

CHAPTER III. A ROMANCE ENDED

I

FROM THE LARGE BALLROOM of Skvoreshniki (the room in which the last interview with Varvara Petrovna and Stepan Trofimovitch had taken place) the fire could be plainly seen. At daybreak, soon after five in the morning, Liza was standing at the farthest window on the right looking intently at the fading glow. She was alone in the room. She was wearing the dress she had worn the day before at the matinée—a very smart light green dress covered with lace, but crushed and put on carelessly and with haste. Suddenly noticing that some of the hooks were undone in front she flushed, hurriedly set it right, snatched up from a chair the red shawl she had flung down when she came in the day before, and put it round her neck. Some locks of her luxuriant hair had come loose and showed below the shawl on her right shoulder. Her face looked weary and careworn, but her eyes glowed under her frowning brows. She went up to the window again and pressed her burning forehead against the cold pane. The door opened and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch came in.

“I’ve sent a messenger on horseback,” he said. “In ten minutes we shall hear all about it, meantime the servants say that part of the riverside quarter has been burnt down, on the right side of the bridge near the quay. It’s been burning since eleven o’clock; now the fire is going down.”

He did not go near the window, but stood three steps behind her; she did not turn towards him.

“It ought to have been light an hour ago by the calendar, and it’s still almost night,” she said irritably.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I don’t remember, Liza. Why dead? You must live.”

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

“No I don’t,” he answered, frowning.

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

A look of pain came into his face.

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

His eyes glowed.

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

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

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

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

“Liza! What happened yesterday!”

“What happened is over!”

“That’s impossible! That’s cruel!”

“What if it is cruel? You must bear it if it is cruel.”

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

“What a mean thought!”

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

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

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

“Your own life or another’s?”

He got up quickly.

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

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

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

“I don’t understand you,” she brought out, faltering apprehensively.

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

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

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

“I did,” he said softly.

“Well then, what would you have? You knew and yet you accepted ‘that moment’ for yourself. Aren’t we quits?”

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

She looked at him with hatred.

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

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

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

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

“No.”

“There is nothing in it to fret your vanity. It is all the absolute truth. It began with a fine moment which was too much for me to bear. The day before yesterday, when I ‘insulted’ you before every one and you answered me so chivalrously, I went home and guessed at once that you were running away from me because you were married, and not from contempt for me which, as a fashionable young lady, I dreaded more than anything. I understood that it was for my sake, for me, mad as I was, that you ran away. You see how I appreciate your generosity. Then Pyotr Stepanovitch skipped up to me and explained it all to me at once. He revealed to me that you were dominated by a ‘great idea,’ before which he and I were as nothing, but yet that I was a stumbling-block in your path. He brought himself in, he insisted that we three should work together, and said the most fantastic things about a boat and about maple-wood oars out of some Russian song. I complimented him and told him he was a poet, which he swallowed as the real thing. And as apart from him I had known long before that I had

not the strength to do anything for long, I made up my mind on the spot. Well, that's all and quite enough, and please let us have no more explanations. We might quarrel. Don't be afraid of anyone, I take it all on myself. I am horrid and capricious, I was fascinated by that operatic boat, I am a young lady ... but you know I did think that you were dreadfully in love with me. Don't despise the poor fool, and don't laugh at the tear that dropped just now. I am awfully given to crying with self-pity. Come, that's enough, that's enough. I am no good for anything and you are no good for anything; it's as bad for both of us, so let's comfort ourselves with that. Anyway, it eases our vanity."

"Dream and delirium," cried Stavrogin, wringing his hands, and pacing about the room. "Liza, poor child, what have you done to yourself?"

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

"Why, why did you come to me?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I ought to confess that ever since those days in Switzerland I have had a strong feeling that you have something awful, loathsome, some bloodshed on your conscience ... and yet something that would make you look very ridiculous. Beware of telling me, if it's true: I shall laugh you to scorn. I shall laugh at you for the rest of your

life.... Aie, you are turning pale again? I won't, I won't, I'll go at once." She jumped up from her chair with a movement of disgust and contempt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II

The room from which Pyotr Stepanovitch had peeped in was a large oval vestibule. Alexey Yegorytch had been sitting there before Pyotr Stepanovitch came in, but the

latter sent him away. Stavrogin closed the door after him and stood expectant. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked rapidly and searchingly at him.

“Well?”

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

“Have they been burnt? murdered?”

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

In the heat of his talk he went close up to Stavrogin and took hold of the revers of his coat (really, it may have been on purpose). With a violent movement Stavrogin struck him on the arm.

“Come, what is it ... give over ... you’ll break my arm ... what matters is the way things have turned out,” he rattled on, not in the least surprised at the blow. “I forked out the money in the evening on condition that his sister and he should set off early next

morning; I trusted that rascal Liputin with the job of getting them into the train and seeing them off. But that beast Liputin wanted to play his schoolboy pranks on the public—perhaps you heard? At the matinée? Listen, listen: they both got drunk, made up verses of which half are Liputin's; he rigged Lebyadkin out in a dress-coat, assuring me meanwhile that he had packed him off that morning, but he kept him shut somewhere in a back room, till he thrust him on the platform at the matinée. But Lebyadkin got drunk quickly and unexpectedly. Then came the scandalous scene you know of, and then they got him home more dead than alive, and Liputin filched away the two hundred roubles, leaving him only small change. But it appears unluckily that already that morning Lebyadkin had taken that two hundred roubles out of his pocket, boasted of it and shown it in undesirable quarters. And as that was just what Fedka was expecting, and as he had heard something at Kirillov's (do you remember, your hint?) he made up his mind to take advantage of it. That's the whole truth. I am glad, anyway, that Fedka did not find the money, the rascal was reckoning on a thousand, you know! He was in a hurry and seems to have been frightened by the fire himself.... Would you believe it, that fire came as a thunderbolt for me. Devil only knows what to make of it! It is taking things into their own hands.... You see, as I expect so much of you I will hide nothing from you: I've long been hatching this idea of a fire because it suits the national and popular taste; but I was keeping it for a critical moment, for that precious time when we should all rise up and ... And they suddenly took it into their heads to do it, on their own initiative, without orders, now at the very moment when we ought to be lying low and keeping quiet! Such presumption!... The fact is, I've not got to the bottom of it yet, they talk about two Shpigulin men, but if there are any of *our* fellows in it, if any one of them has had a hand in it—so much the worse for him! You see what comes of letting people get ever so little out of hand! No, this democratic rabble, with its quintets, is a poor foundation; what we want is one magnificent, despotic will, like an idol, resting on something fundamental and external.... Then the quintets will cringe into obedience and be obsequiously ready on occasion. But, anyway, though, they are all crying out now that Stavrogin wanted his wife to be burnt and that that's what caused the fire in the town, but ...”

“Why, are they all saying that?”

“Well, not yet, and I must confess I have heard nothing of the sort, but what one can do with people, especially when they've been burnt out! *Vox populi vox Dei*. A stupid rumour is soon set going. But you really have nothing to be afraid of. From the legal point of view you are all right, and with your conscience also. For you didn't want it done, did you? There's no clue, nothing but the coincidence.... The only thing is Fedka

may remember what you said that night at Kirillov's (and what made you say it?) but that proves nothing and we shall stop Fedka's mouth. I shall stop it to-day...."

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

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

"Are you threatening me, you fool?"

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

"Mavriky Nikolaevitch? Is that true?"

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

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

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

"She is just going out to him!"

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

"Relieve her mind?"

“Rather! Let’s go.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stavrogin suddenly laughed.

“I am laughing at my monkey,” he explained at once.

“Ah! You saw that I was putting it on!” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, laughing too, with great enjoyment. “I did it to amuse you! Only fancy, as soon as you came out to me I guessed from your face that you’d been ‘unlucky.’ A complete fiasco, perhaps. Eh? There! I’ll bet anything,” he cried, almost gasping with delight, “that you’ve been sitting side by side in the drawing-room all night wasting your precious time discussing something lofty and elevated.... There, forgive me, forgive me; it’s not my business. I felt sure yesterday that it would all end in foolishness. I brought her to you simply to

amuse you, and to show you that you wouldn't have a dull time with me. I shall be of use to you a hundred times in that way. I always like pleasing people. If you don't want her now, which was what I was reckoning on when I came, then ..."

"So you brought her simply for my amusement?"

"Why, what else?"

"Not to make me kill my wife?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ah! You've been listening?"

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

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

“That’s not true. You said ‘murdered.’ ... Who’s been murdered?” she insisted with agonising mistrust.

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

Liza trembled and turned terribly pale.

“A strange brutal outrage, Lizaveta Nikolaevna. A simple case of robbery,” Pyotr Stepanovitch rattled off at once “Simply robbery, under cover of the fire. The crime was committed by Fedka the convict, and it was all that fool Lebyadkin’s fault for showing every one his money.... I rushed here with the news ... it fell on me like a thunderbolt. Stavrogin could hardly stand when I told him. We were deliberating here whether to tell you at once or not?”

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

“No; it’s false.”

“False?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, starting. “What do you mean by that?”

“Heavens! I shall go mad!” cried Liza.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Very well, kill me,” he said softly, almost conciliatorily.

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

Stavrogin smiled strangely.

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

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

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

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

“Yes? Yes?”

“How can I tell?... Go to hell. Go to hell.” And he walked out of the room.

“Perhaps, after all, it may be for the best,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered to himself as he hid the revolver.

III

He rushed off to overtake Lizaveta Nikolaevna. She had not got far away, only a few steps, from the house. She had been detained by Alexey Yegorytch, who was following a step behind her, in a tail coat, and without a hat; his head was bowed respectfully. He was persistently entreating her to wait for a carriage; the old man was alarmed and almost in tears.

“Go along. Your master is asking for tea, and there’s no one to give it to him,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, pushing him away. He took Liza’s arm.

She did not pull her arm away, but she seemed hardly to know what she was doing; she was still dazed.

“To begin with, you are going the wrong way,” babbled Pyotr Stepanovitch. “We ought to go this way, and not by the garden, and, secondly, walking is impossible in any case. It’s over two miles, and you are not properly dressed. If you would wait a second, I came in a droshky; the horse is in the yard. I’ll get it instantly, put you in, and get you home so that no one sees you.”

“How kind you are,” said Liza graciously.

“Oh, not at all. Any humane man in my position would do the same....”

Liza looked at him, and was surprised.

“Good heavens! Why I thought it was that old man here still.”

“Listen. I am awfully glad that you take it like this, because it’s all such a frightfully stupid convention, and since it’s come to that, hadn’t I better tell the old man to get

the carriage at once. It's only a matter of ten minutes and we'll turn back and wait in the porch, eh?"

"I want first ... where are those murdered people?"

"Ah! What next? That was what I was afraid of.... No, we'd better leave those wretched creatures alone; it's no use your looking at them."

"I know where they are. I know that house."

"Well? What if you do know it? Come; it's raining, and there's a fog. (A nice job this sacred duty I've taken upon myself.) Listen, Lizaveta Nikolaevna! It's one of two alternatives. Either you come with me in the droshky—in that case wait here, and don't take another step, for if we go another twenty steps we must be seen by Mavriky Nikolaevitch."

"Mavriky Nikolaevitch! Where? Where?"

"Well, if you want to go with him, I'll take you a little farther, if you like, and show you where he sits, but I don't care to go up to him just now. No, thank you."

"He is waiting for me. Good God!" she suddenly stopped, and a flush of colour flooded her face.

"Oh! Come now. If he is an unconventional man! You know, Lizaveta Nikolaevna, it's none of my business. I am a complete outsider, and you know that yourself. But, still, I wish you well.... If your 'fairy boat' has failed you, if it has turned out to be nothing more than a rotten old hulk, only fit to be chopped up ..."

"Ah! That's fine, that's lovely," cried Liza.

"Lovely, and yet your tears are falling. You must have spirit. You must be as good as a man in every way. In our age, when woman.... Foo, hang it," Pyotr Stepanovitch was on the point of spitting. "And the chief point is that there is nothing to regret. It may all turn out for the best. Mavriky Nikolaevitch is a man.... In fact, he is a man of feeling though not talkative, but that's a good thing, too, as long as he has no conventional notions, of course...."

"Lovely, lovely!" Liza laughed hysterically.

"Well, hang it all ... Lizaveta Nikolaevna," said Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly piqued. "I am simply here on your account.... It's nothing to me.... I helped you yesterday when you wanted it yourself. To-day ... well, you can see Mavriky Nikolaevitch from here;

there he's sitting; he doesn't see us. I say, Lizaveta Nikolaevna, have you ever read 'Polenka Saxe'?"

"What's that?"

"It's the name of a novel, 'Polenka Saxe.' I read it when I was a student.... In it a very wealthy official of some sort, Saxe, arrested his wife at a summer villa for infidelity.... But, hang it; it's no consequence! You'll see, Mavriky Nikolaevitch will make you an offer before you get home. He doesn't see us yet."

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

And she ran back.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But it would be strange to describe their conversation. And meanwhile they walked hand in hand quickly, hurrying as though they were crazy. They were going straight towards the fire. Mavriky Nikolaevitch still had hopes of meeting a cart at least, but no one came that way. A mist of fine, drizzling rain enveloped the whole country, swallowing up every ray of light, every gleam of colour, and transforming everything into one smoky, leaden, indistinguishable mass. It had long been daylight, yet it seemed as though it were still night. And suddenly in this cold foggy mist there appeared coming towards them a strange and absurd figure. Picturing it now I think I should not have believed my eyes if I had been in Lizaveta Nikolaevna's place, yet she uttered a cry of joy, and recognised the approaching figure at once. It was Stepan Trofimovitch. How he had gone off, how the insane, impracticable idea of his flight came to be carried out, of that later. I will only mention that he was in a fever that morning, yet even illness did not prevent his starting. He was walking resolutely on the damp ground. It was evident that he had planned the enterprise to the best of his ability, alone with his inexperience and lack of practical sense. He wore "travelling dress," that is, a greatcoat with a wide patent-leather belt, fastened with a buckle and a pair of new high boots pulled over his trousers. Probably he had for some time past pictured a traveller as looking like this, and the belt and the high boots with the shining tops like a hussar's, in which he could hardly walk, had been ready some time before. A broad-brimmed hat, a knitted scarf, twisted close round his neck, a stick in his right

hand, and an exceedingly small but extremely tightly packed bag in his left, completed his get-up. He had, besides, in the same right hand, an open umbrella. These three objects—the umbrella, the stick, and the bag—had been very awkward to carry for the first mile, and had begun to be heavy by the second.

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

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

“But why are you kneeling down?”

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

“Stepan Trofimovitch, have you heard anything about the people who’ve been murdered?... Is it true? Is it true?”

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

I thought surely I shouldn't meet a brigand the moment I came out on the road. *Chère Lise*, I thought you said something of someone's being murdered. *Oh, mon Dieu!* You are ill!"

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

They reached the fatal house at the very moment when the huge crowd, which had gathered round it, had already heard a good deal of Stavrogin, and of how much it was to his interest to murder his wife. Yet, I repeat, the immense majority went on listening without moving or uttering a word. The only people who were excited were bawling drunkards and excitable individuals of the same sort as the gesticulatory cabinet-maker. Every one knew the latter as a man really of mild disposition, but he was liable on occasion to get excited and to fly off at a tangent if anything struck him in a certain way. I did not see Liza and Mavriky Nikolaevitch arrive. Petrified with amazement, I first noticed Liza some distance away in the crowd, and I did not at once catch sight of Mavriky Nikolaevitch. I fancy there was a moment when he fell two or three steps behind her or was pressed back by the crush. Liza, forcing her way through the crowd, seeing and noticing nothing round her, like one in a delirium, like a patient escaped from a hospital, attracted attention only too quickly, of course. There arose a hubbub of loud talking and at last sudden shouts. Some one bawled out, "It's Stavrogin's woman!" And on the other side, "It's not enough to murder them, she wants to look at them!" All at once I saw an arm raised above her head from behind and suddenly brought down upon it. Liza fell to the ground. We heard a fearful scream from Mavriky Nikolaevitch as he dashed to her assistance and struck with all his strength the man who stood between him and Liza. But at that instant the same cabinetmaker seized him with both arms from behind. For some minutes nothing could be distinguished in the scrimmage that followed. I believe Liza got up but was knocked down by another blow. Suddenly the crowd parted and a small space was left empty round Liza's prostrate figure, and Mavriky Nikolaevitch, frantic with grief and covered with blood, was standing over her, screaming, weeping, and wringing his hands. I don't remember exactly what followed after; I only remember that they began to carry Liza away. I ran after her. She was still alive and perhaps still conscious. The cabinet-maker and three other men in the crowd were seized. These three still deny having taken any part in the

dastardly deed, stubbornly maintaining that they have been arrested by mistake. Perhaps it's the truth. Though the evidence against the cabinet-maker is clear, he is so irrational that he is still unable to explain what happened coherently. I too, as a spectator, though at some distance, had to give evidence at the inquest. I declared that it had all happened entirely accidentally through the action of men perhaps moved by ill-feeling, yet scarcely conscious of what they were doing—drunk and irresponsible. I am of that opinion to this day.

CHAPTER IV. THE LAST RESOLUTION

I

THAT MORNING MANY people saw Pyotr Stepanovitch. All who saw him remembered that he was in a particularly excited state. At two o'clock he went to see Gaganov, who had arrived from the country only the day before, and whose house was full of visitors hotly discussing the events of the previous day. Pyotr Stepanovitch talked more than anyone and made them listen to him. He was always considered among us as a "chatterbox of a student with a screw loose," but now he talked of Yulia Mihailovna, and in the general excitement the theme was an enthralling one. As one who had recently been her intimate and confidential friend, he disclosed many new and unexpected details concerning her; incidentally (and of course unguardedly) he repeated some of her own remarks about persons known to all in the town, and thereby piqued their vanity. He dropped it all in a vague and rambling way, like a man free from guile driven by his sense of honour to the painful necessity of clearing up a perfect mountain of misunderstandings, and so simple-hearted that he hardly knew where to begin and where to leave off. He let slip in a rather unguarded way, too, that Yulia Mihailovna knew the whole secret of Stavrogin and that she had been at the bottom of the whole intrigue. She had taken him in too, for he, Pyotr Stepanovitch, had also been in love with this unhappy Liza, yet he had been so hoodwinked that he had *almost* taken her to Stavrogin himself in the carriage. "Yes, yes, it's all very well for you to laugh, gentlemen, but if only I'd known, if I'd known how it would end!" he concluded. To various excited inquiries about Stavrogin he bluntly replied that in his opinion the catastrophe to the Lebyadkins was a pure coincidence, and that it was all Lebyadkin's own fault for displaying his money. He explained this particularly well. One of his listeners observed that it was no good his "pretending"; that he had eaten and drunk and almost slept at Yulia Mihailovna's, yet now he was the first to blacken

her character, and that this was by no means such a fine thing to do as he supposed. But Pyotr Stepanovitch immediately defended himself.

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

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

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

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

Between seven and eight o’clock, when it was dark, all the five members of the quintet met together at Ensign Erkel’s lodgings in a little crooked house at the end of the town. The meeting had been fixed by Pyotr Stepanovitch himself, but he was unpardonably late, and the members waited over an hour for him. This Ensign Erkel was that young officer who had sat the whole evening at Virginsky’s with a pencil in his hand and a notebook before him. He had not long been in the town; he lodged alone with two old women, sisters, in a secluded by-street and was shortly to leave the town; a meeting at his house was less likely to attract notice than anywhere. This strange boy was distinguished by extreme taciturnity: he was capable of sitting for a dozen evenings in succession in noisy company, with the most extraordinary conversation going on around him, without uttering a word, though he listened with extreme attention, watching the speakers with his childlike eyes. His face was very pretty and even had a certain look of cleverness. He did not belong to the quintet; it was supposed that he

had some special job of a purely practical character. It is known now that he had nothing of the sort and probably did not understand his position himself. It was simply that he was filled with hero-worship for Pyotr Stepanovitch, whom he had only lately met. If he had met a monster of iniquity who had incited him to found a band of brigands on the pretext of some romantic and socialistic object, and as a test had bidden him rob and murder the first peasant he met, he would certainly have obeyed and done it. He had an invalid mother to whom he sent half of his scanty pay—and how she must have kissed that poor little flaxen head, how she must have trembled and prayed over it! I go into these details about him because I feel very sorry for him.

“Our fellows” were excited. The events of the previous night had made a great impression on them, and I fancy they were in a panic. The simple disorderliness in which they had so zealously and systematically taken part had ended in a way they had not expected. The fire in the night, the murder of the Lebyadkins, the savage brutality of the crowd with Liza, had been a series of surprises which they had not anticipated in their programme. They hotly accused the hand that had guided them of despotism and duplicity. In fact, while they were waiting for Pyotr Stepanovitch they worked each other up to such a point that they resolved again to ask him for a definite explanation, and if he evaded again, as he had done before, to dissolve the quintet and to found instead a new secret society “for the propaganda of ideas” and on their own initiative on the basis of democracy and equality. Liputin, Shigalov, and the authority on the peasantry supported this plan; Lyamshin said nothing, though he looked approving. Virginsky hesitated and wanted to hear Pyotr Stepanovitch first. It was decided to hear Pyotr Stepanovitch, but still he did not come; such casualness added fuel to the flames. Erkel was absolutely silent and did nothing but order the tea, which he brought from his landladies in glasses on a tray, not bringing in the samovar nor allowing the servant to enter.

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

“Before I open my mouth, you’ve got something hidden; out with it.”

Liputin began “in the name of all,” and declared in a voice quivering with resentment “that if things were going on like that they might as well blow their brains out.” Oh, they were not at all afraid to blow their brains out, they were quite ready to, in fact, but only to serve the common cause (a general movement of approbation). So he must be more open with them so that they might always know beforehand, “or else what would

things be coming to?" (Again a stir and some guttural sounds.) To behave like this was humiliating and dangerous. "We don't say so because we are afraid, but if one acts and the rest are only pawns, then one would blunder and all would be lost."

(Exclamations. "Yes, yes." General approval.)

"Damn it all, what do you want?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Through us?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Those whose interest it is to burn down towns.”

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

He pulled out of his pocket Lebyadkin’s anonymous letter to Lembke and handed it to Liputin. The latter read it, was evidently surprised, and passed it thoughtfully to his neighbour; the letter quickly went the round.

“Is that really Lebyadkin’s handwriting?” observed Shigalov.

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

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

The members exchanged rapid glances.

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

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

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

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

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

“What three? What three of us?”

“The day before yesterday, at three o’clock in the night, you, Tolkatchenko, were inciting Fomka Zavyalov at the ‘Forget-me-not.’”

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

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

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

Tolkatchenko reflected suddenly.

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

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

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

“State it.”

Shigalov sat down and pulled himself together.

“So far as I understand—and it’s impossible not to understand it—you yourself at first and a second time later, drew with great eloquence, but too theoretically, a picture of Russia covered with an endless network of knots. Each of these centres of activity, proselytising and ramifying endlessly, aims by systematic denunciation to injure the prestige of local authority, to reduce the villages to confusion, to spread cynicism and

scandals, together with complete disbelief in everything and an eagerness for something better, and finally, by means of fires, as a pre-eminently national method, to reduce the country at a given moment, if need be, to desperation. Are those your words which I tried to remember accurately? Is that the programme you gave us as the authorised representative of the central committee, which is to this day utterly unknown to us and almost like a myth?"

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

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

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

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

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

At this all were agape with astonishment.

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

"Stavrogin, no doubt," cried Liputin.

"What ... why Stavrogin?" Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed suddenly taken aback. "Hang it all," he cried, pulling himself together at once, "it's Shatov! I believe you all know now that Shatov in his time was one of the society. I must tell you that, watching him through persons he does not suspect, I found out to my amazement that he knows all about the organisation of the network and ... everything, in fact. To save himself from being charged with having formerly belonged, he will give information against all. He has been hesitating up till now and I have spared him. Your fire has decided him: he is

shaken and will hesitate no longer. To-morrow we shall be arrested as incendiaries and political offenders.”

“Is it true? How does Shatov know?” The excitement was indescribable.

“It’s all perfectly true. I have no right to reveal the source from which I learnt it or how I discovered it, but I tell you what I can do for you meanwhile: through one person I can act on Shatov so that without his suspecting it he will put off giving information, but not more than for twenty-four hours.” All were silent.

“We really must send him to the devil!” Tolkatchenko was the first to exclaim.

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

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

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

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

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

“His determination to take his own life—a philosophic, or as I should call it, insane decision—has become known *there*” Pyotr Stepanovitch went on to explain.

“*There* not a thread, not a grain of dust is overlooked; everything is turned to the service of the cause. Foreseeing how useful it might be and satisfying themselves that his intention was quite serious, they had offered him the means to come to Russia (he was set for some reason on dying in Russia), gave him a commission which he promised to carry out (and he had done so), and had, moreover, bound him by a promise, as you already know, to commit suicide only when he was told to. He promised everything. You must note that he belongs to the organisation on a particular footing and is anxious to be of service; more than that I can’t tell you. To-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"But?" asked Pyotr Stepanovitch....

"*But* what?"

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

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

"Then?"

Virginsky did not answer.

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

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

“I am for the cause,” Virginsky pronounced suddenly.

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

II

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

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

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

meanwhile he was detained by Shatov; he had to cement the quintet together once for all, in case of emergency. "Pity to waste them, they might be of use." That, I imagine, was his way of reasoning.

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

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

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

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

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

“I want a beefsteak.”

“Upon my word! It is always full of people.”

“What if it is?”

“But ... we shall be late. It’s ten o’clock already.”

“You can’t be too late to go there.”

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

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

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

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

“Keep it; I’ll tell you afterwards.... What do you say to it, though?”

Liputin shuddered all over.

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

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

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

“H’m! I think differently,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, walking on resolutely.

“So do I; surely it isn’t your work?”

“That’s not your business.”

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

“You are talking nonsense; it’s a good poem.”

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

“I thought you were a Fourierist.”

“Fourier says something quite different, quite different.”

“I know it’s nonsense.”

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

Liputin positively unbuttoned his coat, he was so hot.

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

“No, excuse me; I can’t undertake such a ... I decline.”

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

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

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

“No, I’m not. We have a full right to break off and found a new society.”

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

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

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

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

“Shatov mustn’t know that we are here,” Pyotr Stepanovitch whispered sternly to Liputin.

III

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

“You are not mistaken,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, “it’s just that I’ve come about.”

“To-day?”

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

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

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

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

“I should prefer not in your presence.”

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

“I don’t care. And now will you be here long?”

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

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

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

“Drink it. You can have some if you like.”

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

“That’s no matter. Let Liputin have some too.”

“No, I ... can’t.”

“Don’t want to or can’t?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, turning quickly to him.

“I am not going to here,” Liputin said expressively.

Pyotr Stepanovitch frowned.

“There’s a flavour of mysticism about that; goodness knows what to make of you people!”

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

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

“Has Stavrogin gone?” asked Kirillov.

“Yes.”

“He’s done well.”

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

“I don’t care what you think as long as every one keeps his word.”

“I’ll keep my word.”

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

“You are an absurd fellow.”

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

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

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

“You’ve no claim at all.”

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

“And am I to take on myself all the nasty things you’ve done?”

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

“I am not afraid.”

“I ask because you are making so many inquiries.”

“Are you going soon?”

“Asking questions again?”

Kirillov scanned him contemptuously.

“You see,” Pyotr Stepanovitch went on, getting angrier and angrier, and unable to take the right tone, “you want me to go away, to be alone, to concentrate yourself, but all that’s a bad sign for you—for you above all. You want to think a great deal. To my mind you’d better not think. And really you make me uneasy.”

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

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

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

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

“You don’t understand anything.”

“That is, I ... well, I listen with respect, anyway.”

“You can do nothing; even now you can’t hide your petty spite, though it’s not to your interest to show it. You’ll make me cross, and then I may want another six months.” Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at his watch. “I never understood your theory, but I know you didn’t invent it for our sakes, so I suppose you would carry it out apart from us. And I know too that you haven’t mastered the idea but the idea has mastered you, so you won’t put it off.”

“What? The idea has mastered me?”

“Yes.”

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

“That’s a good thing, that’s a good thing. Just what you need, to be proud.”

“Enough. You’ve drunk your tea; go away.”

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

“You won’t find him, because he is here and not there.”

“Here! Damn it all, where?”

“Sitting in the kitchen, eating and drinking.”

“How dared he?” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, flushing angrily. “It was his duty to wait ... what nonsense! He has no passport, no money!”

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

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

Kirillov opened a side door into a tiny dark room; from this room three steps led straight to the part of the kitchen where the cook’s bed was usually put, behind the partition. Here, in the corner under the ikons, Fedka was sitting now, at a bare deal table. Before him stood a pint bottle, a plate of bread, and some cold beef and potatoes on an earthenware dish. He was eating in a leisurely way and was already

half drunk, but he was wearing his sheep-skin coat and was evidently ready for a journey. A samovar was boiling the other side of the screen, but it was not for Fedka, who had every night for a week or more zealously blown it up and got it ready for “Alexey Nilitch, for he’s such a habit of drinking tea at nights.” I am strongly disposed to believe that, as Kirillov had not a cook, he had cooked the beef and potatoes that morning with his own hands for Fedka.

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

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

Fedka assumed an air of dignity.

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

And he made a jaunty show of spitting to one side. Haughtiness and determination were evident in his manner, and a certain very threatening assumption of argumentative calm that suggested an outburst to follow. But Pyotr Stepanovitch had no time to realise the danger, and it did not fit in with his preconceived ideas. The incidents and disasters of the day had quite turned his head. Liputin, at the top of the three steps, stared inquisitively down from the little dark room.

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

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

well as the creation of the world and the fate that's to come and the transformation of every sort of creature and every sort of beast out of the Apocalypse, but you've persisted like a senseless idol in your deafness and your dumbness and have brought Ensign Erkel to the same, like the veriest evil seducer and so-called atheist...."

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

"D'you see, Pyotr Stepanovitch, I tell you truly that I have stripped the ikons, but I only took out the pearls; and how do you know? Perhaps my own tear was transformed into a pearl in the furnace of the Most High to make up for my sufferings, seeing I am just that very orphan, having no daily refuge. Do you know from the books that once, in ancient times, a merchant with just such tearful sighs and prayers stole a pearl from the halo of the Mother of God, and afterwards, in the face of all the people, laid the whole price of it at her feet, and the Holy Mother sheltered him with her mantle before all the people, so that it was a miracle, and the command was given through the authorities to write it all down word for word in the Imperial books. And you let a mouse in, so you insulted the very throne of God. And if you were not my natural master, whom I dandled in my arms when I was a stripling, I would have done for you now, without budging from this place!"

Pyotr Stepanovitch flew into a violent rage.

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

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

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

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

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

Fedka leapt on to his feet and his eyes gleamed with fury. Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled out his revolver. Then followed a rapid and revolting scene: before Pyotr Stepanovitch could take aim, Fedka swung round and in a flash struck him on the cheek with all his

might. Then there was the thud of a second blow, a third, then a fourth, all on the cheek. Pyotr Stepanovitch was dazed; with his eyes starting out of his head, he muttered something, and suddenly crashed full length to the ground.

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

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

“Well, how are you?” asked Kirillov. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at him intently, still not recognising him; but seeing Liputin peeping in from the kitchen, he smiled his hateful smile and suddenly got up, picking up his revolver from the floor.

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

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

“Well?” He turned to Liputin with a challenge.

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

“I think ... I think that ...”

“Did you see what Fedka was drinking in the kitchen?”

“What he was drinking? He was drinking vodka.”

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

Liputin rushed home full speed.

IV

He had long had a passport in readiness made out in a false name. It seems a wild idea that this prudent little man, the petty despot of his family, who was, above all things, a sharp man of business and a capitalist, and who was an official too (though he was a Fourierist), should long before have conceived the fantastic project of procuring this passport in case of emergency, that he might escape abroad by means of it *if* ... he did admit the possibility of this *if*, though no doubt he was never able himself to formulate what this *if* might mean.

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

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

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

In insufferable distress, trembling every instant and wondering at himself, alternately groaning aloud and numb with terror, he managed to exist till eleven o'clock next

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

CHAPTER V. A WANDERER

I

THE CATASTROPHE WITH Liza and the death of Marya Timofyevna made an overwhelming impression on Shatov. I have already mentioned that that morning I met him in passing; he seemed to me not himself. He told me among other things that on the evening before at nine o'clock (that is, three hours before the fire had broken out) he had been at Marya Timofyevna's. He went in the morning to look at the corpses, but as far as I know gave no evidence of any sort that morning. Meanwhile, towards the

end of the day there was a perfect tempest in his soul, and ... I think I can say with certainty that there was a moment at dusk when he wanted to get up, go out and tell everything. What that *everything* was, no one but he could say. Of course he would have achieved nothing, and would have simply betrayed himself. He had no proofs whatever with which to convict the perpetrators of the crime, and, indeed, he had nothing but vague conjectures to go upon, though to him they amounted to complete certainty. But he was ready to ruin himself if he could only “crush the scoundrels”—his own words. Pyotr Stepanovitch had guessed fairly correctly at this impulse in him, and he knew himself that he was risking a great deal in putting off the execution of his new awful project till next day. On his side there was, as usual, great self-confidence and contempt for all these “wretched creatures” and for Shatov in particular. He had for years despised Shatov for his “whining idiocy,” as he had expressed it in former days abroad, and he was absolutely confident that he could deal with such a guileless creature, that is, keep an eye on him all that day, and put a check on him at the first sign of danger. Yet what saved “the scoundrels” for a short time was something quite unexpected which they had not foreseen....

Towards eight o'clock in the evening (at the very time when the quintet was meeting at Erkel's, and waiting in indignation and excitement for Pyotr Stepanovitch) Shatov was lying in the dark on his bed with a headache and a slight chill; he was tortured by uncertainty, he was angry, he kept making up his mind, and could not make it up finally, and felt, with a curse, that it would all lead to nothing. Gradually he sank into a brief doze and had something like a nightmare. He dreamt that he was lying on his bed, tied up with cords and unable to stir, and meantime he heard a terrible banging that echoed all over the house, a banging on the fence, at the gate, at his door, in Kirillov's lodge, so that the whole house was shaking, and a far-away familiar voice that wrung his heart was calling to him piteously. He suddenly woke and sat up in bed. To his surprise the banging at the gate went on, though not nearly so violent as it had seemed in his dream. The knocks were repeated and persistent, and the strange voice “that wrung his heart” could still be heard below at the gate, though not piteously but angrily and impatiently, alternating with another voice, more restrained and ordinary. He jumped up, opened the casement pane and put his head out.

“Who's there?” he called, literally numb with terror.

“If you are Shatov,” the answer came harshly and resolutely from below, “be so good as to tell me straight out and honestly whether you agree to let me in or not?”

It was true: he recognised the voice!

“Marie!... Is it you?”

“Yes, yes, Marya Shatov, and I assure you I can’t keep the driver a minute longer.”

“This minute ... I’ll get a candle,” Shatov cried faintly. Then he rushed to look for the matches. The matches, as always happens at such moments, could not be found. He dropped the candlestick and the candle on the floor and as soon as he heard the impatient voice from below again, he abandoned the search and dashed down the steep stairs to open the gate.

“Be so good as to hold the bag while I settle with this blockhead,” was how Madame Marya Shatov greeted him below, and she thrust into his hands a rather light cheap canvas handbag studded with brass nails, of Dresden manufacture. She attacked the driver with exasperation.

“Allow me to tell you, you are asking too much. If you’ve been driving me for an extra hour through these filthy streets, that’s your fault, because it seems you didn’t know where to find this stupid street and imbecile house. Take your thirty kopecks and make up your mind that you’ll get nothing more.”

“Ech, lady, you told me yourself Voznesensky Street and this is Bogoyavlensky; Voznesensky is ever so far away. You’ve simply put the horse into a steam.”

“Voznesensky, Bogoyavlensky—you ought to know all those stupid names better than I do, as you are an inhabitant; besides, you are unfair, I told you first of all Filipov’s house and you declared you knew it. In any case you can have me up to-morrow in the local court, but now I beg you to let me alone.”

“Here, here’s another five kopecks.” With eager haste Shatov pulled a five-kopeck piece out of his pocket and gave it to the driver.

“Do me a favour, I beg you, don’t dare to do that!” Madame Shatov flared up, but the driver drove off and Shatov, taking her hand, drew her through the gate.

“Make haste, Marie, make haste ... that’s no matter, and ... you are wet through. Take care, we go up here—how sorry I am there’s no light—the stairs are steep, hold tight, hold tight! Well, this is my room. Excuse my having no light ... One minute!”

He picked up the candlestick but it was a long time before the matches were found. Madame Shatov stood waiting in the middle of the room, silent and motionless.

“Thank God, here they are at last!” he cried joyfully, lighting up the room. Marya Shatov took a cursory survey of his abode.

“They told me you lived in a poor way, but I didn’t expect it to be as bad as this,” she pronounced with an air of disgust, and she moved towards the bed.

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

Shatov was all of a tremor.

“You mustn’t, Marie, you mustn’t go to an hotel! An hotel! What for? What for?”

He clasped his hands imploringly....

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

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

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

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

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

And she bent on him a long, harassed and weary gaze. Shatov stood facing her at the other end of the room, which was five paces away, and listened to her timidly with a look of new life and unwonted radiance on his face. This strong, rugged man, all bristles on the surface, was suddenly all softness and shining gladness. There was a thrill of extraordinary and unexpected feeling in his soul. Three years of separation, three years of the broken marriage had effaced nothing from his heart. And perhaps

every day during those three years he had dreamed of her, of that beloved being who had once said to him, "I love you." Knowing Shatov I can say with certainty that he could never have allowed himself even to dream that a woman might say to him, "I love you." He was savagely modest and chaste, he looked on himself as a perfect monster, detested his own face as well as his character, compared himself to some freak only fit to be exhibited at fairs. Consequently he valued honesty above everything and was fanatically devoted to his convictions; he was gloomy, proud, easily moved to wrath, and sparing of words. But here was the one being who had loved him for a fortnight (that he had never doubted, never!), a being he had always considered immeasurably above him in spite of his perfectly sober understanding of her errors; a being to whom he could forgive everything, *everything* (of that there could be no question; indeed it was quite the other way, his idea was that he was entirely to blame); this woman, this Marya Shatov, was in his house, in his presence again ... it was almost inconceivable! He was so overcome, there was so much that was terrible and at the same time so much happiness in this event that he could not, perhaps would not—perhaps was afraid to—realise the position. It was a dream. But when she looked at him with that harassed gaze he suddenly understood that this woman he loved so dearly was suffering, perhaps had been wronged. His heart went cold. He looked at her features with anguish: the first bloom of youth had long faded from this exhausted face. It's true that she was still good-looking—in his eyes a beauty, as she had always been. In reality she was a woman of twenty-five, rather strongly built, above the medium height (taller than Shatov), with abundant dark brown hair, a pale oval face, and large dark eyes now glittering with feverish brilliance. But the light-hearted, naïve and good-natured energy he had known so well in the past was replaced now by a sullen irritability and disillusionment, a sort of cynicism which was not yet habitual to her herself, and which weighed upon her. But the chief thing was that she was ill, that he could see clearly. In spite of the awe in which he stood of her he suddenly went up to her and took her by both hands.

"Marie ... you know ... you are very tired, perhaps, for God's sake, don't be angry... If you'd consent to have some tea, for instance, eh? Tea picks one up so, doesn't it? If you'd consent!"

"Why talk about consenting! Of course I consent, what a baby you are still. Get me some if you can. How cramped you are here. How cold it is!"

"Oh, I'll get some logs for the fire directly, some logs ... I've got logs." Shatov was all astir. "Logs ... that is ... but I'll get tea directly," he waved his hand as though with desperate determination and snatched up his cap.

“Where are you going? So you’ve no tea in the house?”

“There shall be, there shall be, there shall be, there shall be everything directly.... I ...”
he took his revolver from the shelf, “I’ll sell this revolver directly ... or pawn it....”

“What foolishness and what a time that will take! Take my money if you’ve nothing, there’s eighty kopecks here, I think; that’s all I have. This is like a madhouse.”

“I don’t want your money, I don’t want it I’ll be here directly, in one instant. I can manage without the revolver....”

And he rushed straight to Kirillov’s. This was probably two hours before the visit of Pyotr Stepanovitch and Liputin to Kirillov. Though Shatov and Kirillov lived in the same yard they hardly ever saw each other, and when they met they did not nod or speak: they had been too long “lying side by side” in America....

“Kirillov, you always have tea; have you got tea and a samovar?”

Kirillov, who was walking up and down the room, as he was in the habit of doing all night, stopped and looked intently at his hurried visitor, though without much surprise.

“I’ve got tea and sugar and a samovar. But there’s no need of the samovar, the tea is hot. Sit down and simply drink it.”

“Kirillov, we lay side by side in America.... My wife has come to me ... I ... give me the tea.... I shall want the samovar.”

“If your wife is here you want the samovar. But take it later. I’ve two. And now take the teapot from the table. It’s hot, boiling hot. Take everything, take the sugar, all of it. Bread ... there’s plenty of bread; all of it. There’s some veal. I’ve a rouble.”

“Give it me, friend, I’ll pay it back to-morrow! Ach, Kirillov!”

“Is it the same wife who was in Switzerland? That’s a good thing. And your running in like this, that’s a good thing too.”

“Kirillov!” cried Shatov, taking the teapot under his arm and carrying the bread and sugar in both hands. “Kirillov, if ... if you could get rid of your dreadful fancies and give up your atheistic ravings ... oh, what a man you’d be, Kirillov!”

“One can see you love your wife after Switzerland. It’s a good thing you do—after Switzerland. When you want tea, come again. You can come all night, I don’t sleep at all. There’ll be a samovar. Take the rouble, here it is. Go to your wife, I’ll stay here and think about you and your wife.”

Marya Shatov was unmistakably pleased at her husband's haste and fell upon the tea almost greedily, but there was no need to run for the samovar; she drank only half a cup and swallowed a tiny piece of bread. The veal she refused with disgust and irritation.

"You are ill, Marie, all this is a sign of illness," Shatov remarked timidly as he waited upon her.

"Of course I'm ill, please sit down. Where did you get the tea if you haven't any?"

Shatov told her about Kirillov briefly. She had heard something of him.

"I know he is mad; say no more, please; there are plenty of fools. So you've been in America? I heard, you wrote."

"Yes, I ... I wrote to you in Paris."

"Enough, please talk of something else. Are you a Slavophil in your convictions?"

"I ... I am not exactly.... Since I cannot be a Russian, I became a Slavophil." He smiled a wry smile with the effort of one who feels he has made a strained and inappropriate jest.

"Why, aren't you a Russian?"

"No, I'm not."

"Well, that's all foolishness. Do sit down, I entreat you. Why are you all over the place? Do you think I am lightheaded? Perhaps I shall be. You say there are only you two in the house."

"Yes.... Downstairs ..."

"And both such clever people. What is there downstairs? You said downstairs?"

"No, nothing."

"Why nothing? I want to know."

"I only meant to say that now we are only two in the yard, but that the Lebyadkins used to live downstairs...."

"That woman who was murdered last night?" she started suddenly. "I heard of it. I heard of it as soon as I arrived. There was a fire here, wasn't there?"

“Yes, Marie, yes, and perhaps I am doing a scoundrelly thing this moment in forgiving the scoundrels....” He stood up suddenly and paced about the room, raising his arms as though in a frenzy.

But Marie had not quite understood him. She heard his answers inattentively; she asked questions but did not listen.

“Fine things are being done among you! Oh, how contemptible it all is! What scoundrels men all are! But do sit down, I beg you, oh, how you exasperate me!” and she let her head sink on the pillow, exhausted.

“Marie, I won’t.... Perhaps you’ll lie down, Marie?” She made no answer and closed her eyes helplessly. Her pale face looked death-like. She fell asleep almost instantly. Shatov looked round, snuffed the candle, looked uneasily at her face once more, pressed his hands tight in front of him and walked on tiptoe out of the room into the passage. At the top of the stairs he stood in the corner with his face to the wall and remained so for ten minutes without sound or movement. He would have stood there longer, but he suddenly caught the sound of soft cautious steps below. Someone was coming up the stairs. Shatov remembered he had forgotten to fasten the gate.

“Who’s there?” he asked in a whisper. The unknown visitor went on slowly mounting the stairs without answering. When he reached the top he stood still; it was impossible to see his face in the dark; suddenly Shatov heard the cautious question:

“Ivan Shatov?”

Shatov said who he was, but at once held out his hand to check his advance. The latter took his hand, and Shatov shuddered as though he had touched some terrible reptile.

“Stand here,” he whispered quickly. “Don’t go in, I can’t receive you just now. My wife has come back. I’ll fetch the candle.”

When he returned with the candle he found a young officer standing there; he did not know his name but he had seen him before.

“Erkel,” said the lad, introducing himself. “You’ve seen me at Virginsky’s.”

“I remember; you sat writing. Listen,” said Shatov in sudden excitement, going up to him frantically, but still talking in a whisper. “You gave me a sign just now when you took my hand. But you know I can treat all these signals with contempt! I don’t acknowledge them.... I don’t want them.... I can throw you downstairs this minute, do you know that?”

“No, I know nothing about that and I don’t know what you are in such a rage about,” the visitor answered without malice and almost ingenuously. “I have only to give you a message, and that’s what I’ve come for, being particularly anxious not to lose time. You have a printing press which does not belong to you, and of which you are bound to give an account, as you know yourself. I have received instructions to request you to give it up to-morrow at seven o’clock in the evening to Liputin. I have been instructed to tell you also that nothing more will be asked of you.”

“Nothing?”

“Absolutely nothing. Your request is granted, and you are struck off our list. I was instructed to tell you that positively.”

“Who instructed you to tell me?”

“Those who told me the sign.”

“Have you come from abroad?”

“I ... I think that’s no matter to you.”

“Oh, hang it! Why didn’t you come before if you were told to?”

“I followed certain instructions and was not alone.”

“I understand, I understand that you were not alone. Eh ... hang it! But why didn’t Liputin come himself?”

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

“Will Verhovensky be there?”

“No, he won’t. Verhovensky is leaving the town at eleven o’clock to-morrow morning.”

“Just what I thought!” Shatov whispered furiously, and he struck his fist on his hip.

“He’s run off, the sneak!”

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

“But how will you take it? You can’t simply pick it up in your hands and carry it.”

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

Shatov looked at him.

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

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

“Verhovensky, Verhovensky has run away!” Shatov growled fiercely.

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

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

“All right, I’ll come,” he cut him short. “And now get away, be off.”

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

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

“What is it?” responded the lad from the bottom.

“Nothing, you can go.”

“I thought you said something.”

II

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

A craving for active service was characteristic of this shallow, unreflecting nature, which was forever yearning to follow the lead of another man’s will, of course for the good of “the common” or “the great” cause. Not that that made any difference, for little fanatics like Erkel can never imagine serving a cause except by identifying it with the person who, to their minds, is the expression of it. The sensitive, affectionate and

kind-hearted Erkel was perhaps the most callous of Shatov's would-be murderers, and, though he had no personal spite against him, he would have been present at his murder without the quiver of an eyelid. He had been instructed, for instance, to have a good look at Shatov's surroundings while carrying out his commission, and when Shatov, receiving him at the top of the stairs, blurted out to him, probably unaware in the heat of the moment, that his wife had come back to him—Erkel had the instinctive cunning to avoid displaying the slightest curiosity, though the idea flashed through his mind that the fact of his wife's return was of great importance for the success of their undertaking.

And so it was in reality; it was only that fact that saved the "scoundrels" from Shatov's carrying out his intention, and at the same time helped them "to get rid of him." To begin with, it agitated Shatov, threw him out of his regular routine, and deprived him of his usual clear-sightedness and caution. Any idea of his own danger would be the last thing to enter his head at this moment when he was absorbed with such different considerations. On the contrary, he eagerly believed that Pyotr Verhovensky was running away the next day: it fell in exactly with his suspicions! Returning to the room he sat down again in a corner, leaned his elbows on his knees and hid his face in his hands. Bitter thoughts tormented him....

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

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

"Oh, I am tired, I am tired," he remembered her exclamations, her weak broken voice. "Good God! Abandon her now, and she has only eighty kopecks; she held out her purse, a tiny old thing! She's come to look for a job. What does she know about jobs?"

What do they know about Russia? Why, they are like naughty children, they've nothing but their own fancies made up by themselves, and she is angry, poor thing, that Russia is not like their foreign dreams! The luckless, innocent creatures!... It's really cold here, though."

He remembered that she had complained, that he had promised to heat the stove. "There are logs here, I can fetch them if only I don't wake her. But I can do it without waking her. But what shall I do about the veal? When she gets up perhaps she will be hungry.... Well, that will do later: Kirillov doesn't go to bed all night. What could I cover her with, she is sleeping so soundly, but she must be cold, ah, she must be cold!" And once more he went to look at her; her dress had worked up a little and her right leg was half uncovered to the knee. He suddenly turned away almost in dismay, took off his warm overcoat, and, remaining in his wretched old jacket, covered it up, trying not to look at it.

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

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

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

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

"How could I wake you, Marie?"

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

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

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

She stood up, tried to take a step, but suddenly a violent spasm of pain deprived her of all power and all determination, and with a loud groan she fell back on the bed. Shatov

ran up, but Marie, hiding her face in the pillow, seized his hand and gripped and squeezed it with all her might. This lasted a minute.

“Marie darling, there’s a doctor Frenzel living here, a friend of mine.... I could run for him.”

“Nonsense!”

“What do you mean by nonsense? Tell me, Marie, what is it hurting you? For we might try fomentations ... on the stomach for instance.... I can do that without a doctor.... Or else mustard poultices.”

“What’s this,” she asked strangely, raising her head and looking at him in dismay.

“What’s what, Marie?” said Shatov, not understanding. “What are you asking about? Good heavens! I am quite bewildered, excuse my not understanding.”

“Ach, let me alone; it’s not your business to understand. And it would be too absurd ...” she said with a bitter smile. “Talk to me about something. Walk about the room and talk. Don’t stand over me and don’t look at me, I particularly ask you that for the five-hundredth time!”

Shatov began walking up and down the room, looking at the floor, and doing his utmost not to glance at her.

“There’s—don’t be angry, Marie, I entreat you—there’s some veal here, and there’s tea not far off.... You had so little before.”

She made an angry gesture of disgust. Shatov bit his tongue in despair.

“Listen, I intend to open a bookbinding business here, on rational co-operative principles. Since you live here what do you think of it, would it be successful?”

“Ech, Marie, people don’t read books here, and there are none here at all. And are they likely to begin binding them!”

“Who are they?”

“The local readers and inhabitants generally, Marie.”

“Well, then, speak more clearly. *They* indeed, and one doesn’t know who they are. You don’t know grammar!”

“It’s in the spirit of the language,” Shatov muttered.

“Oh, get along with your spirit, you bore me. Why shouldn’t the local inhabitant or reader have his books bound?”

“Because reading books and having them bound are two different stages of development, and there’s a vast gulf between them. To begin with, a man gradually gets used to reading, in the course of ages of course, but takes no care of his books and throws them about, not thinking them worth attention. But binding implies respect for books, and implies that not only he has grown fond of reading, but that he looks upon it as something of value. That period has not been reached anywhere in Russia yet. In Europe books have been bound for a long while.”

“Though that’s pedantic, anyway, it’s not stupid, and reminds me of the time three years ago; you used to be rather clever sometimes three years ago.”

She said this as disdainfully as her other capricious remarks.

“Marie, Marie,” said Shatov, turning to her, much moved, “oh, Marie! If you only knew how much has happened in those three years! I heard afterwards that you despised me for changing my convictions. But what are the men I’ve broken with? The enemies of all true life, out-of-date Liberals who are afraid of their own independence, the flunkeys of thought, the enemies of individuality and freedom, the decrepit advocates of deadness and rottenness! All they have to offer is senility, a glorious mediocrity of the most bourgeois kind, contemptible shallowness, a jealous equality, equality without individual dignity, equality as it’s understood by flunkeys or by the French in ’93. And the worst of it is there are swarms of scoundrels among them, swarms of scoundrels!”

“Yes, there are a lot of scoundrels,” she brought out abruptly with painful effort. She lay stretched out, motionless, as though afraid to move, with her head thrown back on the pillow, rather on one side, staring at the ceiling with exhausted but glowing eyes. Her face was pale, her lips were dry and hot.

“You recognise it, Marie, you recognise it,” cried Shatov. She tried to shake her head, and suddenly the same spasm came over her again. Again she hid her face in the pillow, and again for a full minute she squeezed Shatov’s hand till it hurt. He had run up, beside himself with alarm.

“Marie, Marie! But it may be very serious, Marie!”

“Be quiet ... I won’t have it, I won’t have it,” she screamed almost furiously, turning her face upwards again. “Don’t dare to look at me with your sympathy! Walk about the room, say something, talk....”

Shatov began muttering something again, like one distraught.

“What do you do here?” she asked, interrupting him with contemptuous impatience.

“I work in a merchant’s office. I could get a fair amount of money even here if I cared to, Marie.”

“So much the better for you....”

“Oh, don’t suppose I meant anything, Marie. I said it without thinking.”

“And what do you do besides? What are you preaching? You can’t exist without preaching, that’s your character!”

“I am preaching God, Marie.”

“In whom you don’t believe yourself. I never could see the idea of that.”

“Let’s leave that, Marie; we’ll talk of that later.”

“What sort of person was this Marya Timofyevna here?”

“We’ll talk of that later too, Marie.”

“Don’t dare to say such things to me! Is it true that her death may have been caused by ... the wickedness ... of these people?”

“Not a doubt of it,” growled Shatov.

Marie suddenly raised her head and cried out painfully:

“Don’t dare speak of that to me again, don’t dare to, never, never!”

And she fell back in bed again, overcome by the same convulsive agony; it was the third time, but this time her groans were louder, in fact she screamed.

“Oh, you insufferable man! Oh, you unbearable man,” she cried, tossing about recklessly, and pushing away Shatov as he bent over her.

“Marie, I’ll do anything you like.... I’ll walk about and talk....”

“Surely you must see that it has begun!”

“What’s begun, Marie?”

“How can I tell! Do I know anything about it?... I curse myself! Oh, curse it all from the beginning!”

“Marie, if you’d tell me what’s beginning ... or else I ... if you don’t, what am I to make of it?”

“You are a useless, theoretical babbler. Oh, curse everything on earth!”

“Marie, Marie!” He seriously thought that she was beginning to go mad.

“Surely you must see that I am in the agonies of childbirth,” she said, sitting up and gazing at him with a terrible, hysterical vindictiveness that distorted her whole face. “I curse him before he is born, this child!”

“Marie,” cried Shatov, realising at last what it meant. “Marie ... but why didn’t you tell me before.” He pulled himself together at once and seized his cap with an air of vigorous determination.

“How could I tell when I came in here? Should I have come to you if I’d known? I was told it would be another ten days! Where are you going?... Where are you going? You mustn’t dare!”

“To fetch a midwife! I’ll sell the revolver. We must get money before anything else now.”

“Don’t dare to do anything, don’t dare to fetch a midwife! Bring a peasant woman, any old woman, I’ve eighty kopecks in my purse.... Peasant women have babies without midwives.... And if I die, so much the better....”

“You shall have a midwife and an old woman too. But how am I to leave you alone, Marie!”

But reflecting that it was better to leave her alone now in spite of her desperate state than to leave her without help later, he paid no attention to her groans, nor her angry exclamations, but rushed downstairs, hurrying all he could.

III

First of all he went to Kirillov. It was by now about one o’clock in the night. Kirillov was standing in the middle of the room.

“Kirillov, my wife is in childbirth.”

“How do you mean?”

“Childbirth, bearing a child!”

“You ... are not mistaken?”

“Oh, no, no, she is in agonies! I want a woman, any old woman, I must have one at once.... Can you get one now? You used to have a lot of old women....”

“Very sorry that I am no good at childbearing,” Kirillov answered thoughtfully; “that is, not at childbearing, but at doing anything for childbearing ... or ... no, I don’t know how to say it.”

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

“You shall have an old woman, but not directly, perhaps ... If you like I’ll come instead....”

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

“A horrid woman!”

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

“If you like I’ll ...”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Well, let her be, get along."

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

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

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

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

After five endless minutes, Arina Prohorovna made her appearance.

"Has your wife come?" Shatov heard her voice at the window, and to his surprise it was not at all ill-tempered, only as usual peremptory, but Arina Prohorovna could not speak except in a peremptory tone.

"Yes, my wife, and she is in labour."

“Marya Ignatyevna?”

“Yes, Marya Ignatyevna. Of course it’s Marya Ignatyevna.”

A silence followed. Shatov waited. He heard a whispering in the house.

“Has she been here long?” Madame Virginsky asked again.

“She came this evening at eight o’clock. Please make haste.”

Again he heard whispering, as though they were consulting. “Listen, you are not making a mistake? Did she send you for me herself?”

“No, she didn’t send for you, she wants a peasant woman, so as not to burden me with expense, but don’t be afraid, I’ll pay you.”

“Very good, I’ll come, whether you pay or not. I always thought highly of Marya Ignatyevna for the independence of her sentiments, though perhaps she won’t remember me. Have you got the most necessary things?”

“I’ve nothing, but I’ll get everything, everything.”

“There is something generous even in these people,” Shatov reflected, as he set off to Lyamshin’s. “The convictions and the man are two very different things, very likely I’ve been very unfair to them!... We are all to blame, we are all to blame ... and if only all were convinced of it!”

He had not to knock long at Lyamshin’s; the latter, to Shatov’s surprise, opened his casement at once, jumping out of bed, barefoot and in his night-clothes at the risk of catching cold; and he was hypochondriacal and always anxious about his health. But there was a special cause for such alertness and haste: Lyamshin had been in a tremor all the evening, and had not been able to sleep for excitement after the meeting of the quintet; he was haunted by the dread of uninvited and undesired visitors. The news of Shatov’s giving information tormented him more than anything.... And suddenly there was this terrible loud knocking at the window as though to justify his fears.

He was so frightened at seeing Shatov that he at once slammed the casement and jumped back into bed. Shatov began furiously knocking and shouting.

“How dare you knock like that in the middle of the night?” shouted Lyamshin, in a threatening voice, though he was numb with fear, when at least two minutes later he ventured to open the casement again, and was at last convinced that Shatov had come alone.

“Here’s your revolver for you; take it back, give me fifteen roubles.”

“What’s the matter, are you drunk? This is outrageous, I shall simply catch cold. Wait a minute, I’ll just throw my rug over me.”

“Give me fifteen roubles at once. If you don’t give it me, I’ll knock and shout till daybreak; I’ll break your window-frame.”

“And I’ll shout police and you’ll be taken to the lock-up.”

“And am I dumb? Can’t I shout ‘police’ too? Which of us has most reason to be afraid of the police, you or I?”

“And you can hold such contemptible opinions! I know what you are hinting at.... Stop, stop, for God’s sake don’t go on knocking! Upon my word, who has money at night? What do you want money for, unless you are drunk?”

“My wife has come back. I’ve taken ten roubles off the price, I haven’t fired it once; take the revolver, take it this minute!”

Lyamshin mechanically put his hand out of the casement and took the revolver; he waited a little, and suddenly thrusting his head out of the casement, and with a shiver running down his spine, faltered as though he were beside himself.

“You are lying, your wife hasn’t come back to you.... It’s ... it’s simply that you want to run away.”

“You are a fool. Where should I run to? It’s for your Pyotr Verhovensky to run away, not for me. I’ve just been to the midwife, Madame Virginsky, and she consented at once to come to me. You can ask them. My wife is in agony; I need the money; give it me!”

A swarm of ideas flared up in Lyamshin’s crafty mind like a shower of fireworks. It all suddenly took a different colour, though still panic prevented him from reflecting.

“But how ... you are not living with your wife?”

“I’ll break your skull for questions like that.”

“Oh dear, I understand, forgive me, I was struck all of a heap.... But I understand, I understand ... is Arina Prohorovna really coming? You said just now that she had gone? You know, that’s not true. You see, you see, you see what lies you tell at every step.”

“By now, she must be with my wife ... don’t keep me ... it’s not my fault you are a fool.”

“That’s a lie, I am not a fool. Excuse me, I really can’t ...”

And utterly distraught he began shutting the casement again for the third time, but Shatov gave such a yell that he put his head out again.

“But this is simply an unprovoked assault! What do you want of me, what is it, what is it, formulate it? And think, only think, it’s the middle of the night!”

“I want fifteen roubles, you sheep’s-head!”

“But perhaps I don’t care to take back the revolver. You have no right to force me. You bought the thing and the matter is settled, and you’ve no right.... I can’t give you a sum like that in the night, anyhow. Where am I to get a sum like that?”

“You always have money. I’ve taken ten roubles off the price, but every one knows you are a skinflint.”

“Come the day after to-morrow, do you hear, the day after to-morrow at twelve o’clock, and I’ll give you the whole of it, that will do, won’t it?”

Shatov knocked furiously at the window-frame for the third time.

“Give me ten roubles, and to-morrow early the other five.”

“No, the day after to-morrow the other five, to-morrow I swear I shan’t have it. You’d better not come, you’d better not come.”

“Give me ten, you scoundrel!”

“Why are you so abusive. Wait a minute, I must light a candle; you’ve broken the window.... Nobody swears like that at night. Here you are!” He held a note to him out of the window.

Shatov seized it—it was a note for five roubles.

“On my honour I can’t do more, if you were to murder me, I couldn’t; the day after to-morrow I can give you it all, but now I can do nothing.”

“I am not going away!” roared Shatov.

“Very well, take it, here’s some more, see, here’s some more, and I won’t give more. You can shout at the top of your voice, but I won’t give more, I won’t, whatever happens, I won’t, I won’t.”

He was in a perfect frenzy, desperate and perspiring. The two notes he had just given him were each for a rouble. Shatov had seven roubles altogether now.

“Well, damn you, then, I’ll come to-morrow. I’ll thrash you, Lyamshin, if you don’t give me the other eight.”

“You won’t find me at home, you fool!” Lyamshin reflected quickly.

“Stay, stay!” he shouted frantically after Shatov, who was already running off. “Stay, come back. Tell me please, is it true what you said that your wife has come back?”

“Fool!” cried Shatov, with a gesture of disgust, and ran home as hard as he could.

IV

I may mention that Anna Prohorovna knew nothing of the resolutions that had been taken at the meeting the day before. On returning home overwhelmed and exhausted, Virginsky had not ventured to tell her of the decision that had been taken, yet he could not refrain from telling her half—that is, all that Verhovensky had told them of the certainty of Shatov’s intention to betray them; but he added at the same time that he did not quite believe it. Arina Prohorovna was terribly alarmed. This was why she decided at once to go when Shatov came to fetch her, though she was tired out, as she had been hard at work at a confinement all the night before. She had always been convinced that “a wretched creature like Shatov was capable of any political baseness,” but the arrival of Marya Ignatyevna put things in a different light. Shatov’s alarm, the despairing tone of his entreaties, the way he begged for help, clearly showed a complete change of feeling in the traitor: a man who was ready to betray himself merely for the sake of ruining others would, she thought, have had a different air and tone. In short, Arina Prohorovna resolved to look into the matter for herself, with her own eyes. Virginsky was very glad of her decision, he felt as though a hundredweight had been lifted off him! He even began to feel hopeful: Shatov’s appearance seemed to him utterly incompatible with Verhovensky’s supposition.

Shatov was not mistaken: on getting home he found Arina Prohorovna already with Marie. She had just arrived, had contemptuously dismissed Kirillov, whom she found hanging about the foot of the stairs, had hastily introduced herself to Marie, who had not recognised her as her former acquaintance, found her in “a very bad way,” that is ill-tempered, irritable and in “a state of cowardly despair,” and within five minutes had completely silenced all her protests.

“Why do you keep on that you don’t want an expensive midwife?” she was saying at the moment when Shatov came in. “That’s perfect nonsense, it’s a false idea arising from the abnormality of your condition. In the hands of some ordinary old woman, some peasant midwife, you’d have fifty chances of going wrong and then you’d have more bother and expense than with a regular midwife. How do you know I am an

expensive midwife? You can pay afterwards; I won't charge you much and I answer for my success; you won't die in my hands, I've seen worse cases than yours. And I can send the baby to a foundling asylum to-morrow, if you like, and then to be brought up in the country, and that's all it will mean. And meantime you'll grow strong again, take up some rational work, and in a very short time you'll repay Shatov for sheltering you and for the expense, which will not be so great."

"It's not that ... I've no right to be a burden...."

"Rational feelings and worthy of a citizen, but you can take my word for it, Shatov will spend scarcely anything, if he is willing to become ever so little a man of sound ideas instead of the fantastic person he is. He has only not to do anything stupid, not to raise an alarm, not to run about the town with his tongue out. If we don't restrain him he will be knocking up all the doctors of the town before the morning; he waked all the dogs in my street. There's no need of doctors I've said already. I'll answer for everything. You can hire an old woman if you like to wait on you, that won't cost much. Though he too can do something besides the silly things he's been doing. He's got hands and feet, he can run to the chemist's without offending your feelings by being too benevolent. As though it were a case of benevolence! Hasn't he brought you into this position? Didn't he make you break with the family in which you were a governess, with the egoistic object of marrying you? We heard of it, you know ... though he did run for me like one possessed and yell so all the street could hear. I won't force myself upon anyone and have come only for your sake, on the principle that all of us are bound to hold together! And I told him so before I left the house. If you think I am in the way, good-bye, I only hope you won't have trouble which might so easily be averted."

And she positively got up from the chair. Marie was so helpless, in such pain, and—the truth must be confessed—so frightened of what was before her that she dared not let her go. But this woman was suddenly hateful to her, what she said was not what she wanted, there was something quite different in Marie's soul. Yet the prediction that she might possibly die in the hands of an inexperienced peasant woman overcame her aversion. But she made up for it by being more exacting and more ruthless than ever with Shatov. She ended by forbidding him not only to look at her but even to stand facing her. Her pains became more violent. Her curses, her abuse became more and more frantic.

"Ech, we'll send him away," Arina Prohorovna rapped out. "I don't know what he looks like, he is simply frightening you; he is as white as a corpse! What is it to you, tell me please, you absurd fellow? What a farce!"

Shatov made no reply, he made up his mind to say nothing. "I've seen many a foolish father, half crazy in such cases. But they, at any rate ..."

"Be quiet or leave me to die! Don't say another word! I won't have it, I won't have it!" screamed Marie.

"It's impossible not to say another word, if you are not out of your mind, as I think you are in your condition. We must talk of what we want, anyway: tell me, have you anything ready? You answer, Shatov, she is incapable."

"Tell me what's needed?"

"That means you've nothing ready." She reckoned up all that was quite necessary, and one must do her the justice to say she only asked for what was absolutely indispensable, the barest necessities. Some things Shatov had. Marie took out her key and held it out to him, for him to look in her bag. As his hands shook he was longer than he should have been opening the unfamiliar lock. Marie flew into a rage, but when Arina Prohorovna rushed up to take the key from him, she would not allow her on any account to look into her bag and with peevish cries and tears insisted that no one should open the bag but Shatov.

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

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

"He won't dare to imagine anything."

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

V

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

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

“You know, Kirillov, you mustn’t go on staying up every night.”

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

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

“Kirillov, does this often happen?”

“Once in three days, or once a week.”

“Don’t you have fits, perhaps?”

“No.”

“Well, you will. Be careful, Kirillov. I’ve heard that’s just how fits begin. An epileptic described exactly that sensation before a fit, word for word as you’ve done. He mentioned five seconds, too, and said that more could not be endured. Remember Mahomet’s pitcher from which no drop of water was spilt while he circled Paradise on

his horse. That was a case of five seconds too; that's too much like your eternal harmony, and Mahomet was an epileptic. Be careful, Kirillov, it's epilepsy!"

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

VI

The night was passing. Shatov was sent hither and thither, abused, called back. Marie was reduced to the most abject terror for life. She screamed that she wanted to live, that "she must, she must," and was afraid to die. "I don't want to, I don't want to!" she repeated. If Arina Prohorovna had not been there, things would have gone very badly. By degrees she gained complete control of the patient—who began to obey every word, every order from her like a child. Arina Prohorovna ruled by sternness not by kindness, but she was first-rate at her work. It began to get light ... Arina Prohorovna suddenly imagined that Shatov had just run out on to the stairs to say his prayers and began laughing. Marie laughed too, spitefully, malignantly, as though such laughter relieved her. At last they drove Shatov away altogether. A damp, cold morning dawned. He pressed his face to the wall in the corner just as he had done the evening before when Erkel came. He was trembling like a leaf, afraid to think, but his mind caught at every thought as it does in dreams.

He was continually being carried away by day-dreams, which snapped off short like a rotten thread. From the room came no longer groans but awful animal cries, unendurable, incredible. He tried to stop up his ears, but could not, and he fell on his knees, repeating unconsciously, "Marie, Marie!" Then suddenly he heard a cry, a new cry, which made Shatov start and jump up from his knees, the cry of a baby, a weak discordant cry. He crossed himself and rushed into the room. Arina Prohorovna held in her hands a little red wrinkled creature, screaming, and moving its little arms and legs, fearfully helpless, and looking as though it could be blown away by a puff of wind, but screaming and seeming to assert its full right to live. Marie was lying as though insensible, but a minute later she opened her eyes, and bent a strange, strange look on Shatov: it was something quite new, that look. What it meant exactly he was not able to understand yet, but he had never known such a look on her face before.

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

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

When she had bound him up and was about to lay him across the bed between the two pillows, she gave him to Shatov for a minute to hold. Marie signed to him on the sly as though afraid of Arina Prohorovna. He understood at once and brought the baby to show her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“You adopt him as your son?”

“He is my son.”

“Of course he is a Shatov, legally he is a Shatov, and there’s no need for you to pose as a humanitarian. Men can’t get on without fine words. There, there, it’s all right, but look here, my friends,” she added, having finished clearing up at last, “it’s time for me to go. I’ll come again this morning, and again in the evening if necessary, but now, since everything has gone off so well, I must run off to my other patients, they’ve been expecting me long ago. I believe you got an old woman somewhere, Shatov; an old woman is all very well, but don’t you, her tender husband, desert her; sit beside her, you may be of use; Marya Ignatyevna won’t drive you away, I fancy.... There, there, I was only laughing.”

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

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

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

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

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

“That’s not right, that’s not right.... What hands!”

Shatov did it again.

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

He started but stooped down.

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

“Marie!”

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

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

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

“Marie,” he cried, as he held the child in his arms, “all the old madness, shame, and deadness is over, isn’t it? Let us work hard and begin a new life, the three of us, yes, yes!... Oh, by the way, what shall we call him, Marie?”

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

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

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

“How could you, how could you ... Oh, you ungrateful man!”

“Marie, forgive me, Marie ... I only asked you what his name should be. I don’t know....”

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

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

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

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

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

Time was passing. Shatov, exhausted, fell asleep himself in his chair, with his head on Marie’s pillow. So they were found by Arina Prohorovna, who kept her word. She waked them up gaily, asked Marie some necessary questions, examined the baby, and again forbade Shatov to leave her. Then, jesting at the “happy couple,” with a shade of contempt and superciliousness she went away as well satisfied as before.

It was quite dark when Shatov waked up. He made haste to light the candle and ran for the old woman; but he had hardly begun to go down the stairs when he was struck by the sound of the soft, deliberate steps of someone coming up towards him. Erkel came in.

“Don’t come in,” whispered Shatov, and impulsively seizing him by the hand he drew him back towards the gate. “Wait here, I’ll come directly, I’d completely forgotten you, completely! Oh, how you brought it back!”

He was in such haste that he did not even run in to Kirillov’s, but only called the old woman. Marie was in despair and indignation that “he could dream of leaving her alone.”

“But,” he cried ecstatically, “this is the very last step! And then for a new life and we’ll never, never think of the old horrors again!”

He somehow appeased her and promised to be back at nine o’clock; he kissed her warmly, kissed the baby and ran down quickly to Erkel.

They set off together to Stavrogin’s park at Skvoreshniki, where, in a secluded place at the very edge of the park where it adjoined the pine wood, he had, eighteen months before, buried the printing press which had been entrusted to him. It was a wild and deserted place, quite hidden and at some distance from the Stavrogins’ house. It was two or perhaps three miles from Filipov’s house.

“Are we going to walk all the way? I’ll take a cab.”

“I particularly beg you not to,” replied Erkel.

They insisted on that. A cabman would be a witness.

“Well ... bother! I don’t care, only to make an end of it.”

They walked very fast.

“Erkel, you little boy,” cried Shatov, “have you ever been happy?”

“You seem to be very happy just now,” observed Erkel with curiosity.