# PART TWO

# CHAPTER I

## NIGHT

### I

EIGHT days had passed. Now that it is all over and I am writing a record of it, we know all about it; but at the time we knew nothing, and it was natural that many things should seem strange to us: Stepan Trofimovitch and I, anyway, shut ourselves up for the first part of the time, and looked on with dismay from a distance. I did, indeed, go about here and there, and, as before, brought him various items of news, without which he could not exist.

I need hardly say that there were rumours of the most varied kind going about the town in regard to the blow that Stavrogin had received, Lizaveta Nikolaevna's fainting fit, and all that happened on that Sunday. But what we wondered was, through whom the story had got about so quickly and so accurately. Not one of the persons present had any need to give away the secret of what had happened, or interest to serve by doing so.

The servants had not been present. Lebyadkin was the only one who might have chattered, not so much from spite, for he had gone out in great alarm (and fear of an enemy destroys spite against him), but simply from incontinence of speech. But Lebyadkin and his sister had disappeared next day, and nothing could be heard of them. There was no trace of them at Filipov's house, they had moved, no one knew where, and seemed to have vanished. Shatov, of whom I wanted to inquire about Marya Timofyevna, would not open his door, and I believe sat locked up in his room for the whole of those eight

days, even discontinuing his work in the town. He would not see me. I went to see him on Tuesday and knocked at his door. I got no answer, but being convinced by unmistakable evidence that he was at home, I knocked a second time. Then, jumping up, apparently from his bed, he strode to the door and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Shatov is not at home!"

With that I went away.

Stepan Trofimovitch and I, not without dismay at the boldness of the supposition, though we tried to encourage one another, reached at last a conclusion: we made up our mind that the only person who could be responsible for spreading these rumours was Pyotr Stepanovitch, though he himself not long after assured his father that he had found the story on every one's lips, especially at the club, and that the governor and his wife were familiar with every detail of it. What is even more remarkable is that the next day, Monday evening, I met Liputin, and he knew every word that had been passed, so that he must have heard it first-hand. Many of the ladies (and some of the leading ones) were very inquisitive about the "mysterious cripple," as they called Marya Timofyevna. There were some, indeed, who were anxious to see her and make her acquaintance, so the intervention of the persons who had been in such haste to conceal the Lebyadkins was timely. But Lizaveta Nikolaevna's fainting certainly took the foremost place in the story, and "all society" was interested, if only because it directly concerned Yulia Mihailovna, as the kinswoman and patroness of the young lady. And what was there they didn't say! What increased the gossip was the mysterious position of affairs; both houses were obstinately closed; Lizaveta Nikolaevna, so they said, was in bed with brain fever. The same thing was asserted of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with the revolting addition of a tooth knocked out and a swollen face. It was even whispered in corners that there would soon be murder among us, that Stavrogin was not the man to put up with such an insult, and that he would kill Shatov, but with the secrecy of a Corsican vendetta. People liked this idea, but the majority of our young people listened with contempt, and with an air of the most nonchalant indifference, which was of



course, assumed. The old hostility to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch in the town was in general strikingly manifest. Even sober-minded people were eager to throw blame on him though they could not have said for what. It was whispered that he had ruined Lizaveta Nikolaevna's reputation, and that there had been an intrigue between them in Switzerland. Cautious people, of course, restrained themselves, but all listened with relish. There were other things said though not in public, but in private, on rare occasions and almost in secret, extremely strange things, to which I only refer to warn my readers of them with a view to the later events of my story. Some people, with knitted brows, said, God knows on what foundation, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had some special business in our province, that he had, through Count K., been brought into touch with exalted circles in Petersburg, that he was even, perhaps, in government service, and might almost be said to have been furnished with some sort of commission from some one. When very sober-minded and sensible people smiled at this rumour, observing very reasonably that a man always mixed up with scandals, and who was beginning his career among us, with a swollen face did not look like a government official, they were told in a whisper that he was employed not in the official, but, so to say, the confidential service, and that in such cases it was essential to be as little like an official as possible. This remark produced a sensation; we knew that the Zemstvo of our province was the object of marked attention in the capital. I repeat, these were only flitting rumours that disappeared for a time when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch first came among us. But I may observe that many of the rumours were partly due to a few brief but malicious words, vaguely and disconnectedly dropped at the club by a gentleman who had lately returned from Petersburg. This was a retired captain in the guards, Artemy Pavlovitch Gaganov. He was a very large landowner in our province and district, a man used to the society of Petersburg, and a son of the late Pavel Pavlovitch Gaganov, the venerable old man with whom Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had, over four years before, had the extraordinary coarse and sudden encounter which I have described already in the beginning of my story.

It immediately became known to every one that Yulia Mihailovna had made a special call on Varvara Petrovna, and had been informed at the entrance: "Her honour was too unwell to see visitors." It was known, too, that Yulia Mihailovna sent a message two days later to inquire after Varvara Petrovna's health. At last she began "defending" Varvara Petrovna everywhere, of course only in the loftiest sense, that is, in the vaguest possible way. She listened coldly and sternly to the hurried remarks made at first about the scene on Sunday, so that during the later days they were not renewed in her presence. So that the belief gained ground everywhere that Yulia Mihailovna knew not only the whole of the mysterious story but all its secret significance to the smallest detail, and not as an outsider, but as one taking part in it. I may observe, by the way, that she was already gradually beginning to gain that exalted influence among us for which she was so eager and which she was certainly struggling to win, and was already beginning to see herself "surrounded by a circle." A section of society recognised her practical sense and tact . . . but of that later. Her patronage partly explained Pyotr Stepanovitch's rapid success in our society—a success with which Stepan Trofimovitch was particularly impressed at the time.

We possibly exaggerated it. To begin with, Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed to make acquaintance almost instantly with the whole town within the first four days of his arrival. He only arrived on Sunday; and on Tuesday I saw him in a carriage with Artemy Pavlovitch Gaganov, a man who was proud, irritable, and supercilious, in spite of his good breeding, and who was not easy to get on with. At the governor's, too, Pyotr Stepanovitch met with a warm welcome, so much so that he was at once on an intimate footing, like a young friend, treated, so to say, affectionately. He dined with Yulia Mihailovna almost every day. He had made her acquaintance in Switzerland, but there was certainly something curious about the rapidity of his success in the governor's house. In any case he was reputed, whether truly or not, to have been at one time a revolutionist abroad, he had had something to do with some publications and some congresses abroad, "which one can prove from the newspapers," to quote the malicious remark of Alyosha Telyatnikov, who had also been once a young friend affectionately



treated in the house of the late governor, but was now, alas, a clerk on the retired list. But the fact was unmistakable: the former revolutionist, far from being hindered from returning to his beloved Fatherland, seemed almost to have been encouraged to do so, so perhaps there was nothing in it. Liputin whispered to me once that there were rumours that Pyotr Stepanovitch had once professed himself penitent, and on his return had been pardoned on mentioning certain names and so, perhaps, had succeeded in expiating his offence, by promising to be of use to the government in the future. I repeated these malignant phrases to Stepan Trofimovitch, and although the latter was in such a state that he was hardly capable of reflection, he pondered profoundly. It turned out later that Pyotr Stepanovitch had come to us with a very influential letter of recommendation, that he had, at any rate, brought one to the governor's wife from a very important old lady in Petersburg, whose husband was one of the most distinguished old dignitaries in the capital. This old lady, who was Yulia Mihailovna's godmother, mentioned in her letter that Count K. knew Pyotr Stepanovitch very well through Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, made much of him, and thought him "a very excellent young man in spite of his former errors." Yulia Mihailovna set the greatest value on her relations with the "higher spheres," which were few and maintained with difficulty, and was, no doubt, pleased to get the old lady's letter, but still there was something peculiar about it. She even forced her husband upon a familiar footing with Pyotr Stepanovitch, so much so that Mr. von Lembke complained of it . . . but of that, too, later. I may mention, too, that the great author was also favourably disposed to Pyotr Stepanovitch, and at once invited him to go and see him. Such alacrity on the part of a man so puffed up with conceit stung Stepan Trofimovitch more painfully than anything; but I put a different interpretation on it. In inviting a Nihilist to see him, Mr. Karmazinov, no doubt, had in view his relations with the progressives of the younger generation in both capitals. The great author trembled nervously before the revolutionary youth of Russia, and imagining, in his ignorance, that the future lay in their hands, fawned upon them in a despicable way, chiefly because they paid no attention to him whatever.

## II

Pyotr Stepanovitch ran round to see his father twice, but unfortunately I was absent on both occasions. He visited him for the first time only on Wednesday, that is, not till the fourth day after their first meeting, and then only on business. Their difficulties over the property were settled, by the way, without fuss or publicity. Varvara Petrovna took it all on herself, and paid all that was owing, taking over the land, of course, and only informed Stepan Trofimovitch that it was all settled and her butler, Alexey Yegorytch, was, by her authorisation, bringing him something to sign. This Stepan Trofimovitch did, in silence, with extreme dignity. Apropos of his dignity, I may mention that I hardly recognised my old friend during those days. He behaved as he had never done before; became amazingly taciturn and had not even written one letter to Varvara Petrovna since Sunday, which seemed to me almost a miracle. What's more, he had become quite calm. He had fastened upon a final and decisive idea which gave him tranquillity. That was evident. He had hit upon this idea, and sat still, expecting something. At first, however, he was ill, especially on Monday. He had an attack of his summer cholera. He could not remain all that time without news either; but as soon as I departed from the statement of facts, and began discussing the case in itself, and formulated any theory, he at once gesticulated to me to stop. But both his interviews with his son had a distressing effect on him, though they did not shake his determination. After each interview he spent the whole day lying on the sofa with a handkerchief soaked in vinegar on his head. But he continued to remain calm in the deepest sense.

Sometimes, however, he did not hinder my speaking. Sometimes, too, it seemed to me that the mysterious determination he had taken seemed to be failing him and he appeared to be struggling with a new, seductive stream of ideas. That was only at moments, but I made a note of it. I suspected that he was longing to assert himself again, to come forth from his seclusion, to show fight, to struggle to the last.



"*Cher,* I could crush them!" broke from him on Thursday evening after his second interview with Pyotr Stepanovitch, when he lay stretched on the sofa with his head wrapped in a towel.

Till that moment he had not uttered one word all day.

"*Fils, fils, cher,*" and so on, "I agree all those expressions are nonsense, kitchen talk, and so be it. I see it for myself. I never gave him food or drink, I sent him a tiny baby from Berlin to X province by post, and all that, I admit it. . . . 'You gave me neither food nor drink, and sent me by post,' he says, 'and what's more you've robbed me here.' "

" 'But you unhappy boy,' I cried to him, 'my heart has been aching for you all my life; though I did send you by post.' *Il rit.*"

"But I admit it. I admit it, granted it was by post," he concluded, almost in delirium.

"*Passons,*" he began again, five minutes later. "I don't understand Turgenev. That Bazarov of his is a fictitious figure, it does not exist anywhere. The fellows themselves were the first to disown him as unlike anyone. That Bazarov is a sort of indistinct mixture of Nozdryov and Byron, *c'est le mot.* Look at them attentively: they caper about and squeal with joy like puppies in the sun. They are happy, they are victorious! What is there of Byron in them? . . . and with that, such ordinariness! What a low-bred, irritable vanity! What an abject craving to *faire du bruit autour de son nom,* without noticing that *son nom.* . . . Oh, it's a caricature! 'Surely,' I cried to him, 'you don't want to offer yourself just as you are as a substitute for Christ?' *Il rit. Il rit beaucoup. Il rit trop.* He has a strange smile. His mother had not a smile like that. *Il rit toujours.*"

Silence followed again.

"They are cunning; they were acting in collusion on Sunday," he blurted out suddenly. . . .

"Oh, not a doubt of it," I cried, pricking up my ears. "It was a got-up thing and it was too transparent, and so badly acted."

"I don't mean that. Do you know that it was all too transparent on purpose, that those . . . who had to, might understand it. Do you understand that?"

"I don't understand."

"*Tant mieux; passons.* I am very irritable to-day."

"But why have you been arguing with him, Stepan Trofimovitch?" I asked him reproachfully.

"*Je voulais convertir*—you'll laugh of course—*cette pauvre* auntie, *elle entendra de belles choses!* Oh, my dear boy, would you believe it. I felt like a patriot. I always recognised that I was a Russian, however . . . a genuine Russian must be like you and me. *Il y a là dedans quelque chose d'aveugle et de louche.*"

"Not a doubt of it," I assented.

"My dear, the real truth always sounds improbable, do you know that? To make truth sound probable you must always mix in some falsehood with it. Men have always done so. Perhaps there's something in it that passes our understanding. What do you think: is there something we don't understand in that triumphant squeal? I should like to think there was. I should like to think so."

I did not speak. He, too, was silent for a long time.

"They say that French cleverness . . . " he babbled suddenly, as though in a fever . . . " that's false, it always has been. Why libel French cleverness? It's simply Russian indolence, our degrading impotence to produce ideas, our revolting parasitism in the rank of nations. *Ils sont tout simplement des paresseux,* and not French cleverness. Oh, the Russians ought to be extirpated for the good of humanity, like noxious parasites! We've been striving for something utterly, utterly different. I can make nothing of it. I have given up understanding. 'Do you understand,' I cried to him, 'that if you have the guillotine in the foreground of your programme and are so enthusiastic about it too, it's simply because nothing's easier than cutting off heads, and nothing's harder than to have an idea. *Vous êtes des paresseux! Votre drapeau est un guenille, une impuissance.* It's those carts, or, what was it? . . . "the rumble of the carts carrying bread to humanity" being more important than the Sistine Madonna, or, what's the saying? . . . *une bêtise dans ce genre.* Don't you understand, don't you understand,' I said to him, 'that unhappiness is just as necessary to man as happiness.' *Il rit.* 'All you do is to make a *bon mot,*' he said, 'with your limbs snug on a velvet sofa.' . . . (He used a coarser expression.) And this habit of addressing a father so familiarly is very nice when father and son are on good terms, but what do you think of it when they are abusing one another?"



We were silent again for a minute.

"*Cher,*" he concluded at last, getting up quickly, "do you know this is bound to end in something?"

"Of course," said I.

"*Vous ne comprenez pas. Passons.* But . . . usually in our world things come to nothing, but this will end in something; it's bound to, it's bound to!"

He got up, and walked across the room in violent emotion, and coming back to the sofa sank on to it exhausted.

On Friday morning, Pyotr Stepanovitch went off somewhere in the neighbourhood, and remained away till Monday. I heard of his departure from Liputin, and in the course of conversation I learned that the Lebyadkins, brother and sister, had moved to the riverside quarter. "I moved them," he added, and, dropping the Lebyadkins, he suddenly announced to me that Lizaveta Nikolaevna was going to marry Mavriky Nikolaevitch, that, although it had not been announced, the engagement was a settled thing. Next day I met Lizaveta Nikolaevna out riding with Mavriky Nikolaevitch; she was out for the first time after her illness. She beamed at me from the distance, laughed, and nodded in a very friendly way. I told all this to Stepan Trofimovitch; he paid no attention, except to the news about the Lebyadkins.

And now, having described our enigmatic position throughout those eight days during which we knew nothing, I will pass on to the description of the succeeding incidents of my chronicle, writing, so to say, with full knowledge, and describing things as they became known afterwards, and are clearly seen to-day. I will begin with the eighth day after that Sunday, that is, the Monday evening—for in reality a "new scandal" began with that evening.

## III

It was seven o'clock in the evening. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was sitting alone in his study—the room he had been

fond of in old days. It was lofty, carpeted with rugs, and contained somewhat heavy old-fashioned furniture. He was sitting on the sofa in the corner, dressed as though to go out, though he did not seem to be intending to do so. On the table before him stood a lamp with a shade. The sides and corners of the big room were left in shadow. His eyes looked dreamy and concentrated, not altogether tranquil; his face looked tired and had grown a little thinner. He really was ill with a swollen face; but the story of a tooth having been knocked out was an exaggeration. One had been loosened, but it had grown into its place again: he had had a cut on the inner side of the upper lip, but that, too, had healed. The swelling on his face had lasted all the week simply because the invalid would not have a doctor, and instead of having the swelling lanced had waited for it to go down. He would not hear of a doctor, and would scarcely allow even his mother to come near him, and then only for a moment, once a day, and only at dusk, after it was dark and before lights had been brought in. He did not receive Pyotr Stepanovitch either, though the latter ran round to Varvara Petrovna's two or three times a day so long as he remained in the town. And now, at last, returning on the Monday morning after his three days' absence, Pyotr Stepanovitch made a circuit of the town, and, after dining at Yulia Mihailovna's, came at last in the evening to Varvara Petrovna, who was impatiently expecting him. The interdict had been removed, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was "at home." Varvara Petrovna herself led the visitor to the door of the study; she had long looked forward to their meeting, and Pyotr Stepanovitch had promised to run to her and repeat what passed. She knocked timidly at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's door, and getting no answer ventured to open the door a couple of inches.

"Nicolas, may I bring Pyotr Stepanovitch in to see you?" she asked, in a soft and restrained voice, trying to make out her son's face behind the lamp.

"You can, you can, of course you can," Pyotr Stepanovitch himself cried out, loudly and gaily. He opened the door with his hand and went in.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had not heard the knock at the door, and only caught his mother's timid question, and had not had time to answer it. Before him, at that moment, there lay



a letter he had just read over, which he was pondering deeply. He started, hearing Pyotr Stepanovitch's sudden outburst, and hurriedly put the letter under a paper-weight, but did not quite succeed; a corner of the letter and almost the whole envelope showed.

"I called out on purpose that you might be prepared," Pyotr Stepanovitch said hurriedly, with surprising naïveté, running up to the table, and instantly staring at the corner of the letter, which peeped out from beneath the paper-weight.

"And no doubt you had time to see how I hid the letter I had just received, under the paper-weight," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch calmly, without moving from his place.

"A letter? Bless you and your letters, what are they to do with me?" cried the visitor. "But . . . what does matter . . . " he whispered again, turning to the door, which was by now closed, and nodding his head in that direction.

"She never listens," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch observed coldly.

"What if she did overhear?" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, raising his voice cheerfully, and settling down in an arm-chair. "I've nothing against that, only I've come here now to speak to you alone. Well, at last I've succeeded in getting at you. First of all, how are you? I see you're getting on splendidly. Tomorrow you'll show yourself again—eh?"

"Perhaps."

"Set their minds at rest. Set mine at rest at last." He gesticulated violently with a jocose and amiable air. "If only you knew what nonsense I've had to talk to them. You know, though." He laughed.

"I don't know everything. I only heard from my mother that you've been . . . very active."

"Oh, well, I've said nothing definite," Pyotr Stepanovitch flared up at once, as though defending himself from an awful attack. "I simply trotted out Shatov's wife; you know, that is, the rumours of your liaison in Paris, which accounted, of course, for what happened on Sunday. You're not angry?"

"I'm sure you've done your best."

"Oh, that's just what I was afraid of. Though what does that mean, 'done your best'? That's a reproach, isn't it? You always go straight for things, though. . . . What I was most

afraid of, as I came here, was that you wouldn't go straight for the point."

"I don't want to go straight for anything," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with some irritation. But he laughed at once.

"I didn't mean that, I didn't mean that, don't make a mistake," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, waving his hands, rattling his words out like peas, and at once relieved at his companion's irritability. "I'm not going to worry you with *our* business, especially in your present position. I've only come about Sunday's affair, and only to arrange the most necessary steps, because, you see, it's impossible. I've come with the frankest explanations which I stand in more need of than you—so much for your vanity, but at the same time it's true. I've come to be open with you from this time forward."

"Then you have not been open with me before?"

"You know that yourself. I've been cunning with you many times . . . you smile; I'm very glad of that smile as a prelude to our explanation. I provoked that smile on purpose by using the word 'cunning,' so that you might get cross directly at my daring to think I could be cunning, so that I might have a chance of explaining myself at once. You see, you see how open I have become now! Well, do you care to listen?"

In the expression of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's face, which was contemptuously composed, and even ironical, in spite of his visitor's obvious desire to irritate him by the insolence of his premeditated and intentionally coarse naïvetés, there was, at last, a look of rather uneasy curiosity.

"Listen," said Pyotr Stepanovich, wriggling more than ever, "when I set off to come here, I mean here in the large sense, to this town, ten days ago, I made up my mind, of course, to assume a character. It would have been best to have done without anything, to have kept one's own character, wouldn't it? There is no better dodge than one's own character, because no one believes in it. I meant, I must own, to assume the part of a fool, because it is easier to be a fool than to act one's own character; but as a fool is after all something extreme, and anything extreme excites curiosity, I ended by sticking to my own character. And what is my own character? The golden mean: neither wise nor foolish, rather stupid, and dropped from the moon, as sensible people say here, isn't that it?"



"Perhaps it is," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with a faint smile.

"Ah, you agree—I'm very glad; I knew beforehand that it was your own opinion. . . . You needn't trouble, I am not annoyed, and I didn't describe myself in that way to get a flattering contradiction from you—no, you're not stupid, you're clever. . . . Ah! you're smiling again! . . . I've blundered once more. You would not have said 'you're clever,' granted; I'll let it pass anyway. *Passons,* as papa says, and, in parenthesis, don't be vexed with my verbosity. By the way, I always say a lot, that is, use a great many words and talk very fast, and I never speak well. And why do I use so many words, and why do I never speak well? Because I don't know how to speak. People who can speak well, speak briefly. So that I am stupid, am I not? But as this gift of stupidity is natural to me, why shouldn't I make skilful use of it? And I do make use of it. It's true that as I came here, I did think, at first, of being silent. But you know silence is a great talent, and therefore incongruous for me, and secondly silence would be risky, anyway. So I made up my mind finally that it would be best to talk, but to talk stupidly—that is, to talk and talk and talk—to be in a tremendous hurry to explain things, and in the end to get muddled in my own explanations, so that my listener would walk away without hearing the end, with a shrug, or, better still, with a curse. You succeed straight off in persuading them of your simplicity, in boring them and in being incomprehensible—three advantages all at once! Do you suppose anybody will suspect you of mysterious designs after that? Why, every one of them would take it as a personal affront if anyone were to say I had secret designs. And I sometimes amuse them too, and that's priceless. Why, they're ready to forgive me everything now, just because the clever fellow who used to publish manifestoes out there turns out to be stupider than themselves—that's so, isn't it? From your smile I see you approve."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was not smiling at all, however. On the contrary, he was listening with a frown and some impatience.

"Eh? What? I believe you said 'no matter.' "

Pyotr Stepanovitch rattled on. (Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had said nothing at all.) "Of course, of course, I assure you I'm

not here to compromise you by my company, by claiming you as my comrade. But do you know you're horribly captious to-day; I ran in to you with a light and open heart, and you seem to be laying up every word I say against me. I assure you I'm not going to begin about anything shocking to-day, I give you my word, and I agree beforehand to all your conditions."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was obstinately silent.

"Eh? What? Did you say something? I see, I see that I've made a blunder again, it seems; you've not suggested conditions and you're not going to; I believe you, I believe you; well, you can set your mind at rest; I know, of course, that it's not worth while for me to suggest them, is it? I'll answer for you beforehand, and—just from stupidity, of course; stupidity again. . . . You're laughing? Eh? What?"

"Nothing," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch laughed at last. "I just remembered that I really did call you stupid, but you weren't there then, so they must have repeated it. . . . I would ask you to make haste and come to the point."

"Why, but I am at the point! I am talking about Sunday," babbled Pyotr Stepanovitch. "Why, what was I on Sunday? What would you call it? Just fussy, mediocre stupidity, and in the stupidest way I took possession of the conversation by force. But they forgave me everything, first because I dropped from the moon, that seems to be settled here, now, by every one; and, secondly, because I told them a pretty little story, and got you all out of a scrape, didn't they, didn't they?"

"That is, you told your story so as to leave them in doubt and suggest some compact and collusion between us, when there was no collusion and I'd not asked you to do anything."

"Just so, just so!" Pyotr Stepanovitch caught him up, apparently delighted. "That's just what I did do, for I wanted you to see that I implied it; I exerted myself chiefly for your sake, for I caught you and wanted to compromise you, above all I wanted to find out how far you're afraid."

"It would be interesting to know why you are so open now?"

"Don't be angry, don't be angry, don't glare at me. . . . You're not, though. You wonder why I am so open? Why, just because it's all changed now; of course, it's over, buried under the sand. I've suddenly changed my ideas about you. The old way is closed; now I shall never compromise you in the old way, it will be in a new way now."



"You've changed your tactics?"

"There are no tactics. Now it's for you to decide in everything, that is, if you want to, say yes, and if you want to, say no. There you have my new tactics. And I won't say a word about our cause till you bid me yourself. You laugh? Laugh away. I'm laughing myself. But I'm in earnest now, in earnest, in earnest, though a man who is in such a hurry is stupid, isn't he? Never mind, I may be stupid, but I'm in earnest, in earnest."

He really was speaking in earnest in quite a different tone, and with a peculiar excitement, so that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him with curiosity.

"You say you've changed your ideas about me?" he asked.

"I changed my ideas about you at the moment when you drew your hands back after Shatov's attack, and, that's enough, that's enough, no questions, please, I'll say nothing more now."

He jumped up, waving his hands as though waving off questions. But as there were no questions, and he had no reason to go away, he sank into an arm-chair again, somewhat reassured.

"By the way, in parenthesis," he rattled on at once, "some people here are babbling that you'll kill him, and taking bets about it, so that Lembke positively thought of setting the police on, but Yulia Mihailovna forbade it. . . . But enough about that, quite enough, I only spoke of it to let you know. By the way, I moved the Lebyadkins the same day, you know; did you get my note with their address?"

"I received it at the time."

"I didn't do that by way of 'stupidity.' I did it genuinely, to serve you. If it was stupid, anyway, it was done in good faith."

"Oh, all right, perhaps it was necessary. . . . " said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch dreamily, "only don't write any more letters to me, I beg you."

"Impossible to avoid it. It was only one."

"So Liputin knows?"

"Impossible to help it: but Liputin, you know yourself,

dare not . . . By the way, you ought to meet our fellows, that is, *the* fellows not *our* fellows, or you'll be finding fault again. Don't disturb yourself, not just now, but sometime. Just now it's raining. I'll let them know, they'll meet together, and we'll go in the evening. They're waiting, with their mouths open like young crows in a nest, to see what present we've brought them. They're a hot-headed lot. They've brought out leaflets, they're on the point of quarrelling. Virginsky is a universal humanity man, Liputin is a Fourierist with a marked inclination for police work; a man, I assure you, who is precious from one point of view, though he requires strict supervision in all others; and, last of all, that fellow with the long ears, he'll read an account of his own system. And do you know, they're offended at my treating them casually, and throwing cold water over them, but we certainly must meet."

"You've made me out some sort of chief?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch dropped as carelessly as possible.

Pyotr Stepanovitch looked quickly at him.

"By the way," he interposed, in haste to change the subject, as though he had not heard. "I've been here two or three times, you know, to see her excellency, Varvara Petrovna, and I have been obliged to say a great deal too."

"So I imagine."

"No, don't imagine, I've simply told her that you won't kill him, well, and other sweet things. And only fancy; the very next day she knew I'd moved Marya Timofyevna beyond the river. Was it you told her?"

"I never dreamed of it!"

"I knew it wasn't you. Who else could it be? It's interesting."

"Liputin, of course."

"N-no, not Liputin," muttered Pyotr Stepanovitch, frowning; "I'll find out who. It's more like Shatov. . . . That's nonsense though. Let's leave that! Though it's awfully important. . . . By the way, I kept expecting that your mother would suddenly burst out with the great question. . . . Ach! yes, she was horribly glum at first, but suddenly, when I came to-day, she was beaming all over, what does that mean?"

"It's because I promised her to-day that within five days I'll



be engaged to Lizaveta Nikolaevna," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch said with surprising openness.

"Oh! . . . Yes, of course," faltered Pyotr Stepanovitch, seeming disconcerted. "There are rumours of her engagement, you know. It's true, too. But you're right, she'd run from under the wedding crown, you've only to call to her. You're not angry at my saying so?"

"No, I'm not angry."

"I notice it's awfully hard to make you angry to-day, and I begin to be afraid of you. I'm awfully curious to know how you'll appear to-morrow. I expect you've got a lot of things ready. You're not angry at my saying so?"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made no answer at all, which completed Pyotr Stepanovitch's irritation.

"By the way, did you say that in earnest to your mother, about Lizaveta Nikolaevna?" he asked.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked coldly at him.

"Oh, I understand, it was only to soothe her, of course."

"And if it were in earnest?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked firmly.

"Oh, God bless you then, as they say in such cases. It won't hinder the cause (you see, I don't say 'our,' you don't like the word 'our') and I . . . well, I . . . am at your service, as you know."

"You think so?"

"I think nothing—nothing," Pyotr Stepanovitch hurriedly declared, laughing, "because I know you consider what you're about beforehand for yourself, and everything with you has been thought out. I only mean that I am seriously at your service, always and everywhere, and in every sort of circumstance, every sort really, do you understand that?"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch yawned.

"I've bored you," Pyotr Stepanovitch cried, jumping up suddenly, and snatching his perfectly new round hat as though he were going away. He remained and went on talking, however, though he stood up, sometimes pacing about the room and tapping himself on the knee with his hat at exciting parts of the conversation.

"I meant to amuse you with stories of the Lembkes, too," he cried gaily.

"Afterwards, perhaps, not now. But how is Yulia Mihailovna?"

"What conventional manners all of you have! Her health is no more to you than the health of the grey cat, yet you ask after it. I approve of that. She's quite well, and her respect for you amounts to a superstition, her immense anticipations of you amount to a superstition. She does not say a word about what happened on Sunday, and is convinced that you will overcome everything yourself by merely making your appearance. Upon my word! She fancies you can do anything. You're an enigmatic and romantic figure now, more than ever you were —an extremely advantageous position. It is incredible how eager every one is to see you. They were pretty hot when I went away, but now it is more so than ever. Thanks again for your letter. They are all afraid of Count K. Do you know they look upon you as a spy? I keep that up, you're not angry?"

"It does not matter."

"It does not matter; it's essential in the long run. They have their ways of doing things here. I encourage it, of course; Yulia Mihailovna, in the first place, Gaganov too. . . . You laugh? But you know I have my policy; I babble away and suddenly I say something clever just as they are on the lookout for it. They crowd round me and I humbug away again. They've all given me up in despair by now: 'he's got brains but he's dropped from the moon.' Lembke invites me to enter the service so that I may be reformed. You know I treat him shockingly, that is, I compromise him and he simply stares. Yulia Mihailovna encourages it. Oh, by the way, Gaganov is in an awful rage with you. He said the nastiest things about you yesterday at Duhovo. I told him the whole truth on the spot, that is, of course, not the whole truth. I spent the whole day at Duhovo. It's a splendid estate, a fine house."

"Then is he at Duhovo now?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch broke in suddenly, making a sudden start forward and almost leaping up from his seat.

"No, he drove me here this morning, we returned together," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, appearing not to notice Stavrogin's momentary excitement. "What's this? I dropped a book." He bent down to pick up the "keepsake" he had knocked down.



"'The Women of Balzac,' with illustrations." He opened it suddenly. "I haven't read it. Lembke writes novels too."

"Yes?" queried Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, as though beginning to be interested.

"In Russian, on the sly, of course, Yulia Mihailovna knows and allows it. He's henpecked, but with good manners; it's their system. Such strict form—such self-restraint! Something of the sort would be the thing for us."

"You approve of government methods?"

"I should rather think so! It's the one thing that's natural and practicable in Russia. . . . I won't . . . I won't," he cried out suddenly, "I'm not referring to that—not a word on delicate subjects. Good-bye, though, you look rather green."

"I'm feverish."

"I can well believe it; you should go to bed. By the way, there are Skoptsi here in the neighbourhood—they're curious people . . . of that later, though. Ah, here's another anecdote. There's an infantry regiment here in the district. I was drinking last Friday evening with the officers. We've three friends among them, *vous comprenez?* They were discussing atheism and I need hardly say they made short work of God. They were squealing with delight. By the way, Shatov declares that if there's to be a rising in Russia we must begin with atheism. Maybe it's true. One grizzled old stager of a captain sat mum, not saying a word. All at once he stands up in the middle of the room and says aloud, as though speaking to himself: 'If there's no God, how can I be a captain then?' He took up his cap and went out, flinging up his hands."

"He expressed a rather sensible idea," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, yawning for the third time.

"Yes? I didn't understand it; I meant to ask you about it. Well what else have I to tell you? The Shpigulin factory's interesting; as you know, there are five hundred workmen in it, it's a hotbed of cholera, it's not been cleaned for fifteen years and the factory hands are swindled. The owners are millionaires. I assure you that some among the hands have an idea of the *Internationale*. What, you smile? You'll see—only give me ever so little time! I've asked you to fix the time already and now I ask you again and then. . . . But I beg your pardon, I won't, I won't speak of that, don't frown. There!" He turned

back suddenly. "I quite forgot the chief thing. I was told just now that our box had come from Petersburg."

"You mean . . . " Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him, not understanding.

"Your box, your things, coats, trousers, and linen have come. Is it true?"

"Yes . . . they said something about it this morning."

"Ach, then can't I open it at once! . . . "

"Ask Alexey."

"Well, to-morrow, then, will to-morrow do? You see my new jacket, dress-coat and three pairs of trousers are with your things, from Sharmer's, by your recommendation, do you remember?"

"I hear you're going in for being a gentleman here," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with a smile. "Is it true you're going to take lessons at the riding school?"

Pyotr Stepanovitch smiled a wry smile. "I say," he said suddenly, with excessive haste in a voice that quivered and faltered, "I say, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, let's drop personalities once for all. Of course, you can despise me as much as you like if it amuses you—but we'd better dispense with personalities for a time, hadn't we?"

"All right," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch assented.

Pyotr Stepanovitch grinned, tapped his knee with his hat, shifted from one leg to the other, and recovered his former expression.

"Some people here positively look upon me as your rival with Lizaveta Nikolaevna, so I must think of my appearance, mustn't I," he laughed. "Who was it told you that though? H'm. It's just eight o'clock; well I must be off. I promised to look in on Varvara Petrovna, but I shall make my escape. And you go to bed and you'll be stronger to-morrow. It's raining and dark, but I've a cab, it's not over safe in the streets here at night. . . . Ach, by the way, there's a run-away convict from Siberia, Fedka, wandering about the town and the neighbourhood. Only fancy, he used to be a serf of mine, and my papa sent him for a soldier fifteen years ago and took the money for him. He's a very remarkable person."

"You have been talking to him?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch scanned him.



"I have. He lets me know where he is. He's ready for anything, anything, for money of course, but he has convictions, too, of a sort, of course. Oh yes, by the way, again, if you meant anything of that plan, you remember, about Lizaveta Nikolaevna, I tell you once again, I too am a fellow ready for anything of any kind you like, and absolutely at your service. . . . Hullo! are you reaching for your stick. Oh no . . . only fancy . . . I thought you were looking for your stick."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was looking for nothing and said nothing.

But he had risen to his feet very suddenly with a strange look in his face.

"If you want any help about Mr. Gaganov either," Pyotr Stepanovitch blurted out suddenly, this time looking straight at the paper-weight, "of course I can arrange it all, and I'm certain you won't be able to manage without me."

He went out suddenly without waiting for an answer, but thrust his head in at the door once more. "I mention that," he gabbled hurriedly, "because Shatov had no right either, you know, to risk his life last Sunday when he attacked you, had he? I should be glad if you would make a note of that." He disappeared again without waiting for an answer.

## IV

Perhaps he imagined, as he made his exit, that as soon as he was left alone, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch would begin beating on the wall with his fists, and no doubt he would have been glad to see this, if that had been possible. But, if so, he was greatly mistaken. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was still calm. He remained standing for two minutes in the same position by the table, apparently plunged in thought, but soon a cold and listless smile came on to his lips. He slowly sat down again in the same place in the corner of the sofa, and shut his eyes as though from weariness. The corner of the letter was still peeping from under the paper-weight, but he didn't even move to cover it.

He soon sank into complete forgetfulness.

When Pyotr Stepanovitch went out without coming to see

her, as he had promised, Varvara Petrovna, who had been worn out by anxiety during these days, could not control herself, and ventured to visit her son herself, though it was not her regular time. She was still haunted by the idea that he would tell her something conclusive. She knocked at the door gently as before, and again receiving no answer, she opened the door. Seeing that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was sitting strangely motionless, she cautiously advanced to the sofa with a throbbing heart. She seemed struck by the fact that he could fall asleep so quickly and that he could sleep sitting like that, so erect and motionless, so that his breathing even was scarcely perceptible. His face was pale and forbidding, but it looked, as it were, numb and rigid. His brows were somewhat contracted and frowning. He positively had the look of a lifeless wax figure. She stood over him for about three minutes, almost holding her breath, and suddenly she was seized with terror. She withdrew on tiptoe, stopped at the door, hurriedly made the sign of the cross over him, and retreated unobserved, with a new oppression and a new anguish at her heart.

He slept a long while, more than an hour, and still in the same rigid pose: not a muscle of his face twitched, there was not the faintest movement in his whole body, and his brows were still contracted in the same forbidding frown. If Varvara Petrovna had remained another three minutes she could not have endured the stifling sensation that this motionless lethargy roused in her, and would have waked him. But he suddenly opened his eyes, and sat for ten minutes as immovable as before, staring persistently and curiously, as though at some object in the corner which had struck him, although there was nothing new or striking in the room.

Suddenly there rang out the low deep note of the clock on the wall.

With some uneasiness he turned to look at it, but almost at the same moment the other door opened, and the butler, Alexey Yegorytch came in. He had in one hand a greatcoat, a scarf, and a hat, and in the other a silver tray with a note on it.

"Half-past nine," he announced softly, and laying the other things on a chair, he held out the tray with the note—a scrap of paper unsealed and scribbled in pencil. Glancing through it,



Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch took a pencil from the table, added a few words, and put the note back on the tray.

"Take it back as soon as I have gone out, and now dress me," he said, getting up from the sofa.

Noticing that he had on a light velvet jacket, he thought a minute, and told the man to bring him a cloth coat, which he wore on more ceremonious occasions. At last, when he was dressed and had put on his hat, he locked the door by which his mother had come into the room, took the letter from under the paper-weight, and without saying a word went out into the corridor, followed by Alexey Yegorytch. From the corridor they went down the narrow stone steps of the back stairs to a passage which opened straight into the garden. In the corner stood a lantern and a big umbrella.

"Owing to the excessive rain the mud in the streets is beyond anything," Alexey Yegorytch announced, making a final effort to deter his master from the expedition. But opening his umbrella the latter went without a word into the damp and sodden garden, which was dark as a cellar. The wind was roaring and tossing the bare tree-tops. The little sandy paths were wet and slippery. Alexey Yegorytch walked along as he was, bareheaded, in his swallow-tail coat, lighting up the path for about three steps before them with the lantern.

"Won't it be noticed?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked suddenly.

"Not from the windows. Besides I have seen to all that already," the old servant answered in quiet and measured tones.

"Has my mother retired?"

"Her excellency locked herself in at nine o'clock as she has done the last few days, and there is no possibility of her knowing anything. At what hour am I to expect your honour?"

"At one or half-past, not later than two."

"Yes, sir."

Crossing the garden by the winding paths that they both knew by heart, they reached the stone wall, and there in the farthest corner found a little door, which led out into a narrow and deserted lane, and was always kept locked. It appeared that Alexey Yegorytch had the key in his hand.

"Won't the door creak?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch inquired again.

But Alexey Yegorytch informed him that it had been oiled yesterday "as well as to-day." He was by now wet through. Unlocking the door he gave the key to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

"If it should be your pleasure to be taking a distant walk, I would warn your honour that I am not confident of the folk here, especially in the back lanes, and especially beyond the river," he could not resist warning him again. He was an old servant, who had been like a nurse to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, and at one time used to dandle him in his arms; he was a grave and severe man who was fond of listening to religious discourse and reading books of devotion.

"Don't be uneasy, Alexey Yegorytch."

"May God's blessing rest on you, sir, but only in your righteous undertakings."

"What?" said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, stopping short in the lane.

Alexey Yegorytch resolutely repeated his words. He had never before ventured to express himself in such language in his master's presence.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and crossed the lane, sinking five or six inches into the mud at every step. He came out at last into a long deserted street. He knew the town like the five fingers of his hand, but Bogoyavlensky Street was a long way off. It was past ten when he stopped at last before the locked gates of the dark old house that belonged to Filipov. The ground floor had stood empty since the Lebyadkins had left it, and the windows were boarded up, but there was a light burning in Shatov's room on the second floor. As there was no bell he began banging on the gate with his hand. A window was opened and Shatov peeped out into the street. It was terribly dark, and difficult to make out anything. Shatov was peering out for some time, about a minute.

"Is that you?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes," replied the uninvited guest.

Shatov slammed the window, went downstairs and opened the gate. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch stepped over the high sill, and without a word passed by him straight into Kirillov's lodge.



## V

There everything was unlocked and all the doors stood open. The passage and the first two rooms were dark, but there was a light shining in the last, in which Kirillov lived and drank tea, and laughter and strange cries came from it. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went towards the light, but stood still in the doorway without going in. There was tea on the table. In the middle of the room stood the old woman who was a relation of the landlord. She was bareheaded and was dressed in a petticoat and a hare-skin jacket, and her stockingless feet were thrust into slippers. In her arms she had an eighteen-months-old baby, with nothing on but its little shirt; with bare legs, flushed cheeks, and ruffled white hair. It had only just been taken out of the cradle. It seemed to have just been crying; there were still tears in its eyes. But at that instant it was stretching out its little arms, clapping its hands, and laughing with a sob as little children do. Kirillov was bouncing a big red india-rubber ball on the floor before it. The ball bounced up to the ceiling, and back to the floor, the baby shrieked "Baw! baw!" Kirillov caught the "baw" and gave it to it. The baby threw it itself with its awkward little hands, and Kirillov ran to pick it up again. At last the "baw" rolled under the cupboard. "Baw! baw!" cried the child. Kirillov lay down on the floor, trying to reach the ball with his hand under the cupboard. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went into the room. The baby caught sight of him, nestled against the old woman, and went off into a prolonged infantile wail. The woman immediately carried it out of the room.

"Stavrogin?" said Kirillov, beginning to get up from the floor with the ball in his hand, and showing no surprise at the unexpected visit. "Will you have tea?"

He rose to his feet.

"I should be very glad of it, if it's hot," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch; "I'm wet through."

"It's hot, nearly boiling in fact," Kirillov declared delighted. "Sit down. You're muddy, but that's nothing; I'll mop up the floor later."

"You've got weapons enough, and very good ones."

"Very, extremely."

Kirillov, who was poor, almost destitute, though he never noticed his poverty, was evidently proud of showing his precious weapons, which he had certainly obtained with great sacrifice.

"You still have the same intentions?" Stavrogin asked after a moment's silence, and with a certain wariness.

"Yes," answered Kirillov shortly, guessing at once from his voice what he was asking about, and he began taking the weapons from the table.

"When?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch inquired still more cautiously, after a pause.

In the meantime Kirillov had put both the boxes back in his trunk, and sat down in his place again.

"That doesn't depend on me, as you know—when they tell me," he muttered, as though disliking the question; but at the same time with evident readiness to answer any other question. He kept his black, lusterless eyes fixed continually on Stavrogin with a calm but warm and kindly expression in them.

"I understand shooting oneself, of course," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch began suddenly, frowning a little, after a dreamy silence that lasted three minutes. "I sometimes have thought of it myself, and then there always came a new idea: if one did something wicked, or, worse still, something shameful, that is, disgraceful, only very shameful and . . . ridiculous, such as people would remember for a thousand years and hold in scorn for a thousand years, and suddenly the thought comes: 'one blow in the temple and there would be nothing more.' One wouldn't care then for men and that they would hold one in scorn for a thousand years, would one?"

"You call that a new idea?" said Kirillov, after a moment's thought.

"I . . . didn't call it so, but when I thought it I felt it as a new idea."

"You 'felt the idea'?" observed Kirillov. "That's good. There are lots of ideas that are always there and yet suddenly become new. That's true. I see a great deal now as though it were for the first time."

"Suppose you had lived in the moon," Stavrogin interrupted, not listening, but pursuing his own thought, "and suppose there you had done all these nasty and ridiculous things. . . . You know from here for certain that they will laugh at you and hold you in scorn for a thousand years as long as the moon lasts. But now you are here, and looking at the moon from here. You don't care here for anything you've done there, and that the people there will hold you in scorn for a thousand years, do you?"



"I don't know," answered Kirillov. "I've not been in the moon," he added, without any irony, simply to state the fact.

"Whose baby was that just now?"

"The old woman's mother-in-law was here—no, daughter-in-law, it's all the same. Three days. She's lying ill with the baby, it cries a lot at night, it's the stomach. The mother sleeps, but the old woman picks it up; I play ball with it. The ball's from Hamburg. I bought it in Hamburg to throw it and catch it, it strengthens the spine. It's a girl."

"Are you fond of children?"

"I am," answered Kirillov, though rather indifferently.

"Then you're fond of life?"

"Yes, I'm fond of life! What of it?"

"Though you've made up your mind to shoot yourself."

"What of it? Why connect it? Life's one thing and that's another. Life exists, but death doesn't at all."

"You've begun to believe in a future eternal life?"

"No, not in a future eternal life, but in eternal life here. There are moments, you reach moments, and time suddenly stands still, and it will become eternal."

"You hope to reach such a moment?"

"Yes."

"That'll scarcely be possible in our time," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch responded slowly and, as it were, dreamily; the two spoke without the slightest irony. "In the Apocalypse the angel swears that there will be no more time."

"I know. That's very true; distinct and exact. When all mankind attains happiness then there will be no more time, for there'll be no need of it, a very true thought."

"Where will they put it?"

"Nowhere. Time's not an object but an idea. It will be extinguished in the mind."

"The old commonplaces of philosophy, the same from the beginning of time," Stavrogin muttered with a kind of disdainful compassion.

"Always the same, always the same, from the beginning of time and never any other," Kirillov said with sparkling eyes, as though there were almost a triumph in that idea.

"You seem to be very happy, Kirillov."

"Yes, very happy," he answered, as though making the most ordinary reply.

"But you were distressed so lately, angry with Liputin."

"H'm . . . I'm not scolding now. I didn't know then that I was happy. Have you seen a leaf, a leaf from a tree?"

"Yes."

"I saw a yellow one lately, a little green. It was decayed at the edges. It was blown by the wind. When I was ten years old I used to shut my eyes in the winter on purpose and fancy a green leaf, bright, with veins on it, and the sun shining. I used to open my eyes and not believe them, because it was very nice, and I used to shut them again."

"What's that? An allegory?"

"N-no . . . why? I'm not speaking of an allegory, but of a leaf, only a leaf. The leaf is good. Everything's good."

"Everything?"

"Everything. Man is unhappy because he doesn't know he's happy. It's only that. That's all, that's all! If anyone finds out he'll become happy at once, that minute. That mother-in-law will die; but the baby will remain. It's all good. I discovered it all of a sudden."

"And if anyone dies of hunger, and if anyone insults and outrages the little girl, is that good?"

"Yes! And if anyone blows his brains out for the baby, that's good too. And if anyone doesn't, that's good too. It's all good, all. It's good for all those who know that it's all good. If they knew that it was good for them, it would be good for them, but as long as they don't know it's good for them, it will be bad for them. That's the whole idea, the whole of it."

"When did you find out you were so happy?"

"Last week, on Tuesday, no, Wednesday, for it was Wednesday by that time, in the night."



"By what reasoning?"

"I don't remember; I was walking about the room; never mind. I stopped my clock. It was thirty-seven minutes past two."

"As an emblem of the fact that there will be no more time?"

Kirillov was silent.

"They're bad because they don't know they're good. When they find out, they won't outrage a little girl. They'll find out that they're good and they'll all become good, every one of them."

"Here you've found it out, so have you become good then?"

"I am good."

"That I agree with, though," Stavrogin muttered, frowning.

"He who teaches that all are good will end the world."

"He who taught it was crucified."

"He will come, and his name will be the man-god."

"The god-man?"

"The man-god. That's the difference."

"Surely it wasn't you lighted the lamp under the ikon?"

"Yes, it was I lighted it."

"Did you do it believing?"

"The old woman likes to have the lamp and she hadn't time to do it to-day," muttered Kirillov.

"You don't say prayers yourself?"

"I pray to everything. You see the spider crawling on the wall, I look at it and thank it for crawling."

His eyes glowed again. He kept looking straight at Stavrogin with firm and unflinching expression. Stavrogin frowned and watch him disdainfully, but there was no mockery in his eyes.

"I'll bet that when I come next time you'll be believing in God too," he said, getting up and taking his hat.

"Why?" said Kirillov, getting up too.

"If you were to find out that you believe in God, then you'd believe in Him; but since you don't know that you believe in Him, then you don't believe in Him," laughed Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

"That's not right," Kirillov pondered "you've distorted the idea. It's a flippant joke. Remember what you have meant in my life, Stavrogin."

"Good-bye, Kirillov."

"Come at night; when will you?"

"Why, haven't you forgotten about to-morrow?"

"Ach, I'd forgotten. Don't be uneasy. I won't oversleep. At nine o'clock. I know how to wake up when I want to. I go to bed saying 'seven o'clock,' and I wake up at seven o'clock, 'ten o'clock,' an I wake up at ten o'clock."

"You have remarkable powers," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, looking at his pale face.

"I'll come and open the gate."

"Don't trouble, Shatov will open it for me."

"Ah, Shatov. Very well, good-bye."

## VI

The door of the empty house in which Shatov was lodging was not closed; but, making his way into the passage, Stavrogin found himself in utter darkness, and began feeling with his hand for the stairs to the upper story. Suddenly a door opened upstairs, and a light appeared. Shatov did not come out himself, but simply opened his door. When Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was standing in the doorway of the room, he saw Shatov standing at the table in the corner, waiting expectantly.

"Will you receive me on business?" he queried from the doorway.

"Come in and sit down," answered Shatov. "Shut the door; stay, I'll shut it."

He locked the door, returned to the table, and sat down, facing Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. He had grown thinner during that week, and now he seemed in a fever.

"You've been worrying me to death," he said, looking down, in a soft half-whisper. "Why didn't you come?"

"You were so sure I should come then?"

"Yes, stay, I have been delirious . . . perhaps I'm delirious now. . . . Stay a moment."

He got up and seized something that was lying on the uppermost of his three bookshelves. It was a revolver.



"One night, in delirium, I fancied that you were coming to kill me, and early next morning I spent my last farthing on buying a revolver from that good-for-nothing fellow Lyamshin; I did not mean to let you do it. Then I came to myself again . . . I've neither powder nor shot; it has been lying there on the shelf till now; wait a minute. . . . "

He got up and was opening the casement.

"Don't throw it away, why should you?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch checked him. "It's worth something. Besides, to-morrow people will begin saying that there are revolvers lying about under Shatov's window. Put it back, that's right; sit down. Tell me, why do you seem to be penitent for having thought I should come to kill you? I have not come now to be reconciled, but to talk of something necessary. Enlighten me to begin with. You didn't give me that blow because of my connection with your wife?"

"You know I didn't, yourself," said Shatov, looking down again.

"And not because you believed the stupid gossip about Darya Pavlovna?"

"No, no, of course not! It's nonsense! My sister told me from the very first . . . " Shatov said, harshly and impatiently, and even with a slight stamp of his foot.

"Then I guessed right and you too guessed right," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on in a tranquil voice. "You are right. Marya Timofyevna Lebyadkin is my lawful wife, married to me four and a half years ago in Petersburg. I suppose the blow was on her account?"

Shatov, utterly astounded, listened in silence.

"I guessed, but did not believe it," he muttered at last, looking strangely at Stavrogin.

"And you struck me?"

Shatov flushed and muttered almost incoherently:

"Because of your fall . . . your lie. I didn't go up to you to punish you . . . I didn't know when I went up to you that I should strike you . . . I did it because you meant so much to me in my life . . . I . . . "

"I understand, I understand, spare your words. I am sorry you are feverish. I've come about a most urgent matter."

"I have been expecting you too long." Shatov seemed to be

quivering all over, and he got up from his seat. "Say what you have to say . . . I'll speak too . . . later."

He sat down.

"What I have come about is nothing of that kind," began Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, scrutinising him with curiosity. "Owing to certain circumstances I was forced this very day to choose such an hour to come and tell you that they may murder you."

Shatov looked wildly at him.

"I know that I may be in some danger," he said in measured tones, "but how can you have come to know of it?"

"Because I belong to them as you do, and am a member of their society, just as you are."

"You . . . you are a member of the society?"

"I see from your eyes that you were prepared for anything from me rather than that," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with a faint smile. "But, excuse me, you knew then that there would be an attempt on your life?"

"Nothing of the sort. And I don't think so now, in spite of your words, though . . . though there's no being sure of anything with these fools!" he cried suddenly in a fury, striking the table with his fist. "I'm not afraid of them! I've broken with them. That fellow's run here four times to tell me it was possible . . . but"—he looked at Stavrogin—"what do you know about it, exactly?"

"Don't be uneasy; I am not deceiving you," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on, rather coldly, with the air of a man who is only fulfilling a duty. "You question me as to what I know. I know that you entered that society abroad, two years ago, at the time of the old organisation, just before you went to America, and I believe, just after our last conversation, about which you wrote so much to me in your letter from America. By the way, I must apologise for not having answered you by letter, but confined myself to . . . "

"To sending the money; wait a bit," Shatov interrupted, hurriedly pulling out a drawer in the table and taking from under some papers a rainbow-coloured note. "Here, take it, the hundred roubles you sent me; but for you I should have perished out there. I should have been a long time paying it back if it had not been for your mother. She made me a present of



that note nine months ago, because I was so badly off after my illness. But, go on, please. . . . "

He was breathless.

"In America you changed your views, and when you came back you wanted to resign. They gave you no answer, but charged you to take over a printing press here in Russia from some one, and to keep it till you handed it over to some one who would come from them for it. I don't know the details exactly, but I fancy that's the position in outline. You undertook it in the hope, or on the condition, that it would be the last task they would require of you, and that then they would release you altogether. Whether that is so or not, I learnt it, not from them, but quite by chance. But now for what I fancy you don't know; these gentry have no intention of parting with you."

"That's absurd!" cried Shatov. "I've told them honestly that I've cut myself off from them in everything. That is my right, the right to freedom of conscience and of thought. . . . I won't put up with it! There's no power which could . . . "

"I say, don't shout," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch said earnestly, checking him. "That Verhovensky is such a fellow that he may be listening to us now in your passage, perhaps, with his own ears or some one else's. Even that drunkard, Lebyadkin, was probably bound to keep an eye on you, and you on him, too, I dare say? You'd better tell me, has Verhovensky accepted your arguments now, or not?"

"He has. He has said that it can be done and that I have the right. . . . "

"Well then, he's deceiving you. I know that even Kirillov, who scarcely belongs to them at all, has given them information about you. And they have lots of agents, even people who don't know that they're serving the society. They've always kept a watch on you. One of the things Pyotr Verhovensky came here for was to settle your business once for all, and he is fully authorised to do so, that is at the first good opportunity, to get rid of you, as a man who knows too much and might give them away. I repeat that this is certain, and allow me to add that they are, for some reason, convinced that you are a spy, and that if you haven't informed against them yet, you will. Is that true?"

Shatov made a wry face at hearing such a question asked in such a matter-of-fact tone.

"If I were a spy, whom could I inform?" he said angrily, not giving a direct answer. "No, leave me alone, let me go to the devil!" he cried suddenly, catching again at his original idea, which agitated him violently. Apparently it affected him more deeply than the news of his own danger. "You, you, Stavrogin, how could you mix yourself up with such shameful, stupid, second-hand absurdity? You a member of the society? What an exploit for Stavrogin!" he cried suddenly, in despair.

He clasped his hands, as though nothing could be a bitterer and more inconsolable grief to him than such a discovery.

"Excuse me," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, extremely surprised, "but you seem to look upon me as a sort of sun, and on yourself as an insect in comparison. I noticed that even from your letter in America."

"You . . . you know. . . . Oh, let us drop me altogether," Shatov broke off suddenly, "and if you can explain anything about yourself explain it. . . . Answer my question!" he repeated feverishly.

"With pleasure. You ask how I could get into such a den? After what I have told you, I'm bound to be frank with you to some extent on the subject. You see, strictly speaking, I don't belong to the society at all, and I never have belonged to it, and I've much more right than you to leave them, because I never joined them. In fact, from the very beginning I told them that I was not one of them, and that if I've happened to help them it has simply been by accident as a man of leisure. I took some part in reorganising the society, on the new plan, but that was all. But now they've changed their views, and have made up their minds that it would be dangerous to let me go, and I believe I'm sentenced to death too."

"Oh, they do nothing but sentence to death, and all by means of sealed documents, signed by three men and a half. And you think they've any power!"

"You're partly right there and partly not," Stavrogin answered with the same indifference, almost listlessness. "There's no doubt that there's a great deal that's fanciful about it, as



there always is in such cases: a handful magnifies its size and significance. To my thinking, if you will have it, the only one is Pyotr Verhovensky, and it's simply good-nature on his part to consider himself only an agent of the society. But the fundamental idea is no stupider than others of the sort. They are connected with the *Internationale*. They have succeeded in establishing agents in Russia, they have even hit on a rather original method, though it's only theoretical, of course. As for their intentions here, the movements of our Russian organisation are something so obscure and almost always unexpected that really they might try anything among us. Note that Verhovensky is an obstinate man."

"He's a bug, an ignoramus, a buffoon, who understands nothing in Russia!" cried Shatov spitefully.

"You know him very little. It's quite true that none of them understand much about Russia, but not much less than you and I do. Besides, Verhovensky is an enthusiast."

"Verhovensky an enthusiast?"

"Oh, yes. There is a point when he ceases to be a buffoon and becomes a madman. I beg you to remember your own expression: 'Do you know how powerful a single man may be?' Please don't laugh about it, he's quite capable of pulling a trigger. They are convinced that I am a spy too. As they don't know how to do things themselves, they're awfully fond of accusing people of being spies."

"But you're not afraid, are you?"

"N-no. I'm not very much afraid. . . . But your case is quite different. I warned you that you might anyway keep it in mind. To my thinking there's no reason to be offended in being threatened with danger by fools; their brains don't affect the question. They've raised their hand against better men than you or me. It's a quarter past eleven, though." He looked at his watch and got up from his chair. "I wanted to ask you one quite irrelevant question."

"For God's sake!" cried Shatov, rising impulsively from his seat.

"I beg your pardon?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him inquiringly.

"Ask it, ask your question for God's sake," Shatov repeated

in indescribable excitement, "but on condition that I ask you a question too. I beseech you to allow me . . . I can't . . . ask your question!"

Stavrogin waited a moment and then began.

"I've heard that you have some influence on Marya Timofyevna, and that she was fond of seeing you and hearing you talk. Is that so?"

"Yes . . . she used to listen . . . " said Shatov, confused.

"Within a day or two I intend to make a public announcement of our marriage here in the town."

"Is that possible?" Shatov whispered, almost with horror.

"I don't quite understand you. There's no sort of difficulty about it, witnesses to the marriage are here. Everything took place in Petersburg, perfectly legally and smoothly, and if it has not been made known till now, it is simply because the witnesses, Kirillov, Pyotr Verhovensky ,and Lebyadkin (whom I now have the pleasure of claiming as a brother-in-law) promised to hold their tongues."

"I don't mean that . . . You speak so calmly . . . but go on! Listen! You weren't forced into that marriage, were you?"

"No, no one forced me into it." Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled at Shatov's importunate haste.

"And what's that talk she keeps up about her baby?" Shatov interposed disconnectedly, with feverish haste.

"She talks about her baby? Bah! I didn't know. It's the first time I've heard of it. She never had a baby and couldn't have had: Marya Timofyevna is a virgin."

"Ah! That's just what I thought! Listen!"

"What's the matter with you, Shatov?"

Shatov hid his face in his hands, turned away, but suddenly clutched Stavrogin by the shoulders.

"Do you know why, do you know why, anyway," he shouted, "why you did all this, and why you are resolved on such a punishment now!"

"Your question is clever and malignant, but I mean to surprise you too; I fancy I do know why I got married then, and why I am resolved on such a punishment now, as you express it."

"Let's leave that . . . of that later. Put it off. Let's talk of



the chief thing, the chief thing. I've been waiting two years for you."

"Yes?"

"I've waited too long for you. I've been thinking of you incessantly. You are the only man who could move . . . I wrote to you about it from America."

"I remember your long letter very well."

"Too long to be read? No doubt; six sheets of notepaper. Don't speak! Don't speak! Tell me, can you spare me another ten minutes? . . . But now, this minute . . . I have waited for you too long."

"Certainly, half an hour if you like, but not more, if that will suit you."

"And on condition, too," Shatov put in wrathfully, "that you take a different tone. Do you hear? I demand when I ought to entreat. Do you understand what it means to demand when one ought to entreat?"

"I understand that in that way you lift yourself above all ordinary considerations for the sake of loftier aims," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with a faint smile. "I see with regret, too, that you're feverish."

"I beg you to treat me with respect, I insist on it!" shouted Shatov, "not my personality—I don't care a hang for that, but something else, just for this once. While I am talking . . . we are two beings, and have come together in infinity . . . for the last time in the world. Drop your tone, and speak like a human being! Speak, if only for once in your life with the voice of a man. I say it not for my sake but for yours. Do you understand that you ought to forgive me that blow in the face if only because I gave you the opportunity of realising your immense power. . . . Again you smile your disdainful, worldly smile! Oh, when will you understand me! Have done with being a snob! Understand that I insist on that. I insist on it, else I won't speak, I'm not going to for anything!"

His excitement was approaching frenzy. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch frowned and seemed to become more on his guard.

"Since I have remained another half-hour with you when time is so precious," he pronounced earnestly and impressively, "you may rest assured that I mean to listen to you at least with

interest . . . and I am convinced that I shall hear from you much that is new."

He sat down on a chair.

"Sit down!" cried Shatov, and he sat down himself.

"Please remember," Stavrogin interposed once more, "that I was about to ask a real favour of you concerning Marya Timofyevna, of great importance for her, anyway. . . . "

"What?" Shatov frowned suddenly with the air of a man who has just been interrupted at the most important moment, and who gazes at you unable to grasp the question.

"And you did not let me finish," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on with a smile.

"Oh, nonsense, afterwards!" Shatov waved his hand disdainfully, grasping, at last, what he wanted, and passed at once to his principal theme.

## VII

"Do you know," he began, with flashing eyes, almost menacingly, bending right forward in his chair, raising the forefinger of his right hand above him (obviously unaware that he was doing so), "do you know who are the only 'god-bearing' people on earth, destined to regenerate and save the world in the name of a new God, and to whom are given the keys of life and of the new world . . . Do you know which is that people and what is its name?"

"From your manner I am forced to conclude, and I think I may as well do so at once, that it is the Russian people."

"And you can laugh, oh, what a race!" Shatov burst out.

"Calm yourself, I beg of you; on the contrary, I was expecting something of the sort from you."

"You expected something of the sort? And don't you know those words yourself?"

"I know them very well. I see only too well what you're driving at. All your phrases, even the expression 'god-bearing people' is only a sequel to our talk two years ago, abroad, not long before you went to America. . . . At least, as far as I can recall it now."

"It's your phrase altogether, not mine. Your own, not simply



the sequel of our conversation. 'Our' conversation it was not at all. It was a teacher uttering weighty words, and a pupil who was raised from the dead. I was that pupil and you were the teacher."

"But, if you remember, it was just after my words you joined their society, and only afterwards went away to America."

"Yes, and I wrote to you from America about that. I wrote to you about everything. Yes, I could not at once tear my bleeding heart from what I had grown into from childhood, on which had been lavished all the raptures of my hopes and all the tears of my hatred. . . . It is difficult to change gods. I did not believe you then, because I did not want to believe, I plunged for the last time into that sewer. . . . But the seed remained and grew up. Seriously, tell me seriously, didn't you read all my letter from America, perhaps you didn't read it at all?"

"I read three pages of it. The two first and the last. And I glanced through the middle as well. But I was always meaning . . . "

"Ah, never mind, drop it! Damn it!" cried Shatov, waving his hand. "If you've renounced those words about the people now, how could you have uttered them then? . . . That's what crushes me now."

"I wasn't joking with you then; in persuading you I was perhaps more concerned with myself than with you," Stavrogin pronounced enigmatically.

"You weren't joking! In America I was lying for three months on straw beside a hapless creature, and I learnt from him that at the very time when you were sowing the seed of God and the Fatherland in my heart, at that very time, perhaps during those very days, you were infecting the heart of that hapless creature, that maniac Kirillov, with poison . . . you confirmed false malignant ideas in him, and brought him to the verge of insanity. . . . Go, look at him now, he is your creation . . . you've seen him though."

"In the first place, I must observe that Kirillov himself told me that he is happy and that he's good. Your supposition that all this was going on at the same time is almost correct. But what of it? I repeat, I was not deceiving either of you."

"Are you an atheist? An atheist now?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"Just as I was then."

"I wasn't asking you to treat me with respect when I began the conversation. With your intellect you might have understood that," Shatov muttered indignantly.

"I didn't get up at your first word, I didn't close the conversation, I didn't go away from you, but have been sitting here ever since submissively answering your questions and . . . cries, so it seems I have not been lacking in respect to you yet."

Shatov interrupted, waving his hand.

"Do you remember your expression that 'an atheist can't be a Russian,' that 'an atheist at once ceases to be a Russian'? Do you remember saying that?"

"Did I?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch questioned him back.

"You ask? You've forgotten? And yet that was one of the truest statements of the leading peculiarity of the Russian soul, which you divined. You can't have forgotten it! I will remind you of something else: you said then that 'a man who was not orthodox could not be Russian.' "

"I imagine that's a Slavophil idea."

"The Slavophils of to-day disown it. Nowadays, people have grown cleverer. But you went further: you believed that Roman Catholicism was not Christianity; you asserted that Rome proclaimed Christ subject to the third temptation of the devil. Announcing to all the world that Christ without an earthly kingdom cannot hold his ground upon earth, Catholicism by so doing proclaimed Antichrist and ruined the whole Western world. You pointed out that if France is in agonies now it's simply the fault of Catholicism, for she has rejected the iniquitous God of Rome and has not found a new one. That's what you could say then! I remember our conversations."

"If I believed, no doubt I should repeat it even now. I wasn't lying when I spoke as though I had faith," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch pronounced very earnestly. "But I must tell you, this repetition of my ideas in the past makes a very disagreeable impression on me. Can't you leave off?"

"If you believe it?" repeated Shatov, paying not the slightest attention to this request. "But didn't you tell me that if it were mathematically proved to you that the truth excludes Christ, you'd prefer to stick to Christ rather than to the truth? Did you say that? Did you?"



"But allow me too at last to ask a question," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, raising his voice. "What is the object of this irritable and . . . malicious cross-examination?"

"This examination will be over for all eternity, and you will never hear it mentioned again."

"You keep insisting that we are outside the limits of time and space."

"Hold your tongue!" Shatov cried suddenly. "I am stupid and awkward, but let my name perish in ignominy! Let me repeat your leading idea. . . . Oh, only a dozen lines, only the conclusion."

"Repeat it, if it's only the conclusion. . . . "

Stavrogin made a movement to look at his watch, but restrained himself and did not look.

Shatov bent forward in his chair again and again held up his finger for a moment.

"Not a single nation," he went on, as though reading it line by line, still gazing menacingly at Stavrogin, "not a single nation has ever been founded on principles of science or reason. There has never been an example of it, except for a brief moment, through folly. Socialism is from its very nature bound to be atheism, seeing that it has from the very first proclaimed that it is an atheistic organisation of society, and that it intends to establish itself exclusively on the elements of science and reason. Science and reason have, from the beginning of time, played a secondary and subordinate part in the life of nations; so it will be till the end of time. Nations are built up and moved by another force which sways and dominates them, the origin of which is unknown and inexplicable: that force is the force of an insatiable desire to go on to the end, though at the same time it denies that end. It is the force of the persistent assertion of one's own existence, and a denial of death. It's the spirit of life, as the Scriptures call it, 'the river of living water,' the drying up of which is threatened in the Apocalypse. It's the æsthetic principle, as the philosophers call it, the ethical principle with which they identify it, 'the seeking for God,' as I call

it more simply. The object of every national movement, in every people and at every period of its existence is only the seeking for its god, who must be its own god, and the faith in him as the only true one. God is the synthetic personality of the whole people, taken from its beginning to its end. It has never happened that all, or even many, peoples have had one common god, but each has always had its own. It's a sign of the decay of nations when they begin to have gods in common. When gods begin to be common to several nations the gods are dying and the faith in them, together with the nations themselves. The stronger a people the more individual their god. There never has been a nation without a religion, that is, without an idea of good and evil. Every people has its own conception of good and evil, and its own good and evil. When the same conceptions of good and evil become prevalent in several nations, then these nations are dying, and then the very distinction between good and evil is beginning to disappear. Reason has never had the power to define good and evil, or even to distinguish between good and evil, even approximately; on the contrary, it has always mixed them up in a disgraceful and pitiful way; science has even given the solution by the fist. This is particularly characteristic of the half-truths of science, the most terrible scourge of humanity, unknown till this century, and worse than plague, famine, or war. A half-truth is a despot such as has never been in the world before. A despot that has its priests and its slaves, a despot to whom all do homage with love and superstition hitherto inconceivable, before which science itself trembles and cringes in a shameful way. These are your own words, Stavrogin, all except that about the half-truth; that's my own because I am myself a case of half-knowledge, and that's why I hate it particularly. I haven't altered anything of your ideas or even of your words, not a syllable."

"I don't agree that you've not altered anything," Stavrogin observed cautiously. "You accepted them with ardour, and in your ardour have transformed them unconsciously. The very fact that you reduce God to a simple attribute of nationality . . . "

He suddenly began watching Shatov with intense and peculiar attention, not so much his words as himself.



"I reduce God to the attribute of nationality?" cried Shatov. "On the contrary, I raise the people to God. And has it ever been otherwise? The people is the body of God. Every people is only a people so long as it has its own god and excludes all other gods on earth irreconcilably; so long as it believes that by its god it will conquer and drive out of the world all other gods. Such, from the beginning of time, has been the belief of all great nations, all, anyway, who have been specially remarkable, all who have been leaders of humanity. There is no going against facts. The Jews lived only to await the coming of the true God and left the world the true God. The Greeks deified nature and bequeathed the world their religion, that is, philosophy and art. Rome deified the people in the State, and bequeathed the idea of the State to the nations. France throughout her long history was only the incarnation and development of the Roman god, and if they have at last flung their Roman god into the abyss and plunged into atheism, which, for the time being, they call socialism, it is solely because socialism is, anyway, healthier than Roman Catholicism. If a great people does not believe that the truth is only to be found in itself alone (in itself alone and in it exclusively); if it does not believe that it alone is fit and destined to raise up and save all the rest by its truth, it would at once sink into being ethnographical material, and not a great people. A really great people can never accept a secondary part in the history of Humanity, nor even one of the first, but will have the first part. A nation which loses this belief ceases to be a nation. But there is only one truth, and therefore only a single one out of the nations can have the true God, even though other nations may have great gods of their own. Only one nation is 'god-bearing,' that's the Russian people, and . . . and . . . and can you think me such a fool, Stavrogin," he yelled frantically all at once, "that I can't distinguish whether my words at this moment are the rotten old commonplaces that have been ground out in all the Slavophil mills in Moscow, or a perfectly new saying, the last word, the sole word of renewal and resurrection, and . . . and what do I care for your laughter at this minute! What do I care that you utterly, utterly fail to understand me, not a word, not a sound! Oh, how I despise your haughty laughter and your look at this minute!"

He jumped up from his seat; there was positively foam on his lips.

"On the contrary Shatov, on the contrary," Stavrogin began with extraordinary earnestness and self-control, still keeping his seat, "on the contrary, your fervent words have revived many extremely powerful recollections in me. In your words I recognise my own mood two years ago, and now I will not tell you, as I did just now, that you have exaggerated my ideas. I believe, indeed, that they were even more exceptional, even more independent, and I assure you for the third time that I should be very glad to confirm all that you've said just now, every syllable of it, but . . . "

"But you want a hare?"

"Wh-a-t?"

"Your own nasty expression," Shatov laughed spitefully, sitting down again. "To cook your hare you must first catch it, to believe in God you must first have a god. You used to say that in Petersburg, I'm told, like Nozdryov, who tried to catch a hare by his hind legs."

"No, what he did was to boast he'd caught him. By the way, allow me to trouble you with a question though, for indeed I think I have the right to one now. Tell me, have you caught your hare?"

"Don't dare to ask me in such words! Ask differently, quite differently." Shatov suddenly began trembling all over.

"Certainly I'll ask differently." Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked coldly at him. "I only wanted to know, do you believe in God, yourself?"

"I believe in Russia. . . . I believe in her orthodoxy. . . . I believe in the body of Christ. . . . I believe that the new advent will take place in Russia. . . . I believe . . . " Shatov muttered frantically.

"And in God? In God?"

"I . . . I will believe in God."

Not one muscle moved in Stavrogin's face. Shatov looked passionately and defiantly at him, as though he would have scorched him with his eyes.

"I haven't told you that I don't believe," he cried at last. "I will only have you know that I am a luckless, tedious book, and nothing more so far, so far. . . . But confound me! We're



discussing you not me. . . . I'm a man of no talent, and can only give my blood, nothing more, like every man without talent; never mind my blood either! I'm talking about you. I've been waiting here two years for you. . . . Here I've been dancing about in my nakedness before you for the last half-hour. You, only you can raise that flag! . . . "

He broke off, and sat as though in despair, with his elbows on the table and his head in his hands.

"I merely mention it as something queer," Stavrogin interrupted suddenly. "Every one for some inexplicable reason keeps foisting a flag upon me. Pyotr Verhovensky, too, is convinced that I might 'raise his flag,' that's how his words were repeated to me, anyway. He has taken it into his head that I'm capable of playing the part of Stenka Razin for them, 'from my extraordinary aptitude for crime,' his saying too."

"What?" cried Shatov, " 'from your extraordinary aptitude for crime'?"

"Just so."

"H'm! And is it true?" he asked, with an angry smile. "Is it true that when you were in Petersburg you belonged to a secret society for practising beastly sensuality? Is it true that you could give lessons to the Marquis de Sade? Is it true that you decoyed and corrupted children? Speak, don't dare to lie," he cried, beside himself. "Nikolay Stavrogin cannot lie to Shatov, who struck him in the face. Tell me everything, and if it's true I'll kill you, here, on the spot!"

"I did talk like that, but it was not I who outraged children," Stavrogin brought out, after a silence that lasted too long. He turned pale and his eyes gleamed.

"But you talked like that," Shatov went on imperiously, keeping his flashing eyes fastened upon him. "Is it true that you declared that you saw no distinction in beauty between some brutal obscene action and any great exploit, even the sacrifice of life for the good of humanity? Is it true that you have found identical beauty, equal enjoyment, in both extremes?"

"It's impossible to answer like this. . . . I won't answer," muttered Stavrogin, who might well have got up and gone away, but who did not get up and go away.

"I don't know either why evil is hateful and good is beautiful, but I know why the sense of that distinction is effaced

and lost in people like the Stavrogins," Shatov persisted, trembling all over. "Do you know why you made that base and shameful marriage? Simply because the shame and senselessness of it reached the pitch of genius! Oh, you are not one of those who linger on the brink. You fly head foremost. You married from a passion for martyrdom, from a craving for remorse, through moral sensuality. It was a laceration of the nerves. . . . Defiance of common sense was too tempting. Stavrogin and a wretched, half-witted, crippled beggar! When you bit the governor's ear did you feel sensual pleasure? Did you? You idle, loafing, little snob. Did you?"

"You're a psychologist," said Stavrogin, turning paler and paler, "though you're partly mistaken as to the reasons of my marriage. But who can have given you all this information?" he asked, smiling, with an effort. "Was it Kirillov? But he had nothing to do with it."

"You turn pale."

"But what is it you want?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked, raising his voice at last. "I've been sitting under your lash for the last half-hour, and you might at least let me go civilly. Unless you really have some reasonable object in treating me like this."

"Reasonable object?"

"Of course, you're in duty bound, anyway, to let me know your object. I've been expecting you to do so all the time, but you've shown me nothing so far but frenzied spite. I beg you to open the gate for me."

He got up from the chair. Shatov rushed frantically after him.

"Kiss the earth, water it with your tears, pray for forgiveness," he cried, clutching him by the shoulder.

"I didn't kill you . . . that morning, though . . . I drew back my hands . . ." Stavrogin brought out almost with anguish, keeping his eyes on the ground.

"Speak out! Speak out! You came to warn me of danger. You have let me speak. You mean to-morrow to announce your marriage publicly. . . . Do you suppose I don't see from your face that some new menacing idea is dominating you? . . . Stavrogin, why am I condemned to believe in you through all eternity? Could I speak like this to anyone else? I



have modesty, but I am not ashamed of my nakedness because it's Stavrogin I am speaking to. I was not afraid of caricaturing a grand idea by handling it because Stavrogin was listening to me. . . . Shan't I kiss your footprints when you've gone? I can't tear you out of my heart, Nikolay Stavrogin!"

"I'm sorry I can't feel affection for you, Shatov," Stavrogin replied coldly.

"I know you can't, and I know you are not lying. Listen. I can set it all right. I can 'catch your hare' for you."

Stavrogin did not speak.

"You're an atheist because you're a snob, a snob of the snobs. You've lost the distinction between good and evil because you've lost touch with your own people. A new generation is coming, straight from the heart of the people, and you will know nothing of it, neither you nor the Verhovenskys, father or son; nor I, for I'm a snob too—I, the son of your serf and lackey, Pashka. . . . Listen. Attain to God by work; it all lies in that; or disappear like rotten mildew. Attain to Him by work."

"God by work? What sort of work?"

"Peasants' work. Go, give up all your wealth. . . . Ah! you laugh, you're afraid of some trick?"

But Stavrogin was not laughing.

"You suppose that one may attain to God by work, and by peasants' work," he repeated, reflecting as though he had really come across something new and serious which was worth considering. "By the way," he passed suddenly to a new idea, "you reminded me just now. Do you know that I'm not rich at all, that I've nothing to give up? I'm scarcely in a position even to provide for Marya Timofyevna's future. . . . Another thing: I came to ask you if it would be possible for you to remain near Marya Timofyevna in the future, as you are the only person who has some influence over her poor brain. I say this so as to be prepared for anything."

"All right, all right. You're speaking of Marya Timofyevna," said Shatov, waving one hand, while he held a candle in the other. "All right. Afterwards, of course. . . . Listen. Go to Tihon."

"To whom?"

"To Tihon, who used to be a bishop. He lives retired now,

on account of illness, here in the town, in the Bogorodsky monastery."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. People go and see him. You go. What is it to you? What is it to you?"

"It's the first time I've heard of him, and . . . I've never seen anything of that sort of people. Thank you, I'll go."

"This way."

Shatov lighted him down the stairs. "Go along." He flung open the gate into the street.

"I shan't come to you any more, Shatov," said Stavrogin quietly as he stepped through the gateway.

The darkness and the rain continued as before.

## CHAPTER II

### NIGHT (*CONTINUED*)

### I

He walked the length of Bogoyavlensky Street. At last the road began to go downhill; his feet slipped in the mud and suddenly there lay open before him a wide, misty, as it were empty expanse—the river. The houses were replaced by hovels; the street was lost in a multitude of irregular little alleys.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was a long while making his way between the fences, keeping close to the river bank, but finding his way confidently, and scarcely giving it a thought indeed. He was absorbed in something quite different, and looked round with surprise when suddenly, waking up from a profound reverie, he found himself almost in the middle of one long, wet, floating bridge.

There was not a soul to be seen, so that it seemed strange to him when suddenly, almost at his elbow, he heard a deferentially familiar, but rather pleasant, voice, with a suave intonation, such as is affected by our over-refined tradespeople or befrizzled young shop assistants.

"Will you kindly allow me, sir, to share your umbrella?"

There actually was a figure that crept under his umbrella, or tried to appear to do so. The tramp was walking beside him, almost "feeling his elbow," as the soldiers say. Slackening his pace, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch bent down to look more closely, as far as he could, in the darkness. It was a short man, and seemed like an artisan who had been drinking; he was shabbily and scantily dressed; a cloth cap, soaked by the rain

and with the brim half torn off, perched on his shaggy, curly head. He looked a thin, vigorous, swarthy man with dark hair; his eyes were large and must have been black, with a hard glitter and a yellow tinge in them, like a gypsy's; that could be divined even in the darkness. He was about forty, and was not drunk.

"Do you know me?" asked Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

"Mr. Stavrogin, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. You were pointed out to me at the station, when the train stopped last Sunday, though I had heard enough of you beforehand."

"From Pyotr Stepanovitch? Are you . . . Fedka the convict?"

"I was christened Fyodor Fyodorovitch. My mother is living to this day in these parts; she's an old woman, and grows more and more bent every day. She prays to God for me, day and night, so that she doesn't waste her old age lying on the stove."

"You escaped from prison?"

"I've had a change of luck. I gave up books and bells and church-going because I'd a life sentence, so that I had a very long time to finish my term."

"What are you doing here?"

"Well, I do what I can. My uncle, too, died last week in prison here. He was there for false coin, so I threw two dozen stones at the dogs by way of memorial. That's all I've been doing so far. Moreover Pyotr Stepanovitch gives me hopes of a passport, and a merchant's one, too, to go all over Russia, so I'm waiting on his kindness. 'Because,' says he, 'my papa lost you at cards at the English club, and I,' says he, 'find that inhumanity unjust.' You might have the kindness to give me three roubles, sir, for a glass to warm myself."

"So you've been spying on me. I don't like that. By whose orders?"

"As to orders, it's nothing of the sort; it's simply that I knew of your benevolence, which is known to all the world. All we get, as you know, is an armful of hay, or a prod with a fork. Last Friday I filled myself as full of pie as Martin did of soap; since then I didn't eat one day, and the day after I fasted, and on the third I'd nothing again. I've had my fill of water from the river. I'm breeding fish in my belly. . . . So won't your honour give me something? I've a sweetheart expecting



me not far from here, but I daren't show myself to her without money."

"What did Pyotr Stepanovitch promise you from me?"

"He didn't exactly promise anything, but only said that I might be of use to your honour if my luck turns out good, but how exactly he didn't explain; for Pyotr Stepanovitch wants to see if I have the patience of a Cossack, and feels no sort of confidence in me."

"Why?"

"Pyotr Stepanovitch is an astronomer, and has learnt all God's planets, but even he may be criticised. I stand before you, sir, as before God, because I have heard so much about you. Pyotr Stepanovitch is one thing, but you, sir, maybe, are something else. When he's said of a man he's a scoundrel, he knows nothing more about him except that he's a scoundrel. Or if he's said he's a fool, then that man has no calling with him except that of fool. But I may be a fool Tuesday and Wednesday, and on Thursday wiser than he. Here now he knows about me that I'm awfully sick to get a passport, for there's no getting on in Russia without papers—so he thinks that he's snared my soul. I tell you, sir, life's a very easy business for Pyotr Stepanovitch, for he fancies a man to be this and that, and goes on as though he really was. And, what's more, he's beastly stingy. It's his notion that, apart from him, I daren't trouble you, but I stand before you, sir, as before God. This is the fourth night I've been waiting for your honour on this bridge, to show that I can find my own way on the quiet, without him. I'd better bow to a boot, thinks I, than to a peasant's shoe."

"And who told you that I was going to cross the bridge at night?"

"Well, that, I'll own, came out by chance, most through Captain Lebyadkin's foolishness, because he can't keep anything to himself. . . . So that three roubles from your honour would pay me for the weary time I've had these three days and nights. And the clothes I've had soaked, I feel that too much to speak of it."

"I'm going to the left; you'll go to the right. Here's the end of the bridge. Listen, Fyodor; I like people to understand what I say, once for all. I won't give you a farthing. Don't meet me

in future on the bridge or anywhere. I've no need of you, and never shall have, and if you don't obey, I'll tie you and take you to the police. March!"

"Eh-heh! Fling me something for my company, anyhow. I've cheered you on your way."

"Be off!"

"But do you know the way here? There are all sorts of turnings. . . . I could guide you; for this town is for all the world as though the devil carried it in his basket and dropped it in bits here and there."

"I'll tie you up!" said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, turning upon him menacingly.

"Perhaps you'll change your mind, sir; it's easy to ill-treat the helpless."

"Well, I see you can rely on yourself!"

"I rely upon you, sir, and not very much on myself. . . ."

"I've no need of you at all. I've told you so already."

"But I have need, that's how it is! I shall wait for you on the way back. There's nothing for it."

"I give you my word of honour if I meet you I'll tie you up."

"Well, I'll get a belt ready for you to tie me with. A lucky journey to you, sir. You kept the helpless snug under your umbrella. For that alone I'll be grateful to you to my dying day."

He fell behind. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch walked on to his destination, feeling disturbed. This man who had dropped from the sky was absolutely convinced that he was indispensable to him, Stavrogin, and was in insolent haste to tell him so. He was being treated unceremoniously all round. But it was possible, too, that the tramp had not been altogether lying, and had tried to force his services upon him on his own initiative, without Pyotr Stepanovitch's knowledge, and that would be more curious still.

## II

The house which Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had reached stood alone in a deserted lane between fences, beyond which market gardens stretched, at the very end of the town. It was



a very solitary little wooden house, which was only just built and not yet weather-boarded. In one of the little windows the shutters were not yet closed, and there was a candle standing on the window-ledge, evidently as a signal to the late guest who was expected that night. Thirty paces away Stavrogin made out on the doorstep the figure of a tall man, evidently the master of the house, who had come out to stare impatiently up the road. He heard his voice, too, impatient and, as it were, timid.

"Is that you? You?"

"Yes," responded Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but not till he had mounted the steps and was folding up his umbrella.

"At last, sir." Captain Lebyadkin, for it was he, ran fussily to and fro. "Let me take your umbrella, please. It's very wet; I'll open it on the floor here, in the corner. Please walk in. Please walk in."

The door was open from the passage into a room that was lighted by two candles.

"If it had not been for your promise that you would certainly come, I should have given up expecting you."

"A quarter to one," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, looking at his watch, as he went into the room.

"And in this rain; and such an interesting distance. I've no clock . . . and there are nothing but market-gardens round me . . . so that you fall behind the times. Not that I murmur exactly; for I dare not, I dare not, but only because I've been devoured with impatience all the week . . . to have things settled at last."

"How so?"

"To hear my fate, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Please sit down."

He bowed, pointing to a seat by the table, before the sofa.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked around. The room was tiny and low-pitched. The furniture consisted only of the most essential articles, plain wooden chairs and a sofa, also newly made without covering or cushions. There were two tables of limewood; one by the sofa, and the other in the corner was covered with a table-cloth, laid with things over which a clean table-napkin had been thrown. And, indeed, the whole room was obviously kept extremely clean.

monious state of mind. Drunkards of many years' standing, like Lebyadkin, often show traces of incoherence, of mental cloudiness, of something, as it were, damaged, and crazy, though they may deceive, cheat, and swindle, almost as well as anybody if occasion arises.

"I see that you haven't changed a bit in these four years and more, captain," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, somewhat more amiably. "It seems, in fact, as though the second half of a man's life is usually made up of nothing but the habits he has accumulated during the first half."

"Grand words! You solve the riddle of life!" said the captain, half cunningly, half in genuine and unfeigned admiration, for he was a great lover of words. "Of all your sayings, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I remember one thing above all; you were in Petersburg when you said it: 'One must really be a great man to be able to make a stand even against common sense.' That was it."

"Yes, and a fool as well."

"A fool as well, maybe. But you've been scattering clever sayings all your life, while they . . . Imagine Liputin, imagine Pyotr Stepanovitch saying anything like that! Oh, how cruelly Pyotr Stepanovitch has treated me!"

"But how about yourself, captain? What can you say of your behaviour?"

"Drunkenness, and the multitude of my enemies. But now that's all over, all over, and I have a new skin, like a snake. Do you know, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I am making my will; in fact, I've made it already?"

"That's interesting. What are you leaving, and to whom?"

"To my fatherland, to humanity, and to the students. Nikaloy Vsyevolodovitch, I read in the paper the biography of an American. He left all his vast fortune to factories and to the exact sciences, and his skeleton to the students of the academy there, and his skin to be made into a drum, so that the American national hymn might be beaten upon it day and night. Alas! we are pigmies in mind compared with the soaring thought of the States of North America. Russia is the play of nature but not of mind. If I were to try leaving my skin for a drum, for instance, to the Akmolinsky infantry regiment, in which I had the honour of beginning my service,



on condition of beating the Russian national hymn upon it every day, in face of the regiment, they'd take it for liberalism and prohibit my skin . . . and so I confine myself to the students. I want to leave my skeleton to the academy, but on the condition, though, on the condition that a label should be stuck on the forehead for ever and ever, with the words: 'A repentant free-thinker.' There now!"

The captain spoke excitedly, and genuinely believed, of course, that there was something fine in the American will, but he was cunning, too, and very anxious to entertain Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with whom he had played the part of a buffoon for a long time in the past. But the latter did not even smile, on the contrary, he asked, as it were, suspiciously:

"So you intend to publish your will in your lifetime and get rewarded for it?"

"And what if I do, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch? What if I do?" said Lebyadkin, watching him carefully. "What sort of luck have I had? I've given up writing poetry, and at one time even you were amused by my verses, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Do you remember our reading them over a bottle? But it's all over with my pen. I've written only one poem, like Gogol's 'The Last Story.' Do you remember he proclaimed to Russia that it broke spontaneously from his bosom? It's the same with me; I've sung my last and it's over."

"What sort of poem?"

" 'In case she were to break her leg.' "

"Wha-a-t?"

That was all the captain was waiting for. He had an unbounded admiration for his own poems, but, through a certain cunning duplicity, he was pleased, too, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch always made merry over his poems, and sometimes laughed at them immoderately. In this way he killed two birds with one stone, satisfying at once his poetical aspirations and his desire to be of service; but now he had a third special and very ticklish object in view. Bringing his verses on the scene, the captain thought to exculpate himself on one point about which, for some reason, he always felt himself most apprehensive, and most guilty.

" 'In case of her breaking her leg.' That is, of her riding on horseback. It's a fantasy, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, a wild

fancy, but the fancy of a poet. One day I was struck by meeting a lady on horseback, and asked myself the vital question, 'What would happen then?' That is, in case of accident. All her followers turn away, all her suitors are gone. A pretty kettle of fish. Only the poet remains faithful, with his heart shattered in his breast, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Even a louse may be in love, and is not forbidden by law. And yet the lady was offended by the letter and the verses. I'm told that even you were angry. Were you? I wouldn't believe in anything so grievous. Whom could I harm simply by imagination? Besides, I swear on my honour, Liputin kept saying, 'Send it, send it,' every man, however humble, has a right to send a letter! And so I sent it."

"You offered yourself as a suitor, I understand."

"Enemies, enemies, enemies!"

"Repeat the verses," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sternly.

"Ravings, ravings, more than anything."

However, he drew himself up, stretched out his hand, and began:

*"With broken limbs my beauteous queen*
*Is twice as charming as before,*
*And, deep in love as I have been,*
*To-day I love her even more."*

"Come, that's enough," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with a wave of his hand.

"I dream of Petersburg," cried Lebyadkin, passing quickly to another subject, as though there had been no mention of verses. "I dream of regeneration. . . . Benefactor! May I reckon that you won't refuse the means for the journey? I've been waiting for you all the week as my sunshine."

"I'll do nothing of the sort. I've scarcely any money left. And why should I give you money?"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch seemed suddenly angry. Dryly and briefly he recapitulated all the captain's misdeeds; his drunkenness, his lying, his squandering of the money meant for Marya Timofyevna, his having taken her from the nunnery, his insolent letters threatening to publish the secret, the way he had behaved about Darya Pavlovna, and so on, and so on. The captain heaved, gesticulated, began to reply, but every time Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch stopped him peremptorily.



"And listen," he observed at last, "you keep writing about 'family disgrace.' What disgrace is it to you that your sister is the lawful wife of a Stavrogin?"

"But marriage in secret, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch—a fatal secret. I receive money from you, and I'm suddenly asked the question, 'What's that money for?' My hands are tied; I cannot answer to the detriment of my sister, to the detriment of the family honour."

The captain raised his voice. He liked that subject and reckoned boldly upon it. Alas! he did not realise what a blow was in store for him.

Calmly and exactly, as though he were speaking of the most everyday arrangement, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch informed him that in a few days, perhaps even to-morrow or the day after, he intended to make his marriage known everywhere, "to the police as well as to local society." And so the question of family honour would be settled once for all, and with it the question of subsidy. The captain's eyes were ready to drop out of his head; he positively could not take it in. It had to be explained to him.

"But she is . . . crazy."

"I shall make suitable arrangements."

"But . . . how about your mother?"

"Well, she must do as she likes."

"But will you take your wife to your house?"

"Perhaps so. But that is absolutely nothing to do with you and no concern of yours."

"No concern of mine!" cried the captain. "What about me then?"

"Well, certainly you won't come into my house."

"But, you know, I'm a relation."

"One does one's best to escape from such relations. Why should I go on giving you money then? Judge for yourself."

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, this is impossible. You will think better of it, perhaps? You don't want to lay hands upon. . . . What will people think? What will the world say?"

"Much I care for your world. I married your sister when

the fancy took me, after a drunken dinner, for a bet, and now I'll make it public . . . since that amuses me now."

He said this with a peculiar irritability, so that Lebyadkin began with horror to believe him.

"But me, me? What about me? I'm what matters most! . . . Perhaps you're joking, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch?"

"No, I'm not joking."

"As you will, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but I don't believe you. . . . Then I'll take proceedings."

"You're fearfully stupid, captain."

"Maybe, but this is all that's left me," said the captain, losing his head completely. "In old days we used to get free quarters, anyway, for the work she did in the 'corners.' But what will happen now if you throw me over altogether?"

"But you want to go to Petersburg to try a new career. By the way, is it true what I hear, that you mean to go and give information, in the hope of obtaining a pardon, by betraying all the others?"

The captain stood gaping with wide-open eyes, and made no answer.

"Listen, captain," Stavrogin began suddenly, with great earnestness, bending down to the table. Until then he had been talking, as it were, ambiguously, so that Lebyadkin, who had wide experience in playing the part of buffoon, was up to the last moment a trifle uncertain whether his patron were really angry or simply putting it on; whether he really had the wild intention of making his marriage public, or whether he were only playing. Now Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's stern expression was so convincing that a shiver ran down the captain's back.

"Listen, and tell the truth, Lebyadkin. Have you betrayed anything yet, or not? Have you succeeded in doing anything really? Have you sent a letter to somebody in your foolishness?"

"No, I haven't . . . and I haven't thought of doing it," said the captain, looking fixedly at him.

"That's a lie, that you haven't thought of doing it. That's what you're asking to go to Petersburg for. If you haven't written, have you blabbed to anybody here? Speak the truth. I've heard something."



"When I was drunk, to Liputin. Liputin's a traitor. I opened my heart to him," whispered the poor captain.

"That's all very well, but there's no need to be an ass. If you had an idea you should have kept it to yourself. Sensible people hold their tongues nowadays; they don't go chattering."

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch!" said the captain, quaking. "You've had nothing to do with it yourself; it's not you I've . . ."

"Yes. You wouldn't have ventured to kill the goose that laid your golden eggs."

"Judge for yourself, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, judge for yourself," and, in despair, with tears, the captain began hurriedly relating the story of his life for the last four years. It was the most stupid story of a fool, drawn into matters that did not concern him, and in his drunkenness and debauchery unable, till the last minute, to grasp their importance. He said that before he left Petersburg he 'had been drawn in, at first simply through friendship, like a regular student, although he wasn't a student,' and knowing nothing about it, 'without being guilty of anything,' he had scattered various papers on staircases, left them by dozens at doors, on bell-handles, had thrust them in as though they were newspapers, taken them to the theatre, put them in people's hats, and slipped them into pockets. Afterwards he had taken money from them, 'for what means had I?' He had distributed all sorts of rubbish through the districts of two provinces. "Oh, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch!" he exclaimed, "what revolted me most was that this was utterly opposed to civic, and still more to patriotic laws. They suddenly printed that men were to go out with pitchforks, and to remember that those who went out poor in the morning might go home rich at night. Only think of it! It made me shudder, and yet I distributed it. Or suddenly five or six lines addressed to the whole of Russia, apropos of nothing, 'Make haste and lock up the churches, abolish God, do away with marriage, destroy the right of inheritance, take up your knives,' that's all, and God knows what it means. I tell you, I almost got caught with this five-line leaflet. The officers in the regiment gave me a thrashing, but, bless them for it, let me go. And last year I was almost caught when I passed off French counterfeit notes for fifty roubles on Korovayev,

but, thank God, Korovayev fell into the pond when he was drunk, and was drowned in the nick of time, and they didn't succeed in tracking me. Here, at Virginsky's, I proclaimed the freedom of the communistic life. In June I was distributing manifestoes again in X district. They say they will make me do it again. . . . Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly gave me to understand that I must obey; he's been threatening me a long time. How he treated me that Sunday! Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I am a slave, I am a worm, but not a God, which is where I differ from Derzhavin.* But I've no income, no income!"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch heard it all with curiosity.

"A great deal of that I had heard nothing of," he said. "Of course, anything may have happened to you. . . . Listen," he said, after a minute's thought. "If you like, you can tell them, you know whom, that Liputin was lying, and that you were only pretending to give information to frighten me, supposing that I, too, was compromised, and that you might get more money out of me that way. . . . Do you understand?"

"Dear Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, is it possible that there's such a danger hanging over me? I've been longing for you to come, to ask you."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch laughed.

"They certainly wouldn't let you go to Petersburg, even if I were to give you money for the journey. . . . But it's time for me to see Marya Timofyevna." And he got up from his chair.

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but how about Marya Timofyevna?"

"Why, as I told you."

"Can it be true?"

"You still don't believe it?"

"Will you really cast me off like an old worn-out shoe?"

"I'll see," laughed Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. "Come, let me go."

"Wouldn't you like me to stand on the steps . . . for fear I might by chance overhear something . . . for the rooms are small?"

* The reference is to a poem of Derzhavin's.



"That's as well. Stand on the steps. Take my umbrella."

"Your umbrella. . . . Am I worth it?" said the captain over-sweetly.

"Anyone is worthy of an umbrella."

"At one stroke you define the minimum of human rights. . . ."

But he was by now muttering mechanically. He was too much crushed by what he had learned, and was completely thrown out of his reckoning. And yet almost as soon as he had gone out on to the steps and had put up the umbrella, there his shallow and cunning brain caught again the ever-present, comforting idea that he was being cheated and deceived, and if so they were afraid of him, and there was no need for him to be afraid.

"If they're lying and deceiving me, what's at the bottom of it?" was the thought that gnawed at his mind. The public announcement of the marriage seemed to him absurd. "It's true that with such a wonder-worker anything may come to pass; he lives to do harm. But what if he's afraid himself, since the insult of Sunday, and afraid as he's never been before? And so he's in a hurry to declare that he'll announce it himself, from fear that I should announce it. Eh, don't blunder, Lebyadkin! And why does he come on the sly, at night, if he means to make it public himself? And if he's afraid, it means that he's afraid now, at this moment, for these few days. . . . Eh, don't make a mistake, Lebyadkin!

"He scares me with Pyotr Stepanovitch. Oy, I'm frightened, I'm frightened! Yes, this is what's so frightening! And what induced me to blab to Liputin. Goodness knows what these devils are up to. I never can make head or tail of it. Now they are all astir again as they were five years ago. To whom could I give information, indeed? 'Haven't I written to anyone in my foolishness?' H'm! So then I might write as though through foolishness? Isn't he giving me a hint? 'You're going to Petersburg on purpose.' The sly rogue. I've scarcely dreamed of it, and he guesses my dreams. As though he were putting me up to going himself. It's one or the other of two games he's up to. Either he's afraid because he's been up to some pranks himself . . . or he's not afraid for himself, but is simply egging me on to give them all away! Ach, it's ter-

rible, Lebyadkin! Ach you must not make a single blunder!"

He was so absorbed in thought that he forgot to listen. It was not easy to hear either. The door was a solid one, and they were talking in a very low voice. Nothing reached the captain but indistinct sounds. He positively spat in disgust, and went out again, lost in thought, to whistle on the steps.

## III

Marya Timofyevna's room was twice as large as the one occupied by the captain, and furnished in the same rough style; but the table in front of the sofa was covered with a gay-coloured table-cloth, and on it a lamp was burning. There was a handsome carpet on the floor. The bed was screened off by a green curtain, which ran the length of the room, and besides the sofa there stood by the table a large, soft easy chair, in which Marya Timofyevna never sat, however. In the corner there was an ikon as there had been in her old room, and a little lamp was burning before it, and on the table were all her indispensable properties. The pack of cards, the little looking-glass, the song-book, even a milk loaf. Besides these there were two books with coloured pictures—one, extracts from a popular book of travels, published for juvenile reading, the other a collection of very light, edifying tales, for the most part about the days of chivalry, intended for Christmas presents or school reading. She had, too, an album of photographs of various sorts.

Marya Timofyevna was, of course, expecting the visitor, as the captain had announced. But when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went in, she was asleep, half reclining on the sofa, propped on a woolwork cushion. Her visitor closed the door after him noiselessly, and, standing still, scrutinised the sleeping figure.

The captain had been romancing when he told Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch she had been dressing herself up. She was wearing the same dark dress as on Sunday at Varvara Petrovna's. Her hair was done up in the same little close knot at the back of her head; her long thin neck was exposed in the same way. The black shawl Varvara Petrovna had given her



lay carefully folded on the sofa. She was coarsely rouged and powdered as before. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch did not stand there more than a minute. She suddenly waked up, as though she were conscious of his eyes fixed upon her; she opened her eyes, and quickly drew herself up. But something strange must have happened to her visitor: he remained standing at the same place by the door. With a fixed and searching glance he looked mutely and persistently into her face. Perhaps that look was too grim, perhaps there was an expression of aversion in it, even a malignant enjoyment of her fright—if it were not a fancy left by her dreams; but suddenly, after almost a moment of expectation, the poor woman's face wore a look of absolute terror; it twitched convulsively; she lifted her trembling hands and suddenly burst into tears, exactly like a frightened child; in another moment she would have screamed. But Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch pulled himself together; his face changed in one instant, and he went up to the table with the most cordial and amiable smile.

"I'm sorry, Marya Timofyevna, I frightened you coming in suddenly when you were asleep," he said, holding out his hand to her.

The sound of his caressing words produced their effect. Her fear vanished, although she still looked at him with dismay, evidently trying to understand something. She held out her hands timorously also. At last a shy smile rose to her lips.

"How do you do, prince?" she whispered, looking at him strangely.

"You must have had a bad dream," he went on, with a still more friendly and cordial smile.

"But how do you know that I was dreaming *about that?*"

And again she began trembling, and started back, putting up her hand as though to protect herself, on the point of crying again.

"Calm yourself. That's enough. What are you afraid of? Surely you know me?" said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, trying to soothe her; but it was long before he could succeed. She gazed at him dumbly with the same look of agonising perplexity, with a painful idea in her poor brain, and she still seemed to be trying to reach some conclusion. At one moment she dropped her eyes, then suddenly scrutinised him in a rapid

comprehensive glance. At last, though not reassured, she seemed to come to a conclusion.

"Sit down beside me, please, that I may look at you thoroughly later on," she brought out with more firmness, evidently with a new object. "But don't be uneasy, I won't look at you now. I'll look down. Don't you look at me either till I ask you to. Sit down," she added, with positive impatience.

A new sensation was obviously growing stronger and stronger in her.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sat down and waited. Rather a long silence followed.

"H'm! It all seems so strange to me," she suddenly muttered almost disdainfully. "Of course I was depressed by bad dreams, but why have I dreamt of you looking like that?"

"Come, let's have done with dreams," he said impatiently, turning to her in spite of her prohibition, and perhaps the same expression gleamed for a moment in his eyes again. He saw that she several times wanted, very much, in fact, to look at him again, but that she obstinately controlled herself and kept her eyes cast down.

"Listen, prince," she raised her voice suddenly, "listen prince. . . ."

"Why do you turn away? Why don't you look at me? What's the object of this farce?" he cried, losing patience.

But she seemed not to hear him.

"Listen, prince," she repeated for the third time in a resolute voice, with a disagreeable, fussy expression. "When you told me in the carriage that our marriage was going to be made public, I was alarmed at there being an end to the mystery. Now I don't know. I've been thinking it all over, and I see clearly that I'm not fit for it at all. I know how to dress, and I could receive guests, perhaps. There's nothing much in asking people to have a cup of tea, especially when there are footmen. But what will people say though? I saw a great deal that Sunday morning in that house. That pretty young lady looked at me all the time, especially after you came in. It was you came in, wasn't it? Her mother's simply an absurd worldly old woman. My Lebyadkin distinguished himself too. I kept looking at the ceiling to keep from laughing; the ceiling there is finely painted. His mother ought to be an abbess.

Marya's view of all the people — v Sauc.



I'm afraid of her, though she did give me a black shawl. Of course, they must all have come to strange conclusions about me. I wasn't vexed, but I sat there, thinking what relation am I to them? Of course, from a countess one doesn't expect any but spiritual qualities; for the domestic ones she's got plenty of footmen; and also a little worldly coquetry, so as to be able to entertain foreign travellers. But yet that Sunday they did look upon me as hopeless. Only Dasha's an angel. I'm awfully afraid they may wound *him* by some careless allusion to me."

"Don't be afraid, and don't be uneasy," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, making a wry face.

"However, that doesn't matter to me, if he is a little ashamed of me, for there will always be more pity than shame, though it differs with people, of course. He knows, to be sure, that I ought rather to pity them than they me."

"You seem to be very much offended with them, Marya Timofyevna?"

"I? Oh, no," she smiled with simple-hearted mirth. "Not at all. I looked at you all, then. You were all angry, you were all quarrelling. They meet together, and they don't know how to laugh from their hearts. So much wealth and so little gaiety. It all disgusts me. Though I feel for no one now except myself."

"I've heard that you've had a hard life with your brother without me?"

"Who told you that? It's nonsense. It's much worse now. Now my dreams are not good, and my dreams are bad, because you've come. What have you come for, I'd like to know. Tell me please?"

"Wouldn't you like to go back into the nunnery?"

"I knew they'd suggest the nunnery again. Your nunnery is a fine marvel for me! And why should I go to it? What should I go for now? I'm all alone in the world now. It's too late for me to begin a third life."

"You seem very angry about something. Surely you're not afraid that I've left off loving you?"

"I'm not troubling about you at all. I'm afraid that I may leave off loving somebody."

She laughed contemptuously.

"I must have done him some great wrong," she added sud-

denly, as it were to herself, "only I don't know what I've done wrong; that's always what troubles me. Always, always, for the last five years. I've been afraid day and night that I've done him some wrong. I've prayed and prayed and always thought of the great wrong I'd done him. And now it turns out it was true."

"What's turned out?"

"I'm only afraid whether there's something on *his* side," she went on, not answering his question, not hearing it in fact. "And then, again, he couldn't get on with such horrid people. The countess would have liked to eat me, though she did make me sit in the carriage beside her. They're all in the plot. Surely he's not betrayed me?" (Her chin and lips were twitching.) "Tell me, have you read about Grishka Otrpyev, how he was cursed in seven cathedrals?"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch did not speak.

"But I'll turn round now and look at you." She seemed to decide suddenly. "You turn to me, too, and look at me, but more attentively. I want to make sure for the last time."

"I've been looking at you for a long time."

"H'm!" said Marya Timofyevna, looking at him intently. "You've grown much fatter."

She wanted to say something more, but suddenly, for the third time, the same terror instantly distorted her face, and again she drew back, putting her hand up before her.

"What's the matter with you?" cried Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, almost enraged.

But her panic lasted only one instant, her face worked with a sort of strange smile, suspicious and unpleasant.

"I beg you, prince, get up and come in," she brought out suddenly, in a firm, emphatic voice.

"Come in? Where am I to come in?"

"I've been fancying for five years how *he* would come in. Get up and go out of the door into the other room. I'll sit as though I weren't expecting anything, and I'll take up a book, and suddenly you'll come in after five years' travelling. I want to see what it will be like."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch ground his teeth, and muttered something to himself.



"Enough," he said, striking the table with his open hand. "I beg you to listen to me, Marya Timofyevna. Do me the favour to concentrate all your attention if you can. You're not altogether mad, you know!" he broke out impatiently. "Tomorrow I shall make our marriage public. You never will live in a palace, get that out of your head. Do you want to live with me for the rest of your life, only very far away from here? In the mountains in Switzerland, there's a place there. . . . Don't be afraid. I'll never abandon you or put you in a madhouse. I shall have money enough to live without asking anyone's help. You shall have a servant, you shall do no work at all. Everything you want that's possible shall be got for you. You shall pray, go where you like, and do what you like. I won't touch you. I won't go away from the place myself at all. If you like, I won't speak to you all my life, or if you like, you can tell me your stories every evening as you used to do in Petersburg in the corners. I'll read aloud to you if you like. But it must be all your life in the same place, and that place is a gloomy one. Will you? Are you ready? You won't regret it, torment me with tears and curses, will you?"

She listened with extreme curiosity, and for a long time she was silent, thinking.

"It all seems incredible to me," she said at last, ironically and disdainfully. "I might live for forty years in those mountains," she laughed.

"What of it? Let's live forty years then . . . " said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, scowling.

"H'm! I won't come for anything."

"Not even with me?"

"And what are you that I should go with you? I'm to sit on a mountain beside him for forty years on end—a pretty story! And upon my word, how long-suffering people have become nowadays! No, it cannot be that a falcon has become an owl. My prince is not like that!" she said, raising her head proudly and triumphantly.

Light seemed to dawn upon him.

"What makes you call me a prince, and . . . for whom do you take me?" he asked quickly.

"Why, aren't you the prince?"

"I never have been one."

"So yourself, yourself, you tell me straight to my face that you're not the prince?"

"I tell you I never have been."

"Good Lord!" she cried, clasping her hands. "I was ready to expect anything from *his* enemies, but such insolence, never! Is he alive?" she shrieked in a frenzy, turning upon Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. "Have you killed him? Confess!"

"Whom do you take me for?" he cried, jumping up from his chair with a distorted face; but it was not easy now to frighten her. She was triumphant.

"Who can tell who you are and where you've sprung from? Only my heart, my heart had misgivings all these five years, of all the intrigues. And I've been sitting here wondering what blind owl was making up to me? No, my dear, you're a poor actor, worse than Lebyadkin even. Give my humble greetings to the countess and tell her to send some one better than you. Has she hired you, tell me? Have they given you a place in her kitchen out of charity? I see through your deception. I understand you all, every one of you."

He seized her firmly above the elbow; she laughed in his face.

"You're like him, very like, perhaps you're a relation—you're a sly lot! Only mine is a bright falcon and a prince, and you're an owl, and a shopman! Mine will bow down to God if it pleases him, and won't if it doesn't. And Shatushka (he's my dear, my darling!) slapped you on the cheeks, my Lebyadkin told me. And what were you afraid of then, when you came in? Who had frightened you then? When I saw your mean face after I'd fallen down and you picked me up—it was like a worm crawling into my heart. It's not he, I thought, not *he!* My falcon would never have been ashamed of me before a fashionable young lady. Oh heavens! That alone kept me happy for those five years that my falcon was living somewhere beyond the mountains, soaring, gazing at the sun. . . . Tell me, you impostor, have you got much by it? Did you need a big bribe to consent? I wouldn't have given you a farthing. Ha ha ha! Ha ha! . . . "

"Ugh, idiot!" snarled Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, still holding her tight by the arm.



"Go away, impostor!" she shouted peremptorily. "I'm the wife of my prince; I'm not afraid of your knife!"

"Knife!"

"Yes, knife, you've a knife in your pocket. You thought I was asleep but I saw it. When you came in just now you took out your knife!"

"What are you saying, unhappy creature? What dreams you have!" he exclaimed, pushing her away from him with all his might, so that her head and shoulders fell painfully against the sofa. He was rushing away; but she at once flew to overtake him, limping and hopping, and though Lebyadkin, panic-stricken, held her back with all his might, she succeeded in shouting after him into the darkness, shrieking and laughing:

"A curse on you, Grishka Otrepyev!"

## IV

"A knife, a knife," he repeated with uncontrollable anger, striding along through the mud and puddles, without picking his way. It is true that at moments he had a terrible desire to laugh aloud frantically; but for some reason he controlled himself and restrained his laughter. He recovered himself only on the bridge, on the spot where Fedka had met him that evening. He found the man lying in wait for him again. Seeing Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch he took off his cap, grinned gaily, and began babbling briskly and merrily about something. At first Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch walked on without stopping, and for some time did not even listen to the tramp who was pestering him again. He was suddenly struck by the thought that he had entirely forgotten him, and had forgotten him at the very moment when he himself was repeating, "A knife, a knife." He seized the tramp by the collar and gave vent to his pent-up rage by flinging him violently against the bridge. For one instant the man thought of fighting, but almost at once realising that compared with his adversary, who had fallen upon him unawares, he was no better than a wisp of straw, he subsided and was silent, without offering any resistance. Crouching on the ground with his elbows crooked behind his back, the wily tramp calmly waited for what would happen next, apparently quite incredulous of danger.

He was right in his reckoning. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had already with his left hand taken off his thick scarf to tie his prisoner's arms, but suddenly, for some reason, he abandoned him, and shoved him away. The man instantly sprang on to his feet, turned around, and a short, broad boot-knife suddenly gleamed in his hand.

"Away with that knife; put it away, at once!" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch commanded with an impatient gesture, and the knife vanished as instantaneously as it had appeared.

Without speaking again or turning round, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on his way. But the persistent vagabond did not leave him even now, though now, it is true, he did not chatter, and even respectfully kept his distance, a full step behind.

They crossed the bridge like this and came out on to the river bank, turning this time to the left, again into a long deserted back street, which led to the centre of the town by a shorter way than going through Bogoyavlensky Street.

"Is it true, as they say, that you robbed a church in the district the other day?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked suddenly.

"I went in to say my prayers in the first place," the tramp answered, sedately and respectfully as though nothing had happened; more than sedately, in fact, almost with dignity. There was no trace of his former "friendly" familiarity. All that was to be seen was a serious, business-like man, who had indeed been gratuitously insulted, but who was capable of overlooking an insult.

"But when the Lord led me there," he went on, "ech, I thought what a heavenly abundance! It was all owing to my helpless state, as in our way of life there's no doing without assistance. And, now, God be my witness, sir, it was my own loss. The Lord punished me for my sins, and what with the censer and the deacon's halter, I only got twelve roubles altogether. The chin setting of St. Nikolay of pure silver went for next to nothing. They said it was plated."

"You killed the watchman?"

"That is, I cleared the place out together with that watchman, but afterwards, next morning, by the river, we fell to quarrelling which should carry the sack. I sinned, I did lighten his load for him."



"Well, you can rob and murder again."

"That's the very advice Pyotr Stepanovitch gives me, in the very same words, for he's uncommonly mean and hard-hearted about helping a fellow-creature. And what's more, he hasn't a ha'p'orth of belief in the Heavenly Creator, who made us out of earthly clay; but he says it's all the work of nature even to the last beast. He doesn't understand either that with our way of life it's impossible for us to get along without friendly assistance. If you begin to talk to him he looks like a sheep at the water; it makes one wonder. Would you believe, at Captain Lebyadkin's, out yonder, whom your honour's just been visiting, when he was living at Filipov's, before you came, the door stood open all night long. He'd be drunk and sleeping like the dead, and his money dropping out of his pockets all over the floor. I've chanced to see it with my own eyes, for in our way of life it's impossible to live without assistance. . . . "

"How do you mean with your own eyes? Did you go in at night then?"

"Maybe I did go in, but no one knows of it."

"Why didn't you kill him?"

"Reckoning it out, I steadied myself. For once having learned for sure that I can always get one hundred and fifty roubles, why should I go so far when I can get fifteen hundred roubles if I only bide my time. For Captain Lebyadkin (I've heard him with my own ears) had great hopes of you when he was drunk; and there isn't a tavern here—not the lowest pothouse—where he hasn't talked about it when he was in that state. So that hearing it from many lips, I began, too, to rest all my hopes on your excellency. I speak to you, sir, as to my father, or my own brother; for Pyotr Stepanovitch will never learn that from me, and not a soul in the world. So won't your excellency spare me three roubles in your kindness? You might set my mind at rest, so that I might know the real truth; for we can't get on without assistance."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch laughed aloud, and taking out his purse, in which he had as much as fifty roubles, in small notes, threw him one note out of the bundle, then a second, a third, a fourth. Fedka flew to catch them in the air. The notes dropped into the mud, and he snatched them up crying, "Ech! ech!" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch finished by flinging the whole bundle

which had haunted him so painfully since the insult paid to his father by Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch four years before at the club. He conscientiously considered it dishonourable to remain in the service, and was inwardly persuaded that he was contaminating the regiment and his companions, although they knew nothing of the incident. It's true that he had once before been disposed to leave the army long before the insult to his father, and on quite other grounds, but he had hesitated. Strange as it is to write, the original design, or rather desire, to leave the army was due to the proclamation of the 19th of February of the emancipation of the serfs. Gaganov, who was one of the richest landowners in the province, and who had not lost very much by the emancipation, and was, moreover, quite capable of understanding the humanity of the reform and its economic advantages, suddenly felt himself personally insulted by the proclamation. It was something unconscious, a feeling; but was all the stronger for being unrecognised. He could not bring himself, however, to take any decisive step till his father's death. But he began to be well known for his "gentlemanly" ideas to many persons of high position in Petersburg, with whom he strenuously kept up connections. He was secretive and self-contained. Another characteristic: he belonged to that strange section of the nobility, still surviving in Russia, who set an extreme value on their pure and ancient lineage, and take it too seriously. At the same time he could not endure Russian history, and, indeed, looked upon Russian customs in general as more or less piggish. Even in his childhood, in the special military school for the sons of particularly wealthy and distinguished families in which he had the privilege of being educated, from first to last certain poetic notions were deeply rooted in his mind. He loved castles, chivalry; all the theatrical part of it. He was ready to cry with shame that in the days of the Moscow Tsars the sovereign had the right to inflict corporal punishment on the Russian boyars, and blushed at the contrast. This stiff and extremely severe man, who had a remarkable knowledge of military science and performed his duties admirably, was at heart a dreamer. It was said that he could speak at meetings and had the gift of language, but at no time during the thirty-three years of his life had he spoken. Even in the distinguished circles in Petersburg,



in which he had moved of late, he behaved with extraordinary haughtiness. His meeting in Petersburg with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, who had just returned from abroad, almost sent him out of his mind. At the present moment, standing at the barrier, he was terribly uneasy. He kept imagining that the duel would somehow not come off; the least delay threw him into a tremor. There was an expression of anguish in his face when Kirillov, instead of giving the signal for them to fire, began suddenly speaking, only for form, indeed, as he himself explained aloud.

"Simply as a formality, now that you have the pistols in your hands, and I must give the signal, I ask you for the last time, will you not be reconciled? It's the duty of a second."

As though to spite him, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had till then kept silence, although he had been reproaching himself all day for his compliance and acquiescence, suddenly caught up Kirillov's thought and began to speak:

"I entirely agree with Mr. Kirillov's words. . . . This idea that reconciliation is impossible at the barrier is a prejudice, only suitable for Frenchmen. Besides, with your leave, I don't understand what the offence is. I've been wanting to say so for a long time . . . because every apology is offered, isn't it?"

He flushed all over. He had rarely spoken so much, and with such excitement.

"I repeat again my offer to make every possible apology," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch interposed hurriedly.

"This is impossible," shouted Gaganov furiously, addressing Mavriky Nikolaevitch, and stamping with rage. "Explain to this man," he pointed with his pistol at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, "if you're my second and not my enemy, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, that such overtures only aggravate the insult. He feels it impossible to be insulted by me! . . . He feels it no disgrace to walk away from me at the barrier! What does he take me for, after that, do you think? . . . And you, you, my second, too! You're simply irritating me that I may miss."

He stamped again. There were flecks of foam on his lips.

"Negotiations are over. I beg you to listen to the signal!" Kirillov shouted at the top of his voice. "One! Two! Three!"

At the word "Three" the combatants took aim at one another. Gaganov at once raised his pistol, and at the fifth or sixth

step he fired. For a second he stood still, and, making sure that he had missed, advanced to the barrier. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch advanced too, raising his pistol, but somehow holding it very high, and fired, almost without taking aim. Then he took out his handkerchief and bound it round the little finger of his right hand. Only then they saw that Gaganov had not missed him completely, but the bullet had only grazed the fleshy part of his finger without touching the bone; it was only a slight scratch. Kirillov at once announced that the duel would go on, unless the combatants were satisfied.

"I declare," said Gaganov hoarsely (his throat felt parched), again addressing Mavriky Nikolaevitch, "that this man," again he pointed in Stavrogin's direction, "fired in the air on purpose . . . intentionally. . . . This is an insult again. . . . He wants to make the duel impossible!"

"I have the right to fire as I like so long as I keep the rules," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asserted resolutely.

"No, he hasn't! Explain it to him! Explain it!" cried Gaganov.

"I'm in complete agreement with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch," proclaimed Kirillov.

"Why does he spare me?" Gaganov raged, not hearing him. "I despise his mercy. . . . I spit on it. . . . I . . . "

"I give you my word that I did not intend to insult you," cried Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch impatiently. "I shot high because I don't want to kill anyone else, either you or anyone else. It's nothing to do with you personally. It's true that I don't consider myself insulted, and I'm sorry that angers you. But I don't allow any one to interfere with my rights."

"If he's so afraid of bloodshed, ask him why he challenged me," yelled Gaganov, still addressing Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

"How could he help challenging you?" said Kirillov, intervening. "You wouldn't listen to anything. How was one to get rid of you?"

"I'll only mention one thing," observed Mavriky Nikolaevitch, pondering the matter with painful effort. "If a combatant declares beforehand that he will fire in the air the duel certainly cannot go on . . . for obvious and . . . delicate reasons."

"I haven't declared that I'll fire in the air every time," cried



Stavrogin, losing all patience. "You don't know what's in my mind or how I intend to fire again. . . . I'm not restricting the duel at all."

"In that case the encounter can go on," said Mavriky Nikolaevitch to Gaganov.

"Gentlemen, take your places," Kirillov commanded.

Again they advanced, again Gaganov missed and Stavrogin fired into the air. There might have been a dispute as to his firing into the air. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch might have flatly declared that he'd fired properly, if he had not admitted that he had missed intentionally. He did not aim straight at the sky or at the trees, but seemed to aim at his adversary, though as he pointed the pistol the bullet flew a yard above his hat. The second time the shot was even lower, even less like an intentional miss. Nothing would have convinced Gaganov now.

"Again!" he muttered, grinding his teeth. "No matter! I've been challenged and I'll make use of my rights. I'll fire a third time . . . whatever happens."

"You have full right to do so," Kirillov rapped out. Mavriky Nikolaevitch said nothing. The opponents were placed a third time, the signal was given. This time Gaganov went right up to the barrier, and began from there taking aim, at a distance of twelve paces. His hand was trembling too much to take good aim. Stavrogin stood with his pistol lowered and awaited his shot without moving.

"Too long; you've been aiming too long!" Kirillov shouted impetuously. "Fire! Fire!"

But the shot rang out, and this time Stavrogin's white beaver hat flew off. The aim had been fairly correct. The crown of the hat was pierced very low down; a quarter of an inch lower and all would have been over. Kirillov picked up the hat and handed it to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

"Fire; don't detain your adversary!" cried Mavriky Nikolaevitch in extreme agitation, seeing that Stavrogin seemed to have forgotten to fire, and was examining the hat with Kirillov. Stavrogin started, looked at Gaganov, turned round and this time, without the slightest regard for punctilio, fired to one side, into the copse. The duel was over. Gaganov stood as though overwhelmed. Mavriky Nikolaevitch went up and began saying something to him, but he did not seem to under-

stand. Kirillov took off his hat as he went away, and nodded to Mavriky Nikolaevitch. But Stavrogin forgot his former politeness. When he had shot into the copse he did not even turn towards the barrier. He handed his pistol to Kirillov and hastened towards the horses. His face looked angry; he did not speak. Kirillov, too, was silent. They got on their horses and set off at a gallop.

## III

"Why don't you speak?" he called impatiently to Kirillov, when they were not far from home.

"What do you want?" replied the latter, almost slipping off his horse, which was rearing.

Stavrogin restrained himself.

"I didn't mean to insult that . . . fool, and I've insulted him again," he said quietly.

"Yes, you've insulted him again," Kirillov jerked out, "and besides, he's not a fool."

"I've done all I can, anyway."

"No."

"What ought I to have done?"

"Not have challenged him."

"Accept another blow in the face?"

"Yes, accept another."

"I can't understand anything now," said Stavrogin wrathfully. "Why does every one expect of me something not expected from anyone else? Why am I to put up with what no one else puts up with, and undertake burdens no one else can bear?"

"I thought you were seeking a burden yourself."

"I seek a burden?"

"Yes."

"You've . . . seen that?"

"Yes."

"Is it so noticeable?"

"Yes."

There was silence for a moment. Stavrogin had a very preoccupied face. He was almost impressed.



"I didn't aim because I didn't want to kill anyone. There was nothing more in it, I assure you," he said hurriedly, and with agitation, as though justifying himself.

"You ought not to have offended him."

"What ought I to have done then?"

"You ought to have killed him."

"Are you sorry I didn't kill him?"

"I'm not sorry for anything. I thought you really meant to kill him. You don't know what you're seeking."

"I seek a burden," laughed Stavrogin.

"If you didn't want blood yourself, why did you give him a chance to kill you?"

"If I hadn't challenged him, he'd have killed me simply, without a duel."

"That's not your affair. Perhaps he wouldn't have killed you."

"Only have beaten me?"

"That's not your business. Bear your burden. Or else there's no merit."

"Hang your merit. I don't seek anyone's approbation."

"I thought you were seeking it," Kirillov commented with terrible unconcern.

They rode into the courtyard of the house.

"Do you care to come in?" said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

"No; I'm going home. Good-bye."

He got off the horse and took his box of pistols under his arm.

"Anyway, you're not angry with me?" said Stavrogin, holding out his hand to him.

"Not in the least," said Kirillov, turning round to shake hands with him. "If my burden's light it's because it's from nature; perhaps your burden's heavier because that's your nature. There's no need to be much ashamed; only a little."

"I know I'm a worthless character, and I don't pretend to be a strong one."

"You'd better not; you're not a strong person. Come and have tea."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went into the house, greatly perturbed.

## IV

He learned at once from Alexey Yegorytch that Varvara Petrovna had been very glad to hear that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had gone out for a ride—the first time he had left the house after eight days' illness. She had ordered the carriage, and had driven out alone for a breath of fresh air "according to the habit of the past, as she had forgotten for the last eight days what it meant to breathe fresh air."

"Alone, or with Darya Pavlovna?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch interrupted the old man with a rapid question, and he scowled when he heard that Darya Pavlovna "had declined to go abroad on account of indisposition and was in her rooms."

"Listen, old man," he said, as though suddenly making up his mind. "Keep watch over her all to-day, and if you notice her coming to me, stop her at once, and tell her that I can't see her for a few days at least . . . that I ask her not to come myself. . . . I'll let her know myself, when the time comes. Do you hear?"

"I'll tell her, sir," said Alexey Yegorytch, with distress in his voice, dropping his eyes.

"Not till you see clearly she's meaning to come and see me of herself, though."

"Don't be afraid, sir, there shall be no mistake. Your interviews have all passed through me, hitherto. You've always turned to me for help."

"I know. Not till she comes of herself, anyway. Bring me some tea, if you can, at once."

The old man had hardly gone out, when almost at the same instant the door reopened, and Darya Pavlovna appeared in the doorway. Her eyes were tranquil, though her face was pale.

"Where have you come from?" exclaimed Stavrogin.

"I was standing there, and waiting for him to go out, to come in to you. I heard the order you gave him, and when he came out just now I hid round the corner, on the right, and he didn't notice me."

"I've long meant to break off with you, Dasha . . . for a



while . . . for the present. I couldn't see you last night, in spite of your note. I meant to write to you myself, but I don't know how to write," he added with vexation, almost as though with disgust.

"I thought myself that we must break it off. Varvara Petrovna is too suspicious of our relations."

"Well, let her be."

"She mustn't be worried. So now we part till the end comes."

"You still insist on expecting the end?"

"Yes, I'm sure of it."

"But nothing in the world ever has an end."

"This will have an end. Then call me. I'll come. Now, goodbye."

"And what sort of end will it be?" smiled Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

"You're not wounded, and . . . have not shed blood?" she asked, not answering his question.

"It was stupid. I didn't kill anyone. Don't be uneasy. However, you'll hear all about it to-day from every one. I'm not quite well."

"I'm going. The announcement of the marriage won't be to-day?" she added irresolutely.

"It won't be to-day, and it won't be to-morrow. I can't say about the day after to-morrow. Perhaps we shall all be dead, and so much the better. Leave me alone, leave me alone, do."

"You won't ruin that other . . . mad girl?"

"I won't ruin either of the mad creatures. It seems to be the sane I'm ruining. I'm so vile and loathsome, Dasha, that I might really send for you, 'at the latter end,' as you say. And in spite of your sanity you'll come. Why will you be your own ruin?"

"I know that at the end I shall be the only one left you, and . . . I'm waiting for that."

"And what if I don't send for you after all, but run away from you?"

"That can't be. You will send for me."

"There's a great deal of contempt for me in that."

"You know that there's not only contempt."

"Then there is contempt, anyway?"

"I used the wrong word. God is my witness, it's my greatest wish that you may never have need of me."

"One phrase is as good as another. I should also have wished not to have ruined you."

"You can never, anyhow, be my ruin; and you know that yourself, better than anyone," Darya Pavlovna said, rapidly and resolutely. "If I don't come to you I shall be a sister of mercy, a nurse, shall wait upon the sick, or go selling the gospel. I've made up my mind to that. I cannot be anyone's wife. I can't live in a house like this, either. That's not what I want. . . . You know all that."

"No, I never could tell what you want. It seems to me that you're interested in me, as some veteran nurses get specially interested in some particular invalid in comparison with the others, or still more, like some pious old women who frequent funerals and find one corpse more attractive than another. Why do you look at me so strangely?"

"Are you very ill?" she asked sympathetically, looking at him in a peculiar way. "Good heavens! And this man wants to do without me!"

"Listen, Dasha, now I'm always seeing phantoms. One devil offered me yesterday, on the bridge, to murder Lebyadkin and Marya Timofyevna, to settle the marriage difficulty, and to cover up all traces. He asked me to give him three roubles on account, but gave me to understand that the whole operation wouldn't cost less than fifteen hundred. Wasn't he a calculating devil! A regular shopkeeper. Ha ha!"

"But you're fully convinced that it was an hallucination?"

"Oh, no; not a bit an hallucination! It was simply Fedka the convict, the robber who escaped from prison. But that's not the point. What do you suppose I did? I gave him all I had, everything in my purse, and now he's sure I've given him that on account!"

"You met him at night, and he made such a suggestion? Surely you must see that you're being caught in their nets on every side!"

"Well, let them be. But you've got some question at the tip of your tongue, you know. I see it by your eyes," he added with a resentful and irritable smile.



Dasha was frightened.

"I've no question at all, and no doubt whatever; you'd better be quiet!" she cried in dismay, as though waving off his question.

"Then you're convinced that I won't go to Fedka's little shop?"

"Oh, God!" she cried, clasping her hands. "Why do you torture me like this?"

"Oh, forgive me my stupid joke. I must be picking up bad manners from them. Do you know, ever since last night I feel awfully inclined to laugh, to go on laughing continually for ever so long. It's as though I must explode with laughter. It's like an illness. . . . Oh! my mother's coming in. I always know by the rumble when her carriage has stopped at the entrance."

Dasha seized his hand.

"God save you from your demon, and . . . call me, call me quickly!"

"Oh! a fine demon! It's simply a little nasty, scrofulous imp, with a cold in his head, one of the unsuccessful ones. But you have something you don't dare to say again, Dasha?"

She looked at him with pain and reproach, and turned towards the door.

"Listen," he called after her, with a malignant and distorted smile. "If . . . Yes, if, in one word, if . . . you understand, even if I did go to that little shop, and if I called you after that —would you come then?"

She went out, hiding her face in her hands, and neither turning nor answering.

"She will come even after the shop," he whispered, thinking a moment, and an expression of scornful disdain came into his face. "A nurse! H'm! . . . but perhaps that's what I want."

## CHAPTER IV

### ALL IN EXPECTATION

### I

THE impression made on the whole neighbourhood by the story of the duel, which was rapidly noised abroad, was particularly remarkable from the unanimity with which every one hastened to take up the cudgels of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Many of his former enemies declared themselves his friends. The chief reason for this change of front in public opinion was chiefly due to one person, who had hitherto not expressed her opinion, but who now very distinctly uttered a few words, which at once gave the event a significance exceedingly interesting to the vast majority. This was how it happened. On the day after the duel, all the town was assembled at the Marshal of Nobility's in honour of his wife's nameday. Yulia Mihailovna was present, or, rather, presided, accompanied by Lizaveta Nikolaevna, radiant with beauty and peculiar gaiety, which struck many of our ladies at once as particularly suspicious at this time. And I may mention, by the way, her engagement to Mavriky Nikolaevitch was by now an established fact. To a playful question from a retired general of much consequence, of whom we shall have more to say later, Lizaveta Nikolaevna frankly replied that evening that she was engaged. And only imagine, not one of our ladies would believe in her engagement. They all persisted in assuming a romance of some sort, some fatal family secret, something that had happened in Switzerland, and for some reason imagined that Yulia Mihailovna must have had some hand in it. It was difficult to understand why these rumours, or rather fancies, persisted so obstinately, and why Yulia Mihailovna was





so positively connected with it. As soon as she came in, all turned to her with strange looks, brimful of expectation. It must be observed that owing to the freshness of the event, and certain circumstances accompanying it, at the party people talked of it with some circumspection, in undertones. Besides, nothing yet was known of the line taken by the authorities. As far as was known, neither of the combatants had been troubled by the police. Every one knew, for instance, that Gaganov had set off home early in the morning to Duhovo, without being hindered. Meanwhile, of course, all were eager for some one to be the first to speak of it aloud, and so to open the door to the general impatience. They rested their hopes on the general above-mentioned, and they were not disappointed.

This general, a landowner, though not a wealthy one, was one of the most imposing members of our club, and a man of an absolutely unique turn of mind. He flirted in the old-fashioned way with the young ladies, and was particularly fond, in large assemblies, of speaking aloud with all the weightiness of a general, on subjects to which others were alluding in discreet whispers. This was, so to say, his special rôle in local society. He drawled, too, and spoke with peculiar suavity, probably having picked up the habit from Russians travelling abroad, or from those wealthy landowners of former days who had suffered most from the emancipation. Stepan Trofimovitch had observed that the more completely a landowner was ruined, the more suavely he lisped and drawled his words. He did, as a fact, lisp and drawl himself, but was not aware of it in himself.

The general spoke like a person of authority. He was, besides, a distant relation of Gaganov's, though he was on bad terms with him, and even engaged in litigation with him. He had, moreover, in the past, fought two duels himself, and had even been degraded to the ranks and sent to the Caucasus on account of one of them. Some mention was made of Varvara Petrovna's having driven out that day and the day before, after being kept indoors "by illness," though the allusion was not to her, but to the marvellous matching of her four grey horses of the Stavrogins' own breeding. The general suddenly observed that he had met "young Stavrogin" that day, on horseback. . . . Every one was instantly silent. The general munched his lips,

and suddenly proclaimed, twisting in his fingers his presentation gold snuff-box:

"I'm sorry I wasn't here some years ago . . . I mean when I was at Carlsbad . . . H'm! I'm very much interested in that young man about whom I heard so many rumours at that time. H'm! And, I say, is it true that he's mad? Some one told me so then. Suddenly I'm told that he has been insulted by some student here, in the presence of his cousins, and he slipped under the table to get away from him. And yesterday I heard from Stepan Vysotsky that Stavrogin had been fighting with Gaganov. And simply with the gallant object of offering himself as a target to an infuriated man, just to get rid of him. H'm! Quite in the style of the guards of the twenties. Is there any house where he visits here?"

The general paused as though expecting an answer. A way had been opened for the public impatience to express itself.

"What could be simpler?" cried Yulia Mihailovna, raising her voice, irritated that all present had turned their eyes upon her, as though at a word of command. "Can one wonder that Stavrogin fought Gaganov and took no notice of the student? He couldn't challenge a man who used to be his serf!"

A noteworthy saying! A clear and simple notion, yet it had entered nobody's head till that moment. It was a saying that had extraordinary consequences. All scandal and gossip, all the petty tittle-tattle was thrown into the background, another significance had been detected. A new character was revealed whom all had misjudged; a character, almost ideally severe in his standards. Mortally insulted by a student, that is, an educated man, no longer a serf, he despised the affront because his assailant had once been his serf. Society had gossiped and slandered him; shallow-minded people had looked with contempt on a man who had been struck in the face. He had despised a public opinion, which had not risen to the level of the highest standards, though it discussed them.

"And, meantime, you and I, Ivan Alexandrovitch, sit and discuss the correct standards," one old club member observed to another, with a warm and generous glow of self-reproach.

"Yes, Pyotr Mihailovitch, yes," the other chimed in with zest, "talk of the younger generation!"

"It's not a question of the younger generation," observed a third, putting in his spoke, "it's nothing to do with the younger generation; he's a star, not one of the younger generation; that's the way to look at it."



"And it's just that sort we need; they're rare people."

The chief point in all this was that the "new man," besides showing himself an unmistakable nobleman, was the wealthiest landowner in the province, and was, therefore, bound to be a leading man who could be of assistance. I've already alluded in passing to the attitude of the landowners of our province.

People were enthusiastic:

"He didn't merely refrain from challenging the student. He put his hands behind him, note that particularly, your excellency," somebody pointed out.

"And he didn't haul him up before the new law-courts, either," added another.

"In spite of the fact that for a personal insult to a nobleman he'd have got fifteen roubles damages! He he he!"

"No, I'll tell you a secret about the new courts," cried a third, in a frenzy of excitement, "if anyone's caught robbing or swindling and convicted, he'd better run home while there's yet time, and murder his mother. He'll be acquitted of everything at once, and ladies will wave their batiste handkerchiefs from the platform. It's the absolute truth!"

"It's the truth. It's the truth!"

The inevitable anecdotes followed: Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's friendly relations with Count K. were recalled. Count K.'s stern and independent attitude to recent reforms was well known, as well as his remarkable public activity, though that had somewhat fallen off of late. And now, suddenly, every one was positive that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was betrothed to one of the count's daughters, though nothing had given grounds for such a supposition. And as for some wonderful adventures in Switzerland with Lizaveta Nikolaevna, even the ladies quite dropped all reference to it. I must mention, by the way, that the Drozdovs had by this time succeeded in paying all the visits they had omitted at first. Every one now confidently considered Lizaveta Nikolaevna a most ordinary girl, who paraded her delicate nerves. Her fainting on the day of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's arrival was explained now as due to her terror at the student's outrageous behaviour. They even

now, Russians and English alike. All its fame is just the talk of the last generation."

"Fashions are changed then?"

"What I think is that one mustn't despise our younger generation either. They cry out that they're communists, but what I say is that we must appreciate them and mustn't be hard on them. I read everything now—the papers, communism the natural sciences—I get everything because, after all, one must know where one's living and with whom one has to do. One mustn't spend one's whole life on the heights of one's own fancy. I've come to the conclusion, and adopted it as a principle, that one must be kind to the young people and so keep them from the brink. Believe me, Varvara Petrovna, that none but we who make up good society can by our kindness and good influence keep them from the abyss towards which they are brought by the intolerance of all these old men. I am glad though to learn from you about Stepan Trofimovitch. You suggest an idea to me: he may be useful at our literary matinée, you know I'm arranging for a whole day of festivities, a subscription entertainment for the benefit of the poor governesses of our province. They are scattered about Russia; in our district alone we can reckon up six of them. Besides that, there are two girls in the telegraph office, two are being trained in the academy, the rest would like to be but have not the means. The Russian woman's fate is a terrible one, Varvara Petrovna! It's out of that they're making the university question now, and there's even been a meeting of the Imperial Council about it. In this strange Russia of ours one can do anything one likes; and that, again, is why it's only by the kindness and the direct warm sympathy of all the better classes that we can direct this great common cause in the true path. Oh, heavens, have we many noble personalities among us! There are some, of course, but they are scattered far and wide. Let us unite and we shall be stronger. In one word, I shall first have a literary matinée, then a light luncheon, then an interval, and in the evening a ball. We meant to begin the evening by living pictures, but it would involve a great deal of expense, and so, to please the public, there will be one or two quadrilles in masks and fancy dresses, representing well-known literary schools. This humorous idea was suggested by Karmazinov. He



has been a great help to me. Do you know he's going to read us the last thing he's written, which no one has seen yet. He is laying down the pen, and will write no more. This last essay is his farewell to the public. It's a charming little thing called 'Merci.' The title is French; he thinks that more amusing and even subtler. I do, too. In fact I advised it. I think Stepan Trofimovitch might read us something too, if it were quite short and . . . not so very learned. I believe Pyotr Stepanovitch and some one else too will read something. Pyotr Stepanovitch shall run round to you and tell you the programme. Better still, let me bring it to you myself."

"Allow me to put my name down in your subscription list too. I'll tell Stepan Trofimovitch and will beg him to consent."

Varvara Petrovna returned home completely fascinated. She was ready to stand up for Yulia Mihailovna through thick and thin, and for some reason was already quite put out with Stepan Trofimovitch, while he, poor man, sat at home, all unconscious.

"I'm in love with her. I can't understand how I could be so mistaken in that woman," she said to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and Pyotr Stepanovitch, who dropped in that evening.

"But you must make peace with the old man all the same," Pyotr Stepanovitch submitted. "He's in despair. You've quite sent him to Coventry. Yesterday he met your carriage and bowed, and you turned away. We'll trot him out, you know; I'm reckoning on him for something, and he may still be useful."

"Oh, he'll read something."

"I don't mean only that. And I was meaning to drop in on him to-day. So shall I tell him?"

"If you like. I don't know, though, how you'll arrange it," she said irresolutely. "I was meaning to have a talk with him myself, and wanted to fix the time and place."

She frowned.

"Oh, it's not worth while fixing a time. I'll simply give him the message."

"Very well, do. Add that I certainly will fix a time to see him though. Be sure to say that too."

Pyotr Stepanovitch ran off, grinning. He was, in fact, to the best of my recollection, particularly spiteful all this time, and

ventured upon extremely impatient sallies with almost every one. Strange to say, every one, somehow, forgave him. It was generally accepted that he was not to be looked at from the ordinary standpoint. I may remark that he took up an extremely resentful attitude about Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's duel. It took him unawares. He turned positively green when he was told of it. Perhaps his vanity was wounded: he only heard of it next day when every one knew of it.

"You had no right to fight, you know," he whispered to Stavrogin, five days later, when he chanced to meet him at the club. It was remarkable that they had not once met during those five days, though Pyotr Stepanovitch had dropped in at Varvara Petrovna's almost every day.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him in silence with an absent-minded air, as though not understanding what was the matter, and he went on without stopping. He was crossing the big hall of the club on his way to the refreshment room.

"You've been to see Shatov too. . . . You mean to make it known about Marya Timofyevna," Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered, running after him, and, as though not thinking of what he was doing he clutched at his shoulder.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch shook his hand off and turned round quickly to him with a menacing scowl. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at him with a strange, prolonged smile. It all lasted only one moment. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch walked on.

## II

He went to the "old man" straight from Varvara Petrovna's, and he was in such haste simply from spite, that he might revenge himself for an insult of which I had no idea at that time. The fact is that at their last interview on the Thursday of the previous week, Stepan Trofimovitch, though the dispute was one of his own beginning, had ended by turning Pyotr Stepanovitch out with his stick. He concealed the incident from me at the time. But now, as soon as Pyotr Stepanovitch ran in with his everlasting grin, which was so naïvely condescending, and his unpleasantly inquisitive eyes peering into every corner, Stepan Trofimovitch at once made a signal aside to me, not to leave the room. This was how their real



relations came to be exposed before me, for on this occasion I heard their whole conversation.

Stepan Trofimovitch was sitting stretched out on a lounge. He had grown thin and sallow since that Thursday. Pyotr Stepanovitch seated himself beside him with a most familiar air, unceremoniously tucking his legs up under him, and taking up more room on the lounge than deference to his father should have allowed. Stepan Trofimovitch moved aside, in silence, and with dignity.

On the table lay an open book. It was the novel, "What's to be done?" Alas, I must confess one strange weakness in my friend; the fantasy that he ought to come forth from his solitude and fight a last battle was getting more and more hold upon his deluded imagination. I guessed that he had got the novel and was *studying* it solely in order that when the inevitable conflict with the "shriekers" came about he might know their methods and arguments beforehand, from their very "catechism," and in that way be prepared to confute them all triumphantly, *before her eyes*. Oh, how that book tortured him! He sometimes flung it aside in despair, and leaping up, paced about the room almost in a frenzy.

"I agree that the author's fundamental idea is a true one," he said to me feverishly, "but that only makes it more awful. It's just our idea, exactly ours; we first sowed the seed, nurtured it, prepared the way, and, indeed, what could they say new, after us? But, heavens! How it's all expressed, distorted, mutilated!" he exclaimed, tapping the book with his fingers. "Were these the conclusions we were striving for? Who can understand the original idea in this?"

"Improving your mind?" sniggered Pyotr Stepanovitch, taking the book from the table and reading the title. "It's high time. I'll bring you better, if you like."

Stepan Trofimovitch again preserved a dignified silence. I was sitting on a sofa in the corner.

Pyotr Stepanovitch quickly explained the reason of his coming. Of course, Stepan Trofimovitch was absolutely staggered, and he listened in alarm, which was mixed with extreme indignation.

"And that Yulia Mihailovna counts on my coming to read for her!"

Pyotr & his father



"Well, they're by no means in such need of you. On the contrary, it's by way of an attention to you, so as to make up to Varvara Petrovna. But, of course, you won't dare to refuse, and I expect you want to yourself," he added with a grin. "You old fogies are all so devilishly ambitious. But, I say though, you must look out that it's not too boring. What have you got? Spanish history, or what is it? You'd better let me look at it three days beforehand, or else you'll put us to sleep perhaps."

The hurried and too barefaced coarseness of these thrusts was obviously premeditated. He affected to behave as though it were impossible to talk to Stepan Trofimovitch in different and more delicate language. Stepan Trofimovitch resolutely persisted in ignoring his insults, but what his son told him made a more and more overwhelming impression upon him.

"And she, she herself sent me this message through you?" he asked, turning pale.

"Well, you see, she means to fix a time and place for a mutual explanation, the relics of your sentimentalising. You've been coquetting with her for twenty years and have trained her to the most ridiculous habits. But don't trouble yourself, it's quite different now. She keeps saying herself that she's only beginning now to 'have her eyes opened.' I told her in so many words that all this friendship of yours is nothing but a mutual pouring forth of sloppiness. She told me lots, my boy. Foo! what a flunkey's place you've been filling all this time. I positively blushed for you."

"I filling a flunkey's place?" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, unable to restrain himself.

"Worse, you've been a parasite, that is, a voluntary flunkey too lazy to work, while you've an appetite for money. She, too, understands all that now. It's awful the things she's been telling me about you, anyway. I did laugh, my boy, over your letters to her; shameful and disgusting. But you're all so depraved, so depraved! There's always something depraving in charity—you're a good example of it!"

"She showed you my letters!"

"All; though, of course, one couldn't read them all. Foo, what a lot of paper you've covered! I believe there are more than two thousand letters there. And do you know, old chap,



I believe there was one moment when she'd have been ready to marry you. You let slip your chance in the silliest way. Of course, I'm speaking from your point of view, though, anyway, it would have been better than now when you've almost been married to 'cover another man's sins,' like a buffoon, for a jest, for money."

"For money! She, she says it was for money!" Stepan Trofimovich wailed in anguish.

"What else, then? But, of course, I stood up for you. That's your only line of defence, you know. She sees for herself that you needed money like every one else, and that from that point of view maybe you were right. I proved to her as clear as twice two makes four that it was a mutual bargain. She was a capitalist and you were a sentimental buffoon in her service. She's not angry about the money, though you have milked her like a goat. She's only in a rage at having believed in you for twenty years, at your having so taken her in over these noble sentiments, and made her tell lies for so long. She never will admit that she told lies of herself, but you'll catch it the more for that. I can't make out how it was you didn't see that you'd have to have a day of reckoning. For after all you had some sense. I advised her yesterday to put you in an almshouse, a genteel one, don't disturb yourself; there'll be nothing humiliating; I believe that's what she'll do. Do you remember your last letter to me, three weeks ago?"

"Can you have shown her that?" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, leaping up in horror.

"Rather! First thing. The one in which you told me she was exploiting you, envious of your talent; oh, yes, and that about 'other men's sins.' You have got a conceit though, my boy! How I did laugh! As a rule your letters are very tedious. You write a horrible style. I often don't read them at all, and I've one lying about to this day, unopened. I'll send it to you tomorrow. But that one, that last letter of yours was the tiptop of perfection! How I did laugh! Oh, how I laughed!"

"Monster, monster!" wailed Stepan Trofimovitch.

"Foo, damn it all, there's no talking to you. I say, you're getting huffy again as you were last Thursday."

Stepan Trofimovitch drew himself up, menacingly.

"How dare you speak to me in such language?"

"What language? It's simple and clear."

"Tell me, you monster, are you my son or not?"

"You know that best. To be sure all fathers are disposed to be blind in such cases."

"Silence! Silence!" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, shaking all over.

"You see you're screaming and swearing at me as you did last Thursday. You tried to lift your stick against me, but you know, I found that document. I was rummaging all the evening in my trunk from curiosity. It's true there's nothing definite, you can take that comfort. It's only a letter of my mother's to that Pole. But to judge from her character . . . "

"Another word and I'll box your ears."

"What a set of people!" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, suddenly addressing himself to me. "You see, this is how we've been ever since last Thursday. I'm glad you're here this time, anyway, and can judge between us. To begin with, a fact: he reproaches me for speaking like this of my mother, but didn't he egg me on to it? In Petersburg before I left the High School, didn't he wake me twice in the night, to embrace me, and cry like a woman, and what do you suppose he talked to me about at night? Why, the same modest anecdotes about my mother! It was from him I first heard them."

"Oh, I meant that in a higher sense! Oh, you didn't understand me! You understood nothing, nothing."

"But, anyway, it was meaner in you than in me, meaner, acknowledge that. You see, it's nothing to me if you like. I'm speaking from your point of view. Don't worry about my point of view. I don't blame my mother; if it's you, then it's you, if it's a Pole, then it's a Pole, it's all the same to me. I'm not to blame because you and she managed so stupidly in Berlin. As though you could have managed things better. Aren't you an absurd set, after that? And does it matter to you whether I'm your son or not? Listen," he went on, turning to me again, "he's never spent a penny on me all his life; till I was sixteen he didn't know me at all; afterwards he robbed me here, and now he cries out that his heart has been aching over me all his life, and carries on before me like an actor. I'm not Varvara Petrovna, mind you."

He got up and took his hat.



"I curse you henceforth!"

Stepan Trofimovitch, as pale as death, stretched out his hand above him.

"Ach, what folly a man will descend to!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, actually surprised. "Well, good-bye, old fellow, I shall never come and see you again. Send me the article beforehand, don't forget, and try and let it be free from nonsense. Facts, facts, facts. And above all, let it be short. Good-bye."

## III

Outside influences, too, had come into play in the matter, however. Pyotr Stepanovitch certainly had some designs on his parent. In my opinion he calculated upon reducing the old man to despair, and so to driving him to some open scandal of a certain sort. This was to serve some remote and quite other object of his own, of which I shall speak hereafter. All sorts of plans and calculations of this kind were swarming in masses in his mind at that time, and almost all, of course, of a fantastic character. He had designs on another victim besides Stepan Trofimovitch. In fact, as appeared afterwards, his victims were not few ~~in number, but this one~~ he reckoned upon particularly, and it was Mr. von Lembke himself.

Andrey Antonovitch von Lembke belonged to that race, so ~~favoured by nature, which is~~ reckoned by hundreds of thousands at the Russian census, and is perhaps unconscious that it forms throughout its whole mass a strictly organised union. And this union, of course, is not planned and premeditated, but exists spontaneously in the whole race, without words or agreements as a moral obligation consisting in mutual support given by all members of the race to one another, at all times and places, and under all circumstances. Andrey Antonovitch had the honour of being educated in one of those more exalted Russian educational institutions which are filled with the youth from families well provided with wealth or connections. Almost immediately on finishing their studies the pupils were appointed to rather important posts in one of the government departments. Andrey Antonovitch had one uncle a colonel of engineers, and another a baker. But he managed to get into this

obtained good posts and always under chiefs of his own race; and he worked his way up at last to a very fine position for a man of his age. He had, for a long time, been wishing to marry and looking about him carefully. Without the knowledge of his superiors he had sent a novel to the editor of a magazine, but it had not been accepted. On the other hand, he cut out a complete toy railway, and again his creation was most successful. Passengers came on to the platform with bags and portmanteaux, with dogs and children, and got into the carriages. The guards and porters moved away, the bell was rung, the signal was given, and the train started off. He was a whole year busy over this clever contrivance. But he had to get married all the same. The circle of his acquaintance was fairly wide, chiefly in the world of his compatriots, but his duties brought him into Russian spheres also, of course. Finally, when he was in his thirty-ninth year, he came in for a legacy. His uncle the baker died, and left him thirteen thousand roubles in his will. The one thing needful was a suitable post. In spite of the rather elevated style of his surroundings in the service, Mr. von Lembke was a very modest man. He would have been perfectly satisfied with some independent little government post, with the right to as much government timber as he liked, or something snug of that sort, and he would have been content all his life long. But now, instead of the Minna or Ernestine he had expected, Yulia Mihailovna suddenly appeared on the scene. His career was instantly raised to a more elevated plane. The modest and precise man felt that he too was capable of ambition.

Yulia Mihailovna had a fortune of two hundred serfs, to reckon in the old style, and she had besides powerful friends. On the other hand Lembke was handsome, and she was already over forty. It is remarkable that he fell genuinely in love with her by degrees as he became more used to being betrothed to her. On the morning of his wedding day he sent her a poem. She liked all this very much, even the poem; it's no joke to be forty. He was very quickly raised to a certain grade and received a certain order of distinction, and then was appointed governor of our province.

Before coming to us Yulia Mihailovna worked hard at moulding her husband. In her opinion he was not without abili-



ties, he knew how to make an entrance and to appear to advantage, he understood how to listen and be silent with profundity, had acquired a quite distinguished deportment, could make a speech, indeed had even some odds and ends of thought, and had caught the necessary gloss of modern liberalism. What worried her, however, was that he was not very open to new ideas, and after the long, everlasting plodding for a career, was unmistakably beginning to feel the need of repose. She tried to infect him with her own ambition, and he suddenly began making a toy church: the pastor came out to preach the sermon, the congregation listened with their hands before them, one lady was drying her tears with her handkerchief, one old gentleman was blowing his nose; finally the organ pealed forth. It had been ordered from Switzerland, and made expressly in spite of all expense. Yulia Mihailovna, in positive alarm, carried off the whole structure as soon as she knew about it, and locked it up in a box in her own room. To make up for it she allowed him to write a novel on condition of its being kept secret. From that time she began to reckon only upon herself. Unhappily there was a good deal of shallowness and lack of judgment in her attitude. Destiny had kept her too long an old maid. Now one idea after another fluttered through her ambitious and rather over-excited brain. She cherished designs, she positively desired to rule the province, dreamed of becoming at once the centre of a circle, adopted political sympathies. Von Lembke was actually a little alarmed, though, with his official tact, he quickly divined that he had no need at all to be uneasy about the government of the province itself. The first two or three months passed indeed very satisfactorily. But now Pyotr Stepanovitch had turned up, and something queer began to happen.

The fact was that young Verhovensky, from the first step had displayed a flagrant lack of respect for Andrey Antonovitch, and had assumed a strange right to dictate to him; while Yulia Mihailovna, who had always till then been so jealous of her husband's dignity, absolutely refused to notice it; or, at any rate, attached no consequence to it. The young man became a favourite, ate, drank, and almost slept in the house. Von Lembke tried to defend himself, called him "young man" before other people, and slapped him patronisingly on

the shoulder, but made no impression. Pyotr Stepanovitch always seemed to be laughing in his face even when he appeared on the surface to be talking seriously to him, and he would say the most startling things to him before company. Returning home one day he found the young man had installed himself in his study and was asleep on the sofa there, uninvited. He explained that he had come in, and finding no one at home had "had a good sleep." Von Lembke was offended and again complained to his wife. Laughing at his irritability she observed tartly that he evidently did not know how to keep up his own dignity; and that with her, anyway, "the boy" had never permitted himself any undue familiarity, "he was naïve and fresh indeed, though not regardful of the conventions of society." Von Lembke sulked. This time she made peace between them. Pyotr Stepanovitch did not go so far as to apologise, but got out of it with a coarse jest, which might at another time have been taken for a fresh offense, but was accepted on this occasion as a token of repentance. The weak spot in Andrey Antonovitch's position was that he had blundered in the first instance by divulging the secret of his novel to him. Imagining him to be an ardent young man of poetic feeling and having long dreamed of securing a listener, he had, during the early days of their acquaintance, on one occasion read aloud two chapters to him. The young man had listened without disguising his boredom, had rudely yawned, had vouchsafed no word of praise; but on leaving had asked for the manuscript that he might form an opinion of it at his leisure, and Andrey Antonovitch had given it him. He had not returned the manuscript since, though he dropped in every day, and had turned off all inquiries with a laugh. Afterwards he declared that he had lost it in the street. At the time Yulia Mihailovna was terribly angry with her husband when she heard of it.

"Perhaps you told him about the church too?" she burst out almost in dismay.

Von Lembke unmistakably began to brood, and brooding was bad for him, and had been forbidden by the doctors. Apart from the fact that there were signs of trouble in the province of which we will speak later, he had private reasons



for brooding, his heart was wounded, not merely his official dignity. When Andrey Antonovitch had entered upon married life, he had never conceived the possibility of conjugal strife, or dissension in the future. It was inconsistent with the dreams he had cherished all his life of his Minna or Ernestine. He felt that he was unequal to enduring domestic storms. Yulia Mihailovna had an open explanation with him at last.

"You can't be angry at this," she said, "if only because you've still as much sense as he has, and are immeasurably higher in the social scale. The boy still preserves many traces of his old free-thinking habits; I believe it's simply mischief; but one can do nothing suddenly, in a hurry; you must do things by degrees. We must make much of our young people; I treat them with affection and hold them back from the brink."

"But he says such dreadful things," Von Lembke objected. "I can't behave tolerantly when he maintains in my presence and before other people that the government purposely drenches the people with vodka in order to brutalise them, and so keep them from revolution. Fancy my position when I'm forced to listen to that before every one."

As he said this, Von Lembke recalled a conversation he had recently had with Pyotr Stepanovitch. With the innocent object of displaying his Liberal tendencies he had shown him his own private collection of every possible kind of manifesto, Russian and foreign, which he had carefully collected since the year 1859, not simply from a love of collecting but from a laudable interest in them. Pyotr Stepanovitch, seeing his object, expressed the opinion that there was more sense in one line of some manifestoes than in a whole government department, "not even excluding yours, maybe."

Lembke winced.

"But this is premature among us, premature," he pronounced almost imploringly, pointing to the manifestoes.

"No, it's not premature; you see you're afraid, so it's not premature."

"But here, for instance, is an incitement to destroy churches."

"And why not? You're a sensible man, and of course you

don't believe in it yourself, but you know perfectly well that you need religion to brutalise the people. Truth is honester than falsehood. . . ."

"I agree, I agree, I quite agree with you, but it is premature, premature in this country . . ." said Von Lembke, frowning.

"And how can you be an official of the government after that, when you agree to demolishing churches, and marching on Petersburg armed with staves, and make it all simply a question of date?"

Lembke was greatly put out at being so crudely caught.

"It's not so, not so at all," he cried, carried away and more and more mortified in his amour-propre. "You're young, and know nothing of our aims, and that's why you're mistaken. You see, my dear Pyotr Stepanovitch, you call us officials of the government, don't you? Independent officials, don't you? But let me ask you, how are we acting? Ours is the responsibility, but in the long run we serve the cause of progress just as you do. We only hold together what you are unsettling, and what, but for us, would go to pieces in all directions. We are not your enemies, not a bit of it. We say to you, go forward, progress, you may even unsettle things, that is, things that are antiquated and in need of reform. But we will keep you, when need be, within necessary limits, and so save you from yourselves, for without us you would set Russia tottering, robbing her of all external decency, while our task is to preserve external decency. Understand that we are mutually essential to one another. In England the Whigs and Tories are in the same way mutually essential to one another. Well, you're Whigs and we're Tories. That's how I look at it."

Andrey Antonovitch rose to positive eloquence. He had been fond of talking in a Liberal and intellectual style even in Petersburg, and the great thing here was that there was no one to play the spy on him.

Pyotr Stepanovitch was silent, and maintained an unusually grave air. This excited the orator more than ever.

"Do you know that I, the 'person responsible for the province,' " he went on, walking about the study, "do you know I have so many duties I can't perform one of them, and, on the other hand, I can say just as truly that there's nothing for me to do here. The whole secret of it is, that everything depends upon the views of the government. Suppose the government were ever to found a republic, from policy, or to pacify public excitement, and at the same time to increase the power of the governors, then we governors would swallow up the republic; and not the republic only. Anything you like we'll swallow up. I, at least, feel that I am ready. In one word, if the government dictates to me by telegram, *activité dévorante*, I'll supply *activité dévorante*. I've told them here straight in their faces: 'Dear sirs, to maintain the equilibrium and to develop all the provincial institutions one thing is essential; the increase of the power of the governor.' You see it's necessary that all these institutions, the zemstvos, the law-courts, should have a two-fold existence, that is, on the one hand, it's necessary they should exist (I agree that it is necessary), on the other hand, it's necessary that they shouldn't. It's all according to the views of the government. If the mood takes them so that institutions seem suddenly necessary, I shall have them at once in readiness. The necessity passes and no one will find them under my rule. That's what I understand by *activité dévorante*, and you can't have it without an increase of the governor's power. We're talking *tête-à-tête*. You know I've already laid before the government in Petersburg the necessity of a special sentinel before the governor's house. I'm awaiting an answer."



"You ought to have two," Pyotr Stepanovitch commented.

"Why two?" said Von Lembke, stopping short before him.

"One's not enough to create respect for you. You certainly ought to have two."

Andrey Antonovitch made a wry face.

"You . . . there's no limit to the liberties you take, Pyotr Stepanovitch. You take advantage of my good-nature, you say cutting things, and play the part of a *bourru bienfaisant*. . . ."

"Well, that's as you please," muttered Pyotr Stepanovitch; "anyway you pave the way for us and prepare for our success."

"Now, who are 'we,' and what success?" said Von Lembke, staring at him in surprise. But he got no answer.

Yulia Mihailovna, receiving a report of the conversation, was greatly displeased.

"But I can't exercise my official authority upon your favourite," Andrey Antonovitch protested in self-defence, "especially when we're *tête-à-tête*. . . . I may say too much . . . in the goodness of my heart."

"From too much goodness of heart. I didn't know you'd got a collection of manifestoes. Be so good as to show them to me."

"But . . . he asked to have them for one day."

"And you've let him have them, again!" cried Yulia Mihailovna getting angry. "How tactless!"

"I'll send some one to him at once to get them."

"He won't give them up."

"I'll insist on it," cried Von Lembke, boiling over, and he jumped up from his seat. "Who's he that we should be so afraid of him, and who am I that I shouldn't dare to do anything?"

"Sit down and calm yourself," said Yulia Mihailovna, checking him. "I will answer your first question. He came to me with the highest recommendations. He's talented, and sometimes says extremely clever things. Karmazinov tells me that he has connections almost everywhere, and extraordinary influence over the younger generation in Petersburg and Moscow. And if through him I can attract them all and group them round myself, I shall be saving them from perdition by guiding them into a new outlet for their ambitions. He's devoted to me with his whole heart and is guided by me in everything."

"But while they're being petted . . . the devil knows what they may not do. Of course, it's an idea . . ." said Von Lembke, vaguely defending himself, "but . . . but here I've heard that manifestoes of some sort have been found in X district."

"But there was a rumour of that in the summer—manifestoes, false bank-notes, and all the rest of it, but they haven't found one of them so far. Who told you?"

"I heard it from Von Blum."

"Ah, don't talk to me of your Blum. Don't ever dare mention him again!"

Yulia Mihailovna flew into a rage, and for a moment could not speak. Von Blum was a clerk in the governor's office whom she particularly hated. Of that later.



"Please don't worry yourself about Verhovensky," she said in conclusion. "If he had taken part in any mischief he wouldn't talk as he does to you, and every one else here. Talkers are not dangerous, and I will even go so far as to say that if anything were to happen I should be the first to hear of it through him. He's quite fanatically devoted to me."

I will observe, anticipating events that, had it not been for Yulia Mihailovna's obstinacy and self-conceit, probably nothing of all the mischief these wreched people succeeded in bringing about amongst us would have happened. She was responsible for a great deal.

## CHAPTER V

### ON THE EVE OF THE FÊTE

### I

THE date of the fête which Yulia Mihailovna was getting up for the benefit of the governesses of our province had been several times fixed and put off. She had invariably bustling round her Pyotr Stepanovitch and a little clerk, Lyamshin, who used at one time to visit Stepan Trofimovitch, and had suddenly found favour in the governor's house for the way he played the piano and now was of use running errands. Liputin was there a good deal too, and Yulia Mihailovna destined him to be the editor of a new independent provincial paper. There were also several ladies, married and single, and lastly, even Karmazinov who, though he could not be said to bustle, announced aloud with a complacent air that he would agreeably astonish every one when the literary quadrille began. An extraordinary multitude of donors and subscribers had turned up, all the select society of the town; but even the unselect were admitted, if only they produced the cash. Yulia Mihailovna observed that sometimes it was a positive duty to allow the mixing of classes, "for otherwise who is to enlighten them?"

A private drawing-room committee was formed, at which it was decided that the fête was to be of a democratic character. The enormous list of subscriptions tempted them to lavish expenditure. They wanted to do something on a marvellous scale—that's why it was put off. They were still undecided where the ball was to take place, whether in the immense house belonging to the marshal's wife, which she was willing to give up to them for the day, or at Varvara Petrovna's mansion at Skvoreshniki. It was rather a distance to Skvoreshniki, but many of the committee were of opinion that it would be "freer" there. Varvara Petrovna would dearly have liked it to have been in her house. It's difficult to understand why this proud woman seemed almost making up to Yulia Mihailovna. Probably what pleased her was that the latter in her turn seemed almost fawning upon Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and was more gracious to him than to anyone. I repeat again that Pyotr Stepanovitch was always, in continual whispers, strengthening in the governor's household an idea he had insinuated there already, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was a man who had very mysterious connections with very mysterious circles, and that he had certainly come here with some commission from them.





People here seemed in a strange state of mind at the time. Among the ladies especially a sort of frivolity was conspicuous, and it could not be said to be a gradual growth. Certain very free-and-easy notions seemed to be in the air. There was a sort of dissipated gaiety and levity, and I can't say it was always quite pleasant. A lax way of thinking was the fashion. Afterwards when it was all over, people blamed Yulia Mihailovna, her circle, her attitude. But it can hardly have been altogether due to Yulia Mihailovna. On the contrary; at first many people vied with one another in praising the new governor's wife for her success in bringing local society together, and for making things more lively. Several scandalous incidents took place, for which Yulia Mihailovna was in no way responsible, but at the time people were amused and did nothing but laugh, and there was no one to check them. A rather large group of people, it is true, held themselves aloof, and had views of their own on the course of events. But even these made no complaint at the time; they smiled, in fact.

I remember that a fairly large circle came into existence, as it were, spontaneously, the centre of which perhaps was really to be found in Yulia Mihailovna's drawing-room. In this intimate circle which surrounded her, among the younger members of it, of course, it was considered admissible to play all sorts of pranks, sometimes rather free-and-easy ones, and, in fact, such conduct became a principle among them. In this circle there were even some very charming ladies. The young

people arranged picnics, and even parties, and sometimes went about the town in a regular cavalcade, in carriages and on horseback. They sought out adventures, even got them up themselves, simply for the sake of having an amusing story to tell. They treated our town as though it were a sort of Glupov. People called them the jeerers or sneerers, because they did not stick at anything. It happened, for instance, that the wife of a local lieutenant, a little brunette, very young though she looked worn out from her husband's ill-treatment, at an evening party thoughtlessly sat down to play whist for high stakes in the fervent hope of winning enough to buy herself a mantle, and instead of winning, lost fifteen roubles. Being afraid of her husband, and having no means of paying, she plucked up the courage of former days and ventured on the sly to ask for a loan, on the spot, at the party, from the son of our mayor, a very nasty youth, precociously vicious. The latter not only refused it, but went laughing aloud to tell her husband. The lieutenant, who certainly was poor, with nothing but his salary, took his wife home and avenged himself upon her to his heart's content in spite of her shrieks, wails, and entreaties on her knees for forgiveness. This revolting story excited nothing but mirth all over the town, and though the poor wife did not belong to Yulia Mihailovna's circle, one of the ladies of the "cavalcade," an eccentric and adventurous character who happened to know her, drove round, and simply carried her off to her own house. Here she was at once taken up by our madcaps, made much of, loaded with presents, and kept for four days without being sent back to her husband. She stayed at the adventurous lady's all day long, drove about with her and all the sportive company in expeditions about the town, and took part in dances and merry-making. They kept egging her on to haul her husband before the court and to make a scandal. They declared that they would all support her and would come and bear witness. The husband kept quiet, not daring to oppose them. The poor thing realised at last that she had got into a hopeless position and, more dead than alive with fright, on the fourth day she ran off in the dusk from her protectors to her lieutenant. It's not definitely known what took place between husband and wife, but two shutters of the low-pitched little house in which the lieutenant lodged were



not opened for a fortnight. Yulia Mihailovna was angry with the mischief-makers when she heard about it all, and was greatly displeased with the conduct of the adventurous lady, though the latter had presented the lieutenant's wife to her on the day she carried her off. However, this was soon forgotten.

Another time a petty clerk, a respectable head of a family, married his daughter, a beautiful girl of seventeen, known to every one in the town, to another petty clerk, a young man who came from a different district. But suddenly it was learned that the young husband had treated the beauty very roughly on the wedding night, chastising her for what he regarded as a stain on his honour. Lyamshin, who was almost a witness of the affair, because he got drunk at the wedding and so stayed the night, as soon as day dawned, ran around with the diverting intelligence. Instantly a party of a dozen was made up, all of them on horseback, some on hired Cossack horses, Pyotr Stepanovitch, for instance, and Liputin, who, in spite of his grey hairs, took part in almost every scandalous adventure of our reckless youngsters. When the young couple appeared in the street in a droshky with a pair of horses to make the calls which are obligatory in our town on the day after a wedding, in spite of anything that may happen, the whole cavalcade, with merry laughter, surrounded the droshky and followed them about the town all the morning. They did not, it's true, go into the house, but waited for them outside, on horseback. They refrained from marked insult to the bride or bridegroom, but still they caused a scandal. The whole town began talking of it. Every one laughed, of course. But at this Von Lembke was angry, and again had a lively scene with Yulia Mihailovna. She, too, was extremely angry, and formed the intention of turning the scapegraces out of her house. But next day she forgave them all after persuasions from Pyotr Stepanovitch and some words from Karmazinov, who considered the affair rather amusing.

"It's in harmony with the traditions of the place," he said. "Anyway it's characteristic and . . . bold; and look, every one's laughing, you're the only person indignant."

But there were pranks of a certain character that were absolutely past endurance.

A respectable woman of the artisan class, who went about

selling gospels, came into the town. People talked about her, because some interesting references to these gospel women had just appeared in the Petersburg papers. Again the same buffoon, Lyamshin, with the help of a divinity student, who was taking a holiday while waiting for a post in the school, succeeded, on the pretence of buying books from the gospel woman, in thrusting into her bag a whole bundle of indecent and obscene photographs from abroad, sacrificed expressly for the purpose, as we learned afterwards, by a highly respectable old gentleman (I will omit his name) with an order on his breast, who, to use his own words, loved "a healthy laugh and a merry jest." When the poor woman went to take out the holy books in the bazaar, the photographs were scattered about the place. There were roars of laughter and murmurs of indignation. A crowd collected, began abusing her, and would have come to blows if the police had not arrived in the nick of time. The gospel woman was taken to the lock-up, and only in the evening, thanks to the efforts of Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had learned with indignation the secret details of this loathsome affair, she was released and escorted out of the town. At this point Yulia Mihailovna would certainly have forbidden Lyamshin her house, but that very evening the whole circle brought him to her with the intelligence that he had just composed a new piece for the piano, and persuaded her at least to hear it. The piece turned out to be really amusing, and bore the comic title of "The Franco-Prussian War." It began with the menacing strains of the "Marseillaise":

"*Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.*"

There is heard the pompous challenge, the intoxication of future victories. But suddenly mingling with the masterly variations on the national hymn, somewhere from some corner quite close, on one side come the vulgar strains of "Mein lieber Augustin." The "Marseillaise" goes on unconscious of them. The "Marseillaise" is at the climax of its intoxication with its own grandeur; but Augustin gains strength; Augustin grows more and more insolent, and suddenly the melody of Augustin begins to blend with the melody of the "Marseillaise." The latter begins, as it were, to get angry; becoming aware of Augustin at last she tries to fling him off, to brush him aside like a tiresome insignificant fly. But "Mein lieber Augustin"



holds his ground firmly, he is cheerful and self-confident, he is gleeful and impudent, and the "Marseillaise" seems suddenly to become terribly stupid. She can no longer conceal her anger and mortification; it is a wail of indignation, tears, and curses, with hands outstretched to Providence.

"*Pas un pouce de notre terrain; pas une de nos forteresses.*"

But she is forced to sing in time with "Mein lieber Augustin." Her melody passes in a sort of foolish way into Augustin; she yields and dies away. And only by snatches there is heard again:

"*Qu'un sang impur . . .*"

But at once it passes very offensively into the vulgar waltz. She submits altogether. It is Jules Favre sobbing on Bismarck's bosom and surrendering everything. . . . But at this point Augustin too grows fierce; hoarse sounds are heard; there is a suggestion of countless gallons of beer, of a frenzy of self-glorification, demands for millions, for fine cigars, champagne, and hostages. Augustin passes into a wild yell. . . . "The Franco-Prussian War" is over. Our circle applauded, Yulia Mihailovna smiled, and said, "Now, how is one to turn him out?" Peace was made. The rascal really had talent. Stepan Trofimovitch assured me on one occasion that the very highest artistic talents may exist in the most abominable blackguards, and that the one thing does not interfere with the other. There was a rumour afterwards that Lyamshin had stolen this burlesque from a talented and modest young man of his acquaintance, whose name remained unknown. But this is beside the mark. This worthless fellow who had hung about Stepan Trofimovitch for years, who used at his evening parties, when invited, to mimic Jews of various types, a deaf peasant woman making her confession, or the birth of a child, now at Yulia Mihailovna's caricatured Stepan Trofimovitch himself in a killing way, under the title of "A Liberal of the Forties." Everybody shook with laughter, so that in the end it was quite impossible to turn him out: he had become too necessary a person. Besides he fawned upon Pyotr Stepanovitch in a slavish way, and he, in his turn, had obtained by this time a strange and unaccountable influence over Yulia Mihailovna.

I wouldn't have talked about this scoundrel, and, indeed, he would not be worth dwelling upon, but there was another

revolting story, so people declare, in which he had a hand, and this story I cannot omit from my record.

One morning the news of a hideous and revolting sacrilege was all over the town. At the entrance to our immense market-place there stands the ancient church of Our Lady's Nativity, which was a remarkable antiquity in our ancient town. At the gates of the precincts there is a large ikon of the Mother of God fixed behind a grating in the wall. And behold, one night the ikon had been robbed, the glass of the case was broken, the grating was smashed and several stones and pearls (I don't know whether they were very precious ones) had been removed from the crown and the setting. But what was worse, besides the theft a senseless, scoffing sacrilege had been perpetrated. Behind the broken glass of the ikon they found in the morning, so it was said, a live mouse. Now, four months since, it has been established beyond doubt that the crime was committed by the convict Fedka, but for some reason it is added that Lyamshin took part in it. At the time no one spoke of Lyamshin or had any suspicion of him. But now every one says it was he who put the mouse there. I remember all our responsible officials were rather staggered. A crowd thronged round the scene of the crime from early morning. There was a crowd continually before it, not a very huge one, but always about a hundred people, some coming and some going. As they approached they crossed themselves and bowed down to the ikon. They began to give offerings, and a church dish made its appearance, and with the dish a monk. But it was only about three o'clock in the afternoon it occurred to the authorities that it was possible to prohibit the crowds standing about, and to command them when they had prayed, bowed down and left their offerings, to pass on. Upon Von Lembke this unfortunate incident made the gloomiest impression. As I was told, Yulia Mihailovna said afterwards it was from this ill-omened morning that she first noticed in her husband that strange depression which persisted in him until he left our province on account of illness two months ago, and, I believe, haunts him still in Switzerland, where he has gone for a rest after his brief career amongst us.

I remember at one o'clock in the afternoon I crossed the market-place; the crowd was silent and their faces solemn



and gloomy. A merchant, fat and sallow, drove up, got out of his carriage, made a bow to the ground, kissed the ikon, offered a rouble, sighing, got back into his carriage and drove off. Another carriage drove up with two ladies accompanied by two of our scapegraces. The young people (one of whom was not quite young) got out of their carriage too, and squeezed their way up to the ikon, pushing people aside rather carelessly. Neither of the young men took off his hat, and one of them put a pince-nez on his nose. In the crowd there was a murmur, vague but unfriendly. The dandy with the pince-nez took out of his purse, which was stuffed full of bank-notes, a copper farthing and flung it into the dish. Both laughed, and, talking loudly, went back to their carriage. At that moment Lizaveta Nikolaevna galloped up, escorted by Mavriky Nikolaevitch. She jumped off her horse, flung the reins to her companion, who, at her bidding, remained on his horse, and approached the ikon at the very moment when the farthing had been flung down. A flush of indignation suffused her cheeks; she took off her round hat and her gloves, fell straight on her knees before the ikon on the muddy pavement, and reverently bowed down three times to the earth. Then she took out her purse, but as it appeared she had only a few small coins in it she instantly took off her diamond ear-rings and put them in the dish.

"May I? May I? For the adornment of the setting?" she asked the monk.

"It is permitted," replied the latter, "every gift is good."

The crowd was silent, expressing neither dissent nor approval. Liza got on her horse again, in her muddy riding-habit, and galloped away.

## II

Two days after the incident I have described I met her in a numerous company, who were driving out on some expedition in three coaches, surrounded by others on horseback. She beckoned to me, stopped her carriage, and pressingly urged me to join their party. A place was found for me in the carriage, and she laughingly introduced me to her companions, gor-

geously attired ladies, and explained to me that they were all going on a very interesting expedition. She was laughing, and seemed somewhat excessively happy. Just lately she had been very lively, even playful, in fact.

The expedition was certainly an eccentric one. They were all going to a house the other side of the river, to the merchant Sevastyanov's. In the lodge of this merchant's house our saint and prophet, Semyon Yakovlevitch, who was famous not only amongst us but in the surrounding provinces and even in Petersburg and Moscow, had been living for the last ten years, in retirement, ease, and comfort. Every one went to see him, especially visitors to the neighbourhood, extracting from him some crazy utterance, bowing down to him, and leaving an offering. These offerings were sometimes considerable, and if Semyon Yakovlevitch did not himself assign them to some other purpose were piously sent to some church or more often to the monastery of Our Lady. A monk from the monastery was always in waiting upon Semyon Yakovlevitch with this object.

All were in expectation of great amusement. No one of the party had seen Semyon Yakovlevitch before, except Lyamshin, who declared that the saint had given orders that he should be driven out with a broom, and had with his own hand flung two big baked potatoes after him. Among the party I noticed Pyotr Stepanovitch, again riding a hired Cossack horse, on which he sat extremely badly, and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, also on horseback. The latter did not always hold aloof from social diversions, and on such occasions always wore an air of gaiety, although, as always, he spoke little and seldom. When our party had crossed the bridge and reached the hotel of the town, some one suddenly announced that in one of the rooms of the hotel they had just found a traveller who had shot himself, and were expecting the police. At once the suggestion was made that they should go and look at the suicide. The idea met with approval: our ladies had never seen a suicide. I remember one of them said aloud on the occasion, "Everything's so boring, one can't be squeamish over one's amusements, as long as they're interesting." Only a few of them remained outside. The others went in a body into the dirty corridor, and amongst the others I saw, to my amazement, Lizaveta Nikolaevna. The door of the room was open, and they did not, of course, dare to prevent our going in to look at the suicide. He was quite a young lad, not more than nineteen. He must have been very good-looking, with thick fair hair, with a regular oval face, and a fine, pure forehead. The body was already stiff, and his white young face looked like marble. On the table lay a note, in his hand-writing, to the effect that no one was to blame for his death, that he had killed himself because he had "squandered" four hundred roubles. The word "squandered" was used in the letter; in the four lines of his letter there were three mistakes in spelling.



A stout country gentleman, evidently a neighbour, who had been staying in the hotel on some business of his own, was particularly distressed about it. From his words it appeared that the boy had been sent by his family, that is, a widowed mother, sisters, and aunts, from the country to the town in order that, under the supervision of a female relation in the town, he might purchase and take home with him various articles for the trousseau of his eldest sister, who was going to be married. The family had, with sighs of apprehension, entrusted him with the four hundred roubles, the savings of ten years, and had sent him on his way with exhortations, prayers, and signs of the cross. The boy had till then been well-behaved and trustworthy. Arriving three days before at the town, he had not gone to his relations, had put up at the hotel, and gone straight to the club in the hope of finding in some back room a "travelling banker," or at least some game of cards for money. But that evening there was no "banker" there or gambling going on. Going back to the hotel about midnight he asked for champagne, Havana cigars, and ordered a supper of six or seven dishes. But the champagne made him drunk, and the cigar made him sick so that he did not touch the food when it was brought to him, and went to bed almost unconscious. Waking next morning as fresh as an apple, he went at once to the gipsies' camp, which was in a suburb beyond the river, and of which he had heard the day before at the club. He did not reappear at the hotel for two days. At last, at five o'clock in the afternoon of the previous day, he had returned drunk, had at once gone to bed, and had slept till ten o'clock in the evening. On waking up he had asked for

a cutlet, a bottle of Château d'Yquem, and some grapes, paper, and ink, and his bill. No one noticed anything special about him; he was quiet, gentle, and friendly. He must have shot himself at about midnight, though it was strange that no one had heard the shot, and they only raised the alarm at midday, when, after knocking in vain, they had broken in the door. The bottle of Château d'Yquem was half empty, there was half a plateful of grapes left too. The shot had been fired from a little three-chambered revolver, straight into the heart. Very little blood had flowed. The revolver had dropped from his hand on to the carpet. The boy himself was half lying in a corner of the sofa. Death must have been instantaneous. There was no trace of the anguish of death in the face; the expression was serene, almost happy, as though there were no cares in his life. All our party stared at him with greedy curiosity. In every misfortune of one's neighbour there is always something cheering for an onlooker—whoever he may be. Our ladies gazed in silence, their companions distinguished themselves by their wit and their superb equanimity. One observed that his was the best way out of it, and that the boy could not have hit upon anything more sensible; another observed that he had had a good time if only for a moment. A third suddenly blurted out the inquiry why people had begun hanging and shooting themselves among us of late, as though they had suddenly lost their roots, as though the ground were giving way under every one's feet. People looked coldly at this *raisonneur*. Then Lyamshin, who prided himself on playing the fool, took a bunch of grapes from the plate; another, laughing, followed his example, and a third stretched out his hand for the Château d'Yquem. But the head of police arriving checked him, and even ordered that the room should be cleared. As every one had seen all they wanted they went out without disputing, though Lyamshin began pestering the police captain about something. The general merrymaking, laughter, and playful talk were twice as lively on the latter half of the way.

We arrived at Semyon Yakovlevitch's just at one o'clock. The gate of the rather large house stood unfastened, and the approach to the lodge was open. We learnt at once that Semyon Yakovlevitch was dining, but was receiving guests. The

Semyon.



whole crowd of us went in. The room in which the saint dined and received visitors had three windows, and was fairly large. It was divided into two equal parts by a wooden lattice-work partition, which ran from wall to wall, and was three or four feet high. Ordinary visitors remained on the outside of this partition, but lucky ones were by the saint's invitation admitted through the partition doors into his half of the room. And if so disposed he made them sit down on the sofa or on his old leather chairs. He himself invariably sat in an old-fashioned shabby Voltaire arm-chair. He was a rather big, bloated-looking, yellow-faced man of five and fifty, with a bald head and scanty flaxen hair. He wore no beard; his right cheek was swollen, and his mouth seemed somehow twisted awry. He had a large wart on the left side of his nose; narrow eyes, and a calm, stolid, sleepy expression. He was dressed in European style, in a black coat, but had no waistcoat or tie. A rather coarse, but white shirt, peeped out below his coat. There was something the matter with his feet, I believe, and he kept them in slippers. I've heard that he had at one time been a clerk, and received a rank in the service. He had just finished some fish soup, and was beginning his second dish of potatoes in their skins, eaten with salt. He never ate anything else, but he drank a great deal of tea, of which he was very fond. Three servants provided by the merchant were running to and fro about him. One of them was in a swallow-tail, the second looked like a workman, and the third like a verger. There was also a very lively boy of sixteen. Besides the servants there was present, holding a jug, a reverend, grey-headed monk, who was a little too fat. On one of the tables a huge samovar was boiling, and a tray with almost two dozen glasses was standing near it. On another table opposite offerings had been placed: some loaves and also some pounds of sugar, two pounds of tea, a pair of embroidered slippers, a foulard handkerchief, a length of cloth, a piece of linen, and so on. Money offerings almost all went into the monk's jug. The room was full of people, at least a dozen visitors, of whom two were sitting with Semyon Yakovlevitch on the other side of the partition. One was a grey-headed old pilgrim of the peasant class, and the other a little, dried-up monk, who sat demurely, with his eyes cast down. The other visitors were all standing

on the near side of the partition, and were mostly, too, of the peasant class, except one elderly and poverty-stricken lady, one landowner, and a stout merchant, who had come from the district town, a man with a big beard, dressed in the Russian style, though he was known to be worth a hundred thousand.

All were waiting for their chance, not daring to speak of themselves. Four were on their knees, but the one who attracted most attention was the landowner, a stout man of forty-five, kneeling right at the partition, more conspicuous than any one, waiting reverently for a propitious word or look from Semyon Yakovlevitch. He had been there for about an hour already, but the saint still did not notice him.

Our ladies crowded right up to the partition, whispering gaily and laughingly together. They pushed aside or got in front of all the other visitors, even those on their knees, except the landowner, who remained obstinately in his prominent position even holding on to the partition. Merry and greedily inquisitive eyes were turned upon Semyon Yakovlevitch, as well as lorgnettes, pince-nez, and even opera-glasses. Lyamshin, at any rate, looked through an opera-glass. Semyon Yakovlevitch calmly and lazily scanned all with his little eyes.

"Milovzors! Milovzors!" he deigned to pronounce, in a hoarse bass, and slightly staccato.

All our party laughed: "What's the meaning of 'Milovzors'?" But Semyon Yakovlevitch relapsed into silence, and finished his potatoes. Presently he wiped his lips with his napkin, and they handed him tea.

As a rule, he did not take tea alone, but poured out some for his visitors, but by no means for all, usually pointing himself to those he wished to honour. And his choice always surprised people by its unexpectedness. Passing by the wealthy and the high-placed, he sometimes pitched upon a peasant or some decrepit old woman. Another time he would pass over the beggars to honour some fat wealthy merchant. Tea was served differently, too, to different people, sugar was put into some of the glasses and handed separately with others, while some got it without any sugar at all. This time the favoured one was the monk sitting by him, who had sugar put in; and the old pilgrim, to whom it was given without any sugar. The fat monk with the jug, from the monastery, for some reason



had none handed to him at all, though up till then he had had his glass every day.

"Semyon Yakovlevitch, do say something to me. I've been longing to make your acquaintance for ever so long," carolled the gorgeously dressed lady from our carriage, screwing up her eyes and smiling. She was the lady who had observed that one must not be squeamish about one's amusements, so long as they were interesting. Semyon Yakovlevitch did not even look at her. The kneeling landowner uttered a deep, sonorous sigh, like the sound of a big pair of bellows.

"With sugar in it!" said Semyon Yakovlevitch suddenly, pointing to the wealthy merchant. The latter moved forward and stood beside the kneeling gentleman.

"Some more sugar for him!" ordered Semyon Yakovlevitch, after the glass had already been poured out. They put some more in. "More, more, for him!" More was put in a third time, and again a fourth. The merchant began submissively drinking his syrup.

"Heavens!" whispered the people, crossing themselves. The kneeling gentleman again heaved a deep, sonorous sigh.

"Father! Semyon Yakovlevitch!" The voice of the poor lady rang out all at once plaintively, though so sharply that it was startling. Our party had shoved her back to the wall. "A whole hour, dear father, I've been waiting for grace. Speak to me. Consider my case in my helplessness."

"Ask her," said Semyon Yakovlevitch to the verger, who went to the partition.

"Have you done what Semyon Yakovlevitch bade you last time?" he asked the widow in a soft and measured voice.

"Done it! Father Semyon Yakovlevitch. How can one do it with them?" wailed the widow. "They're cannibals; they're lodging a complaint against me, in the court; they threaten to take it to the senate. That's how they treat their own mother!"

"Give her!" Semyon Yakovlevitch pointed to a sugar-loaf. The boy skipped up, seized the sugar-loaf and dragged it to the widow.

"Ach, father; great is your merciful kindness. What am I to do with so much?" wailed the widow.

"More, more," said Semyon Yakovlevitch lavishly.

They dragged her another sugar-loaf. "More, more!" the

saint commanded. They took her a third, and finally a fourth. The widow was surrounded with sugar on all sides. The monk from the monastery sighed; all this might have gone to the monastery that day as it had done on former occasions.

"What am I to do with so much," the widow sighed obsequiously. "It's enough to make one person sick! . . . Is it some sort of a prophecy, father?"

"Be sure it's by way of a prophecy," said some one in the crowd.

"Another pound for her, another!" Semyon Yakovlevitch persisted.

There was a whole sugar-loaf still on the table, but the saint ordered a pound to be given, and they gave her a pound.

"Lord have mercy on us!" gasped the people, crossing themselves. "It's surely a prophecy."

"Sweeten your heart for the future with mercy and loving kindness, and then come to make complaints against your own children; bone of your bone. That's what we must take this emblem to mean," the stout monk from the monastery, who had had no tea given to him, said softly but self-complacently, taking upon himself the rôle of interpreter in an access of wounded vanity.

"What are you saying, father?" cried the widow, suddenly infuriated. "Why, they dragged me into the fire with a rope round me when the Verhishins' house was burnt, and they locked up a dead cat in my chest. They are ready to do any villainy. . . ."

"Away with her! Away with her!" Semyon Yakovlevitch said suddenly, waving his hands.

The verger and the boy dashed through the partition. The verger took the widow by the arm, and without resisting she trailed to the door, keeping her eyes fixed on the loaves of sugar that had been bestowed on her, which the boy dragged after her.

"One to be taken away. Take it away," Semyon Yakovlevitch commanded to the servant like a workman, who remained with him. The latter rushed after the retreating woman, and the three servants returned somewhat later bringing back one loaf of sugar which had been presented to the widow and now taken away from her. She carried off three, however.



"Semyon Yakovlevitch," said a voice at the door. "I dreamt of a bird, a jackdaw; it flew out of the water and flew into the fire. What does the dream mean?"

"Frost," Semyon Yakovlevitch pronounced.

"Semyon Yakovlevitch, why don't you answer me all this time? I've been interested in you ever so long," the lady of our party began with.

"Ask him!" said Semyon Yakovlevitch, not heeding her, but pointing to the kneeling gentleman.

The monk from the monastery to whom the order was given moved sedately to the kneeling figure.

"How have you sinned? And was not some command laid upon you?"

"Not to fight; not to give the rein to my hands," answered the kneeling gentleman hoarsely.

"Have you obeyed?" asked the monk.

"I cannot obey. My own strength gets the better of me."

"Away with him, away with him! With a broom, with a broom!" cried Semyon Yakovlevitch, waving his hands. The gentleman rushed out of the room without waiting for this penalty.

"He's left a gold piece where he knelt," observed the monk, picking up a half-imperial.

"For him!" said the saint, pointing to the rich merchant. The latter dared not refuse it, and took it.

"Gold to gold," the monk from the monastery could not refrain from saying.

"And give him some with sugar in it," said the saint, pointing to Mavriky Nikolaevitch. The servant poured out the tea and took it by mistake to the dandy with the pince-nez.

"The long one, the long one!" Semyon Yakovlevitch corrected him.

Mavriky Nikolaevitch took the glass, made a military half-bow, and began drinking it. I don't know why, but all our party burst into peals of laughter.

"Mavriky Nikolaevitch," cried Liza, addressing him suddenly. "That kneeling gentleman has gone away. You kneel down in his place."

Mavriky Nikolaevitch looked at her in amazement.

"I beg you to. You'll do me the greatest favour. Listen,

Mavriky Nikolaevitch," she went on, speaking in an emphatic, obstinate, excited, and rapid voice. "You must kneel down; I must see you kneel down. If you won't, don't come near me. I insist, I insist!"

I don't know what she meant by it; but she insisted upon it relentlessly, as though she were in a fit. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, as we shall see later, set down these capricious impulses, which had been particularly frequent of late, to outbreaks of blind hatred for him, not due to spite, for, on the contrary, she esteemed him, loved him, and respected him, and he knew that himself—but from a peculiar unconscious hatred which at times she could not control.

In silence he gave his cup to an old woman standing behind him, opened the door of the partition, and, without being invited, stepped into Semyon Yakovlevitch's private apartment, and knelt down in the middle of the room in sight of all. I imagine that he was deeply shocked in his candid and delicate heart by Liza's coarse and mocking freak before the whole company. Perhaps he imagined that she would feel ashamed of herself, seeing his humiliation, on which she had so insisted. Of course no one but he would have dreamt of bringing a woman to reason by so naïve and risky a proceeding. He remained kneeling with his imperturbable gravity—long, tall, awkward, and ridiculous. But our party did not laugh. The unexpectedness of the action produced a painful shock. Every one looked at Liza.

"Anoint, anoint!" muttered Semyon Yakovlevitch.

Liza suddenly turned white, cried out, and rushed through the partition. Then a rapid and hysterical scene followed. She began pulling Mavriky Nikolaevitch up with all her might, tugging at his elbows with both hands.

"Get up! Get up!" she screamed, as though she were crazy. "Get up at once, at once. How dare you?"

Mavriky Nikolaevitch got up from his knees. She clutched his arms above the elbow and looked intently into his face. There was terror in her expression.

"Milovzors! Milovzors!" Semyon Yakovlevitch repeated again.

She dragged Mavriky Nikolaevitch back to the other part of the room at last. There was some commotion in all our



company. The lady from our carriage, probably intending to relieve the situation, loudly and shrilly asked the saint for the third time, with an affected smile:

"Well, Semyon Yakovlevitch, won't you utter some saying for me? I've been reckoning so much on you."

"Out with the ——, out with the ——," said Semyon Yakovlevitch, suddenly addressing her, with an extremely indecent word. The words were uttered savagely, and with horrifying distinctness. Our ladies shrieked, and rushed headlong away, while the gentlemen escorting them burst into Homeric laughter. So ended our visit to Semyon Yakovlevitch.

At this point, however, there took place, I am told, an extremely enigmatic incident, and, I must own, it was chiefly on account of it that I have described this expedition so minutely.

I am told that when all flocked out, Liza, supported by Mavriky Nikolaevitch, was jostled against Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch in the crush in the doorway. I must mention that since that Sunday morning when she fainted they had not approached each other, nor exchanged a word, though they had met more than once. I saw them brought together in the doorway. I fancied they both stood still for an instant, and looked, as it were, strangely at one another, but I may not have seen rightly in the crowd. It is asserted, on the contrary, and quite seriously, that Liza, glancing at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, quickly raised her hand to the level of his face, and would certainly have struck him if he had not drawn back in time. Perhaps she was displeased with the expression of his face, or the way he smiled, particularly just after such an episode with Mavriky Nikolaevitch. I must admit I saw nothing myself, but all the others declared they had, though they certainly could not all have seen it in such a crush, though perhaps some may have. But I did not believe it at the time. I remember, however, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was rather pale all the way home.

## III

Almost at the same time, and certainly on the same day, the interview at last took place between Stepan Trofimovitch and

Varvara Petrovna. She had long had this meeting in her mind, and had sent word about it to her former friend, but for some reason she had kept putting it off till then. It took place at Skvoreshniki; Varvara Petrovna arrived at her country house all in a bustle; it had been definitely decided the evening before that the fête was to take place at the marshal's, but Varvara Petrovna's rapid brain at once grasped that no one could prevent her from afterwards giving her own special entertainment at Skvoreshniki, and again assembling the whole town. Then every one could see for themselves whose house was best, and in which more taste was displayed in receiving guests and giving a ball. Altogether she was hardly to be recognised. She seemed completely transformed, and instead of the unapproachable "noble lady" (Stepan Trofimovitch's expression) seemed changed into the most commonplace, whimsical society woman. But perhaps this may only have been on the surface.

When she reached the empty house she had gone through all the rooms, accompanied by her faithful old butler, Alexey Yegorytch, and by Fomushka, a man who had seen much of life and was a specialist in decoration. They began to consult and deliberate: what furniture was to be brought from the town house, what things, what pictures, where they were to be put, how the conservatories and flowers could be put to the best use, where to put new curtains, where to have the refreshment rooms, whether one or two, and so on and so on. And, behold, in the midst of this exciting bustle she suddenly took it into her head to send for Stepan Trofimovitch.

The latter had long before received notice of this interview and was prepared for it, and he had every day been expecting just such a sudden summons. As he got into the carriage he crossed himself: his fate was being decided. He found his friend in the big drawing-room on the little sofa in the recess, before a little marble table with a pencil and paper in her hands. Fomushka, with a yard measure, was measuring the height of the galleries and the windows, while Varvara Petrovna herself was writing down the numbers and making notes on the margin. She nodded in Stepan Trofimovitch's direction without breaking off from what she was doing, and when the latter muttered some sort of greeting, she hurriedly gave him her hand, and without looking at him motioned him to a seat beside her.

Stepan + Varvara break up



"I sat waiting for five minutes, 'mastering my heart,' " he told me afterwards. "I saw before me not the woman whom I had known for twenty years. An absolute conviction that all was over gave me a strength which astounded even her. I swear that she was surprised at my stoicism in that last hour."

Varvara Petrovna suddenly put down her pencil on the table and turned quickly to Stepan Trofimovitch.

"Stepan Trofimovitch, we have to talk of business. I'm sure you have prepared all your fervent words and various phrases, but we'd better go straight to the point, hadn't we?"

She had been in too great a hurry to show the tone she meant to take. And what might not come next?

"Wait, be quiet; let me speak. Afterwards you shall, though really I don't know what you can answer me," she said in a rapid patter. "The twelve hundred roubles of your pension I consider a sacred obligation to pay you as long as you live. Though why a sacred obligation, simply a contract; that would be a great deal more real, wouldn't it? If you like, we'll write it out. Special arrangements have been made in case of my death. But you are receiving from me at present lodging, servants, and your maintenance in addition. Reckoning that in money it would amount to fifteen hundred roubles, wouldn't it? I will add another three hundred roubles, making three thousand roubles in all. Will that be enough a year for you? I think that's not too little? In any extreme emergency I would add something more. And so, take your money, send me back my servants, and live by yourself where you like in Petersburg, in Moscow, abroad, or here, only not with me. Do you hear?"

"Only lately those lips dictated to me as imperatively and as suddenly very different demands," said Stepan Trofimovitch slowly and with sorrowful distinctness. "I submitted . . . and danced the Cossack dance to please you. *Oui, la comparaison peut être permise. C'était comme un petit Cosaque du Don qui sautait sur sa propre tombe.* Now . . . "

"Stop, Stepan Trofimovitch, you are horribly long-winded. You didn't dance, but came to see me in a new tie, new linen, gloves, scented and pomatumed. I assure you that you were very anxious to get married yourself; it was written on your face, and I assure you a most unseemly expression it was. If I did not mention it to you at the time, it was simply out of

delicacy. But you wished it, you wanted to be married, in spite of the abominable things you wrote about me and your betrothed. Now it's very different. And what has the *Cosaque du Don* to do with it, and what tomb do you mean? I don't understand the comparison. On the contrary, you have only to live. Live as long as you can. I shall be delighted."

"In an almshouse?"

"In an almshouse? People don't go into almshouses with three thousand roubles a year. Ah, I remember," she laughed. "Pyotr Stepanovitch did joke about an almshouse once. Bah, there certainly is a special almshouse, which is worth considering. It's for persons who are highly respectable; there are colonels there, and there's positively one general who wants to get into it. If you went into it with all your money, you would find peace, comfort, servants to wait on you. There you could occupy yourself with study, and could always make up a party for cards."

"*Passons.*"

"*Passons?*" Varvara Petrovna winced. "But, if so, that's all. You've been informed that we shall live henceforward entirely apart."

"And that's all?" he said. "All that's left of twenty years? Our last farewell?"

"You're awfully fond of these exclamations, Stepan Trofimovitch. It's not at all the fashion. Nowadays people talk roughly but simply. You keep harping on our twenty years! Twenty years of mutual vanity, and nothing more. Every letter you've written me was written not for me but for posterity. You're a stylist, and not a friend, and friendship is only a splendid word. In reality—a mutual exchange of sloppiness. . . . "

"Good heavens! How many sayings not your own! Lessons learned by heart! They've already put their uniform on you too. You, too, are rejoicing; you, too, are basking in the sunshine. *Chère, chère,* for what a mess of pottage you have sold them your freedom!"

"I'm not a parrot, to repeat other people's phrases!" cried Varvara Petrovna, boiling over. "You may be sure I have stored up many sayings of my own. What have you been doing for me all these twenty years? You refused me even the books I ordered for you, though, except for the binder, they would



have remained uncut. What did you give me to read when I asked you during those first years to be my guide? Always Kapfig, and nothing but Kapfig. You were jealous of my culture even, and took measures. And all the while every one's laughing at you. I must confess I always considered you only as a critic. You are a literary critic and nothing more. When on the way to Petersburg I told you that I meant to found a journal and to devote my whole life to it, you looked at me ironically at once, and suddenly became horribly supercilious."

"That was not that, not that. . . . we were afraid then of persecution. . . . "

"It was just that. And you couldn't have been afraid of persecution in Petersburg at that time. Do you remember that in February, too, when the news of the emancipation came, you ran to me in a panic, and demanded that I should at once give you a written statement that the proposed magazine had nothing to do with you; that the young people had been coming to see me and not you; that you were only a tutor who lived in the house, only because he had not yet received his salary. Isn't that so? Do you remember that? You have distinguished yourself all your life, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"That was only a moment of weakness, a moment when we were alone," he exclaimed mournfully. "But is it possible, is it possible, to break off everything for the sake of such petty impressions? Can it be that nothing more has been left between us after those long years?"

"You are horribly calculating; you keep trying to leave me in your debt. When you came back from abroad you looked down upon me and wouldn't let me utter a word, but when I came back myself and talked to you afterwards of my impressions of the Madonna, you wouldn't hear me, you began smiling condescendingly into your cravat, as though I were incapable of the same feelings as you."

"It was not so. It was probably not so. *J'ai oublié!*"

"No; it was so," she answered, "and, what's more, you've nothing to pride yourself on. That's all nonsense, and one of your fancies. Now, there's no one, absolutely no one, in ecstasies over the Madonna; no one wastes time over it except old men who are hopelessly out of date. That's established."

"Established, is it?"

"It's of no use whatever. This jug's of use because one can pour water into it. This pencil's of use because you can write anything with it. But that woman's face is inferior to any face in nature. Try drawing an apple, and put a real apple beside it. Which would you take? You wouldn't make a mistake, I'm sure. This is what all our theories amount to, now that the first light of free investigation has dawned upon them."

"Indeed, indeed."

"You laugh ironically. And what used you to say to me about charity? Yet the enjoyment derived from charity is a haughty and immoral enjoyment. The rich man's enjoyment in his wealth, his power, and in the comparison of his importance with the poor. Charity corrupts giver and taker alike; and, what's more, does not attain its object, as it only increases poverty. Fathers who don't want to work crowd round the charitable like gamblers round the gambling-table, hoping for gain, while the pitiful farthings that are flung them are a hundred times too little. Have you given away much in your life? Less than a rouble, if you try and think. Try to remember when last you gave away anything; it'll be two years ago, maybe four. You make an outcry and only hinder things. Charity ought to be forbidden by law, even in the present state of society. In the new régime there will be no poor at all."

"Oh, what an eruption of borrowed phrases! So it's come to the new régime already? Unhappy woman, God help you!"

"Yes; it has, Stepan Trofimovitch. You carefully concealed all these new ideas from me, though every one's familiar with them nowadays. And you did it simply out of jealousy, so as to have power over me. So that even now that Yulia is a hundred miles ahead of me. But now my eyes have been opened. I have defended you, Stepan Trofimovitch, all I could, but there is no one who does not blame you."

"Enough!" said he, getting up from his seat. "Enough! And what can I wish you now, unless it's repentance?"

"Sit still a minute, Stepan Trofimovitch. I have another question to ask you. You've been told of the invitation to read at the literary matinée. It was arranged through me. Tell me what you're going to read?"

"Why, about that very Queen of Queens, that ideal of humanity, the Sistine Madonna, who to your thinking is inferior to a glass or a pencil."



"So you're not taking something historical?" said Varvara Petrovna in mournful surprise. "But they won't listen to you. You've got that Madonna on your brain. You seem bent on putting every one to sleep! Let me assure you, Stepan Trofimovitch, I am speaking entirely in your own interest. It would be a different matter if you would take some short but interesting story of mediæval court life from Spanish history, or, better still, some anecdote, and pad it out with other anecdotes and witty phrases of your own. There were magnificent courts then; ladies, you know, poisonings. Karmazinov says it would be strange if you couldn't read something interesting from Spanish history."

"Karmazinov—that fool who has written himself out—looking for a subject for me!"

"Karmazinov, that almost imperial intellect. You are too free in your language, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"Your Karmazinov is a spiteful old woman whose day is over. *Chère, chère,* how long have you been so enslaved by them? Oh God!"

"I can't endure him even now for the airs he gives himself. But I do justice to his intellect. I repeat, I have done my best to defend you as far as I could. And why do you insist on being absurd and tedious? On the contrary, come on to the platform with a dignified smile as the representative of the last generation, and tell them two or three anecdotes in your witty way, as only you can tell things sometimes. Though you may be an old man now, though you may belong to a past age, though you may have dropped behind them, in fact, yet you'll recognise it yourself, with a smile, in your preface, and all will see that you're an amiable, good-natured, witty relic . . . in brief, a man of the old savour, and so far advanced as to be capable of appreciating at their value all the absurdities of certain ideas which you have hitherto followed. Come, as a favour to me, I beg you."

"*Chère,* enough. Don't ask me. I can't. I shall speak of the Madonna, but I shall raise a storm that will either crush them all or shatter me alone."

"It will certainly be you alone, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"Such is my fate. I will speak of the contemptible slave, of the stinking, depraved flunkey who will first climb a ladder with scissors in his hands, and slash to pieces the divine image of the great ideal, in the name of equality, envy, and . . . digestion. Let my curse thunder out upon them, and then—then . . . "

"The madhouse?"

"Perhaps. But in any case, whether I shall be left vanquished or victorious, that very evening I shall take my bag, my beggar's bag. I shall leave all my goods and chattels, all your presents, all your pensions and promises of future benefits, and go forth on foot to end my life a tutor in a merchant's family or to die somewhere of hunger in a ditch. I have said it. *Alea jacta est.*"

He got up again.

"I've been convinced for years," said Varvara Petrovna, getting up with flashing eyes, "that your only object in life is to put me and my house to shame by your calumnies! What do you mean by being a tutor in a merchant's family or dying in a ditch? It's spite, calumny, and nothing more."

"You have always despised me. But I will end like a knight, faithful to my lady. Your good opinion has always been dearer to me than anything. From this moment I will take nothing, but will worship you disinterestedly."

"How stupid that is!"

"You have never respected me. I may have had a mass of weaknesses. Yes, I have sponged on you. I speak the language of Nihilism, but sponging has never been the guiding motive of my action. It has happened so of itself. I don't know how. . . . I always imagined there was something higher than meat and drink between us, and—I've never, never been a scoundrel! And so, to take the open road, to set things right. I set off late, late autumn out of doors, the mist lies over the fields, the hoar-frost of old age covers the road before me, and the wind howls about the approaching grave. . . . But so forward, forward, on my new way

*'Filled with purest love and fervour,*
*Faith which my sweet dream did yield.'*



Oh, my dreams. Farewell. Twenty years. *Alea jacta est!*"

His face was wet with a sudden gush of tears. He took his hat.

"I don't understand Latin," said Varvara Petrovna, doing her best to control herself.

Who knows, perhaps, she too felt like crying. But caprice and indignation once more got the upper hand.

"I know only one thing, that all this is childish nonsense. You will never be capable of carrying out your threats, which are a mass of egoism. You will set off nowhere, to no merchant; you'll end very peaceably on my hands, taking your pension, and receiving your utterly impossible friends on Tuesdays. Good-bye, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"*Alea jacta est!*" He made her a deep bow, and returned home, almost dead with emotion.

# CHAPTER VI

## PYOTR STEPANOVITCH IS BUSY

### I

The date of the fête was definitely fixed, and Von Lembke became more and more depressed. He was full of strange and sinister forebodings, and this made Yulia Mihailovna seriously uneasy. Indeed, things were not altogether satisfactory. Our mild governor had left the affairs of the province a little out of gear; at the moment we were threatened with cholera; serious outbreaks of cattle plague had appeared in several places; fires were prevalent that summer in towns and villages; whilst among the peasantry foolish rumours of incendiarism grew stronger and stronger. Cases of robbery were twice as numerous as usual. But all this, of course, would have been perfectly ordinary had there been no other and more weighty reasons to disturb the equanimity of Andrey Antonovitch, who had till then been in good spirits.

What struck Yulia Mihailovna most of all was that he became more silent and, strange to say, more secretive every day. Yet it was hard to imagine what he had to hide. It is true that he rarely opposed her and as a rule followed her lead without question. At her instigation, for instance, two or three regulations of a risky and hardly legal character were introduced with the object of strengthening the authority of the governor. There were several ominous instances of transgressions being condoned with the same end in view; persons who deserved to be sent to prison and Siberia were, solely because she insisted, recommended for promotion. Certain complaints and inquiries were deliberately and systematically ignored. All this came out later on. Not only did Lembke sign everything, but





he did not even go into the question of the share taken by his wife in the execution of his duties. On the other hand, he began at times to be restive about "the most trifling matters," to the surprise of Yulia Mihailovna. No doubt he felt the need to make up for the days of suppression by brief moments of mutiny. Unluckily, Yulia Mihailovna was unable, for all her insight, to understand this honourable punctiliousness in an honourable character. Alas, she had no thought to spare for that, and that was the source of many misunderstandings.

There are some things of which it is not suitable for me to write, and indeed I am not in a position to do so. It is not my business to discuss the blunders of administration either, and I prefer to leave out this administrative aspect of the subject altogether. In the chronicle I have begun I've set before myself a different task. Moreover a great deal will be brought to light by the Commission of Inquiry which has just been appointed for our province; it's only a matter of waiting a little. Certain explanations, however, cannot be omitted.

But to return to Yulia Mihailovna. The poor lady (I feel very sorry for her) might have attained all that attracted and allured her (renown and so on) without any such violent and eccentric actions as she resolved upon at the very first step. But either from an exaggerated passion for the romantic or from the frequently blighted hopes of her youth, she felt suddenly, at the change of her fortunes, that she had become one of the specially elect, almost God's anointed, "over whom there gleamed a burning tongue of fire," and this tongue of flame was the root of the mischief, for, after all, it is not like a chignon, which will fit any woman's head. But there is nothing of which it is more difficult to convince a woman than of this; on the contrary, anyone who cares to encourage the delusion in her will always be sure to meet with success. And people vied with one another in encouraging the delusion in Yulia Mihailovna. The poor woman became at once the sport of conflicting influences, while fully persuaded of her own originality. Many clever people feathered their nests and took advantage of her simplicity during the brief period of her rule in the province. And what a jumble there was under this assumption of independence! She was fascinated at the same time by the aristocratic element and the system of big landed properties and the

increase of the governor's power, and the democratic element, and the new reforms and discipline, and free-thinking and stray Socialistic notions, and the correct tone of the aristocratic *salon* and the free-and-easy, almost pot-house, manners of the young people that surrounded her. She dreamed of "giving happiness" and reconciling the irreconcilable, or, rather, of uniting all and everything in the adoration of her own person. She had favourites too; she was particularly fond of Pyotr Stepanovitch, who had recourse at times to the grossest flattery in dealing with her. But she was attracted by him for another reason, an amazing one, and most characteristic of the poor lady: she was always hoping that he would reveal to her a regular conspiracy against the government. Difficult as it is to imagine such a thing, it really was the case. She fancied for some reason that there must be a nihilist plot concealed in the province. By his silence at one time and his hints at another Pyotr Stepanovitch did much to strengthen this strange idea in her. She imagined that he was in communication with every revolutionary element in Russia but at the same time passionately devoted to her. To discover the plot, to receive the gratitude of the government, to enter on a brilliant career, to influence the young "by kindness," and to restrain them from extremes—all these dreams existed side by side in her fantastic brain. She had saved Pyotr Stepanovitch, she had conquered him (of this she was for some reason firmly convinced); she would save others. None, none of them should perish, she should save them all; she would pick them out; she would send in the right report of them; she would act in the interests of the loftiest justice, and perhaps posterity and Russian liberalism would bless her name; yet the conspiracy would be discovered. Every advantage at once.

Still it was essential that Andrey Antonovitch should be in rather better spirits before the festival. He must be cheered up and reassured. For this purpose she sent Pyotr Stepanovitch to him in the hope that he would relieve his depression by some means of consolation best known to himself, perhaps by giving him some information, so to speak, first hand. She put implicit faith in his dexterity.

It was some time since Pyotr Stepanovitch had been in Mr. von Lembke's study. He popped in on him just when the sufferer was in a most stubborn mood.



## II

A combination of circumstances had arisen which Mr. von Lembke was quite unable to deal with. In the very district where Pyotr Stepanovitch had been having a festive time a sub-lieutenant had been called up to be censured by his immediate superior, and the reproof was given in the presence of the whole company. The sub-lieutenant was a young man fresh from Petersburg, always silent and morose, of dignified appearance though small, stout, and rosy-cheeked. He resented the reprimand and suddenly, with a startling shriek that astonished the whole company, he charged at his superior officer with his head bent down like a wild beast's, struck him, and bit him on the shoulder with all his might; they had difficulty in getting him off. There was no doubt that he had gone out of his mind; anyway, it became known that of late he had been observed performing incredibly strange actions. He had, for instance, flung two ikons belonging to his landlady out of his lodgings and smashed up one of them with an axe; in his own room he had, on three stands resembling lecterns, laid out the works of Vogt, Moleschott, and Büchner, and before each lectern he used to burn a church wax-candle. From the number of books found in his rooms it could be gathered that he was a well-read man. If he had had fifty thousand francs he would perhaps have sailed to the islands of Marquesas like the "cadet" to whom Herzen alludes with such sprightly humour in one of his writings. When he was seized, whole bundles of the most desperate manifestoes were found in his pockets and his lodgings.

Manifestoes are a trivial matter too, and to my thinking not worth troubling about. We have seen plenty of them. Besides, they were not new manifestoes; they were, it was said later, just the same as had been circulated in the X province, and Liputin, who had travelled in that district and the neighbouring province six weeks previously, declared that he had seen exactly the same leaflets there then. But what struck Andrey

Antonovitch most was that the overseer of Shpigulin's factory had brought the police just at the same time two or three packets of exactly the same leaflets as had been found on the lieutenant. The bundles, which had been dropped in the factory in the night, had not been opened, and none of the factory-hands had had time to read one of them. The incident was a trivial one, but it set Andrey Antonovitch pondering deeply. The position presented itself to him in an unpleasantly complicated light.

In this factory the famous "Shpigulin scandal" was just then brewing, which made so much talk among us and got into the Petersburg and Moscow papers with all sorts of variations. Three weeks previously one of the hands had fallen ill and died of Asiatic cholera; then several others were stricken down. The whole town was in a panic, for the cholera was coming nearer and nearer and had reached the neighbouring province. I may observe that satisfactory sanitary measures had been, so far as possible, taken to meet the unexpected guest. But the factory belonging to the Shpigulins, who were millionaires and well-connected people, had somehow been overlooked. And there was a sudden outcry from every one that this factory was the hot-bed of infection, that the factory itself, and especially the quarters inhabited by the workpeople, were so inveterately filthy that even if cholera had not been in the neighbourhood there might well have been an outbreak there. Steps were immediately taken, of course, and Andrey Antonovitch vigorously insisted on their being carried out without delay within three weeks. The factory was cleansed, but the Shpigulins, for some unknown reason, closed it. One of the Shpigulin brothers always lived in Petersburg and the other went away to Moscow when the order was given for cleansing the factory. The overseer proceeded to pay off the workpeople and, as it appeared, cheated them shamelessly. The hands began to complain among themselves, asking to be paid fairly, and foolishly went to the police, though without much disturbance, for they were not so very much excited. It was just at this moment that the manifestoes were brought to Andrey Antonovitch by the overseer.

Pyotr Stepanovitch popped into the study unannounced, like an intimate friend and one of the family; besides, he had a message from Yulia Mihailovna. Seeing him, Lembke frowned



grimly and stood still at the table without welcoming him. Till that moment he had been pacing up and down the study and had been discussing something *tête-à-tête* with his clerk Blum, a very clumsy and surly German whom he had brought with him from Petersburg, in spite of the violent opposition of Yulia Mihailovna. On Pyotr Stepanovitch's entrance the clerk had moved to the door, but had not gone out. Pyotr Stepanovitch even fancied that he exchanged significant glances with his chief.

"Aha, I've caught you at last, you secretive monarch of the town!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried out laughing, and laid his hand over the manifesto on the table. "This increases your collection, eh?"

Andrey Antonovitch flushed crimson; his face seemed to twitch.

"Leave off, leave off at once!" he cried, trembling with rage. "And don't you dare . . . sir . . . "

"What's the matter with you? You seem to be angry!"

"Allow me to inform you, sir, that I've no intention of putting up with your *sans façon* henceforward, and I beg you to remember . . . "

"Why, damn it all, he is in earnest!"

"Hold your tongue, hold your tongue"—Von Lembke stamped on the carpet—"and don't dare . . . "

God knows what it might have come to. Alas, there was one circumstance involved in the matter of which neither Pyotr Stepanovitch nor even Yulia Mihailovna herself had any idea. The luckless Andrey Antonovitch had been so greatly upset during the last few days that he had begun to be secretly jealous of his wife and Pyotr Stepanovitch. In solitude, especially at night, he spent some very disagreeable moments.

"Well, I imagined that if a man reads you his novel two days running till after midnight and wants to hear your opinion of it, he had of his own act discarded official relations, anyway. . . . Yulia Mihailovna treats me as a friend; there's no making you out," Pyotr Stepanovitch brought out, with a certain dignity indeed. "Here is your novel, by the way." He laid on the table a large heavy manuscript rolled up in blue paper.

Lembke turned red and looked embarrassed.

"Where did you find it?" he asked discreetly, with a rush of

joy which he was unable to suppress, though he did his utmost to conceal it.

"Only fancy, done up like this, it rolled under the chest of drawers. I must have thrown it down carelessly on the chest when I went out. It was only found the day before yesterday, when the floor was scrubbed. You did set me a task, though!"

Lembke dropped his eyes sternly.

"I haven't slept for the last two nights, thanks to you. It was found the day before yesterday, but I kept it, and have been reading it ever since. I've no time in the day, so I've read it at night. Well, I don't like it; it's not my way of looking at things. But that's no matter; I've never set up for being a critic, but I couldn't tear myself away from it, my dear man, though I didn't like it! The fourth and fifth chapters are . . . they really are . . . damn it all, they are beyond words! And what a lot of humour you've packed into it; it made me laugh! How you can make fun of things *sans que cela paraisse!* As for the ninth and tenth chapters, it's all about love; that's not my line, but it's effective though. I was nearly blubbering over Egrenev's letter, though you've shown him up so cleverly. . . . You know, it's touching, though at the same time you want to show the false side of him, as it were, don't you? Have I guessed right? But I could simply beat you for the ending. For what are you setting up? Why, the same old idol of domestic happiness, begetting children and making money; 'they were married and lived happy ever afterwards'—come, it's too much! You will enchant your readers, for even I couldn't put the book down; but that makes it all the worse! The reading public is as stupid as ever, but it's the duty of sensible people to wake them up, while you . . . But that's enough. Goodbye. Don't be cross another time; I came in to you because I had a couple of words to say to you, but you are so unaccountable . . . "

Andrey Antonovitch meantime took his novel and locked it up in an oak bookcase, seizing the opportunity to wink to Blum to disappear. The latter withdrew with a long, mournful face.

"I am not unaccountable, I am simply . . . nothing but annoyances," he muttered, frowning but without anger, and sitting down to the table. "Sit down and say what you have to



say. It's a long time since I've seen you, Pyotr Stepanovitch, only don't burst upon me in the future with such manners . . . sometimes, when one has business, it's . . . "

"My manners are always the same. . . . "

"I know, and I believe that you mean nothing by it, but sometimes one is worried. . . . Sit down."

Pyotr Stepanovitch immediately lolled back on the sofa and drew his legs under him.

## III

"What sort of worries? Surely not these trifles?" He nodded towards the manifesto. "I can bring you as many of them as you like; I made their acquaintance in X province."

"You mean at the time you were staying there?"

"Of course, it was not in my absence. I remember there was a hatchet printed at the top of it. Allow me." (He took up the manifesto.) "Yes, there's the hatchet here too; that's it, the very same."

"Yes, here's a hatchet. You see, a hatchet."

"Well, is it the hatchet that scares you?"

"No, it's not . . . and I am not scared; but this business . . . it is a business; there are circumstances."

"What sort? That it's come from the factory? He he! But do you know, at that factory the workpeople will soon be writing manifestoes for themselves."

"What do you mean?" Von Lembke stared at him severely.

"What I say. You've only to look at them. You are too soft, Andrey Antonovitch; you write novels. But this has to be handled in the good old way."

"What do you mean by the good old way? What do you mean by advising me? The factory has been cleaned; I gave the order and they've cleaned it."

"And the workmen are in rebellion. They ought to be flogged, every one of them; that would be the end of it."

"In rebellion? That's nonsense; I gave the order and they've cleaned it."

"Ech, you are soft, Andrey Antonovitch!"

"In the first place, I am not so soft as you think, and in the

distinction between a rogue and an honest man forced by circumstances. Well, in short, we'll dismiss that. But now . . . now that these fools . . . now that this has come to the surface and is in your hands, and I see that you'll find out all about it—for you are a man with eyes and one can't tell beforehand what you'll do—and these fools are still going on, I . . . I . . . well, the fact is, I've come to ask you to save one man, a fool too, most likely mad, for the sake of his youth, his misfortunes, in the name of your humanity. . . . You can't be so humane only in the novels you manufacture!" he said, breaking off with coarse sarcasm and impatience.

In fact, he was seen to be a straightforward man, awkward and impolitic from excess of humane feeling and perhaps from excessive sensitiveness—above all, a man of limited intelligence, as Von Lembke saw at once with extraordinary subtlety. He had indeed long suspected it, especially when during the previous week he had, sitting alone in his study at night, secretly cursed him with all his heart for the inexplicable way in which he had gained Yulia Mihailovna's good graces.

"For whom are you interceding, and what does all this mean?" he inquired majestically, trying to conceal his curiosity.

"It . . . it's . . . damn it! It's not my fault that I trust you! Is it my fault that I look upon you as a most honourable and, above all, a sensible man . . . capable, that is, of understanding . . . damn . . . "

The poor fellow evidently could not master his emotion.

"You must understand at last," he went on, "you must understand that in pronouncing his name I am betraying him to you—I am betraying him, am I not? I am, am I not?"

"But how am I to guess if you don't make up your mind to speak out?"

"That's just it; you always cut the ground from under one's feet with your logic, damn it. . . . Well, here goes . . . this 'noble personality,' this 'student' . . . is Shatov . . . that's all."

"Shatov? How do you mean it's Shatov?"

"Shatov is the 'student' who is mentioned in this. He lives here, he was once a serf, the man who gave that slap. . . . "

"I know, I know." Lembke screwed up his eyes. "But excuse me, what is he accused of? Precisely and, above all, what is your petition?"



"I beg you to save him, do you understand? I used to know him eight years ago, I might almost say I was his friend," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, completely carried away. "But I am not bound to give you an account of my past life," he added, with a gesture of dismissal. "All this is of no consequence; it's the case of three men and a half, and with those that are abroad you can't make up a dozen. But what I am building upon is your humanity and your intelligence. You will understand and you will put the matter in its true light, as the foolish dream of a man driven crazy . . . by misfortunes, by continued misfortunes, and not as some impossible political plot or God knows what!"

He was almost gasping for breath.

"H'm. I see that he is responsible for the manifestoes with the axe," Lembke concluded almost majestically. "Excuse me, though, if he were the only person concerned, how could he have distributed it both here and in other districts and in the X province . . . and, above all, where did he get them?"

"But I tell you that at the utmost there are not more than five people in it—a dozen perhaps. How can I tell?"

"You don't know?"

"How should I know?—damn it all."

"Why, you knew that Shatov was one of the conspirators."

"Ech!" Pyotr Stepanovitch waved his hand as though to keep off the overwhelming penetration of the inquirer. "Well, listen. I'll tell you the whole truth: of the manifestoes I know nothing—that is, absolutely nothing. Damn it all, don't you know what nothing means? . . . That sub-lieutenant, to be sure, and somebody else and some one else here . . . and Shatov perhaps and some one else too—well, that's the lot of them . . . a wretched lot. . . . But I've come to intercede for Shatov. He must be saved, for this poem is his, his own composition, and it was through him it was published abroad; that I know for a fact, but of the manifestoes I really know nothing."

"If the poem is his work, no doubt the manifestoes are too. But what data have you for suspecting Mr. Shatov?"

Pyotr Stepanovitch, with the air of a man driven out of all

patience, pulled a pocket-book out of his pocket and took a note out of it.

"Here are the facts," he cried, flinging it on the table.

Lembke unfolded it; it turned out to be a note written six months before from here to some address abroad. It was a brief note, only two lines:

"I can't print 'A Noble Personality' here, and in fact I can do nothing; print it abroad. Iv. Shatov."

Lembke looked intently at Pyotr Stepanovitch. Varvara Petrovna had been right in saying that he had at times the expression of a sheep.

"You see, it's like this," Pyotr Stepanovitch burst out. "He wrote this poem here six months ago, but he couldn't get it printed here, in a secret printing press, and so he asks to have it printed abroad. . . . That seems clear."

"Yes, that's clear, but to whom did he write? That's not clear yet," Lembke observed with the most subtle irony.

"Why, Kirillov, of course; the letter was written to Kirillov abroad. . . . Surely you knew that? What's so annoying is that perhaps you are only putting it on before me, and most likely you knew all about this poem and everything long ago! How did it come to be on your table? It found its way there somehow! Why are you torturing me, if so?"

He feverishly mopped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"I know something, perhaps." Lembke parried dexterously. "But who is this Kirillov?"

"An engineer who has lately come to the town. He was Stavrogin's second, a maniac, a madman; your sub-lieutenant may really only be suffering from temporary delirium, but Kirillov is a thoroughgoing madman—thoroughgoing, that I guarantee. Ah, Andrey Antonovitch, if the government only knew what sort of people these conspirators all are, they wouldn't have the heart to lay a finger on them. Every single one of them ought to be in an asylum; I had a good look at them in Switzerland and at the congresses."

"From which they direct the movement here?"

"Why, who directs it? Three men and a half. It makes one sick to think of them. And what sort of movement is there here? Manifestoes! And what recruits have they made? Sub-



lieutenants in brain fever and two or three students! You are a sensible man: answer this question. Why don't people of consequence join their ranks? Why are they all students and half-baked boys of twenty-two? And not many of those. I dare say there are thousands of bloodhounds on their track, but have they tracked out many of them? Seven! I tell you it makes one sick."

Lembke listened with attention but with an expression that seemed to say, "You don't feed nightingales on fairy-tales."

"Excuse me, though. You asserted that the letter was sent abroad, but there's no address on it; how do you come to know that it was addressed to Mr. Kirillov and abroad too and . . . and . . . that it really was written by Mr. Shatov?"

"Why, fetch some specimen of Shatov's writing and compare it. You must have some signature of his in your office. As for its being addressed to Kirillov, it was Kirillov himself showed it me at the time."

"Then you were yourself . . . "

"Of course I was, myself. They showed me lots of things out there. And as for this poem, they say it was written by Herzen to Shatov when he was still wandering abroad, in memory of their meeting, so they say, by way of praise and recommendation—damn it all . . . and Shatov circulates it among the young people as much as to say, 'This was Herzen's opinion of me.' "

"Ha ha!" cried Lembke, feeling he had got to the bottom of it at last. "That's just what I was wondering: one can understand the manifesto, but what's the object of the poem?"

"Of course you'd see it. Goodness knows why I've been babbling to you. Listen. Spare Shatov for me and the rest may go to the devil—even Kirillov, who is in hiding now, shut up in Filipov's house, where Shatov lodges too. They don't like me because I've turned round . . . but promise me Shatov and I'll dish them all up for you. I shall be of use, Andrey Antonovitch! I reckon nine or ten men make up the whole wretched lot. I am keeping an eye on them myself, on my own account. We know of three already: Shatov, Kirillov, and that sub-lieutenant. The others I am only watching carefully . . . though I am pretty sharp-sighted too. It's the same over again as it was in the X province: two students, a schoolboy, two

noblemen of twenty, a teacher, and a half-pay major of sixty, crazy with drink, have been caught with manifestoes; that was all—you can take my word for it, that was all; it was quite a surprise that that was all. But I must have six days. I have reckoned it out—six days, not less. If you want to arrive at any result, don't disturb them for six days and I can kill all the birds with one stone for you; but if you flutter them before, the birds will fly away. But spare me Shatov. I speak for Shatov. . . . The best plan would be to fetch him here secretly, in a friendly way, to your study and question him without disguising the facts. . . . I have no doubt he'll throw himself at your feet and burst into tears! He is a highly strung and unfortunate fellow; his wife is carrying on with Stavrogin. Be kind to him and he will tell you everything, but I must have six days. . . . And, above all, above all, not a word to Yulia Mihailovna. It's a secret. May it be a secret?"

"What?" cried Lembke, opening wide his eyes. "Do you mean to say you said nothing of this to Yulia Mihailovna?"

"To her? Heaven forbid! Ech, Andrey Antonovitch! You see, I value her friendship and I have the highest respect for her . . . and all the rest of it . . . but I couldn't make such a blunder. I don't contradict her, for, as you know yourself, it's dangerous to contradict her. I may have dropped a word to her, for I know she likes that, but to suppose that I mentioned names to her as I have to you or anything of that sort! My good sir! Why am I appealing to you? Because you are a man, anyway, a serious person with old-fashioned firmness and experience in the service. You've seen life. You must know by heart every detail of such affairs, I expect, from what you've seen in Petersburg. But if I were to mention those two names, for instance, to her, she'd stir up such a hubbub. . . . You know, she would like to astonish Petersburg. No, she's too hot-headed, she really is."

"Yes, she has something of that *fougue*," Andrey Antonovitch muttered with some satisfaction, though at the same time he resented this unmannerly fellow's daring to express himself rather freely about Yulia Mihailovna. But Pyotr Stepanovitch probably imagined that he had not gone far enough and that he must exert himself further to flatter Lembke and make a complete conquest of him.



"*Fougue* is just it," he assented. "She may be a woman of genius, a literary woman, but she would scare our sparrows. She wouldn't be able to keep quiet for six hours, let alone six days. Ech, Andrey Antonovitch, don't attempt to tie a woman down for six days! You do admit that I have some experience—in this sort of thing, I mean; I know something about it, and you know that I may very well know something about it. I am not asking for six days for fun but with an object."

"I have heard . . . " (Lembke hesitated to utter his thought) "I have heard that on your return from abroad you made some expression . . . as it were of repentance, in the proper quarter?"

"Well, that's as it may be."

"And, of course, I don't want to go into it. . . . But it has seemed to me all along that you've talked in quite a different style—about the Christian faith, for instance, about social institutions, about the government even. . . . "

"I've said lots of things, no doubt, I am saying them still; but such ideas mustn't be applied as those fools do it, that's the point. What's the good of biting his superior's shoulder? You agreed with me yourself, only you said it was premature."

"I didn't mean that when I agreed and said it was premature."

"You weigh every word you utter, though. He he! You are a careful man!" Pyotr Stepanovitch observed gaily all of a sudden. "Listen, old friend. I had to get to know you; that's why I talked in my own style. You are not the only one I get to know like that. Maybe I needed to find out your character."

"What's my character to you?"

"How can I tell what it may be to me?" He laughed again. "You see, my dear and highly respected Andrey Antonovitch, you are cunning, but it's not come to *that* yet and it certainly never will come to it, you understand? Perhaps you do understand. Though I did make an explanation in the proper quarter when I came back from abroad, and I really don't know why a man of certain convictions should not be able to work for the advancement of his sincere convictions . . . but nobody *there* has yet instructed me to investigate your character and I've not undertaken any such job from *them*. Consider: I need not have given those two names to you. I might have gone straight

ance in the porter's room when it was left empty the day before.

"So what do you think?" Pyotr Stepanovitch asked almost rudely.

"I think it's an anonymous skit by way of a hoax."

"Most likely it is. There's no taking you in."

"What makes me think that is that it's so stupid."

"Have you received such documents here before?"

"Once or twice, anonymous letters."

"Oh, of course they wouldn't be signed. In a different style. In different handwritings?"

"Yes."

"And were they buffoonery like this one?"

"Yes, and you know . . . very disgusting."

"Well, if you had them before, it must be the same thing now."

"Especially because it's so stupid. Because these people are educated and wouldn't write so stupidly."

"Of course, of course."

"But what if this is some one who really wants to turn informer?"

"It's not very likely," Pyotr Stepanovitch rapped out dryly. "What does he mean by a telegram from the Secret Police and a pension? It's obviously a hoax."

"Yes, yes," Lembke admitted, abashed.

"I tell you what: you leave this with me. I can certainly find out for you before I track out the others."

"Take it," Lembke assented, though with some hesitation.

"Have you shown it to anyone?"

"Is it likely! No."

"Not to Yulia Mihailovna?"

"Oh, Heaven forbid! And for God's sake don't you show it her!" Lembke cried in alarm. "She'll be so upset . . . and will be dreadfully angry with me."

"Yes, you'll be the first to catch it; she'd say you brought it on yourself if people write like that to you. I know what women's logic is. Well, good-bye. I dare say I shall bring you the writer in a couple of days or so. Above all, our compact!"



## IV

Though Pyotr Stepanovitch was perhaps far from being a stupid man, Fedka the convict had said of him truly "that he would make up a man himself and go on living with him too." He came away from Lembke fully persuaded that for the next six days, anyway, he had put his mind at rest, and this interval was absolutely necessary for his own purposes. But it was a false idea and founded entirely on the fact that he had made up for himself once for all an Andrey Antonovitch who was a perfect simpleton.

Like every morbidly suspicious man, Andrey Antonovitch was always exceedingly and joyfully trustful the moment he got on to sure ground. The new turn of affairs struck him at first in a rather favourable light in spite of some fresh and troublesome complications. Anyway, his former doubts fell to the ground. Besides, he had been so tired for the last few days, so exhausted and helpless, that his soul involuntarily yearned for rest. But alas! he was again uneasy. The long time he had spent in Petersburg had left ineradicable traces in his heart. The official and even the secret history of the "younger generation" was fairly familiar to him—he was a curious man and used to collect manifestoes—but he could never understand a word of it. Now he felt like a man lost in a forest. Every instinct told him that there was something in Pyotr Stepanovitch's words utterly incongruous, anomalous, and grotesque, "though there's no telling what may not happen with this 'younger generation,' and the devil only knows what's going on among them," he mused, lost in perplexity.

And at this moment, to make matters worse, Blum poked his head in. He had been waiting not far off through the whole of Pyotr Stepanovitch's visit. This Blum was actually a distant relation of Andrey Antonovitch, though the relationship had always been carefully and timorously concealed. I must apologise to the reader for devoting a few words here to this insignificant person. Blum was one of that strange class of "unfortunate" Germans who are unfortunate not through lack of ability but through some inexplicable ill luck. "Unfortunate"

Germans are not a myth, but really do exist even in Russia, and are of a special type. Andrey Antonovitch had always had a quite touching sympathy for him, and wherever he could, as he rose himself in the service, had promoted him to subordinate positions under him; but Blum had never been successful. Either the post was abolished after he had been appointed to it, or a new chief took charge of the department; once he was almost arrested by mistake with other people. He was precise, but he was gloomy to excess and to his own detriment. He was tall and had red hair; he stooped and was depressed and even sentimental; and in spite of his being humbled by his life, he was obstinate and persistent as an ox, though always at the wrong moment. For Andrey Antonovitch he, as well as his wife and numerous family, had cherished for many years a reverent devotion. Except Andrey Antonovitch no one had ever liked him. Yulia Mihailovna would have discarded him from the first, but could not overcome her husband's obstinacy. It was the cause of their first conjugal quarrel. It had happened soon after their marriage, in the early days of their honeymoon, when she was confronted with Blum, who, together with the humiliating secret of his relationship, had been until then carefully concealed from her. Andrey Antonovitch besought her with clasped hands, told her pathetically all the story of Blum and their friendship from childhood, but Yulia Mihailovna considered herself disgraced for ever, and even had recourse to fainting. Von Lembke would not budge an inch, and declared that he would not give up Blum or part from him for anything in the world, so that she was surprised at last and was obliged to put up with Blum. It was settled, however, that the relationship should be concealed even more carefully than before if possible, and that even Blum's Christian name and patronymic should be changed, because he too was for some reason called Andrey Antonovitch. Blum knew no one in the town except the German chemist, had not called on anyone, and led, as he always did, a lonely and niggardly existence. He had long been aware of Andrey Antonovitch's literary peccadilloes. He was generally summoned to listen to secret *tête-à-tête* readings of his novel; he would sit like a post for six hours at a stretch, perspiring and straining his utmost to keep awake and smile. On reaching home he would groan with his long-legged and



lanky wife over their benefactor's unhappy weakness for Russian literature.

Andrey Antonovitch looked with anguish at Blum.

"I beg you to leave me alone, Blum," he began with agitated haste, obviously anxious to avoid any renewal of the previous conversation which had been interrupted by Pyotr Stepanovitch.

"And yet this may be arranged in the most delicate way and with no publicity; you have full power." Blum respectfully but obstinately insisted on some point, stooping forward and coming nearer and nearer by small steps to Andrey Antonovitch.

"Blum, you are so devoted to me and so anxious to serve me that I am always in a panic when I look at you."

"You always say witty things, and sleep in peace satisfied with what you've said, but that's how you damage yourself."

"Blum, I have just convinced myself that it's quite a mistake, quite a mistake."

"Not from the words of that false, vicious young man whom you suspect yourself? He has won you by his flattering praise of your talent for literature."

"Blum, you understand nothing about it; your project is absurd, I tell you. We shall find nothing and there will be a fearful upset and laughter too, and Yulia Mihailovna . . . "

"We shall certainly find everything we are looking for." Blum advanced firmly towards him, laying his right hand on his heart. "We will make a search suddenly early in the morning, carefully showing every consideration for the person himself and strictly observing all the prescribed forms of the law. The young men, Lyamshin and Telyatnikov, assert positively that we shall find all we want. They were constant visitors there. Nobody is favourably disposed to Mr. Verhovensky. Madame Stavrogin has openly refused him her graces, and every honest man, if only there is such a one in this coarse town, is persuaded that a hotbed of infidelity and social doctrines has always been concealed there. He keeps all the forbidden books, Ryliev's 'Reflections,' all Herzen's works. . . . I have an approximate catalogue, in case of need."

"Oh heavens! Every one has these books; how simple you are, my poor Blum."

"And many manifestoes," Blum went on without heeding the observation. "We shall end by certainly coming upon traces of the real manifestoes here. That young Verhovensky I feel very suspicious of."

"But you are mixing up the father and the son. They are not on good terms. The son openly laughs at his father."

"That's only a mask."

"Blum, you've sworn to torment me! Think! he is a conspicuous figure here, after all. He's been a professor, he is a well-known man. He'll make such an uproar and there will be such gibes all over the town, and we shall make a mess of it all. . . . And only think how Yulia Mihailovna will take it."

Blum pressed forward and did not listen.

"He was only a lecturer, only a lecturer, and of a low rank when he retired." He smote himself on the chest. "He has no marks of distinction. He was discharged from the service on suspicion of plots against the government. He has been under secret supervision, and undoubtedly still is so. And in view of the disorders that have come to light now, you are undoubtedly bound in duty. You are losing your chance of distinction by letting slip the real criminal."

"Yulia Mihailovna! Get away, Blum," Von Lembke cried suddenly, hearing the voice of his spouse in the next room.

Blum started but did not give in.

"Allow me, allow me," he persisted, pressing both hands still more tightly on his chest.

"Get away!" hissed Andrey Antonovitch. "Do what you like . . . afterwards. Oh, my God!"

The curtain was raised and Yulia Mihailovna made her appearance. She stood still majestically at the sight of Blum, casting a haughty and offended glance at him, as though the very presence of this man was an affront to her. Blum respectfully made her a deep bow without speaking and, doubled up with veneration, moved towards the door on tiptoe with his arms held a little away from him.

Either because he really took Andrey Antonovitch's last hysterical outbreak as a direct permission to act as he was asking, or whether he strained a point in this case for the direct advantage of his benefactor, because he was too confident that success would crown his efforts; anyway, as we shall see later

Karamazinov



on, this conversation of the governor with his subordinate led to a very surprising event which amused many people, became public property, moved Yulia Mihailovna to fierce anger, utterly disconcerting Andrey Antonovitch and reducing him at the crucial moment to a state of deplorable indecision.

## V

It was a busy day for Pyotr Stepanovitch. From Von Lembke he hastened to Bogoyavlensky Street, but as he went along Bykovy Street, past the house where Karmazinov was staying, he suddenly stopped, grinned, and went into the house. The servant told him that he was expected, which interested him, as he had said nothing beforehand of his coming.

But the great writer really had been expecting him, not only that day but the day before and the day before that. Three days before he had handed him his manuscript *Merci* (which he had meant to read at the litererary matinée at Yulia Mihailovna's fête). He had done this out of amiability, fully convinced that he was agreeably flattering the young man's vanity by letting him read the great work beforehand. Pyotr Stepanovitch had noticed long before that this vainglorious, spoiled gentleman, who was so offensively unapproachable for all but the elect, this writer "with the intellect of a statesman," was simply trying to curry favour with him, even with avidity. I believe the young man guessed at last that Karmazinov considered him, if not the leader of the whole secret revolutionary movement in Russia, at least one of those most deeply initiated into the secrets of the Russian revolution who had an incontestable influence on the younger generation. The state of mind of "the cleverest man in Russia" interested Pyotr Stepanovitch, but hitherto he had, for certain reasons, avoided explaining himself.

The great writer was staying in the house belonging to his sister, who was the wife of a *kammerherr* and had an estate in the neighbourhood. Both she and her husband had the deepest reverence for their illustrious relation, but to their profound regret both of them happened to be in Moscow at the time of his visit, so that the honour of receiving him fell to the lot of an old lady, a poor relation of the *kammerherr's*, who had for

years lived in the family and looked after the housekeeping. All the household had moved about on tiptoe since Karmazinov's arrival. The old lady sent news to Moscow almost every day, how he had slept, what he had deigned to eat, and had once sent a telegram to announce that after a dinner-party at the mayor's he was obliged to take a spoonful of a well-known medicine. She rarely plucked up courage to enter his room, though he behaved courteously to her, but dryly, and only talked to her of what was necessary.

When Pyotr Stepanovitch came in, he was eating his morning cutlet with half a glass of red wine. Pyotr Stepanovitch had been to see him before and always found him eating this cutlet, which he finished in his presence without ever offering him anything. After the cutlet a little cup of coffee was served. The footman who brought in the dishes wore a swallow-tail coat, noiseless boots, and gloves.

"Ha ha!" Karmazinov got up from the sofa, wiping his mouth with a table-napkin, and came forward to kiss him with an air of unmixed delight—after the characteristic fashion of Russians if they are very illustrious. But Pyotr Stepanovitch knew by experience that, though Karmazinov made a show of kissing him, he really only proffered his cheek, and so this time he did the same: the cheeks met. Karmazinov did not show that he noticed it, sat down on the sofa, and affably offered Pyotr Stepanovitch an easy chair facing him, in which the latter stretched himself at once.

"You don't . . . wouldn't like some lunch?" inquired Karmazinov, abandoning his usual habit, but with an air, of course, which would prompt a polite refusal. Pyotr Stepanovitch at once expressed a desire for lunch. A shade of offended surprise darkened the face of his host, but only for an instant; he nervously rang for the servant and, in spite of all his breeding, raised his voice scornfully as he gave orders for a second lunch to be served.

"What will you have, cutlet or coffee?" he asked once more.

"A cutlet and coffee, and tell him to bring some more wine. I am hungry," answered Pyotr Stepanovitch, calmly scrutinising his host's attire. Mr. Karmazinov was wearing a sort of indoor wadded jacket with pearl buttons, but it was too short, which was far from becoming to his rather comfortable stomach and the solid curves of his hips. But tastes differ. Over his knees he had a checkered woollen plaid reaching to the floor, though it was warm in the room.



"Are you unwell?" commented Pyotr Stepanovitch.

"No, not unwell, but I am afraid of being so in this climate," answered the writer in his squeaky voice, though he uttered each word with a soft cadence and agreeable gentlemanly lisp. "I've been expecting you since yesterday."

"Why? I didn't say I'd come."

"No, but you have my manuscript. Have you . . . read it?"

"Manuscript? Which one?"

Karmazinov was terribly surprised.

"But you've brought it with you, haven't you?" He was so disturbed that he even left off eating and looked at Pyotr Stepanovitch with a face of dismay.

"Ah, that *Bonjour* you mean. . . . "

"*Merci.*"

"Oh, all right. I'd quite forgotten it and hadn't read it; I haven't had time. I really don't know, it's not in my pockets . . . it must be on my table. Don't be uneasy, it will be found."

"No, I'd better send to your rooms at once. It might be lost; besides, it might be stolen."

"Oh, who'd want it! But why are you so alarmed? Why, Yulia Mihailovna told me you always have several copies made —one kept at a notary's abroad, another in Petersburg, a third in Moscow, and then you send some to a bank, I believe."

"But Moscow might be burnt again and my manuscript with it. No, I'd better send at once."

"Stay, here it is!" Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled a roll of notepaper out of a pocket at the back of his coat. "It's a little crumpled. Only fancy, it's been lying there with my pocket-handkerchief ever since I took it from you; I forgot it."

Karmazinov greedily snatched the manuscript, carefully examined it, counted the pages, and laid it respectfully beside him on a special table, for the time, in such a way that he would not lose sight of it for an instant.

"You don't read very much, it seems?" he hissed, unable to restrain himself.

"No, not very much."

"And nothing in the way of Russian literature?"

"In the way of Russian literature? Let me see, I have read something. . . . 'On the Way' or 'Away!' or 'At the Parting of the Ways'—something of the sort; I don't remember. It's a long time since I read it, five years ago. I've no time."

A silence followed.

"When I came I assured every one that you were a very intelligent man, and now I believe every one here is wild over you."

"Thank you," Pyotr Stepanovitch answered calmly.

Lunch was brought in. Pyotr Stepanovitch pounced on the cutlet with extraordinary appetite, had eaten it in a trice, tossed off the wine and swallowed his coffee.

"This boor," thought Karmazinov, looking at him askance as he munched the last morsel and drained the last drops—"this boor probably understood the biting taunt in my words . . . and no doubt he has read the manuscript with eagerness; he is simply lying with some object. But possibly he is not lying and is only genuinely stupid. I like a genius to be rather stupid. Mayn't he be a sort of genius among them? Devil take the fellow!"

He got up from the sofa and began pacing from one end of the room to the other for the sake of exercise, as he always did after lunch.

"Leaving here soon?" asked Pyotr Stepanovitch from his easy chair, lighting a cigarette.

"I really came to sell an estate and I am in the hands of my bailiff."

"You left, I believe, because they expected an epidemic out there after the war?"

"N-no, not entirely for that reason," Mr. Karmazinov went on, uttering his phrases with an affable intonation, and each time he turned round in pacing the corner there was a faint but jaunty quiver of his right leg. "I certainly intend to live as long as I can." He laughed, not without venom. "There is something in our Russian nobility that makes them wear out very quickly, from every point of view. But I wish to wear out as late as possible, and now I am going abroad for good; there the climate is better, the houses are of stone, and everything



stronger. Europe will last my time, I think. What do you think?"

"How can I tell?"

"H'm. If the Babylon out there really does fall, and great will be the fall thereof (about which I quite agree with you, yet I think it will last my time), there's nothing to fall here in Russia, comparatively speaking. There won't be stones to fall, everything will crumble into dirt. Holy Russia has less power of resistance than anything in the world. The Russian peasantry is still held together somehow by the Russian God; but according to the latest accounts the Russian God is not to be relied upon, and scarcely survived the emancipation; it certainly gave Him a severe shock. And now, what with railways, what with you . . . I've no faith in the Russian God."

"And how about the European one?"

"I don't believe in any. I've been slandered to the youth of Russia. I've always sympathised with every movement among them. I was shown the manifestoes here. Every one looks at them with perplexity because they are frightened at the way things are put in them, but every one is convinced of their power even if they don't admit it to themselves. Everybody has been rolling downhill, and every one has known for ages that they have nothing to clutch at. I am persuaded of the success of this mysterious propaganda, if only because Russia is now pre-eminently the place in all the world where anything you like may happen without any opposition. I understand only too well why wealthy Russians all flock abroad, and more and more so every year. It's simply instinct. If the ship is sinking, the rats are the first to leave it. Holy Russia is a country of wood, of poverty . . . and of danger, the country of ambitious beggars in its upper classes, while the immense majority live in poky little huts. She will be glad of any way to escape; you have only to present it to her. It's only the government that still means to resist, but it brandishes its cudgel in the dark and hits its own men. Everything here is doomed and awaiting the end. Russia as she is has no future. I have become a German and I am proud of it."

"But you began about the manifestoes. Tell me everything: how do you look at them?"

"Every one is afraid of them, so they must be influential.

They openly unmask what is false and prove that there is nothing to lay hold of among us, and nothing to lean upon. They speak aloud while all is silent. What is most effective about them (in spite of their style) is the incredible boldness with which they look the truth straight in the fact. To look facts straight in the face is only possible to Russians of this generation. No, in Europe they are not yet so bold; it is a realm of stone, there there is still something to lean upon. So far as I see and am able to judge, the whole essence of the Russian revolutionary idea lies in the negation of honour. I like its being so boldly and fearlessly expressed. No, in Europe they wouldn't understand it yet, but that's just what we shall clutch at. For a Russian a sense of honour is only a superfluous burden, and it always has been a burden through all his history. The open 'right to dishonour' will attract him more than anything. I belong to the older generation and, I must confess, still cling to honour, but only from habit. It is only that I prefer the old forms, granted it's from timidity; you see one must live somehow what's left of one's life."

He suddenly stopped.

"I am talking," he thought, "while he holds his tongue and watches me. He has come to make me ask him a direct question. And I shall ask him."

"Yulia Mihailovna asked me by some stratagem to find out from you what the surprise is that you are preparing for the ball to-morrow," Pyotr Stepanovitch asked suddenly.

"Yes, there really will be a surprise and I certainly shall astonish . . . " said Karmazinov with increased dignity. "But I won't tell you what the secret is."

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not insist.

"There is a young man here called Shatov," observed the great writer. "Would you believe it, I haven't seen him."

"A very nice person. What about him?"

"Oh, nothing. He talks about something. Isn't he the person who gave Stavrogin that slap in the face?"

"Yes."

"And what's your opinion of Stavrogin?"

"I don't know; he is such a flirt."

Karmazinov detested Stavrogin because it was the latter's habit not to take any notice of him.



"That flirt," he said, chuckling, "if what is advocated in your manifestoes ever comes to pass, will be the first to be hanged."

"Perhaps before," Pyotr Stepanovitch said suddenly.

"Quite right too," Karmazinov assented, not laughing, and with pronounced gravity.

"You have said so once before, and, do you know, I repeated it to him."

"What, you surely didn't repeat it?" Karmazinov laughed again.

"He said that if he were to be hanged it would be enough for you to be flogged, not simply as a compliment but to hurt, as they flog the peasants."

Pyotr Stepanovitch took his hat and got up from his seat. Karmazinov held out both hands to him at parting.

"And what if all that you are . . . plotting for is destined to come to pass . . ." he piped suddenly, in a honeyed voice with a peculiar intonation, still holding his hands in his. "How soon could it come about?"

"How could I tell?" Pyotr Stepanovitch answered rather roughly. They looked intently into each other's eyes.

"At a guess? Approximately?" Karmazinov piped still more sweetly.

"You'll have time to sell your estate and time to clear out too," Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered still more roughly. They looked at one another even more intently.

There was a minute of silence.

"It will begin early next May and will be over by October," Pyotr Stepanovitch said suddenly.

"I thank you sincerely," Karmazinov pronounced in a voice saturated with feeling, pressing his hands.

"You will have time to get out of the ship, you rat," Pyotr Stepanovitch was thinking as he went out into the street. "Well, if that 'imperial intellect' inquires so confidently of the day and the hour and thanks me so respectfully for the information I have given, we mustn't doubt of ourselves. [He grinned.] H'm! But he really isn't stupid . . . and he is simply a rat escaping; men like that don't tell tales!"

He ran to Filipov's house in Bogoyavlensky Street.

## VI

Pyotr Stepanovitch went first to Kirillov's. He found him, as usual, alone, and at the moment practising gymnastics, that is, standing with his legs apart, brandishing his arms above his head in a peculiar way. On the floor lay a ball. The tea stood cold on the table, not cleared since breakfast. Pyotr Stepanovitch stood for a minute on the threshold.

"You are very anxious about your health, it seems," he said in a loud and cheerful tone, going into the room. "What a jolly ball, though; foo, how it bounces! Is that for gymnastics too?"

Kirillov put on his coat.

"Yes, that's for the good of my health too," he muttered dryly. "Sit down."

"I'm only here for a minute. Still, I'll sit down. Health is all very well, but I've come to remind you of our agreement. The appointed time is approaching . . . in a certain sense," he concluded awkwardly.

"What agreement?"

"How can you ask?" Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled and even dismayed.

"It's not an agreement and not an obligation. I have not bound myself in any way; it's a mistake on your part."

"I say, what's this you're doing?" Pyotr Stepanovitch jumped up.

"What I choose."

"What do you choose?"

"The same as before."

"How am I to understand that? Does that mean that you are in the same mind?"

"Yes. Only there's no agreement and never has been, and I have not bound myself in any way. I could do as I liked and I can still do as I like."

Kirillov explained himself curtly and contemptuously.

"I agree, I agree; be as free as you like if you don't change your mind." Pyotr Stepanovitch sat down again with a satisfied air. "You are angry over a word. You've become very



irritable of late; that's why I've avoided coming to see you. I was quite sure, though, you would be loyal."

"I dislike you very much, but you can be perfectly sure—though I don't regard it as loyalty and disloyalty."

"But do you know" (Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled again) "we must talk things over thoroughly again so as not to get in a muddle. The business needs accuracy, and you keep giving me such shocks. Will you let me speak?"

"Speak," snapped Kirillov, looking away.

"You made up your mind long ago to take your life . . . I mean, you had the idea in your mind. Is that the right expression? Is there any mistake about that?"

"I have the same idea still."

"Excellent. Take note that no one has forced it on you."

"Rather not; what nonsense you talk."

"I dare say I express it very stupidly. Of course, it would be very stupid to force anybody to it. I'll go on. You were a member of the society before its organization was changed, and confessed it to one of the members."

"I didn't confess it, I simply said so."

"Quite so. And it would be absurd to confess such a thing. What a confession! You simply said so. Excellent."

"No, it's not excellent, for you are being tedious. I am not obliged to give you any account of myself and you can't understand my ideas. I want to put an end to my life, because that's my idea, because I don't want to be afraid of death, because . . . because there's no need for you to know. What do you want? Would you like tea? It's cold. Let me get you another glass."

Pyotr Stepanovitch actually had taken up the teapot and was looking for an empty glass. Kirillov went to the cupboard and brought a clean glass.

"I've just had lunch at Karmazinov's," observed his visitor, "then I listened to him talking, and perspired and got into a sweat again running here. I am fearfully thirsty."

"Drink. Cold tea is good."

Kirillov sat down on his chair again and again fixed his eyes on the farthest corner.

"The idea has arisen in the society," he went on in the same voice, "that I might be of use if I killed myself, and that

when you get up some bit of mischief here, and they are looking for the guilty, I might suddenly shoot myself and leave a letter saying I did it all, so that you might escape suspicion for another year."

"For a few days, anyway; one day is precious."

"Good. So for that reason they asked me, if I would, to wait. I said I'd wait till the society fixed the day, because it makes no difference to me."

"Yes, but remember that you bound yourself not to make up your last letter without me and that in Russia you would be at my . . . well, at my disposition, that is for that purpose only. I need hardly say, in everything else, of course, you are free," Pyotr Stepanovitch added almost amiably.

"I didn't bind myself, I agreed, because it makes no difference to me."

"Good, good. I have no intention of wounding your vanity, but . . ."

"It's not a question of vanity."

"But remember that a hundred and twenty thalers were collected for your journey, so you've taken money."

"Not at all." Kirillov fired up. "The money was not on that condition. One doesn't take money for that."

"People sometimes do."

"That's a lie. I sent a letter from Petersburg, and in Petersburg I paid you a hundred and twenty thalers; I put it in your hand . . . and it has been sent off there, unless you've kept it for yourself."

"All right, all right, I don't dispute anything; it has been sent off. All that matters is that you are still in the same mind."

"Exactly the same. When you come and tell me it's time, I'll carry it all out. Will it be very soon?"

"Not very many days. . . . But remember, we'll make up the letter together, the same night."

"The same day if you like. You say I must take the responsibility for the manifestoes on myself?"

"And something else too."

"I am not going to make myself out responsible for everything."



"What won't you be responsible for?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch again.

"What I don't choose; that's enough. I don't want to talk about it any more."

Pyotr Stepanovitch controlled himself and changed the subject.

"To speak of something else," he began, "will you be with us this evening? It's Virginsky's name-day; that's the pretext for our meeting."

"I don't want to."

"Do me a favour. Do come. You must. We must impress them by our number and our looks. You have a face . . . well, in one word, you have a fateful face."

"You think so?" laughed Kirillov. "Very well, I'll come, but not for the sake of my face. What time is it?"

"Oh, quite early, half-past six. And, you know, you can go in, sit down, and not speak to any one, however many there may be there. Only, I say, don't forget to bring pencil and paper with you."

"What's that for?"

"Why, it makes no difference to you, and it's my special request. You'll only have to sit still, speaking to no one, listen, and sometimes seem to make a note. You can draw something, if you like."

"What nonsense! What for?"

"Why, since it makes no difference to you! You keep saying that it's just the same to you."

"No, what for?"

"Why, because that member of the society, the inspector, has stopped at Moscow and I told some of them here that possibly the inspector may turn up to-night; and they'll think that you are the inspector. And as you've been here three weeks already, they'll be still more surprised."

"Stage tricks. You haven't got an inspector in Moscow."

"Well, suppose I haven't — damn him! — what business is that of yours and what bother will it be to you? You are a member of the society yourself."

"Tell them I am the inspector; I'll sit still and hold my tongue, but I won't have the pencil and paper."

"But why?"

"I don't want to."

Pyotr Stepanovitch was really angry; he turned positively green, but again he controlled himself. He got up and took his hat.

"Is that fellow with you?" he brought out suddenly, in a low voice.

"Yes."

"That's good. I'll soon get him away. Don't be uneasy."

"I am not uneasy. He is only here at night. The old woman is in the hospital, her daughter-in-law is dead. I've been alone for the last two days. I've shown him the place in the paling where you can take a board out; he gets through, no one sees."

"I'll take him away soon."

"He says he has got plenty of places to stay the night in."

"That's rot; they are looking for him, but here he wouldn't be noticed. Do you ever get into talk with him?"

"Yes, at night. He abuses you tremendously. I've been reading the 'Apocalypse' to him at night, and we have tea. He listened eagerly, very eagerly, the whole night."

"Hang it all, you'll convert him to Christianity!"

"He is a Christian as it is. Don't be uneasy, he'll do the murder. Whom do you want to murder?"

"No, I don't want him for that, I want him for something different. . . . And does Shatov know about Fedka?"

"I don't talk to Shatov, and I don't see him."

"Is he angry?"

"No, we are not angry, only we shun one another. We lay too long side by side in America."

"I am going to him directly."

"As you like."

"Stavrogin and I may come and see you from there, about ten o'clock."

"Do."

"I want to talk to him about something important. . . . I say, make me a present of your ball; what do you want with it now? I want it for gymnastics too. I'll pay you for it if you like."

"You can take it without."



Pyotr Stepanovitch put the ball in the back pocket of his coat.

"But I'll give you nothing against Stavrogin," Kirillov muttered after his guest, as he saw him out. The latter looked at him in amazement but did not answer.

Kirillov's last words perplexed Pyotr Stepanovitch extremely; he had not time yet to discover their meaning, but even while he was on the stairs of Shatov's lodging he tried to remove all trace of annoyance and to assume an amiable expression. Shatov was at home and rather unwell. He was lying on his bed, though dressed.

"What bad luck!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried out in the doorway. "Are you really ill?"

The amiable expression of his face suddenly vanished; there was a gleam of spite in his eyes.

"Not at all." Shatov jumped up nervously. "I am not ill at all . . . a little headache . . ."

He was disconcerted; the sudden appearance of such a visitor positively alarmed him.

"You mustn't be ill for the job I've come about," Pyotr Stepanovitch began quickly and, as it were, peremptorily. "Allow me to sit down." (He sat down.) "And you sit down again on your bedstead; that's right. There will be a party of our fellows at Virginsky's to-night on the pretext of his birthday; it will have no political character, however—we've seen to that. I am coming with Nikolay Stavrogin. I would not, of course, have dragged you there, knowing your way of thinking at present . . . simply to save your being worried, not because we think you would betray us. But as things have turned out, you will have to go. You'll meet there the very people with whom we shall finally settle how you are to leave the society and to whom you are to hand over what is in your keeping. We'll do it without being noticed; I'll take you aside into a corner; there'll be a lot of people and there's no need for every one to know. I must confess I've had to keep my tongue wagging on your behalf; but now I believe they've agreed, on condition you hand over the printing press and all the papers, of course. Then you can go where you please."

Shatov listened, frowning and resentful. The nervous alarm of a moment before had entirely left him.

"I don't acknowledge any sort of obligation to give an account to the devil knows whom," he declared definitely. "No one has the authority to set me free."

"Not quite so. A great deal has been entrusted to you. You hadn't the right to break off simply. Besides, you made no clear statement about it, so that you put them in an ambiguous position."

"I stated my position clearly by letter as soon as I arrived here."

"No, it wasn't clear," Pyotr Stepanovitch retorted calmly. "I sent you 'A Noble Personality' to be printed here, and meaning the copies to be kept here till they were wanted; and the two manifestoes as well. You returned them with an ambiguous letter which explained nothing."

"I refused definitely to print them."

"Well, not definitely. You wrote that you couldn't, but you didn't explain for what reason. 'I can't' doesn't mean 'I don't want to.' It might be supposed that you were simply unable through circumstances. That was how they took it, and considered that you still meant to keep up your connection with the society, so that they might have entrusted something to you again and so have compromised themselves. They say here that you simply meant to deceive them, so that you might betray them when you got hold of something important. I have defended you to the best of my powers, and have shown your brief note as evidence in your favour. But I had to admit on rereading those two lines that they were misleading and not conclusive."

"You kept that note so carefully then?"

"My keeping it means nothing; I've got it still."

"Well, I don't care, damn it!" Shatov cried furiously. "Your fools may consider that I've betrayed them if they like —what is it to me? I should like to see what you can do to me?"

"Your name would be noted, and at the first success of the revolution you would be hanged."

"That's when you get the upper hand and dominate Russia?"

"You needn't laugh. I tell you again, I stood up for you. Anyway, I advise you to turn up to-day. Why waste words through false pride? Isn't it better to part friends? In any case you'll have to give up the printing press and the old type and papers—that's what we must talk about."



"I'll come," Shatov muttered, looking down thoughtfully.

Pyotr Stepanovitch glanced askance at him from his place.

"Will Stavrogin be there?" Shatov asked suddenly, raising his head.

"He is certain to be."

"Ha ha!"

Again they were silent for a minute. Shatov grinned disdainfully and irritably.

"And that contemptible 'Noble Personality' of yours, that I wouldn't print here. Has it been printed?" he asked.

"Yes."

"To make the schoolboys believe that Herzen himself had written it in your album?"

"Yes, Herzen himself."

Again they were silent for three minutes. At last Shatov got up from the bed.

"Go out of my room; I don't care to sit with you."

"I'm going," Pyotr Stepanovitch brought out with positive alacrity, getting up at once. "Only one word: Kirillov is quite alone in the lodge now, isn't he, without a servant?"

"Quite alone. Get along; I can't stand being in the same room with you."

"Well, you are a pleasant customer now!" Pyotr Stepanovitch reflected gaily as he went out into the street, "and you will be pleasant this evening too, and that just suits me; nothing better could be wished, nothing better could be wished! The Russian God Himself seems helping me."

## VII

He had probably been very busy that day on all sorts of errands and probably with success, which was reflected in the self-satisfied expression of his face when at six o'clock that evening he turned up at Stavrogin's. But he was not at once admitted: Stavrogin had just locked himself in the study with Mavriky Nikolaevitch. This news instantly made Pyotr Stepa-

novitch anxious. He seated himself close to the study door to wait for the visitor to go away. He could hear conversation but could not catch the words. The visit did not last long; soon he heard a noise, the sound of an extremely loud and abrupt voice, then the door opened and Mavriky Nikolaevitch came out with a very pale face. He did not notice Pyotr Stepanovitch, and quickly passed by. Pyotr Stepanovitch instantly ran into the study.

I cannot omit a detailed account of the very brief interview that had taken place between the two "rivals"—an interview which might well have seemed impossible under the circumstances, but which had yet taken place.

This is how it had come about. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had been enjoying an after-dinner nap on the couch in his study when Alexey Yegorytch had announced the unexpected visitor. Hearing the name, he had positively leapt up, unwilling to believe it. But soon a smile gleamed on his lips—a smile of haughty triumph and at the same time of a blank, incredulous wonder. The visitor, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, seemed struck by the expression of that smile as he came in; anyway, he stood still in the middle of the room as though uncertain whether to come further in or to turn back. Stavrogin succeeded at once in transforming the expression of his face, and with an air of grave surprise took a step towards him. The visitor did not take his outstretched hand, but awkwardly moved a chair and, not uttering a word, sat down without waiting for his host to do so. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sat down on the sofa facing him obliquely and, looking at Mavriky Nikolaevitch, waited in silence.

"If you can, marry Lizaveta Nikolaevna," Mavriky Nikolaevitch brought out suddenly at last, and what was most curious, it was impossible to tell from his tone whether it was an entreaty, a recommendation, a surrender, or a command.

Stavrogin still remained silent, but the visitor had evidently said all he had come to say and gazed at him persistently, waiting for an answer.

"If I am not mistaken (but it's quite certain), Lizaveta Nikolaevna is already betrothed to you," Stavrogin said at last.

"Promised and betrothed," Mavriky Nikolaevitch assented firmly and clearly.



"You have . . . quarrelled? Excuse me, Mavriky Nikolaevitch."

"No, she 'loves and respects me'; those are her words. Her words are more precious than anything."

"Of that there can be no doubt."

"But let me tell you, if she were standing in the church at her wedding and you were to call her, she'd give up me and every one and go to you."

"From the wedding?"

"Yes, and after the wedding."

"Aren't you making a mistake?"

"No. Under her persistent, sincere, and intense hatred for you love is flashing out at every moment . . . and madness . . . the sincerest infinite love and . . . madness! On the contrary, behind the love she feels for me, which is sincere too, every moment there are flashes of hatred . . . the most intense hatred! I could never have fancied all these transitions . . . before."

"But I wonder, though, how could you come here and dispose of the hand of Lizaveta Nikolaevna? Have you the right to do so? Has she authorised you?"

Mavriky Nikolaevitch frowned and for a minute he looked down.

"That's all words on your part," he brought out suddenly, "words of revenge and triumph; I am sure you can read between the lines, and is this the time for petty vanity? Haven't you satisfaction enough? Must I really dot my *i*'s and go into it all? Very well, I will dot my *i*'s, if you are so anxious for my humiliation. I have no right, it's impossible for me to be authorised; Lizaveta Nikolaevna knows nothing about it and her betrothed has finally lost his senses and is only fit for a madhouse, and, to crown everything, has come to tell you so himself. You are the only man in the world who can make her happy, and I am the one to make her unhappy. You are trying to get her, you are pursuing her, but—I don't know why—you won't marry her. If it's because of a lovers' quarrel abroad and I must be sacrificed to end it, sacrifice me. She is too unhappy and I can't endure it. My words are not a sanction, not a prescription, and so it's no slur on your pride. If you care to take my place at the altar, you can do it without any sanction from

me, and there is no ground for me to come to you with a mad proposal, especially as our marriage is utterly impossible after the step I am taking now. I cannot lead her to the altar feeling myself an abject wretch. What I am doing here and my handing her over to you, perhaps her bitterest foe, is to my mind something so abject that I shall never get over it."

"Will you shoot yourself on our wedding day?"

"No, much later. Why stain her bridal dress with my blood? Perhaps I shall not shoot myself at all, either now or later."

"I suppose you want to comfort me by saying that?"

"You? What would the blood of one more mean to you?"

He turned pale and his eyes gleamed. A minute of silence followed.

"Excuse me for the questions I've asked you," Stavrogin began again; "some of them I had no business to ask you, but one of them I think I have every right to put to you. Tell me, what facts have led you to form a conclusion as to my feelings for Lizaveta Nikolaevna? I mean to a conviction of a degree of feeling on my part as would justify your coming here . . . and risking such a proposal."

"What?" Mavriky Nikolaevitch positively started. "Haven't you been trying to win her? Aren't you trying to win her, and don't you want to win her?"

"Generally speaking, I can't speak of my feeling for this woman or that to a third person or to anyone except the woman herself. You must excuse it, it's a constitutional peculiarity. But to make up for it, I'll tell you the truth about everything else; I am married, and it's impossible for me either to marry or to try 'to win' anyone."

Mavriky Nikolaevitch was so astounded that he started back in his chair and for some time stared fixedly into Stavrogin's face.

"Only fancy, I never thought of that," he muttered. "You said then, that morning, that you were not married . . . and so I believed you were not married."

He turned terribly pale; suddenly he brought his fist down on the table with all his might.

"If after that confession you don't leave Lizaveta Nikolaevna alone, if you make her unhappy, I'll kill you with my stick like a dog in a ditch!"



He jumped up and walked quickly out of the room. Pyotr Stepanovitch, running in, found his host in a most unexpected frame of mind.

"Ah, that's you!" Stavrogin laughed loudly; his laughter seemed to be provoked simply by the appearance of Pyotr Stepanovitch as he ran in with such impulsive curiosity.

"Were you listening at the door? Wait a bit. What have you come about? I promised you something, didn't I? Ah, bah! I remember, to meet 'our fellows.' Let us go. I am delighted. You couldn't have thought of anything more appropriate."

He snatched up his hat and they both went at once out of the house.

"Are you laughing beforehand at the prospect of seeing 'our fellows'?" chirped gaily Pyotr Stepanovitch, dodging round him with obsequious alacrity, at one moment trying to walk beside his companion on the narrow brick pavement and at the next running right into the mud of the road; for Stavrogin walked in the middle of the pavement without observing that he left no room for anyone else.

"I am not laughing at all," he answered loudly and gaily; "on the contrary, I am sure that you have the most serious set of people there."

" 'Surly dullards,' as you once deigned to express it."

"Nothing is more amusing sometimes than a surly dullard."

"Ah, you mean Mavriky Nikolaevitch? I am convinced he came to give up his betrothed to you, eh? I egged him on to do it, indirectly, would you believe it? And if he doesn't give her up, we'll take her, anyway, won't we—eh?"

Pyotr Stepanovitch knew no doubt that he was running some risk in venturing on such sallies, but when he was excited he preferred to risk anything rather than to remain in uncertainty. Stavrogin only laughed.

"You still reckon you'll help me?" he asked.

"If you call me. But you know there's one way, and the best one."

"Do I know your way?"

"Oh no, that's a secret for the time. Only remember, a secret has its price."

"I know what it costs," Stavrogin muttered to himself, but he restrained himself and was silent.

"What it costs? What did you say?" Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled.

"I said, 'Damn you and your secret!' You'd better be telling me who will be there. I know that we are going to a name-day party, but who will be there?"

"Oh all sorts! Even Kirillov."

"All members of circles?"

"Hang it all, you are in a hurry! There's not one circle formed yet."

"How did you manage to distribute so many manifestoes then?"

"Where we are going only four are members of the circle. The others on probation are spying on one another with jealous eagerness, and bring reports to me. They are a trustworthy set. It's all material which we must organise, and then we must clear out. But you wrote the rules yourself, there's no need to explain."

"Are things going badly then? Is there a hitch?"

"Going? Couldn't be better. It will amuse you: the first thing which has a tremendous effect is giving them titles. Nothing has more influence than a title. I invent ranks and duties on purpose; I have secretaries, secret spies, treasurers, presidents, registrars, their assistants—they like it awfully, it's taken capitally. Then, the next force is sentimentalism, of course. You know, amongst us Socialism spreads principally through sentimentalism. But the trouble is these lieutenants who bite; sometimes you put your foot in it. Then come the out-and-out rogues; well, they are a good sort, if you like, and sometimes very useful; but they waste a lot of one's time, they want incessant looking after. And the most important force of all—the cement that holds everything together—is their being ashamed of having an opinion of their own. That is a force! And whose work is it, whose precious achievement is it, that not one idea of their own is left in their heads! They think originality a disgrace."

"If so, why do you take so much trouble?"

"Why, if people lie simply gaping at every one, how can you resist annexing them? Can you seriously refuse to believe in the possibility of success? Yes, you have the faith, but one wants will. It's just with people like this that success is possible. I



tell you I could make them go through fire; one has only to din it into them that they are not advanced enough. The fools reproach me that I have taken in every one here over the central committee and 'the innumerable branches.' You once blamed me for it yourself, but where's the deception? You and I are the central committee and there will be as many branches as we like."

"And always the same sort of rabble!"

"Raw material. Even they will be of use."

"And you are still reckoning on me?"

"You are the chief, you are the head; I shall only be a subordinate, your secretary. We shall take to our barque, you know; the oars are of maple, the sails are of silk, at the helm sits a fair maiden, Lizaveta Nikolaevna . . . hang it, how does it go in the ballad?"

"He is stuck," laughed Stavrogin. "No, I'd better give you my version. There you reckon on your fingers the forces that make up the circles. All that business of titles and sentimentalism is a very good cement, but there is something better; persuade four members of the circle to do for a fifth on the pretence that he is a traitor, and you'll tie them all together with the blood they've shed as though it were a knot. They'll be your slaves, they won't dare to rebel or call you to account. Ha ha ha!"

"But you . . . you shall pay for those words," Pyotr Stepanovitch thought to himself, "and this very evening, in fact. You go too far."

This or something like this must have been Pyotr Stepanovitch's reflection. They were approaching Virginsky's house.

"You've represented me, no doubt, as a member from abroad, an inspector in connection with the *Internationale*?" Stavrogin asked suddenly.

"No, not an inspector; you won't be an inspector; but you are one of the original members from abroad, who knows the most important secrets—that's your rôle. You are going to speak, of course?"

"What's put that idea into your head?"

"Now you are bound to speak."

Stavrogin positively stood still in the middle of the street in surprise, not far from a street lamp. Pyotr Stepanovitch faced

his scrutiny calmly and defiantly. Stavrogin cursed and went on.

"And are you going to speak?" he suddenly asked Pyotr Stepanovitch.

"No, I am going to listen to you."

"Damn you, you really are giving me an idea!"

"What idea?" Pyotr Stepanovitch asked quickly.

"Perhaps I will speak there, but afterwards I will give you a hiding—and a sound one too, you know."

"By the way, I told Karmazinov this morning that you said he ought to be thrashed, and not simply as a form but to hurt, as they flog peasants."

"But I never said such a thing; ha ha!"

"No matter. *Se non è vero . . .*"

"Well, thanks. I am truly obliged."

"And another thing. Do you know, Karmazinov says that the essence of our creed is the negation of honour, and that by the open advocacy of a right to be dishonourable a Russian can be won over more easily than by anything."

"An excellent saying! Golden words!" cried Stavrogin. "He's hit the mark there! The right to dishonour—why, they'd all flock to us for that, not one would stay behind! And listen, Verhovensky, you are not one of the higher police, are you?"

"Anyone who has a question like that in his mind doesn't utter it."

"I understand, but we are by ourselves."

"No, so far I am not one of the higher police. Enough, here we are. Compose your features, Stavrogin; I always do mine when I go in. A gloomy expression, that's all, nothing more is wanted; it's a very simple business."

## CHAPTER VII

### A MEETING

### I

VIRGINSKY lived in his own house, or rather his wife's, in Muravyin Street. It was a wooden house of one story, and there were no lodgers in it. On the pretext of Virginsky's name-day party, about fifteen guests were assembled; but the entertainment was not in the least like an ordinary provincial name-day party. From the very beginning of their married life the husband and wife had agreed once for all that it was utterly stupid to invite friends to celebrate name-days, and that "there is nothing to rejoice about in fact." In a few years they had succeeded in completely cutting themselves off from all society. Though he was a man of some ability, and by no means very poor, he somehow seemed to every one an eccentric fellow who was fond of solitude, and, what's more, "stuck up in conversation." Madame Virginsky was a midwife by profession, and by that very fact was on the lowest rung of the social ladder, lower even than the priest's wife in spite of her husband's rank as an officer. But she was conspicuously lacking in the humility befitting her position. And after her very stupid and unpardonably open liaison on principle with Captain Lebyadkin, a notorious rogue, even the most indulgent of our ladies turned away from her with marked contempt. But Madame Virginsky accepted all this as though it were what she wanted. It is remarkable that those very ladies applied to Arina Prohorovna (that is, Madame Virginsky) when they were in an interesting condition, rather than to any one of the older three *accoucheuses* of the town. She was sent for even by country families living in the neighbourhood, so great was the belief

Madame Virginsky.



in her knowledge, luck, and skill in critical cases. It ended in her practising only among the wealthiest ladies; she was greedy of money. Feeling her power to the full, she ended by not putting herself out for anyone. Possibly on purpose, indeed, in her practice in the best houses she used to scare nervous patients by the most incredible and nihilistic disregard of good manners, or by jeering at "everything holy," at the very time when "everything holy" might have come in most useful. Our town doctor, Rozanov—he too was an *accoucheur*—asserted most positively that on one occasion when a patient in labour was crying out and calling on the name of the Almighty, a free-thinking sally from Arina Prohorovna, fired off like a pistol-shot, had so terrifying an effect on the patient that it greatly accelerated her delivery.

But though she was a Nihilist, Madame Virginsky did not, when occasion arose, disdain social or even old-fashioned superstitions and customs if they could be of any advantage to herself. She would never, for instance, have stayed away from a baby's christening, and always put on a green silk dress with a train and adorned her chignon with curls and ringlets for such events, though at other times she positively revelled in slovenliness. And though during the ceremony she always maintained "the most insolent air," so that she put the clergy to confusion, yet when it was over she invariably handed champagne to the guests (it was for that that she came and dressed up), and it was no use trying to take the glass without a contribution to her "porridge bowl."

The guests who assembled that evening at Virginsky's (mostly men) had a casual and exceptional air. There was no supper nor cards. In the middle of the large drawing-room, which was papered with extremely old blue paper, two tables had been put together and covered with a large though not quite clean table-cloth, and on them two samovars were boiling. The end of the table was taken up by a huge tray with twenty-five glasses on it and a basket with ordinary French bread cut into a number of slices, as one sees it in genteel boarding-schools for boys or girls. The tea was poured out by a maiden lady of thirty, Arina Prohorovna's sister, a silent and malevolent creature, with flaxen hair and no eyebrows, who shared her sister's progressive ideas and was an object of terror



to Virginsky himself in domestic life. There were only three ladies in the room: the lady of the house, her eyebrowless sister, and Virginsky's sister, a girl who had just arrived from Petersburg. Arina Prohorovna, a good-looking and buxom woman of seven-and-twenty, rather dishevelled, in an everyday greenish woollen dress, was sitting scanning the guests with her bold eyes, and her look seemed in haste to say, "You see I am not in the least afraid of anything." Miss Virginsky, a rosy-cheeked student and a Nihilist, who was also good-looking, short, plump and round as a little ball, had settled herself beside Arina Prohorovna, almost in her travelling clothes. She held a roll of paper in her hand, and scrutinised the guests with impatient and roving eyes. Virginsky himself was rather unwell that evening, but he came in and sat in an easy chair by the tea-table. All the guests were sitting down too, and the orderly way in which they were ranged on chairs suggested a meeting. Evidently all were expecting something and were filling up the interval with loud but irrelevant conversation. When Stavrogin and Verhovensky appeared there was a sudden hush.

But I must be allowed to give a few explanations to make things clear.

I believe that all these people had come together in the agreeable expectation of hearing something particularly interesting, and had notice of it beforehand. They were the flower of the reddest Radicalism of our ancient town, and had been carefully picked out by Virginsky for this "meeting." I may remark, too, that some of them (though not very many) had never visited him before. Of course most of the guests had no clear idea why they had been summoned. It was true that at that time all took Pyotr Stepanovitch for a fully authorised emissary from abroad; this idea had somehow taken root among them at once and naturally flattered them. And yet among the citizens assembled ostensibly to keep a name-day, there were some who had been approached with definite proposals. Pyotr Verhovensky had succeeded in getting together a "quintet" amongst us like the one he had already formed in Moscow and, as appeared later, in our province among the officers. It was said that he had another in X province. This quintet of the elect were sitting now at the general table, and very skilfully succeeded in

giving themselves the air of being quite ordinary people, so that no one could have known them. They were—since it is no longer a secret—first Liputin, then Virginsky himself, then Shigalov (a gentleman with long ears, the brother of Madame Virginsky), Lyamshin, and lastly a strange person called Tolkatchenko, a man of forty, who was famed for his vast knowledge of the people, especially of thieves and robbers. He used to frequent the taverns on purpose (though not only with the object of studying the people), and plumed himself on his shabby clothes, tarred boots, and crafty wink and a flourish of peasant phrases. Lyamshin had once or twice brought him to Stepan Trofimovitch's gatherings, where, however, he did not make a great sensation. He used to make his appearance in the town from time to time, chiefly when he was out of a job; he was employed on the railway.

Every one of these five champions had formed this first group in the fervent conviction that their quintet was only one of hundreds and thousands of similar groups scattered all over Russia, and that they all depended on some immense central but secret power, which in its turn was intimately connected with the revolutionary movement all over Europe. But I regret to say that even at that time there was beginning to be dissension among them. Though they had ever since the spring been expecting Pyotr Verhovensky, whose coming had been heralded first by Tolkatchenko and then by the arrival of Shigalov, though they had expected extraordinary miracles from him, and though they had responded to his first summons without the slightest criticism, yet they had no sooner formed the quintet than they all somehow seemed to feel insulted; and I really believe it was owing to the promptitude with which they consented to join. They had joined, of course, from a not ignoble feeling of shame, for fear people might say afterwards that they had not dared to join; still they felt Pyotr Verhovensky ought to have appreciated their heroism and have rewarded it by telling them some really important bits of news at least. But Verhovensky was not at all inclined to satisfy their legitimate curiosity, and told them nothing but what was necessary; he treated them in general with great sternness and even rather casually. This was positively irritating, and Comrade Shigalov was already egging the others on to insist on his



"explaining himself," though, of course, not at Virginsky's, where so many outsiders were present.

I have an idea that the above-mentioned members of the first quintet were disposed to suspect that among the guests of Virginsky's that evening some were members of other groups, unknown to them, belonging to the same secret organisation and founded in the town by the same Verhovensky; so that in fact all present were suspecting one another, and posed in various ways to one another, which gave the whole party a very perplexing and even romantic air. Yet there were persons present who were beyond all suspicion. For instance a major in the service, a near relation of Virginsky, a perfectly innocent person who had not been invited but had come of himself for the name-day celebration, so that it was impossible not to receive him. But Virginsky was quite unperturbed, as the major was "incapable of betraying them"; for in spite of his stupidity he had all his life been fond of dropping in wherever extreme Radicals met; he did not sympathise with their ideas himself, but was very fond of listening to them. What's more, he had even been compromised indeed. It had happened in his youth that whole bundles of manifestoes and of numbers of *The Bell* had passed through his hands, and although he had been afraid even to open them, yet he would have considered it absolutely contemptible to refuse to distribute them—and there are such people in Russia even to this day.

The rest of the guests were either types of honourable amour propre crushed and embittered, or types of the generous impulsiveness of ardent youth. There were two or three teachers, of whom one, a lame man of forty-five, a master in the high school, was a very malicious and strikingly vain person; and two or three officers. Of the latter, one very young artillery officer who had only just come from a military training school, a silent lad who had not yet made friends with anyone, turned up now at Virginsky's with a pencil in his hand, and, scarcely taking any part in the conversation, continually made notes in his notebook. Everybody saw this, but every one pretended not to. There was, too, an idle divinity student who had helped Lyamshin to put indecent photographs into the gospel-woman's pack. He was a solid youth with a free-and-easy though mistrustful manner, with an unchangeably satirical smile, togeth

er with a calm air of triumphant faith in his own perfection. There was also present, I don't know why, the mayor's son, that unpleasant and prematurely exhausted youth to whom I have referred already in telling the story of the lieutenant's little wife. He was silent the whole evening. Finally there was a very enthusiastic and tousle-headed schoolboy of eighteen, who sat with the gloomy air of a young man whose dignity has been wounded, evidently distressed by his eighteen years. This infant was already the head of an independent group of conspirators which had been formed in the highest class of the gymnasium, as it came out afterwards to the surprise of every one.

I haven't mentioned Shatov. He was there at the farthest corner of the table, his chair pushed back a little out of the row. He gazed at the ground, was gloomily silent, refused tea and bread, and did not for one instant let his cap go out of his hand, as though to show that he was not a visitor, but had come on business, and when he liked would get up and go away. Kirillov was not far from him. He, too, was very silent, but he did not look at the ground; on the contrary, he scrutinised intently every speaker with his fixed, lustreless eyes, and listened to everything without the slightest emotion or surprise. Some of the visitors who had never seen him before stole thoughtful glances at him. I can't say whether Madame Virginsky knew anything about the existence of the quintet. I imagine she knew everything and from her husband. The girl-student, of course, took no part in anything; but she had an anxiety of her own: she intended to stay only a day or two and then to go on farther and farther from one university town to another "to show active sympathy with the sufferings of poor students and to rouse them to protest." She was taking with her some hundreds of copies of a lithographed appeal, I believe of her own composition. It is remarkable that the schoolboy conceived an almost murderous hatred for her from the first moment, though he saw her for the first time in his life; and she felt the same for him. The major was her uncle, and met her to-day for the first time after ten years. When Stavrogin and Verhovensky came in, her cheeks were as red as cranberries: she had just quarrelled with her uncle over his views on the woman question.



## II

With conspicuous nonchalance Verhovensky lounged in the chair at the upper end of the table, almost without greeting anyone. His expression was disdainful and even haughty. Stavrogin bowed politely, but in spite of the fact that they were all only waiting for them, everybody, as though acting on instruction, appeared scarcely to notice them. The lady of the house turned severely to Stavrogin as soon as he was seated.

"Stavrogin, will you have tea?"

"Please," he answered.

"Tea for Stavrogin," she commanded her sister at the samovar. "And you, will you?" (This was to Verhovensky.)

"Of course. What a question to ask a visitor! And give me cream too; you always give one such filthy stuff by way of tea, and with a name-day party in the house!"

"What, you believe in keeping name-days too?" the girl-student laughed suddenly. "We were just talking of that."

"That's stale," muttered the schoolboy at the other end of the table.

"What's stale? To disregard conventions, even the most innocent is not stale; on the contrary, to the disgrace of every one, so far it's a novelty," the girl-student answered instantly, darting forward on her chair. "Besides, there are no innocent conventions," she added with intensity.

"I only meant," cried the schoolboy with tremendous excitement, "to say that though conventions of course are stale and must be eradicated, yet about name-days everybody knows that they are stupid and very stale to waste precious time upon, which has been wasted already all over the world, so that it would be as well to sharpen one's wits on something more useful. . . ."

"You drag it out so, one can't understand what you mean," shouted the girl.

"I think that every one has a right to express an opinion as well as every one else, and if I want to express my opinion like anybody else . . ."

"No one is attacking your right to give an opinion," the lady

of the house herself cut in sharply. "You were only asked not to ramble because no one can make out what you mean."

"But allow me to remark that you are not treating me with respect. If I couldn't fully express my thought, it's not from want of thought but from too much thought," the schoolboy muttered, almost in despair, losing his thread completely.

"If you don't know how to talk, you'd better keep quiet," blurted out the girl.

The schoolboy positively jumped from his chair.

"I only wanted to state," he shouted, crimson with shame and afraid to look about him, "that you only wanted to show off your cleverness because Mr. Stavrogin came in—so there!"

"That's a nasty and immoral idea and shows the worthlessness of your development. I beg you not to address me again," the girl rattled off.

"Stavrogin," began the lady of the house, "they've been discussing the rights of the family before you came—this officer here"—she nodded towards her relation, the major—"and, of course, I am not going to worry you with such stale nonsense, which has been dealt with long ago. But how have the rights and duties of the family come about in the superstitious form in which they exist at present? That's the question. What's your opinion?"

"What do you mean by 'come about'?" Stavrogin asked in his turn.

"We know, for instance, that the superstition about God came from thunder and lightning." The girl-student rushed into the fray again, staring at Stavrogin with her eyes almost jumping out of her head. "It's well known that primitive man, scared by thunder and lightning, made a god of the unseen enemy, feeling their weakness before it. But how did the superstition of the family arise? How did the family itself arise?"

"That's not quite the same thing. . . ." Madame Virginsky tried to check her.

"I think the answer to this question wouldn't be quite discreet," answered Stavrogin.

"How so?" said the girl-student, craning forward suddenly

But there was an audible titter in the group of teachers, which was at once caught up at the other end by Lyamshin and



the schoolboy and followed by a hoarse chuckle from the major.

"You ought to write vaudevilles," Madame Virginsky observed to Stavrogin.

"It does you no credit, I don't know what your name is," the girl rapped out with positive indignation.

"And don't you be too forward," boomed the major. "You are a young lady and you ought to behave modestly, and you keep jumping about as though you were sitting on a needle."

"Kindly hold your tongue and don't address me familiarly with your nasty comparisons. I've never seen you before and I don't recognise the relationship."

"But I am your uncle; I used to carry you about when you were a baby!"

"I don't care what babies you used to carry about. I didn't ask you to carry me. It must have been a pleasure to you to do so, you rude officer. And allow me to observe, don't dare to address me so familiarly, unless it's as a fellow-citizen. I forbid you to do it, once for all."

"There, they are all like that!" cried the major, banging the table with his fist and addressing Stavrogin, who was sitting opposite. "But, allow me, I am fond of Liberalism and modern ideas, and I am fond of listening to clever conversation; masculine conversation, though, I warn you. But to listen to these women, these flighty windmills—no, that makes me ache all over! Don't wriggle about!" he shouted to the girl, who was leaping up from her chair. "No, it's my turn to speak, I've been insulted."

"You can't say anything yourself, and only hinder other people talking," the lady of the house grumbled indignantly.

"No, I will have my say," said the major hotly, addressing Stavrogin. "I reckon on you, Mr. Stavrogin, as a fresh person who has only just come on the scene, though I haven't the honour of knowing you. Without men they'll perish like flies—that's what I think. All their woman question is only lack of originality. I assure you that all this woman question has been invented for them by men in foolishness and to their own hurt. I only thank God I am not married. There's not the slightest variety in them, they can't even invent a simple pattern; they

have to get men to invent them for them! Here I used to carry her in my arms, used to dance the mazurka with her when she was ten years old; to-day she's come, naturally I fly to embrace her, and at the second word she tells me there's no God. She might have waited a little, she was in too great a hurry! Clever people don't believe, I dare say; but that's from their cleverness. But you, chicken, what do you know about God, I said to her. 'Some student taught you, and if he'd taught you to light the lamp before the ikons you would have lighted it.' "

"You keep telling lies, you are a very spiteful person, I proved to you just now the untenability of your position," the girl answered contemptuously, as though disdaining further explanations with such a man. "I told you just now that we've all been taught in the Catechism if you honor your father and your parents you will live long and have wealth. That's in the Ten Commandments. If God thought it necessary to offer rewards for love, your God must be immoral. That's how I proved it to you. It wasn't the second word, and it was because you asserted your rights. It's not my fault if you are stupid and don't understand even now. You are offended and you are spiteful—and that's what explains all your generation."

"You're a goose!" said the major.

"And you are a fool!"

"You can call me names!"

"Excuse me, Kapiton Maximitch, you told me yourself you don't believe in God," Liputin piped from the other end of the table.

"What if I did say so—that's a different matter. I believe, perhaps, only not altogether. Even if I don't believe altogether, still I don't say God ought to be shot. I used to think about God before I left the hussars. From all the poems you would think that hussars do nothing but carouse and drink. Yes, I did drink, maybe, but would you believe it, I used to jump out of bed at night and stood crossing myself before the images with nothing but my socks on, praying to God to give me faith; for even then I couldn't be at peace as to whether there was a God or not. It used to fret me so! In the morning, of course, one would amuse oneself and one's faith would seem to be lost again; and in fact I've noticed that faith always seems to be less in the daytime."



"Haven't you any cards?" asked Verhovensky, with a mighty yawn, addressing Madame Virginsky.

"I sympathise with your question, I sympathise entirely," the girl-student broke in hotly, flushed with indignation at the major's words.

"We are wasting precious time listening to silly talk," snapped out the lady of the house, and she looked reprovingly at her husband.

The girl pulled herself together.

"I wanted to make a statement to the meeting concerning the sufferings of the students and their protest, but as time is being wasted in immoral conversation . . ."

"There's no such thing as moral or immoral," the schoolboy brought out, unable to restrain himself as soon as the girl began.

"I knew that, Mr. Schoolboy, long before you were taught it."

"And I maintain," he answered savagely, "that you are a child come from Petersburg to enlighten us all, though we know for ourselves the commandment 'honour thy father and thy mother,' which you could not repeat correctly; and the fact that it's immoral every one in Russia knows from Byelinsky."

"Are we ever to have an end of this?" Madame Virginsky said resolutely to her husband. As the hostess, she blushed for the ineptitude of the conversation, especially as she noticed smiles and even astonishment among the guests who had been invited for the first time.

"Gentlemen," said Virginsky, suddenly lifting up his voice, "if anyone wishes to say anything more nearly connected with our business, or has any statement to make, I call upon him to do so without wasting time."

"I'll venture to ask one question," said the lame teacher suavely. He had been sitting particularly decorously and had not spoken till then. "I should like to know, are we some sort of meeting, or are we simply a gathering of ordinary mortals paying a visit? I ask simply for the sake of order and so as not to remain in ignorance."

This "sly" question made an impression. People looked at each other, every one expecting some one else to answer, and

suddenly all, as though at a word of command, turned their eyes to Verhovensky and Stavrogin.

"I suggest our voting on the answer to the question whether we are a meeting or not," said Madame Virginsky.

"I entirely agree with the suggestion," Liputin chimed in, "though the question is rather vague."

"I agree too." "And so do I," cried voices.

"I too think it would make our proceedings more in order," confirmed Virginsky.

"To the vote then," said his wife. "Lyamshin, please sit down to the piano; you can give your vote from there when the voting begins."

"Again!" cried Lyamshin. "I've strummed enough for you."

"I beg you most particularly, sit down and play. Don't you care to do anything for the cause?"

"But I assure you, Arina Prohorovna, nobody is eaves-dropping. It's only your fancy. Besides, the windows are high, and people would not understand if they did hear."

"We don't understand ourselves," some one muttered.

"But I tell you one must always be on one's guard. I mean in case there should be spies," she explained to Verhovensky. "Let them hear from the street that we have music and a name-day party."

"Hang it all!" Lyamshin swore, and sitting down to the piano, began strumming a valse, banging on the keys almost with his fists, at random.

"I propose that those who want it to be a meeting should put up their right hands," Madame Virginsky proposed.

Some put them up, others did not. Some held them up and then put them down again and then held them up again.

"Foo! I don't understand it at all," one officer shouted.

"I don't either," cried the other.

"Oh, I understand," cried a third. "If it's *yes*, you hold your hand up."

"But what does 'yes' mean?"

"Means a meeting."

"No, it means not a meeting."

"I voted for a meeting," cried the schoolboy to Madame Virginsky.

"Then why didn't you hold up your hand?"



"I was looking at you. You didn't hold up yours, so I didn't hold up mine."

"How stupid! I didn't hold up my hand because I proposed it. Gentlemen, now I propose the contrary. Those who want a meeting, sit still and do nothing; those who don't, hold up their right hands."

"Those who don't want it?" inquired the schoolboy.

"Are you doing it on purpose?" cried Madame Virginsky wrathfully.

"No. Excuse me, those who want it, or those who don't want it? For one must know that definitely," cried two or three voices.

"Those who don't want it—those who *don't* want it."

"Yes, but what is one to do, hold up one's hand or not hold it up if one doesn't want it?" cried an officer.

"Ech, we are not accustomed to constitutional methods yet!" remarked the major.

"Mr. Lyamshin, excuse me, but you are thumping so that no one can hear anything," observed the lame teacher.

"But, upon my word, Arina Prohorovna, nobody is listening, really!" cried Lyamshin, jumping up. "I won't play! I've come to you as a visitor, not as a drummer!"

"Gentlemen," Virginsky went on, "answer verbally, are we a meeting or not?"

"We are! We are!" was heard on all sides.

"If so, there's no need to vote, that's enough. Are you satisfied, gentlemen? Is there any need to put it to the vote?"

"No need—no need, we understand."

"Perhaps some one doesn't want it to be a meeting?"

"No, no; we all want it."

"But what does 'meeting' mean?" cried a voice.

No one answered.

"We must choose a chairman," people cried from different parts of the room.

"Our host, of course, our host!"

"Gentlemen, if so," Virginsky, the chosen chairman, began, "I propose my original motion. If anyone wants to say anything more relevant to the subject, or has some statement to make, let him bring it forward without loss of time."

There was a general silence. The eyes of all were turned again on Verhovensky and Stavrogin.

"Verhovensky, have you no statement to make?" Madame Virginsky asked him directly.

"Nothing whatever," he answered, yawning and stretching on his chair. "But I should like a glass of brandy."

"Stavrogin, don't you want to?"

"Thank you, I don't drink."

"I mean don't you want to speak, not don't you want brandy."

"To speak, what about? No, I don't want to."

"They'll bring you some brandy," she answered Verhovensky.

The girl-student got up. She had darted up several times already.

"I have come to make a statement about the sufferings of poor students and the means of rousing them to protest."

But she broke off. At the other end of the table a rival had risen, and all eyes turned to him. Shigalov, the man with the long ears, slowly rose from his seat with a gloomy and sullen air and mournfully laid on the table a thick notebook filled with extremely small handwriting. He remained standing in silence. Many people looked at the notebook in consternation, but Liputin, Virginsky, and the lame teacher seemed pleased.

"I ask leave to address the meeting," Shigalov pronounced sullenly but resolutely.

"You have leave." Virginsky gave his sanction.

The orator sat down, was silent for half a minute, and pronounced in a solemn voice,

"Gentlemen!"

"Here's the brandy," the sister who had been pouring out tea and had gone to fetch brandy rapped out, contemptuously and disdainfully putting the bottle before Verhovensky, together with the wineglass which she had brought in her fingers without a tray or a plate.

The interrupted orator made a dignified pause.

"Never mind, go on, I am not listening," cried Verhovensky, pouring himself out a glass.

"Gentlemen, asking your attention and, as you will see later, soliciting your aid in a matter of the first importance," Shigalov began again, "I must make some prefatory remarks."

Shigalov's system.



"Arina Prohorovna, haven't you some scissors?" Pyotr Stepanovitch asked suddenly.

"What do you want scissors for?" she asked, with wide-open eyes.

"I've forgotten to cut my nails; I've been meaning to for the last three days," he observed, scrutinising his long and dirty nails with unruffled composure.

Arina Prohorovna crimsoned, but Miss Virginsky seemed pleased.

"I believe I saw them just now on the window." She got up from the table, went and found the scissors, and at once brought them. Pyotr Stepanovitch did not even look at her, took the scissors, and set to work with them. Arina Prohorovna grasped that these were realistic manners, and was ashamed of her sensitiveness. People looked at one another in silence. The lame teacher looked vindictively and enviously at Verhovensky. Shigalov went on.

"Dedicating my energies to the study of the social organisation which is in the future to replace the present condition of things, I've come to the conviction that all makers of social systems from ancient times up to the present year, 187—, have been dreamers, tellers of fairy-tales, fools who contradicted themselves, who understood nothing of natural science and the strange animal called man. Plato, Rousseau, Fourier, columns of aluminium, are only fit for sparrows and not for human society. But, now that we are all at last preparing to act, a new form of social organisation is essential. In order to avoid further uncertainty, I propose my own system of world-organisation. Here it is." He tapped the notebook. "I wanted to expound my views to the meeting in the most concise form possible, but I see that I should need to add a great many verbal explanations, and so the whole exposition would occupy at least ten evenings, one for each of my chapters." (There was the sound of laughter.) "I must add, besides, that my system is not yet complete." (Laughter again.) "I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism. I will add, however, that there can be no solution of the social problem but mine."

The laughter grew louder and louder, but it came chiefly from the younger and less initiated visitors. There was an expression of some annoyance on the faces of Madame Virginsky, Liputin, and the lame teacher.

"If you've been unsuccessful in making your system consistent, and have been reduced to despair yourself, what could we do with it?" one officer observed warily.

"You are right, Mr. Officer"—Shigalov turned sharply to him—"especially in using the word despair. Yes, I am reduced to despair. Nevertheless, nothing can take the place of the system set forth in my book, and there is no other way out of it; no one can invent anything else. And so I hasten without loss of time to invite the whole society to listen for ten evenings to my book and then give their opinions of it. If the members are unwilling to listen to me, let us break up from the start—the men to take up service under government, the women to their cooking; for if you reject my solution you'll find no other, none whatever! If they let the opportunity slip, it will simply be their loss, for they will be bound to come back to it again."

There was a stir in the company. "Is he mad, or what?" voices asked.

"So the whole point lies in Shigalov's despair," Lyamshin commented, "and the essential question is whether he must despair or not?"

"Shigalov's being on the brink of despair is a personal question," declared the schoolboy.

"I propose we put it to a vote how far Shigalov's despair affects the common cause, and at the same time whether it's worth while listening to him or not," an officer suggested gaily.

"That's not right." The lame teacher put in his spoke at last. As a rule he spoke with a rather mocking smile, so that it was difficult to make out whether he was in earnest or joking. "That's not right, gentlemen. Mr. Shigalov is too much devoted to his task and is also too modest. I know his book. He suggests as a final solution of the question the division of mankind into two unequal parts. One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths. The others have to give up all individuality and become, so to speak, a herd, and, through boundless submission, will by a series of regenerations attain primæval innocence, something like the



Garden of Eden. They'll have to work, however. The measures proposed by the author for depriving nine-tenths of mankind of their freedom and transforming them into a herd through the education of whole generations are very remarkable, founded on the facts of nature and highly logical. One may not agree with some of the deductions, but it would be difficult to doubt the intelligence and knowledge of the author. It's a pity that the time required—ten evenings—is impossible to arrange for, or we might hear a great deal that's interesting."

"Can you be in earnest?" Madame Virginsky addressed the lame gentleman with a shade of positive uneasiness in her voice, "when that man doesn't know what to do with people and so turns nine-tenths of them into slaves? I've suspected him for a long time."

"You say that of your own brother?" asked the lame man. "Relationship? Are you laughing at me?"

"And besides, to work for aristocrats and to obey them as though they were gods is contemptible!" observed the girl-student fiercely.

"What I propose is not contemptible; it's paradise, an earthly paradise, and there can be no other on earth," Shigalov pronounced authoritatively.

"For my part," said Lyamshin, "if I didn't know what to do with nine-tenths of mankind, I'd take them and blow them up into the air instead of putting them in paradise. I'd only leave a handful of educated people, who would live happily ever afterwards on scientific principles."

"No one but a buffoon can talk like that!" cried the girl, flaring up.

"He is a buffoon, but he is of use," Madame Virginsky whispered to her.

"And possibly that would be the best solution of the problem," said Shigalov, turning hotly to Lyamshin. "You certainly don't know what a profound thing you've succeeded in saying, my merry friend. But as it's hardly possible to carry out your idea, we must confine ourselves to an earthly paradise, since that's what they call it."

"This is pretty thorough rot," broke, as though involuntarily, from Verhovensky. Without even raising his eyes, however, he went on cutting his nails with perfect nonchalance.

"Why is it rot?" The lame man took it up instantly, as though he had been lying in wait for his first words to catch at them. "Why is it rot? Mr. Shigalov is somewhat fanatical in his love for humanity, but remember that Fourier, still more Cabet and even Proudhon himself, advocated a number of the most despotic and even fantastic measures. Mr. Shigalov is perhaps far more sober in his suggestions than they are. I assure you that when one reads his book it's almost impossible not to agree with some things. He is perhaps less far from realism than anyone and his earthly paradise is almost the real one—if it ever existed—for the loss of which man is always sighing."

"I knew I was in for something," Verhovensky muttered again.

"Allow me," said the lame man, getting more and more excited. "Conversations and arguments about the future organisation of society are almost an actual necessity for all thinking people nowadays. Herzen was occupied with nothing else all his life. Byelinsky, as I know on very good authority, used to spend whole evenings with his friends debating and settling beforehand even the minutest, so to speak, domestic, details of the social organisation of the future."

"Some people go crazy over it," the major observed suddenly.

"We are more likely to arrive at something by talking, anyway, than by sitting silent and posing as dictators," Liputin hissed, as though at last venturing to begin the attack.

"I didn't mean Shigalov when I said it was rot," Verhovensky mumbled. "You see, gentlemen,"—he raised his eyes a trifle—"to my mind all these books, Fourier, Cabet, all this talk about the right to work, and Shigalov's theories—are all like novels of which one can write a hundred thousand—an æsthetic entertainment. I can understand that in this little town you are bored, so you rush to ink and paper."

"Excuse me," said the lame man, wriggling on his chair, "though we are provincials and of course objects of commiseration on that ground, yet we know that so far nothing has happened in the world new enough to be worth our weeping at having missed it. It is suggested to us in various pamphlets made abroad and secretly distributed that we should unite and form groups with the sole object of bringing about universal destruction. It's urged that, however much you tinker with the

Russia destined for the great task?



world, you can't make a good job of it, but that by cutting off a hundred million heads and so lightening one's burden, one can jump over the ditch more safely. A fine idea, no doubt, but quite as impracticable as Shigalov's theories, which you referred to just now so contemptuously."

"Well, but I haven't come here for discussion." Verhovensky let drop this significant phrase, and, as though quite unaware of his blunder, drew the candle nearer to him that he might see better.

"It's a pity, a great pity, that you haven't come for discussion, and it's a great pity that you are so taken up just now with your toilet."

"What's my toilet to you?"

"To remove a hundred million heads is as difficult as to transform the world by propaganda. Possibly more difficult, especially in Russia," Liputin ventured again.

"It's Russia they rest their hopes on now," said an officer.

"We've heard they are resting their hopes on it," interposed the lame man. "We know that a mysterious finger is pointing to our delightful country as the land most fitted to accomplish the great task. But there's this: by the gradual solution of the problem by propaganda I shall gain something, anyway—I shall have some pleasant talk, at least, and shall even get some recognition from government for my services to the cause of society. But in the second way, by the rapid method of cutting off a hundred million heads, what benefit shall I get personally? If you began advocating that, your tongue might be cut out."

"Yours certainly would be," observed Verhovensky.

"You see. And as under the most favourable circumstances you would not get through such a massacre in less than fifty or at the best thirty years—for they are not sheep, you know, and perhaps they would not let themselves be slaughtered—wouldn't it be better to pack one's bundle and migrate to some quiet island beyond calm seas and there close one's eyes tranquilly? Believe me"—he tapped the table significantly with his finger—"you will only promote emigration by such propaganda and nothing else!"

He finished evidently triumphant. He was one of the intellects of the province. Liputin smiled slyly, Virginsky listened rather dejectedly, the others followed the discussion with great

attention, especially the ladies and officers. They all realised that the advocate of the hundred million heads theory had been driven into a corner, and waited to see what would come of it.

"That was a good saying of yours, though," Verhovensky mumbled more carelessly than ever, in fact with an air of positive boredom. "Emigration is a good idea. But all the same, if in spite of all the obvious disadvantages you foresee, more and more come forward every day ready to fight for the common cause, it will be able to do without you. It's a new religion, my good friend, coming to take the place of the old one. That's why so many fighters come forward, and it's a big movement. You'd better emigrate! And, you know, I should advise Dresden, not 'the calm islands.' To begin with, it's a town that has never been visited by an epidemic, and as you are a man of culture, no doubt you are afraid of death. Another thing, it's near the Russian frontier, so you can more easily receive your income from your beloved Fatherland. Thirdly, it contains what are called treasures of art, and you are a man of æsthetic tastes, formerly a teacher of literature, I believe. And, finally, it has a miniature Switzerland of its own—to provide you with poetic inspiration, for no doubt you write verse. In fact, it's a treasure in a nutshell!"

There was a general movement, especially among the officers. In another instant they would have all begun talking at once. But the lame man rose irritably to the bait.

"No, perhaps I am not going to give up the common cause. You must understand that . . . "

"What, would you join the quintet if I proposed it to you?" Verhovensky boomed suddenly, and he laid down the scissors.

Every one seemed startled. The mysterious man had revealed himself too freely. He had even spoken openly of the "quintet."

"Every one feels himself to be an honest man and will not shirk his part in the common cause"—the lame man tried to wriggle out of it—"but . . ."

"No, this is not a question which allows of a *but*," Verhovensky interrupted harshly and peremptorily. "I tell you, gentlemen, I must have a direct answer. I quite understand that, having come here and having called you together myself, I am bound to give you explanations" (again an unexpected



revelation), "but I can give you none till I know what is your attitude to the subject. To cut the matter short—for we can't go on talking for another thirty years as people have done for the last thirty—I ask you which you prefer: the slow way, which consists in the composition of socialistic romances and the academic ordering of the destinies of humanity a thousand years hence, while despotism will swallow the savoury morsels which would almost fly into your mouths of themselves if you'd take a little trouble; or do you, whatever it may imply, prefer a quicker way which will at last untie your hands, and will let humanity make its own social organisation in freedom and in action, not on paper? They shout 'a hundred million heads'; that may be only a metaphor; but why be afraid of it if, with the slow day-dreams on paper, despotism in the course of some hundred years will devour not a hundred but five hundred million heads? Take note too that an incurable invalid will not be cured whatever prescriptions are written for him on paper. On the contrary, if there is delay, he will grow so corrupt that he will infect us too and contaminate all the fresh forces which one might still reckon upon now, so that we shall all at last come to grief together. I thoroughly agree that it's extremely agreeable to chatter liberally and eloquently, but action is a little trying. . . . However, I am no hand at talking; I came here with communications, and so I beg all the honourable company not to vote, but simply and directly to state which you prefer: walking at a snail's pace in the marsh, or putting on full steam to get across it?"

"I am certainly for crossing at full steam!" cried the schoolboy in an ecstasy.

"So am I," Lyamshin chimed in.

"There can be no doubt about the choice," muttered an officer, followed by another, then by some one else. What struck them all most was that Verhovensky had come "with communications" and had himself just promised to speak.

"Gentlemen, I see that almost all decide for the policy of the manifestoes," he said, looking round at the company.

"All, all!" cried the majority of voices.

"I confess I am rather in favour of a more humane policy," said the major, "but as all are on the other side, I go with all the rest."

"It appears, then, that even you are not opposed to it," said Verhovensky, addressing the lame man.

"I am not exactly . . ." said the latter, turning rather red, 'but if I do agree with the rest now, it's simply not to break up. . . ."

"You are all like that! Ready to argue for six months to practise your Liberal eloquence and in the end you vote the same as the rest! Gentlemen, consider though, is it true that you are all ready?"

(Ready for what? The question was vague, but very alluring.)

"All are, of course!" voices were heard. But all were looking at one another.

"But afterwards perhaps you will resent having agreed so quickly? That's almost always the way with you."

The company was excited in various ways, greatly excited. The lame man flew at him.

"Allow me to observe, however, that answers to such questions are conditional. Even if we have given our decision, you must note that questions put in such a strange way . . ."

"In what strange way?"

"In a way such questions are not asked."

"Teach me how, please. But do you know, I felt sure you'd be the first to take offence."

"You've extracted from us an answer as to our readiness for immediate action; but what right had you to do so? By what authority do you ask such questions?"

"You should have thought of asking that question sooner! Why did you answer? You agree and then you go back on it!"

"But to my mind the irresponsibility of your principal question suggests to me that you have no authority, no right, and only asked from personal curiosity."

"What do you mean? What do you mean?" cried Verhovensky, apparently beginning to be much alarmed.

"Why, that the initiation of new members into anything you like is done, anyway, *tête-à-tête* and not in the company of twenty people one doesn't know!" blurted out the lame man. He had said all that was in his mind because he was too irritated to restrain himself. Verhovensky turned to the general company with a capitally simulated look of alarm.



"Gentlemen, I deem it my duty to declare that all this is folly, and that our conversation has gone too far. I have so far initiated no one, and no one has the right to say of me that I initiate members. We were simply discussing our opinions. That's so, isn't it? But whether that's so or not, you alarm me very much." He turned to the lame man again. "I had no idea that it was unsafe here to speak of such practically innocent matters except *tête-à-tête*. Are you afraid of informers? Can there possibly be an informer among us here?"

The excitement became tremendous; all began talking.

"Gentlemen, if that is so," Verhovensky went on, "I have compromised myself more than anyone, and so I will ask you to answer one question, if you care to, of course. You are all perfectly free."

"What question? What question?" every one clamoured.

"A question that will make it clear whether we are to remain together, or take up our hats and go our several ways without speaking."

"The question! The question!"

"If any one of us knew of a proposed political murder, would he, in view of all the consequences, go to give information, or would he stay at home and await events? Opinions may differ on this point. The answer to the question will tell us clearly whether we are to separate, or to remain together and for far longer than this one evening. Let me appeal to you first." He turned to the lame man.

"Why to me first?"

"Because you began it all. Be so good as not to prevaricate; it won't help you to be cunning. But please yourself, it's for you to decide."

"Excuse me, but such a question is positively insulting."

"No, can't you be more exact than that?"

"I've never been an agent of the Secret Police," replied the latter, wriggling more than ever.

"Be so good as to be more definite, don't keep us waiting."

The lame man was so furious that he left off answering. Without a word he glared wrathfully from under his spectacles at his tormentor.

"Yes or no? Would you inform or not?" cried Verhovensky

"Of course I wouldn't," the lame man shouted twice as loudly.

"And no one would, of course not!" cried many voices.

"Allow me to appeal to you, Mr. Major. Would you inform or not?" Verhovensky went on. "And note that I appeal to you on purpose."

"I won't inform."

"But if you knew that some one meant to rob and murder some one else, an ordinary mortal, then you would inform and give warning?"

"Yes, of course; but that's a private affair, while the other would be a political treachery. I've never been an agent of the Secret Police."

"And no one here has," voices cried again. "It's an unnecessary question. Every one will make the same answer. There are no informers here."

"What is that gentleman getting up for?" cried the girl-student.

"That's Shatov. What are you getting up for?" cried the lady of the house.

Shatov did, in fact, stand up. He was holding his cap in his hand and looking at Verhovensky. Apparently he wanted to say something to him, but was hesitating. His face was pale and wrathful, but he controlled himself. He did not say one word, but in silence walked towards the door.

"Shatov, this won't make things better for you!" Verhovensky called after him enigmatically.

"But it will for you, since you are a spy and a scoundrel!" Shatov shouted to him from the door, and he went out.

Shouts and exclamations again.

"That's what comes of a test," cried a voice.

"It's been of use," cried another.

"Hasn't it been of use too late?" observed a third.

"Who invited him? Who let him in? Who is he? Who is Shatov? Will he inform, or won't he?" There was a shower of questions.

"If he were an informer he would have kept up appearances instead of cursing it all and going away," observed some one.



"See, Stavrogin is getting up too. Stavrogin has not answered the question either," cried the girl-student.

Stavrogin did actually stand up, and at the other end of the table Kirillov rose at the same time.

"Excuse me, Mr. Stavrogin," Madame Virginsky addressed him sharply, "we all answered the question, while you are going away without a word."

"I see no necessity to answer the question which interests you," muttered Stavrogin.

"But we've compromised ourselves and you won't," shouted several voices.

"What business is it of mine if you have compromised yourselves?" laughed Stavrogin, but his eyes flashed.

"What business? What business?" voices exclaimed.

Many people got up from their chairs.

"Allow me, gentlemen, allow me," cried the lame man. "Mr. Verhovensky hasn't answered the question either; he has only asked it."

The remark produced a striking effect. All looked at one another. Stavrogin laughed aloud in the lame man's face and went out; Kirillov followed him: Verhovensky ran after them into the passage.

"What are you doing?" he faltered, seizing Stavrogin's hand and gripping it with all his might in his. Stavrogin pulled away his hand without a word.

"Be at Kirillov's directly, I'll come. . . . It's absolutely necessary for me to see you! . . ."

"It isn't necessary for me," Stavrogin cut him short.

"Stavrogin will be there," Kirillov said finally. "Stavrogin, it is necessary for you. I will show you that there."

They went out.

"I told you this evening why you needed Shatov's blood," said Stavrogin, with flashing eyes. "It's the cement you want to bind your groups together with. You drove Shatov away cleverly just now. You knew very well that he wouldn't promise not to inform and he would have thought it mean to lie to you. But what do you want with me? What do you want with me? Ever since we met abroad you won't let me alone. The explanation you've given me so far was simply raving. Meanwhile you are driving at my giving Lebyadkin fifteen hundred roubles, so as to give Fedka an opportunity to murder him. I know that you think I want my wife murdered too. You think to tie my hands by this crime, and have me in your power. That's it, isn't it? What good will that be to you? What the devil do you want with me? Look at me. Once for all, am I the man for you? And let me alone."

"Has Fedka been to you himself?" Verhovensky asked breathlessly.

"Yes, he came. His price is fifteen hundred too. . . . But here; he'll repeat it himself. There he stands." Stavrogin stretched out his hand.

Pyotr Stepanovitch turned round quickly. A new figure, Fedka, wearing a sheep-skin coat, but without a cap, as though he were at home, stepped out of the darkness in the doorway. He stood there laughing and showing his even white teeth. His black eyes, with yellow whites, darted cautiously about the room watching the gentlemen. There was something he did not understand. He had evidently been just brought in by Kirillov, and his inquiring eyes turned to the latter. He stood in the doorway, but was unwilling to come into the room.

"I suppose you got him ready here to listen to our bargaining, or that he may actually see the money in our hands. Is that it?" asked Stavrogin; and without waiting for an answer he walked out of the house. Verhovensky, almost frantic, overtook him at the gate.

"Stop! Not another step!" he cried, seizing him by the arm. Stavrogin tried to pull away his arm, but did not succeed. He was overcome with fury. Seizing Verhovensky by the hair with his left hand he flung him with all his might on the ground



and went out at the gate. But he had not gone thirty paces before Verhovensky overtook him again.

"Let us make it up; let us make it up!" he murmured in a spasmodic whisper.

Stavrogin shrugged his shoulders, but neither answered nor turned round.

"Listen. I will bring you Lizaveta Nikolaevna to-morrow; shall I? No? Why don't you answer? Tell me what you want. I'll do it. Listen. I'll let you have Shatov. Shall I?"

"Then it's true that you meant to kill him?" cried Stavrogin.

"What do you want with Shatov? What is he to you?" Pyotr Stepanovitch went on, gasping, speaking rapidly. He was in a frenzy, and kept running forward and seizing Stavrogin by the elbow, probably unaware of what he was doing. "Listen. I'll let you have him. Let's make it up. Your price is a very great one, but . . . Let's make it up!"

Stavrogin glanced at him at last, and was amazed. The eyes, the voice, were not the same as always, or as they had been in the room just now. What he saw was almost another face. The intonation of the voice was different. Verhovensky besought, implored. He was a man from whom what was most precious was being taken or had been taken, and who was still stunned by the shock.

"But what's the matter with you?" cried Stavrogin. The other did not answer, but ran after him and gazed at him with the same imploring but yet inflexible expression.

"Let's make it up!" he whispered once more. "Listen. Like Fedka, I have a knife in my boot, but I'll make it up with you!"

"But what do you want with me, damn you?" Stavrogin cried, with intense anger and amazement. "Is there some mystery about it? Am I a sort of talisman for you?"

"Listen. We are going to make a revolution," the other muttered rapidly, and almost in delirium. "You don't believe we shall make a revolution? We are going to make such an upheaval that everything will be uprooted from its foundation. Karmazinov is right that there is nothing to lay hold of. Karmazinov is very intelligent. Another ten such groups in different parts of Russia—and I am safe."

"Groups of fools like that?" broke reluctantly from Stavrogin.

"Oh, don't be so clever, Stavrogin; don't be so clever yourself. And you know you are by no means so intelligent that you need wish others to be. You are afraid, you have no faith. You are frightened at our doing things on such a scale. And why are they fools? They are not such fools. No one has a mind of his own nowadays. There are terribly few original minds nowadays. Virginsky is a pure-hearted man, ten times as pure as you or I; but never mind about him. Liputin is a rogue, but I know one point about him. Every rogue has some point in him. . . . Lyashim is the only one who hasn't, but he is in my hands. A few more groups, and I should have money and passports everywhere; so much at least. Suppose it were only that? And safe places, so that they can search as they like. They might uproot one group but they'd stick at the next. We'll set things in a ferment. . . . Surely you don't think that we two are not enough?"

"Take Shigalov, and let me alone. . . ."

"Shigalov is a man of genius! Do you know he is a genius like Fourier, but bolder than Fourier; stronger. I'll look after him. He's discovered 'equality'!"

"He is in a fever; he is raving; something very queer has happened to him," thought Stavrogin, looking at him once more. Both walked on without stopping.

"He's written a good thing in that manuscript," Verhovensky went on. "He suggests a system of spying. Every member of the society spies on the others, and it's his duty to inform against them. Every one belongs to all and all to every one. All are slaves and equal in their slavery. In extreme cases he advocates slander and murder, but the great thing about it is equality. To begin with, the level of education, science, and talents is lowered. A high level of education and science is only possible for great intellects, and they are not wanted. The great intellects have always seized the power and been despots. Great intellects cannot help being despots and they've always done more harm than good. They will be banished or put to death. Cicero will have his tongue cut out, Copernicus will have his eyes put out, Shakespeare will be stoned—that's Shigalovism. Slaves are bound to be equal. There has never been either freedom or equality without despotism, but in the herd there is bound to be equality, and that's Shigalovism! Ha ha ha! Do you think it strange? I am for Shigalovism."



Stavrogin tried to quicken his pace, and to reach home as soon as possible. "If this fellow is drunk, where did he manage to get drunk?" crossed his mind. "Can it be the brandy?"

"Listen, Stavrogin. To level the mountains is a fine idea, not an absurd one. I am for Shigalov. Down with culture. We've had enough science! Without science we have material enough to go on for a thousand years, but one must have discipline. The one thing wanting in the world is discipline. The thirst for culture is an aristocratic thirst. The moment you have family ties or love you get the desire for property. We will destroy that desire; we'll make use of drunkenness, slander, spying; we'll make use of incredible corruption; we'll stifle every genius in its infancy. We'll reduce all to a common denominator! Complete equality! 'We've learned a trade, and we are honest men; we need nothing more,' that was an answer given by English working-men recently. Only the necessary is necessary, that's the motto of the whole world henceforward. But it needs a shock. That's for us, the directors, to look after. Slaves must have directors. Absolute submission, absolute loss of individuality, but once in thirty years Shigalov would let them have a shock and they would all suddenly begin eating one another up, to a certain point, simply as a precaution against boredom. Boredom is an aristocratic sensation. The Shigalovians will have no desires. Desire and suffering are our lot, but Shigalovism is for the slaves."

"You exclude yourself?" Stavrogin broke in again.

"You, too. Do you know, I have thought of giving up the world to the Pope. Let him come forth, on foot, and barefoot, and show himself to the rabble, saying, 'See what they have brought me to!' and they will all rush after him, even the troops. The Pope at the head, with us round him, and below us—Shigalovism. All that's needed is that the *Internationale* should come to an agreement with the Pope; so it will. And the old chap will agree at once. There's nothing else he can do.

Remember my words! Ha ha! Is it stupid? Tell me, is it stupid or not?"

"That's enough!" Stavrogin muttered with vexation.

"Enough! Listen. I've given up the Pope! Damn Shigalovism! Damn the Pope! We must have something more everyday. Not Shigalovism, for Shigalovism is a rare specimen of the jeweller's art. It's an ideal; it's in the future. Shigalov is an artist and a fool like every philanthropist. We need coarse work, and Shigalov despises coarse work. Listen. The Pope shall be for the West, and you shall be for us, you shall be for us!"

"Let me alone, you drunken fellow!" muttered Stavrogin, and he quickened his pace.

"Stavrogin, you are beautiful," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, almost ecstatically. "Do you know that you are beautiful! What's the most precious thing about you is that you sometimes don't know it. Oh, I've studied you! I often watch you on the sly! There's a lot of simpleheartedness and naïveté about you still. Do you know that? There still is, there is! You must be suffering and suffering genuinely from that simpleheartedness. I love beauty. I am a Nihilist, but I love beauty. Are Nihilists incapable of loving beauty? It's only idols they dislike, but I love an idol. You are my idol! You injure no one, and every one hates you. You treat every one as an equal, and yet every one is afraid of you—that's good. Nobody would slap you on the shoulder. You are an awful aristocrat. An aristocrat is irresistible when he goes in for democracy! To sacrifice life, your own or another's is nothing to you. You are just the man that's needed. It's just such a man as you that I need. I know no one but you. You are the leader, you are the sun and I am your worm."

He suddenly kissed his hand. A shiver ran down Stavrogin's spine, and he pulled away his hand in dismay. They stood still.

"Madman!" whispered Stavrogin.

"Perhaps I am raving; perhaps I am raving," Pyotr Stepanovitch assented, speaking rapidly. "But I've thought of the first step! Shigalov would never have thought of it. There are lots of Shigalovs, but only one man, one man in Russia has hit on the first step and knows how to take it. And I am that man! Why do you look at me? I need you, you; without you I am

The material of revolution



nothing. Without you I am a fly, a bottled idea; Columbus without America."

Stavrogin stood still and looked intently into his wild eyes.

"Listen. First of all we'll make an upheaval," Verhovensky went on in desperate haste, continually clutching at Stavrogin's left sleeve. "I've already told you. We shall penetrate to the peasantry. Do you know that we are tremendously powerful already? Our party does not consist only of those who commit murder and arson, fire off pistols in the traditional fashion, or bite colonels. They are only a hindrance. I don't accept anything without discipline. I am a scoundrel, of course, and not a Socialist. Ha ha! Listen. I've reckoned them all up: a teacher who laughs with children at their God and at their cradle is on our side. The lawyer who defends an educated murderer because he is more cultured than his victims and could not help murdering them to get money is one of us. The schoolboys who murder a peasant for the sake of sensation are ours. The juries who acquit every criminal are ours. The prosecutor who trembles at a trial for fear he should not seem advanced enough is ours, ours. Among officials and literary men we have lots, lots, and they don't know it themselves. On the other hand, the docility of schoolboys and fools has reached an extreme pitch; the schoolmasters are bitter and bilious. On all sides we see vanity puffed up out of all proportion; brutal, monstrous appetites. . . . Do you know how many we shall catch by little, ready-made ideas? When I left Russia, Littre's dictum that crime is insanity was all the rage; I come back and find that crime is no longer insanity, but simply common sense, almost a duty; anyway, a gallant protest. 'How can we expect a cultured man not to commit a murder, if he is in need of money.' But these are only the first fruits. The Russian God has already been vanquished by cheap vodka. The peasants are drunk, the mothers are drunk, the children are drunk, the churches are empty, and in the peasant courts one hears, 'Two hundred lashes or stand us a bucket of vodka.' Oh, this generation has only to grow up. It's only a pity we can't afford to wait, or we might have let them get a bit more tipsy! Ah, what a pity there's no proletariat! But there will be, there will be; we are going that way. . . ."

"It's a pity, too, that we've grown greater fools," muttered Stavrogin, moving forward as before.

"Listen. I've seen a child of six years old leading home his drunken mother, whilst she swore at him with foul words. Do you suppose I am glad of that? When it's in our hands, maybe we'll mend things . . . if need be, we'll drive them for forty years into the wilderness. . . . But one or two generations of vice are essential now; monstrous, abject vice by which a man is transformed into a loathsome, cruel, egoistic reptile. That's what we need! And what's more, a little 'fresh blood' that we may get accustomed to it. Why are you laughing? I am not contradicting myself. I am only contradicting the philanthropists and Shigalovism, not myself! I am a scoundrel, not a Socialist. Ha ha ha! I'm only sorry there's no time. I promised Karmazinov to begin in May, and to make an end by October. Is that too soon? Ha ha! Do you know what, Stavrogin? Though the Russian people use foul language, there's nothing cynical about them so far. Do you know the serfs had more self-respect than Karmazinov? Though they were beaten they always preserved their gods, which is more than Karmazinov's done."

"Well, Verhovensky, this is the first time I've heard you talk, and I listen with amazement," observed Stavrogin. "So you are really not a Socialist, then, but some sort of . . . ambitious politician?"

"A scoundrel, a scoundrel! You are wondering what I am. I'll tell you what I am directly, that's what I am leading up to. It was not for nothing that I kissed your hand. But the people must believe that we know what we are after, while the other side do nothing but 'brandish their cudgels and beat their own followers.' Ah, if we only had more time! That's the only trouble, we have no time. We will proclaim destruction. . . . Why is it, why is it that idea has such a fascination. But we must have a little exercise; we must. We'll set fires going. . . . We'll set legends going. Every scurvy 'group' will be of use. Out of those very groups I'll pick you out fellows so keen they'll not shrink from shooting, and be grateful for the honour of a job, too. Well, and there will be an upheaval! There's going to be such an upset as the world has never seen before.



. . . Russia will be overwhelmed with darkness, the earth will weep for its old gods. . . . Well, then we shall bring forward . . . whom?"

"Whom."

"Ivan the Tsarevitch."

"Who-m?"

"Ivan the Tsarevitch. You! You!"

Stavrogin thought a minute.

"A pretender?" he asked suddenly, looking with intense surprise at his frantic companion. "Ah! so that's your plan at last!"

"We shall say that he is 'in hiding,'" Verhovensky said softly, in a sort of tender whisper, as though he really were drunk indeed. "Do you know the magic of that phrase, 'he is in hiding'? But he will appear, he will appear. We'll set a legend going better than the Skoptsis'. He exists, but no one has seen him. Oh, what a legend one can set going! And the great thing is it will be a new force at work! And we need that; that's what they are crying for. What can Socialism do: it's destroyed the old forces but hasn't brought in any new. But in this we have a force, and what a force! Incredible. We only need one lever to lift up the earth. Everything will rise up!"

"Then have you been seriously reckoning on me?" Stavrogin said with a malicious smile.

"Why do you laugh, and so spitefully? Don't frighten me. I am like a little child now. I can be frightened to death by one smile like that. Listen. I'll let no one see you, no one. So it must be. He exists, but no one has seen him: he is in hiding. And do you know, one might show you, to one out of a hundred thousand, for instance. And the rumour will spread over all the land, 'We've seen him, we've seen him.' Ivan Filipovitch the God of Sabaoth,* has been seen, too, when he ascended into heaven in his chariot in the sight of men. They saw him with their own eyes. And you are not an Ivan Filipovitch. You are beautiful and proud as a God; you are seeking nothing for yourself, with the halo of a victim round you, 'in

* The reference is to the legend current in the sect of Flagellants —Translator's note.

hiding.' The great thing is the legend. You'll conquer them, you'll have only to look, and you will conquer them. He is 'in hiding,' and will come forth bringing a new truth. And, meanwhile, we'll pass two or three judgments as wise as Solomon's. The groups, you know, the quintets—we've no need of newspapers. If out of ten thousand petitions only one is granted, all would come with petitions. In every parish, every peasant will know that there is somewhere a hollow tree where petitions are to be put. And the whole land will resound with the cry, 'A new just law is to come,' and the sea will be troubled and the whole gimcrack show will fall to the ground, and then we shall consider how to build up an edifice of stone. For the first time! *We* are going to build it, we, and only we!"

"Madness," said Stavrogin.

"Why, why don't you want it? Are you afraid? That's why I caught at you, because you are afraid of nothing. Is it unreasonable? But you see, so far I am Columbus without America. Would Columbus without America seem reasonable?"

Stavrogin did not speak. Meanwhile they had reached the house and stopped at the entrance.

"Listen," Verhovensky bent down to his ear. "I'll do it for you without the money. I'll settle Marya Timofyevna to-morrow! . . . Without the money, and to-morrow I'll bring you Liza. Will you have Liza to-morrow?"

"Is he really mad?" Stavrogin wondered smiling. The front door was opened.

"Stavrogin—is America ours?" said Verhovensky, seizing his hand for the last time.

"What for?" said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, gravely and sternly.

"You don't care, I knew that!" cried Verhovensky in an access of furious anger. "You are lying, you miserable, profligate, perverted, little aristocrat! I don't believe you, you've the appetite of a wolf! . . . Understand that you've cost me such a price, I can't give you up now! There's no one on earth but you! I invented you abroad; I invented it all, looking at you. If I hadn't watched you from my corner, nothing of all this would have entered my head!"

Stavrogin went up the steps without answering.

"Stavrogin!" Verhovensky called after him, "I give you a



day . . . two, then . . . three, then; more than three I can't —and then you're to answer!"*

* The chapter entitled "At Tihon's," suppressed in all previous editions of *The Possessed* and containing Stavrogin's confession, which originally was intended to follow at this point in the text, appears, complete and unexpurgated, in a translation by Avrahm Yarmolinsky, in the Supplement, beginning on page 691.

happened in the days before our present, more recent regulations. It is true, too, that according to his own account they had offered to follow more regular procedure, but he "got the better of them" and refused. . . . Of course not long ago a governor might, in extreme cases. . . . But how could this be an extreme case? That's what baffled me.

"No doubt they had a telegram from Petersburg," Stepan Trofimovitch said suddenly.

"A telegram? About you? Because of the works of Herzen and your poem? Have you taken leave of your senses? What is there in that to arrest you for?"

I was positively angry. He made a grimace and was evidently mortified—not at my exclamation, but at the idea that there was no ground for arrest.

"Who can tell in our day what he may not be arrested for?" he muttered enigmatically.

A wild and nonsensical idea crossed my mind.

"Stepan Trofimovitch, tell me as a friend," I cried, "as a real friend, I will not betray you: do you belong to some secret society or not?"

And on this, to my amazement, he was not quite certain whether he was or was not a member of some secret society.

"That depends, *voyez-vous.*"

"How do you mean 'it depends'?"

"When with one's whole heart one is an adherent of progress and . . . who can answer it? You may suppose you don't belong, and suddenly it turns out that you do belong to something."

"Now is that possible? It's a case of yes or no."

"*Cela date de Pétersburg* when she and I were meaning to found a magazine there. That's what's at the root of it. She gave them the slip then, and they forgot us, but now they've remembered. *Cher, cher,* don't you know me?" he cried hysterically. "And they'll take us, put us in a cart, and march us off to Siberia for ever, or forget us in prison."

And he suddenly broke into bitter weeping. His tears positively streamed. He covered his face with his red silk handkerchief and sobbed, sobbed convulsively for five minutes. It wrung my heart. This was the man who had been a prophet among us for twenty years, a leader, a patriarch, the Kukolnik



who had borne himself so loftily and majestically before all of us, before whom we bowed down with genuine reverence, feeling proud of doing so—and all of a sudden here he was sobbing, sobbing like a naughty child waiting for the rod which the teacher is fetching for him. I felt fearfully sorry for him. He believed in the reality of that "cart" as he believed that I was sitting by his side, and he expected it that morning, at once, that very minute, and all this on account of his Herzen and some poem! Such complete, absolute ignorance of everyday reality was touching and somehow repulsive.

At last he left off crying, got up from the sofa and began walking about the room again, continuing to talk to me, though he looked out of the window every minute and listened to every sound in the passage. Our conversation was still disconnected. All my assurances and attempts to console him rebounded from him like peas from a wall. He scarcely listened, but yet what he needed was that I should console him and keep on talking with that object. I saw that he could not do without me now, and would not let me go for anything. I remained, and we spent more than two hours together. In conversation he recalled that Blum had taken with him two manifestoes he had found.

"Manifestoes!" I said, foolishly frightened. "Do you mean to say you . . ."

"Oh, ten were left here," he answered with vexation (he talked to me at one moment in a vexed and haughty tone and at the next with dreadful plaintiveness and humiliation), "but I had disposed of eight already, and Blum only found two."

And he suddenly flushed with indignation.

"*Vous me mettez avec ces gens-là!* Do you suppose I could be working with those scoundrels, those anonymous libellers, with my son Pyotr Stepanovitch, *avec ces esprits forts de la lâcheté?* Oh, heavens!"

"Bah! haven't they mixed you up perhaps? . . . But it's nonsense, it can't be so," I observed.

"*Savez-vous,*" broke from him suddenly, "I feel at moments *que je ferai là-bas quelque esclandre.* Oh, don't go away, don't leave me alone! *Ma carrière est finie aujourd'hui, je le sens.* Do you know, I might fall on somebody there and bite him, like that lieutenant."

He looked at me with a strange expression—alarmed, and at the same time anxious to alarm me. He certainly was getting more and more exasperated with somebody and about something as time went on and the police-cart did not appear; he was positively wrathful. Suddenly Nastasya, who had come from the kitchen into the passage for some reason, upset a clothes-horse there. Stepan Trofimovitch trembled and turned numb with terror as he sat; but when the noise was explained, he almost shrieked at Nastasya and, stamping, drove her back to the kitchen. A minute later he said, looking at me in despair:

"I am ruined! *Cher*"—he sat down suddenly beside me and looked piteously into my face—"*cher,* it's not Siberia I am afraid of, I swear. *Oh, je vous jure!*" (Tears positively stood in his eyes.) "It's something else I fear."

I saw from his expression that he wanted at last to tell me something of great importance which he had till now refrained from telling.

"I am afraid of disgrace," he whispered mysteriously.

"What disgrace? On the contrary! Believe me, Stepan Trofimovitch, that all this will be explained to-day and will end to your advantage. . . ."

"Are you so sure that they will pardon me?"

"Pardon you? What! What a word! What have you done? I assure you you've done nothing."

"*Qu'en savez-vous;* all my life has been . . . *cher* . . . They'll remember everything . . . and if they find nothing, it will be *worse still,*" he added all of a sudden, unexpectedly.

"How do you mean it will be worse?"

"It will be worse."

"I don't understand."

"My friend, let it be Siberia, Archangel, loss of rights—if I must perish, let me perish! But . . . I am afraid of something else." (Again whispering, a scared face, mystery.)

"But of what? Of what?"

"They'll flog me," he pronounced, looking at me with a face of despair.

"Who'll flog you? What for? Where?" I cried, feeling alarmed that he was going out of his mind.

"Where? Why there . . . where 'that's' done."



"But where is it done?"

"Eh, *cher,*" he whispered almost in my ear. "The floor suddenly gives way under you, you drop half through. . . . Every one knows that."

"Legends!" I cried, guessing what he meant. "Old tales Can you have believed them till now?" I laughed.

"Tales! But there must be foundation for them; flogged men tell no tales. I've imagined it ten thousand times."

"But you, why you? You've done nothing, you know."

"That makes it worse. They'll find out I've done nothing and flog me for it."

"And you are sure that you'll be taken to Petersburg for that."

"My friend, I've told you already that I regret nothing, *ma carrière est finie.* From that hour when she said good-bye to me at Skvoreshniki my life has had no value for me . . . but disgrace, disgrace, *que dira-t-elle* if she finds out?"

He looked at me in despair. And the poor fellow flushed all over. I dropped my eyes too.

"She'll find out nothing, for nothing will happen to you. I feel as if I were speaking to you for the first time in my life, Stepan Trofimovitch, you've astonished me so this morning."

"But, my friend, this isn't fear. For even if I am pardoned, even if I am brought here and nothing is done to me—then I am undone. *Elle me soupçonnera toute sa vie*—me, me, the poet, the thinker, the man whom she has worshipped for twenty-two years!"

"It will never enter her head."

"It will," he whispered with profound conviction. "We've talked of it several times in Petersburg, in Lent, before we came away, when we were both afraid. . . . *Elle me soupçonnera toute sa vie* . . . and how can I disabuse her? It won't sound likely. And in this wretched town who'd believe it, *c'est invraisemblable.* . . . *Et puis les femmes,* she will be pleased. She will be genuinely grieved like a true friend, but secretly she will be pleased. . . . I shall give her a weapon against me for the rest of my life. Oh, it's all over with me! Twenty years of such perfect happiness with her . . . and now!"

He hid his face in his hands.

"Stepan Trofimovitch, oughtn't you to let Varvara Pe-

## CHAPTER X

### FILIBUSTERS. A FATAL MORNING

THE adventure that befell us on the way was also a surprising one. But I must tell the story in due order. An hour before Stepan Trofimovitch and I came out into the street, a crowd of people, the hands from Shpigulin's factory, seventy or more in number, had been marching through the town, and had been an object of curiosity to many spectators. They walked intentionally in good order and almost in silence. Afterwards it was asserted that these seventy had been elected out of the whole number of factory hands, amounting to about nine hundred, to go to the governor and to try and get from him, in the absence of their employer, a just settlement of their grievances against the manager, who, in closing the factory and dismissing the workmen, had cheated them all in an impudent way—a fact which has since been proved conclusively. Some people still deny that there was any election of delegates, maintaining that seventy was too large a number to elect, and that the crowd simply consisted of those who had been most unfairly treated, and that they only came to ask for help in their own case, so that the general "mutiny" of the factory workers, about which there was such an uproar later on, had never existed at all. Others fiercely maintained that these seventy men were not simple strikers but revolutionists, that is, not merely that they were the most turbulent, but that they must have been worked upon by seditious manifestoes. The fact is, it is still uncertain whether there had been any outside influence or incitement at work or not. My private opinion is that the workmen had not read the seditious manifestoes at all, and if they had read them, would not have understood one word, for one reason because the authors of such literature write very ob-





scurely in spite of the boldness of their style. But as the workmen really were in a difficult plight and the police to whom they appealed would not enter into their grievances, what could be more natural than their idea of going in a body to "the general himself" if possible, with a petition at their head, forming up in an orderly way before his door, and as soon as he showed himself, all falling on their knees and crying out to him as to providence itself? To my mind there is no need to see in this a mutiny or even a deputation, for it's a traditional, historical mode of action; the Russian people have always loved to parley with "the general himself" for the mere satisfaction of doing so, regardless of how the conversation may end.

And so I am quite convinced that, even though Pyotr Stepanovitch, Liputin, and perhaps some others—perhaps even Fedka too—had been flitting about among the workpeople talking to them (and there is fairly good evidence of this), they had only approached two, three, five at the most, trying to sound them, and nothing had come of their conversation. As for the mutiny they advocated, if the factory-workers did understand anything of their propaganda, they would have left off listening to it at once as to something stupid that had nothing to do with them. Fedka was a different matter: he had more success, I believe, than Pyotr Stepanovitch. Two workmen are now known for a fact to have assisted Fedka in causing the fire in the town which occurred three days afterwards, and a month later three men who had worked in the factory were arrested for robbery and arson in the province. But if in these cases Fedka did lure them to direct and immediate action, he could only have succeeded with these five, for we heard of nothing of the sort being done by others.

Be that as it may, the whole crowd of workpeople had at last reached the open space in front of the governor's house and were drawn up there in silence and good order. Then, gaping open-mouthed at the front door, they waited. I am told that as soon as they halted they took off their caps, that is, a good half-hour before the appearance of the governor, who, as ill-luck would have it, was not at home at the moment. The police made their appearance at once, at first individual policemen and then as large a contingent of them as could be gathered together; they began, of course, by being menacing, ordering

them to break up. But the workmen remained obstinately, like a flock of sheep at a fence, and replied laconically that they had come to see "the general himself"; it was evident that they were firmly determined. The unnatural shouting of the police ceased, and was quickly succeeded by deliberations, mysterious whispered instructions, and stern, fussy perplexity, which wrinkled the brows of the police officers. The head of the police preferred to await the arrival of the "governor himself." It was not true that he galloped to the spot with three horses at full speed, and began hitting out right and left before he alighted from his carriage. It's true that he used to dash about and was fond of dashing about at full speed in a carriage with a yellow back, and while his trace-horses, who were so trained to carry their heads that they looked "positively perverted," galloped more and more frantically, rousing the enthusiasm of all the shopkeepers in the bazaar, he would rise up in the carriage, stand erect, holding on by a strap which had been fixed on purpose at the side, and with his right arm extended into space like a figure on a monument, survey the town majestically. But in the present case he did not use his fists, and though as he got out of the carriage he could not refrain from a forcible expression, this was simply done to keep up his popularity. There is a still more absurd story that soldiers were brought up with bayonets, and that a telegram was sent for artillery and Cossacks; those are legends which are not believed now even by those who invented them. It's an absurd story, too, that barrels of water were brought from the fire brigade, and that people were drenched with water from them. The simple fact is that Ilya Ilyitch shouted in his heat that he wouldn't let one of them come dry out of the water; probably this was the foundation of the barrel legend which got into the columns of the Petersburg and Moscow newspapers. Probably the most accurate version was that at first all the available police formed a cordon round the crowd, and a messenger was sent for Lembke, a police superintendent, who dashed off in the carriage belonging to the head of the police on the way to Skvoreshniki, knowing that Lembke had gone there in his carriage half an hour before.

But I must confess that I am still unable to answer the question how they could at first sight, from the first moment, have



transformed an insignificant, that is to say an ordinary, crowd of petitioners, even though there were several of them, into a rebellion which threatened to shake the foundations of the state. Why did Lembke himself rush at that idea when he arrived twenty minutes after the messenger? I imagine (but again it's only my private opinion) that it was to the interest of Ilya Ilyitch, who was a crony of the factory manager's, to represent the crowd in this light to Lembke, in order to prevent him from going into the case; and Lembke himself had put the idea into his head. In the course of the last two days he had had two unusual and mysterious conversations with him. It is true they were exceedingly obscure, but Ilya Ilyitch was able to gather from them that the governor had thoroughly made up his mind that there were political manifestoes, and that Shpigulin's factory hands were being incited to a Socialist rising, and that he was so persuaded of it that he would perhaps have regretted it if the story had turned out to be nonsense. "He wants to get distinction in Petersburg," our wily Ilya Ilyitch thought to himself as he left Von Lembke; "well, that just suits me."

But I am convinced that poor Andrey Antonovitch would not have desired a rebellion even for the sake of distinguishing himself. He was a most conscientious official, who had lived in a state of innocence up to the time of his marriage. And was it his fault that, instead of an innocent allowance of wood from the government and an equally innocent Minnchen, a princess of forty summers had raised him to her level? I know almost for certain that the unmistakable symptoms of the mental condition which brought poor Andrey Antonovitch to a well-known establishment in Switzerland, where, I am told, he is now regaining his energies, were first apparent on that fatal morning. But once we admit that unmistakable signs of something were visible that morning, it may well be allowed that similar symptoms may have been evident the day before, though not so clearly. I happen to know from the most private sources (well, you may assume that Yulia Mihailovna later on, not in triumph but *almost* in remorse—for a woman is incapable of *complete* remorse—revealed part of it to me herself) that Andrey Antonovitch had gone into his wife's room in the middle of the previous night, past two o'clock in the

morning, had waked her up, and had insisted on her listening to his "ultimatum." He demanded it so insistently that she was obliged to get up from her bed in indignation and curl-papers, and, sitting down on a couch, she had to listen, though with sarcastic disdain. Only then she grasped for the first time how far gone her Andrey Antonovitch was, and was secretly horrified. She ought to have thought what she was about and have been softened, but she concealed her horror and was more obstinate than ever. Like every wife she had her own method of treating Andrey Antonovitch, which she had tried more than once already and with it driven him to frenzy. Yulia Mihailovna's method was that of contemptuous silence, for one hour, two, a whole day, and almost for three days and nights—silence whatever happened, whatever he said, whatever he did, even if he had clambered up to throw himself out of a three-story window—a method unendurable for a sensitive man! Whether Yulia Mihailovna meant to punish her husband for his blunders of the last few days and the jealous envy he, as the chief authority in the town, felt for her administrative abilities; whether she was indignant at his criticism of her behaviour with the young people and local society generally, and lack of comprehension of her subtle and far-sighted political aims; or was angry with his stupid and senseless jealousy of Pyotr Stepanovitch—however that may have been, she made up her mind not to be softened even now, in spite of its being three o'clock at night, and though Andrey Antonovitch was in a state of emotion such as she had never seen him in before.

Pacing up and down in all directions over the rugs of her boudoir, beside himself, he poured out everything, everything, quite disconnectedly, it's true, but everything that had been rankling in his heart, for—"it was outrageous." He began by saying that he was a laughing-stock to every one and "was being led by the nose." "Curse the expression," he squealed at once catching her smile, "let it stand, it's true. . . . No, madam, the time has come; let me tell you it's not a time for laughter and feminine arts now. We are not in the boudoir of a mincing lady, but like two abstract creatures in a balloon who have met to speak the truth." (He was no doubt confused and could not find the right words for his ideas, however just they were.) "It is you, madam, you who have destroyed my



happy past. I took up this post simply for your sake, for the sake of your ambition. . . . You smile sarcastically? Don't triumph, don't be in a hurry. Let me tell you, madam, let me tell you that I should have been equal to this position, and not only this position but a dozen positions like it, for I have abilities; but with you, madam, with you—it's impossible, for with you here I have no abilities. There cannot be two centres, and you have created two—one of mine and one in your boudoir—two centres of power, madam, but I won't allow it, I won't allow it! In the service, as in marriage, there must be one centre, two are impossible. . . . How have you repaid me?" he went on. "Our marriage has been nothing but your proving to me all the time, every hour, that I am a nonentity, a fool, and even a rascal, and I have been all the time, every hour, forced in a degrading way to prove to you that I am not a nonentity, not a fool at all, and that I impress every one with my honourable character. Isn't that degrading for both sides?"

At this point he began rapidly stamping with both feet on the carpet, so that Yulia Mihailovna was obliged to get up with stern dignity. He subsided quickly, but passed to being pathetic and began sobbing (yes, sobbing!), beating himself on the breast almost for five minutes, getting more and more frantic at Yulia Mihailovna's profound silence. At last he made a fatal blunder, and let slip that he was jealous of Pyotr Stepanovitch. Realising that he had made an utter fool of himself, he became savagely furious, and shouting that he "would not allow them to deny God" and that he would "send her *salon* of irresponsible infidels packing," that the governor of a province was bound to believe in God "and so his wife was too," that he wouldn't put up with these young men; that "you, madam, for the sake of your own dignity, ought to have thought of your husband and to have stood up for his intelligence even if he were a man of poor abilities (and I'm by no means a man of poor abilities!), and yet it's your doing that every one here despises me, it was you put them all up to it!" He shouted that he would annihilate the woman question, that he would eradicate every trace of it, that to-morrow he would forbid and break up their silly fête for the benefit of the governesses (damn them!), that the first governess he came across to-morrow morning he would drive out of the province "with a Cos-

sack! I'll make a point of it!" he shrieked. "Do you know," he screamed, "do you know that your rascals are inciting men at the factory, and that I know it? Let me tell you, I know the names of four of these rascals and that I am going out of my mind, hopelessly, hopelessly! . . . "

But at this point Yulia Mihailovna suddenly broke her silence and sternly announced that she had long been aware of these criminal designs, and that it was all foolishness, and that he had taken it too seriously, and that as for these mischievous fellows, she knew not only those four but all of them (it was a lie); but that she had not the faintest intention of going out of her mind on account of it, but, on the contrary, had all the more confidence in her intelligence and hoped to bring it all to a harmonious conclusion: to encourage the young people, to bring them to reason, to show them suddenly and unexpectedly that their designs were known, and then to point out to them new aims for rational and more noble activity.

Oh, how can I describe the effect of this on Andrey Antonovitch! Hearing that Pyotr Stepanovitch had duped him again and had made a fool of him so coarsely, that he had told her much more than he had told him, and sooner than him, and that perhaps Pyotr Stepanovitch was the chief instigator of all these criminal designs—he flew into a frenzy. "Senseless but malignant woman," he cried, snapping his bonds at one blow, "let me tell you, I shall arrest your worthless lover at once, I shall put him in fetters and send him to the fortress, or—I shall jump out of a window before your eyes this minute!"

Yulia Mihailovna, turning green with anger, greeted this tirade at once with a burst of prolonged, ringing laughter, going off into peals such as one hears at the French theatre when a Parisian actress, imported for a fee of a hundred thousand to play a coquette, laughs in her husband's face for daring to be jealous of her.

Von Lembke rushed to the window, but suddenly stopped as though rooted to the spot, folded his arms across his chest, and, white as a corpse, looked with a sinister gaze at the laughing lady. "Do you know, Yulia, do you know," he said in a gasping and suppliant voice, "do you know that even I can do something?" But at the renewed and even louder laughter that followed his last words he clenched his teeth, groaned, and sud-



denly rushed, not towards the window, but at his spouse, with his fist raised! He did not bring it down—no, I repeat again and again, no; but it was the last straw. He ran to his own room, not knowing what he was doing, flung himself, dressed as he was, face downwards on his bed, wrapped himself convulsively, head and all, in the sheet, and lay so for two hours—incapable of sleep, incapable of thought, with a load on his heart and blank, immovable despair in his soul. Now and then he shivered all over with an agonising, feverish tremor. Disconnected and irrelevant things kept coming into his mind: at one minute he thought of the old clock which used to hang on his wall fifteen years ago in Petersburg and had lost the minute-hand; at another of the cheerful clerk, Millebois, and how they had once caught a sparrow together in Alexandrovsky Park and had laughed so that they could be heard all over the park, remembering that one of them was already a college assessor. I imagine that about seven in the morning he must have fallen asleep without being aware of it himself, and must have slept with enjoyment, with agreeable dreams.

Waking about ten o'clock, he jumped wildly out of bed, remembering everything at once, and slapped himself on the head; he refused his breakfast, and would see neither Blum nor the chief of the police nor the clerk who came to remind him that he was expected to preside over a meeting that morning; he would listen to nothing, and did not want to understand. He ran like one possessed to Yulia Mihailovna's part of the house. There Sofya Antropovna, an old lady of good family who had lived for years with Yulia Mihailovna, explained to him that his wife had set off at ten o'clock that morning with a large company of three carriages to Varvara Petrovna Stavrogin's, to Skvoreshniki, to look over the place with a view to the second fête which was planned for a fortnight later, and that the visit to-day had been arranged with Varvara Petrovna three days before. Overwhelmed with this news, Andrey Antonovitch returned to his study and impulsively ordered the horses. He could hardly wait for them to be got ready. His soul was hungering for Yulia Mihailovna—to look at her, to be near her for five minutes; perhaps she would glance at him, notice him, would smile as before, forgive him . . . O-oh! "Aren't the horses ready?" Mechanically he opened a thick book lying on

the table. (He sometimes used to try his fortune in this way with a book, opening it at random and reading the three lines at the top of the right-hand page.) What turned up was: "*Tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possibles.*" —Voltaire, *Candide*. He uttered an ejaculation of contempt and ran to get into the carriage. "Skvoreshniki!"

The coachman said afterwards that his master urged him on all the way, but as soon as they were getting near the mansion he suddenly told him to turn and drive back to the town, bidding him: "Drive fast; please drive fast!" Before they reached the town wall "master told me to stop again, got out of the carriage, and went across the road into the field; I thought he felt ill but he stopped and began looking at the flowers, and so he stood for a time. It was strange, really; I began to feel quite uneasy." This was the coachman's testimony. I remember the weather that morning: it was a cold, clear, but windy September day; before Andrey Antonovitch stretched a forbidding landscape of bare fields from which the crop had long been harvested; there were a few dying yellow flowers, pitiful relics blown about by the howling wind. Did he want to compare himself and his fate with those wretched flowers battered by the autumn and the frost? I don't think so; in fact I feel sure it was not so, and that he realised nothing about the flowers in spite of the evidence of the coachman and of the police superintendent, who drove up at that moment and asserted afterwards that he found the governor with a bunch of yellow flowers in his hand. This police superintendent, Flibusterov by name, was an ardent champion of authority who had only recently come to our town but had already distinguished himself and become famous by his inordinate zeal, by a certain vehemence in the execution of his duties, and his inveterate inebriety. Jumping out of the carriage, and not the least disconcerted at the sight of what the governor was doing, he blurted out all in one breath, with a frantic expression, yet with an air of conviction, that "There's an upset in the town."

"Eh? What?" said Andrey Antonovitch, turning to him with a stern face, but without a trace of surprise or any recollection of his carriage and his coachman, as though he had been in his own study.



"Police-superintendent Flibusterov, your Excellency. There's a riot in the town."

"Filibusters?" Andrey Antonovitch said thoughtfully.

"Just so, your Excellency. The Shpigulin men are making a riot."

"The Shpigulin men! . . . "

The name "Shpigulin" seemed to remind him of something. He started and put his finger to his forehead: "The Shpigulin men!" In silence, and still plunged in thought, he walked without haste to the carriage, took his seat, and told the coachman to drive to the town. The police-superintendent followed in the droshky.

I imagine that he had vague impressions of many interesting things of all sorts on the way, but I doubt whether he had any definite idea or any settled intention as he drove into the open space in front of his house. But no sooner did he see the resolute and orderly ranks of "the rioters," the cordon of police, the helpless (and perhaps purposely helpless) chief of police, and the general expectation of which he was the object, than all the blood rushed to his heart. With a pale face he stepped out of his carriage.

"Caps off!" he said breathlessly and hardly audibly. "On your knees!" he squealed, to the surprise of every one, to his own surprise too, and perhaps the very unexpectedness of the position was the explanation of what followed. Can a sledge on a switchback at carnival stop short as it flies down the hill? What made it worse, Andrey Antonovitch had been all his life serene in character, and never shouted or stamped at anyone; and such people are always the most dangerous if it once happens that something sets their sledge sliding downhill. Everything was whirling before his eyes.

"Filibusters!" he yelled still more shrilly and absurdly, and his voice broke. He stood, not knowing what he was going to do, but knowing and feeling in his whole being that he certainly would do something directly.

"Lord!" was heard from the crowd. A lad began crossing himself; three or four men actually did try to kneel down, but the whole mass moved three steps forward, and suddenly all began talking at once: "Your Excellency . . . we were hired

for a term . . . the manager . . . you mustn't say," and so on and so on. It was impossible to distinguish anything.

Alas! Andrey Antonovitch could distinguish nothing: the flowers were still in his hands. The riot was as real to him as the prison carts were to Stepan Trofimovitch. And flitting to and fro in the crowd of "rioters" who gazed open-eyed at him, he seemed to see Pyotr Stepanovitch, who had egged them on—Pyotr Stepanovitch, whom he hated and whose image had never left him since yesterday.

"Rods!" he cried even more unexpectedly. A dead silence followed.

From the facts I have learnt and those I have conjectured, this must have been what happened at the beginning; but I have no such exact information for what followed, nor can I conjecture it so easily. There are some facts, however.

In the first place, rods were brought on the scene with strange rapidity; they had evidently been got ready beforehand in expectation by the intelligent chief of the police. Not more than two, or at most three, were actually flogged, however; that fact I wish to lay stress on. It's an absolute fabrication to say that the whole crowd of rioters, or at least half of them, were punished. It is a nonsensical story, too, that a poor but respectable lady was caught as she passed by and promptly thrashed; yet I read myself an account of this incident afterwards among the provincial items of a Petersburg newspaper. Many people in the town talked of an old woman called Avdotya Petrovna Tarapygin who lived in the almshouse by the cemetery. She was said, on her way home from visiting a friend, to have forced her way into the crowd of spectators through natural curiosity. Seeing what was going on, she cried out, "What a shame!" and spat on the ground. For this it was said she had been seized and flogged too. This story not only appeared in print, but in our excitement we positively got up a subscription for her benefit. I subscribed twenty kopecks myself. And would you believe it? It appears now that there was no old woman called Tarapygin living in the almshouse at all! I went to inquire at the almshouse by the cemetery myself; they had never heard of anyone called Tarapygin there, and, what's more, they were quite offended when I told them the story that was going round. I mention this fabulous Avdotya Petrovna because what happened to her (if she really had existed) very nearly happened to Stepan Trofimovitch. Possibly, indeed, his adventure may have been at the bottom of the ridiculous tale about the old woman, that is, as the gossip went on growing he was transformed into this old dame.



What I find most difficult to understand is how he came to slip away from me as soon as he got into the square. As I had a misgiving of something very unpleasant, I wanted to take him round the square straight to the entrance to the governor's, but my own curiosity was roused, and I stopped only for one minute to question the first person I came across, and suddenly I looked round and found Stepan Trofimovitch no longer at my side. Instinctively I darted off to look for him in the most dangerous place; something made me feel that his sledge, too, was flying downhill. And I did, as a fact, find him in the very centre of things. I remember I seized him by the arm; but he looked quietly and proudly at me with an air of immense authority.

"*Cher,*" he pronounced in a voice which quivered on a breaking note, "if they are dealing with people so unceremoniously before us, in an open square, what is to be expected from *that* man, for instance . . . if he happens to act on his own authority?"

And shaking with indignation and with an intense desire to defy them, he pointed a menacing, accusing finger at Flibusterov, who was gazing at us open-eyed two paces away.

"*That* man!" cried the latter, blind with rage. "What man? And who are you?" He stepped up to him, clenching his fist. "Who are you?" he roared ferociously, hysterically, and desperately. (I must mention that he knew Stepan Trofimovitch perfectly well by sight.) Another moment and he would have certainly seized him by the collar; but luckily, hearing him shout, Lembke turned his head. He gazed intensely but with perplexity at Stepan Trofimovitch, seeming to consider something, and suddenly he shook his hand impatiently. Flibusterov was checked. I drew Stepan Trofimovitch out of the crowd, though perhaps he may have wished to retreat himself.

"Home, home," I insisted; "it was certainly thanks to Lembke that we were not beaten."

"Go, my friend; I am to blame for exposing you to this. You

were taken from me and wheeled through the town in a barrow."

"Who searched you?" said Lembke, starting and returning to full consciousness of the position. He suddenly flushed all over. He turned quickly to the chief of police. At that moment the long, stooping, and awkward figure of Blum appeared in the doorway.

"Why, this official here," said Stepan Trofimovitch, indicating him. Blum came forward with a face that admitted his responsibility but showed no contrition.

"*Vous ne faites que des bêtises,*" Lembke threw at him in a tone of vexation and anger, and suddenly he was transformed and completely himself again.

"Excuse me," he muttered, utterly disconcerted and turning absolutely crimson, "all this . . . all this was probably a mere blunder, a misunderstanding . . . nothing but a misunderstanding."

"Your Excellency," observed Stepan Trofimovitch, "once when I was young I saw a characteristic incident. In the corridor of a theatre a man ran up to another and gave him a sounding smack in the face before the whole public. Perceiving at once that his victim was not the person whom he had intended to chastise but some one quite different who only slightly resembled him, he pronounced angrily, with the haste of one whose moments are precious—as your Excellency did just now —'I've made a mistake . . . excuse me, it was a misunderstanding, nothing but a misunderstanding.' And when the offended man remained resentful and cried out, he observed to him, with extreme annoyance: 'Why, I tell you it was a misunderstanding. What are you crying out about?' "

"That's . . . that's very amusing, of course"—Lembke gave a wry smile—"but . . . but can't you see how unhappy I am myself?"

He almost screamed, and seemed about to hide his face in his hands.

This unexpected and piteous exclamation, almost a sob, was almost more than one could bear. It was probably the first moment since the previous day that he had full, vivid consciousness of all that had happened—and it was followed by complete, humiliating despair that could not be disguised—



who knows, in another minute he might have sobbed aloud. For the first moment Stepan Trofimovitch looked wildly at him; then he suddenly bowed his head and in a voice pregnant with feeling pronounced:

"Your Excellency, don't trouble yourself with my petulant complaint, and only give orders for my books and letters to be restored to me. . . . "

He was interrupted. At that very instant Yulia Mihailovna returned and entered noisily with all the party which had accompanied her. But at this point I should like to tell my story in as much detail as possible.

## III

In the first place, the whole company who had filled three carriages crowded into the waiting-room. There was a special entrance to Yulia Mihailovna's apartments on the left as one entered the house; but on this occasion they all went through the waiting-room—and I imagine just because Stepan Trofimovitch was there, and because all that had happened to him as well as the Shpigulin affair had reached Yulia Mihailovna's ears as she drove into the town. Lyamshin, who for some misdemeanour had not been invited to join the party and so knew all that had happened in the town before anyone else, brought her the news. With spiteful glee he hired a wretched Cossack nag and hastened on the way to Skvoreshniki to meet the returning cavalcade with the diverting intelligence. I fancy that, in spite of her lofty determination, Yulia Mihailovna was a little disconcerted on hearing such surprising news, but probably only for an instant. The political aspect of the affair, for instance, could not cause her uneasiness; Pyotr Stepanovitch had impressed upon her three or four times that the Shpigulin ruffians ought to be flogged, and Pyotr Stepanovitch certainly had for some time past been a great authority in her eyes. "But . . . anyway, I shall make him pay for it," she doubtless reflected, the "he," of course, referring to her spouse. I must observe in passing that on this occasion, as though purposely, Pyotr Stepanovitch had taken no part in the expedition, and no one had seen him all day. I must mention, too, by the way, that Var-

vara Petrovna had come back to the town with her guests (in the same carriage with Yulia Mihailovna) in order to be present at the last meeting of the committee which was arranging the fête for the next day. She too must have been interested, and perhaps even agitated, by the news about Stepan Trofimovitch communicated by Lyamshin.

The hour of reckoning for Andrey Antonovitch followed at once. Alas! he felt that from the first glance at his admirable wife. With an open air and an enchanting smile she went quickly up to Stepan Trofimovitch, held out her exquisitely gloved hand, and greeted him with a perfect shower of flattering phrases—as though the only thing she cared about that morning was to make haste to be charming to Stepan Trofimovitch because at last she saw him in her house. There was not one hint of the search that morning; it was as though she knew nothing of it. There was not one word to her husband, not one glance in his direction—as though he had not been in the room. What's more, she promptly confiscated Stepan Trofimovitch and carried him off to the drawing-room—as though he had had no interview with Lembke, or as though it was not worth prolonging if he had. I repeat again, I think that in this, Yulia Mihailovna, in spite of her aristocratic tone, made another great mistake. And Karmazinov particularly did much to aggravate this. (He had taken part in the expedition at Yulia Mihailovna's special request, and in that way had, incidentally, paid his visit to Varvara Petrovna, and she was so poor-spirited as to be perfectly delighted at it.) On seeing Stepan Trofimovitch, he called out from the doorway (he came in behind the rest) and pressed forward to embrace him, even interrupting Yulia Mihailovna.

"What years, what ages! At last . . . *excellent ami.*"

He made as though to kiss him, offering his cheek, of course, and Stepan Trofimovitch was so fluttered that he could not avoid saluting it.

"*Cher,*" he said to me that evening, recalling all the events of that day, "I wondered at that moment which of us was the most contemptible: he, embracing me only to humiliate me, or I, despising him and his face and kissing it on the spot, though I might have turned away. . . . Foo!"

"Come, tell me about yourself, tell me everything," Karmazinov drawled and lisped, as though it were possible for him on the spur of the moment to give an account of twenty-five years of his life. But this foolish trifling was the height of "chic."



"Remember that the last time we met was at the Granovsky dinner in Moscow, and that twenty-four years have passed since then . . . " Stepan Trofimovitch began very reasonably (and consequently not at all in the same "chic" style).

"*Ce cher homme,*" Karmazinov interrupted with shrill familiarity, squeezing his shoulder with exaggerated friendliness. "Make haste and take us to your room, Yulia Mihailovna; there he'll sit down and tell us everything."

"And yet I was never at all intimate with that peevish old woman," Stepan Trofimovitch went on complaining to me that same evening, shaking with anger; "we were almost boys, and I'd begun to detest him even then . . . just as he had me, of course."

Yulia Mihailovna's drawing-room filled up quickly. Varvara Petrovna was particularly excited, though she tried to appear indifferent, but I caught her once or twice glancing with hatred at Karmazinov and with wrath at Stepan Trofimovitch—the wrath of anticipation, the wrath of jealousy and love: if Stepan Trofimovitch had blundered this time and had let Karmazinov make him look small before every one, I believe she would have leapt up and beaten him. I have forgotten to say that Liza too was there, and I had never seen her more radiant, carelessly light-hearted, and happy. Mavriky Nikolaevitch was there too, of course. In the crowd of young ladies and rather vulgar young men who made up Yulia Mihailovna's usual retinue, and among whom this vulgarity was taken for sprightliness, and cheap cynicism for wit, I noticed two or three new faces: a very obsequious Pole who was on a visit in the town; a German doctor, a sturdy old fellow who kept loudly laughing with great zest at his own wit; and lastly, a very young princeling from Petersburg like an automaton figure, with the deportment of a state dignitary and a fearfully high collar. But it was evident that Yulia Mihailovna had a very high opinion of this visitor, and was even a little anxious of the impression her *salon* was making on him.

"*Cher M. Karmazinov,*" said Stepan Trofimovitch, sitting in

a picturesque pose on the sofa and suddenly beginning to lisp as daintily as Karmazinov himself, "*cher M. Karmazinov,* the life of a man of our time and of certain convictions, even after an interval of twenty-five years, is bound to seem monotonous . . . "

The German went off into a loud abrupt guffaw like a neigh, evidently imagining that Stepan Trofimovitch had said something exceedingly funny. The latter gazed at him with studied amazement but produced no effect on him whatever. The prince, too, looked at the German, turning head, collar and all, towards him and putting up his pince-nez, though without the slightest curiosity.

". . . Is bound to seem monotonous," Stepan Trofimovitch intentionally repeated, drawling each word as deliberately and nonchalantly as possible. "And so my life has been throughout this quarter of a century, *et comme on trouve partout plus de moines que de raison,* and as I am entirely of this opinion, it has come to pass that throughout this quarter of a century I . . . "

"*C'est charmant, les moines,*" whispered Yulia Mihailovna, turning to Varvara Petrovna, who was sitting beside her.

Varvara Petrovna responded with a look of pride. But Karmazinov could not stomach the success of the French phrase, and quickly and shrilly interrupted Stepan Trofimovitch.

"As for me, I am quite at rest on that score, and for the past seven years I've been settled at Karlsruhe. And last year, when it was proposed by the town council to lay down a new water-pipe, I felt in my heart that this question of water-pipes in Karlsruhe was dearer and closer to my heart than all the questions of my precious Fatherland . . . in this period of so-called reform."

"I can't help sympathising, though it goes against the grain," sighed Stepan Trofimovitch, bowing his head significantly.

Yulia Mihailovna was triumphant: the conversation was becoming profound and taking a political turn.

"A drain-pipe?" the doctor inquired in a loud voice.

"A water-pipe, doctor, a water-pipe, and I positively assisted them in drawing up the plan."

The doctor went into a deafening guffaw. Many people followed his example, laughing in the face of the doctor, who remained unconscious of it and was highly delighted that every one was laughing.



"You must allow me to differ from you, Karmazinov," Yulia Mihailovna hastened to interpose. "Karlsruhe is all very well, but you are fond of mystifying people, and this time we don't believe you. What Russian writer has presented so many modern types, has brought forward so many contemporary problems, has put his finger on the most vital modern points which make up the type of the modern man of action? You, only you, and no one else. It's no use your assuring us of your coldness towards your own country and your ardent interest in the water-pipes of Karlsruhe. Ha ha!"

"Yes, no doubt," lisped Karmazinov. "I have portrayed in the character of Pogozhev all the failings of the Slavophils and in the character of Nikodimov all the failings of the Westerners. . . . "

"I say, hardly *all!*" Lyamshin whispered slyly.

"But I do this by the way, simply to while away the tedious hours and to satisfy the persistent demands of my fellow-countrymen."

"You are probably aware, Stepan Trofimovitch," Yulia Mihailovna went on enthusiastically, "that to-morrow we shall have the delight of hearing the charming lines . . . one of the last of Semyon Yakovlevitch's exquisite literary inspirations—it's called *Merci.* He announces in this piece that he will write no more, that nothing in the world will induce him to, if angels from Heaven or, what's more, all the best society were to implore him to change his mind. In fact he is laying down the pen for good, and this graceful *Merci* is addressed to the public in grateful acknowledgment of the constant enthusiasm with which it has for so many years greeted his unswerving loyalty to true Russian thought."

Yulia Mihailovna was at the acme of bliss.

"Yes, I shall make my farewell; I shall say my *Merci* and depart and there . . . in Karlsruhe . . . I shall close my eyes." Karmazinov was gradually becoming maudlin.

Like many of our great writers (and there are numbers of them amongst us), he could not resist praise, and began to be limp at once, in spite of his penetrating wit. But I consider this is pardonable. They say that one of our Shakespeares positively

blurted out in private conversation that "we *great men* can't do otherwise," and so on, and, what's more, was unaware of it.

"There in Karlsruhe I shall close my eyes. When we have done our duty, all that's left for us great men is to make haste to close our eyes without seeking a reward. I shall do so too."

"Give me the address and I shall come to Karlsruhe to visit your tomb," said the German, laughing immoderately.

"They send corpses by rail nowadays," one of the less important young men said unexpectedly.

Lyamshin positively shrieked with delight. Yulia Mihailovna frowned. Nikolay Stavrogin walked in.

"Why, I was told that you were locked up?" he said aloud, addressing Stepan Trofimovitch before every one else.

"No, it was a case of unlocking," jested Stepan Trofimovitch.

"But I hope that what's happened will have no influence on what I asked you to do," Yulia Mihailovna put in again. "I trust that you will not let this unfortunate annoyance, of which I had no idea, lead you to disappoint our eager expectations and deprive us of the enjoyment of hearing your reading at our literary matinée."

"I don't know, I . . . now . . . "

"Really, I am so unlucky, Varvara Petrovna . . . and only fancy, just when I was so longing to make the personal acquaintance of one of the most remarkable and independent intellects of Russia—and here Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly talks of deserting us."

"Your compliment is uttered so audibly that I ought to pretend not to hear it," Stepan Trofimovitch said neatly, "but I cannot believe that my insignificant presence is so indispensable at your fête to-morrow. However, I . . ."

"Why, you'll spoil him!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, bursting into the room. "I've only just got him in hand—and in one morning he has been searched, arrested, taken by the collar by a policeman, and here ladies are cooing to him in the governor's drawing-room. Every bone in his body is aching with rapture; in his wildest dreams he had never hoped for such good fortune. Now he'll begin informing against the Socialists after this!"

"Impossible, Pyotr Stepanovitch! Socialism is too grand an idea to be unrecognised by Stepan Trofimovitch." Yulia Mihailovna took up the gauntlet with energy.



"It's a great idea but its exponents are not always great men, *et brisons-là, mon cher,*" Stepan Trofimovitch ended, addressing his son and rising gracefully from his seat.

But at this point an utterly unexpected circumstance occurred. Von Lembke had been in the room for some time but seemed unnoticed by anyone, though every one had seen him come in. In accordance with her former plan, Yulia Mihailovna went on ignoring him. He took up his position near the door and with a stern face listened gloomily to the conversation. Hearing an allusion to the events of the morning, he began fidgeting uneasily, stared at the prince, obviously struck by his stiffly starched, prominent collar; then suddenly he seemed to start on hearing the voice of Pyotr Stepanovitch and seeing him burst in; and no sooner had Stepan Trofimovitch uttered his phrase about Socialists than Lembke went up to him, pushing against Lyamshin, who at once skipped out of the way with an affected gesture of surprise, rubbing his shoulder and pretending that he had been terribly bruised.

"Enough!" said Von Lembke to Stepan Trofimovitch, vigorously gripping the hand of the dismayed gentleman and squeezing it with all his might in both of his. "Enough! The filibusters of our day are unmasked. Not another word. Measures have been taken. . . . "

He spoke loudly enough to be heard by all the room, and concluded with energy. The impression he produced was poignant. Everybody felt that something was wrong. I saw Yulia Mihailovna turn pale. The effect was heightened by a trivial accident. After announcing that measures had been taken, Lembke turned sharply and walked quickly towards the door, but he had hardly taken two steps when he stumbled over a rug, swerved forward, and almost fell. For a moment he stood still, looked at the rug at which he had stumbled, and uttering aloud "Change it!" went out of the room. Yulia Mihailovna ran after him. Her exit was followed by an uproar, in which it was difficult to distinguish anything. Some said he was "deranged," others that he was "liable to attacks"; others put their fingers to their forehead; Lyamshin, in the corner, put his two fingers above his forehead. People hinted at some domestic diffi-

culties—in a whisper, of course. No one took up his hat; all were waiting. I don't know what Yulia Mihailovna managed to do, but five minutes later she came back, doing her utmost to appear composed. She replied evasively that Andrey Antonovitch was rather excited, but that it meant nothing, that he had been like that from a child, that she knew "much better," and that the fête next day would certainly cheer him up. Then followed a few flattering words to Stepan Trofimovitch simply from civility, and a loud invitation to the members of the committee to open the meeting now, at once. Only then, all who were not members of the committee prepared to go home; but the painful incidents of this fatal day were not yet over.

I noticed at the moment when Nikolay Stavrogin came in that Liza looked quickly and intently at him and was for a long time unable to take her eyes off him—so much so that at last it attracted attention. I saw Mavriky Nikolaevitch bend over her from behind; he seemed to mean to whisper something to her, but evidently changed his intention and drew himself up quickly, looked round at every one with a guilty air. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch too excited curiosity; his face was paler than usual and there was a strangely absent-minded look in his eyes. After flinging his question at Stepan Trofimovitch he seemed to forget about him altogether, and I really believe he even forgot to speak to his hostess. He did not once look at Liza—not because he did not want to, but I am certain because he did not notice her either. And suddenly, after the brief silence that followed Yulia Mihailovna's invitation to open the meeting without loss of time, Liza's musical voice, intentionally loud, was heard. She called to Stavrogin.

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, a captain who calls himself a relation of yours, the brother of your wife, and whose name is Lebyadkin, keeps writing impertinent letters to me, complaining of you and offering to tell me some secrets about you. If he really is a connection of yours, please tell him not to annoy me, and save me from this unpleasantness."

There was a note of desperate challenge in these words—every one realised it. The accusation was unmistakable, though perhaps it was a surprise to herself. She was like a man who shuts his eyes and throws himself from the roof.

But Nikolay Stavrogin's answer was even more astounding.



To begin with, it was strange that he was not in the least surprised and listened to Liza with unruffled attention. There was no trace of either confusion or anger in his face. Simply, firmly, even with an air of perfect readiness, he answered the fatal question:

"Yes, I have the misfortune to be connected with that man. I have been the husband of his sister for nearly five years. You may be sure I will give him your message as soon as possible, and I'll answer for it that he shan't annoy you again."

I shall never forget the horror that was reflected on the face of Varvara Petrovna. With a distracted air she got up from her seat, lifting up her right hand as though to ward off a blow. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at her, looked at Liza, at the spectators, and suddenly smiled with infinite disdain; he walked deliberately out of the room. Every one saw how Liza leapt up from the sofa as soon as he turned to go and unmistakably made a movement to run after him. But she controlled herself and did not run after him; she went quietly out of the room without saying a word or even looking at anyone, accompanied, of course, by Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who rushed after her.

The uproar and the gossip that night in the town I will not attempt to describe. Varvara Petrovna shut herself up in her town house and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, it was said, went straight to Skvoreshniki without seeing his mother. Stepan Trofimovitch sent me that evening to *cette chère amie* to implore her to allow him to come to her, but she would not see me. He was terribly overwhelmed; he shed tears. "Such a marriage! Such a marriage! Such an awful thing in the family!" he kept repeating. He remembered Karmazinov, however, and abused him terribly. He set to work vigorously to prepare for the reading too and—the artistic temperament!—rehearsed before the looking-glass and went over all the jokes and witticisms uttered in the course of his life which he had written down in a separate notebook, to insert into his reading next day.

"My dear, I do this for the sake of a great idea," he said to me, obviously justifying himself. "*Cher ami,* I have been stationary for twenty-five years and suddenly I've begun to move—whither, I know not—but I've begun to move. . . . "

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