

Stavrogin's Confession

and

The Plan of The Life of a Great Sinner

by

F. M. Dostoevsky

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STAVROGIN'S CONFESSION AND THE PLAN OF THE LIFE OF A GREAT SINNER

3F. M. DOSTOEVSKY

STAVROGIN'S CONFESSION

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THE PLAN OF

THE LIFE OF A GREAT SINNER

WITH INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

TRANSLATED BY

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TRANSLATORS' NOTE

The Russian Government has recently published a small paper-covered book containing *Stavrogin's Confession*, unpublished chapters of Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed*, and Dostoevsky's plan or sketch of a novel which he never actually wrote but which he called *The Life of a Great Sinner*. The circumstances in which these MSS. were discovered are described in the note of the Russian Government which we give below. Our translation of *Stavrogin's Confession* and of the plan is from the text as published by the Russian Government. We have added translations of introductory or explanatory notes upon the two MSS. by V. Friche, V. Komarovich, and N. Brodsky. The notes by Friche and Komarovich are given in the book published by the Russian Government, that by M. Komarovich appeared in *Builoe* (No. 18, 1922).

It should be added that there are two different versions of the unpublished chapters of *The Possessed* in existence, and they have both been published for the first time this year. The second version, which is in the Pushkin Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was published in *Builoe*. We have not included it, since it appears to be an earlier version than that published by the Russian Government. It should be noted that M. Komarovich's note refers to this version in the Academy of Sciences.

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NEW MSS. OF F. M. DOSTOEVSKY

Note by the Russian Government

On November 12, 1921, in the presence of A. V. Lunacharsky, Commissar of Education, and M. N. Pokrovsky, Assistant Commissar of Education, in the Central Archive Department of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic there was opened a white tin case numbered 5038 from the State Archives containing F. M. Dostoevsky's papers.

In the case were twenty-three articles: note-books, bags, and bundles of letters and other documents. On one of these note-books, which is bound (187 numbered pages), is written: "en cas de ma mort ou une maladie grave"; these are business papers and instructions of Anna Grigorevna Dostoevsky, the writer's wife. On pages 53-55 she has written: "List of note-books 10 in which Fedor Mikhailovich wrote the plans of his novels and also some biographical notes, copies of letters, etc." Madame A. G. Dostoevsky gives a list of fifteen such note-books with a short description of their contents and disposal: Nos. 1 and 2, *Crime and Punishment*; No. 3, *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*; Nos. 4-5, *Journal*, 1876; No. 6, *Journal*, 1881; Nos. 7 and 8, *The Raw Youth*; No. 9, *Brothers Karamazov*; No. 10, *The Idiot*; No. 11, *The Eternal Husband*; Nos. 12-15, *The Possessed*. Of these fifteen note-books enumerated by A. G. Dostoevsky the following were deposited on her instructions in the Historical Museum: No. 7, No. 12, and No. 13. Note-book No. 8 was in 1901 "transferred to Lubov Fedorovna Dostoevsky" (Dostoevsky's daughter), and No. 9 was deposited elsewhere. The other note-books of Dostoevsky given in A. G. Dostoevsky's list, with the exception of No. 11, i.e. Nos. 1-6, 10, 14, and 15, were found in the white case when it was opened on November 12 at the Central Archive Department.

On the first page of these note-books A. G. Dostoevsky has, in her own handwriting, given a brief list of their contents, as follows:

11 No. 1

(147 numbered pages)

1. Variant of the novel *Crime and Punishment*, under the title *On Trial*. (Raskolnikov tells his story.)

2. Materials for the novel *Crime and Punishment*.

3. Draft of letter to Katkov.

No. 2

(152 pages)

1. Variant of the novel *Crime and Punishment*.

2. Materials for the novel *Crime and Punishment*.

3. Materials for the tale *The Crocodile*.—Answers to *Sovremennik*.—Notes.

4. Letter to Katkov (1865) explaining the fundamental idea of *Crime and Punishment*.

No. 3

(154 pages)

1. Materials for the novel *Crime and Punishment*.

2. Materials for the novel *The Idiot*.

No. 4

(Pages not numbered)

Journal, 1876. January, February, March.

No. 5

(84 pages)

Journal, 1876. April, December.

No. 6

(58 pages)

Journal, 1881.

12No. 10

(136 pages)

The Idiot.

No. 14

(56 pages)

The Possessed. Notes for the end of the novel.

No. 15

(62 pages)

The Possessed.

In addition to these note-books which were in A. G. Dostoevsky's list, there were also found in the white case three other note-books not mentioned by her, namely, (1) containing materials for *The Raw Youth*, in a linen binding, 204 pages; (2) unbound, 33½ folios, also containing material for *The Raw Youth* (one of these may be either No. 7 or No. 8 above); (3) containing materials for *The Idiot*, 144 pages.^[1]

Everything of value in these note-books will be published in a book, now being prepared, which will include Dostoevsky's letters found in the case; they cover the period 1839-1855, mostly to his brother, as well as the period 1866-1880, 13th the latter being to his fiancée and future wife, A. G. Dostoevsky. The new note-books will make it possible to understand with some accuracy and completeness the method of work by which Dostoevsky produced such masterpieces as *Crime and Punishment*, *The Raw Youth*, and *The Possessed*. Besides these, there are scattered through the note-books subjects of stories (*The Crank*), long tales (*The Seekings*), poems (*Imperator*), which were planned but not written.

In addition to the list which Madame Dostoevsky gives in the note-book marked "en cas de ma mort, etc.," she also mentions one other note-book in which fifteen proof-sheets of *The Possessed* had been pasted. This note-book was also found in the white case. On the first page of it A. G. Dostoevsky has written: "In this note-book (in proof-sheets) are a few chapters of the novel *The Possessed*, which were not included in it by F. M. Dostoevsky, when it was published in *Russkii Vèstnik*. The first chapter (proof-sheets 1-5) was first published in the eighth volume of the jubilee edition of the Complete Works in the section 'Materials for the novel *The Possessed*.'" (This last statement is not quite correct. In the "Materials," to which A. G. 14 Dostoevsky refers, the first chapter is not published in full, the first twenty lines not being included.) "The other chapters," A. G. Dostoevsky continues, "have never been published."

Below the reader will find the text of these two hitherto unpublished chapters of *The Possessed*. We have thought it necessary also to republish the first chapter, because all these chapters form a whole and should be given together, and also because the beginning of the first chapter was not published in the Supplement to Vol. VIII. of the jubilee edition. The fifteen proof-sheets pasted in the note-book—particularly after

the first chapter—are covered, in the margins and the text itself, with a vast number of corrections, insertions, and additions in Dostoevsky’s handwriting.

We give below the text of the proofs with only a few of the author’s corrections. We have omitted passages which Dostoevsky struck out without substituting a variant, though we give such passages in the footnotes. We have made a few corrections about which there could be no doubt. All the other corrections and additions, which are extremely numerous, will be given in a book of new materials on Dostoevsky which is under preparation. It is clear that the author himself did not consider that these marginal corrections and additions were final. This is shown by the fact that there are several mistakes in the text and the punctuation is not always correct, while often there are several different corrections of the text in the margin and it is not clear which correction is to be preferred; other passages are incompletely corrected, and, lastly, several corrections inserted in the text give a rough version in which the same idea is expressed more than once in different words.

The plan of *The Life of a Great Sinner*, which we give below, is taken from F. M. Dostoevsky’s note-book which is in the Historical Museum. This plan has recently been published by L. P. Grossman in his book on Dostoevsky,^[2] but not in full nor accurately, with such important omissions that the text given below can alone be considered accurately to reproduce the original.

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STAVROGIN’S CONFESSION

THREE HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED CHAPTERS OF THE NOVEL

THE POSSESSED

19PART SECOND^[3]

CHAPTER I

AT TIKHON’S

I

Nikolai Vsevolodovich did not sleep that night, and all the time he sat on the sofa, often gazing fixedly at a particular point in the corner near the chest of drawers. All night long the lamp burnt in his room. About seven o’clock in the morning he fell

asleep where he sat, and, when Alexei Egorovich, according to invariable custom, came into his room at half-past nine precisely with a cup of coffee and, by coming in, woke him, he seemed unpleasantly surprised that he should have slept so long and that it was already so late. He hastily drank his coffee, hastily dressed himself, and hurriedly left the house. To Alexei Egorovich's hesitating question "Any orders?" he made no reply. He walked along the street looking at the ground, deep in thought, save that now and then he looked up for a moment, raised his head, showing a certain vague but violent uneasiness. At one crossing, not far from the house, a crowd of peasants, about fifty or more, crossed the road; they walked orderly, almost silently, in deliberate order. At the little shop, where he had to wait a moment, some one said that these were "Shpigulin's workmen." He hardly paid any attention to them. At last, about half-past ten, he approached the gate of Our Lady Spasso-Efimev Monastery, on the outskirts of the town, by the river. Here only he suddenly seemed to remember something alarming and troublesome, stopped, hastily fumbled for something in his side pocket and—smiled. Upon entering the enclosure he asked the first youth he met how to find Bishop Tikhon, who was living in retirement in the Monastery. The youth began bowing, and immediately showed the way. Near the little flight of steps, at the end of the long two-storied Monastery buildings, he was taken over from the youth, authoritatively and promptly, by a fat grey-haired monk, who took him through a long narrow corridor, also bowing all the time (though because of his fat he could not bow low, but only twitched his head frequently and abruptly), and all the time begging him to follow, though Nikolai Vsevolodovich followed without being told to. The monk asked questions incessantly and spoke of the Father Archimandrite, but, receiving no answers, he became more and more deferential. Stavrogin observed that he was known here, although, so far as he remembered, he had only been here as a child. When they reached the door at the very end of the corridor the monk opened it, as if he had authority, and enquired familiarly of the lay-brother, who instantly appeared, whether they might go in; then, without waiting for a reply, he threw the door wide open, and, bending down, let the "dear" visitor enter. On receiving a gratuity he quickly disappeared, as if in flight. Nikolai Vsevolodovich entered a small room, and almost at that very moment there appeared in the door of the adjoining room a tall thin man, aged about fifty-five, in a simple cassock, looking rather ill, with a vague smile and with a strange, somewhat shy expression. This was that very Tikhon of whom Nikolai Vsevolodovich had heard for the first time from Shatov, and about whom he had since managed to collect in passing certain information.

The information was varied and contradictory, but there was something common to it all, namely, that those who liked Tikhon and those who did not like him (there were

such) both kept back something of their opinion. Those who did not like him probably did it out of contempt for him; and his adherents, even the ardent ones, from a sort of modesty, as though wishing to conceal something about him—some weakness, some craziness perhaps. Nikolai Vsevolodovich had found out that Tikhon had been living in the Monastery for about six years, and that the humblest people as well as the most distinguished were in the habit of going to him there; that even in far-distant Petersburg he had ardent admirers amongst men, but chiefly among women. Again he had also heard from one stately-looking old man belonging to our “Club,” a pious old man too, this opinion, that “that Tikhon is almost a madman^[4] and, undoubtedly, given to drink.” For my own part, I shall add, although this is anticipating, that the last statement is complete rubbish, but that he is afflicted with a chronic rheumatic affection in his legs and suffers at times from nervous tremors. Nikolai Vsevolodovich also learnt that the Bishop who lived in retreat in the Monastery had not managed to inspire a particular respect²³ for himself in the Monastery itself, either through weakness of character or through absentmindedness unforgivable and improper in one of his rank. It was also said that the Father Archimandrite, a stern man, conscientious in the discharge of his duties as Father Superior, and famous too for his scholarship, even cherished a certain hostility against him and condemned him (not to his face, but indirectly) for his slovenly mode of life, and almost accused him of heresy. The monks, too, treated the sick Bishop not exactly with neglect, but with a sort of familiarity. The two rooms which composed Tikhon’s cell were also rather strangely furnished. Side by side with clumsy old pieces of furniture, covered with shabby leather, were three or four elegant things: a superb easy-chair, a large writing-table of excellent workmanship, a daintily carved bookcase, little tables, shelves, all of which had, of course, been given to him as presents. There was an expensive Bokhara carpet, and also mats. There were engravings of a “worldly” nature and of mythological subjects, and alongside with these in the corner there was a large shrine glittering with gold and silver icons, one of which was of very ancient date and contained relics. His library also, it was said, was of a too varied and contradictory character: side by side²⁴ with the works of the great ecclesiastics and Christian Fathers there were works “of drama and fiction, and perhaps something even worse.”

After the first greetings, uttered with an evident awkwardness on both sides, hurriedly and even indistinctly, Tikhon led his visitor to his study, and, as if all the while in a hurry, made him sit on the sofa, in front of the table, and sat down himself nearby in a wicker chair.^[5] To his surprise Nikolai Vsevolodovich was completely at a loss. It looked as if he was making up his mind with all his might on a step extraordinary and inevitable, and yet at the same time almost impossible for him. For a minute he looked

about the study, evidently without seeing what he looked at;^[6] he was thinking but, perhaps, without knowing of what. He was roused by the stillness, and suddenly it appeared to him that Tikhon cast down his eyes with a kind of shyness, with a quite unnecessary^[7] smile. This instantly roused in him disgust and reaction; he wanted to get up and go; 25in his opinion, Tikhon was decidedly drunk. But the latter suddenly raised his eyes and looked at him with such a firm and thoughtful gaze, and at the same time with such an unexpected and enigmatical expression, that he nearly shuddered. And now it suddenly seemed to him something absolutely different: that Tikhon already knew why he had come, that he was already warned (although nobody in the whole world could know the reason), and that if he did not speak first, it was because he was sparing his feelings, was afraid of his humiliation.

“Do you know me?” he suddenly asked abruptly. “Did I introduce myself when I came in or not? Pardon me, I am so absent-minded....”

“You did not introduce yourself, but I had the pleasure of seeing you once about four years ago, here in the Monastery ... by chance.”

Tikhon spoke unhurriedly and evenly, in a soft voice, pronouncing his words clearly and distinctly.

“I was not in this Monastery four years ago,” Nikolai Vsevolodovich replied with unnecessary rudeness. “I was here only as a child, when you were not yet here.”

“Perhaps you have forgotten?” Tikhon observed guardedly and without insisting upon it.

26“No, I have not forgotten; it would be ridiculous if I did not remember,” Stavrogin on his part insisted rather too hotly. “Perhaps you have merely heard about me and formed some idea, and thus made the mistake that you had seen me.”

Tikhon remained silent. Nikolai Vsevolodovich now noticed that a nervous shudder sometimes passed over his face, a symptom of chronic nervous exhaustion.

“I see only that you are not well to-day,” he said. “I think it would be better if I went.”

He even began to rise from his seat.

“Yes, to-day and yesterday I have had violent pains in my legs and I slept little during the night....”

Tikhon stopped. His visitor suddenly fell into a vague reverie. The silence lasted long, about two minutes.

“You were watching me?” he suddenly asked with anxiety and suspicion.

“I looked at you, and was reminded of the expression on your mother’s face. Externally unlike, there is much inner, spiritual resemblance.”

“There is no resemblance at all, certainly no spiritual—absolutely none!” Nikolai Vsevolodovich grew again uneasy for no reason and too persistent without knowing why. “You say this just ... out of pity for my state,”^[8] he said without thinking. “Ah! does my mother come and see you?”

“She does.”

“I didn’t know. She never told me. Does she come often?”

“Nearly every month, sometimes oftener.”

“I never, never heard of that. I did not know.” He seemed terribly alarmed by that fact.

“And she, of course, told you that I am mad,” he broke out again.

“No, not exactly that you are mad—though, I’ve heard that notion too, but from others.”

“You must have a very good memory, if you can remember such trifles. And did you hear about the slap in the face?”

“I heard something about that.”

“You mean everything. You must have a great deal of time on your hands. And about the duel too?”^[9]

“And about the duel.”

“You don’t need newspapers here. Shatov warned you against me?”

“No, I know Mr. Shatov, though; but I haven’t seen him for a long time.”

28 “Hm.... What’s that map you have got there? Ah, the map of the last war! What do you want with it?”

“I wanted to refer to it in reading this book. It’s a most interesting description.”

“Let me see. Yes, the account is not bad.”^[10] Yet what strange reading for you.”

He drew the book towards him and gave it a cursory glance. It was a full and able account of the circumstances of the last war, not so much from the military point of view, however, as from the purely literary. Having turned the book over, he suddenly put it down impatiently.

“I positively do not know why I came here,” he said with aversion, looking straight into Tikhon’s eyes, as though he expected him to reply.

“You, too, are not feeling well!”

“No, not altogether.”^[11]

And suddenly he related, in the shortest and most abrupt manner so that certain words could hardly be understood, that he was subject, especially at nights, to a kind of hallucinations, that he sometimes saw or felt near him a spiteful being, mocking and “rational,” “in various forms and in various characters, but it is always one and the same and I always fly into a rage.”

Wild and confused were these revelations, as if indeed they came from a madman. And yet Nikolai Vsevolodovich spoke with such strange frankness, never seen in him before, with such a simplicity, quite unnatural to him, that it seemed as if suddenly and unexpectedly his former self had completely disappeared. He was not in the least ashamed of showing the fear with which he spoke of his apparition. But all this was momentary and went as suddenly as it had come.

“It’s all nonsense,” he said, drawing back with awkward irritation. “I’ll go and see a doctor.”

“You should, certainly,” Tikhon assented.

“You speak so confidently.... Have you seen people, like me, with such apparitions?”

“I have, but very rarely. Indeed I remember only one such case in my life. He was a military officer; it was after he had lost his wife, his life companion. The other case was mere hearsay. Both men then went to a cure abroad.^[12] Have you been subject to this for long?”

“For about a year, but it’s all nonsense. I’ll see a doctor. This is all nonsense, utter nonsense. It is myself in various aspects, and nothing else. But even as I use that phrase, you certainly think that I am still doubtful and am not sure that it is myself, and not really the devil.”

Tikhon gave him a questioning look.

“And ... you actually see him?” he asked, dismissing, in fact, any question of its being a false and morbid hallucination. “Do you actually see a certain image?”

“It is strange that you should lay such stress upon this, when I have already told you that I do see it.” Stavrogin again began to grow more and more irritated with each

word. "Of course I see it; I see it as plainly as I see you ... and sometimes I see it and I'm not sure that I see it, although I do see it ... and sometimes^[13] I do not know what is real: I or it ... it's all nonsense. And can't you possibly believe that this is indeed the devil?" he added, breaking into a laugh and passing too abruptly into derision. "Surely that would be more in keeping with your profession."

"It is more likely a disease, although...."

"Although what?"

"Devils certainly exist, but one's conception of them may be very various."

31 "And you have again just looked down," Stavrogin broke in with an irritating laugh, "because you were ashamed that I should believe in the devil; but I made out that I did not believe and cunningly put the question to you: does he or does he not really exist?"

Tikhon gave a vague smile.^[14]

"Well, know then that I am not at all ashamed, and to make up for my rudeness I will tell you, seriously and unblushingly: I do believe in the devil, I believe canonically, in a personal, not allegorical, devil, and I do not in the least want to extort an answer from any one; now that's all."^[15]

He gave a nervous, unnatural laugh. Tikhon looked at him with curiosity, with a rather timorous, yet gentle look.

"You believe in God?" Nikolai Vsevolodovich suddenly burst out.

"I do."

"It is said, if you believe and bid a mountain move, it will move ... though, pardon me this nonsense. Yet I am curious to know: could you move a mountain or not?"

32 "If God will, I could," Tikhon uttered quickly and calmly, again beginning to look down at the ground.

"Well, it's just the same as saying that God Himself could move it. But you, you, as a reward for your belief in God?"

"Perhaps I could move it."

"Perhaps."^[16] Well, that is not bad, either. But you are still doubtful?"

"Through the imperfection of my belief I have doubts."

“Why, do *you* believe incompletely?”

“Yes ... perhaps; I do believe and not perfectly,” Tikhon replied.

“That is what I should not think, looking at you!”—he suddenly gave him a look of some surprise, a perfectly simple look which did not at all harmonize with the mocking tone of the preceding questions.

“Well, at any rate you do believe that, even if it be with God’s help, you could move it, and that is something, after all. At least, you wish to believe. And you take the mountain literally. It is a good principle. I observed that the progressives among our Levites are greatly inclined towards Lutheranism. Anyhow it is 33better than the *très peu* of the Archbishop, it is true, under the threat of the sword. You are, certainly, a Christian too.” Stavrogin spoke quickly, his words now serious, now mocking.

“May I not be ashamed, Lord, of Thy Cross.” Tikhon almost whispered it, with a passionate whisper, and bowed his head still lower.^[17]

“And can one believe in the devil, without believing in God?” Stavrogin laughed.

“Oh, there are such people everywhere.” Tikhon raised his eyes and smiled.

“And I am sure that you find such belief more respectable after all than complete unbelief...”^[18] Stavrogin began to laugh.

“On the contrary, complete atheism is more respectable than worldly indifference,” Tikhon answered, with visible gaiety and good-nature.

“Oho, that’s how you get round it!”

“A complete atheist stands on the last rung but one before absolute faith (he may or may not step higher), but an indifferent man has no longer any faith at all, nothing but an ugly fear, and that only on rare occasions, if he is a sentimental man.”

“Hm ... you have read the Apocalypse?”

“I have.”

34“Do you remember, ‘Write to the Angel of the Laodicean Church’?”

“I do.”^[19]

“Where is the book?” Stavrogin began with a strange hurry and anxiety, searching with his eyes for the book on the table. “I want to read to you ... you have a Russian translation?”

“I know the passage, I remember it,” Tikhon murmured.

“Do you know it by heart? Read it...”

He at once looked at the ground, rested both his hands on his knees, and impatiently prepared to listen. Tikhon repeated word for word:

“Write to the Angel of the Laodicean Church: The true and authoritative witness of the beginning of the creations of God says Amen. I know thy works; thou art neither cold nor hot. Would that thou wert cold or hot. But in so far as thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I shall spew thee out from my lips. For thou sayest: I am rich; I have everything and need nothing; but thou knowest not that thou art miserable, and poor and beggarly and blind and naked....”

35“Enough,” Stavrogin cut him short.^[20] “Do you know, I love you very much.”

“I love you too,” Tikhon replied in a low voice.

Stavrogin fell silent and suddenly lapsed again into his old reverie. This came as though in fits and now for the third time. And the “I love” he said to Tikhon was also said almost in an impulse, at any rate unexpectedly to himself. More than a minute passed.

“Do not be angry,” Tikhon whispered, touching his arm very lightly with his finger and as though his courage failed him.

Stavrogin shuddered and frowned angrily.

“How did you know that I was angry?” he said hastily. Tikhon was about to reply, when he suddenly interrupted him in inexplicable alarm:

“Why did you think that I must necessarily become angry? Yes, I was angry; you are right; and just because I had said to you ‘I love.’ You are right, but you are a crude cynic, you think slightingly of human nature. There might have been no anger, had it been any one else but myself.... Though, it does not matter about others; it concerns me. After all, you are a queer fellow and crazy.”

36He grew more and more irritated, and, strangely, made no attempt to restrain his language:

“Listen, I do not like spies and thought-readers, at any rate those who creep into my soul. I do not invite any one into my soul; I need no one; I am able to shift for myself. You think I am afraid of you,” he raised his voice and looked up defiantly; “you are quite convinced that I have come to confide to you some ‘terrible’ secret, and you are

waiting for it with all the hermit curiosity of which you are capable. Understand then that I will confide nothing to you, no secret, because I can perfectly well do without you....”^[21]

Tikhon looked at him firmly.

“It surprised you that the Lamb prefers a cold man to a merely lukewarm one,” he said. “You don’t want to be merely lukewarm. I have a foreboding that you are possessed by an extraordinary intention, perhaps a terrible one. I implore you, don’t torment yourself and tell me everything.”^[22]

“And you knew for certain that I had come with something.”

37“I ... guessed it,”^[23] Tikhon replied in a whisper, looking down.

Nikolai Vsevolodovich was rather pale; his hands shook a little. For a few seconds he looked motionlessly and silently, as though coming to a final decision. At last he took out of the side pocket of his coat a few printed sheets and put them on the table.

“These sheets are meant for circulation,” he said in a tremulous voice. “If only one man reads them, then understand that I shall keep them back no longer, and they will be read by every one. That is settled. I don’t need you at all, for I have settled it. But read them ... while you are reading them, say nothing; but after you have read them—say everything....”

“Shall I read them?” Tikhon asked irresolutely.

“Do; I am calm.”

“No; I shall not be able to read them without glasses; the printing is pale, foreign.”

“Here are your glasses.” Stavrogin took them from the table and handed them to him, and leant on the back of the sofa. Tikhon did not look at him, and plunged straight into the reading.

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II

The printing was in fact foreign: three little sheets of ordinary small-sized writing-paper printed and stitched together. It must have been printed secretly at a Russian press abroad, and the sheets at the first glance looked very much like a political pamphlet. The title read: “From Stavrogin.”

I insert the document literally in my chronicle.^[24] I have allowed myself to correct the spelling, for the mistakes are rather numerous and have surprised me a little, considering after all that the author was a man of education and even well-read (of course, relatively speaking). But in the style I have made no alterations whatever, in spite of its irregularities. It is at any rate clear that the writer was above all not a man of letters.^[25]

39“From Stavrogin.

“I, Nikolai Stavrogin, retired officer, lived in the year 186.. in Petersburg, abandoned to vice, in which I found no pleasure. For a 40certain period at that time I rented three lodgings. In one of them I lived myself and boarded and lodged, and there at that time lived Marya Lebiadkin, now my lawful wife. My other two lodgings I rented by the month for the purpose of an intrigue: in one I received a certain lady who loved me, and in the other her maid, and for a time I was much engrossed with the notion of contriving that both the lady and the maid should meet each other at my lodging.^[26] Knowing the characters of both, I anticipated for myself great pleasure from that joke.

“While I was gradually preparing for this meeting, I had to go more often to one of the two lodgings in a large house in Gorokhovaya Street, since that was the place where the maid and I met. I had only one room there, on the fifth floor, which I rented from some Russian working-class people. They themselves fitted themselves into the adjoining room, which was smaller than mine and so much so that the door dividing my room from theirs always stood open, which was what I wanted. The husband, a clerk in some office, used to be out from early morning till night. His wife, a woman of about forty, was occupied in cutting down old clothes 41and making them up into new, and she also frequently left the house to deliver her work. I remained alone with their daughter,^[27] who was quite a child to look at. They called her Matryosha. Her mother loved her, but often beat her, and, as is the custom of these people, shouted at her horribly. This little girl waited on me and tidied up after me behind the screens. I declare I have forgotten the number of the house. Now, upon enquiry, I find that the old house has been demolished, and, where there were then two or three houses, there is now one very large new house. I have also forgotten my landlord’s name (or perhaps I never knew it even at the time). I remember that the woman was called Stepanida, I believe, Mikhailovna. Him I do not remember.^[28] I suppose that if a search were started and all possible enquiries made by the Petersburg police, they could be traced. The flat was in a courtyard, in the corner. All happened in June. The house was painted a bright sky-blue.

“One day I missed from my table a penknife which I did not need in the least, and which lay 42there for no particular reason. I told my landlady, without thinking that she would thrash her daughter for it. But the landlady had just been scolding the little girl^[29] for the loss of some rag, suspecting that she had stolen it, and had even pulled her hair. When that rag was found under the tablecloth, the little girl did not utter a single word of complaint, and just looked in silence. I noticed that, and then for the first time I observed the face of the little girl, which until then I had hardly noticed properly. She had fair hair, and a freckled ordinary face, but there was much in it that was childish and quiet, extraordinarily quiet. The mother did not like it that the daughter made no complaint for having been beaten for nothing, and she raised her fist, but did not strike; and just at that moment the subject of the penknife came up. Besides the three of us, there was in fact nobody, and only the little girl went behind my screen. The woman flew into a rage at having for the first time punished her unjustly, and she rushed for the broom, tore twigs from it, and thrashed the little girl in my presence until her body was covered with scars, although the child was already in her twelfth year. Matryosha did not cry at 43the thrashing, probably because I was there, but she gave a strange sob at each blow. And afterwards she sobbed very much for a whole hour.

“But there was just this before that happened: at the very moment when the landlady rushed for the broom to pull out twigs, I found the penknife on my bed, where it had somehow or other fallen from the table. Instantly it occurred to my mind not to say so, in order that she should be thrashed. I decided on it instantaneously; in such moments my breathing always stops. But I mean to tell the whole thing in the plainest language, so that there can no longer remain anything concealed.

“Every unusually disgraceful, utterly degrading, dastardly, and, above all, ridiculous situation, in which I ever happened to be in my life, always roused in me, side by side with extreme anger, an incredible delight. I felt exactly this in moments of committing crimes and in moments when life was in danger. If I stole, I would feel, while committing the theft, a rapture from the consciousness of the depth of my vileness. It was not the vileness that I loved (here my mind was perfectly sound), but I enjoyed rapture from the tormenting consciousness of the baseness. In the same way each time when, standing 44at the barrier, I waited for my opponent to fire, I experienced just the same disgraceful and wild sensation; and once I did so with extraordinary vividness. I confess that I often myself looked out for it, because it is to me the strongest of sensations of the kind. When I received a slap in the face (and I received two in my life), it was there too, in spite of my terrible anger. But if the anger is checked by it, then the delight surpasses anything that can be imagined. I never spoke of this to

any one, even by a hint, and I concealed it as a shame and disgrace. But when I was once soundly beaten in a public-house in Petersburg and was dragged by the hair, I did not experience that sensation, but only an incredible anger, not being intoxicated, and I put up a fight. But had I been seized by my hair and forced down by the French Viscount abroad who slapped me on the cheek and whose lower jaw I shot away for it, I should have felt a rapture and, perhaps, should not have felt anger. So it seemed to me then.

“I tell all this in order that every one may know that the feeling never absorbed the whole of me absolutely, but there always remained the most perfect consciousness (on that consciousness indeed it was all based). And although it would take hold of me to the pitch of madness, or, so to say, ⁴⁵obstinacy, it would never reach the point of making me forget myself. It reached in me the point of a perfect fire, but I could at the same time overcome it completely, even stop it at its climax; only I never wished to stop it. I am convinced that I could live all my life as a monk, in spite of the brutal voluptuousness with which I am gifted and which I always called forth.^[30] I am always master of myself when I want to be. And so let it be understood that I do not claim irresponsibility for my crimes, either on account of environment or of disease.

“The thrashing over, I put the penknife in my waistcoat pocket and, without saying a single word, left the house and threw it away in the street, a long distance from the house, so that nobody should ever discover it. Then I waited two days. The little girl, after she had cried, became even more silent; against me, I am convinced, she had no spite. Though she was, certainly, ashamed that she had been punished in that way in my presence.^[31] But for the shame ⁴⁶she, like the child she was, assuredly blamed no one but herself.^[32]

“It was precisely during those two days that I once put to myself the question, could I go away and give up the plan I had invented, and I immediately felt that I could, that I could at any moment and at once. About that time I wished to kill myself from the disease of indifference; or rather I don’t know the reason, but during those two or three days (for it was necessary to wait till the little girl forgot it all) I, probably in order to divert myself from the idea which obsessed me, or for fun, committed a theft in the rooms. This was the only theft of my life.

“There were many people crowded in those rooms. Amongst others there lived there a minor official with his family in two rooms; he was about forty, not altogether a fool, and had a decent appearance, but was poor. I did not make friends with him, and he was afraid of the company that surrounded me there. He had only just received his salary—thirty-five roubles. What chiefly influenced me was that I at that moment

needed money (although four days later I received money by post), so that I stole, as though out of want, and not for fun. It was done impudently and obviously: I simply entered his room, when he, his wife, and children were dining in the other little room. There on the chair by the door lay his folded uniform. The idea suddenly occurred to me when I was in the corridor. I put my hand into the pocket and took the purse. But the official heard a movement and looked out of his room. He, it seems, actually saw, at any rate, something, but as he did not see it all, he, of course, did not believe his eyes. I said that, as I was passing down the corridor, I had come in to see the time by his clock. 'It has stopped,' he said, and I went out.

"At that time I drank a great deal, and in my rooms was a whole crowd, Lebiadkin amongst them. I threw away the purse and the small coins, but kept the notes. There were thirty-two roubles, three red notes and two yellow. I immediately changed one red note and sent for champagne; then I sent the second red note, and the third. About four hours later towards evening the official was waiting for me in the corridor.

"Nikolai Vsevolodovich, when you came in just now, did you by any chance let my uniform fall off the chair ... it was by the door?"

"No, I don't remember; was your uniform there?"

48 "Yes, it was."

"On the floor?"

"First on the chair, and then on the floor."

"Did you pick it up?"

"I did."

"Well, what more do you want?"

"In that case, it's all right..."

"He dared not finish, nor did he dare tell anybody in the rooms—so timid are those people. In the lodgings every one was extremely afraid of me and respected me. After that I liked to catch his eye a couple of times in the corridor. Soon I got bored with it.

"After three days^[33] I returned to Gorokhovaya Street. The mother was just going out with a bundle; the man, of course, was not at home; Matryosha and myself were left alone. The windows were open. The house was all inhabited by artisans, and all day long from every floor was heard the knocking of hammers or of singing. About an hour passed. Matryosha sat in her room, on a bench, with her back to me, and occupied

with her needle. At last, she suddenly began to sing softly, very softly, as was sometimes her way. I took out my watch and looked at the time; it was two o'clock. My heart began beating.^[34] I got up and began approaching her stealthily. On their window-sill stood pots of geranium, and the sun shone very brightly. I quietly sat down near her on the floor. She started, and at first was terribly frightened and jumped up. I took her hand and kissed it quietly, sat her down again on the little bench, and began looking into her eyes. My kissing her hand made her suddenly laugh like a baby, but only for one second, because she impetuously jumped up for the second time and was in such a fright that a spasm passed across her face. She looked at me with eyes motionless with terror, and her lips began to twitch as if she were about to cry, but she did not cry. I kissed her hand again, and took her on my knee.^[35] Then she suddenly pulled herself away and smiled as if ashamed, with a wry smile. All her face flushed with shame. I was whispering to her all the time, as though drunk. At last, all of a sudden, such a strange thing happened, which I shall never forget and which bewildered me: the little girl flung her arms round my neck and suddenly began to kiss me passionately. Her face expressed perfect ecstasy. I almost got up to go away—so unpleasant was this to me in the little creature from the sense of pity that I suddenly felt.^[36]...

“When all was over, she was confused. I did not try to reassure her and no longer fondled her. She looked at me, smiling timidly. Her face suddenly appeared to me stupid. The confusion rapidly with each minute took an increasing hold over her. At last she covered her face with her hands and stood in the corner with her face to the wall motionless. I was afraid that she might be frightened again, as she had been just before, and silently I left the house.

“I think that all that happened must have seemed to her, in the end, infinitely horrible, a deadly horror. Notwithstanding the Russian swear words and all sorts of queer conversations that she must have heard from her very cradle, I am completely convinced that she did not yet know anything. For indeed it appeared to her in the end that she had committed an immense crime, and was guilty of a mortal sin. ‘She had killed God.’

“That night I had the row in the bar which I mentioned in passing. But I woke up in my rooms in the morning; Lebiadkin took me home. My first thought when I awoke was whether she had told or not. It was a minute of real fear, although as yet not very intense. I was very gay that morning and extremely good-natured with every one, and the whole company was very pleased with me. But I left them all and went to Gorokhovaya Street. I met her downstairs in the passage. She was coming in from the grocer's shop where she had been sent for chicory. On seeing me she dashed off in a

terrible fright upstairs. When I entered, her mother had just given her a cuff^[37] for bursting in 'like a maniac,' and thus the real reason of her fright was concealed. So far then all was safe. She hid in a corner and did not come out while I was there. I stayed about an hour and then went away.

"Towards evening I again felt the fear, but incomparably more intense. Of course I could deny all knowledge, but might be given the lie. Penal servitude glimmered for me in the distance. I had never felt fear, and all my life, except in this one case, I never before nor after was afraid of anything—particularly of Siberia, although I might have been deported there more than once. 52But this time I was frightened and really felt fear, I don't know why, for the first time in my life—a very tormenting sensation. Besides, that evening in my rooms, I got to hate her to such an extent that I decided to kill her. My chief hatred was at the recollection of her smile. I began to feel contempt and immense loathing for her having, after the whole thing was over, rushed off to the corner and covered her face with her hands; an inexplicable rage seized me, and then cold shivering, and, when towards the morning I began to feel feverish, I was again seized with fear, but such an intense fear that I never knew any torment more violent. Yet I no longer hated the little girl—at any rate it did not reach such a paroxysm as on the previous evening. I realized that intense fear completely drives away hatred and the feeling of revenge.

"I woke about mid-day, feeling well and surprised even at the force of yesterday's sensations. Yet I was in a bad humour and was again compelled to go to Gorokhovaya Street, in spite of all my aversion. I remember that I wished intensely at that minute to pick a quarrel on the way with any one, so long as it was a violent quarrel. But when I reached Gorokhovaya Street, I suddenly found Nina Savelevna, the maid, in my room, where she had been waiting for an hour already. 53I did not like the girl altogether, so that she had come half afraid that I should be angry with her for coming unasked. But I suddenly felt very glad to see her. She was not bad-looking, but unassuming, with those manners of which common people are very fond, so that my landlady had for long sung her praises to me. I found them both drinking coffee together, and the landlady highly pleased with the polite conversation. In the corner of their room I saw Matryosha. She stood looking at her mother and at the visitor without stirring. When I came in she did not hide as before and did not run away. It only appeared to me that she had grown very thin and was in a fever. I was cordial to Nina, and locked my door against the landlady, which I had not done for a long time, so that Nina left perfectly delighted. We left together and for two days I did not return to Gorokhovaya Street. I was already bored with it. I resolved to put an end to it all, to give up my rooms and leave Petersburg.

“But when I came to give notice to my landlady, I found her much worried and distressed: Matryosha had been ill for three days, had a high temperature, and was delirious every night. Of course I asked what she said in her delirium (we spoke in whispers in my room); she whispered 54back that she raved of ‘horrors’: “‘I killed God,” she says.’ I offered to have a doctor at my own expense, but she did not wish it. ‘By God’s will it will pass without doctors; she is not in bed all the time; during the day she gets up; she has just run round to the grocer’s shop.’ I determined to see Matryosha alone, and, as the landlady let out that she had to go to the Petersburg Road about five o’clock, I decided to come back in the evening.

“I had a meal in a public-house. Exactly at a quarter past five I returned. I always let myself in with my key. There was no one there but Matryosha. She lay on her mother’s bed behind a screen, and I saw her peep out; but I pretended not to have seen her. All the windows were open. The air outside was warm, and even hot. I walked up and down and then sat down on the sofa. I remember everything up to the last moment. It decidedly gave me pleasure not to speak to Matryosha, but to keep her in suspense; I don’t know why. I waited a whole hour, when suddenly she sprang from her bed behind the screen. I heard both her feet thud upon the floor and then fairly quick steps, and she stood on the threshold of my room. She stood and looked silently. I was so mean that my heart thrilled with joy that 55I had kept up my character and waited for her to come first. During these days, when I had not once seen her close, she had grown very thin. Her face had shrunk, and her head, I was sure, was hot.

“Her eyes had grown large and gazed at me without moving, with a dull curiosity, as I thought at first. I sat still and looked and did not move. And then suddenly I felt hatred for her again. But I very soon noticed that she was not in the least afraid of me, but was perhaps rather delirious. But she was not delirious either. She suddenly began shaking her head repeatedly at me, as simple uneducated people without manners do when they find fault with you. And suddenly she raised her tiny fist and began threatening from where she stood. The first moment her gesture seemed to me ridiculous, but then I could stand it no longer.^[38] On her face was such despair as was unendurable to see on a child’s face. She shook her tiny fist at me all the while threateningly, and nodded her head reproachfully. I rose and moved towards her in fear, and warily began saying something softly and kindly, but I saw that she would not understand. Then suddenly she 56covered her face impulsively with both hands, as she had done before, and moved off and stood by the window with her back to me. I returned to my room and sat by the window. I cannot possibly make out why I did not leave then, but remained as though waiting for something. Soon I again heard her quick steps; she came out of the door on to the wooden landing which led to the

stairs. I hastily ran to my door, opened it, and had just time to see that Matryosha went into the tiny box-room, which was like a hen-roost and was next door to the water-closet. A very curious idea shot through my mind. To this day I can't make out why all of a sudden this idea came into my head—everything turned upon it. I half closed the door and sat down again by the window. Of course, it was still impossible to believe in this sudden idea:—'but after all....' (I remember everything, and my heart beat violently).

"After a minute I looked at my watch and noted the time with perfect accuracy. Why I should need to know the time so precisely I don't know, but I was able to do it, and altogether at that moment I wanted to notice everything. So that I remember now what I noticed and see it as if it were before me. The evening drew on. A fly buzzed about my head and settled continually on my face. I caught it, held it in my fingers, and put it out of the window. Very loudly a van entered the courtyard below. Very loudly (and for some time before) a tailor, sitting at his window in the corner of the courtyard, sang a song. He sat at his work, and I could see him there. It struck me that, as nobody had met me when I passed through the gate and came upstairs, it was also, of course, not necessary that I should be seen now when I should be going downstairs; and I moved my chair from the window purposely so that I could not be seen by the lodgers. I took a book, but threw it away, and began looking at a tiny reddish spider on the leaf of a geranium, and I fell into a trance. I remember everything up to the last moment.

"Suddenly I took out my watch. Twenty minutes had passed since she went out of the room. The conjecture was assuming the shape of a probability. But I determined to wait precisely fifteen minutes more. It also crossed my mind that perhaps she had come back, and that I perhaps had not heard her. But that was impossible: there was a dead silence, and I could hear the hum of every small fly. Suddenly my heart began bounding again. I looked at my watch: it was three minutes short of the quarter. I sat them out, though my heart beat so as to hurt me. Then I got up, put on my hat, buttoned my overcoat, and looked round the room^[39]—had I left any traces of my visit? I moved the chair closer to the window just as it had been before. At last I gently opened the door, locked it with my key, and went to the little box-room. It was closed, but not locked; I knew that it did not lock, but I did not want to open it, and I stood on tiptoe and began looking through the chink. At that moment, standing on tiptoe, I remembered that, when I sat by the window and looked at the little red spider and fell into a trance, I had been thinking of how I should stand on tiptoe and peer through this very chink. I mention this detail because I wish to prove fully to what an extent I was obviously in possession of my mental faculties and I hold myself responsible for

everything. For a long time I peered through the chink, but it was dark there, but not absolutely, so that at last I saw what I wanted....^[40]

“At last I decided to leave.^[41] I met no one on the stairs. Three hours later we were all drinking tea in our shirt-sleeves in our rooms and playing with a pack of old cards; Lebiadkin recited poetry. Many stories were told, and, as if on purpose, they were good and amusing, and not as foolish as usual. Kirillov too was there. No one drank, although there was a bottle of rum, but only Lebiadkin took a pull at it now and then.

“Prokhor Malov once said that ‘when Nikolai Vsevolodovich is pleased to be cheerful and does not sulk, the whole lot of us are happy and talk cleverly.’ I remembered this at that time; consequently I was merry, cheerful, and not sulky. This was how it looked. But I remember being conscious that I was simply a low and despicable coward for my joy at having escaped and that I should never be an honest man.

“About eleven o’clock the doorkeeper’s little daughter came from the landlady at Gorokhovaya Street, with a message to me that Matryosha had hanged herself. I went with the little girl and saw that the landlady herself did not know why she had sent for me. She wailed aloud and beat her head^[42]; there was a crowd and 60 policemen. I stood about for a time^[43] and went away.

“I was scarcely disturbed all that time, yet I was asked the usual questions. But all I said was that the girl had been ill and delirious, so that I had offered to call a doctor at my own expense. They also questioned me about the penknife, and I said that the landlady had thrashed her, but that there was nothing in that. Nobody knew about my having been there that evening.^[44]

“For about a week I did not call there. I went at last^[45] to give notice about the room. The landlady was still crying, although she was already messing about with her rags and sewing as usual. ‘It was for your penknife that I wronged her,’ she said to me, but without much reproach. I settled my account with her, and gave as an excuse for going that I could not remain in a house like that to receive Nina Savelevna. At parting, she again praised Nina Savelevna to me. When I left, I gave her five roubles over and above what was due for the room.

“In the main I was sick of life, to the verge⁶¹ of madness. The incident in Gorokhovaya Street, after the danger was over, I would have completely forgotten, just as I forgot all the other events of that time, had I not for a certain time remembered with anger what a coward I had been.

“I vented my anger on any one I could find. About that time, altogether for no definite reason, I took it into my head to cripple my life, but only in as disgusting a way as

possible. Already for about a year I had been thinking of shooting myself; but something better presented itself.

“One day, as I looked at the lame Marya Timofeevna Lebiadkin, the woman who in a sense tidied up the rooms, and at that time was not yet mad, but simply an exalted idiot, in secret madly in love with me (which my friends had discovered), I suddenly determined to marry her. The idea of the marriage of Stavrogin with that lowest of creatures excited my nerves. Anything more monstrous it was impossible to imagine.^[46] At any rate I married her, not simply because of ‘a bet made after dinner in one’s cups.’ The witnesses were Kirillov and Peter Verkhovensky, who happened to be in Petersburg; 62and lastly, Lebiadkin himself and Prokhor Malov (who is now dead). No one else ever knew of it, and those who did swore to keep silence. That silence always seemed to me a kind of meanness, but it has not been broken up till now, although I intended to make it public; now I make it public as well as the rest.

“The wedding over, I went to the country to stay with my mother. I went to distract myself.^[47] In our town I had left behind me the idea that I was mad—which idea still persists even now and undoubtedly does me harm, as I shall explain later. After that I went abroad and remained there four years.

“I was in the East in the monastery on Mount Athos and attended religious services which lasted eight hours; I was in Egypt, lived in Switzerland, travelled even in Iceland; spent a whole year at Göttingen University. During the last year I became very friendly with a distinguished Russian family in Paris, and with two Russian girls in Switzerland. About two years ago, in Frankfort, passing a stationer’s shop, I noticed amongst the photographs for sale a portrait of a little girl, dressed in an elegant childish dress, but very much like Matryosha.

63I bought the portrait at once, and when I returned to my hotel I put it on the mantelpiece of my room. There it lay for a week untouched, and I did not once look at it; and when I left Frankfort I forgot to take it with me.

“I mention this fact only to prove to what an extent I could master my memories and had become indifferent to them. I dismissed the whole lot of them at one *go en masse*, and the whole mass obediently disappeared, each time, directly I wished it to disappear. To recall the past always bored me, and I never could talk about the past, as nearly all people do, the more so that it was, like everything else concerning me, hateful to me. As for Matryosha, I even forgot to take her picture from the mantelpiece. About a year ago, in the spring, travelling through Germany, I forgot absentmindedly to get out at the station where I had to change, and so went on the wrong line. At the next station I had to get out; it was past two o’clock in the afternoon and a fine bright day. It

was a tiny German town. I was shown to a hotel. I had to wait, for the next train did not arrive until eleven o'clock at night. I was even pleased with my adventure, as I was in no hurry to get anywhere. The hotel turned out a wretched little place, but it was all wooded and surrounded with flower-beds. I⁶⁴ was given a very small room. I made a large meal, and, as I had been travelling all night, I fell sound asleep after lunch at about four o'clock in the afternoon.

"In my sleep I had a dream which was completely new to me, for I had never had one like it. In the Dresden gallery there is a picture by Claude Lorraine, called in the catalogue, I think, 'Acis and Galatea,' but I always called it 'The Golden Age,' I don't know why. I had seen it before, but about three days ago, as I passed through Dresden, I saw it again. I even went on purpose to have a look at it, and possibly for this alone I stopped at Dresden. It was that picture I dreamt of, but not as of a picture, but as of a reality.

"A corner of the Greek Archipelago; blue caressing waves, islands and rocks; fertile shore, a magic vista on the horizon, the appeal of the setting sun—no words could describe it. Here was the cradle of European man, here were the first scenes of the mythological world, here its green paradise.... Here had once lived a beautiful race. They rose and went to sleep happy and innocent; they filled the woods with their joyful songs; the great abundance of their virgin powers went out into love and into simple happiness. The sun bathed these islands and⁶⁵ sea in its beams, rejoicing in its beautiful children. Wonderful dream, splendid illusion! A dream the most incredible of all that had ever been dreamt, but upon it the whole of mankind has lavished all its powers throughout history; for this it has made every sacrifice, for this men have died on the cross and their prophets have been killed; without this, nations will not live and are unable even to die. I lived through all these feelings in my dream; I do not know what exactly I dreamt about, but the rocks, the sea, and the slanting rays of the setting sun—all these seemed to be still visible to me, when I woke and opened my eyes and, for the first time in my life, found them full of tears. A feeling of happiness, until then unfamiliar to me, went through my whole heart, even painfully. It was now evening; through the window of my tiny room, through the green leaves of the flowers standing on the sill, poured a shaft of bright slanting rays from the setting sun, and bathed me in their light. I quickly shut my eyes again, as if longing to bring back the vanished dream, but suddenly, in the middle of the bright, bright light, I saw a tiny point. The point began suddenly to take a definite form, and all of a sudden I distinctly pictured to myself a tiny reddish spider. At once I remembered it on the leaf of the geranium,⁶⁶ upon which, too, had poured the rays of the setting sun. It was as though something were plunged through me; I raised myself and sat on my bed.

“(That’s all how it happened then!)

“I saw before me! (Oh, not in the flesh! Would that the vision had been true!) I saw before me Matryosha, emaciated, with feverish eyes, in every point exactly as she was when she stood on the threshold of my room and, shaking her head at me, threatened me with her tiny fist. Nothing has ever been so agonizing to me! The pitiable despair of a helpless creature^[48] with an unformed mind, threatening me (with what? what could she do to me, O Lord?), but blaming, of course, herself alone! Nothing like that has ever happened to me. I sat, till night came, without moving, having lost count of time. Is this what they call remorse or repentance? I do not know, and even now cannot say.^[49] But it was intolerable to me, that image of her standing on the threshold with her raised and threatening little fist, merely that vision of her then, that moment ‘then,’ that shaking of her head. It is precisely that which I cannot endure, because since then it has come to me almost every day. Not that it comes itself, but that I bring it before myself and cannot help bringing it, although I can’t live with it. Oh, if I could ever see her in the flesh, even though it were an hallucination!^[50]

“Why, then, do no other of the memories of my life rouse in me anything like this?— and I had indeed many memories, perhaps much worse in the judgment of men. They rouse merely hatred in me, and that only because they are stimulated by my present state; but formerly I forgot them callously and dismissed them from my mind.

“I wandered after that for nearly the whole of the following year, and tried to find some occupation. I know I can dismiss the thought of Matryosha even now whenever I want to. I am as completely master of my will as ever. But the whole point is that I never wanted to do it; I myself do not want to, and never shall.^[51] So it will go on until I go mad.

68“In Switzerland two months later I was seized with a fit of the same passion and one of the same furious impulses which I used to have before.^[52] I felt a terrible temptation to commit a new crime, namely, to commit bigamy (for I was already married). But I fled on the advice of another girl to whom I had confided almost everything, even that I had no love for her whom I desired so much, and that I could never love any one. Moreover, the fresh crime would not in any way rid me of Matryosha.

“Thus I decided to have these little sheets printed and three hundred copies sent to Russia. When the time comes, I shall send some of them to the police and to the local authorities; simultaneously I shall send them to the editors of all newspapers with a request that they shall be published; I shall also send them to a number of people in Petersburg and in Russia who know me. They will also come out in a translation abroad. I know that I shall, perhaps, not be worried by the law, at any rate not to any

considerable extent. It is I who am informing against myself and I have no accuser; besides, the evidence is extraordinarily slight or non-existent. ⁶⁹Finally, the rooted idea that I am mentally unbalanced and, certainly, the efforts of my family, who will make use of that idea, will quash any legal prosecution that might threaten me. By the way, I make this statement in order to prove that I am now of sound mind and understand my situation. But there will remain those who will know everything and will look at me, and I at them. ^[53] I want every one to look at me. Will it relieve me? I don't know. I come to this as to my last resource.

“Once more: if a good search be made by the Petersburg police, perhaps something might be discovered. The landlady and her husband might be living even now in Petersburg. The house, of course, must be remembered. It was painted a bright sky-blue. For myself, I shall not go anywhere, and for a certain length of time (a year or two) I shall always be found at Skvoreshniki, my mother's estate. If required, I will appear anywhere.

“Nikolai Stavrogin.”

70 CHAPTER IX ^[54]

The reading lasted for about an hour. Tikhon read slowly, and, possibly, read certain passages twice over. All the time Stavrogin had sat silent and motionless. ^[55] Tikhon took off his glasses, paused, and, looking up at him, was the first to begin to speak rather guardedly.

“Can't certain corrections be made in this document?”

“Why should there? I wrote sincerely,” Stavrogin replied.

“Some corrections in the style should...”

“I forgot to warn you,” he said quickly and peremptorily, pulling himself up, “that all you say will be useless; I shall not postpone my intention; don't try to dissuade me. I shall publish it.”

71 “You did not forget to tell me that, before I began to read.”

“Never mind,” Stavrogin interrupted peremptorily, “I repeat it again: however great the force of your objections may be, I shall not give up my intention. And observe that, by this clumsy or clever phrase—think of it what you like—I am not trying to get you at once to start arguing and coaxing me.” ^[56]

“I shall not argue with you, still less coax you, to give up your intention, nor could I do it either. Your idea is a great idea, and it would be impossible to express more perfectly a Christian idea. Repentance cannot go further than the wonderful deed which you have conceived, if only...”

“If only what?”

“If it were indeed repentance and indeed a Christian idea.”

“I wrote sincerely.”^[57]

“You seem deliberately to wish to make yourself out coarser than your heart would desire...” Tikhon gradually became bolder. Evidently “the document” made a strong impression on him.

72 “‘Make myself out’? I repeat to you, I did not ‘make myself out,’ still less did I ‘pose.’”^[58]

Tikhon quickly cast his eyes down.

“This document comes straight from the needs of a heart which is mortally wounded,—am I not right in this?” he said emphatically and with extraordinary earnestness. “Yes, it is repentance and natural need of repentance that has overcome you, and you have taken the great way, the rarest way. But you, it seems, already hate and despise beforehand all those who will read what is written here, and you challenge them. You were not ashamed of admitting your crime; why are you ashamed of repentance?”

“Ashamed?”

“You are ashamed and afraid!”

“Afraid?”

“Mortally. Let them look at me, you say; well, and you, how will you look at them? Certain passages in your statement are emphasized; you seem to be luxuriating in your own psychology and clutch at each detail, in order to surprise the reader by a callousness which is not really in you. What is this but a haughty defiance of the judge by the accused?”

73 “Where is the defiance? I kept out all personal discussion.”

Tikhon was silent. His pale cheeks flushed.

“Let us leave that,” Stavrogin said peremptorily. “Allow me to put to you a question on my side: we have now been talking for five minutes since you read that” (he nodded at the pages), “and I do not see in you any expression of aversion or shame.... You don’t seem to be squeamish....”

He did not finish.^[59]

“I shall not conceal anything from you: I was horrified at the great idle force that had been deliberately wasted in abomination. As for the crime itself, many people sin like that, but they live in peace and quiet with their conscience, even considering it to be the inevitable delinquency of youth. There are old men, too, who sin in the same way—yes, lightly and indulgently. The world is full of these horrors. But you have felt the whole depth to a degree which is extremely rare.”

“Have you come to respect me after these pages?” Stavrogin said, with a wry smile.

“I am not going to answer that straight off. 74But there certainly is not, nor can there be, a greater and more terrible crime than your behaviour towards the girl.”

“Let us stop this measuring by the yard.^[60] Perhaps I do not suffer so much as I have made out, and perhaps I have even told many lies against myself,” he added suddenly.

Tikhon once more let this pass in silence.^[61]

“And the young lady,”^[62] Tikhon began again, “with whom you broke off in Switzerland; where, if I may ask, is she ... at this moment?”

“Here.”

There was silence again.

“Perhaps I did lie much against myself,” Stavrogin persisted once more. “Well, what does it matter that I challenge them by the coarseness of my confession, if you noticed the challenge? I shall make them hate me still more, that’s all. Surely that will make it easier for me.”^[63]

“That is, anger in you will rouse responsive 75anger in them, and, in hating, you will feel easier than if you accepted their pity.”

“You are right. You understand.” He laughed suddenly. “They may perhaps call me a Jesuit and sanctimonious hypocrite after the document, ha, ha, ha! Yes?”

“Certainly there is sure to be some such opinion. And do you expect to carry out your intention soon?”

“To-day, to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, how do I know? But very soon. You are right: I think, indeed, it will in the end happen that I shall publish it unexpectedly, and, indeed, in a revengeful, hateful moment, when I hate them most.”

“Answer me one question, but sincerely, to me alone, only to me,” Tikhon said in quite a different voice; “if some one forgave you for this” (Tikhon pointed at the pages), “and not one of those whom you respect or fear, but a stranger, a man whom you will never know, if, reading your terrible confession, he forgave you, in the privacy of his heart—would you feel relieved, or would it be just the same to you?”

“I should feel easier,” Stavrogin said in an undertone. “If you forgave me, I should feel very much relieved,” he added, casting his eyes down.

76“Provided that you forgive me too,” Tikhon murmured in a penetrating voice.^[64]

“It is false humility. All these monastic formulas, you know, are not fine in the least. I will tell you the whole truth: I want you to forgive me. And besides you—one or two more, but as for the rest—let the rest rather hate me. But I want this, so that I may bear it with humility...”

“And universal pity for you—could you not bear it with the same humility?”

“Perhaps I could not.^[65] Why do you...?”^[66]

“I feel the extent of your sincerity and am, of course, very much to blame, but I am not good at approaching people. I have always felt it a great fault in myself,” Tikhon said sincerely and intimately, looking straight into Stavrogin’s eyes. “I just say this, because I am afraid for you,” he added; “there is an almost impassable abyss before you.”

“That I shan’t be able to bear it? Not 77able to endure^[67] their hatred?” Stavrogin gave a start.

“Not their hatred alone.”

“What else?”

“Their laughter.” Tikhon half whispered these words, as if it were more than he had strength for.

Stavrogin blushed; his face expressed alarm.

“I foresaw it,” he said; “I must have appeared to you a very comic character after your reading of my ‘document.’^[68] Don’t be uncomfortable. Don’t look disconcerted. I expected it.”

“The horror will be universal and, of course, more false than sincere. People fear only what directly threatens their personal interests. I am not talking of pure souls: they will be horrified in themselves and will blame themselves, but no notice will be taken of them—besides they will keep silent. But the laughter will be universal.”^[69]

“I am surprised what a low opinion you have of people and how they disgust you.” Stavrogin spoke with some show of anger.

78 “Believe me, I judged rather by myself than by other people!” Tikhon exclaimed.

“Indeed? but is there also something in your soul that makes you amused at my misery?”

“Who knows, perhaps there is? oh, perhaps there is!”

“Enough. Tell me, then, where exactly am I ridiculous in my manuscript? I know myself, but I want you to put your finger on it. And tell it as cynically as possible, tell me with all the sincerity of which you are capable. And I repeat to you again that you are a terribly queer fellow.”

“In the very form of this great penance there is something ridiculous. Oh, don’t let yourself think that you won’t conquer!” he suddenly exclaimed, almost in ecstasy. “Even this form will conquer” (he pointed to the pages), “if only you sincerely accept the blows and the spitting. It always ended in the most ignominious cross becoming a great glory and a great strength, if the humility of the deed was sincere. Perhaps even in your lifetime you will be comforted!...”

“So you find something ridiculous in the form itself?”^[70] Stavrogin insisted.

“And in the substance. The ugliness of it 79 will kill it,” Tikhon said in a whisper, looking down.

“Ugliness! what ugliness?”

“Of the crime. There are truly ugly crimes. Crimes, whatever they be, the more blood, the more horror in them, the more imposing they are, so to say, more picturesque. But there are crimes shameful, disgraceful, past all horror, they are, so to say, almost too inelegant....”

Tikhon did not finish.

“You mean to say,” Stavrogin caught him up in agitation, “you find me a very ridiculous figure when I kissed the hands of the dirty little girl....”^[71] I understand you very well,

and that is why you despair for me, that it is ugly, revolting—not precisely revolting, but shameful, ridiculous, and you think that that is what I shall least of all be able to bear.”

Tikhon was silent.^[72]

“I understand why you asked about the young lady from Switzerland, whether she was here.”

“You are not prepared, not hardened,” Tikhon said timidly in a whisper, casting his eyes down; “you are uprooted, you do not believe.”

“Listen, Father Tikhon: I want to forgive myself, and that is my object, my whole object!” Stavrogin suddenly said with gloomy ecstasy in his eyes. “Then only, I know, that vision will disappear. That is why I seek boundless suffering. I seek it myself. Don’t make me afraid, or I shall die in anger.”

The sincerity was so unexpected that Tikhon got up.

“If you believe that you can forgive yourself and attain that forgiveness in this world through your suffering; if you set that object before you with faith, then you already believe completely!” Tikhon exclaimed rapturously. “Why did you say, then, that you did not believe in God?”

Stavrogin made no answer.

“For your unbelief God will forgive you, for you respect the Holy Spirit without knowing Him.”

“Christ will forgive too?” asked Stavrogin, with a wry smile and in a quickly changed tone; and in the tone of his question a suspicion of irony could be heard.

“It says in the Book: ‘And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones,’ you remember. ⁸¹According to the Gospel there is no greater crime....”^[73]

“Quite plainly, you don’t want a row, and you are laying a trap for me, venerable Father Tikhon,” Stavrogin muttered scornfully and with annoyance, making as if to get up; “in a word, you want me to settle down, to marry, perhaps, and end my life as a member of the local club, and visit your monastery on holidays. Why, that’s penance! isn’t it so? though as a reader of hearts you, perhaps, foresee that it will certainly be so, and all that is needed now is for me to be nicely wheedled into it for form’s sake, since I am only too eager for that,—isn’t it so?”

He gave a wry smile.

“No, not that penance, I am preparing another for you!” Tikhon went on earnestly, without taking the least notice of Stavrogin’s smile and remark.

“I know an old man, a hermit and ascetic, not here, but not far from here, of such great Christian wisdom that he is even beyond your and my understanding. He will listen to my request. I will tell him about you. Go to him, into retreat, as a novice under his guidance, for five years, for seven, for as many as you find necessary. Make a vow to yourself, and by this great sacrifice you will acquire all that you long for and don’t even expect, for you cannot possibly realize now what you will obtain.”

Stavrogin listened gravely.

“You suggest that I enter the monastery as a monk.”^[74]

“You must not be in the monastery, nor take orders as a monk; be only a lay-brother, a secret, not an open one; it may be that, even living altogether in society...”

“Enough, Father Tikhon.” Stavrogin interrupted him with aversion and rose from his chair. Tikhon also rose.

“What is the matter with you?” he suddenly exclaimed almost in fear, staring at Tikhon. Tikhon stood before him, with his hands clasped, and a painful convulsion seemed to pass for a moment across his face as if from the greatest fear.

“What’s the matter with you? What’s the matter?” Stavrogin repeated, rushing to him in order to support him. It seemed to him that Tikhon was going to fall.

“I see ... I see, as if it stood before me,” Tikhon exclaimed in a voice which penetrated the soul and with an expression of the most violent grief, “that you, poor, lost youth, have never been so near another and a still greater crime than you are at this moment.”

“Calm yourself!” pleaded Stavrogin, decidedly alarmed for him. “Perhaps I shall still postpone it.... You are right...”

“No, not after the publication, but before it, a day, an hour, perhaps, before the great step, you will throw yourself on a new crime, as a way out, and you will commit it solely in order to avoid the publication of these pages.”

Stavrogin shuddered with anger and almost with fear.^[75] “You cursed psychologist!”— he suddenly cut him short in fury and, without looking round, left the cell.

PLAN OF THE NOVEL

THE LIFE OF A GREAT SINNER

87 *THE LIFE OF A GREAT SINNER*

Page 8.

20/8 December.

- Accumulation of wealth.
 - The birth of strong passions.
 - Strengthening of the will and of the inner powers.
 - Measureless pride and struggle with ambition.
 - The prose of life and a passionate belief that incessantly overcomes it.
 - That all should plead; I only demand.
 - Not to be afraid of anything. The sacrifices of life.
 - The influence of vice; the horror and coldness from it.
 - A desire to defile every one.
 - The romance of the years of childhood. Maccary.^[76]
 - Schooling and first ideals.
 - Gets to know everything secretly.
- 88—Alone, to prepare himself for anything.

(He is incessantly preparing himself for something, although he does not know for what, and—what is strange—he does not care about *the what*, as though perfectly sure that it will come of itself.)

—Either slavery or domination. He believes. And that only. Unbelief for the first time—strangely springing up and taking shape only in the monastery. The little lame girl. Katya. Brother Misha. The Stolen Money. Underwent punishment. Fearlessness. A Cornfield. Do not kill me, Uncle. Love of Kulikov. John. Brutilov. The Frenchman Pougot. Upbraids Brutilov. Goes on with his studies. The diver. *Albert*.^[77] Shibo. Receiving the communion. *Albert* does not believe in God. The old people. Loves a

great many things secretly and keeps them to himself. They call him a brute and thus he behaves like a brute. Passionate desire to surprise all by unexpectedly impertinent tricks? But not from ambition. 89By himself. The old people. Songs, Therese-Philosophe John, Brin, Brutilov—Brother, *Albert*. Friends, and yet they torture a friend; disgusting. A meek, good and pure friend before whom he blushes. Training himself by hardships and accumulating money. *Humboldt*.

They immediately inform him that he is not their brother.

He makes friends with Kulikov. The lady doctor. He sees her in a halo. A passionate desire to foul himself, to degrade himself in her eyes, but not to please her. A theft took place. They accuse him, he exculpates himself, but the affair becomes clear. The step-brother committed the theft.

Page 7.

A strong and permanent trait.

Disrespect for the people round him, but this is not yet based on reason, but solely on a repulsion for them. Much repulsion. I eat grapes. He is beaten and flogged for his repulsion. He only shuts himself up in himself and hates still more. Haughty contempt for his persecutors, and rapidity of judgment. Extraordinary quickness of judgment signifies a strong passionate individuality. He begins to feel that he ought 90not to make quick judgments and for this he must strengthen his will.

First signs of expansiveness.

The mother's boys are at Sushar's and at Chermak's. (Their repulsion comes from stupidity.)

—It is a lie, mon Mushvar.

Arkashka and French conversations.

Arkashka, Brutilov and himself keep together.

At Sushar's—only Brutilov and his history; altogether two chapters—

All up. Because he slapped Sushar. The beginning of *Albert*.

The boarding-school. An unjust punishment takes place in the house. Exams. In the country. Self-renunciation. Katya. In the town and in the boarding-school he surprises by his brutality. *Lambert*. Heroic acts—to run away with Katya. Kulikov, with him. Murder. He does not forgive any lie or falsehood and without reasoning instantly

rushes into a fight. For a long time he does not believe Katya, then he put her to the test and at last intimidated her with the disgrace.

—Strength of will—this he set before himself as the chief thing.

91—After Kulikov, he immediately goes to ask about the lame girl.

Just here they caught him.

—In the country the lady doctor falls in love with him.

He caught her with a lover.

The lady doctor. Mr. Alfonsky—characters.

Page 9.

At the house of the old people. With the old man—reading Karamzin, Arabian tales—
On Suvorov, etc. On interest on money. He offended the younger old lady. Ask pardon,
I do not want to. He locked them in. Death. Anna and Vasilissa ran away. They sold
Vasilissa. The last communion. The first confession. Repulsion. Is there a God? Bible
and reading.

January 2.

He smashed the mirror deliberately.

He decides to keep silent and not to say a single word—

—St. mother: why do you make a show of yourself as a sacrifice? (An ideal and strange creature.)

Alfonsky, the father. (His speeches to his son and aspirations.)

—A feeling of destruction.

How many sciences must one know (his conversation with Vanka).

92—Voluptuousness (he wants to remain in this state until he has money).

—And the enormous idea of domination (a direct feeling) is hidden so deep in him that he does not feel able, by himself, to adjust himself to these people.

He is surprised at himself, puts himself to the test, and loves to plunge into the abyss—

—The running away with the little girl and the murderer Kulikov immediately after his removal from Sushar's to Chermak's. (The fact which produces an overwhelming

effect on him and which has even somewhat unsettled him so that he feels a natural need to contract inwardly and to reflect so as to lean on something.) He leans after all on money.

Of God meanwhile he does not think.

His silence ends after a year and a half by his confession about Kulikov.

After Kulikov, he is humble at home and in the boarding-school in order to reflect and find himself,

to concentrate.

—But he is unsociable and uncommunicative, nor could it be otherwise, remembering 93 and knowing such a horror, and looking at all the other children, for instance, as at something perfectly alien to him, from which he had fled away into another path, into a good path or a bad one—

The blood at times torments him. But the *chief thing*:

(He is violently carried away by something, by *Hamlet*, for instance.)

The Inhabitants of the Moon.

It is not this alone that isolates him from everybody, but really his dreams of power and his enormous height above everything.

From that height he is kept back by science, poetry, etc., *i.e.* in the sense that these are higher things and that it is therefore necessary that he should be higher and better in them too.

Only to prepare oneself, but he is strangely *certain* that it will all come by itself. Money will solve *all* questions.

The chief thing. The meaning of the first part—Hesitation, insatiable desire for the ideal, instinctive consciousness of superiority, power and strength. Looking for a fixed point to rest upon. But at any rate an unusual man.

94Page 11. [78]

or better:—Not a single dream of what to be and what's his vocation prevented him from amassing money.

—But doubt is always solved by the necessity of money and the chance of amassing a fortune (he sells himself to the men-servants).

Concerning a horse that went mad, or a fire.

The father gave him a flogging—a rupture between them—I do not consider you my father.

—He sells himself to the men-servants, and for this he is held in general contempt, but

—Finds a pocket-book—the infatuation that possessed him finally on account of his exam.—he nearly yields.

But after this the history of Katya's disgrace, and then the hellish debauchery with *Albert*, crime and blasphemy and denouncing himself as accessory to the murder with Kulikov—*straight into the abyss*. The Monastery.

—Although money concentrates him terribly on a certain *firm* point and solves *all* questions, at times the *point* wavers (poetry and many other things) and he cannot find a way out. This state of *wavering* forms the novel.

95—Strengthening of his will, wounds and burns—feed his pride. He wishes to be ready for anything.

—He made up his mind to make money in an honest way. His hesitation with regard to the pocket-book.

—Since a great many things at times *move* him sincerely, in a terrible fit of spite and pride he plunges into debauchery.

(*This is the chief thing.*)

—His estrangement from people was furthered by the fact that they all looked upon him as an eccentric and laughed or feared him.

—A broken head (*pantalons en haut*), he is ill.

Then Chermak left him alone. (Mango.)

—By the process of thinking he arrived at the conclusion, for instance, that it is not necessary to act *dishonestly*, because acting *honestly* he would make money even *better*, since to the rich all privileges for any evil are granted even without that.

—*Albert* and he steal a star from the crown and escape successfully (*he* incited), but when *Albert* began to blaspheme, he began beating him. And then he declared himself before the court as an atheist.

—Idea: that he could gain a still greater power by flattery, like Von Brin.

96But no—he thinks—I want to reach the same end without flattery.

Page 12.

I myself am God, and he makes Katya worship him. (God knows what he does with her. “I shall love you then when you can do everything.”)

—In the vagaries of his imagination he has endless dreams, up to the overthrow of God and putting himself in the place of God. (Kulikov had a strong influence.)

Problem. Memento.

To find the mean proportional.

Act 1. Early Childhood, the old man and w

" 2. The family, Sushar, the running away a

" 3. Chermak—exams.

" 4. The Country and Katya, debauchery w

20 Childhood.

20 Monastery.

40 Before deportation.

20 Woman and Satan.

40 Heroic Acts.

97—Repulsion for people from the very first consciousness as a child (through the passion of a proud and domineering nature). Out of contempt:

—“I will carry it with a high hand, shan’t degrade myself with the flattery and dexterity of a Brin.”

—And this too is from repulsion for people and from contempt for them from the earliest years of childhood—

—“Oh, if I only took upon myself the rôle of a flatterer like Brin,—what could I not achieve!”

—And begins at times to reason: “Shall I not become a flatterer? (he consults the lame girl about it). This too is a power of the spirit—to *endure oneself as a flatterer*. But no, I do not want it, it is foul—besides I shall have an instrument—money, so that they, willy-nilly, whether they choose or not, will all come to me and bow to me.”

With Kulikov he displays his spiritual power.

Kulikov does not kill him; but the murderer, the runaway soldier, they killed together.

9813

2

27

12

3

5

—

35 years ago

born in 1835.

If any one overheard his dreams, he believes he would die; but he confesses himself in everything to the lame girl.

—Whatever he reads, he tells in a peculiar way of his own to the lame girl.

—“A slap in the face is the greatest offence.” With blood.—

—The first organized dream of the significance of money.

—The lame girl keeps everything *he* is telling her secret—she does it without thinking, without his command, having subtly realized it for herself, so that in most cases he does not remind her of the necessity of keeping things secret.

The lame girl does not agree to become an atheist.

He does not beat her for that.

99Page 13.

—A single, but detailed psychological analysis of how writers, for instance, “The Hero of Our Time” (Lermontov), affect a child.

—The indignation of a child at the guests as they arrive; at the frankness and impertinence which they allow themselves. (Uvar) “How dare they?”—the child thinks.

—The fall of the old couple.

—The theatre. Sit on my knees—

—They flog him for his repulsion.

—When he and the little girl come to live with the Alfonskys, he tells her not to say a word about Gogol or about what concerns us, about travels. She should not say a word.—

—He has read an immense amount (Walter Scott, etc.).

—At the Alfonskys—not brothers. He is made to feel it.

—He pretends to be rude, undeveloped, and a fool.

—With the men-servants.

—Mrs. Alfonsky suggests the idea that they should not mix with the children.

—At Sushar’s. Alfonsky flogs him. It turns out to be for no fault.

100—Mrs. Alfonsky has invented, the running away. With Kulikov—Caught.

—A guest: they call him. They examine him. Candid thoughts.

The guest is surprised.—The house is set on fire, or something—illness.

—*Alfonsky delivers speeches.*

—At Chermak’s. Progress in studies, reading. Exam.

—After Exam. Alfonsky makes some one fall in love with—Alfonsky questions.

For the lame girl. With Katya. A cornfield.—Family scenes—Alfonsky, his friend, a box on the ear.

In Moscow, *Lambert*—

About classical education at Chermak’s (Herr Teider).

Jan. 27

He is astonished that all these (grown up) people completely believe in their nonsense, and are much more stupid and insignificant than they seem from the outside.

(One of the *scholarly* guests, falls down intoxicated and goes with gypsies in the Maryin Woods.)

A period of unbelief in God. Essential to 101 write how the New Testament had affected him. He agrees with the Gospel.

The chief thing meantime is his own *I* and his interests. Philosophical questions engage him in so far as they touch him.

Page 14. ^[79]

Lambert.

The lame girl: and I will tell how you said that you will be a king (or something ludicrous).

—He wounds her for this—

Lambert and *he*—a complete picture of depravity. But *Lambert* is intoxicated with it and finds nothing higher than this. National levity.

But *he* plunges into debauchery with an irresistible desire, but also with fear. The hollowness, dirt, and absurdity of immorality astonish him. He gives it all up and after terrible crimes he denounces himself with bitterness.

102

Of what does he

When I am grown
say he dreamt of
this or that. Of w
money did not in

He talked to her a
French and Germ
lessons to other

Because the lam
her.

He knew the who

—The history of t

(Dreams of travels, Kul and the lame girl.) They read novels.—He is highly developed and knows a great deal about many things. He knows Gogol and Pushkin. He never pretends tenderness for the lame girl until the time when he carried her in his arms.—

He meets Umno
he tells the lame
lame girl a slight

103Do it—cut me off, I don't want you to study together with my children.

—When the old couple used to be very drunk and roll about, the lame girl used to cry over them. At first he beat her, but then ceased.

—They killed a goose.—

—The Bible. Jacob bowed three times. He gets muddled with the Bible. The lame girl laughs.

—The habit of beating her; he did not want to kiss her.

(The lame girl was not frozen to death.

They found her. But she disappeared from the house of the Alfonskys.)

His incessant thinking. From the time he began to remember himself: What shall I be and how shall I do it all?

Then doubt: is power alone worth everything and could one not be the slave of all the strongest.

He began training his will power. He is stung by passions.

104Page 16.

That in each line should be heard: I know what I am writing and I am not writing in vain.

1. *The First Pages*.—(1) The tone, (2) ideas to be artistically and concisely fitted in.

The First N.B.—*The Tone* (the story is a *life*—*i.e.* although from the author, it must be concise, without being meagre in explanations, but also representing by means of scenes. In this harmony is needed). The concision of the story is at times that of Gil Blas. As though no importance is attached (by the author) to dramatic and scenic passages.

But the dominating idea of the Life should be seen,—*i.e.* although the whole dominating idea is not explained and is always left vague, the reader should always realize that the idea is religious, that the Life is of such importance that it is worth while to begin even from the years of extreme childhood—also, in the selection of that in which the *story* consists, of all facts, there is continuously displayed (*something*) and the man to be is constantly exhibited and set on a pedestal. 105

Chief Nota Bene: He began saving money from a vague idea, but that idea was all the time becoming solid, and showing itself to him in the further development of the affair.

But the chief impulse was his coming to live at Alfonsky's.

(1) Caught a mouse.

The lame girl.

The old couple.

When I shall be grown up.

The nurse, bathing, the badge, and retirement.

Anna and Vasilissa ran away.

The last communion (the Italian, money from pocket)—

The first idea.

The teacher (drunk).

The first confession, what has he got there in the little boxes, an

To convert the Devil.

The beating of the lame girl.

The corpse by the hedge. Kilyan.

Vasilissa was sold—

Interest on money and conversations with the guest.

Readings. On Suworov. Arabian tales.

Dreams.—Umnov and Gogol—(the lame girl laughs).

—The old couple grow weaker and weaker.

He locked them in. He got drunk.

Stole with the boy. Thrashed him.

Fighting with older boys.

—Complete depravity.

He beats the lame girl to make her fight the boys.

She would like to come out, but she was thrashed and she

Dreams of power and will. Umnov (looks at naked girls, tries

When the old couple died—he is eleven years old, and the lame girl is ten,—
Alfonsky—The old man and woman. Death. He makes a speech to the lame girl upon
how to behave.

—Before that: They teased the lady—fell 107 on her, they were dragged home,
flogging—He was afraid to complain.

The first fight, he rushed to beat the gentleman with the badge.

I shall never play the coward.

—I'll learn not to play the coward. (He was afraid, but thrashed the boy.)

—He cut himself for a test.

—Instruction from the boy as to fornic...on (Therese-Philosophe gave him a beating for
it).

But the book she took away from him.

He began to save money.

To amass (he tells the lame girl).

The lame girl was taken into the Alfonsky family before.^[80]

He, directly he arrived, puts her through an examination. (Advice to her: do not speak
of Gogol and of nothing of ours.)

First part. The boy is wild, but thinks a tremendous lot of himself.

—The man-servant Osip—at first he was taken into the house to amuse them by telling stories, by his jovial character. *Alfonsky* had whipped Osip's brother to death, then he took Osip and pressed him for the army. Immediately Osip escaped (he is also Kulikov). They killed Orlov. They part. Kulikov (Osip) let him off.

—In a year and a half's time the hero's step-mother weeps at Alfonsky's betrayal of her. He keeps a mistress openly. Osip's sister (for that reason he whipped Osip's brother to death). Alfonsky is killed by the peasants (?).

The Canvas of the Novel.—The hero's step-mother, Alfonsky's wife (a society lady), when she pined, becoming an old maid, had a fiancé (an officer or some one—teacher).

But she married Alfonsky. Unhappy and offended by Alfonsky (she slapped his mistress in the face) she renewed relations with her first lover who happened to turn up at that time. The boy saw them kissing. "You may report it to your father," and then begged him not to tell. The boy kept silence; but Alfonsky knows that his son knows that he has horns and that the step-mother has a lover.

He made a row in the village on account of the lame girl. He mocked Katya. The mother was beside herself because of Katya. In town with *Lambert*—and so on.

Here (Al—y) who made a row in the village, 109the peasants *might* have killed him, which the boy might witness,—and—

(I may make up about the step-mother and her lover, and to what extent and degree the boy is *involved*)

—Alfonsky has a benefactor—and indeed his chief enemy, because he is a benefactor. All the benefactor's favours humiliate his pride. The benefactor does not like to live unless he can act the part of benefactor, but for one inch of favour demands three yards of gratitude. Both humiliate themselves, humiliate each other, and hate each other to the verge of illness.

Page 17.

—The extraordinary pride of the boy has the result that he can neither pity nor despise these men.

Nor can he be very indignant with them. He cannot sympathize either with his father or mother. At the exam, he distinguished himself unexpectedly,—he wanted to appear an imbecile. He despises himself greatly because he could not restrain himself and distinguished himself.

—The dangerous and uncommon idea that he is to become an extraordinary man possessed him from his first childhood. He thinks of it incessantly. Cleverness, skill, learning—all these he wishes to acquire as a means to being extraordinary in the future.

Again money seems to him at least not unnecessary, a power useful on all occasions, and he decides on money:

Knowledge appears to him terribly difficult.

Now again it seems to him that even if he is not to be an extraordinary man, but most ordinary, money will give him everything,—i.e. power and the right to despise—

And at last he repents and is tormented in his conscience because he wishes so basely to be extraordinary.

But he himself does not know what he will be.

The pure ideal of a free man flashes across him at times; all this when at the boarding school.

—He made friends with Osip, about the Khlysti, they almost sleep together.

—Umnov; he knows Gogol by heart.

Page 70.

Monastery—God give us and all animals a good night—(To make a study of Humboldt's description of animals, Buffon and the Russians.)

—Science as worship.

—About the bear.

—Of his first love and how he became a monk—(chastity).

—On the nature of Satan?

—Anikita goes to Chaadaev to exhort him. He calls Tikhon: the latter comes, argues, and then asks to be forgiven.

—On little insects and the universal joy of *Living Life*, Tikhon's inspiring stories.

—His friendship with the boy, who allows himself to torment Tikhon by pranks. (The devil is in him.)

—Tikhon learns of Therese-Philosophe—He blesses him in his downfall and revolt.

—Tikhon's clear stories about life and happiness on earth. Of his family, father, mother, brothers. Extraordinarily simple and therefore moving stories from Tikhon of his transgressions against his people, of pride, ambition, mockery (I wish I could unmake all this again now, Tikhon says).

This alone is in itself moving, that he has become friends with the boy.

Tikhon's story of his first love, of children, it is lower to live as a Monk; one must have children, and it is *higher* when one has a vocation.

—Therese-Philosophe disturbed Tikhon. And I thought that he had already been hardened. He vowed obedience to the boy. He obeys him.

(Loftily, vigorously, and movingly.)

Tikhon says to a certain lady that she is a traitor to Russia as well as a malefactor towards her children; of how they are deprived of childish visions even from their very childhood. The study of them (by Leo Tolstoi and Turgenev), although they are exact, reveals an alien life. Pushkin alone is a real Russian.

The boy has at times a low opinion of Tikhon: he is so funny, he does not know things, he is so weak and helpless, he comes to me for advice, but at last he perceives that Tikhon's mind is as strong as a babe is pure; that he cannot have an evil thought, cannot be tempted, and therefore all his acts are clear and beautiful.

Page 71.

Tikhon. On humility (how mighty humility is).

All about humility and free will.

—Of forgiving the unforgivable sinner (that this torment is the most tormenting).

Page 19.

113The Main Idea.

May 3/15.

After the Monastery and Tikhon the Great Sinner comes out into the world in order to be *the greatest of men*. He is sure that he will be the greatest of men. And in that way he behaves: he is the proudest of the proud and behaves with the greatest haughtiness towards people. The vagueness as to the form of his future greatness coincides perfectly with his youth. But he (and this is cardinal) has *through Tikhon* got hold of the idea (conviction) that in order to conquer the whole world one must conquer oneself only. Conquer thyself and thou shalt conquer the world. Does not choose a career, but neither has he the time: he begins to watch himself profoundly. But along with this there are also certain contradictions:

(1) Gold (amassing) (a family on his hands); amassing money was suggested to him by a usurer, a terrible man, the antithesis of Tikhon. (2) Education (Comte—Atheism—Friends). Education—He is tormented by ideas and philosophy but he masters that which is essential.

Suddenly youth and debauchery. A martyr's act and terrible crimes. Self-renunciation. But out of mad pride he becomes an ascetic and pilgrim. 114 Travels in Russia. (Romance of love. Thirst for humiliation), etc., etc., and so on.

(The canvas is rich.)

Fallings and risings.

Extraordinary man—but what has he done and achieved.

Traits.—Out of pride and infinite haughtiness towards people he becomes meek and charitable to all because he is already higher than all.

He wanted to shoot himself (a child was exposed at his door).

He ends with establishing a Foundling Hospital and becomes a Haase.^[81] Everything is becoming clear.

He dies confessing a crime.

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STAVROGIN'S MEETING WITH TIKHON

BY

V. FRICHE

117STAVROGIN'S MEETING WITH TIKHON

From Dostoevsky's Note-books

Bishop Tikhon, to whom Stavrogin makes his "Confession," was conceived by Dostoevsky as one of the principal characters in the great—unnamed—novel in five books, the plan of which he communicated in 1870 to A. N. Maikov. The action of the second book, on which Dostoevsky rested all his hopes, was to take place in a monastery to which a boy, who had committed a criminal offence, had been sent by his parents. He was "fully developed and depraved" (a type, as Dostoevsky says, well known to him), "a little wolf and a nihilist," who comes in the end to feel the beneficent influence of Bishop Tikhon. "I want to make Tikhon Sadonsky in the second book the central figure," Dostoevsky wrote, "of course under a different name, but he is also a bishop and will live in a monastery in retirement.... It is no longer a Konstanjhoglo, nor the German (I forget his name) in *Oblomov*, nor the 118Lopukhovs and Rakhmetovs. True, I shall not create anything, but shall only reveal the actual Tikhon whom I have long since taken to my heart with rapture."

When Dostoevsky later conceived the idea of *The Life of a Great Sinner*, the hero of *The Life*, "sometimes a believer, sometimes an atheist," had indeed to be spiritually reborn in a monastery under the influence of the "holy and grand" figure of Tikhon, and to issue into life as "the greatest of men."

When Dostoevsky finally decided on his conception of *The Possessed*, his intention was to give a conspicuous place to Tikhon, to whom Stavrogin (the prince) was to give his Confession, and this Confession adds considerably to Peter Stepanovich Verkhovensky's story about the Petersburg period of Nikolai Vsevolodovich's life (*The Possessed*, Part I. chap. v.).

In the notes published by L. P. Grossman in his book on Dostoevsky (notes taken from the Dostoevsky Note-books in the Historical Museum), there are hints as to Stavrogin's (prince) meeting with Tikhon, and also as to the subject of their conversation and the crime of which Stavrogin repents in his Confession.

Thus Dostoevsky intended the following words to appear in Stavrogin's "document": "And I 119did all this as an aristocrat, an idler, a man uprooted from the ground. I admit, though, that the chief factor was my own wicked will, and had nothing to do with my environment; of course nobody commits such crimes. But all, who are uprooted from the ground, do the same kind of things, although more feeble and watery. Many people do not even notice their nasty acts and think themselves honest."

Tikhon, who in the note appears under the name of “Bishop,” advises that this passage shall be struck out, and Stavrogin replies in a grumbling tone: “I am not a man of letters.”

This passage is not in Stavrogin’s Confession. The idea that many people sin in the same way, yet go on living (“in peace and quiet with their conscience”), is expressed there not by Stavrogin, but by Tikhon. And it is Tikhon, not Stavrogin, who says that the latter’s moral fall is a result of his being uprooted from the ground (words inserted by Dostoevsky in the text of the proofs while correcting them).

In these published notes there is also some indication of the motive which decided Stavrogin to make his “document” public:

“Tikhon says: On earth people must be happy.

“(Prince): I am an idler and I am bored. I know that on earth one can be happy (and must be happy) and that there is something which gives happiness, but I do not know what it is. No, I am not one of the disappointed. I think I am one of the corrupt and idle.

“The Prince says to him: I want to test my strength and I will tell you about the little girl.”

As can be seen from Stavrogin’s Confession, he did commit his crime from “boredom.” Not satisfied with Stavrogin’s admission of this in the text, Dostoevsky tried to heighten the motive by adding the following words in the margin: “I say frankly, I was sometimes by no means far from thinking that I should be exiled to Siberia. The main thing is—I am bored. I was so bored that I could have hanged myself, I think. I remember, at that time I was much taken up with theology. That, it is true, diverted me a bit, but later I felt still more bored.”

Finally, in one of the notes published by Grossman the reason is indicated why Stavrogin, when it comes to the point, gives up the idea of publishing his “document”: “the Bishop says that the confession of faith is all right, but that faith without deeds is dead, and he demands a still higher deed, a still more difficult act, a *moral labour*, as if he said: ‘Well, Prince, are you capable of this?’ And the Prince admits that 121 he is a Prince, he confesses that he has lied and takes back his words: in the end—Uri.”^[82]

To these notes of Dostoevsky, which are already known, we are now able to add a series of new notes taken from Dostoevsky’s Note-book which is in the Central Archives (No. 15 in A. G. Dostoevsky’s list).

On page 30 we find:

“Lisa^[83] pays attention to Nechaev.^[84]

He kills Shatov.

Lisa is convinced that *he* (Stavrogin) had killed him.

She hurries off to him.

(Meanwhile the Prince^[85] and Tikhon; before that the Prince and Shatov. Everything as before.)

Lisa runs away with Nechaev. St. Tr.^[86] And the book-pedlar. He dies. The Prince hanged himself. Everything as before.”

This, clearly, is quite a different version of the end of the novel so far as it relates to Lisa. Another indication as to the meeting of Tikhon and Stavrogin is found on page 37:

122“Sum total. Stavrogin as a character.

All noble impulses to a monstrous degree.

(Tikhon) and all passions (*with unfailing boredom*).

He throws himself on the girl^[87] and on the beauty.^[88]

He did not really love the beauty but despised her, but flared up with passion (illusory and momentary, but infinite) and, as soon as he has committed the crime, he is disappointed. He escaped punishment, but hanged himself.”

There is also a hint with regard to one detail in the supposed conversation between Tikhon and Stavrogin. On page 38 we find: “He confesses to Tikhon that he gets fun out of making game of the beauty.” But actually Stavrogin does not make game of Elisabeth Nikolaevna, and she is scarcely mentioned in the Confession and in the conversation with Tikhon.

There is also a hint with regard to the crime committed by Stavrogin on page 37: “No one knows the secret of the marriage^[89] except Dasha and the beauty. Only Tikhon knows about the little girl.”

123Finally, on page 36 there is a hint with regard to the passage in the novel to which Stavrogin’s meeting must be referred: “Stavrogin advises Dasha to give up S. T. and run away with him to Switzerland, to Uri. He had already done this before. Here there is a misunderstanding with S. T., who, to spite her, tells her he is a cuckold ... and Dasha goes to her brother. At the same time (the beauty showed jealousy) she warns him that Stavrogin is married to the lame girl. The beauty is in despair, since all her hopes

are lost (for she suspects that the prince is in love with her, and she herself is madly in love with him); she laughs at Dasha; she runs and gives herself to the prince. Immediately after this the murder of the lame girl.

(He went to Tikhon).”^[90]

Such are the hints and notes out of which eventually grew the chapters of “At Tikhon’s,” and we do not know the reason why they were not included by Dostoevsky in *The Possessed*. Some details of Stavrogin’s Confession were later used by Dostoevsky for the character of Versilov in *The Raw Youth*.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE UNPUBLISHED CHAPTER

OF

THE POSSESSED

BY

V. KOMAROVICH

127THE UNPUBLISHED CHAPTER

OF

THE POSSESSED

The chapter of *The Possessed*, Stavrogin’s confession of his terrible crime, excluded from the completed novel, first became known to Merezhkovsky. Mrs. F. M. Dostoevsky (Anna Gregorievna Dostoevsky, Dostoevsky’s widow) originally intended to invite Merezhkovsky to edit the 1906 Jubilee Edition of Dostoevsky’s Works and showed him the precious fragment in manuscript. In his book, *Tolstoi and Dostoevsky*, M. preserved his first impression of that reading by saying that it surpasses the bounds of the possible in its concentrated expression of horror. A. G. Dostoevsky hesitated to publish the chapter in full, and gave parts of it only in her edition of 1906 as a supplement to *The Possessed*. Her hesitation is understandable: Stavrogin’s

terrible confession was not a complete secret even to Dostoevsky's contemporaries. Excluded from the novel at Katkov's request, the Confession became known by hearsay, and round these rumours grew up the dark legend of Dostoevsky as a Marquis de Sade. It was the doing of his enemies and of faithless friends.^[91] But the feeling which kept the author's widow from publishing the fragment of *The Possessed* must not restrain the student of Dostoevsky. Indeed, the dark legend that Dostoevsky was a sensualist is based (by N. Strakhov chiefly) either on an obscure calumny, or on coarse and callous surmises as to the mystery of that troubled and too exacting conscience which was the mark of Dostoevsky's character. And we believe that the surest way of freeing Dostoevsky's memory from those false accusations is by means of open enquiry and the fullest understanding of Dostoevsky as an artist.

"The scene from Stavrogin (the rape, etc.)," of which Strakhov speaks in the letter to Tolstoi, is preserved in the Dostoevsky Archives which belong to the Pushkin Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences.^[92] It is a note-book of seventy-seven pages carefully executed in the handwriting of A. G. Dostoevsky, a copy, although unfinished, of a hitherto unknown manuscript of Dostoevsky. It is not difficult to determine the place which had been intended for that fragment in *The Possessed*. The manuscript is headed "Chapter IX. At Tikhon's." From the contents it can be seen that the chapter so numbered must be referred to Part Second of the novel. In our fragment the following incidents are supposed to have already taken place: Shatov's box on Stavrogin's ear (the last chapter of Part I.) and Stavrogin's conversation with Shatov in the night (the first chapter of Part II.). On the other hand Stavrogin's public declaration of his marriage with Maria Timofeevna (Chapter X. Part II.) is only expected and is still being considered by Stavrogin and Tikhon. Thus, our Chapter IX. ought to follow immediately after Chapter VIII. of Part II. ("Ivan the Tsarevich"), where the maddened Peter Verkhovensky confesses in a passionate whisper his incredible love of Stavrogin, and where Stavrogin—in the highest state of tension (as was ever the case with Dostoevsky)—reveals his true self. (Stavrogin as Ivan Tsarevich, the unknown "he" of all Russia, is hiding himself, the "beautiful" and "sun," but through Verkhovensky's wiles is already enslaved by the demon of nihilism.) Yet Stavrogin has two ways and two inclinations which constitute the basis and centre of the novel so far as it affects the religious destinies of Russia. Apart from the temptations of nihilism, he, like the future Aliosha Karamazov, knows also the way to the monastery and to religious obedience. Thus after the embraces of the devil—Verkhovensky (in Chapter VIII.)—there is the confession to Tikhon (in our Chapter IX.).

The question which has to be answered first by the student of this fragment is the question of its relation to the text of the finished novel, *The Possessed*. Is this Chapter

IX. a part of the artistic whole, which, against the artist's wish, has accidentally been omitted, and which therefore must now be restored to its proper place in that whole? Or is it one of those numerous fragments of Dostoevsky's, which, corresponding to some early but subsequently altered scheme of the novel, have been detached from the finished novel, and have not been included in the final text by the artist, but are now preserved only in Dostoevsky's rough manuscripts as curious examples of the complex origin of his books? As to the first of these suppositions, the words of N. Strakhov, which there is no reason to distrust, speak quite clearly. "The scene from 131 Stavrogin (the rape, etc.) Katkov did not want to publish." Thus the omission of the chapter "At Tikhon's" from the novel did not arise from the artist's decision, but from an external cause, the request of the editor of the *Russkii Vèstnik* where *The Possessed* was appearing.

Strakhov's evidence is confirmed by the connection which exists between the omitted Chapter IX. and Dostoevsky's creative activity generally, and also with *The Possessed* as an artistic whole.

The motif of a cruelly insulted little girl, developed in Stavrogin's Confession, is evidently one of Dostoevsky's long-standing and enduring ideas. In the year 1866, at the time of his friendship with the family of the Korvin-Krukovskys, Dostoevsky told this idea of his as "a scene from a novel planned by him in his youth." The hero of the novel one morning goes over all his recollections in memory, and "suddenly in the very heat ... of pleasant dreams and bygone experiences begins to feel an awkwardness—something like an inner pain, an alarm.... It appears to him that he must recollect something, and he makes efforts, strains his memory.... And suddenly, he actually called to mind, as vividly and realistically as if it had happened yesterday ... whereas for all these twenty years it had not worried him at all. He 132 remembered how once, after a night of debauchery and under provocation from his friends, he had raped a little girl of ten."^[93]

The connection between this idea and Stavrogin's Confession is indisputable. The recollection of a sin after a long forgetfulness leads straight to the closing scene of Stavrogin's Confession and to the last "vision."

But there are several connecting links between that idea (which in 1866 he thought of as of long standing and remote) and Chapter IX. of *The Possessed*. Putting aside *Crime and Punishment*, where Svidrigailov's vision before his death is also an echo of that idea, *The Life of a Great Sinner*, which was conceived by him in the years 1869 and 1870, was without doubt to have developed the theme of the injured girl.

The hero of *The Life* was meant to show by the whole course of his existence the religious consistency of life in general, and the inevitability of the acceptance of God. *The Life* in its first parts was to tell the story of the constant and increasing immersion of man in sin. To the artist this utter absorption of the hero in sin was a necessity. Here Dostoevsky by artistic experiment tested one of his dearest and most secret ideas—his belief that each personality and man's life on earth generally will not desert, nor can desert, the kingdom of the Grace of the Spirit so long as it preserves itself entire; that sin has nothing ontological in itself; that man's soul is by its very nature a "Christian." If the notes of *The Life* are read attentively, one sees how Dostoevsky tries to bring the sin and downfall of his hero to the utmost limits, to the last boundary—and this is in order that Dostoevsky's optimistic belief in the essential illumination of life through Grace should be more strikingly justified, and should prevail in the end of *The Life* where "everything is becoming clear," and the ("great") sinner turns to God and dies confessing his crime.

Sin, the deepest sin, is not innate in, but accidental to, man—this belief of Dostoevsky's dominated *The Life*, and led the artist to contrive situations in which the extremes of sin could be shown. To Dostoevsky the violation of the little girl was an extreme of this sort. This theme was provided by the writer with a view to the religious trials of the hero of *The Life*, for among the notes of the plan there is the following: "He makes an attempt on the lame girl..."

It should be plain that Dostoevsky's interest in this conception had risen not from personal recollections, and was not maintained by them, but by the artist's desire to find some adequate way of expressing in the plot his religious conception of the world.

But it is not only the conception of Chapter IX. that is anticipated by the plan of *The Life*. There is a deeper and closer connection between them.

The note, "he makes an attempt on the lame girl," occurring in the plan, is closely connected as a particular development of the general idea with the other note, "straight into the abyss." But this last is intimately connected with another and quite different note, brief but of great significance in the eyes of Dostoevsky, "The Monastery." The Great Sinner, the violator of the little girl, doing penance to Tikhon in the monastery, was meant to form the second part of *The Life*, and in the plan is sketched out by independent notes.

It is at the same time the artistic skeleton of our Chapter IX. of *The Possessed*. The relations between Tikhon and the Great Sinner merely anticipate the dialogue between Stavrogin and Tikhon. "He vowed obedience to the boy" (*i.e.* Tikhon to the

Great Sinner); “Friendship with the boy who allowed himself to torture Tikhon by pranks (The devil is in him).” These notes are closely related to those passages of the dialogue of Chapter IX. where Tikhon humbly lowers himself before Stavrogin, asks to be forgiven, confesses his love for Stavrogin, while Stavrogin is haughty and mocking.... “The boy has at times a low opinion of Tikhon, he is so funny, he does not know things, he is weak and helpless, comes to me for advice; but at last he realizes that Tikhon is strong in mind, as a babe is pure, and that he cannot have an evil thought.”

This note appears already as a simple sketch of the dialogue between Stavrogin and Tikhon, in which the relations of the sinner and the ascetic are depicted in this double way by vacillations between suspicious mockery and adoration.

The close correspondence between Stavrogin’s Confession and the plan of *The Life* can be explained by the history of the logical construction of *The Possessed*. That novel grew from the complicated re-fashioning of the originally simple idea which, as it grew larger and broader, drew into itself fragments of *The Life*, which had been conceived at the same time, but had not yet been executed. Stavrogin’s appearance in *The Possessed* in the part of the principal hero marks a comparatively late stage in the conception of that novel, which coincides with Dostoevsky’s determination not to write *The Life*. Stavrogin’s character introduced into the novel the broad religious and artistic problems of *The Life of a Great Sinner*. The Great Sinner’s meeting with Tikhon and his confession was an organic part of *The Life*, foreseen by Dostoevsky even in the first moments of inspiration.^[94]

In so far as Stavrogin is the Great Sinner, his meeting with Tikhon and confession (*i.e.* our Chapter IX.) are a necessary part of *The Possessed*. This conclusion is justified by Dostoevsky’s direct evidence. There is no doubt that Dostoevsky had Chapter IX. (At Tikhon’s) in view when he says to Katkov, in his letter of October 8, 1870, that in *The Possessed*, which was at that time being published in the *Russkii Vèstnik*, he “wants for the first time ... to deal with a certain group of people which has as yet been little dealt with in literature. I take Tikhon Sadonsky to be the ideal of such a character. He too is a priest living in a monastery in retirement. With him I confront the hero of my novel and bring them together for a time.”^[95] That is, up to the end of writing the novel, Dostoevsky himself considered that Chapter IX. was a necessary, inseparable, and essential part of it. The relationship between 137 *The Life of a Great Sinner* and *The Possessed* explains that necessity.

Turning to the completed text of *The Possessed*, we find signs of the seemingly accidental disappearance of Chapter IX. Without that chapter certain details of the

novel appear to be incomplete. Stavrogin, when he awoke “looking stubbornly and curiously at an object in the corner of the room which had struck him, although there was nothing new or particular there...”^[96] Shatov, seeing Stavrogin out, says to him: “Listen, go and see Tikhon ... Tikhon, the late Bishop, who through ill-health lives in retirement in this city, in our Yefimev-Bogorodskii Monastery.”^[97] The first two details (we could indicate others) are, without Chapter IX., superfluous and have no artistic foundation. And only Stavrogin’s confession about the devil who persecutes him, only his meeting and conversation with Tikhon, only Chapter IX., give to these details the sense of that anticipation of motive which Dostoevsky was so fond of using.

Finally, by excluding Chapter IX. from the novel, we violate the characteristic grace of Dostoevsky’s construction. We violate Dostoevsky’s aesthetic principle, according to which the action in its early stages advances by motives concealed from the reader, and only when it approaches the catastrophe is the hidden cause immediately made clear by the hero’s lengthy confession. Such a “belated exposition” is Raskolnikov’s theory, communicated only after the murder. “The Revolt” and “The Legend of the Great Inquisitor”—Ivan Karamazov’s Confession—are communicated to the reader only after he already knows that Ivan has consented in his own mind to patricide (“Voluptuaries”). There is also the case of Versilov’s confession to his son—after the absurd letter to Madame Ahmakov and immediately before the catastrophe. Stavrogin’s confession before the catastrophe, together with events in the last chapter of the second part and the chapters of the third part, correspond perfectly to this obviously characteristic principle in the construction of Dostoevsky’s novels.

Such are the reasons for thinking that Chapter IX. was accidentally excluded and that it is necessary to restore it to its proper place in the novel.

There are, however, reasons leading to an opposite solution of the question, and they are the more convincing.

If we compare the character of Stavrogin, as he appears in the novel, with the new material which our fragment (Chapter IX.) adds to that character, important and deep-seated contradictions are at once apparent. A pale mask concealing behind itself indifference to good and evil—such is Stavrogin as we know him in the novel. Chapter IX. ostensibly brings to life that dead inert force by means of his religious experiences. Here Stavrogin’s Confession, however absurdly expressed, is a penance, *i.e.* the act of a live religious will. “You have discovered a great way, an unheard-of way,” Tikhon says to Stavrogin, “to punish yourself in the eyes of the whole world by the disgrace which you have deserved; you submitted to the judgment of the whole church, without believing in the church.” There is also a true humility in Stavrogin: “You ... speak to me

exactly as to an equal,” he says to Tikhon; and Tikhon replies: “Your saying that I speak to you as to an equal, although involuntary, is a splendid saying.” And finally, the last verdict of the confessor: “For your unbelief God will forgive you, for you truly respect the Holy Spirit without knowing him.” If this Confession were included in the novel, then Stavrogin’s end, his callous—in a religious sense—suicide, would be perfectly impossible and artistically unprepared for. A man who 140 “truly respects the Holy Spirit” could not have written the letters before his death to Darya Pavlovna; Dostoevsky would have prepared a completely different end from the end of Stavrogin for the elect of the Spirit: “the citizen of the canton of Uri hanged here behind the door, etc.”

This inconsistency in the principal character of the novel, which arises if Chapter IX. is included, clearly forbids any such inclusion. Besides, there are direct proofs that at the time he finished work on *The Possessed*, and also later, Dostoevsky considered that Chapter IX. was excluded from the novel. The words of the Apocalypse, “And to the Angel of the Laodicean Church,” would hardly have been repeated by Dostoevsky at the end of the novel in the last talk of Stepan Trofimovich with the “book-pedlar,” if he had not considered that Chapter IX. was finally excluded from the text.

Although *The Possessed* was published more than once after 1871, Dostoevsky, though no longer bound by Katkov’s censorship, did not include Chapter IX. And finally, the following fact gives us the clearest evidence as to how Dostoevsky regarded the fragment in relation to the text of *The Possessed*: a considerable part of Stavrogin’s Confession was inserted by Dostoevsky almost without alteration in the confession of 141 Versilov (*The Raw Youth*), in 1874.^[98] The artist might have used for the new novel the material of the rough draft of the preceding novel, but could not possibly have used a fragment of the authentic text.

Thus, both the completeness of Stavrogin’s character and the definitely expressed wish of the author compel us to conclude that Chapter IX. was not accidentally omitted, but did not belong to the novel. It is a variant of the manuscript, but nothing more. How then are we to reconcile this conclusion with the one which tells in favour of the opposite solution? Surely Dostoevsky’s letter of October 8, 1870, to Katkov clearly refers to our fragment as a necessary part of the novel.

The date, although it coincides with the beginning of the publication of the novel, does not fix the final moment of the conception of *The Possessed*. The autumn of 1870 is the time when the idea of *The Possessed* had become closely related in Dostoevsky’s mind with the idea of *The Life of a Great Sinner*. Stavrogin is almost 142 identified with the hero of *The Life*. And since the crisis of that Life, as it was planned, was the

repentance of the sinner and his conversion to God with Tikhon's help, Dostoevsky had then planned the same conversion for Stavrogin. At that moment (the final moment in the creation of the novel, for the first part was already being published) Dostoevsky might, indeed, have thought that Chapter IX.—the story of the meeting of the sinner with Tikhon and the beginning of his repentance—was necessary.

The second part of the novel was evidently written by Dostoevsky with the determination to show the "great sinner" (Stavrogin) converted. Our Chapter IX. corresponds to the "serene" Stavrogin who does not appear in the novel, and of whom a few hints are preserved in the rough draft which no doubt issue from the idea of *The Life*.

The hesitation and vacillation as to the plan of the novel spread over so long a time that, when he was finishing the second part of the novel (Chapter IX.), Dostoevsky was even nearer to the plan of *The Life of a Great Sinner* than to the form which *The Possessed* finally took. He still meant to represent his great sinner, Stavrogin, in the light of Grace. But, as he worked on the last chapter of the novel and approached the catastrophe in the third part, Dostoevsky evidently realized that it was impossible to carry out the religious and artistic objects which he had in view. Dostoevsky did not find himself possessed of the artistic powers needed to convert the Great Sinner, and everything that was leading up to the expected conversion (Chapter IX.) was abandoned. Only an echo of his original intention is left—not in the novel even, but on the first page, in the quotation from the Gospels of the promise to the sinner that he shall find salvation at the feet of Christ. The crimes of the hero appeared to the writer at the end of his work suddenly, and against his expectation, like a stronghold, enduring and self-sufficient.

And in this sketch of the evolution of the significant idea of *The Possessed* is shown, I think, the usual course of Dostoevsky's artistic problems and their solution. *The Idiot*, *The Raw Youth*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* had all, like *The Possessed*, been meant originally to reveal that desire for "universal harmony" cherished by Dostoevsky, the universal Hosannah which Dostoevsky, the thinker, had visualized as the hidden essence of the universe, clouded, but only accidentally, by the phantom of sin. But each time, in the finished work of Dostoevsky, the artist, there triumphed a sterner, but for all that a more religious, conception of the world as a world subject to sin, beyond the Grace of the Spirit, which is granted it as a gift, but not hidden in the substance of nature.

Stavrogin's Confession, as it echoed Dostoevsky's optimistic view, had inevitably to disappear in his masterpiece.

THE UNFULFILLED IDEA

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO

THE LIFE OF A GREAT SINNER

BY

N. BRODSKY

147THE UNFULFILLED IDEA

Creative ideas and conceptions circled perpetually round the agitated Dostoevsky like a whirlwind. His soul knew no rest, he was always at boiling-point, and he rushed simultaneously along different roads in different directions. Artistic visions raced before him in many streams at the same time. "Ideas were born in his head like spray in a whirlpool,"—such was A. E. Risenkampf's memory of Dostoevsky as a boy when a pupil in the College of Engineering. The same impression of a dynamic spirit, saturated through and through with ideas and visions, Dostoevsky also produced when he was a mature man. "Listen, listen," was his usual beginning as he entered upon the discussion of a problem that interested him, so we read in the reminiscences of Prince V. M. "I'll tell you what,' he would add, and then would clutch his head, as though there immediately rushed into it so many ideas that he found it difficult to begin. Very often 148for that reason he began to speak from the end, from the conclusion, from a few very remote, very complicated entanglements of his thought; or he would express the first and principal idea and then would develop the parentheses, and begin expressing supplementary and explanatory ideas or anything that occurred to him *à propos* at the moment.... This sudden inspiration was so strong in him that it was felt not only in him but around him...."^[99]

This intellectual peculiarity of Dostoevsky's is easily verified when one listens to his own confessions. "I have a multitude of ideas," he wrote in 1845 to his brother Michael, when he had just begun his literary career. "There is so much that is new in my life every day, so many changes, so many impressions.... I am always busy, I have a multitude of ideas and I write incessantly," he wrote in 1846. In 1849 he writes to his brother: "I do not waste time in vain; I have thought out three stories and two novels,

one of which I am writing now.” When he came out from prison in 1856 he wrote to A. Maikov from Semipalatinsk: “I can’t tell you what agonies I suffered through not writing at the galleys. And yet work was boiling within.” ... A few years later we have the same confession, which proves the incessant, complex, and many-sided activity of Dostoevsky’s spirit. In 1868 he wrote to A. Maikov from Florence: “I have a tremendous novel in my head now.” “I have an idea for a fairly long story of twelve printed sheets, which attracts me. I have another idea.” “I have a number of themes,” he writes to Maikov in 1870. “I have six stories conceived and planned out,” he writes to N. N. Strakhov in 1870.

It is no wonder that Dostoevsky, possessed by a clamorous multitude of visions, could not arrest them all, and could not fix them in print. Every instant new subjects occurred to him and new characters. Somewhere in the subconscious part of him all this material was melted into one monolithic whole, but it gushed out so impetuously and variously on the surface and overflowed into so many channels that it was impossible to catch all the details and all the particulars. N. N. Strakhov, Dostoevsky’s intimate friend, left a remarkable description which testifies to the unrestrained overflow of Dostoevsky’s imagination. “New characters, new schemes for novels, new problems occurred to him incessantly; they besieged him. They even hampered his work.” Strakhov says, “Certainly he only wrote a tenth part of the novels which he had thought out and carried about with him, sometimes for many years. Some of them he told in detail and with great enthusiasm, and he had endless schemes like this which he had not time to work out.” Neither Strakhov nor the other memoir writers (with the exception of Sophie Kovalevsky) told Dostoevsky’s admirers about those plans of which he spoke “with great enthusiasm.”... In Dostoevsky’s note-books there remain traces of his creative ideas, “ideas for new stories,” plans of unfinished works, “memento. For my whole life.” Thus on one page I found a note: “In 1860, (1) The Darling, (2) Spring Love, (3) The Double (to re-write it), (4) Memoirs of a Convict (fragments), (5) Apathy and Impressions.” “Spring Love” is the title of a novel of which only the plan is left.... Under the date Nov. 23, 1859, he put down the “plan of the tragedy *Fatum*. Plan of Comedy: the lady places the married teacher under arrest because he is married.” Among the stories of Makar Ivanovich (in *The Raw Youth*) there was a story about “a squire who rebuilt a village that had been destroyed by fire. Stinking Lizzie. How the Holy Monks killed a monk, etc.”^[100]

151 On Dec. 11, 1868, Dostoevsky announced to Apollon Maikov that he had conceived the idea of a “tremendous novel. Its title is *Atheism* (it will not be ready for two years).” The author attributed great importance to this novel. “When I have written this last novel, then I can die—I shall have expressed myself completely.” “Now I

believe that I shall express the whole of myself in it," he wrote of the same novel, in March 1869, to Madame S. A. Ivanov-Khmirov.

The principal character of the novel was meant to be "a Russian man of our society, *not young*, not highly educated, but not uneducated, of some standing, and *suddenly*, when already on in years, he loses his belief in God. All his life he was occupied with his business, and never got out of the rut, and distinguished himself in nothing until the age of forty-five. (The solution of the problem is psychological: deep feeling, a man, and a Russian.) The loss of his belief in God affects him tremendously (indeed, the action in the novel, the setting, are huge, Dostoevsky wrote on Dec. 11, 1868, to A. Maikov). He looks about everywhere among the younger generation, among atheists, Slavophiles and Westerners, among Russian fanatics and hermits, among priests; by the way, he gets stuck fast on the hook of a Jesuit propagandist, a Pole; from him he descends into the abyss of Khlistovshchina [a fanatical Russian sect], and at last he finds Christ and Russia, the Russian Christ and the Russian God." "Two or three characters have shaped very well in my head, among them a Catholic enthusiast, a priest (of the kind of Fanier's St. Francis)," Dostoevsky wrote to Madame S. A. Ivanov-Khmirov on March 8, 1869, confident that his novel is "a real poem"; "it must have a great effect on account of its theme"; "it will attract the reader involuntarily." But that novel was not written—new ideas crowded in.... Yet the mysterious threads of the creative idea were not torn. They are combined in other entanglements, in another novel of which Dostoevsky wrote to Strakhov on March 24, 1870, that its "idea has been alive in me for three years."^[101] That new novel was intended for the magazine *Sarya*. The author wrote that the "whole plan of the novel was 'ripe.'" "During three years a great deal has become ripe"; "the idea of the novel demanded a large volume"; in its bulk at any rate, the same as Tolstoi's *War and Peace*. "The novel will consist of five very long stories (about fifteen printed folios each). The stories are quite separate from one another, so that they could even be sold separately, and published in various magazines (except the two stories in the middle)," so he wrote to A. Maikov on March 25, 1870. "The common title will unite them into a whole novel."

In his letter to N. N. Strakhov of March 24, 1870, we hear about the title of the novel *The Life of a Great Sinner*. Dostoevsky's letter, written on the following day to A. Maikov, gives very valuable particulars about the novel. The action of the first book takes place as far back as the forties. "The main question which runs through all the books is the same which has tormented me, consciously and unconsciously, all my life—the existence of God. The hero is at different times in his life an atheist, a believer, a fanatic, and sectarian, now again an atheist. The action of the second book

will take place in a monastery. I place all my hopes on this second book. Perhaps they will say at last that I have written not merely trifles. (To you alone, Apollon Nikolaevich, I make the confession: I want to make Tikhon Sadonsky in the second book the central figure, of course under a different name, but he is also a bishop and will live in a monastery in retirement.) A thirteen-year-old boy who took part in a criminal offence, highly developed and depraved (I know that type), the future hero of the whole novel, is placed in the monastery by his parents (educated, of our class) to be educated there. The young wolf and nihilist of a boy makes friends with Tikhon (you surely know the character and the whole aspect of Tikhon.) I shall put Chaadaev also here in the monastery (also of course under a different name). Why should not Chaadaev spend a year in a monastery? Suppose that Chaadaev, after his first article, for which his mental state was examined into by doctors every week, could not bear it any longer and published, let us say, abroad a pamphlet in French. It is extremely likely that for this offence he might have been sent to spend a year in a monastery. Belinsky, for instance, Granovsky, even Pushkin might come to Chaadaev as visitors. (It is not Chaadaev; I only take that as a type in my novel.) In the monastery are also Pavel Prusky;^[102] Golubov^[103] is also there, and the monk Parfeny.^[104] 155 (In this world I am an expert, and I know the Russian monastery from my childhood's days.) But the chief thing is—Tikhon and the boy. For the love of God do not tell any one the contents of the second part. I never tell my themes beforehand; it feels awkward; but to you I confess myself. To others it may not be worth a farthing, but to me it is a treasure. Don't tell them about Tikhon. I wrote to Strakhov about the monastery, but I did not write about Tikhon. Perhaps I shall represent a grand, positive, holy character. It is no longer a Konstanjhoglo, nor the German (I forget his name) in *Oblomov*, nor the Lopukhovs and Rakhmetovs. True, I shall not create anything, but shall only reveal the actual Tikhon whom I have long since taken to my heart with rapture. But I shall, if I succeed, consider even this an important deed for myself. Do not then tell it to any one. But for the second book, for the monastery, I must be in Russia.^[105] Ah, if only I succeed in it! The first book is the childhood of the hero. It is understood that children are not in the scene; there is a love story.”

Dostoevsky attributed to this novel the importance of a personal confession and final 156summing up. “This will be my last novel.” “I consider this novel as the last word in my literary career.” Six years had to be spent in work on it. Interrupted by the idea and plan of *The Possessed*, busily engaged in writing for the *Russkii Vèstnik*, Dostoevsky was waiting the moment when he could sit down to his large canvas “with pleasure.” But the novel was only planned out with any distinctness in its first stage, in

the rough draft of the syllabus; and the individual characters, ideas, and scenes have been dispersed in a series of subsequent novels.

Among Dostoevsky's manuscripts, preserved by his widow, A. G. Dostoevsky, and handed over by her to the Russian Historical Museum, are Dostoevsky's note-books, and in one of them is the detailed plan of a novel portraying the principal hero in the days of his childhood in the monastery and after he came out of the monastery. The plot of the novel changed in the course of writing; now the boy is with his family, now from the beginning he is with the Alfonsky family. The details of the novel were also erratic: its "canvas" could always be covered with new patterns. The novelist's favourite word "invent" serves to indicate that the plan 157of the novel in question could by no means be considered fixed.^[106]

We publish the *complete* text of the plan of *The Life of a Great Sinner*, preserving all the peculiarities of the writing and punctuation of the original.

The novel was planned during various months in 1869-70.

The significance of this novel autobiographically is undeniable. Strakhov has already called Dostoevsky the most subjective of writers. A great many things show that in *The Life of a Great Sinner* Dostoevsky intended to dissect his soul, to open its wounds, to free himself from the tormenting impulses of his ego, to chastise the outbreaks of his spiteful, vicious thoughts, to lay bare before himself the secret places of his soul, and to bring out into the light of day that darkness, so as to disperse it—like Gogol, who fought the defects of his own spirit in describing the characters in his books.

158The hero of *The Life* is not of course a portrait of the writer; the details of the description are invented,^[107] but *The Life* gives hints of the most interesting kind for an understanding of the writer's character.

The whole background in the first part is steeped in the raw material of real life, of recollections of the writer's actual experiences. "Brother Misha"—is he not Michael, one of Dostoevsky's younger brothers? Sushar is Nikolai Ivanovich Souchar, the French teacher who gave lessons to the Dostoevsky children. *Chermak* is Leontii Ivanovich Chermak, in whose boarding-school Fedor Dostoevsky spent the years 1834-37. *Umnov* is a playmate of the Dostoevsky brothers who used to come to their house, the Vanichka Umnov who brought them various books and books in manuscript (for instance *The House of the Mad*, by Voyekov, etc.).

The list of authors and books known to the well-read hero of *The Life* takes us vividly into the childhood and youth of Dostoevsky himself. The New Testament, the Bible, Gogol, Pushkin, Walter Scott, Karamzin, works on history and geography, *Arabian*

Nights, etc.—all these are confirmed by Dostoevsky's own accounts of the early years of his life and in the reminiscences of him by his brother Andrei Mikhailovich. The latter, speaking of their family readings, points out first of all that the father and mother read aloud the usual books to their children: *The History of the Russian State* by Karamzin, and above all volumes xi. and xii. Karamzin's *History* was Fedor Dostoevsky's table-book, and he always read it when he had nothing new to read. Karamzin's stories *Poor Lisa* and *Marfa Possadnitsa* were also read aloud, also *Letters of a Russian Traveller*. Dostoevsky himself owned to N. N. Strakhov (December 2, 1870): "I grew up on Karamzin"; and in *The Journal of a Writer* Dostoevsky said that at the age of ten he "already knew almost all the principal episodes of Russian history from Karamzin." Andrei Mikhailovich Dostoevsky says: "I saw Walter Scott most often in the hands of my brother Fedor." To a correspondent who asked Dostoevsky to advise him about his daughter's reading, Dostoevsky wrote in 1880: "When I was twelve, during my summer holiday in the country I read Walter Scott all through. From that reading I took with me into life so many splendid and lofty impressions that they certainly formed a great force in my soul for the struggle against impressions of a tempting, sensual, and corrupting kind." According to the recollections of Andrei Dostoevsky, Pushkin was read many times and was almost learnt by heart. Gogol, too, was one of his brother's favourite writers in boyhood. Referring to Dostoevsky's love for Gogol, A. E. Risenkampf recorded that Dostoevsky as a boy recited to him by heart whole pages from *Dead Souls*. Concerning the New Testament Dostoevsky wrote: "I come from a Russian and religious family. We in our family knew the New Testament almost from early childhood." As a boy of eight he was greatly impressed by hearing in church the Bible story of Job.^[108]

Relations of F. M. Dostoevsky remember that the stories from the *Arabian Nights* were told to the brothers Dostoevsky by an old woman, Alexandra Nikolaevna, who used often to visit the family. She would tell one story after another, and the children would not leave her side. In F. M. Dostoevsky's own words he was very fond of books of adventure. *The Inhabitants of the Moon* is evidently the title of a book which was very popular in the thirties—"Of the Inhabitants of the Moon and other remarkable discoveries made by the astronomer Sir John Herschel during his stay at the Cape of Good Hope, translated from the German, Petersburg, 1836." That infatuation for the theatre, particularly for *Hamlet*, which possessed the hero of *The Life* finds confirmation also in Dostoevsky's biography.^[109]

The frequency in *The Life* of details based on facts taken by the author from his boyhood inevitably introduces a question as to the right of the student to look for

a *personal* key in the author himself to his hero's character. Indeed, many of the hero's spiritual experiences testify to their subjective character.

He loved to test himself; he trained his will-power; he accustomed himself to "self-torment." This thirst for self-torment, this anxiety to spend himself in suffering, so as to be convinced of his ability to "endure," was characteristic of Dostoevsky himself. A letter is brought to him from his brother. "I have invented a new kind of enjoyment for myself—a 162most strange one—to make myself suffer," he tells his brother Michael, in a letter of January 1, 1840. "I take your letter, turn it over in my hand for several minutes, feel if it is full weight, and, having looked at it sufficiently and admired the closed envelope, I put it in my pocket.... You won't believe what a voluptuous state of soul, feeling, and heart there is in that! And so I sometimes wait for a quarter of an hour...."

The hero of *The Life* is unsociable, "uncommunicative," keeps a great many things to himself, is reserved and avoids people. Michael Dostoevsky in 1838 calls his brother "reserved," not without reason. Fedor Dostoevsky, writing to him about the "strange and wonderful things" in his life, says "that he will never tell any one this long story." In the College of Engineering, Dostoevsky, according to the recollection of his fellow-students, usually sat or walked alone, and kept himself apart from all. In 1854 he wrote from Semipalatinsk: "I live a lonely life here; I hide myself from people as usual." That avoidance of human beings in the hero of *The Life* was fed by his contempt for them, by a feeling of repulsion, and sprang from "a proud, passionate, and domineering nature." Let us call to mind a fragment from Dostoevsky's 163letter to his brother Michael in 1847: "But, Lord, what a multitude of disgusting, narrow-minded, grey-bearded wiseacres, connoisseurs, Pharisees there are, who *pride themselves* on their experience, *i.e.* on their insignificance (for they are all made to the same measure), who eternally preach contentment with one's lot, belief in something, sobriety in life, and satisfaction with one's place, without having realized the meaning of those words,—a satisfaction which is like monastic flagellation and denial,—and with inexhaustible petty spite they condemn a strong, fiery soul who cannot endure their banal daily time-table and calendar of existence. They are scoundrels with their farcical earthly happiness. They are scoundrels!"

The hero of *The Life* had by nature a sharply defined sense of personality, a consciousness of his superiority, of inner strength, of his own uniqueness. Does not the very same tone sound in the proud and "hyperbolic" admissions of Dostoevsky himself, when intoxicated by the success of *Poor Folk*, his first literary venture?^[110] "A crowd of new writers has appeared. Some are my rivals. Herzen (Iskander) and

Goncharov are especially remarkable among them. 164 They are highly praised. But the first place is mine for the time being and, I hope, for ever.”

Much later, when he had served hard labour, he writes (Oct. 1, 1859) to his brother from Tver: “Towards the middle of December I will send (or bring myself) the corrected *Double*. Believe me, brother, that the correction, provided with a preface, will be worth a *new novel*. They will at last see what *The Double* is like. I hope I shall make them even too deeply interested. In a word, I challenge them all. And, finally, if I do not correct *The Double* now, when shall I do it? Why should I lose a superb idea, the greatest type, in its social importance, which I was the first to discover, and of which I was the prophet?” The gigantic individualism of the hero of *The Life*, stressed more than once by the author, is to be heard in Dostoevsky’s characteristic admission to Apollon Maikov: “Everywhere and in everything I reach the furthest limit; I have passed beyond the boundaries of all life” (Aug. 16, 1867).

Certain eccentricities in the character of the hero of *The Life* are worth attention. He loved to “surprise everybody by unexpectedly rude pranks”; “behaved like a monster”; “offended an old woman.” Something of the kind, certain collapses in his spiritual life and in his relation 165 to people, were to be found in Dostoevsky. Thus on his own admission he was rude to the officer who taught algebra in the College of Engineering (1838). In his letter to his brother (1847) he gives himself the following characteristics: “I have such a bad repulsive character.... For you and yours I am ready to give my life, but at times, when my heart is melting with love, you can’t get a kind word from me. My nerves do not obey me at such times.... How often I have been rude to Emily Fedorovna,^[111] the noblest of women, a thousand times better than myself; I remembered how I used sometimes to be deliberately cross with Fedya whom at the same time I loved even better than yourself....”

There flared up at times in the hero of *The Life* “a feeling of destructiveness,” and the same feeling showed itself in Dostoevsky’s view of the world when he was a boy. “Up till now I did not know what wounded vanity meant,” he wrote on Oct. 31, 1838. “I should blush if that feeling possessed me ... but—do you know?—I should like to crush the whole world at one go.” Those plunges into “abysses” and the voluptuousness of the hero of *The Life* have their counterpart in certain details which 166 Dostoevsky himself relates of his youth. “Good-bye,” he ended his letter to his brother of Nov. 16, 1845; “the little Minnies, Claras, Mariannes, etc., are enchanting, but they cost a terrible amount of money. The other day Turgenev and Belinsky scolded me terrifically for my disorderly life.”

“The idea of amassing money,” one of the hidden thoughts of *The Great Sinner*, had early engrossed the attention of the greatest martyr in the ranks of poverty-stricken writers, who all his life long was in need of money and passionately awaited the chance of living and working in conditions of security like Tolstoi and Turgenev. “Money and security are good things. When shall I get rid of my debts?” “Money—I have not one brass farthing.” “It is very painful.” “If you can save me, do.” “I am again in such straits as to be ready to hang myself.” “I am really in an awful state now.... I have not got a farthing.” “All my life I have worked for money, and all my life I have been constantly in need.” “How can I write when I am hungry?... Damn myself and my hunger. But my wife is nursing, and she *herself* has to go and pawn her last woollen skirt. And it has been snowing now for two days. And then they ask me for artistry, 167for purity of poetry, without strain, without violence, and they point to Turgenev and Goncharov! Let them only see in what conditions I work ... ”—that is the cry, echoing like a groan through Dostoevsky’s letters at various periods of his life, particularly when he was abroad, and during the years when *The Life of a Great Sinner* was being shaped. We have to suppose that the religious problem was being solved by Dostoevsky much in the same way as it was in the life of the hero of the novel—by “stretches” of belief and unbelief.

An analysis of *The Life* which reveals the autobiographic substratum lets us see with greater certainty the *personal* traits in those other novels of Dostoevsky’s into which *The Life of a Great Sinner* split off. Versilov’s son, born Dolgorukov (*The Raw Youth*), with his “idea of discipline,” approaches the character in Dostoevsky’s unwritten novel who in this respect, by the way, is akin to Stavrogin. The hero of *The Possessed*, with his falls, “abysses,” and depravity, is also akin to the Great Sinner. The pages about “Tushar’s” boarding-school, the exposed child, the figure of Lambert in *The Raw Youth*, are taken from *The Life*. In certain particulars the Great Sinner approaches Ivan Karamazov and Dmitri Karamazov. Tikhon of *The Life* passed 168into *The Possessed* and *Brothers Karamazov* in the characters of the Bishop and of the old monk Zosima.^[112]

Thus the novel connects the most important works of Dostoevsky’s later period, and is allied in certain details with the early experiments, for instance with *Notes from the Underworld*. But much of what he had planned remained unexecuted and faded in the working out of the chosen themes. Where is the broad picture of the people’s religious life, with their world of sectarians and believers of the Old Faith, into which the Great Sinner plunged? The pale figure of Makar Ivanovich Dolgorukov, the pilgrim, is very far from corresponding with a great “poem.” The principal character became much diminished and spiritually toned down in the “raw youth,” Versilov.

The sketch of the unwritten novel is generally valuable for the light it throws upon Dostoevsky's habits of creation. *The novel was not written*. The huge canvas would not have been covered by the mass of characters that hovered in the writer's imagination. The novels *Atheism* and *169The Life of a Great Sinner* clearly prove that Dostoevsky could not cope with the swarm of his creative imagination. He could not tame and conquer the rush of his elemental visions. His soul burnt too fiercely to be satisfied with an inferior light. All in flames, his soul set on fire and destroyed the flashing visions. And it seems as if iron necessity alone chained the writer to the desk and made it possible for us to read his works. There is something *accidental* in the published works of Dostoevsky. They do not represent the *whole* creator; they are paler than his original conceptions.

THE END

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FOOTNOTES

1. This is almost certainly No. 11 above, since it contains, besides notes for *The Idiot*, notes for *The Eternal Husband*.
2. *Dostoevsky's Genius*, Odessa, 1921.
3. Originally "Chapter IX."
4. After "madman" is struck out: "and at any rate, a perfectly talentless creature."
5. After the words "wicker chair" there stood originally: "Nikolai Vsevolodovich was still much distracted by some inner overpowering agitation."
6. After the words "looked at" originally stood: "he thought and, certainly, did not know of what."
7. There is struck out "ridiculous."
8. There is struck out "and rubbish."
9. After "And about the duel" there followed originally: "You did hear a great deal here."

10. Originally “This is not a bad account.”
11. Originally “No, I am not well.”
12. Originally “were cured.”
13. After “although I do see it ... and sometimes” there originally followed “I am not sure that I see.”
14. After “smile” there is struck out: “And do you know, it does not suit you at all to cast your eyes down: it is unnatural, ridiculous, and affected.”
15. After “all” there is struck out: “You must be awfully glad.”
16. After “perhaps” there is struck out: “That’s not bad. Why do you have doubts, then?”—“I believe imperfectly.”
17. After “his head still lower” there is struck out: “the corners of his lips suddenly began twitching, quickly and nervously.”
18. After “unbelief” is struck out: “Oh, parson!”
19. After “I do” is struck out: “They are fascinating words.”—“Fascinating,’ these are strange words for a bishop; you are altogether a queer fellow.”
20. After “Stavrogin cut him short” is struck out: “this is for those in the middle, this is for the indifferent ones, isn’t it?”
21. Instead of “perfectly, etc.,” the original had “I don’t need you in the least.”
22. After “tell everything” there is struck out: “for which you came here.”
23. After “guessed” there is struck out: “from your face.”
24. After “chronicle” there is struck out: “it must be supposed that it is now known to many.”
25. After the words “above all not a man of letters” there is written in Dostoevsky’s hand on the proofs “one remark, only one.” In the text of the opening of Chapter I., published as a Supplement to Vol. VIII. of the Jubilee Edition of 1906 of Dostoevsky’s Works, there is the following passage, which is not in the proofs:

“I shall allow myself one more remark, although I am straying in advance of my story. This document is, in my opinion, a morbid work, a work of the devil who took hold of that gentleman. It is like this: as if a man were suffering from acute pain and tossing about in bed, trying to find a position to relieve his pain even for a moment. Not even

to relieve the pain, but only to change it, momentarily, for another. In a situation like that, one of course does not bother about the becomingness or good sense of the position. The fundamental idea of the document is a terrible, undisguised craving for self-punishment, the need for the cross, for immolation in the eyes of all. And yet this need for the cross in a man who does not believe in the cross, does not this in itself form 'an idea,' as Stepan Trofimovich expressed himself once, on a different occasion though. On the other hand, the document is at the same time something wild and random, although evidently written with a different intention. The author declares that he could not help writing it, that he was 'compelled,' and this is quite likely; he would have been glad to let that cup pass him by, if only he could; but he indeed, so it seems, could not do so, and he merely snatched at a convenient excuse for a fresh outburst. Yes, the sick man tosses about in his bed and wishes to exchange one pain for another, and now the struggle with society appears to him the easiest position, and he throws out a challenge to it.

"Indeed, in the very fact of such a document is implied a new, unexpected, and unforgivable defiance of society—only to find some enemy to pick a quarrel with!

"And who can say? perhaps all this, the sheets and their intended publication, are but the same as the Governor's bitten ear, only in a different shape. But why this should come into my mind now, when so much has already been explained, I can't understand. I bring forward no proof, nor do I at all assert that the document is false, that is, completely made up and fabricated. Most likely the truth ought to be sought somewhere midway. However, I have already wandered too far in advance; it is safer to turn to the document itself. This is what Tikhon read."

Here ends the first chapter in the Supplement to Vol. VIII. of Dostoevsky's Works, Jubilee Edition, 1906.

[26.](#) After "should meet, etc.," there is struck out: "in the presence of my friends and of her husband."

[27.](#) After "with their daughter" is struck out: "I think her age was about fourteen."

[28.](#) After "I do not remember" is struck out: "who they are, from where they come, and where they are now, I don't know in the least."

[29.](#) After "girl" is struck out: "(I lived with them on familiar terms, and they stood on no ceremonies with me)."

- [30.](#) After “always called forth” there is struck out: “Having indulged up to the age of sixteen with extraordinary immoderation in the vice to which J. J. Rousseau confessed, I stopped it at the very moment which I had fixed, at the age of seventeen.”
- [31.](#) After “presence” is struck out: “she did not cry, but only sobbed under the blows, certainly because I stood there and saw everything.”
- [32.](#) After “herself” is struck out: “up till now she perhaps only feared me, not personally, but as a lodger, a stranger, and, I believe, she was very timid.”
- [33.](#) Originally “As soon as the three days were over.”
- [34.](#) After “beating” is struck out: “but then I suddenly asked myself: can I stop now, and I instantly answered that I can.”
- [35.](#) Originally “I kissed her face and legs: when I kissed her legs.”
- [36.](#) Originally “I wished to get up and go away—so unpleasant was this to me in such a tiny child, from a sense of pity. But I overcame the sudden sense of my fear and remained.”
- [37.](#) After “cuff” is struck out: “twice on her cheek.”
- [38.](#) After “no longer” is struck out: “I rose and moved close to her.”
- [39.](#) After “room” is struck out: “to see if everything was in its place as before.”
- [40.](#) After “what I wanted” is struck out: “I wanted all the while to be completely sure.”
- [41.](#) Instead of “at last, etc.,” originally stood: “I finally decided that I could leave and I went downstairs.”
- [42.](#) After “beat her head” is struck out: “there was a commotion.”
- [43.](#) After “stood” is struck out: “in the lobby.”
- [44.](#) There is struck out “I heard nothing of the result of the medical evidence.”
- [45.](#) The words “after she had been long buried” are struck out.
- [46.](#) After the word “imagine” is struck out: “I will not decide one way or another whether into my resolution there entered even unconsciously (of course, unconsciously) anger for the wild cowardice which had possessed me after the affair with Matryosha. Really, I do not think so.”
- [47.](#) After “distract” is struck out: “and because it had become intolerable.”

- [48.](#) After “creature” is struck out: “of ten years.”
- [49.](#) After “even now” is struck out: “The recollection of the deed itself is perhaps not even now loathsome to me. Perhaps the memory of it even now contains something which is gratifying to my passions.”
- [50.](#) After “hallucination” is struck out: “I have other old memories, perhaps, worse than this. There was a woman whom I treated worse, and she died of it. I killed two men in a duel who had done me no harm. I was once mortally insulted, and did not avenge myself. I have it to my account that I poisoned some one, deliberately and successfully, without being found out. If necessary, I will confess it all.”
- [51.](#) After “shall” is struck out: “of this I am perfectly sure.”
- [52.](#) Originally “In Switzerland I was able two months after that to fall in love with a girl, or, to speak more accurately, I experienced a fit, etc.”
- [53.](#) Originally “And the more of those, the better.”
- [54.](#) This is how the chapter is numbered in the original.
- [55.](#) After “motionless” the following is struck out: “It is strange that the signs of impatience, absentmindedness, and even of delirium, that had been in his face all that morning, almost disappeared, and gave place to calmness and a kind of sincerity, that gave him an air almost of dignity.”
- [56.](#) After “coaxing” is struck out: “he added, as though he could no longer keep it up, and suddenly fell again for a moment into his former tone, but he immediately smiled sadly at his words.”
- [57.](#) Before the words “I wrote sincerely” there is struck out: “This seems to me a subtlety; does this really matter...”
- [58.](#) The phrase “Make myself out, etc.,” is struck out.
- [59.](#) After “he did not finish” is struck out: “You mean you would like me immediately to express to you my contempt,” Tikhon said firmly.
- [60.](#) There is struck out: “I am somewhat surprised at your opinion about other people and about the ordinariness of such a crime.”
- [61.](#) After the sentence “Tikhon, etc.,” is struck out: “Stavrogin had no thought of going away; on the contrary he began again for some minutes to fall into a reverie.”
- [62.](#) After “lady” is struck out: “very timidly.”

- [63](#). All this passage, from “Well” to “easier for me,” is struck out.
- [64](#). After the words “Tikhon murmured, etc.,” there is struck out: “For what? What have you done to me? Ah, yes, it is the monastic formula!”—“For voluntary and involuntary sin. Every man who commits a sin has already sinned against all, and every man is in some way guilty for another’s sin. There is no solitary sin. As for me I am a great sinner, and perhaps worse than you.”
- [65](#). After “I could not” is struck out: “You understand very finely, but....”
- [66](#). After “Why do you” is struck out: “do this.”
- [67](#). After “endure” is struck out: “with humility.”
- [68](#). After the word “document” is struck out: “in spite of all the tragedy.”
- [69](#). After “the laughter will be universal” is struck out: “and add to it the remark of the philosopher that in other people’s misfortune there is always something gratifying to us.”—“That is true.”—“Yet ... you ... yourself.”
- [70](#). After “form” is struck out: “in the style.”
- [71](#). After “dirty little girl” is struck out: “and all that I said about my temperament and, well, all the rest ... I see.”
- [72](#). After “Tikhon was silent” is struck out: “Yes, you know people, that is, you know that I shan’t bear this.”
- [73](#). The fourteenth proof-sheet ends here—there appears to be something missing.
- [74](#). After the word “monk” is struck out: “However much I respect you, I ought to have expected this. Well, I must confess to you, that in moments of cowardice this idea has occurred to me—once having made these pages universally known, to hide from people in a monastery, be it only for a time. But I blushed at the meanness of it. But to take orders as a monk, that did not occur to me even in moments of most cowardly fear.”
- [75](#). The words “Stavrogin, etc.,” are struck out and several variants substituted, none of which, evidently, satisfied Dostoevsky.
- [76](#). This is in Roman letters in Dostoevsky’s MS.
- [77](#). Throughout the MS. Dostoevsky writes this name and Lambert (see below) in Roman characters.
- [78](#). At the top of page 11 is the sentence: “Scenes (cows, tigers, horses, etc.)”

- [79.](#) On this sheet Dostoevsky noted: *To begin to send out on Feb. 22, Jan. 27.* Under the name of *Lambert* stands the name of the author. On the top are several dates—Feb. 10, 15, 22.
- [80.](#) On the left-hand margin Dostoevsky wrote, beginning at the words “They caught a mouse” and continuing to this point, “To squeeze all this into four folios (maximum).”
- [81.](#) F. M. Dostoevsky had evidently in mind the famous Russian doctor and philanthropist Haase.
- [82.](#) *I.e.* the idea of Stavrogin’s going away with Dasha to Switzerland and living there as a Swiss citizen.
- [83.](#) Lisa, *i.e.* Elisabeth Nikolaevna Drosdov.
- [84.](#) Nechaev became Peter Verkhovensky.
- [85.](#) Stavrogin.
- [86.](#) Stepan Trofimovich, Peter Verkhovensky’s father.
- [87.](#) Dasha or Darya Pavlovna.
- [88.](#) Elisabeth Nikolaevna.
- [89.](#) Stavrogin’s marriage to the lame girl.
- [90.](#) Below is added: “The prince buries the lame girl, and Kuleshov (Fedka the murderer) confesses that it was he who did it.... And the beauty quickly went out of her mind.”
- [91.](#) See Turgenev’s letter of Sept. 24, 1882, to Schedrin; also N. N. Strakhov’s letter of Nov. 28, 1883, to Leo Tolstoi.
- [92.](#) The author of this article, published in *Builoe*, No. 18, 1922, seems at the time of writing to have been ignorant of the version of Stavrogin’s Confession published by the Central Archives.—Translators.
- [93.](#) *Reminiscences of Childhood*, by Sophie Kovalevsky.
- [94.](#) See Dostoevsky’s *Biography, Letters, etc.*, pp. 202, 233, etc., in the original.
- [95.](#) See “Dostoevsky as contributor to *Russkii Vèstnik*” in *Builoe*, No. 14, 1919; F. M. D.’s unpublished letters from 1866 to 1873.
- [96.](#) See *The Possessed* (original), Edition 1888, vol. vii. pp. 212-213.

97. See *ibid.* p. 238.

98. Compare the passage in Stavrogin's Confession from "A year ago, in the spring, going through Germany, I absentmindedly left the station behind me," to the words "A whole shaft of bright slanting rays from the setting sun rushed out and poured their light over me," with the corresponding passage of Chapter VII., Part III., of *The Raw Youth*, third edition, 1888, pp. 461-462.

99. Prince V. M., *Reminiscences of F. M. Dostoevsky*, "Dobro," No. 2-3, 1881.

100. From unpublished materials.

101. "This future novel has been tormenting me now for more than three years."

102. A sectarian of the old faith, who founded a printing-office in the '60's to print the books of the old faith; later embraced orthodoxy.

103. Editor of the journal of the old faith, *Istina*, in the '60's; embraced orthodoxy under the influence of the monk Pavel.

104. Author of the book in three volumes, *The Story of My Wanderings in Russia, Moldavia, Turkey, and the Holy Land*; Moscow, 1856.

105. Dostoevsky was at that time in Dresden.

106. The original draft gives the following characteristics of the hero:

—No authority.

—Germs of the most violent physical passions.

—Inclinations towards boundless power and unshakable belief in his authority. To move mountains. And is glad to test his power.

—Struggle—his second nature. But quiet, not stormy.

—Despises falsehood with all his strength.

107. Evidently Dostoevsky got some material for his "model" in I. N. Shidlovsky, a friend of his youth, who serves also as the prototype of Stavrogin in the first stages of work upon him.

108. Madame A. G. Dostoevsky made the following note in the margin of the title-page of *Brothers Karamazov* (seventh edition, p. 308), beside the quotation "A hundred and four sacred stories from the Old and New Testament." "Fedor Mikhailovich learnt to

read from this book.” The book is in the F. M. Dostoevsky Museum. (From unpublished materials.)

[109](#). See complete edition of F. M. Dostoevsky’s Works, vol. i., Petersburg, 1883, p. 11; N. N. von Voght, “To the Biography of Dostoevsky,” in *Istoricheskii Vèstnik*, 1901, xii. p. 1028. See also Dostoevsky’s letter of Aug. 9, 1838, to his brother Michael.

[110](#). “I am now nearly drunk with my own fame.” (F. D.’s letter of Nov. 16, 1845.)

[111](#). The wife of Michael Dostoevsky.

[112](#). A few expressions, typical of Dostoevsky, are found in *The Life* and in his later works: thus, the expression “sacrifice of life” found place there and in *Brothers Karamazov* (Part I. Book I. chap. v. p. 33; third edition of F. M. Dostoevsky’s Works).

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