there is and can be no greater crime than to offend 'one of these little ones.' In this book here!"

He pointed to the Gospels.

"As to that, I will give you joyous tidings," said Tihon with emotion; "Christ too will forgive you if you reach the point where you can forgive yourself . . . Oh, no, no, do not believe I am uttering blasphemy: even if you do not achieve reconciliation with yourself and self-forgiveness, even then He will forgive you for your intention and your great suffering . . . for there are no words in the human language, no thoughts in the mind to express all the ways and purposes of the Lamb, 'until His ways are revealed unto us?' Who can fathom Him who is infinite, who can grasp the incomprehensible?"

Again the corners of his mouth twitched and a scarcely perceptible spasm passed over his face. He kept a grip on himself for awhile, then broke down and quickly lowered his eyes.

Stavrogin took his hat from the sofa.

"I will come again some time," he said with an air of extreme fatigue, "we will . . . I appreciate very much both the pleasure of the talk and the honour . . . and your sentiments. Believe me, I understand why some people love you so. Please pray for me to Him whom you so love . . ."

"You are going already?" Tihon quickly rose to his feet, as if he did not expect such a speedy departure. "And I," he seemed lost, "I was thinking of making a request . . . but now I don't know . . . I am afraid . . ."

"Oh, please do," Stavrogin immediately sat down, hat in hand. Tihon looked at this hat, at this pose, the pose of a man excited and half crazy, who suddenly put on his society manners, and was allowing him five minutes to complete the business at hand—and grew even more confused.

"My request is merely this, that you . . . you realise, Nikolay Vsevolodovitch (that is the name, I believe), that if you publish these sheets, you will ruin your prospects . . . as regards your career, for example . . . and in other respects."

"Career?" Stavrogin frowned with displeasure.

"Why ruin it? Why be so inflexible?" Tihon concluded almost pleadingly, and obviously aware of his own awkwardness. Stavrogin looked sickened.

"I have already said, and I repeat; all your words will be futile . . . and in general our conversation is becoming intolerable . . ."

He turned significantly in his armchair.

"You don't understand me. Listen to me and do not get irritated. You know my opinion: what you intend to do, if it really is the result of humility, would be a deed of the highest Christian heroism, provided you hold out. Even if you don't, the Lord will take account of your original sacrifice. Everything will be taken into account; not a word, not a movement of the spirit, not a half-thought will be lost. But I offer you instead an even higher deed, something great beyond question."

Stavrogin was silent.

"You are possessed by a desire for martyrdom and self-sac-

rifice; overcome this desire, too, put aside these sheets and your intention, and then you will overcome everything. You will put to shame your pride and your demon. You will end as a victor, and achieve freedom . . ."

His eyes kindled; he clasped his hands beseechingly.

"How morbidly you react to all this, and how highly you prize it all . . . Believe me, however, that I appreciate it all," Stavrogin said politely, but not without disgust, as it were. "I observe that you are eager to lay a trap for me—unquestionably with the noblest purpose, out of a desire for good and out of love for mankind. What you want is to have me settle down, to have me marry, perhaps, and end my life as a member of the local club, visiting the monastery on holidays. Isn't that so? However, as a reader of hearts and a cynic, perhaps you have a foreboding that, no doubt, that's how it will all end, and it's all a question of having you plead with me insistently for the sake of appearances, because all that I'm after is to be coaxed, isn't that so? I wager that you are also thinking of my mother and her peace of mind . . ."

He smiled wryly.

"No, not that penance, I'm preparing another one," continued Tihon with fire, without paying the slightest attention to Stavrogin's remark and his laughter. "I know an old man, not far from here, a monk and a hermit, and of such Christian wisdom that you and I could hardly understand it. He will heed my entreaties. I will tell him everything about you. Will you permit me? Go to him, and become a novice under him for some five or seven years, for as long as you find it necessary. Take a vow, and with this great sacrifice you will purchase all that you desire, and even more than you expect, for you cannot understand now what you will receive."

Stavrogin listened earnestly. His pale cheeks flushed.

"You bid me become a monk and enter a monastery?" he asked.

"You do not have to enter a monastery. You do not have to take orders. Simply be a novice, secretly. You can do this, living in the world."

"Quit it, Father Tihon," Stavrogin interrupted disgustedly, and rose from his chair. Tihon rose also.

"What is the matter with you?" he exclaimed suddenly, staring almost fearfully at Tihon.

Tihon stood before him, his palms pressed together and thrust forward, and a morbid convulsion, apparently caused by an overwhelming fear, momentarily contorted his features.

"What is the matter with you? What is the matter with you?" repeated Stavrogin, running toward him to support him.

It seemed to Stavrogin that the man was going to drop.

"I see . . . I see clearly," exclaimed Tihon in a penetrating voice and with an expression of most intense grief, "that never, poor lost youth, have you stood nearer to a new and more terrible crime than at this moment."

"Calm yourself," Stavrogin begged him, positively alarmed for him. "Perhaps I will postpone . . . You're right . . . I will not publish the sheets. Compose yourself."

"No, not after the publication, but even before it, a day, an hour perhaps, before the great step, you will plunge into a new crime as a way out, and you will commit it solely to avoid the publication of these sheets, upon which you now insist."

Stavrogin veritably shook with anger and almost with fear.

"Cursed psychologist!" he suddenly cut the conversation short in a rage, and, without looking back, left the cell.

VARIANT READINGS