VII.

While he feasted his eyes upon Aglaya, as she talked merrily with Evgenie and Prince N., suddenly the old anglomaniac, who was talking to the dignitary in another corner of the room, apparently telling him a story about something or other—suddenly this gentleman pronounced the name of "Nicolai Andreevitch Pavlicheff" aloud. The prince quickly turned towards him, and listened.

The conversation had been on the subject of land, and the present disorders, and there must have been something amusing said, for the old man had begun to laugh at his companion's heated expressions.

The latter was describing in eloquent words how, in consequence of recent legislation, he was obliged to sell a beautiful estate in the N. province, not because he wanted ready money—in fact, he was obliged to sell it at half its value. "To avoid another lawsuit about the Pavlicheff estate, I ran away," he said. "With a few more inheritances of that kind I should soon be ruined!"

At this point General Epanchin, noticing how interested Muishkin had become in the conversation, said to him, in a low tone:

"That gentleman—Ivan Petrovitch—is a relation of your late friend, Mr. Pavlicheff. You wanted to find some of his relations, did you not?"

The general, who had been talking to his chief up to this moment, had observed the prince's solitude and silence, and was anxious to draw him into the conversation, and so introduce him again to the notice of some of the important personages.

"Lef Nicolaievitch was a ward of Nicolai Andreevitch Pavlicheff, after the death of his own parents," he remarked, meeting Ivan Petrovitch's eye.

"Very happy to meet him, I'm sure," remarked the latter. "I remember Lef Nicolaievitch well. When General Epanchin introduced us just now, I recognized you at once, prince. You are very little changed, though I saw you last as a child of some ten or eleven years old. There was something in your features, I suppose, that—"

"You saw me as a child!" exclaimed the prince, with surprise.

"Oh! yes, long ago," continued Ivan Petrovitch, "while you were living with my cousin at Zlatoverhoff. You don't remember me? No, I dare say you don't; you had some malady at the time, I remember. It was so serious that I was surprised—"

"No; I remember nothing!" said the prince. A few more words of explanation followed, words which were spoken without the smallest excitement by his companion, but

which evoked the greatest agitation in the prince; and it was discovered that two old ladies to whose care the prince had been left by Pavlicheff, and who lived at Zlatoverhoff, were also relations of Ivan Petrovitch.

The latter had no idea and could give no information as to why Pavlicheff had taken so great an interest in the little prince, his ward.

“In point of fact I don’t think I thought much about it,” said the old fellow. He seemed to have a wonderfully good memory, however, for he told the prince all about the two old ladies, Pavlicheff’s cousins, who had taken care of him, and whom, he declared, he had taken to task for being too severe with the prince as a small sickly boy—the elder sister, at least; the younger had been kind, he recollected. They both now lived in another province, on a small estate left to them by Pavlicheff. The prince listened to all this with eyes sparkling with emotion and delight.

He declared with unusual warmth that he would never forgive himself for having travelled about in the central provinces during these last six months without having hunted up his two old friends.

He declared, further, that he had intended to go every day, but had always been prevented by circumstances; but that now he would promise himself the pleasure—however far it was, he would find them out. And so Ivan Petrovitch *really* knew Natalia Nikitishna!—what a saintly nature was hers!—and Martha Nikitishna! Ivan Petrovitch must excuse him, but really he was not quite fair on dear old Martha. She was severe, perhaps; but then what else could she be with such a little idiot as he was then? (Ha, ha.) He really was an idiot then, Ivan Petrovitch must know, though he might not believe it. (Ha, ha.) So he had really seen him there! Good heavens! And was he really and truly and actually a cousin of Pavlicheff’s?

“I assure you of it,” laughed Ivan Petrovitch, gazing amusedly at the prince.

“Oh! I didn’t say it because I *doubt* the fact, you know. (Ha, ha.) How could I doubt such a thing? (Ha, ha, ha.) I made the remark because—because Nicolai Andreevitch Pavlicheff was such a splendid man, don’t you see! Such a high-souled man, he really was, I assure you.”

The prince did not exactly pant for breath, but he “seemed almost to *choke* out of pure simplicity and goodness of heart,” as Adelaida expressed it, on talking the party over with her fiance, the Prince S., next morning.

“But, my goodness me,” laughed Ivan Petrovitch, “why can’t I be cousin to even a splendid man?”

“Oh, dear!” cried the prince, confused, trying to hurry his words out, and growing more and more eager every moment: “I’ve gone and said another stupid thing. I don’t know what to say. I—I didn’t mean that, you know—I—I—he really was such a splendid man, wasn’t he?”

The prince trembled all over. Why was he so agitated? Why had he flown into such transports of delight without any apparent reason? He had far outshot the measure of joy and emotion consistent with the occasion. Why this was it would be difficult to say.

He seemed to feel warmly and deeply grateful to someone for something or other—perhaps to Ivan Petrovitch; but likely enough to all the guests, individually, and collectively. He was much too happy.

Ivan Petrovitch began to stare at him with some surprise; the dignitary, too, looked at him with considerable attention; Princess Bielokonski glared at him angrily, and compressed her lips. Prince N., Evgenie, Prince S., and the girls, all broke off their own conversations and listened. Aglaya seemed a little startled; as for Lizabetha Prokofievna, her heart sank within her.

This was odd of Lizabetha Prokofievna and her daughters. They had themselves decided that it would be better if the prince did not talk all the evening. Yet seeing him sitting silent and alone, but perfectly happy, they had been on the point of exerting themselves to draw him into one of the groups of talkers around the room. Now that he was in the midst of a talk they became more than ever anxious and perturbed.

“That he was a splendid man is perfectly true; you are quite right,” repeated Ivan Petrovitch, but seriously this time. “He was a fine and a worthy fellow—worthy, one may say, of the highest respect,” he added, more and more seriously at each pause; “and it is agreeable to see, on your part, such—”

“Wasn’t it this same Pavlicheff about whom there was a strange story in connection with some abbot? I don’t remember who the abbot was, but I remember at one time everybody was talking about it,” remarked the old dignitary.

“Yes—Abbot Gurot, a Jesuit,” said Ivan Petrovitch. “Yes, that’s the sort of thing our best men are apt to do. A man of rank, too, and rich—a man who, if he had continued to serve, might have done anything; and then to throw up the service and everything else in order to go over to Roman Catholicism and turn Jesuit—openly, too—almost triumphantly. By Jove! it was positively a mercy that he died when he did—it was indeed—everyone said so at the time.”

The prince was beside himself.

“Pavlicheff?—Pavlicheff turned Roman Catholic? Impossible!” he cried, in horror.

“H’m! impossible is rather a strong word,” said Ivan Petrovitch. “You must allow, my dear prince… However, of course you value the memory of the deceased so very highly; and he certainly was the kindest of men; to which fact, by the way, I ascribe, more than to anything else, the success of the abbot in influencing his religious convictions. But you may ask me, if you please, how much trouble and worry I, personally, had over that business, and especially with this same Gurot! Would you believe it,” he continued, addressing the dignitary, “they actually tried to put in a claim under the deceased’s will, and I had to resort to the very strongest measures in order to bring them to their senses? I assure you they knew their cue, did these gentlemen—wonderful! Thank goodness all this was in Moscow, and I got the Court, you know, to help me, and we soon brought them to their senses.”

“You wouldn’t believe how you have pained and astonished me,” cried the prince.

“Very sorry; but in point of fact, you know, it was all nonsense and would have ended in smoke, as usual—I’m sure of that. Last year,”—he turned to the old man again,—“Countess K. joined some Roman Convent abroad. Our people never seem to be able to offer any resistance so soon as they get into the hands of these—intriguers—especially abroad.”

“That is all thanks to our lassitude, I think,” replied the old man, with authority. “And then their way of preaching; they have a skilful manner of doing it! And they know how to startle one, too. I got quite a fright myself in ’32, in Vienna, I assure you; but I didn’t cave in to them, I ran away instead, ha, ha!”

“Come, come, I’ve always heard that you ran away with the beautiful Countess Levitsky that time—throwing up everything in order to do it—and not from the Jesuits at all,” said Princess Bielokonski, suddenly.

“Well, yes—but we call it from the Jesuits, you know; it comes to the same thing,” laughed the old fellow, delighted with the pleasant recollection.

“You seem to be very religious,” he continued, kindly, addressing the prince, “which is a thing one meets so seldom nowadays among young people.”

The prince was listening open-mouthed, and still in a condition of excited agitation. The old man was evidently interested in him, and anxious to study him more closely.

“Pavlicheff was a man of bright intellect and a good Christian, a sincere Christian,” said the prince, suddenly. “How could he possibly embrace a faith which is unchristian? Roman Catholicism is, so to speak, simply the same thing as unchristianity,” he added with flashing eyes, which seemed to take in everybody in the room.

“Come, that’s a little *too* strong, isn’t it?” murmured the old man, glancing at General Epanchin in surprise.

“How do you make out that the Roman Catholic religion is *unchristian?* What is it, then?” asked Ivan Petrovitch, turning to the prince.

“It is not a Christian religion, in the first place,” said the latter, in extreme agitation, quite out of proportion to the necessity of the moment. “And in the second place, Roman Catholicism is, in my opinion, worse than Atheism itself. Yes—that is my opinion. Atheism only preaches a negation, but Romanism goes further; it preaches a disfigured, distorted Christ—it preaches Anti-Christ—I assure you, I swear it! This is my own personal conviction, and it has long distressed me. The Roman Catholic believes that the Church on earth cannot stand without universal temporal Power. He cries ‘non possumus!’ In my opinion the Roman Catholic religion is not a faith at all, but simply a continuation of the Roman Empire, and everything is subordinated to this idea—beginning with faith. The Pope has seized territories and an earthly throne, and has held them with the sword. And so the thing has gone on, only that to the sword they have added lying, intrigue, deceit, fanaticism, superstition, swindling;—they have played fast and loose with the most sacred and sincere feelings of men;—they have exchanged everything—everything for money, for base earthly *power!* And is this not the teaching of Anti-Christ? How could the upshot of all this be other than Atheism? Atheism is the child of Roman Catholicism—it proceeded from these Romans themselves, though perhaps they would not believe it. It grew and fattened on hatred of its parents; it is the progeny of their lies and spiritual feebleness. Atheism! In our country it is only among the upper classes that you find unbelievers; men who have lost the root or spirit of their faith; but abroad whole masses of the people are beginning to profess unbelief—at first because of the darkness and lies by which they were surrounded; but now out of fanaticism, out of loathing for the Church and Christianity!”

The prince paused to get breath. He had spoken with extraordinary rapidity, and was very pale.

All present interchanged glances, but at last the old dignitary burst out laughing frankly. Prince N. took out his eye-glass to have a good look at the speaker. The

German poet came out of his corner and crept nearer to the table, with a spiteful smile.

“You exaggerate the matter very much,” said Ivan Petrovitch, with rather a bored air. “There are, in the foreign Churches, many representatives of their faith who are worthy of respect and esteem.”

“Oh, but I did not speak of individual representatives. I was merely talking about Roman Catholicism, and its essence—of Rome itself. A Church can never entirely disappear; I never hinted at that!”

“Agreed that all this may be true; but we need not discuss a subject which belongs to the domain of theology.”

“Oh, no; oh, no! Not to theology alone, I assure you! Why, Socialism is the progeny of Romanism and of the Romanistic spirit. It and its brother Atheism proceed from Despair in opposition to Catholicism. It seeks to replace in itself the moral power of religion, in order to appease the spiritual thirst of parched humanity and save it; not by Christ, but by force. ‘Don’t dare to believe in God, don’t dare to possess any individuality, any property! *Fraternité ou la Mort*; two million heads. ‘By their works ye shall know them’—we are told. And we must not suppose that all this is harmless and without danger to ourselves. Oh, no; we must resist, and quickly, quickly! We must let our Christ shine forth upon the Western nations, our Christ whom we have preserved intact, and whom they have never known. Not as slaves, allowing ourselves to be caught by the hooks of the Jesuits, but carrying our Russian civilization to *them*, we must stand before them, not letting it be said among us that their preaching is ‘skilful,’ as someone expressed it just now.”

“But excuse me, excuse me;” cried Ivan Petrovitch considerably disturbed, and looking around uneasily. “Your ideas are, of course, most praiseworthy, and in the highest degree patriotic; but you exaggerate the matter terribly. It would be better if we dropped the subject.”

“No, sir, I do not exaggerate, I understate the matter, if anything, undoubtedly understate it; simply because I cannot express myself as I should like, but—”

“Allow me!”

The prince was silent. He sat straight up in his chair and gazed fervently at Ivan Petrovitch.

“It seems to me that you have been too painfully impressed by the news of what happened to your good benefactor,” said the old dignitary, kindly, and with the utmost

calmness of demeanour. “You are excitable, perhaps as the result of your solitary life. If you would make up your mind to live more among your fellows in society, I trust, I am sure, that the world would be glad to welcome you, as a remarkable young man; and you would soon find yourself able to look at things more calmly. You would see that all these things are much simpler than you think; and, besides, these rare cases come about, in my opinion, from ennui and from satiety.”

“Exactly, exactly! That is a true thought!” cried the prince. “From ennui, from our ennui but not from satiety! Oh, no, you are wrong there! Say from *thirst* if you like; the thirst of fever! And please do not suppose that this is so small a matter that we may have a laugh at it and dismiss it; we must be able to foresee our disasters and arm against them. We Russians no sooner arrive at the brink of the water, and realize that we are really at the brink, than we are so delighted with the outlook that in we plunge and swim to the farthest point we can see. Why is this? You say you are surprised at Pavlicheff’s action; you ascribe it to madness, to kindness of heart, and what not, but it is not so.

“Our Russian intensity not only astonishes ourselves; all Europe wonders at our conduct in such cases! For, if one of us goes over to Roman Catholicism, he is sure to become a Jesuit at once, and a rabid one into the bargain. If one of us becomes an Atheist, he must needs begin to insist on the prohibition of faith in God by force, that is, by the sword. Why is this? Why does he then exceed all bounds at once? Because he has found land at last, the fatherland that he sought in vain before; and, because his soul is rejoiced to find it, he throws himself upon it and kisses it! Oh, it is not from vanity alone, it is not from feelings of vanity that Russians become Atheists and Jesuits! But from spiritual thirst, from anguish of longing for higher things, for dry firm land, for foothold on a fatherland which they never believed in because they never knew it. It is easier for a Russian to become an Atheist, than for any other nationality in the world. And not only does a Russian ‘become an Atheist,’ but he actually *believes in* Atheism, just as though he had found a new faith, not perceiving that he has pinned his faith to a negation. Such is our anguish of thirst! ‘Whoso has no country has no God.’ That is not my own expression; it is the expression of a merchant, one of the Old Believers, whom I once met while travelling. He did not say exactly these words. I think his expression was:

“‘Whoso forsakes his country forsakes his God.’

“But let these thirsty Russian souls find, like Columbus’ discoverers, a new world; let them find the Russian world, let them search and discover all the gold and treasure that lies hid in the bosom of their own land! Show them the restitution of lost

humanity, in the future, by Russian thought alone, and by means of the God and of the Christ of our Russian faith, and you will see how mighty and just and wise and good a giant will rise up before the eyes of the astonished and frightened world; astonished because they expect nothing but the sword from us, because they think they will get nothing out of us but barbarism. This has been the case up to now, and the longer matters go on as they are now proceeding, the more clear will be the truth of what I say; and I—"

But at this moment something happened which put a most unexpected end to the orator's speech. All this heated tirade, this outflow of passionate words and ecstatic ideas which seemed to hustle and tumble over each other as they fell from his lips, bore evidence of some unusually disturbed mental condition in the young fellow who had "boiled over" in such a remarkable manner, without any apparent reason.

Of those who were present, such as knew the prince listened to his outburst in a state of alarm, some with a feeling of mortification. It was so unlike his usual timid self-constraint; so inconsistent with his usual taste and tact, and with his instinctive feeling for the higher proprieties. They could not understand the origin of the outburst; it could not be simply the news of Pavlicheff's perversion. By the ladies the prince was regarded as little better than a lunatic, and Princess Bielokonski admitted afterwards that "in another minute she would have bolted."

The two old gentlemen looked quite alarmed. The old general (Epanchin's chief) sat and glared at the prince in severe displeasure. The colonel sat immovable. Even the German poet grew a little pale, though he wore his usual artificial smile as he looked around to see what the others would do.

In point of fact it is quite possible that the matter would have ended in a very commonplace and natural way in a few minutes. The undoubtedly astonished, but now more collected, General Epanchin had several times endeavoured to interrupt the prince, and not having succeeded he was now preparing to take firmer and more vigorous measures to attain his end. In another minute or two he would probably have made up his mind to lead the prince quietly out of the room, on the plea of his being ill (and it was more than likely that the general was right in his belief that the prince *was* actually ill), but it so happened that destiny had something different in store.

At the beginning of the evening, when the prince first came into the room, he had sat down as far as possible from the Chinese vase which Aglaya had spoken of the day before.

Will it be believed that, after Aglaya's alarming words, an ineradicable conviction had taken possession of his mind that, however he might try to avoid this vase next day, he must certainly break it? But so it was.

During the evening other impressions began to awaken in his mind, as we have seen, and he forgot his presentiment. But when Pavlicheff was mentioned and the general introduced him to Ivan Petrovitch, he had changed his place, and went over nearer to the table; when, it so happened, he took the chair nearest to the beautiful vase, which stood on a pedestal behind him, just about on a level with his elbow.

As he spoke his last words he had risen suddenly from his seat with a wave of his arm, and there was a general cry of horror.

The huge vase swayed backwards and forwards; it seemed to be uncertain whether or no to topple over on to the head of one of the old men, but eventually determined to go the other way, and came crashing over towards the German poet, who darted out of the way in terror.

The crash, the cry, the sight of the fragments of valuable china covering the carpet, the alarm of the company—what all this meant to the poor prince it would be difficult to convey to the mind of the reader, or for him to imagine.

But one very curious fact was that all the shame and vexation and mortification which he felt over the accident were less powerful than the deep impression of the almost supernatural truth of his premonition. He stood still in alarm—in almost superstitious alarm, for a moment; then all mists seemed to clear away from his eyes; he was conscious of nothing but light and joy and ecstasy; his breath came and went; but the moment passed. Thank God it was not that! He drew a long breath and looked around.

For some minutes he did not seem to comprehend the excitement around him; that is, he comprehended it and saw everything, but he stood aside, as it were, like someone invisible in a fairy tale, as though he had nothing to do with what was going on, though it pleased him to take an interest in it.

He saw them gather up the broken bits of china; he heard the loud talking of the guests and observed how pale Aglaya looked, and how very strangely she was gazing at him. There was no hatred in her expression, and no anger whatever. It was full of alarm for him, and sympathy and affection, while she looked around at the others with flashing, angry eyes. His heart filled with a sweet pain as he gazed at her.

At length he observed, to his amazement, that all had taken their seats again, and were laughing and talking as though nothing had happened. Another minute and the

laughter grew louder—they were laughing at him, at his dumb stupor—laughing kindly and merrily. Several of them spoke to him, and spoke so kindly and cordially, especially Lizabetha Prokofievna—she was saying the kindest possible things to him.

Suddenly he became aware that General Epanchin was tapping him on the shoulder; Ivan Petrovitch was laughing too, but still more kind and sympathizing was the old dignitary. He took the prince by the hand and pressed it warmly; then he patted it, and quietly urged him to recollect himself—speaking to him exactly as he would have spoken to a little frightened child, which pleased the prince wonderfully; and next seated him beside himself.

The prince gazed into his face with pleasure, but still seemed to have no power to speak. His breath failed him. The old man's face pleased him greatly.

"Do you really forgive me?" he said at last. "And—and Lizabetha Prokofievna too?" The laugh increased, tears came into the prince's eyes, he could not believe in all this kindness—he was enchanted.

"The vase certainly was a very beautiful one. I remember it here for fifteen years—yes, quite that!" remarked Ivan Petrovitch.

"Oh, what a dreadful calamity! A wretched vase smashed, and a man half dead with remorse about it," said Lizabetha Prokofievna, loudly. "What made you so dreadfully startled, Lef Nicolaievitch?" she added, a little timidly. "Come, my dear boy! cheer up. You really alarm me, taking the accident so to heart."

"Do you forgive me all—*all*, besides the vase, I mean?" said the prince, rising from his seat once more, but the old gentleman caught his hand and drew him down again—he seemed unwilling to let him go.

"*C'est très-curieux et c'est très-sérieux*," he whispered across the table to Ivan Petrovitch, rather loudly. Probably the prince heard him.

"So that I have not offended any of you? You will not believe how happy I am to be able to think so. It is as it should be. As if I *could* offend anyone here! I should offend you again by even suggesting such a thing."

"Calm yourself, my dear fellow. You are exaggerating again; you really have no occasion to be so grateful to us. It is a feeling which does you great credit, but an exaggeration, for all that."

“I am not exactly thanking you, I am only feeling a growing admiration for you—it makes me happy to look at you. I dare say I am speaking very foolishly, but I must speak—I must explain, if it be out of nothing better than self-respect.”

All he said and did was abrupt, confused, feverish—very likely the words he spoke, as often as not, were not those he wished to say. He seemed to inquire whether he *might* speak. His eyes lighted on Princess Bielokonski.

“All right, my friend, talk away, talk away!” she remarked. “Only don’t lose your breath; you were in such a hurry when you began, and look what you’ve come to now! Don’t be afraid of speaking—all these ladies and gentlemen have seen far stranger people than yourself; you don’t astonish *them*. You are nothing out-of-the-way remarkable, you know. You’ve done nothing but break a vase, and give us all a fright.”

The prince listened, smiling.

“Wasn’t it you,” he said, suddenly turning to the old gentleman, “who saved the student Porkunoff and a clerk called Shoabrin from being sent to Siberia, two or three months since?”

The old dignitary blushed a little, and murmured that the prince had better not excite himself further.

“And I have heard of *you*,” continued the prince, addressing Ivan Petrovitch, “that when some of your villagers were burned out you gave them wood to build up their houses again, though they were no longer your serfs and had behaved badly towards you.”

“Oh, come, come! You are exaggerating,” said Ivan Petrovitch, beaming with satisfaction, all the same. He was right, however, in this instance, for the report had reached the prince’s ears in an incorrect form.

“And you, princess,” he went on, addressing Princess Bielokonski, “was it not you who received me in Moscow, six months since, as kindly as though I had been your own son, in response to a letter from Lizabetha Prokofievna; and gave me one piece of advice, again as to your own son, which I shall never forget? Do you remember?”

“What are you making such a fuss about?” said the old lady, with annoyance. “You are a good fellow, but very silly. One gives you a halfpenny, and you are as grateful as though one had saved your life. You think this is praiseworthy on your part, but it is not—it is not, indeed.”

She seemed to be very angry, but suddenly burst out laughing, quite good-humouredly.

Lizabetha Prokofievna's face brightened up, too; so did that of General Epanchin.

"I told you Lef Nicolaievitch was a man—a man—if only he would not be in such a hurry, as the princess remarked," said the latter, with delight.

Aglaya alone seemed sad and depressed; her face was flushed, perhaps with indignation.

"He really is very charming," whispered the old dignitary to Ivan Petrovitch.

"I came into this room with anguish in my heart," continued the prince, with ever-growing agitation, speaking quicker and quicker, and with increasing strangeness. "I—I was afraid of you all, and afraid of myself. I was most afraid of myself. When I returned to Petersburg, I promised myself to make a point of seeing our greatest men, and members of our oldest families—the old families like my own. I am now among princes like myself, am I not? I wished to know you, and it was necessary, very, very necessary. I had always heard so much that was evil said of you all—more evil than good; as to how small and petty were your interests, how absurd your habits, how shallow your education, and so on. There is so much written and said about you! I came here today with anxious curiosity; I wished to see for myself and form my own convictions as to whether it were true that the whole of this upper stratum of Russian society is *worthless*, has outlived its time, has existed too long, and is only fit to die—and yet is dying with petty, spiteful warring against that which is destined to supersede it and take its place—hindering the Coming Men, and knowing not that itself is in a dying condition. I did not fully believe in this view even before, for there never was such a class among us—excepting perhaps at court, by accident—or by uniform; but now there is not even that, is there? It has vanished, has it not?"

"No, not a bit of it," said Ivan Petrovitch, with a sarcastic laugh.

"Good Lord, he's off again!" said Princess Bielokonski, impatiently.

"Laissez-le dire! He is trembling all over," said the old man, in a warning whisper.

The prince certainly was beside himself.

"Well? What have I seen?" he continued. "I have seen men of graceful simplicity of intellect; I have seen an old man who is not above speaking kindly and even *listening* to a boy like myself; I see before me persons who can understand, who can forgive—kind, good Russian hearts—hearts almost as kind and cordial as I met

abroad. Imagine how delighted I must have been, and how surprised! Oh, let me express this feeling! I have so often heard, and I have even believed, that in society there was nothing but empty forms, and that reality had vanished; but I now see for myself that this can never be the case *here*, among us—it may be the order elsewhere, but not in Russia. Surely you are not all Jesuits and deceivers! I heard Prince N.'s story just now. Was it not simple-minded, spontaneous humour? Could such words come from the lips of a man who is dead?—a man whose heart and talents are dried up? Could dead men and women have treated me so kindly as you have all been treating me to-day? Is there not material for the future in all this—for hope? Can such people fail to *understand?* Can such men fall away from reality?"

"Once more let us beg you to be calm, my dear boy. We'll talk of all this another time—I shall do so with the greatest pleasure, for one," said the old dignitary, with a smile.

Ivan Petrovitch grunted and twisted round in his chair. General Epanchin moved nervously. The latter's chief had started a conversation with the wife of the dignitary, and took no notice whatever of the prince, but the old lady very often glanced at him, and listened to what he was saying.

"No, I had better speak," continued the prince, with a new outburst of feverish emotion, and turning towards the old man with an air of confidential trustfulness. "Yesterday, Aglaya Ivanovna forbade me to talk, and even specified the particular subjects I must not touch upon—she knows well enough that I am odd when I get upon these matters. I am nearly twenty-seven years old, and yet I know I am little better than a child. I have no right to express my ideas, and said so long ago. Only in Moscow, with Rogojin, did I ever speak absolutely freely! He and I read Pushkin together—all his works. Rogojin knew nothing of Pushkin, had not even heard his name. I am always afraid of spoiling a great Thought or Idea by my absurd manner. I have no eloquence, I know. I always make the wrong gestures—inappropriate gestures—and therefore I degrade the Thought, and raise a laugh instead of doing my subject justice. I have no sense of proportion either, and that is the chief thing. I know it would be much better if I were always to sit still and say nothing. When I do so, I appear to be quite a sensible sort of a person, and what's more, I think about things. But now I must speak; it is better that I should. I began to speak because you looked so kindly at me; you have such a beautiful face. I promised Aglaya Ivanovna yesterday that I would not speak all the evening."

"Really?" said the old man, smiling.

“But, at times, I can’t help thinking that I am wrong in feeling so about it, you know. Sincerity is more important than elocution, isn’t it?”

“Sometimes.”

“I want to explain all to you—everything—everything! I know you think me Utopian, don’t you—an idealist? Oh, no! I’m not, indeed—my ideas are all so simple. You don’t believe me? You are smiling. Do you know, I am sometimes very wicked—for I lose my faith? This evening as I came here, I thought to myself, ‘What shall I talk about? How am I to begin, so that they may be able to understand partially, at all events?’ How afraid I was—dreadfully afraid! And yet, how *could* I be afraid—was it not shameful of me? Was I afraid of finding a bottomless abyss of empty selfishness? Ah! that’s why I am so happy at this moment, because I find there is no bottomless abyss at all—but good, healthy material, full of life.

“It is not such a very dreadful circumstance that we are odd people, is it? For we really are odd, you know—careless, reckless, easily wearied of anything. We don’t look thoroughly into matters—don’t care to understand things. We are all like this—you and I, and all of them! Why, here are you, now—you are not a bit angry with me for calling you ‘odd,’ are you? And, if so, surely there is good material in you? Do you know, I sometimes think it is a good thing to be odd. We can forgive one another more easily, and be more humble. No one can begin by being perfect—there is much one cannot understand in life at first. In order to attain to perfection, one must begin by failing to understand much. And if we take in knowledge too quickly, we very likely are not taking it in at all. I say all this to you—you who by this time understand so much—and doubtless have failed to understand so much, also. I am not afraid of you any longer. You are not angry that a mere boy should say such words to you, are you? Of course not! You know how to forget and to forgive. You are laughing, Ivan Petrovitch? You think I am a champion of other classes of people—that I am *their* advocate, a democrat, and an orator of Equality?” The prince laughed hysterically; he had several times burst into these little, short nervous laughs. “Oh, no—it is for you, for myself, and for all of us together, that I am alarmed. I am a prince of an old family myself, and I am sitting among my peers; and I am talking like this in the hope of saving us all; in the hope that our class will not disappear altogether—into the darkness—unguessing its danger—blaming everything around it, and losing ground every day. Why should we disappear and give place to others, when we may still, if we choose, remain in the front rank and lead the battle? Let us be servants, that we may become lords in due season!”

He tried to get upon his feet again, but the old man still restrained him, gazing at him with increasing perturbation as he went on.

“Listen—I know it is best not to speak! It is best simply to give a good example—simply to begin the work. I have done this—I have begun, and—and—oh! *can* anyone be unhappy, really? Oh! what does grief matter—what does misfortune matter, if one knows how to be happy? Do you know, I cannot understand how anyone can pass by a green tree, and not feel happy only to look at it! How anyone can talk to a man and not feel happy in loving him! Oh, it is my own fault that I cannot express myself well enough! But there are lovely things at every step I take—things which even the most miserable man must recognize as beautiful. Look at a little child—look at God’s day dawn—look at the grass growing—look at the eyes that love you, as they gaze back into your eyes!”

He had risen, and was speaking standing up. The old gentleman was looking at him now in unconcealed alarm. Lizabetha Prokofievna wrung her hands. “Oh, my God!” she cried. She had guessed the state of the case before anyone else.

Aglaya rushed quickly up to him, and was just in time to receive him in her arms, and to hear with dread and horror that awful, wild cry as he fell writhing to the ground.

There he lay on the carpet, and someone quickly placed a cushion under his head.

No one had expected this.

In a quarter of an hour or so Prince N. and Evgenie Pavlovitch and the old dignitary were hard at work endeavouring to restore the harmony of the evening, but it was of no avail, and very soon after the guests separated and went their ways.

A great deal of sympathy was expressed; a considerable amount of advice was volunteered; Ivan Petrovitch expressed his opinion that the young man was “a Slavophile, or something of that sort”; but that it was not a dangerous development. The old dignitary said nothing.

True enough, most of the guests, next day and the day after, were not in very good humour. Ivan Petrovitch was a little offended, but not seriously so. General Epanchin’s chief was rather cool towards him for some while after the occurrence. The old dignitary, as patron of the family, took the opportunity of murmuring some kind of admonition to the general, and added, in flattering terms, that he was most interested in Aglaya’s future. He was a man who really did possess a kind heart, although his interest in the prince, in the earlier part of the evening, was due, among other reasons, to the latter’s connection with Nastasia Philipovna, according to popular report. He had heard a good deal of this story here and there, and was greatly interested in it, so much so that he longed to ask further questions about it.

Princess Bielokonski, as she drove away on this eventful evening, took occasion to say to Lizabetha Prokofievna:

“Well—he’s a good match—and a bad one; and if you want my opinion, more bad than good. You can see for yourself the man is an invalid.”

Lizabetha therefore decided that the prince was impossible as a husband for Aglaya; and during the ensuing night she made a vow that never while she lived should he marry Aglaya. With this resolve firmly impressed upon her mind, she awoke next day; but during the morning, after her early lunch, she fell into a condition of remarkable inconsistency.

In reply to a very guarded question of her sisters’, Aglaya had answered coldly, but exceedingly haughtily:

“I have never given him my word at all, nor have I ever counted him as my future husband—never in my life. He is just as little to me as all the rest.”

Lizabetha Prokofievna suddenly flared up.

“I did not expect that of you, Aglaya,” she said. “He is an impossible husband for you,—I know it; and thank God that we agree upon that point; but I did not expect to hear such words from you. I thought I should hear a very different tone from you. I would have turned out everyone who was in the room last night and kept him,—that’s the sort of man he is, in my opinion!”

Here she suddenly paused, afraid of what she had just said. But she little knew how unfair she was to her daughter at that moment. It was all settled in Aglaya’s mind. She was only waiting for the hour that would bring the matter to a final climax; and every hint, every careless probing of her wound, did but further lacerate her heart.

VIII.

This same morning dawned for the prince pregnant with no less painful presentiments,—which fact his physical state was, of course, quite enough to account for; but he was so indefinably melancholy,—his sadness could not attach itself to anything in particular, and this tormented him more than anything else. Of course certain facts stood before him, clear and painful, but his sadness went beyond all that he could remember or imagine; he realized that he was powerless to console himself unaided. Little by little he began to develop the expectation that this day something important, something decisive, was to happen to him.

His attack of yesterday had been a slight one. Excepting some little heaviness in the head and pain in the limbs, he did not feel any particular effects. His brain worked all right, though his soul was heavy within him.

He rose late, and immediately upon waking remembered all about the previous evening; he also remembered, though not quite so clearly, how, half an hour after his fit, he had been carried home.

He soon heard that a messenger from the Epanchins' had already been to inquire after him. At half-past eleven another arrived; and this pleased him.

Vera Lebedeff was one of the first to come to see him and offer her services. No sooner did she catch sight of him than she burst into tears; but when he tried to soothe her she began to laugh. He was quite struck by the girl's deep sympathy for him; he seized her hand and kissed it. Vera flushed crimson.

"Oh, don't, don't!" she exclaimed in alarm, snatching her hand away. She went hastily out of the room in a state of strange confusion.

Lebedeff also came to see the prince, in a great hurry to get away to the "deceased," as he called General Ivolgin, who was alive still, but very ill. Colia also turned up, and begged the prince for pity's sake to tell him all he knew about his father which had been concealed from him till now. He said he had found out nearly everything since yesterday; the poor boy was in a state of deep affliction. With all the sympathy which he could bring into play, the prince told Colia the whole story without reserve, detailing the facts as clearly as he could. The tale struck Colia like a thunderbolt. He could not speak. He listened silently, and cried softly to himself the while. The prince perceived that this was an impression which would last for the whole of the boy's life. He made haste to explain his view of the matter, and pointed out that the old man's approaching death was probably brought on by horror at the thought of his action; and that it was not everyone who was capable of such a feeling.

Colia's eyes flashed as he listened.

"Gania and Varia and Ptitsin are a worthless lot! I shall not quarrel with them; but from this moment our feet shall not travel the same road. Oh, prince, I have felt much that is quite new to me since yesterday! It is a lesson for me. I shall now consider my mother as entirely my responsibility; though she may be safe enough with Varia. Still, meat and drink is not everything."

He jumped up and hurried off, remembering suddenly that he was wanted at his father's bedside; but before he went out of the room he inquired hastily after the prince's health, and receiving the latter's reply, added:

"Isn't there something else, prince? I heard yesterday, but I have no right to talk about this... If you ever want a true friend and servant—neither you nor I are so very happy, are we?—come to me. I won't ask you questions, though."

He ran off and left the prince more dejected than ever.

Everyone seemed to be speaking prophetically, hinting at some misfortune or sorrow to come; they had all looked at him as though they knew something which he did not know. Lebedeff had asked questions, Colia had hinted, and Vera had shed tears. What was it?

At last, with a sigh of annoyance, he said to himself that it was nothing but his own cursed sickly suspicion. His face lighted up with joy when, at about two o'clock, he espied the Epanchins coming along to pay him a short visit, "just for a minute." They really had only come for a minute.

Lizabetha Prokofievna had announced, directly after lunch, that they would all take a walk together. The information was given in the form of a command, without explanation, drily and abruptly. All had issued forth in obedience to the mandate; that is, the girls, mamma, and Prince S. Lizabetha Prokofievna went off in a direction exactly contrary to the usual one, and all understood very well what she was driving at, but held their peace, fearing to irritate the good lady. She, as though anxious to avoid any conversation, walked ahead, silent and alone. At last Adelaida remarked that it was no use racing along at such a pace, and that she could not keep up with her mother.

"Look here," said Lizabetha Prokofievna, turning round suddenly; "we are passing his house. Whatever Aglaya may think, and in spite of anything that may happen, he is not a stranger to us; besides which, he is ill and in misfortune. I, for one, shall call in and see him. Let anyone follow me who cares to."

Of course every one of them followed her.

The prince hastened to apologize, very properly, for yesterday's mishap with the vase, and for the scene generally.

"Oh, that's nothing," replied Lizabetha; "I'm not sorry for the vase, I'm sorry for you. H'm! so you can see that there was a 'scene,' can you? Well, it doesn't matter much, for everyone must realize now that it is impossible to be hard on you. Well, *au revoir*. I

advise you to have a walk, and then go to sleep again if you can. Come in as usual, if you feel inclined; and be assured, once for all, whatever happens, and whatever may have happened, you shall always remain the friend of the family—mine, at all events. I can answer for myself."

In response to this challenge all the others chimed in and re-echoed mamma's sentiments.

And so they took their departure; but in this hasty and kindly designed visit there was hidden a fund of cruelty which Lizabetha Prokofievna never dreamed of. In the words "as usual," and again in her added, "mine, at all events," there seemed an ominous knell of some evil to come.

The prince began to think of Aglaya. She had certainly given him a wonderful smile, both at coming and again at leave-taking, but had not said a word, not even when the others all professed their friendship for him. She had looked very intently at him, but that was all. Her face had been paler than usual; she looked as though she had slept badly.

The prince made up his mind that he would make a point of going there "as usual," tonight, and looked feverishly at his watch.

Vera came in three minutes after the Epanchins had left. "Lef Nicolaievitch," she said, "Aglaya Ivanovna has just given me a message for you."

The prince trembled.

"Is it a note?"

"No, a verbal message; she had hardly time even for that. She begs you earnestly not to go out of the house for a single moment all to-day, until seven o'clock in the evening. It may have been nine; I didn't quite hear."

"But—but, why is this? What does it mean?"

"I don't know at all; but she said I was to tell you particularly."

"Did she say that?"

"Not those very words. She only just had time to whisper as she went by; but by the way she looked at me I knew it was important. She looked at me in a way that made my heart stop beating."

The prince asked a few more questions, and though he learned nothing else, he became more and more agitated.

Left alone, he lay down on the sofa, and began to think.

“Perhaps,” he thought, “someone is to be with them until nine tonight and she is afraid that I may come and make a fool of myself again, in public.” So he spent his time longing for the evening and looking at his watch. But the clearing-up of the mystery came long before the evening, and came in the form of a new and agonizing riddle.

Half an hour after the Epanchins had gone, Hippolyte arrived, so tired that, almost unconscious, he sank into a chair, and broke into such a fit of coughing that he could not stop. He coughed till the blood came. His eyes glittered, and two red spots on his cheeks grew brighter and brighter. The prince murmured something to him, but Hippolyte only signed that he must be left alone for a while, and sat silent. At last he came to himself.

“I am off,” he said, hoarsely, and with difficulty.

“Shall I see you home?” asked the prince, rising from his seat, but suddenly stopping short as he remembered Aglaya’s prohibition against leaving the house. Hippolyte laughed.

“I don’t mean that I am going to leave your house,” he continued, still gasping and coughing. “On the contrary, I thought it absolutely necessary to come and see you; otherwise I should not have troubled you. I am off there, you know, and this time I believe, seriously, that I am off! It’s all over. I did not come here for sympathy, believe me. I lay down this morning at ten o’clock with the intention of not rising again before that time; but I thought it over and rose just once more in order to come here; from which you may deduce that I had some reason for wishing to come.”

“It grieves me to see you so, Hippolyte. Why didn’t you send me a message? I would have come up and saved you this trouble.”

“Well, well! Enough! You’ve pitied me, and that’s all that good manners exact. I forgot, how are you?”

“I’m all right; yesterday I was a little—”

“I know, I heard; the china vase caught it! I’m sorry I wasn’t there. I’ve come about something important. In the first place I had, the pleasure of seeing Gavrila Ardalionovitch and Aglaya Ivanovna enjoying a rendezvous on the green bench in the park. I was astonished to see what a fool a man can look. I remarked upon the fact to Aglaya Ivanovna when he had gone. I don’t think anything ever surprises you, prince!” added Hippolyte, gazing incredulously at the prince’s calm demeanour. “To be astonished by nothing is a sign, they say, of a great intellect. In my opinion it would

serve equally well as a sign of great foolishness. I am not hinting about you; pardon me! I am very unfortunate today in my expressions."

"I knew yesterday that Gavrila Ardalionovitch—" began the prince, and paused in evident confusion, though Hippolyte had shown annoyance at his betraying no surprise.

"You knew it? Come, that's news! But no—perhaps better not tell me. And were you a witness of the meeting?"

"If you were there yourself you must have known that I was *not* there!"

"Oh! but you may have been sitting behind the bushes somewhere. However, I am very glad, on your account, of course. I was beginning to be afraid that Mr. Gania—might have the preference!"

"May I ask you, Hippolyte, not to talk of this subject? And not to use such expressions?"

"Especially as you know all, eh?"

"You are wrong. I know scarcely anything, and Aglaya Ivanovna is aware that I know nothing. I knew nothing whatever about this meeting. You say there was a meeting. Very well; let's leave it so—"

"Why, what do you mean? You said you knew, and now suddenly you know nothing! You say 'very well; let's leave it so.' But I say, don't be so confiding, especially as you know nothing. You are confiding simply *because* you know nothing. But do you know what these good people have in their minds' eye—Gania and his sister? Perhaps you are suspicious? Well, well, I'll drop the subject!" he added, hastily, observing the prince's impatient gesture. "But I've come to you on my own business; I wish to make you a clear explanation. What a nuisance it is that one cannot die without explanations! I have made such a quantity of them already. Do you wish to hear what I have to say?"

"Speak away, I am listening."

"Very well, but I'll change my mind, and begin about Gania. Just fancy to begin with, if you can, that I, too, was given an appointment at the green bench today! However, I won't deceive you; I asked for the appointment. I said I had a secret to disclose. I don't know whether I came there too early, I think I must have; but scarcely had I sat down beside Aglaya Ivanovna than I saw Gavrila Ardalionovitch and his sister Varia coming along, arm in arm, just as though they were enjoying a morning walk together. Both of

them seemed very much astonished, not to say disturbed, at seeing me; they evidently had not expected the pleasure. Aglaya Ivanovna blushed up, and was actually a little confused. I don't know whether it was merely because I was there, or whether Gania's beauty was too much for her! But anyway, she turned crimson, and then finished up the business in a very funny manner. She jumped up from her seat, bowed back to Gania, smiled to Varia, and suddenly observed: 'I only came here to express my gratitude for all your kind wishes on my behalf, and to say that if I find I need your services, believe me—' Here she bowed them away, as it were, and they both marched off again, looking very foolish. Gania evidently could not make head nor tail of the matter, and turned as red as a lobster; but Varia understood at once that they must get away as quickly as they could, so she dragged Gania away; she is a great deal cleverer than he is. As for myself, I went there to arrange a meeting to be held between Aglaya Ivanovna and Nastasia Philipovna."

"Nastasia Philipovna!" cried the prince.

"Aha! I think you are growing less cool, my friend, and are beginning to be a trifle surprised, aren't you? I'm glad that you are not above ordinary human feelings, for once. I'll console you a little now, after your consternation. See what I get for serving a young and high-souled maiden! This morning I received a slap in the face from the lady!"

"A—a moral one?" asked the prince, involuntarily.

"Yes—not a physical one! I don't suppose anyone—even a woman—would raise a hand against me now. Even Gania would hesitate! I did think at one time yesterday, that he would fly at me, though. I bet anything that I know what you are thinking of now! You are thinking: 'Of course one can't strike the little wretch, but one could suffocate him with a pillow, or a wet towel, when he is asleep! One *ought* to get rid of him somehow.' I can see in your face that you are thinking that at this very second."

"I never thought of such a thing for a moment," said the prince, with disgust.

"I don't know—I dreamed last night that I was being suffocated with a wet cloth by—somebody. I'll tell you who it was—Rogojin! What do you think, can a man be suffocated with a wet cloth?"

"I don't know."

"I've heard so. Well, we'll leave that question just now. Why am I a scandal-monger? Why did she call me a scandal-monger? And mind, *after* she had heard every word I had to tell her, and had asked all sorts of questions besides—but such is the way of

women. For *her* sake I entered into relations with Rogojin—an interesting man! At *her* request I arranged a personal interview between herself and Nastasia Philipovna. Could she have been angry because I hinted that she was enjoying Nastasia Philipovna's 'leavings'? Why, I have been impressing it upon her all this while for her own good. Two letters have I written her in that strain, and I began straight off today about its being humiliating for her. Besides, the word 'leavings' is not my invention. At all events, they all used it at Gania's, and she used it herself. So why am I a scandal-monger? I see—I see you are tremendously amused, at this moment! Probably you are laughing at me and fitting those silly lines to my case—

"'Maybe sad Love upon his setting smiles, And with vain hopes his farewell hour beguiles.'

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hippolyte suddenly burst into a fit of hysterical laughter, which turned into a choking cough.

"Observe," he gasped, through his coughing, "what a fellow Gania is! He talks about Nastasia's 'leavings,' but what does he want to take himself?"

The prince sat silent for a long while. His mind was filled with dread and horror.

"You spoke of a meeting with Nastasia Philipovna," he said at last, in a low voice.

"Oh—come! Surely you must know that there is to be a meeting today between Nastasia and Aglaya Ivanovna, and that Nastasia has been sent for on purpose, through Rogojin, from St. Petersburg? It has been brought about by invitation of Aglaya Ivanovna and my own efforts, and Nastasia is at this moment with Rogojin, not far from here—at Dana Alexeyevna's—that curious friend of hers; and to this questionable house Aglaya Ivanovna is to proceed for a friendly chat with Nastasia Philipovna, and for the settlement of several problems. They are going to play at arithmetic—didn't you know about it? Word of honour?"

"It's a most improbable story."

"Oh, very well! if it's improbable—it is—that's all! And yet—where should you have heard it? Though I must say, if a fly crosses the room it's known all over the place here. However, I've warned you, and you may be grateful to me. Well—*au revoir*—probably in the next world! One more thing—don't think that I am telling you all this for your sake. Oh, dear, no! Do you know that I dedicated my confession to Aglaya Ivanovna? I did though, and how she took it, ha, ha! Oh, no! I am not acting from any high, exalted motives. But though I may have behaved like a cad to you, I have not done *her* any

harm. I don't apologize for my words about 'leavings' and all that. I am atoning for that, you see, by telling you the place and time of the meeting. Goodbye! You had better take your measures, if you are worthy the name of a man! The meeting is fixed for this evening—that's certain."

Hippolyte walked towards the door, but the prince called him back and he stopped.

"Then you think Aglaya Ivanovna herself intends to go to Nastasia Philipovna's tonight?" he asked, and bright hectic spots came out on his cheeks and forehead.

"I don't know absolutely for certain; but in all probability it is so," replied Hippolyte, looking round. "Nastasia would hardly go to her; and they can't meet at Gania's, with a man nearly dead in the house."

"It's impossible, for that very reason," said the prince. "How would she get out if she wished to? You don't know the habits of that house—she *could* not get away alone to Nastasia Philipovna's! It's all nonsense!"

"Look here, my dear prince, no one jumps out of the window if they can help it; but when there's a fire, the dandiest gentleman or the finest lady in the world will skip out! When the moment comes, and there's nothing else to be done—our young lady will go to Nastasia Philipovna's! Don't they let the young ladies out of the house alone, then?"

"I didn't mean that exactly."

"If you didn't mean that, then she has only to go down the steps and walk off, and she need never come back unless she chooses: Ships are burned behind one sometimes, and one doesn't care to return whence one came. Life need not consist only of lunches, and dinners, and Prince S's. It strikes me you take Aglaya Ivanovna for some conventional boarding-school girl. I said so to her, and she quite agreed with me. Wait till seven or eight o'clock. In your place I would send someone there to keep watch, so as to seize the exact moment when she steps out of the house. Send Colia. He'll play the spy with pleasure—for you at least. Ha, ha, ha!"

Hippolyte went out.

There was no reason for the prince to set anyone to watch, even if he had been capable of such a thing. Aglaya's command that he should stay at home all day seemed almost explained now. Perhaps she meant to call for him, herself, or it might be, of course, that she was anxious to make sure of his not coming there, and therefore bade him remain at home. His head whirled; the whole room seemed to be turning round. He lay down on the sofa, and closed his eyes.

One way or the other the question was to be decided at last—finally.

Oh, no, he did not think of Aglaya as a boarding-school miss, or a young lady of the conventional type! He had long since feared that she might take some such step as this. But why did she wish to see Nastasia?

He shivered all over as he lay; he was in high fever again.

No! he did not account her a child. Certain of her looks, certain of her words, of late, had filled him with apprehension. At times it had struck him that she was putting too great a restraint upon herself, and he remembered that he had been alarmed to observe this. He had tried, all these days, to drive away the heavy thoughts that oppressed him; but what was the hidden mystery of that soul? The question had long tormented him, although he implicitly trusted that soul. And now it was all to be cleared up. It was a dreadful thought. And "that woman" again! Why did he always feel as though "that woman" were fated to appear at each critical moment of his life, and tear the thread of his destiny like a bit of rotten string? That he always *had* felt this he was ready to swear, although he was half delirious at the moment. If he had tried to forget her, all this time, it was simply because he was afraid of her. Did he love the woman or hate her? This question he did not once ask himself today; his heart was quite pure. He knew whom he loved. He was not so much afraid of this meeting, nor of its strangeness, nor of any reasons there might be for it, unknown to himself; he was afraid of the woman herself, Nastasia Philipovna. He remembered, some days afterwards, how during all those fevered hours he had seen but *her* eyes, *her* look, had heard *her* voice, strange words of hers; he remembered that this was so, although he could not recollect the details of his thoughts.

He could remember that Vera brought him some dinner, and that he took it; but whether he slept after dinner, or no, he could not recollect.

He only knew that he began to distinguish things clearly from the moment when Aglaya suddenly appeared, and he jumped up from the sofa and went to meet her. It was just a quarter past seven then.

Aglaya was quite alone, and dressed, apparently hastily, in a light mantle. Her face was pale, as it had been in the morning, and her eyes were ablaze with bright but subdued fire. He had never seen that expression in her eyes before.

She gazed attentively at him.

“You are quite ready, I observe,” she said, with absolute composure, “dressed, and your hat in your hand. I see somebody has thought fit to warn you, and I know who. Hippolyte?”

“Yes, he told me,” said the prince, feeling only half alive.

“Come then. You know, I suppose, that you must escort me there? You are well enough to go out, aren’t you?”

“I am well enough; but is it really possible?—”

He broke off abruptly, and could not add another word. This was his one attempt to stop the mad child, and, after he had made it, he followed her as though he had no will of his own. Confused as his thoughts were, he was, nevertheless, capable of realizing the fact that if he did not go with her, she would go alone, and so he must go with her at all hazards. He guessed the strength of her determination; it was beyond him to check it.

They walked silently, and said scarcely a word all the way. He only noticed that she seemed to know the road very well; and once, when he thought it better to go by a certain lane, and remarked to her that it would be quieter and less public, she only said, “it’s all the same,” and went on.

When they were almost arrived at Daria Alexeyevna’s house (it was a large wooden structure of ancient date), a gorgeously-dressed lady and a young girl came out of it. Both these ladies took their seats in a carriage, which was waiting at the door, talking and laughing loudly the while, and drove away without appearing to notice the approaching couple.

No sooner had the carriage driven off than the door opened once more; and Rogojin, who had apparently been awaiting them, let them in and closed it after them.

“There is not another soul in the house now excepting our four selves,” he said aloud, looking at the prince in a strange way.

Nastasia Philipovna was waiting for them in the first room they went into. She was dressed very simply, in black.

She rose at their entrance, but did not smile or give her hand, even to the prince. Her anxious eyes were fixed upon Aglaya. Both sat down, at a little distance from one another—Aglaya on the sofa, in the corner of the room, Nastasia by the window. The prince and Rogojin remained standing, and were not invited to sit.

Muishkin glanced at Rogojin in perplexity, but the latter only smiled disagreeably, and said nothing. The silence continued for some few moments.

An ominous expression passed over Nastasia Philipovna's face, of a sudden. It became obstinate-looking, hard, and full of hatred; but she did not take her eyes off her visitors for a moment.

Aglaya was clearly confused, but not frightened. On entering she had merely glanced momentarily at her rival, and then had sat still, with her eyes on the ground, apparently in thought. Once or twice she glanced casually round the room. A shade of disgust was visible in her expression; she looked as though she were afraid of contamination in this place.

She mechanically arranged her dress, and fidgeted uncomfortably, eventually changing her seat to the other end of the sofa. Probably she was unconscious of her own movements; but this very unconsciousness added to the offensiveness of their suggested meaning.

At length she looked straight into Nastasia's eyes, and instantly read all there was to read in her rival's expression. Woman understood woman! Aglaya shuddered.

"You know of course why I requested this meeting?" she said at last, quietly, and pausing twice in the delivery of this very short sentence.

"No—I know nothing about it," said Nastasia, drily and abruptly.

Aglaya blushed. Perhaps it struck her as very strange and impossible that she should really be sitting here and waiting for "that woman's" reply to her question.

At the first sound of Nastasia's voice a shudder ran through her frame. Of course "that woman" observed and took in all this.

"You know quite well, but you are pretending to be ignorant," said Aglaya, very low, with her eyes on the ground.

"Why should I?" asked Nastasia Philipovna, smiling slightly.

"You want to take advantage of my position, now that I am in your house," continued Aglaya, awkwardly.

"For that position *you* are to blame and not I," said Nastasia, flaring up suddenly. "*I* did not invite *you*, but you me; and to this moment I am quite ignorant as to why I am thus honoured."

Aglaya raised her head haughtily.

“Restrain your tongue!” she said. “I did not come here to fight you with your own weapons.

“Oh! then you did come ‘to fight,’ I may conclude? Dear me!—and I thought you were cleverer—”

They looked at one another with undisguised malice. One of these women had written to the other, so lately, such letters as we have seen; and it all was dispersed at their first meeting. Yet it appeared that not one of the four persons in the room considered this in any degree strange.

The prince who, up to yesterday, would not have believed that he could even dream of such an impossible scene as this, stood and listened and looked on, and felt as though he had long foreseen it all. The most fantastic dream seemed suddenly to have been metamorphosed into the most vivid reality.

One of these women so despised the other, and so longed to express her contempt for her (perhaps she had only come for that very purpose, as Rogojin said next day), that howsoever fantastical was the other woman, howsoever afflicted her spirit and disturbed her understanding, no preconceived idea of hers could possibly stand up against that deadly feminine contempt of her rival. The prince felt sure that Nastasia would say nothing about the letters herself; but he could judge by her flashing eyes and the expression of her face what the thought of those letters must be costing her at this moment. He would have given half his life to prevent Aglaya from speaking of them. But Aglaya suddenly braced herself up, and seemed to master herself fully, all in an instant.

“You have not quite understood,” she said. “I did not come to quarrel with you, though I do not like you. I came to speak to you as… as one human being to another. I came with my mind made up as to what I had to say to you, and I shall not change my intention, although you may misunderstand me. So much the worse for you, not for myself! I wished to reply to all you have written to me and to reply personally, because I think that is the more convenient way. Listen to my reply to all your letters. I began to be sorry for Prince Lef Nicolaievitch on the very day I made his acquaintance, and when I heard—afterwards—of all that took place at your house in the evening, I was sorry for him because he was such a simple-minded man, and because he, in the simplicity of his soul, believed that he could be happy with a woman of your character. What I feared actually took place; you could not love him, you tortured him, and threw him over. You could not love him because you are too proud—no, not proud, that is an error; because you are too vain—no, not quite that either; too self-loving; you are self-loving to madness. Your letters to me are a proof of it. You could not love so simple a

soul as his, and perhaps in your heart you despised him and laughed at him. All you could love was your shame and the perpetual thought that you were disgraced and insulted. If you were less shameful, or had no cause at all for shame, you would be still more unhappy than you are now."

Aglaya brought out these thronging words with great satisfaction. They came from her lips hurriedly and impetuously, and had been prepared and thought out long ago, even before she had ever dreamed of the present meeting. She watched with eagerness the effect of her speech as shown in Nastasia's face, which was distorted with agitation.

"You remember," she continued, "he wrote me a letter at that time; he says you know all about that letter and that you even read it. I understand all by means of this letter, and understand it correctly. He has since confirmed it all to me—what I now say to you, word for word. After receiving his letter I waited; I guessed that you would soon come back here, because you could never do without Petersburg; you are still too young and lovely for the provinces. However, this is not my own idea," she added, blushing dreadfully; and from this moment the colour never left her cheeks to the end of her speech. "When I next saw the prince I began to feel terribly pained and hurt on his account. Do not laugh; if you laugh you are unworthy of understanding what I say."

"Surely you see that I am not laughing," said Nastasia, sadly and sternly.

"However, it's all the same to me; laugh or not, just as you please. When I asked him about you, he told me that he had long since ceased to love you, that the very recollection of you was a torture to him, but that he was sorry for you; and that when he thought of you his heart was pierced. I ought to tell you that I never in my life met a man anything like him for noble simplicity of mind and for boundless trustfulness. I guessed that anyone who liked could deceive him, and that he would immediately forgive anyone who did deceive him; and it was for this that I grew to love him—"

Aglaya paused for a moment, as though suddenly brought up in astonishment that she could have said these words, but at the same time a great pride shone in her eyes, like a defiant assertion that it would not matter to her if "this woman" laughed in her face for the admission just made.

"I have told you all now, and of course you understand what I wish of you."

"Perhaps I do; but tell me yourself," said Nastasia Philipovna, quietly.

Aglaya flushed up angrily.

"I wished to find out from you," she said, firmly, "by what right you dare to meddle with his feelings for me? By what right you dared send me those letters? By what right do

you continually remind both me and him that you love him, after you yourself threw him over and ran away from him in so insulting and shameful a way?"

"I never told either him or you that I loved him!" replied Nastasia Philipovna, with an effort. "And—and I did run away from him—you are right there," she added, scarcely audibly.

"Never told either him or me?" cried Aglaya. "How about your letters? Who asked you to try to persuade me to marry him? Was not that a declaration from you? Why do you force yourself upon us in this way? I confess I thought at first that you were anxious to arouse an aversion for him in my heart by your meddling, in order that I might give him up; and it was only afterwards that I guessed the truth. You imagined that you were doing an heroic action! How could you spare any love for him, when you love your own vanity to such an extent? Why could you not simply go away from here, instead of writing me those absurd letters? Why do you not *now* marry that generous man who loves you, and has done you the honour of offering you his hand? It is plain enough why; if you marry Rogojin you lose your grievance; you will have nothing more to complain of. You will be receiving too much honour. Evgenie Pavlovitch was saying the other day that you had read too many poems and are too well educated for—your position; and that you live in idleness. Add to this your vanity, and, there you have reason enough—"

"And do you not live in idleness?"

Things had come to this unexpected point too quickly. Unexpected because Nastasia Philipovna, on her way to Pavlofsk, had thought and considered a good deal, and had expected something different, though perhaps not altogether good, from this interview; but Aglaya had been carried away by her own outburst, just as a rolling stone gathers impetus as it careers downhill, and could not restrain herself in the satisfaction of revenge.

It was strange, Nastasia Philipovna felt, to see Aglaya like this. She gazed at her, and could hardly believe her eyes and ears for a moment or two.

Whether she were a woman who had read too many poems, as Evgenie Pavlovitch supposed, or whether she were mad, as the prince had assured Aglaya, at all events, this was a woman who, in spite of her occasionally cynical and audacious manner, was far more refined and trustful and sensitive than appeared. There was a certain amount of romantic dreaminess and caprice in her, but with the fantastic was mingled much that was strong and deep.

The prince realized this, and great suffering expressed itself in his face.

Aglaya observed it, and trembled with anger.

“How dare you speak so to me?” she said, with a haughtiness which was quite indescribable, replying to Nastasia’s last remark.

“You must have misunderstood what I said,” said Nastasia, in some surprise.

“If you wished to preserve your good name, why did you not give up your—your ‘guardian,’ Totski, without all that theatrical posturing?” said Aglaya, suddenly a propos of nothing.

“What do you know of my position, that you dare to judge me?” cried Nastasia, quivering with rage, and growing terribly white.

“I know this much, that you did not go out to honest work, but went away with a rich man, Rogojin, in order to pose as a fallen angel. I don’t wonder that Totski was nearly driven to suicide by such a fallen angel.”

“Silence!” cried Nastasia Philipovna. “You are about as fit to understand me as the housemaid here, who bore witness against her lover in court the other day. She would understand me better than you do.”

“Probably an honest girl living by her own toil. Why do you speak of a housemaid so contemptuously?”

“I do not despise toil; I despise you when you speak of toil.”

“If you had cared to be an honest woman, you would have gone out as a laundress.”

Both had risen, and were gazing at one another with pallid faces.

“Aglaya, don’t! This is unfair,” cried the prince, deeply distressed.

Rogojin was not smiling now; he sat and listened with folded arms, and lips tight compressed.

“There, look at her,” cried Nastasia, trembling with passion. “Look at this young lady! And I imagined her an angel! Did you come to me without your governess, Aglaya Ivanovna? Oh, fie, now shall I just tell you why you came here today? Shall I tell you without any embellishments? You came because you were afraid of me!”

“Afraid of *you?*” asked Aglaya, beside herself with naive amazement that the other should dare talk to her like this.

“Yes, me, of course! Of course you were afraid of me, or you would not have decided to come. You cannot despise one you fear. And to think that I have actually esteemed

you up to this very moment! Do you know why you are afraid of me, and what is your object now? You wished to satisfy yourself with your own eyes as to which he loves best, myself or you, because you are fearfully jealous."

"He has told me already that he hates you," murmured Aglaya, scarcely audibly.

"Perhaps, perhaps! I am not worthy of him, I know. But I think you are lying, all the same. He cannot hate me, and he cannot have said so. I am ready to forgive you, in consideration of your position; but I confess I thought better of you. I thought you were wiser, and more beautiful, too; I did, indeed! Well, take your treasure! See, he is gazing at you, he can't recollect himself. Take him, but on one condition; go away at once, this instant!"

She fell back into a chair, and burst into tears. But suddenly some new expression blazed in her eyes. She stared fixedly at Aglaya, and rose from her seat.

"Or would you like me to bid him, *bid him*, do you hear, *command him*, now, at once, to throw you up, and remain mine for ever? Shall I? He will stay, and he will marry me too, and you shall trot home all alone. Shall I?—shall I say the word?" she screamed like a madwoman, scarcely believing herself that she could really pronounce such wild words.

Aglaya had made for the door in terror, but she stopped at the threshold, and listened. "Shall I turn Rogojin off? Ha! ha! you thought I would marry him for your benefit, did you? Why, I'll call out *now*, if you like, in your presence, 'Rogojin, get out!' and say to the prince, 'Do you remember what you promised me?' Heavens! what a fool I have been to humiliate myself before them! Why, prince, you yourself gave me your word that you would marry me whatever happened, and would never abandon me. You said you loved me and would forgive me all, and—and resp—yes, you even said that! I only ran away from you in order to set you free, and now I don't care to let you go again. Why does she treat me so—so shamefully? I am not a loose woman—ask Rogojin there! He'll tell you. Will you go again now that she has insulted me, before your eyes, too; turn away from me and lead her away, arm-in-arm? May you be accursed too, for you were the only one I trusted among them all! Go away, Rogojin, I don't want you," she continued, blind with fury, and forcing the words out with dry lips and distorted features, evidently not believing a single word of her own tirade, but, at the same time, doing her utmost to prolong the moment of self-deception.

The outburst was so terribly violent that the prince thought it would have killed her.

“There he is!” she shrieked again, pointing to the prince and addressing Aglaya. “There he is! and if he does not approach me at once and take *me* and throw you over, then have him for your own—I give him up to you! I don’t want him!”

Both she and Aglaya stood and waited as though in expectation, and both looked at the prince like madwomen.

But he, perhaps, did not understand the full force of this challenge; in fact, it is certain he did not. All he could see was the poor despairing face which, as he had said to Aglaya, “had pierced his heart for ever.”

He could bear it no longer, and with a look of entreaty, mingled with reproach, he addressed Aglaya, pointing to Nastasia the while:

“How can you?” he murmured; “she is so unhappy.”

But he had no time to say another word before Aglaya’s terrible look bereft him of speech. In that look was embodied so dreadful a suffering and so deadly a hatred, that he gave a cry and flew to her; but it was too late.

She could not hold out long enough even to witness his movement in her direction. She had hidden her face in her hands, cried once “Oh, my God!” and rushed out of the room. Rogojin followed her to undo the bolts of the door and let her out into the street.

The prince made a rush after her, but he was caught and held back. The distorted, livid face of Nastasia gazed at him reproachfully, and her blue lips whispered:

“What? Would you go to her—to her?”

She fell senseless into his arms.

He raised her, carried her into the room, placed her in an arm-chair, and stood over her, stupefied. On the table stood a tumbler of water. Rogojin, who now returned, took this and sprinkled a little in her face. She opened her eyes, but for a moment she understood nothing.

Suddenly she looked around, shuddered, gave a loud cry, and threw herself in the prince’s arms.

“Mine, mine!” she cried. “Has the proud young lady gone? Ha, ha, ha!” she laughed hysterically. “And I had given him up to her! Why—why did I? Mad—mad! Get away, Rogojin! Ha, ha, ha!”

Rogojin stared intently at them; then he took his hat, and without a word, left the room.

A few moments later, the prince was seated by Nastasia on the sofa, gazing into her eyes and stroking her face and hair, as he would a little child's. He laughed when she laughed, and was ready to cry when she cried. He did not speak, but listened to her excited, disconnected chatter, hardly understanding a word of it the while. No sooner did he detect the slightest appearance of complaining, or weeping, or reproaching, than he would smile at her kindly, and begin stroking her hair and her cheeks, soothing and consoling her once more, as if she were a child.

IX.

A fortnight had passed since the events recorded in the last chapter, and the position of the actors in our story had become so changed that it is almost impossible for us to continue the tale without some few explanations. Yet we feel that we ought to limit ourselves to the simple record of facts, without much attempt at explanation, for a very patent reason: because we ourselves have the greatest possible difficulty in accounting for the facts to be recorded. Such a statement on our part may appear strange to the reader. How is anyone to tell a story which he cannot understand himself? In order to keep clear of a false position, we had perhaps better give an example of what we mean; and probably the intelligent reader will soon understand the difficulty. More especially are we inclined to take this course since the example will constitute a distinct march forward of our story, and will not hinder the progress of the events remaining to be recorded.

During the next fortnight—that is, through the early part of July—the history of our hero was circulated in the form of strange, diverting, most unlikely-sounding stories, which passed from mouth to mouth, through the streets and villas adjoining those inhabited by Lebedeff, Ptitsin, Nastasia Philipovna and the Epanchins; in fact, pretty well through the whole town and its environs. All society—both the inhabitants of the place and those who came down of an evening for the music—had got hold of one and the same story, in a thousand varieties of detail—as to how a certain young prince had raised a terrible scandal in a most respectable household, had thrown over a daughter of the family, to whom he was engaged, and had been captured by a woman of shady reputation whom he was determined to marry at once—breaking off all old ties for the satisfaction of his insane idea; and, in spite of the public indignation roused by his action, the marriage was to take place in Pavlofsk openly and publicly, and the prince had announced his intention of going through with it with head erect and looking the whole world in the face. The story was so artfully adorned with scandalous details, and persons of so great eminence and importance were apparently mixed up in it, while, at the same time, the evidence was so circumstantial, that it was no wonder the matter gave food for plenty of curiosity and gossip.

According to the reports of the most talented gossip-mongers—those who, in every class of society, are always in haste to explain every event to their neighbours—the young gentleman concerned was of good family—a prince—fairly rich—weak of intellect, but a democrat and a dabbler in the Nihilism of the period, as exposed by Mr. Turgenieff. He could hardly talk Russian, but had fallen in love with one of the Miss Epanchins, and his suit met with so much encouragement that he had been received in the house as the recognized bridegroom-to-be of the young lady. But like the Frenchman of whom the story is told that he studied for holy orders, took all the oaths, was ordained priest, and next morning wrote to his bishop informing him that, as he did not believe in God and considered it wrong to deceive the people and live upon their pockets, he begged to surrender the orders conferred upon him the day before, and to inform his lordship that he was sending this letter to the public press,—like this Frenchman, the prince played a false game. It was rumoured that he had purposely waited for the solemn occasion of a large evening party at the house of his future bride, at which he was introduced to several eminent persons, in order publicly to make known his ideas and opinions, and thereby insult the "big-wigs," and to throw over his bride as offensively as possible; and that, resisting the servants who were told off to turn him out of the house, he had seized and thrown down a magnificent china vase. As a characteristic addition to the above, it was currently reported that the young prince really loved the lady to whom he was engaged, and had thrown her over out of purely Nihilistic motives, with the intention of giving himself the satisfaction of marrying a fallen woman in the face of all the world, thereby publishing his opinion that there is no distinction between virtuous and disreputable women, but that all women are alike, free; and a "fallen" woman, indeed, somewhat superior to a virtuous one.

It was declared that he believed in no classes or anything else, excepting "the woman question."

All this looked likely enough, and was accepted as fact by most of the inhabitants of the place, especially as it was borne out, more or less, by daily occurrences.

Of course much was said that could not be determined absolutely. For instance, it was reported that the poor girl had so loved her future husband that she had followed him to the house of the other woman, the day after she had been thrown over; others said that he had insisted on her coming, himself, in order to shame and insult her by his taunts and Nihilistic confessions when she reached the house. However all these things might be, the public interest in the matter grew daily, especially as it became clear that the scandalous wedding was undoubtedly to take place.

So that if our readers were to ask an explanation, not of the wild reports about the prince's Nihilistic opinions, but simply as to how such a marriage could possibly satisfy his real aspirations, or as to the spiritual condition of our hero at this time, we confess that we should have great difficulty in giving the required information.

All we know is, that the marriage really was arranged, and that the prince had commissioned Lebedeff and Keller to look after all the necessary business connected with it; that he had requested them to spare no expense; that Nastasia herself was hurrying on the wedding; that Keller was to be the prince's best man, at his own earnest request; and that Burdovsky was to give Nastasia away, to his great delight. The wedding was to take place before the middle of July.

But, besides the above, we are cognizant of certain other undoubted facts, which puzzle us a good deal because they seem flatly to contradict the foregoing.

We suspect, for instance, that having commissioned Lebedeff and the others, as above, the prince immediately forgot all about masters of ceremonies and even the ceremony itself; and we feel quite certain that in making these arrangements he did so in order that he might absolutely escape all thought of the wedding, and even forget its approach if he could, by detailing all business concerning it to others.

What did he think of all this time, then? What did he wish for? There is no doubt that he was a perfectly free agent all through, and that as far as Nastasia was concerned, there was no force of any kind brought to bear on him. Nastasia wished for a speedy marriage, true!—but the prince agreed at once to her proposals; he agreed, in fact, so casually that anyone might suppose he was but acceding to the most simple and ordinary suggestion.

There are many strange circumstances such as this before us; but in our opinion they do but deepen the mystery, and do not in the smallest degree help us to understand the case.

However, let us take one more example. Thus, we know for a fact that during the whole of this fortnight the prince spent all his days and evenings with Nastasia; he walked with her, drove with her; he began to be restless whenever he passed an hour without seeing her—in fact, to all appearances, he sincerely loved her. He would listen to her for hours at a time with a quiet smile on his face, scarcely saying a word himself. And yet we know, equally certainly, that during this period he several times set off, suddenly, to the Epanchins', not concealing the fact from Nastasia Philipovna, and driving the latter to absolute despair. We know also that he was not received at the Epanchins' so long as they remained at Pavlofsk, and that he was not allowed an

interview with Aglaya;—but next day he would set off once more on the same errand, apparently quite oblivious of the fact of yesterday's visit having been a failure,—and, of course, meeting with another refusal. We know, too, that exactly an hour after Aglaya had fled from Nastasia Philipovna's house on that fateful evening, the prince was at the Epanchins',—and that his appearance there had been the cause of the greatest consternation and dismay; for Aglaya had not been home, and the family only discovered then, for the first time, that the two of them had been to Nastasia's house together.

It was said that Elizabetha Prokofievna and her daughters had there and then denounced the prince in the strongest terms, and had refused any further acquaintance and friendship with him; their rage and denunciations being redoubled when Varia Ardalionovna suddenly arrived and stated that Aglaya had been at her house in a terrible state of mind for the last hour, and that she refused to come home.

This last item of news, which disturbed Lizabetha Prokofievna more than anything else, was perfectly true. On leaving Nastasia's, Aglaya had felt that she would rather die than face her people, and had therefore gone straight to Nina Alexandrovna's. On receiving the news, Lizabetha and her daughters and the general all rushed off to Aglaya, followed by Prince Lef Nicolaievitch—undeterred by his recent dismissal; but through Varia he was refused a sight of Aglaya here also. The end of the episode was that when Aglaya saw her mother and sisters crying over her and not uttering a word of reproach, she had flung herself into their arms and gone straight home with them.

It was said that Gania managed to make a fool of himself even on this occasion; for, finding himself alone with Aglaya for a minute or two when Varia had gone to the Epanchins', he had thought it a fitting opportunity to make a declaration of his love, and on hearing this Aglaya, in spite of her state of mind at the time, had suddenly burst out laughing, and had put a strange question to him. She asked him whether he would consent to hold his finger to a lighted candle in proof of his devotion! Gania—it was said—looked so comically bewildered that Aglaya had almost laughed herself into hysterics, and had rushed out of the room and upstairs,—where her parents had found her.

Hippolyte told the prince this last story, sending for him on purpose. When Muishkin heard about the candle and Gania's finger he had laughed so that he had quite astonished Hippolyte,—and then shuddered and burst into tears. The prince's condition during those days was strange and perturbed. Hippolyte plainly declared that he thought he was out of his mind;—this, however, was hardly to be relied upon.

Offering all these facts to our readers and refusing to explain them, we do not for a moment desire to justify our hero's conduct. On the contrary, we are quite prepared to feel our share of the indignation which his behaviour aroused in the hearts of his friends. Even Vera Lebedeff was angry with him for a while; so was Colia; so was Keller, until he was selected for best man; so was Lebedeff himself,—who began to intrigue against him out of pure irritation;—but of this anon. In fact we are in full accord with certain forcible words spoken to the prince by Evgenie Pavlovitch, quite unceremoniously, during the course of a friendly conversation, six or seven days after the events at Nastasia Philipovna's house.

We may remark here that not only the Epanchins themselves, but all who had anything to do with them, thought it right to break with the prince in consequence of his conduct. Prince S. even went so far as to turn away and cut him dead in the street. But Evgenie Pavlovitch was not afraid to compromise himself by paying the prince a visit, and did so, in spite of the fact that he had recommenced to visit at the Epanchins', where he was received with redoubled hospitality and kindness after the temporary estrangement.

Evgenie called upon the prince the day after that on which the Epanchins left Pavlofsk. He knew of all the current rumours,—in fact, he had probably contributed to them himself. The prince was delighted to see him, and immediately began to speak of the Epanchins;—which simple and straightforward opening quite took Evgenie's fancy, so that he melted at once, and plunged *in medias res* without ceremony.

The prince did not know, up to this, that the Epanchins had left the place. He grew very pale on hearing the news; but a moment later he nodded his head, and said thoughtfully:

"I knew it was bound to be so." Then he added quickly:

"Where have they gone to?"

Evgenie meanwhile observed him attentively, and the rapidity of the questions, their simplicity, the prince's candour, and at the same time, his evident perplexity and mental agitation, surprised him considerably. However, he told Muishkin all he could, kindly and in detail. The prince hardly knew anything, for this was the first informant from the household whom he had met since the estrangement.

Evgenie reported that Aglaya had been really ill, and that for two nights she had not slept at all, owing to high fever; that now she was better and out of serious danger, but still in a nervous, hysterical state.

“It’s a good thing that there is peace in the house, at all events,” he continued. “They never utter a hint about the past, not only in Aglaya’s presence, but even among themselves. The old people are talking of a trip abroad in the autumn, immediately after Adelaida’s wedding; Aglaya received the news in silence.”

Evgenie himself was very likely going abroad also; so were Prince S. and his wife, if affairs allowed of it; the general was to stay at home. They were all at their estate of Colmina now, about twenty miles or so from St. Petersburg. Princess Bielokonski had not returned to Moscow yet, and was apparently staying on for reasons of her own. Lizabetha Prokofievna had insisted that it was quite impossible to remain in Pavlofsk after what had happened. Evgenie had told her of all the rumours current in town about the affair; so that there could be no talk of their going to their house on the Yelagin as yet.

“And in point of fact, prince,” added Evgenie Pavlovitch, “you must allow that they could hardly have stayed here, considering that they knew of all that went on at your place, and in the face of your daily visits to their house, visits which you insisted upon making in spite of their refusal to see you.”

“Yes—yes, quite so; you are quite right. I wished to see Aglaya Ivanovna, you know!” said the prince, nodding his head.

“Oh, my dear fellow,” cried Evgenie, warmly, with real sorrow in his voice, “how could you permit all that to come about as it has? Of course, of course, I know it was all so unexpected. I admit that you, only naturally, lost your head, and—and could not stop the foolish girl; that was not in your power. I quite see so much; but you really should have understood how seriously she cared for you. She could not bear to share you with another; and you could bring yourself to throw away and shatter such a treasure! Oh, prince, prince!”

“Yes, yes, you are quite right again,” said the poor prince, in anguish of mind. “I was wrong, I know. But it was only Aglaya who looked on Nastasia Philipovna so; no one else did, you know.”

“But that’s just the worst of it all, don’t you see, that there was absolutely nothing serious about the matter in reality!” cried Evgenie, beside himself: “Excuse me, prince, but I have thought over all this; I have thought a great deal over it; I know all that had happened before; I know all that took place six months since; and I know there was *nothing* serious about the matter, it was but fancy, smoke, fantasy, distorted by agitation, and only the alarmed jealousy of an absolutely inexperienced girl could possibly have mistaken it for serious reality.”

Here Evgenie Pavlovitch quite let himself go, and gave the reins to his indignation.

Clearly and reasonably, and with great psychological insight, he drew a picture of the prince's past relations with Nastasia Philipovna. Evgenie Pavlovitch always had a ready tongue, but on this occasion his eloquence, surprised himself. "From the very beginning," he said, "you began with a lie; what began with a lie was bound to end with a lie; such is the law of nature. I do not agree, in fact I am angry, when I hear you called an idiot; you are far too intelligent to deserve such an epithet; but you are so far *strange* as to be unlike others; that you must allow, yourself. Now, I have come to the conclusion that the basis of all that has happened, has been first of all your innate inexperience (remark the expression 'innate,' prince). Then follows your unheard-of simplicity of heart; then comes your absolute want of sense of proportion (to this want you have several times confessed); and lastly, a mass, an accumulation, of intellectual convictions which you, in your unexampled honesty of soul, accept unquestionably as also innate and natural and true. Admit, prince, that in your relations with Nastasia Philipovna there has existed, from the very first, something democratic, and the fascination, so to speak, of the 'woman question'? I know all about that scandalous scene at Nastasia Philipovna's house when Rogojin brought the money, six months ago. I'll show you yourself as in a looking-glass, if you like. I know exactly all that went on, in every detail, and why things have turned out as they have. You thirsted, while in Switzerland, for your home-country, for Russia; you read, doubtless, many books about Russia, excellent books, I dare say, but hurtful to *you*; and you arrived here; as it were, on fire with the longing to be of service. Then, on the very day of your arrival, they tell you a sad story of an ill-used woman; they tell *you*, a knight, pure and without reproach, this tale of a poor woman! The same day you actually *see* her; you are attracted by her beauty, her fantastic, almost demoniacal, beauty—(I admit her beauty, of course).

"Add to all this your nervous nature, your epilepsy, and your sudden arrival in a strange town—the day of meetings and of exciting scenes, the day of unexpected acquaintanceships, the day of sudden actions, the day of meeting with the three lovely Epanchin girls, and among them Aglaya—add your fatigue, your excitement; add Nastasia' s evening party, and the tone of that party, and—what were you to expect of yourself at such a moment as that?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the prince, once more, nodding his head, and blushing slightly. "Yes, it was so, or nearly so—I know it. And besides, you see, I had not slept the night before, in the train, or the night before that, either, and I was very tired."

“Of course, of course, quite so; that’s what I am driving at!” continued Evgenie, excitedly. “It is as clear as possible, and most comprehensible, that you, in your enthusiasm, should plunge headlong into the first chance that came of publicly airing your great idea that you, a prince, and a pure-living man, did not consider a woman disgraced if the sin were not her own, but that of a disgusting social libertine! Oh, heavens! it’s comprehensible enough, my dear prince, but that is not the question, unfortunately! The question is, was there any reality and truth in your feelings? Was it nature, or nothing but intellectual enthusiasm? What do you think yourself? We are told, of course, that a far worse woman was *forgiven*, but we don’t find that she was told that she had done well, or that she was worthy of honour and respect! Did not your common-sense show you what was the real state of the case, a few months later? The question is now, not whether she is an innocent woman (I do not insist one way or the other—I do not wish to); but can her whole career justify such intolerable pride, such insolent, rapacious egotism as she has shown? Forgive me, I am too violent, perhaps, but—”

“Yes—I dare say it is all as you say; I dare say you are quite right,” muttered the prince once more. “She is very sensitive and easily put out, of course; but still, she…”

“She is worthy of sympathy? Is that what you wished to say, my good fellow? But then, for the mere sake of vindicating her worthiness of sympathy, you should not have insulted and offended a noble and generous girl in her presence! This is a terrible exaggeration of sympathy! How can you love a girl, and yet so humiliate her as to throw her over for the sake of another woman, before the very eyes of that other woman, when you have already made her a formal proposal of marriage? And you *did* propose to her, you know; you did so before her parents and sisters. Can you be an honest man, prince, if you act so? I ask you! And did you not deceive that beautiful girl when you assured her of your love?”

“Yes, you are quite right. Oh! I feel that I am very guilty!” said Muishkin, in deepest distress.

“But as if that is enough!” cried Evgenie, indignantly. “As if it is enough simply to say: ‘I know I am very guilty!’ You are to blame, and yet you persevere in evil-doing. Where was your heart, I should like to know, your *christian heart*, all that time? Did she look as though she were suffering less, at that moment? You saw her face—was she suffering less than the other woman? How could you see her suffering and allow it to continue? How could you?”

“But I did not allow it,” murmured the wretched prince.

“How—what do you mean you didn’t allow?”

“Upon my word, I didn’t! To this moment I don’t know how it all happened. I—I ran after Aglaya Ivanovna, but Nastasia Philipovna fell down in a faint; and since that day they won’t let me see Aglaya—that’s all I know.”

“It’s all the same; you ought to have run after Aglaya though the other was fainting.”

“Yes, yes, I ought—but I couldn’t! She would have died—she would have killed herself. You don’t know her; and I should have told Aglaya everything afterwards—but I see, Evgenie Pavlovitch, you don’t know all. Tell me now, why am I not allowed to see Aglaya? I should have cleared it all up, you know. Neither of them kept to the real point, you see. I could never explain what I mean to you, but I think I could to Aglaya. Oh! my God, my God! You spoke just now of Aglaya’s face at the moment when she ran away. Oh, my God! I remember it! Come along, come along—quick!” He pulled at Evgenie’s coat-sleeve nervously and excitedly, and rose from his chair.

“Where to?”

“Come to Aglaya—quick, quick!”

“But I told you she is not at Pavlofsk. And what would be the use if she were?”

“Oh, she’ll understand, she’ll understand!” cried the prince, clasping his hands. “She would understand that all this is not the point—not a bit the real point—it is quite foreign to the real question.”

“How can it be foreign? You *are* going to be married, are you not? Very well, then you are persisting in your course. *Are* you going to marry her or not?”

“Yes, I shall marry her—yes.”

“Then why is it ‘not the point’?”

“Oh, no, it is not the point, not a bit. It makes no difference, my marrying her—it means nothing.”

“How ‘means nothing’? You are talking nonsense, my friend. You are marrying the woman you love in order to secure her happiness, and Aglaya sees and knows it. How can you say that it’s ‘not the point’?”

“Her happiness? Oh, no! I am only marrying her—well, because she wished it. It means nothing—it’s all the same. She would certainly have died. I see now that that marriage with Rogojin was an insane idea. I understand all now that I did not understand before; and, do you know, when those two stood opposite to one another,

I could not bear Nastasia Philipovna's face! You must know, Evgenie Pavlovitch, I have never told anyone before—not even Aglaya—that I cannot bear Nastasia Philipovna's face." (He lowered his voice mysteriously as he said this.) "You described that evening at Nastasia Philipovna's (six months since) very accurately just now; but there is one thing which you did not mention, and of which you took no account, because you do not know. I mean her *face*—I looked at her face, you see. Even in the morning when I saw her portrait, I felt that I could not *bear* to look at it. Now, there's Vera Lebedeff, for instance, her eyes are quite different, you know. I'm *afraid* of her face!" he added, with real alarm.

"You are *afraid* of it?"

"Yes—she's mad!" he whispered, growing pale.

"Do you know this for certain?" asked Evgenie, with the greatest curiosity.

"Yes, for certain—quite for certain, now! I have discovered it *absolutely* for certain, these last few days."

"What are you doing, then?" cried Evgenie, in horror. "You must be marrying her solely out of *fear*, then! I can't make head or tail of it, prince. Perhaps you don't even love her?"

"Oh, no; I love her with all my soul. Why, she is a child! She's a child now—a real child. Oh! you know nothing about it at all, I see."

"And are you assured, at the same time, that you love Aglaya too?"

"Yes—yes—oh; yes!"

"How so? Do you want to make out that you love them *both?*"

"Yes—yes—both! I do!"

"Excuse me, prince, but think what you are saying! Recollect yourself!"

"Without Aglaya—I—I *must* see Aglaya!—I shall die in my sleep very soon—I thought I was dying in my sleep last night. Oh! if Aglaya only knew all—I mean really, *really* all! Because she must know *all*—that's the first condition towards understanding. Why cannot we ever know all about another, especially when that other has been guilty? But I don't know what I'm talking about—I'm so confused. You pained me so dreadfully. Surely—surely Aglaya has not the same expression now as she had at the moment when she ran away? Oh, yes! I am guilty and I know it—I know it! Probably I am in fault all round—I don't quite know how—but I am in fault, no doubt. There is

something else, but I cannot explain it to you, Evgenie Pavlovitch. I have no words; but Aglaya will understand. I have always believed Aglaya will understand—I am assured she will."

"No, prince, she will not. Aglaya loved like a woman, like a human being, not like an abstract spirit. Do you know what, my poor prince? The most probable explanation of the matter is that you never loved either the one or the other in reality."

"I don't know—perhaps you are right in much that you have said, Evgenie Pavlovitch. You are very wise, Evgenie Pavlovitch—oh! how my head is beginning to ache again! Come to her, quick—for God's sake, come!"

"But I tell you she is not in Pavlofsk! She's in Colmina."

"Oh, come to Colmina, then! Come—let us go at once!"

"No—no, impossible!" said Evgenie, rising.

"Look here—I'll write a letter—take a letter for me!"

"No—no, prince; you must forgive me, but I can't undertake any such commissions! I really can't."

And so they parted.

Evgenie Pavlovitch left the house with strange convictions. He, too, felt that the prince must be out of his mind.

"And what did he mean by that *face*—a face which he so fears, and yet so loves? And meanwhile he really may die, as he says, without seeing Aglaya, and she will never know how devotedly he loves her! Ha, ha, ha! How does the fellow manage to love two of them? Two different kinds of love, I suppose! This is very interesting—poor idiot! What on earth will become of him now?"

X.

The prince did not die before his wedding—either by day or night, as he had foretold that he might. Very probably he passed disturbed nights, and was afflicted with bad dreams; but, during the daytime, among his fellow-men, he seemed as kind as ever, and even contented; only a little thoughtful when alone.

The wedding was hurried on. The day was fixed for exactly a week after Evgenie's visit to the prince. In the face of such haste as this, even the prince's best friends (if he had had any) would have felt the hopelessness of any attempt to save "the poor madman." Rumour said that in the visit of Evgenie Pavlovitch was to be discerned the influence

of Lizabetha Prokofievna and her husband… But if those good souls, in the boundless kindness of their hearts, were desirous of saving the eccentric young fellow from ruin, they were unable to take any stronger measures to attain that end. Neither their position, nor their private inclination, perhaps (and only naturally), would allow them to use any more pronounced means.

We have observed before that even some of the prince's nearest neighbours had begun to oppose him. Vera Lebedeff's passive disagreement was limited to the shedding of a few solitary tears; to more frequent sitting alone at home, and to a diminished frequency in her visits to the prince's apartments.

Colia was occupied with his father at this time. The old man died during a second stroke, which took place just eight days after the first. The prince showed great sympathy in the grief of the family, and during the first days of their mourning he was at the house a great deal with Nina Alexandrovna. He went to the funeral, and it was observable that the public assembled in church greeted his arrival and departure with whisperings, and watched him closely.

The same thing happened in the park and in the street, wherever he went. He was pointed out when he drove by, and he often overheard the name of Nastasia Philipovna coupled with his own as he passed. People looked out for her at the funeral, too, but she was not there; and another conspicuous absentee was the captain's widow, whom Lebedeff had prevented from coming.

The funeral service produced a great effect on the prince. He whispered to Lebedeff that this was the first time he had ever heard a Russian funeral service since he was a little boy. Observing that he was looking about him uneasily, Lebedeff asked him whom he was seeking.

"Nothing. I only thought I—"

"Is it Rogojin?"

"Why—is he here?"

"Yes, he's in church."

"I thought I caught sight of his eyes!" muttered the prince, in confusion. "But what of it!—Why is he here? Was he asked?"

"Oh, dear, no! Why, they don't even know him! Anyone can come in, you know. Why do you look so amazed? I often meet him; I've seen him at least four times, here at Pavlofsk, within the last week."

“I haven’t seen him once—since that day!” the prince murmured.

As Nastasia Philipovna had not said a word about having met Rogojin since “that day,” the prince concluded that the latter had his own reasons for wishing to keep out of sight. All the day of the funeral our hero was in a deeply thoughtful state, while Nastasia Philipovna was particularly merry, both in the daytime and in the evening.

Colia had made it up with the prince before his father’s death, and it was he who urged him to make use of Keller and Burdovsky, promising to answer himself for the former’s behaviour. Nina Alexandrovna and Lebedeff tried to persuade him to have the wedding in St. Petersburg, instead of in the public fashion contemplated, down here at Pavlofsk in the height of the season. But the prince only said that Nastasia Philipovna desired to have it so, though he saw well enough what prompted their arguments.

The next day Keller came to visit the prince. He was in a high state of delight with the post of honour assigned to him at the wedding.

Before entering he stopped on the threshold, raised his hand as if making a solemn vow, and cried:

“I won’t drink!”

Then he went up to the prince, seized both his hands, shook them warmly, and declared that he had at first felt hostile towards the project of this marriage, and had openly said so in the billiard-rooms, but that the reason simply was that, with the impatience of a friend, he had hoped to see the prince marry at least a Princess de Rohan or de Chabot; but that now he saw that the prince’s way of thinking was ten times more noble than that of “all the rest put together.” For he desired neither pomp nor wealth nor honour, but only the truth! The sympathies of exalted personages were well known, and the prince was too highly placed by his education, and so on, not to be in some sense an exalted personage!

“But all the common herd judge differently; in the town, at the meetings, in the villas, at the band, in the inns and the billiard-rooms, the coming event has only to be mentioned and there are shouts and cries from everybody. I have even heard talk of getting up a ‘charivari’ under the windows on the wedding-night. So if ‘you have need of the pistol’ of an honest man, prince, I am ready to fire half a dozen shots even before you rise from your nuptial couch!”

Keller also advised, in anticipation of the crowd making a rush after the ceremony, that a fire-hose should be placed at the entrance to the house; but Lebedeff was opposed to this measure, which he said might result in the place being pulled down.

“I assure you, prince, that Lebedeff is intriguing against you. He wants to put you under control. Imagine that! To take ‘from you the use of your free-will and your money’—that is to say, the two things that distinguish us from the animals! I have heard it said positively. It is the sober truth.”

The prince recollected that somebody had told him something of the kind before, and he had, of course, scoffed at it. He only laughed now, and forgot the hint at once.

Lebedeff really had been busy for some little while; but, as usual, his plans had become too complex to succeed, through sheer excess of ardour. When he came to the prince—the very day before the wedding—to confess (for he always confessed to the persons against whom he intrigued, especially when the plan failed), he informed our hero that he himself was a born Talleyrand, but for some unknown reason had become simple Lebedeff. He then proceeded to explain his whole game to the prince, interesting the latter exceedingly.

According to Lebedeff’s account, he had first tried what he could do with General Epanchin. The latter informed him that he wished well to the unfortunate young man, and would gladly do what he could to “save him,” but that he did not think it would be seemly for him to interfere in this matter. Lizabetha Prokofievna would neither hear nor see him. Prince S. and Evgenie Pavlovitch only shrugged their shoulders, and implied that it was no business of theirs. However, Lebedeff had not lost heart, and went off to a clever lawyer,—a worthy and respectable man, whom he knew well. This old gentleman informed him that the thing was perfectly feasible if he could get hold of competent witnesses as to Muishkin’s mental incapacity. Then, with the assistance of a few influential persons, he would soon see the matter arranged.

Lebedeff immediately procured the services of an old doctor, and carried the latter away to Pavlofsk to see the prince, by way of viewing the ground, as it were, and to give him (Lebedeff) counsel as to whether the thing was to be done or not. The visit was not to be official, but merely friendly.

Muishkin remembered the doctor’s visit quite well. He remembered that Lebedeff had said that he looked ill, and had better see a doctor; and although the prince scouted the idea, Lebedeff had turned up almost immediately with his old friend, explaining that they had just met at the bedside of Hippolyte, who was very ill, and that the doctor had something to tell the prince about the sick man.

The prince had, of course, at once received him, and had plunged into a conversation about Hippolyte. He had given the doctor an account of Hippolyte’s attempted suicide; and had proceeded thereafter to talk of his own malady,—of Switzerland, of

Schneider, and so on; and so deeply was the old man interested by the prince's conversation and his description of Schneider's system, that he sat on for two hours.

Muishkin gave him excellent cigars to smoke, and Lebedeff, for his part, regaled him with liqueurs, brought in by Vera, to whom the doctor—a married man and the father of a family—addressed such compliments that she was filled with indignation. They parted friends, and, after leaving the prince, the doctor said to Lebedeff: "If all such people were put under restraint, there would be no one left for keepers." Lebedeff then, in tragic tones, told of the approaching marriage, whereupon the other nodded his head and replied that, after all, marriages like that were not so rare; that he had heard that the lady was very fascinating and of extraordinary beauty, which was enough to explain the infatuation of a wealthy man; that, further, thanks to the liberality of Totski and of Rogojin, she possessed—so he had heard—not only money, but pearls, diamonds, shawls, and furniture, and consequently she could not be considered a bad match. In brief, it seemed to the doctor that the prince's choice, far from being a sign of foolishness, denoted, on the contrary, a shrewd, calculating, and practical mind. Lebedeff had been much struck by this point of view, and he terminated his confession by assuring the prince that he was ready, if need be, to shed his very life's blood for him.

Hippolyte, too, was a source of some distraction to the prince at this time; he would send for him at any and every hour of the day. They lived,—Hippolyte and his mother and the children,—in a small house not far off, and the little ones were happy, if only because they were able to escape from the invalid into the garden. The prince had enough to do in keeping the peace between the irritable Hippolyte and his mother, and eventually the former became so malicious and sarcastic on the subject of the approaching wedding, that Muishkin took offence at last, and refused to continue his visits.

A couple of days later, however, Hippolyte's mother came with tears in her eyes, and begged the prince to come back, "or *he* would eat her up bodily." She added that Hippolyte had a great secret to disclose. Of course the prince went. There was no secret, however, unless we reckon certain pantings and agitated glances around (probably all put on) as the invalid begged his visitor to "beware of Rogojin."

"He is the sort of man," he continued, "who won't give up his object, you know; he is not like you and me, prince—he belongs to quite a different order of beings. If he sets his heart on a thing he won't be afraid of anything—" and so on.

Hippolyte was very ill, and looked as though he could not long survive. He was tearful at first, but grew more and more sarcastic and malicious as the interview proceeded.

The prince questioned him in detail as to his hints about Rogojin. He was anxious to seize upon some facts which might confirm Hippolyte's vague warnings; but there were none; only Hippolyte's own private impressions and feelings.

However, the invalid—to his immense satisfaction—ended by seriously alarming the prince.

At first Muishkin had not cared to make any reply to his sundry questions, and only smiled in response to Hippolyte's advice to "run for his life—abroad, if necessary. There are Russian priests everywhere, and one can get married all over the world."

But it was Hippolyte's last idea which upset him.

"What I am really alarmed about, though," he said, "is Aglaya Ivanovna. Rogojin knows how you love her. Love for love. You took Nastasia Philipovna from him. He will murder Aglaya Ivanovna; for though she is not yours, of course, now, still such an act would pain you,—wouldn't it?"

He had attained his end. The prince left the house beside himself with terror.

These warnings about Rogojin were expressed on the day before the wedding. That evening the prince saw Nastasia Philipovna for the last time before they were to meet at the altar; but Nastasia was not in a position to give him any comfort or consolation. On the contrary, she only added to his mental perturbation as the evening went on. Up to this time she had invariably done her best to cheer him—she was afraid of his looking melancholy; she would try singing to him, and telling him every sort of funny story or reminiscence that she could recall. The prince nearly always pretended to be amused, whether he were so actually or no; but often enough he laughed sincerely, delighted by the brilliancy of her wit when she was carried away by her narrative, as she very often was. Nastasia would be wild with joy to see the impression she had made, and to hear his laugh of real amusement; and she would remain the whole evening in a state of pride and happiness. But this evening her melancholy and thoughtfulness grew with every hour.

The prince had told Evgenie Pavlovitch with perfect sincerity that he loved Nastasia Philipovna with all his soul. In his love for her there was the sort of tenderness one feels for a sick, unhappy child which cannot be left alone. He never spoke of his feelings for Nastasia to anyone, not even to herself. When they were together they never discussed their "feelings," and there was nothing in their cheerful, animated conversation which an outsider could not have heard. Daria Alexeyevna, with whom Nastasia was staying, told afterwards how she had been filled with joy and delight only to look at them, all this time.

Thanks to the manner in which he regarded Nastasia's mental and moral condition, the prince was to some extent freed from other perplexities. She was now quite different from the woman he had known three months before. He was not astonished, for instance, to see her now so impatient to marry him—she who formerly had wept with rage and hurled curses and reproaches at him if he mentioned marriage! "It shows that she no longer fears, as she did then, that she would make me unhappy by marrying me," he thought. And he felt sure that so sudden a change could not be a natural one. This rapid growth of self-confidence could not be due only to her hatred for Aglaya. To suppose that would be to suspect the depth of her feelings. Nor could it arise from dread of the fate that awaited her if she married Rogojin. These causes, indeed, as well as others, might have played a part in it, but the true reason, Muishkin decided, was the one he had long suspected—that the poor sick soul had come to the end of its forces. Yet this was an explanation that did not procure him any peace of mind. At times he seemed to be making violent efforts to think of nothing, and one would have said that he looked on his marriage as an unimportant formality, and on his future happiness as a thing not worth considering. As to conversations such as the one held with Evgenie Pavlovitch, he avoided them as far as possible, feeling that there were certain objections to which he could make no answer.

The prince had observed that Nastasia knew well enough what Aglaya was to him. He never spoke of it, but he had seen her face when she had caught him starting off for the Epanchins' house on several occasions. When the Epanchins left Pavlofsk, she had beamed with radiance and happiness. Unsuspicious and unobservant as he was, he had feared at that time that Nastasia might have some scheme in her mind for a scene or scandal which would drive Aglaya out of Pavlofsk. She had encouraged the rumours and excitement among the inhabitants of the place as to her marriage with the prince, in order to annoy her rival; and, finding it difficult to meet the Epanchins anywhere, she had, on one occasion, taken him for a drive past their house. He did not observe what was happening until they were almost passing the windows, when it was too late to do anything. He said nothing, but for two days afterwards he was ill.

Nastasia did not try that particular experiment again. A few days before that fixed for the wedding, she grew grave and thoughtful. She always ended by getting the better of her melancholy, and becoming merry and cheerful again, but not quite so unaffectedly happy as she had been some days earlier.

The prince redoubled his attentive study of her symptoms. It was a most curious circumstance, in his opinion, that she never spoke of Rogojin. But once, about five days before the wedding, when the prince was at home, a messenger arrived begging him to come at once, as Nastasia Philipovna was very ill.

He had found her in a condition approaching to absolute madness. She screamed, and trembled, and cried out that Rogojin was hiding out there in the garden—that she had seen him herself—and that he would murder her in the night—that he would cut her throat. She was terribly agitated all day. But it so happened that the prince called at Hippolyte's house later on, and heard from his mother that she had been in town all day, and had there received a visit from Rogojin, who had made inquiries about Pavlofsk. On inquiry, it turned out that Rogojin visited the old lady in town at almost the same moment when Nastasia declared that she had seen him in the garden; so that the whole thing turned out to be an illusion on her part. Nastasia immediately went across to Hippolyte's to inquire more accurately, and returned immensely relieved and comforted.

On the day before the wedding, the prince left Nastasia in a state of great animation. Her wedding-dress and all sorts of finery had just arrived from town. Muishkin had not imagined that she would be so excited over it, but he praised everything, and his praise rendered her doubly happy.

But Nastasia could not hide the cause of her intense interest in her wedding splendour. She had heard of the indignation in the town, and knew that some of the populace was getting up a sort of charivari with music, that verses had been composed for the occasion, and that the rest of Pavlofsk society more or less encouraged these preparations. So, since attempts were being made to humiliate her, she wanted to hold her head even higher than usual, and to overwhelm them all with the beauty and taste of her toilette. "Let them shout and whistle, if they dare!" Her eyes flashed at the thought. But, underneath this, she had another motive, of which she did not speak. She thought that possibly Aglaya, or at any rate someone sent by her, would be present incognito at the ceremony, or in the crowd, and she wished to be prepared for this eventuality.

The prince left her at eleven, full of these thoughts, and went home. But it was not twelve o'clock when a messenger came to say that Nastasia was very bad, and he must come at once.

On hurrying back he found his bride locked up in her own room and could hear her hysterical cries and sobs. It was some time before she could be made to hear that the prince had come, and then she opened the door only just sufficiently to let him in, and immediately locked it behind him. She then fell on her knees at his feet. (So at least Dana Alexeyevna reported.)

"What am I doing? What am I doing to you?" she sobbed convulsively, embracing his knees.

The prince was a whole hour soothing and comforting her, and left her, at length, pacified and composed. He sent another messenger during the night to inquire after her, and two more next morning. The last brought back a message that Nastasia was surrounded by a whole army of dressmakers and maids, and was as happy and as busy as such a beauty should be on her wedding morning, and that there was not a vestige of yesterday's agitation remaining. The message concluded with the news that at the moment of the bearer's departure there was a great confabulation in progress as to which diamonds were to be worn, and how.

This message entirely calmed the prince's mind.

The following report of the proceedings on the wedding day may be depended upon, as coming from eye-witnesses.

The wedding was fixed for eight o'clock in the evening. Nastasia Philipovna was ready at seven. From six o'clock groups of people began to gather at Nastasia's house, at the prince's, and at the church door, but more especially at the former place. The church began to fill at seven.

Colia and Vera Lebedeff were very anxious on the prince's account, but they were so busy over the arrangements for receiving the guests after the wedding, that they had not much time for the indulgence of personal feelings.

There were to be very few guests besides the best men and so on; only Dana Alexeyevna, the Ptitsins, Gania, and the doctor. When the prince asked Lebedeff why he had invited the doctor, who was almost a stranger, Lebedeff replied:

"Why, he wears an 'order,' and it looks so well!"

This idea amused the prince.

Keller and Burdovsky looked wonderfully correct in their dress-coats and white kid gloves, although Keller caused the bridegroom some alarm by his undisguisedly hostile glances at the gathering crowd of sight-seers outside.

At about half-past seven the prince started for the church in his carriage.

We may remark here that he seemed anxious not to omit a single one of the recognized customs and traditions observed at weddings. He wished all to be done as openly as possible, and "in due order."

Arrived at the church, Muishkin, under Keller's guidance, passed through the crowd of spectators, amid continuous whispering and excited exclamations. The prince stayed near the altar, while Keller made off once more to fetch the bride.

On reaching the gate of Daria Alexeyevna's house, Keller found a far denser crowd than he had encountered at the prince's. The remarks and exclamations of the spectators here were of so irritating a nature that Keller was very near making them a speech on the impropriety of their conduct, but was luckily caught by Burdovsky, in the act of turning to address them, and hurried indoors.

Nastasia Philipovna was ready. She rose from her seat, looked into the glass and remarked, as Keller told the tale afterwards, that she was "as pale as a corpse." She then bent her head reverently, before the ikon in the corner, and left the room.

A torrent of voices greeted her appearance at the front door. The crowd whistled, clapped its hands, and laughed and shouted; but in a moment or two isolated voices were distinguishable.

"What a beauty!" cried one.

"Well, she isn't the first in the world, nor the last," said another.

"Marriage covers everything," observed a third.

"I defy you to find another beauty like that," said a fourth.

"She's a real princess! I'd sell my soul for such a princess as that!"

Nastasia came out of the house looking as white as any handkerchief; but her large dark eyes shone upon the vulgar crowd like blazing coals. The spectators' cries were redoubled, and became more exultant and triumphant every moment. The door of the carriage was open, and Keller had given his hand to the bride to help her in, when suddenly with a loud cry she rushed from him, straight into the surging crowd. Her friends about her were stupefied with amazement; the crowd parted as she rushed through it, and suddenly, at a distance of five or six yards from the carriage, appeared Rogojin. It was his look that had caught her eyes.

Nastasia rushed to him like a madwoman, and seized both his hands.

"Save me!" she cried. "Take me away, anywhere you like, quick!"

Rogojin seized her in his arms and almost carried her to the carriage. Then, in a flash, he tore a hundred-rouble note out of his pocket and held it to the coachman.

"To the station, quick! If you catch the train you shall have another. Quick!"

He leaped into the carriage after Nastasia and banged the door. The coachman did not hesitate a moment; he whipped up the horses, and they were off.

“One more second and I should have stopped him,” said Keller, afterwards. In fact, he and Burdovsky jumped into another carriage and set off in pursuit; but it struck them as they drove along that it was not much use trying to bring Nastasia back by force.

“Besides,” said Burdovsky, “the prince would not like it, would he?” So they gave up the pursuit.

Rogojin and Nastasia Philipovna reached the station just in time for the train. As he jumped out of the carriage and was almost on the point of entering the train, Rogojin accosted a young girl standing on the platform and wearing an old-fashioned, but respectable-looking, black cloak and a silk handkerchief over her head.

“Take fifty roubles for your cloak?” he shouted, holding the money out to the girl. Before the astonished young woman could collect her scattered senses, he pushed the money into her hand, seized the mantle, and threw it and the handkerchief over Nastasia’s head and shoulders. The latter’s wedding-array would have attracted too much attention, and it was not until some time later that the girl understood why her old cloak and kerchief had been bought at such a price.

The news of what had happened reached the church with extraordinary rapidity. When Keller arrived, a host of people whom he did not know thronged around to ask him questions. There was much excited talking, and shaking of heads, even some laughter; but no one left the church, all being anxious to observe how the now celebrated bridegroom would take the news. He grew very pale upon hearing it, but took it quite quietly.

“I was afraid,” he muttered, scarcely audibly, “but I hardly thought it would come to this.” Then after a short silence, he added: “However, in her state, it is quite consistent with the natural order of things.”

Even Keller admitted afterwards that this was “extraordinarily philosophical” on the prince’s part. He left the church quite calm, to all appearances, as many witnesses were found to declare afterwards. He seemed anxious to reach home and be left alone as quickly as possible; but this was not to be. He was accompanied by nearly all the invited guests, and besides this, the house was almost besieged by excited bands of people, who insisted upon being allowed to enter the verandah. The prince heard Keller and Lebedeff remonstrating and quarrelling with these unknown individuals, and soon went out himself. He approached the disturbers of his peace, requested courteously to be told what was desired; then politely putting Lebedeff and Keller aside, he addressed an old gentleman who was standing on the verandah steps at the head of the band of would-be guests, and courteously requested him to honour him

with a visit. The old fellow was quite taken aback by this, but entered, followed by a few more, who tried to appear at their ease. The rest remained outside, and presently the whole crowd was censuring those who had accepted the invitation. The prince offered seats to his strange visitors, tea was served, and a general conversation sprang up. Everything was done most decorously, to the considerable surprise of the intruders. A few tentative attempts were made to turn the conversation to the events of the day, and a few indiscreet questions were asked; but Muishkin replied to everybody with such simplicity and good-humour, and at the same time with so much dignity, and showed such confidence in the good breeding of his guests, that the indiscreet talkers were quickly silenced. By degrees the conversation became almost serious. One gentleman suddenly exclaimed, with great vehemence: "Whatever happens, I shall not sell my property; I shall wait. Enterprise is better than money, and there, sir, you have my whole system of economy, if you wish!" He addressed the prince, who warmly commended his sentiments, though Lebedeff whispered in his ear that this gentleman, who talked so much of his "property," had never had either house or home.

Nearly an hour passed thus, and when tea was over the visitors seemed to think that it was time to go. As they went out, the doctor and the old gentleman bade Muishkin a warm farewell, and all the rest took their leave with hearty protestations of good-will, dropping remarks to the effect that "it was no use worrying," and that "perhaps all would turn out for the best," and so on. Some of the younger intruders would have asked for champagne, but they were checked by the older ones. When all had departed, Keller leaned over to Lebedeff, and said:

"With you and me there would have been a scene. We should have shouted and fought, and called in the police. But he has simply made some new friends—and such friends, too! I know them!"

Lebedeff, who was slightly intoxicated, answered with a sigh:

"Things are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. I have applied those words to him before, but now I add that God has preserved the babe himself from the abyss, He and all His saints."

At last, about half-past ten, the prince was left alone. His head ached. Colia was the last to go, after having helped him to change his wedding clothes. They parted on affectionate terms, and, without speaking of what had happened, Colia promised to come very early the next day. He said later that the prince had given no hint of his intentions when they said good-bye, but had hidden them even from him. Soon there

was hardly anyone left in the house. Burdovsky had gone to see Hippolyte; Keller and Lebedeff had wandered off together somewhere.

Only Vera Lebedeff remained hurriedly rearranging the furniture in the rooms. As she left the verandah, she glanced at the prince. He was seated at the table, with both elbows upon it, and his head resting on his hands. She approached him, and touched his shoulder gently. The prince started and looked at her in perplexity; he seemed to be collecting his senses for a minute or so, before he could remember where he was. As recollection dawned upon him, he became violently agitated. All he did, however, was to ask Vera very earnestly to knock at his door and awake him in time for the first train to Petersburg next morning. Vera promised, and the prince entreated her not to tell anyone of his intention. She promised this, too; and at last, when she had half-closed the door, he called her back a third time, took her hands in his, kissed them, then kissed her forehead, and in a rather peculiar manner said to her, “Until tomorrow!”

Such was Vera’s story afterwards.

She went away in great anxiety about him, but when she saw him in the morning, he seemed to be quite himself again, greeted her with a smile, and told her that he would very likely be back by the evening. It appears that he did not consider it necessary to inform anyone excepting Vera of his departure for town.

XI.

An hour later he was in St. Petersburg, and by ten o’clock he had rung the bell at Rogojin’s.

He had gone to the front door, and was kept waiting a long while before anyone came. At last the door of old Mrs. Rogojin’s flat was opened, and an aged servant appeared.

“Parfen Semionovitch is not at home,” she announced from the doorway. “Whom do you want?”

“Parfen Semionovitch.”

“He is not in.”

The old woman examined the prince from head to foot with great curiosity.

“At all events tell me whether he slept at home last night, and whether he came alone?”

The old woman continued to stare at him, but said nothing.

“Was not Nastasia Philipovna here with him, yesterday evening?”

“And, pray, who are you yourself?”

“Prince Lef Nicolaievitch Muishkin; he knows me well.”

“He is not at home.”

The woman lowered her eyes.

“And Nastasia Philipovna?”

“I know nothing about it.”

“Stop a minute! When will he come back?”

“I don’t know that either.”

The door was shut with these words, and the old woman disappeared. The prince decided to come back within an hour. Passing out of the house, he met the porter.

“Is Parfen Semionovitch at home?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Why did they tell me he was not at home, then?”

“Where did they tell you so,—at his door?”

“No, at his mother’s flat; I rang at Parfen Semionovitch’s door and nobody came.”

“Well, he may have gone out. I can’t tell. Sometimes he takes the keys with him, and leaves the rooms empty for two or three days.”

“Do you know for certain that he was at home last night?”

“Yes, he was.”

“Was Nastasia Philipovna with him?”

“I don’t know; she doesn’t come often. I think I should have known if she had come.”

The prince went out deep in thought, and walked up and down the pavement for some time. The windows of all the rooms occupied by Rogojin were closed, those of his mother’s apartments were open. It was a hot, bright day. The prince crossed the road in order to have a good look at the windows again; not only were Rogojin’s closed, but the white blinds were all down as well.

He stood there for a minute and then, suddenly and strangely enough, it seemed to him that a little corner of one of the blinds was lifted, and Rogojin's face appeared for an instant and then vanished. He waited another minute, and decided to go and ring the bell once more; however, he thought better of it again and put it off for an hour.

The chief object in his mind at this moment was to get as quickly as he could to Nastasia Philipovna's lodging. He remembered that, not long since, when she had left Pavlofsk at his request, he had begged her to put up in town at the house of a respectable widow, who had well-furnished rooms to let, near the Ismailofsky barracks. Probably Nastasia had kept the rooms when she came down to Pavlofsk this last time; and most likely she would have spent the night in them, Rogojin having taken her straight there from the station.

The prince took a droshky. It struck him as he drove on that he ought to have begun by coming here, since it was most improbable that Rogojin should have taken Nastasia to his own house last night. He remembered that the porter said she very rarely came at all, so that it was still less likely that she would have gone there so late at night.

Vainly trying to comfort himself with these reflections, the prince reached the Ismailofsky barracks more dead than alive.

To his consternation the good people at the lodgings had not only heard nothing of Nastasia, but all came out to look at him as if he were a marvel of some sort. The whole family, of all ages, surrounded him, and he was begged to enter. He guessed at once that they knew perfectly well who he was, and that yesterday ought to have been his wedding-day; and further that they were dying to ask about the wedding, and especially about why he should be here now, inquiring for the woman who in all reasonable human probability might have been expected to be with him in Pavlofsk.

He satisfied their curiosity, in as few words as possible, with regard to the wedding, but their exclamations and sighs were so numerous and sincere that he was obliged to tell the whole story—in a short form, of course. The advice of all these agitated ladies was that the prince should go at once and knock at Rogojin's until he was let in: and when let in insist upon a substantial explanation of everything. If Rogojin was really not at home, the prince was advised to go to a certain house, the address of which was given, where lived a German lady, a friend of Nastasia Philipovna's. It was possible that she might have spent the night there in her anxiety to conceal herself.

The prince rose from his seat in a condition of mental collapse. The good ladies reported afterwards that "his pallor was terrible to see, and his legs seemed to give way underneath him." With difficulty he was made to understand that his new friends

would be glad of his address, in order to act with him if possible. After a moment's thought he gave the address of the small hotel, on the stairs of which he had had a fit some five weeks since. He then set off once more for Rogojin's.

This time they neither opened the door at Rogojin's flat nor at the one opposite. The prince found the porter with difficulty, but when found, the man would hardly look at him or answer his questions, pretending to be busy. Eventually, however, he was persuaded to reply so far as to state that Rogojin had left the house early in the morning and gone to Pavlofsk, and that he would not return today at all.

"I shall wait; he may come back this evening."

"He may not be home for a week."

"Then, at all events, he *did* sleep here, did he?"

"Well—he did sleep here, yes."

All this was suspicious and unsatisfactory. Very likely the porter had received new instructions during the interval of the prince's absence; his manner was so different now. He had been obliging—now he was as obstinate and silent as a mule. However, the prince decided to call again in a couple of hours, and after that to watch the house, in case of need. His hope was that he might yet find Nastasia at the address which he had just received. To that address he now set off at full speed.

But alas! at the German lady's house they did not even appear to understand what he wanted. After a while, by means of certain hints, he was able to gather that Nastasia must have had a quarrel with her friend two or three weeks ago, since which date the latter had neither heard nor seen anything of her. He was given to understand that the subject of Nastasia's present whereabouts was not of the slightest interest to her; and that Nastasia might marry all the princes in the world for all she cared! So Muishkin took his leave hurriedly. It struck him now that she might have gone away to Moscow just as she had done the last time, and that Rogojin had perhaps gone after her, or even *with* her. If only he could find some trace!

However, he must take his room at the hotel; and he started off in that direction. Having engaged his room, he was asked by the waiter whether he would take dinner; replying mechanically in the affirmative, he sat down and waited; but it was not long before it struck him that dining would delay him. Enraged at this idea, he started up, crossed the dark passage (which filled him with horrible impressions and gloomy forebodings), and set out once more for Rogojin's. Rogojin had not returned, and no one came to the door. He rang at the old lady's door opposite, and was informed that

Parfen Semionovitch would not return for three days. The curiosity with which the old servant stared at him again impressed the prince disagreeably. He could not find the porter this time at all.

As before, he crossed the street and watched the windows from the other side, walking up and down in anguish of soul for half an hour or so in the stifling heat. Nothing stirred; the blinds were motionless; indeed, the prince began to think that the apparition of Rogojin's face could have been nothing but fancy. Soothed by this thought, he drove off once more to his friends at the Ismailofsky barracks. He was expected there. The mother had already been to three or four places to look for Nastasia, but had not found a trace of any kind.

The prince said nothing, but entered the room, sat down silently, and stared at them, one after the other, with the air of a man who cannot understand what is being said to him. It was strange—one moment he seemed to be so observant, the next so absent; his behaviour struck all the family as most remarkable. At length he rose from his seat, and begged to be shown Nastasia's rooms. The ladies reported afterwards how he had examined everything in the apartments. He observed an open book on the table, Madam Bovary, and requested the leave of the lady of the house to take it with him. He had turned down the leaf at the open page, and pocketed it before they could explain that it was a library book. He had then seated himself by the open window, and seeing a card-table, he asked who played cards.

He was informed that Nastasia used to play with Rogojin every evening, either at "preference" or "little fool," or "whist"; that this had been their practice since her last return from Pavlofsk; that she had taken to this amusement because she did not like to see Rogojin sitting silent and dull for whole evenings at a time; that the day after Nastasia had made a remark to this effect, Rogojin had whipped a pack of cards out of his pocket. Nastasia had laughed, but soon they began playing. The prince asked where were the cards, but was told that Rogojin used to bring a new pack every day, and always carried it away in his pocket.

The good ladies recommended the prince to try knocking at Rogojin's once more—not at once, but in the evening. Meanwhile, the mother would go to Pavlofsk to inquire at Dana Alexeyevna's whether anything had been heard of Nastasia there. The prince was to come back at ten o'clock and meet her, to hear her news and arrange plans for the morrow.

In spite of the kindly-meant consolations of his new friends, the prince walked to his hotel in inexpressible anguish of spirit, through the hot, dusty streets, aimlessly staring at the faces of those who passed him. Arrived at his destination, he

determined to rest awhile in his room before he started for Rogojin's once more. He sat down, rested his elbows on the table and his head on his hands, and fell to thinking.

Heaven knows how long and upon what subjects he thought. He thought of many things—of Vera Lebedeff, and of her father; of Hippolyte; of Rogojin himself, first at the funeral, then as he had met him in the park, then, suddenly, as they had met in this very passage, outside, when Rogojin had watched in the darkness and awaited him with uplifted knife. The prince remembered his enemy's eyes as they had glared at him in the darkness. He shuddered, as a sudden idea struck him.

This idea was, that if Rogojin were in Petersburg, though he might hide for a time, yet he was quite sure to come to him—the prince—before long, with either good or evil intentions, but probably with the same intention as on that other occasion. At all events, if Rogojin were to come at all he would be sure to seek the prince here—he had no other town address—perhaps in this same corridor; he might well seek him here if he needed him. And perhaps he did need him. This idea seemed quite natural to the prince, though he could not have explained why he should so suddenly have become necessary to Rogojin. Rogojin would not come if all were well with him, that was part of the thought; he would come if all were not well; and certainly, undoubtedly, all would not be well with him. The prince could not bear this new idea; he took his hat and rushed out towards the street. It was almost dark in the passage.

"What if he were to come out of that corner as I go by and—and stop me?" thought the prince, as he approached the familiar spot. But no one came out.

He passed under the gateway and into the street. The crowds of people walking about—as is always the case at sunset in Petersburg, during the summer—surprised him, but he walked on in the direction of Rogojin's house.

About fifty yards from the hotel, at the first cross-road, as he passed through the crowd of foot-passengers sauntering along, someone touched his shoulder, and said in a whisper into his ear:

"Lef Nicolaievitch, my friend, come along with me." It was Rogojin.

The prince immediately began to tell him, eagerly and joyfully, how he had but the moment before expected to see him in the dark passage of the hotel.

"I was there," said Rogojin, unexpectedly. "Come along." The prince was surprised at this answer; but his astonishment increased a couple of minutes afterwards, when he began to consider it. Having thought it over, he glanced at Rogojin in alarm. The latter

was striding along a yard or so ahead, looking straight in front of him, and mechanically making way for anyone he met.

“Why did you not ask for me at my room if you were in the hotel?” asked the prince, suddenly.

Rogojin stopped and looked at him; then reflected, and replied as though he had not heard the question:

“Look here, Lef Nicolaievitch, you go straight on to the house; I shall walk on the other side. See that we keep together.”

So saying, Rogojin crossed the road.

Arrived on the opposite pavement, he looked back to see whether the prince were moving, waved his hand in the direction of the Gorohovaya, and strode on, looking across every moment to see whether Muishkin understood his instructions. The prince supposed that Rogojin desired to look out for someone whom he was afraid to miss; but if so, why had he not told *him* whom to look out for? So the two proceeded for half a mile or so. Suddenly the prince began to tremble from some unknown cause. He could not bear it, and signalled to Rogojin across the road.

The latter came at once.

“Is Nastasia Philipovna at your house?”

“Yes.”

“And was it you looked out of the window under the blind this morning?”

“Yes.”

“Then why did—”

But the prince could not finish his question; he did not know what to say. Besides this, his heart was beating so that he found it difficult to speak at all. Rogojin was silent also and looked at him as before, with an expression of deep thoughtfulness.

“Well, I’m going,” he said, at last, preparing to recross the road. “You go along here as before; we will keep to different sides of the road; it’s better so, you’ll see.”

When they reached the Gorohovaya, and came near the house, the prince’s legs were trembling so that he could hardly walk. It was about ten o’clock. The old lady’s windows were open, as before; Rogojin’s were all shut, and in the darkness the white blinds showed whiter than ever. Rogojin and the prince each approached the house

on his respective side of the road; Rogojin, who was on the near side, beckoned the prince across. He went over to the doorway.

“Even the porter does not know that I have come home now. I told him, and told them at my mother’s too, that I was off to Pavlofsk,” said Rogojin, with a cunning and almost satisfied smile. “We’ll go in quietly and nobody will hear us.”

He had the key in his hand. Mounting the staircase he turned and signalled to the prince to go more softly; he opened the door very quietly, let the prince in, followed him, locked the door behind him, and put the key in his pocket.

“Come along,” he whispered.

He had spoken in a whisper all the way. In spite of his apparent outward composure, he was evidently in a state of great mental agitation. Arrived in a large salon, next to the study, he went to the window and cautiously beckoned the prince up to him.

“When you rang the bell this morning I thought it must be you. I went to the door on tip-toe and heard you talking to the servant opposite. I had told her before that if anyone came and rang—especially you, and I gave her your name—she was not to tell about me. Then I thought, what if he goes and stands opposite and looks up, or waits about to watch the house? So I came to this very window, looked out, and there you were staring straight at me. That’s how it came about.”

“Where is Nastasia Philipovna?” asked the prince, breathlessly.

“She’s here,” replied Rogojin, slowly, after a slight pause.

“Where?”

Rogojin raised his eyes and gazed intently at the prince.

“Come,” he said.

He continued to speak in a whisper, very deliberately as before, and looked strangely thoughtful and dreamy. Even while he told the story of how he had peeped through the blind, he gave the impression of wishing to say something else. They entered the study. In this room some changes had taken place since the prince last saw it. It was now divided into two equal parts by a heavy green silk curtain stretched across it, separating the alcove beyond, where stood Rogojin’s bed, from the rest of the room.

The heavy curtain was drawn now, and it was very dark. The bright Petersburg summer nights were already beginning to close in, and but for the full moon, it would have been difficult to distinguish anything in Rogojin’s dismal room, with the drawn blinds.

They could just see one anothers faces, however, though not in detail. Rogojin's face was white, as usual. His glittering eyes watched the prince with an intent stare.

"Had you not better light a candle?" said Muishkin.

"No, I needn't," replied Rogojin, and taking the other by the hand he drew him down to a chair. He himself took a chair opposite and drew it up so close that he almost pressed against the prince's knees. At their side was a little round table.

"Sit down," said Rogojin; "let's rest a bit." There was silence for a moment.

"I knew you would be at that hotel," he continued, just as men sometimes commence a serious conversation by discussing any outside subject before leading up to the main point. "As I entered the passage it struck me that perhaps you were sitting and waiting for me, just as I was waiting for you. Have you been to the old lady at Ismailofsky barracks?"

"Yes," said the prince, squeezing the word out with difficulty owing to the dreadful beating of his heart.

"I thought you would. 'They'll talk about it,' I thought; so I determined to go and fetch you to spend the night here—'We will be together,' I thought, 'for this one night—'"

"Rogojin, *where* is Nastasia Philipovna?" said the prince, suddenly rising from his seat. He was quaking in all his limbs, and his words came in a scarcely audible whisper. Rogojin rose also.

"There," he whispered, nodding his head towards the curtain.

"Asleep?" whispered the prince.

Rogojin looked intently at him again, as before.

"Let's go in—but you mustn't—well—let's go in."

He lifted the curtain, paused—and turned to the prince. "Go in," he said, motioning him to pass behind the curtain. Muishkin went in.

"It's so dark," he said.

"You can see quite enough," muttered Rogojin.

"I can just see there's a bed—"

"Go nearer," suggested Rogojin, softly.

The prince took a step forward—then another—and paused. He stood and stared for a minute or two.

Neither of the men spoke a word while at the bedside. The prince's heart beat so loud that its knocking seemed to be distinctly audible in the deathly silence.

But now his eyes had become so far accustomed to the darkness that he could distinguish the whole of the bed. Someone was asleep upon it—in an absolutely motionless sleep. Not the slightest movement was perceptible, not the faintest breathing could be heard. The sleeper was covered with a white sheet; the outline of the limbs was hardly distinguishable. He could only just make out that a human being lay outstretched there.

All around, on the bed, on a chair beside it, on the floor, were scattered the different portions of a magnificent white silk dress, bits of lace, ribbons and flowers. On a small table at the bedside glittered a mass of diamonds, torn off and thrown down anyhow. From under a heap of lace at the end of the bed peeped a small white foot, which looked as though it had been chiselled out of marble; it was terribly still.

The prince gazed and gazed, and felt that the more he gazed the more death-like became the silence. Suddenly a fly awoke somewhere, buzzed across the room, and settled on the pillow. The prince shuddered.

"Let's go," said Rogojin, touching his shoulder. They left the alcove and sat down in the two chairs they had occupied before, opposite to one another. The prince trembled more and more violently, and never took his questioning eyes off Rogojin's face.

"I see you are shuddering, Lef Nicolaievitch," said the latter, at length, "almost as you did once in Moscow, before your fit; don't you remember? I don't know what I shall do with you—"

The prince bent forward to listen, putting all the strain he could muster upon his understanding in order to take in what Rogojin said, and continuing to gaze at the latter's face.

"Was it you?" he muttered, at last, motioning with his head towards the curtain.

"Yes, it was I," whispered Rogojin, looking down.

Neither spoke for five minutes.

"Because, you know," Rogojin recommenced, as though continuing a former sentence, "if you were ill now, or had a fit, or screamed, or anything, they might hear it in the yard, or even in the street, and guess that someone was passing the night in the

house. They would all come and knock and want to come in, because they know I am not at home. I didn't light a candle for the same reason. When I am not here—for two or three days at a time, now and then—no one comes in to tidy the house or anything; those are my orders. So that I want them to not know we are spending the night here—"

"Wait," interrupted the prince. "I asked both the porter and the woman whether Nastasia Philipovna had spent last night in the house; so they knew—"

"I know you asked. I told them that she had called in for ten minutes, and then gone straight back to Pavlofsk. No one knows she slept here. Last night we came in just as carefully as you and I did today. I thought as I came along with her that she would not like to creep in so secretly, but I was quite wrong. She whispered, and walked on tip-toe; she carried her skirt over her arm, so that it shouldn't rustle, and she held up her finger at me on the stairs, so that I shouldn't make a noise—it was you she was afraid of. She was mad with terror in the train, and she begged me to bring her to this house. I thought of taking her to her rooms at the Ismailofsky barracks first; but she wouldn't hear of it. She said, 'No—not there; he'll find me out at once there. Take me to your own house, where you can hide me, and tomorrow we'll set off for Moscow.' Thence she would go to Orel, she said. When she went to bed, she was still talking about going to Orel."

"Wait! What do you intend to do now, Parfen?"

"Well, I'm afraid of you. You shudder and tremble so. We'll pass the night here together. There are no other beds besides that one; but I've thought how we'll manage. I'll take the cushions off all the sofas, and lay them down on the floor, up against the curtain here—for you and me—so that we shall be together. For if they come in and look about now, you know, they'll find her, and carry her away, and they'll be asking me questions, and I shall say I did it, and then they'll take me away, too, don't you see? So let her lie close to us—close to you and me."

"Yes, yes," agreed the prince, warmly.

"So we will not say anything about it, or let them take her away?"

"Not for anything!" cried the other; "no, no, no!"

"So I had decided, my friend; not to give her up to anyone," continued Rogojin. "We'll be very quiet. I have only been out of the house one hour all day, all the rest of the time I have been with her. I dare say the air is very bad here. It is so hot. Do you find it bad?"

"I don't know—perhaps—by morning it will be."

“I’ve covered her with oilcloth—best American oilcloth, and put the sheet over that, and four jars of disinfectant, on account of the smell—as they did at Moscow—you remember? And she’s lying so still; you shall see, in the morning, when it’s light. What! can’t you get up?” asked Rogojin, seeing the other was trembling so that he could not rise from his seat.

“My legs won’t move,” said the prince; “it’s fear, I know. When my fear is over, I’ll get up—”

“Wait a bit—I’ll make the bed, and you can lie down. I’ll lie down, too, and we’ll listen and watch, for I don’t know yet what I shall do... I tell you beforehand, so that you may be ready in case I—”

Muttering these disconnected words, Rogojin began to make up the beds. It was clear that he had devised these beds long before; last night he slept on the sofa. But there was no room for two on the sofa, and he seemed anxious that he and the prince should be close to one another; therefore, he now dragged cushions of all sizes and shapes from the sofas, and made a sort of bed of them close by the curtain. He then approached the prince, and gently helped him to rise, and led him towards the bed. But the prince could now walk by himself, so that his fear must have passed; for all that, however, he continued to shudder.

“It’s hot weather, you see,” continued Rogojin, as he lay down on the cushions beside Muishkin, “and, naturally, there will be a smell. I daren’t open the window. My mother has some beautiful flowers in pots; they have a delicious scent; I thought of fetching them in, but that old servant will find out, she’s very inquisitive.”

“Yes, she is inquisitive,” assented the prince.

“I thought of buying flowers, and putting them all round her; but I was afraid it would make us sad to see her with flowers round her.”

“Look here,” said the prince; he was bewildered, and his brain wandered. He seemed to be continually groping for the questions he wished to ask, and then losing them. “Listen—tell me—how did you—with a knife?—That same one?”

“Yes, that same one.”

“Wait a minute, I want to ask you something else, Parfen; all sorts of things; but tell me first, did you intend to kill her before my wedding, at the church door, with your knife?”

“I don’t know whether I did or not,” said Rogojin, drily, seeming to be a little astonished at the question, and not quite taking it in.

“Did you never take your knife to Pavlofsk with you?”

“No. As to the knife,” he added, “this is all I can tell you about it.” He was silent for a moment, and then said, “I took it out of the locked drawer this morning about three, for it was in the early morning all this—happened. It has been inside the book ever since—and—and—this is what is such a marvel to me, the knife only went in a couple of inches at most, just under her left breast, and there wasn’t more than half a tablespoonful of blood altogether, not more.”

“Yes—yes—yes—” The prince jumped up in extraordinary agitation. “I know, I know, I’ve read of that sort of thing—it’s internal haemorrhage, you know. Sometimes there isn’t a drop—if the blow goes straight to the heart—”

“Wait—listen!” cried Rogojin, suddenly, starting up. “Somebody’s walking about, do you hear? In the hall.” Both sat up to listen.

“I hear,” said the prince in a whisper, his eyes fixed on Rogojin.

“Footsteps?”

“Yes.”

“Shall we shut the door, and lock it, or not?”

“Yes, lock it.”

They locked the door, and both lay down again. There was a long silence.

“Yes, by-the-by,” whispered the prince, hurriedly and excitedly as before, as though he had just seized hold of an idea and was afraid of losing it again. “I—I wanted those cards! They say you played cards with her?”

“Yes, I played with her,” said Rogojin, after a short silence.

“Where are the cards?”

“Here they are,” said Rogojin, after a still longer pause.

He pulled out a pack of cards, wrapped in a bit of paper, from his pocket, and handed them to the prince. The latter took them, with a sort of perplexity. A new, sad, helpless feeling weighed on his heart; he had suddenly realized that not only at this moment, but for a long while, he had not been saying what he wanted to say, had not been acting as he wanted to act; and that these cards which he held in his hand, and which he had been so delighted to have at first, were now of no use—no use… He rose, and

wrung his hands. Rogojin lay motionless, and seemed neither to hear nor see his movements; but his eyes blazed in the darkness, and were fixed in a wild stare.

The prince sat down on a chair, and watched him in alarm. Half an hour went by.

Suddenly Rogojin burst into a loud abrupt laugh, as though he had quite forgotten that they must speak in whispers.

“That officer, eh!—that young officer—don’t you remember that fellow at the band? Eh? Ha, ha, ha! Didn’t she whip him smartly, eh?”

The prince jumped up from his seat in renewed terror. When Rogojin quieted down (which he did at once) the prince bent over him, sat down beside him, and with painfully beating heart and still more painful breath, watched his face intently. Rogojin never turned his head, and seemed to have forgotten all about him. The prince watched and waited. Time went on—it began to grow light.

Rogojin began to wander—muttering disconnectedly; then he took to shouting and laughing. The prince stretched out a trembling hand and gently stroked his hair and his cheeks—he could do nothing more. His legs trembled again and he seemed to have lost the use of them. A new sensation came over him, filling his heart and soul with infinite anguish.

Meanwhile the daylight grew full and strong; and at last the prince lay down, as though overcome by despair, and laid his face against the white, motionless face of Rogojin. His tears flowed on to Rogojin’s cheek, though he was perhaps not aware of them himself.

At all events when, after many hours, the door was opened and people thronged in, they found the murderer unconscious and in a raging fever. The prince was sitting by him, motionless, and each time that the sick man gave a laugh, or a shout, he hastened to pass his own trembling hand over his companion’s hair and cheeks, as though trying to soothe and quiet him. But alas! he understood nothing of what was said to him, and recognized none of those who surrounded him.

If Schneider himself had arrived then and seen his former pupil and patient, remembering the prince’s condition during the first year in Switzerland, he would have flung up his hands, despairingly, and cried, as he did then:

“An idiot!”

XII.

When the widow hurried away to Pavlofsk, she went straight to Daria Alexeyevna's house, and telling all she knew, threw her into a state of great alarm. Both ladies decided to communicate at once with Lebedeff, who, as the friend and landlord of the prince, was also much agitated. Vera Lebedeff told all she knew, and by Lebedeff's advice it was decided that all three should go to Petersburg as quickly as possible, in order to avert "what might so easily happen."

This is how it came about that at eleven o'clock next morning Rogojin's flat was opened by the police in the presence of Lebedeff, the two ladies, and Rogojin's own brother, who lived in the wing.

The evidence of the porter went further than anything else towards the success of Lebedeff in gaining the assistance of the police. He declared that he had seen Rogojin return to the house last night, accompanied by a friend, and that both had gone upstairs very secretly and cautiously. After this there was no hesitation about breaking open the door, since it could not be got open in any other way.

Rogojin suffered from brain fever for two months. When he recovered from the attack he was at once brought up on trial for murder.

He gave full, satisfactory, and direct evidence on every point; and the prince's name was, thanks to this, not brought into the proceedings. Rogojin was very quiet during the progress of the trial. He did not contradict his clever and eloquent counsel, who argued that the brain fever, or inflammation of the brain, was the cause of the crime; clearly proving that this malady had existed long before the murder was perpetrated, and had been brought on by the sufferings of the accused.

But Rogojin added no words of his own in confirmation of this view, and as before, he recounted with marvellous exactness the details of his crime. He was convicted, but with extenuating circumstances, and condemned to hard labour in Siberia for fifteen years. He heard his sentence grimly, silently, and thoughtfully. His colossal fortune, with the exception of the comparatively small portion wasted in the first wanton period of his inheritance, went to his brother, to the great satisfaction of the latter.

The old lady, Rogojin's mother, is still alive, and remembers her favourite son Parfen sometimes, but not clearly. God spared her the knowledge of this dreadful calamity which had overtaken her house.

Lebedeff, Keller, Gania, Ptitsin, and many other friends of ours continue to live as before. There is scarcely any change in them, so that there is no need to tell of their subsequent doings.

Hippolyte died in great agitation, and rather sooner than he expected, about a fortnight after Nastasia Philipovna's death. Colia was much affected by these events, and drew nearer to his mother in heart and sympathy. Nina Alexandrovna is anxious, because he is "thoughtful beyond his years," but he will, we think, make a useful and active man.

The prince's further fate was more or less decided by Colia, who selected, out of all the persons he had met during the last six or seven months, Evgenie Pavlovitch, as friend and confidant. To him he made over all that he knew as to the events above recorded, and as to the present condition of the prince. He was not far wrong in his choice. Evgenie Pavlovitch took the deepest interest in the fate of the unfortunate "idiot," and, thanks to his influence, the prince found himself once more with Dr. Schneider, in Switzerland.

Evgenie Pavlovitch, who went abroad at this time, intending to live a long while on the continent, being, as he often said, quite superfluous in Russia, visits his sick friend at Schneider's every few months.

But Dr. Schneider frowns ever more and more and shakes his head; he hints that the brain is fatally injured; he does not as yet declare that his patient is incurable, but he allows himself to express the gravest fears.

Evgenie takes this much to heart, and he has a heart, as is proved by the fact that he receives and even answers letters from Colia. But besides this, another trait in his character has become apparent, and as it is a good trait we will make haste to reveal it. After each visit to Schneider's establishment, Evgenie Pavlovitch writes another letter, besides that to Colia, giving the most minute particulars concerning the invalid's condition. In these letters is to be detected, and in each one more than the last, a growing feeling of friendship and sympathy.

The individual who corresponds thus with Evgenie Pavlovitch, and who engages so much of his attention and respect, is Vera Lebedeff. We have never been able to discover clearly how such relations sprang up. Of course the root of them was in the events which we have already recorded, and which so filled Vera with grief on the prince's account that she fell seriously ill. But exactly how the acquaintance and friendship came about, we cannot say.

We have spoken of these letters chiefly because in them is often to be found some news of the Epanchin family, and of Aglaya in particular. Evgenie Pavlovitch wrote of her from Paris, that after a short and sudden attachment to a certain Polish count, an exile, she had suddenly married him, quite against the wishes of her parents, though

they had eventually given their consent through fear of a terrible scandal. Then, after a six months' silence, Evgenie Pavlovitch informed his correspondent, in a long letter, full of detail, that while paying his last visit to Dr. Schneider's establishment, he had there come across the whole Epanchin family (excepting the general, who had remained in St. Petersburg) and Prince S. The meeting was a strange one. They all received Evgenie Pavlovitch with effusive delight; Adelaida and Alexandra were deeply grateful to him for his "angelic kindness to the unhappy prince."

Lizabetha Prokofievna, when she saw poor Muishkin, in his enfeebled and humiliated condition, had wept bitterly. Apparently all was forgiven him.

Prince S. had made a few just and sensible remarks. It seemed to Evgenie Pavlovitch that there was not yet perfect harmony between Adelaida and her fiance, but he thought that in time the impulsive young girl would let herself be guided by his reason and experience. Besides, the recent events that had befallen her family had given Adelaida much to think about, especially the sad experiences of her younger sister. Within six months, everything that the family had dreaded from the marriage with the Polish count had come to pass. He turned out to be neither count nor exile—at least, in the political sense of the word—but had had to leave his native land owing to some rather dubious affair of the past. It was his noble patriotism, of which he made a great display, that had rendered him so interesting in Aglaya's eyes. She was so fascinated that, even before marrying him, she joined a committee that had been organized abroad to work for the restoration of Poland; and further, she visited the confessional of a celebrated Jesuit priest, who made an absolute fanatic of her. The supposed fortune of the count had dwindled to a mere nothing, although he had given almost irrefutable evidence of its existence to Lizabetha Prokofievna and Prince S.

Besides this, before they had been married half a year, the count and his friend the priest managed to bring about a quarrel between Aglaya and her family, so that it was now several months since they had seen her. In a word, there was a great deal to say; but Mrs. Epanchin, and her daughters, and even Prince S., were still so much distressed by Aglaya's latest infatuations and adventures, that they did not care to talk of them, though they must have known that Evgenie knew much of the story already.

Poor Lizabetha Prokofievna was most anxious to get home, and, according to Evgenie's account, she criticized everything foreign with much hostility.

"They can't bake bread anywhere, decently; and they all freeze in their houses, during winter, like a lot of mice in a cellar. At all events, I've had a good Russian cry over this poor fellow," she added, pointing to the prince, who had not recognized her in the slightest degree. "So enough of this nonsense; it's time we faced the truth. All this

continental life, all this Europe of yours, and all the trash about ‘going abroad’ is simply foolery, and it is mere foolery on our part to come. Remember what I say, my friend; you’ll live to agree with me yourself.”

So spoke the good lady, almost angrily, as she took leave of Evgenie Pavlovitch.