CHAPTER VI. A BUSY NIGHT

I

During that day Virginsky had spent two hours in running round to see the members of the quintet and to inform them that Shatov would certainly not give information, because his wife had come back and given birth to a child, and no one "who knew anything of human nature" could suppose that Shatov could be a danger at this moment. But to his discomfiture he found none of them at home except Erkel and Lyamshin. Erkel listened in silence, looking candidly into his eyes, and in answer to the direct question "Would he go at six o'clock or not?" he replied with the brightest of smiles that "of course he would go."

Lyamshin was in bed, seriously ill, as it seemed, with his head covered with a quilt. He was alarmed at Virginsky's coming in, and as soon as the latter began speaking he waved him off from under the bedclothes, entreating him to let him alone. He listened to all he said about Shatov, however, and seemed for some reason extremely struck by the news that Virginsky had found no one at home. It seemed that Lyamshin knew already (through Liputin) of Fedka's death, and hurriedly and incoherently told Virginsky about it, at which the latter seemed struck in his turn. To Virginsky's direct question, "Should they go or not?" he began suddenly waving his hands again, entreating him to let him alone, and saying that it was not his business, and that he knew nothing about it.

Virginsky returned home dejected and greatly alarmed. It weighed upon him that he had to hide it from his family; he was accustomed to tell his wife everything; and if his feverish brain had not hatched a new idea at that moment, a new plan of conciliation for further action, he might have taken to his bed like Lyamshin. But this new idea sustained him; what's more, he began impatiently awaiting the hour fixed, and set off for the appointed spot earlier than was necessary. It was a very gloomy place at the end of the huge park. I went there afterwards on purpose to look at it. How sinister it must have looked on that chill autumn evening! It was at the edge of an old wood belonging to the Crown. Huge ancient pines stood out as vague sombre blurs in the darkness. It was so dark that they could hardly see each other two paces off, but Pyotr Stepanovitch, Liputin, and afterwards Erkel, brought lanterns with them. At some unrecorded date in the past a rather absurd-looking grotto had for some reason been built here of rough unhewn stones. The table and benches in the grotto had long ago decayed and fallen. Two hundred paces to the right was the bank of the third pond of the park. These three ponds stretched one after another for a mile from the house to the very end of the park. One could scarcely imagine that any noise, a scream, or even

a shot, could reach the inhabitants of the Stavrogins' deserted house. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's departure the previous day and Alexey Yegorytch's absence left only five or six people in the house, all more or less invalided, so to speak. In any case it might be assumed with perfect confidence that if cries or shouts for help were heard by any of the inhabitants of the isolated house they would only have excited terror; no one would have moved from his warm stove or snug shelf to give assistance.

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

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

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

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

"So Liputin is the only one not here?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Of course. Why should we lose it?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, lifting the lantern to his face. “But, you see, we all agreed yesterday that it was not really necessary to take it. He need only show you the exact spot where it’s buried; we can dig it up afterwards for ourselves. I know that it’s somewhere ten paces from a corner of this grotto. But, damn it all! how could you have forgotten, Liputin? It was agreed that you should meet him alone and that we should come out afterwards.... It’s strange that you should ask—or didn’t you mean what you said?”

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

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

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

He stopped short with a catch in his breath.

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

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

“You would rather be unhappy again than be a scoundrel?”

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

“Well then, let me tell you that Shatov looks on this betrayal as a public duty. It’s his most cherished conviction, and the proof of it is that he runs some risk himself; though, of course, they will pardon him a great deal for giving information. A man like that will never give up the idea. No sort of happiness would overcome him. In another day he’ll go back on it, reproach himself, and will go straight to the police. What’s

more, I don't see any happiness in the fact that his wife has come back after three years' absence to bear him a child of Stavrogin's."

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

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

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

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

"I protest, I protest!" Virginsky persisted.

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

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

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

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

He turned and walked away.

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

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

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

“I beg you to observe that I am not Fourier. If you mix me up with that mawkish theoretical twaddler you simply prove that you know nothing of my manuscript, though it has been in your hands. As for your vengeance, let me tell you that it’s a mistake to cock your pistol: that’s absolutely against your interests at the present moment. But if you threaten to shoot me to-morrow, or the day after, you’ll gain nothing by it but unnecessary trouble. You may kill me, but sooner or later you’ll come to my system all the same. Good-bye.”

At that instant a whistle was heard in the park, two hundred paces away from the direction of the pond. Liputin at once answered, whistling also as had been agreed the evening before. (As he had lost several teeth and distrusted his own powers, he had this morning bought for a farthing in the market a child’s clay whistle for the purpose.)

Erkel had warned Shatov on the way that they would whistle as a signal, so that the latter felt no uneasiness.

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

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

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

And he stamped with his foot ten paces from the end of the grotto towards the wood. At that moment Tolkatchenko rushed out from behind a tree and sprang at him from behind, while Erkel seized him by the elbows. Liputin attacked him from the front. The three of them at once knocked him down and pinned him to the ground. At this point Pyotr Stepanovitch darted up with his revolver. It is said that Shatov had time to turn his head and was able to see and recognise him. Three lanterns lighted up the scene. Shatov suddenly uttered a short and desperate scream. But they did not let him go on screaming. Pyotr Stepanovitch firmly and accurately put his revolver to Shatov’s forehead, pressed it to it, and pulled the trigger. The shot seems not to have been loud; nothing was heard at Skvoreshniki, anyway. Shigalov, who was scarcely three paces away, of course heard it—he heard the shout and the shot, but, as he testified afterwards, he did not turn nor even stop. Death was almost instantaneous. Pyotr Stepanovitch was the only one who preserved all his faculties, but I don’t think he was quite cool. Squatting on his heels, he searched the murdered man’s pockets hastily, though with steady hand. No money was found (his purse had been left under Marya Ignatyevna’s pillow). Two or three scraps of paper of no importance were found: a note from his office, the title of some book, and an old bill from a restaurant abroad which had been preserved, goodness knows why, for two years in his pocket. Pyotr Stepanovitch transferred these scraps of paper to his own pocket, and suddenly noticing that they had all gathered round, were gazing at the corpse and doing nothing, he began rudely and angrily abusing them and urging them on. Tolkatchenko and Erkel recovered themselves, and running to the grotto brought instantly from it two stones which they had got ready there that morning. These stones, which weighed about twenty pounds each, were securely tied with cord. As they intended to throw the body in the nearest of the three ponds, they proceeded to tie the stones to the head and

feet respectively. Pyotr Stepanovitch fastened the stones while Tolkatchenko and Erkel only held and passed them. Erkel was foremost, and while Pyotr Stepanovitch, grumbling and swearing, tied the dead man's feet together with the cord and fastened the stone to them—a rather lengthy operation—Tolkatchenko stood holding the other stone at arm's-length, his whole person bending forward, as it were, deferentially, to be in readiness to hand it without delay. It never once occurred to him to lay his burden on the ground in the interval. When at last both stones were tied on and Pyotr Stepanovitch got up from the ground to scrutinise the faces of his companions, something strange happened, utterly unexpected and surprising to almost every one.

As I have said already, all except perhaps Tolkatchenko and Erkel were standing still doing nothing. Though Virginsky had rushed up to Shatov with the others he had not seized him or helped to hold him. Lyamshin had joined the group after the shot had been fired. Afterwards, while Pyotr Stepanovitch was busy with the corpse—for perhaps ten minutes—none of them seemed to have been fully conscious. They grouped themselves around and seemed to have felt amazement rather than anxiety or alarm. Liputin stood foremost, close to the corpse. Virginsky stood behind him, peeping over his shoulder with a peculiar, as it were unconcerned, curiosity; he even stood on tiptoe to get a better view. Lyamshin hid behind Virginsky. He took an apprehensive peep from time to time and slipped behind him again at once. When the stones had been tied on and Pyotr Stepanovitch had risen to his feet, Virginsky began faintly shuddering all over, clasped his hands, and cried out bitterly at the top of his voice:

"It's not the right thing, it's not, it's not at all!" He would perhaps have added something more to his belated exclamation, but Lyamshin did not let him finish: he suddenly seized him from behind and squeezed him with all his might, uttering an unnatural shriek. There are moments of violent emotion, of terror, for instance, when a man will cry out in a voice not his own, unlike anything one could have anticipated from him, and this has sometimes a very terrible effect. Lyamshin gave vent to a scream more animal than human. Squeezing Virginsky from behind more and more tightly and convulsively, he went on shrieking without a pause, his mouth wide open and his eyes starting out of his head, keeping up a continual patter with his feet, as though he were beating a drum. Virginsky was so scared that he too screamed out like a madman, and with a ferocity, a vindictiveness that one could never have expected of Virginsky. He tried to pull himself away from Lyamshin, scratching and punching him as far as he could with his arms behind him. Erkel at last helped to pull Lyamshin away. But when, in his terror, Virginsky had skipped ten paces away from him, Lyamshin, catching sight of Pyotr Stepanovitch, began yelling again and flew at him.

Stumbling over the corpse, he fell upon Pyotr Stepanovitch, pressing his head to the latter's chest and gripping him so tightly in his arms that Pyotr Stepanovitch, Tolkatchenko, and Liputin could all of them do nothing at the first moment. Pyotr Stepanovitch shouted, swore, beat him on the head with his fists. At last, wrenching himself away, he drew his revolver and put it in the open mouth of Lyamshin, who was still yelling and was by now tightly held by Tolkatchenko, Erkel, and Liputin. But Lyamshin went on shrieking in spite of the revolver. At last Erkel, crushing his silk handkerchief into a ball, deftly thrust it into his mouth and the shriek ceased. Meantime Tolkatchenko tied his hands with what was left of the rope.

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

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

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

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

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

“Pyotr Stepanovitch! Pyotr Stepanovitch! Lyamshin will give information!”

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

“What about you?”

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

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, Pyotr Stepanovitch, perhaps we shall never meet again!”

“What’s put that into your head?”

“Only tell me one thing.”

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

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

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

“I know, I know; but the answer, your answer!”

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

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

Pyotr Stepanovitch pondered a little.

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

II

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

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

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

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

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

“Everything is in order, then, and we are not drawing back from our resolution. Bravo!” He smiled an offensively patronising smile. “But, after all,” he added with unpleasant jocosity, “if I am behind my time, it’s not for you to complain: I made you a present of three hours.”

“I don’t want extra hours as a present from you, and you can’t make me a present … you fool!”

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

“I don’t want to look upon you as a mouse.”

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

“I’ve dined, and it’s not your business. Hold your tongue!”

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

“Eat it if you can.”

“Thank you, and then I’ll have tea.”

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

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

“I’ve decided in the night that it’s nothing to me. I’ll write it. About the manifestoes?”

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

“That’s not your business.”

“It’s not mine, of course. It need only be a few lines, though: that you and Shatov distributed the manifestoes and with the help of Fedka, who hid in your lodgings. This last point about Fedka and your lodgings is very important—the most important of all, indeed. You see, I am talking to you quite openly.”

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

“What next! What is it to you? You can’t hurt him now.”

“His wife has come back to him. She has waked up and has sent to ask me where he is.”

“She has sent to ask you where he is? H’m … that’s unfortunate. She may send again; no one ought to know I am here.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch was uneasy.

“She won’t know, she’s gone to sleep again. There’s a midwife with her, Arina Virginsky.”

“So that’s how it was…. She won’t overhear, I suppose? I say, you’d better shut the front door.”

“She won’t overhear anything. And if Shatov comes I’ll hide you in another room.”

“Shatov won’t come; and you must write that you quarrelled with him because he turned traitor and informed the police … this evening … and caused his death.”

“He is dead!” cried Kirillov, jumping up from the sofa.

“He died at seven o’clock this evening, or rather, at seven o’clock yesterday evening, and now it’s one o’clock.”

“You have killed him!… And I foresaw it yesterday!”

“No doubt you did! With this revolver here.” (He drew out his revolver as though to show it, but did not put it back again and still held it in his right hand as though in readiness.) “You are a strange man, though, Kirillov; you knew yourself that the stupid fellow was bound to end like this. What was there to foresee in that? I made that as

plain as possible over and over again. Shatov was meaning to betray us; I was watching him, and it could not be left like that. And you too had instructions to watch him; you told me so yourself three weeks ago....”

“Hold your tongue! You’ve done this because he spat in your face in Geneva!”

“For that and for other things too—for many other things; not from spite, however. Why do you jump up? Why look like that? Oh oh, so that’s it, is it?”

He jumped up and held out his revolver before him. Kirillov had suddenly snatched up from the window his revolver, which had been loaded and put ready since the morning. Pyotr Stepanovitch took up his position and aimed his weapon at Kirillov. The latter laughed angrily.

“Confess, you scoundrel, that you brought your revolver because I might shoot you.... But I shan’t shoot you ... though ... though ...”

And again he turned his revolver upon Pyotr Stepanovitch, as it were rehearsing, as though unable to deny himself the pleasure of imagining how he would shoot him. Pyotr Stepanovitch, holding his ground, waited for him, waited for him till the last minute without pulling the trigger, at the risk of being the first to get a bullet in his head: it might well be expected of “the maniac.” But at last “the maniac” dropped his hand, gasping and trembling and unable to speak.

“You’ve played your little game and that’s enough.” Pyotr Stepanovitch, too, dropped his weapon. “I knew it was only a game; only you ran a risk, let me tell you: I might have fired.”

And he sat down on the sofa with a fair show of composure and poured himself out some tea, though his hand trembled a little. Kirillov laid his revolver on the table and began walking up and down.

“I won’t write that I killed Shatov ... and I won’t write anything now. You won’t have a document!”

“I shan’t?”

“No, you won’t.”

“What meanness and what stupidity!” Pyotr Stepanovitch turned green with resentment. “I foresaw it, though. You’ve not taken me by surprise, let me tell you. As you please, however. If I could make you do it by force, I would. You are a scoundrel, though.” Pyotr Stepanovitch was more and more carried away and unable to restrain himself. “You asked us for money out there and promised us no end of things.... I won’t

go away with nothing, however: I'll see you put the bullet through your brains first, anyway."

"I want you to go away at once." Kirillov stood firmly before him.

"No, that's impossible." Pyotr Stepanovitch took up his revolver again. "Now in your spite and cowardice you may think fit to put it off and to turn traitor to-morrow, so as to get money again; they'll pay you for that, of course. Damn it all, fellows like you are capable of anything! Only don't trouble yourself; I've provided for all contingencies: I am not going till I've dashed your brains out with this revolver, as I did to that scoundrel Shatov, if you are afraid to do it yourself and put off your intention, damn you!"

"You are set on seeing my blood, too?"

"I am not acting from spite; let me tell you, it's nothing to me. I am doing it to be at ease about the cause. One can't rely on men; you see that for yourself. I don't understand what fancy possesses you to put yourself to death. It wasn't my idea; you thought of it yourself before I appeared, and talked of your intention to the committee abroad before you said anything to me. And you know, no one has forced it out of you; no one of them knew you, but you came to confide in them yourself, from sentimentalism. And what's to be done if a plan of action here, which can't be altered now, was founded upon that with your consent and upon your suggestion?... your suggestion, mind that! You have put yourself in a position in which you know too much. If you are an ass and go off to-morrow to inform the police, that would be rather a disadvantage to us; what do you think about it? Yes, you've bound yourself; you've given your word, you've taken money. That you can't deny...."

Pyotr Stepanovitch was much excited, but for some time past Kirillov had not been listening. He paced up and down the room, lost in thought again.

"I am sorry for Shatov," he said, stopping before Pyotr Stepanovitch again.

"Why so? I am sorry, if that's all, and do you suppose ..."

"Hold your tongue, you scoundrel," roared Kirillov, making an alarming and unmistakable movement; "I'll kill you."

"There, there, there! I told a lie, I admit it; I am not sorry at all. Come, that's enough, that's enough." Pyotr Stepanovitch started up apprehensively, putting out his hand.

Kirillov subsided and began walking up and down again.

"I won't put it off; I want to kill myself now: all are scoundrels."

“Well, that’s an idea; of course all are scoundrels; and since life is a beastly thing for a decent man ...”

“Fool, I am just such a scoundrel as you, as all, not a decent man. There’s never been a decent man anywhere.”

“He’s guessed the truth at last! Can you, Kirillov, with your sense, have failed to see till now that all men are alike, that there are none better or worse, only some are stupider, than others, and that if all are scoundrels (which is nonsense, though) there oughtn’t to be any people that are not?”

“Ah! Why, you are really in earnest?” Kirillov looked at him with some wonder. “You speak with heat and simply.... Can it be that even fellows like you have convictions?”

“Kirillov, I’ve never been able to understand why you mean to kill yourself. I only know it’s from conviction ... strong conviction. But if you feel a yearning to express yourself, so to say, I am at your service.... Only you must think of the time.”

“What time is it?”

“Oh oh, just two.” Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at his watch and lighted a cigarette.

“It seems we can come to terms after all,” he reflected.

“I’ve nothing to say to you,” muttered Kirillov.

“I remember that something about God comes into it ... you explained it to me once—twice, in fact. If you stopped yourself, you become God; that’s it, isn’t it?”

“Yes, I become God.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not even smile; he waited. Kirillov looked at him subtly.

“You are a political impostor and intriguer. You want to lead me on into philosophy and enthusiasm and to bring about a reconciliation so as to disperse my anger, and then, when I am reconciled with you, beg from me a note to say I killed Shatov.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch answered with almost natural frankness.

“Well, supposing I am such a scoundrel. But at the last moments does that matter to you, Kirillov? What are we quarrelling about? Tell me, please. You are one sort of man and I am another—what of it? And what’s more, we are both of us ...”

“Scoundrels.”

“Yes, scoundrels if you like. But you know that that’s only words.”

“All my life I wanted it not to be only words. I lived because I did not want it to be. Even now every day I want it to be not words.”

“Well, every one seeks to be where he is best off. The fish ... that is, every one seeks his own comfort, that’s all. That’s been a commonplace for ages and ages.”

“Comfort, do you say?”

“Oh, it’s not worth while quarrelling over words.”

“No, you were right in what you said; let it be comfort. God is necessary and so must exist.”

“Well, that’s all right, then.”

“But I know He doesn’t and can’t.”

“That’s more likely.”

“Surely you must understand that a man with two such ideas can’t go on living?”

“Must shoot himself, you mean?”

“Surely you must understand that one might shoot oneself for that alone? You don’t understand that there may be a man, one man out of your thousands of millions, one man who won’t bear it and does not want to.”

“All I understand is that you seem to be hesitating.... That’s very bad.”

“Stavrogin, too, is consumed by an idea,” Kirillov said gloomily, pacing up and down the room. He had not noticed the previous remark.

“What?” Pyotr Stepanovitch pricked up his ears. “What idea? Did he tell you something himself?”

“No, I guessed it myself: if Stavrogin has faith, he does not believe that he has faith. If he hasn’t faith, he does not believe that he hasn’t.”

“Well, Stavrogin has got something else worse than that in his head,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered peevishly, uneasily watching the turn the conversation had taken and the pallor of Kirillov.

“Damn it all, he won’t shoot himself!” he was thinking. “I always suspected it; it’s a maggot in the brain and nothing more; what a rotten lot of people!”

“You are the last to be with me; I shouldn’t like to part on bad terms with you,” Kirillov vouchsafed suddenly.

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not answer at once. “Damn it all, what is it now?” he thought again.

“I assure you, Kirillov, I have nothing against you personally as a man, and always ...”

“You are a scoundrel and a false intellect. But I am just the same as you are, and I will shoot myself while you will remain living.”

“You mean to say, I am so abject that I want to go on living.”

He could not make up his mind whether it was judicious to keep up such a conversation at such a moment or not, and resolved “to be guided by circumstances.” But the tone of superiority and of contempt for him, which Kirillov had never disguised, had always irritated him, and now for some reason it irritated him more than ever—possibly because Kirillov, who was to die within an hour or so (Pyotr Stepanovitch still reckoned upon this), seemed to him, as it were, already only half a man, some creature whom he could not allow to be haughty.

“You seem to be boasting to me of your shooting yourself.”

“I’ve always been surprised at every one’s going on living,” said Kirillov, not hearing his remark.

“H’m! Admitting that’s an idea, but ...”

“You ape, you assent to get the better of me. Hold your tongue; you won’t understand anything. If there is no God, then I am God.”

“There, I could never understand that point of yours: why are you God?”

“If God exists, all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. If not, it’s all my will and I am bound to show self-will.”

“Self-will? But why are you bound?”

“Because all will has become mine. Can it be that no one in the whole planet, after making an end of God and believing in his own will, will dare to express his self-will on the most vital point? It’s like a beggar inheriting a fortune and being afraid of it and not daring to approach the bag of gold, thinking himself too weak to own it. I want to manifest my self-will. I may be the only one, but I’ll do it.”

“Do it by all means.”

“I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands.”

“But you won’t be the only one to kill yourself; there are lots of suicides.”

“With good cause. But to do it without any cause at all, simply for self-will, I am the only one.”

“He won’t shoot himself,” flashed across Pyotr Stepanovitch’s mind again.

“Do you know,” he observed irritably, “if I were in your place I should kill someone else to show my self-will, not myself. You might be of use. I’ll tell you whom, if you are not afraid. Then you needn’t shoot yourself to-day, perhaps. We may come to terms.”

“To kill someone would be the lowest point of self-will, and you show your whole soul in that. I am not you: I want the highest point and I’ll kill myself.”

“He’s come to it of himself,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered malignantly.

“I am bound to show my unbelief,” said Kirillov, walking about the room. “I have no higher idea than disbelief in God. I have all the history of mankind on my side. Man has done nothing but invent God so as to go on living, and not kill himself; that’s the whole of universal history up till now. I am the first one in the whole history of mankind who would not invent God. Let them know it once for all.”

“He won’t shoot himself,” Pyotr Stepanovitch thought anxiously.

“Let whom know it?” he said, egging him on. “It’s only you and me here; you mean Liputin?”

“Let every one know; all will know. There is nothing secret that will not be made known. *He* said so.”

And he pointed with feverish enthusiasm to the image of the Saviour, before which a lamp was burning. Pyotr Stepanovitch lost his temper completely.

“So you still believe in Him, and you’ve lighted the lamp; ‘to be on the safe side,’ I suppose?”

The other did not speak.

“Do you know, to my thinking, you believe perhaps more thoroughly than any priest.”

“Believe in whom? In *Him?* Listen.” Kirillov stood still, gazing before him with fixed and ecstatic look. “Listen to a great idea: there was a day on earth, and in the midst of the earth there stood three crosses. One on the Cross had such faith that he said to another, ‘To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.’ The day ended; both died and passed away and found neither Paradise nor resurrection. His words did not come

true. Listen: that Man was the loftiest of all on earth, He was that which gave meaning to life. The whole planet, with everything on it, is mere madness without that Man. There has never been any like Him before or since, never, up to a miracle. For that is the miracle, that there never was or never will be another like Him. And if that is so, if the laws of nature did not spare even Him, have not spared even their miracle and made even Him live in a lie and die for a lie, then all the planet is a lie and rests on a lie and on mockery. So then, the very laws of the planet are a lie and the vaudeville of devils. What is there to live for? Answer, if you are a man."

"That's a different matter. It seems to me you've mixed up two different causes, and that's a very unsafe thing to do. But excuse me, if you are God? If the lie were ended and if you realised that all the falsity comes from the belief in that former God?"

"So at last you understand!" cried Kirillov rapturously. "So it can be understood if even a fellow like you understands. Do you understand now that the salvation for all consists in proving this idea to every one? Who will prove it? I! I can't understand how an atheist could know that there is no God and not kill himself on the spot. To recognise that there is no God and not to recognise at the same instant that one is God oneself is an absurdity, else one would certainly kill oneself. If you recognise it you are sovereign, and then you won't kill yourself but will live in the greatest glory. But one, the first, must kill himself, for else who will begin and prove it? So I must certainly kill myself, to begin and prove it. Now I am only a god against my will and I am unhappy, because I am bound to assert my will. All are unhappy because all are afraid to express their will. Man has hitherto been so unhappy and so poor because he has been afraid to assert his will in the highest point and has shown his self-will only in little things, like a schoolboy. I am awfully unhappy, for I'm awfully afraid. Terror is the curse of man.... But I will assert my will, I am bound to believe that I don't believe. I will begin and will make an end of it and open the door, and will save. That's the only thing that will save mankind and will re-create the next generation physically; for with his present physical nature man can't get on without his former God, I believe. For three years I've been seeking for the attribute of my godhead and I've found it; the attribute of my godhead is self-will! That's all I can do to prove in the highest point my independence and my new terrible freedom. For it is very terrible. I am killing myself to prove my independence and my new terrible freedom."

His face was unnaturally pale, and there was a terribly heavy look in his eyes. He was like a man in delirium. Pyotr Stepanovitch thought he would drop on to the floor.

"Give me the pen!" Kirillov cried suddenly, quite unexpectedly, in a positive frenzy. "Dictate; I'll sign anything. I'll sign that I killed Shatov even. Dictate while it amuses

me. I am not afraid of what the haughty slaves will think! You will see for yourself that all that is secret shall be made manifest! And you will be crushed.... I believe, I believe!"

Pyotr Stepanovitch jumped up from his seat and instantly handed him an inkstand and paper, and began dictating, seizing the moment, quivering with anxiety.

"I, Alexey Kirillov, declare ..."

"Stay; I won't! To whom am I declaring it?"

Kirillov was shaking as though he were in a fever. This declaration and the sudden strange idea of it seemed to absorb him entirely, as though it were a means of escape by which his tortured spirit strove for a moment's relief.

"To whom am I declaring it? I want to know to whom?"

"To no one, every one, the first person who reads it. Why define it? The whole world!"

"The whole world! Bravo! And I won't have any repentance. I don't want penitence and I don't want it for the police!"

"No, of course, there's no need of it, damn the police! Write, if you are in earnest!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried hysterically.

"Stay! I want to put at the top a face with the tongue out."

"Ech, what nonsense," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch crossly, "you can express all that without the drawing, by—the tone."

"By the tone? That's true. Yes, by the tone, by the tone of it. Dictate, the tone."

"I, Alexey Kirillov," Pyotr Stepanovitch dictated firmly and peremptorily, bending over Kirillov's shoulder and following every letter which the latter formed with a hand trembling with excitement, "I, Kirillov, declare that to-day, the —th October, at about eight o'clock in the evening, I killed the student Shatov in the park for turning traitor and giving information of the manifestoes and of Fedka, who has been lodging with us for ten days in Filipov's house. I am shooting myself to-day with my revolver, not because I repent and am afraid of you, but because when I was abroad I made up my mind to put an end to my life."

"Is that all?" cried Kirillov with surprise and indignation.

"Not another word," cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, waving his hand, attempting to snatch the document from him.

“Stay.” Kirillov put his hand firmly on the paper. “Stay, it’s nonsense! I want to say with whom I killed him. Why Fedka? And what about the fire? I want it all and I want to be abusive in tone, too, in tone!”

“Enough, Kirillov, I assure you it’s enough,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch almost imploringly, trembling lest he should tear up the paper; “that they may believe you, you must say it as obscurely as possible, just like that, simply in hints. You must only give them a peep of the truth, just enough to tantalise them. They’ll tell a story better than ours, and of course they’ll believe themselves more than they would us; and you know, it’s better than anything—better than anything! Let me have it, it’s splendid as it is; give it to me, give it to me!”

And he kept trying to snatch the paper. Kirillov listened open-eyed and appeared to be trying to reflect, but he seemed beyond understanding now.

“Damn it all,” Pyotr Stepanovitch cried all at once, ill-humouredly, “he hasn’t signed it! Why are you staring like that? Sign!”

“I want to abuse them,” muttered Kirillov. He took the pen, however, and signed. “I want to abuse them.”

“Write *‘Vive la république,’* and that will be enough.”

“Bravo!” Kirillov almost bellowed with delight. “*‘Vive la république démocratique sociale et universelle ou la mort!’* No, no, that’s not it. *‘Liberté, égalité, fraternité ou la mort.’* There, that’s better, that’s better.” He wrote it gleefully under his signature.

“Enough, enough,” repeated Pyotr Stepanovitch.

“Stay, a little more. I’ll sign it again in French, you know. ‘*De Kirillov, gentilhomme russe et citoyen du monde.’* Ha ha!” He went off in a peal of laughter. “No, no, no; stay. I’ve found something better than all. Eureka! *‘Gentilhomme, séminariste russe et citoyen du monde civilisé!’* That’s better than any….” He jumped up from the sofa and suddenly, with a rapid gesture, snatched up the revolver from the window, ran with it into the next room, and closed the door behind him.

Pyotr Stepanovitch stood for a moment, pondering and gazing at the door.

“If he does it at once, perhaps he’ll do it, but if he begins thinking, nothing will come of it.”

Meanwhile he took up the paper, sat down, and looked at it again. The wording of the document pleased him again.

“What’s needed for the moment? What’s wanted is to throw them all off the scent and keep them busy for a time. The park? There’s no park in the town and they’ll guess its Skvoreshniki of themselves. But while they are arriving at that, time will be passing; then the search will take time too; then when they find the body it will prove that the story is true, and it will follow that’s it all true, that it’s true about Fedka too. And Fedka explains the fire, the Lebyadkins; so that it was all being hatched here, at Filipov’s, while they overlooked it and saw nothing—that will quite turn their heads! They will never think of the quintet; Shatov and Kirillov and Fedka and Lebyadkin, and why they killed each other—that will be another question for them. Oh, damn it all, I don’t hear the shot!”

Though he had been reading and admiring the wording of it, he had been listening anxiously all the time, and he suddenly flew into a rage. He looked anxiously at his watch; it was getting late and it was fully ten minutes since Kirillov had gone out.... Snatching up the candle, he went to the door of the room where Kirillov had shut himself up. He was just at the door when the thought struck him that the candle had burnt out, that it would not last another twenty minutes, and that there was no other in the room. He took hold of the handle and listened warily; he did not hear the slightest sound. He suddenly opened the door and lifted up the candle: something uttered a roar and rushed at him. He slammed the door with all his might and pressed his weight against it; but all sounds died away and again there was deathlike stillness.

He stood for a long while irresolute, with the candle in his hand. He had been able to see very little in the second he held the door open, but he had caught a glimpse of the face of Kirillov standing at the other end of the room by the window, and the savage fury with which the latter had rushed upon him. Pyotr Stepanovitch started, rapidly set the candle on the table, made ready his revolver, and retreated on tiptoe to the farthest corner of the room, so that if Kirillov opened the door and rushed up to the table with the revolver he would still have time to be the first to aim and fire.

Pyotr Stepanovitch had by now lost all faith in the suicide. “He was standing in the middle of the room, thinking,” flashed like a whirlwind through Pyotr Stepanovitch’s mind, “and the room was dark and horrible too.... He roared and rushed at me. There are two possibilities: either I interrupted him at the very second when he was pulling the trigger or ... or he was standing planning how to kill me. Yes, that’s it, he was planning it.... He knows I won’t go away without killing him if he funks it himself—so that he would have to kill me first to prevent my killing him.... And again, again there is silence. I am really frightened: he may open the door all of a sudden.... The nuisance of it is that he believes in God like any priest.... He won’t shoot himself for anything! There are lots of these people nowadays ‘who’ve come to it of themselves.’ A rotten

lot! Oh, damn it, the candle, the candle! It'll go out within a quarter of an hour for certain.... I must put a stop to it; come what may, I must put a stop to it.... Now I can kill him.... With that document here no one would think of my killing him. I can put him in such an attitude on the floor with an unloaded revolver in his hand that they'd be certain he'd done it himself.... Ach, damn it! how is one to kill him? If I open the door he'll rush out again and shoot me first. Damn it all, he'll be sure to miss!"

He was in agonies, trembling at the necessity of action and his own indecision. At last he took up the candle and again approached the door with the revolver held up in readiness; he put his left hand, in which he held the candle, on the doorhandle. But he managed awkwardly: the handle clanked, there was a rattle and a creak. "He will fire straightway," flashed through Pyotr Stepanovitch's mind. With his foot he flung the door open violently, raised the candle, and held out the revolver; but no shot nor cry came from within.... There was no one in the room.

He started. The room led nowhere. There was no exit, no means of escape from it. He lifted the candle higher and looked about him more attentively: there was certainly no one. He called Kirillov's name in a low voice, then again louder; no one answered.

"Can he have got out by the window?" The casement in one window was, in fact, open. "Absurd! He couldn't have got away through the casement." Pyotr Stepanovitch crossed the room and went up to the window. "He couldn't possibly." All at once he turned round quickly and was aghast at something extraordinary.

Against the wall facing the windows on the right of the door stood a cupboard. On the right side of this cupboard, in the corner formed by the cupboard and the wall, stood Kirillov, and he was standing in a very strange way; motionless, perfectly erect, with his arms held stiffly at his sides, his head raised and pressed tightly back against the wall in the very corner, he seemed to be trying to conceal and efface himself. Everything seemed to show that he was hiding, yet somehow it was not easy to believe it. Pyotr Stepanovitch was standing a little sideways to the corner, and could only see the projecting parts of the figure. He could not bring himself to move to the left to get a full view of Kirillov and solve the mystery. His heart began beating violently, and he felt a sudden rush of blind fury: he started from where he stood, and, shouting and stamping with his feet, he rushed to the horrible place.

But when he reached Kirillov he stopped short again, still more overcome, horror-stricken. What struck him most was that, in spite of his shout and his furious rush, the figure did not stir, did not move in a single limb—as though it were of stone or of wax. The pallor of the face was unnatural, the black eyes were quite unmoving and were staring away at a point in the distance. Pyotr Stepanovitch lowered the candle and

raised it again, lighting up the figure from all points of view and scrutinising it. He suddenly noticed that, although Kirillov was looking straight before him, he could see him and was perhaps watching him out of the corner of his eye. Then the idea occurred to him to hold the candle right up to the wretch's face, to scorch him and see what he would do. He suddenly fancied that Kirillov's chin twitched and that something like a mocking smile passed over his lips—as though he had guessed Pyotr Stepanovitch's thought. He shuddered and, beside himself, clutched violently at Kirillov's shoulder.

Then something happened so hideous and so soon over that Pyotr Stepanovitch could never afterwards recover a coherent impression of it. He had hardly touched Kirillov when the latter bent down quickly and with his head knocked the candle out of Pyotr Stepanovitch's hand; the candlestick fell with a clang on the ground and the candle went out. At the same moment he was conscious of a fearful pain in the little finger of his left hand. He cried out, and all that he could remember was that, beside himself, he hit out with all his might and struck three blows with the revolver on the head of Kirillov, who had bent down to him and had bitten his finger. At last he tore away his finger and rushed headlong to get out of the house, feeling his way in the dark. He was pursued by terrible shouts from the room.

"Directly, directly, directly, directly." Ten times. But he still ran on, and was running into the porch when he suddenly heard a loud shot. Then he stopped short in the dark porch and stood deliberating for five minutes; at last he made his way back into the house. But he had to get the candle. He had only to feel on the floor on the right of the cupboard for the candlestick; but how was he to light the candle? There suddenly came into his mind a vague recollection: he recalled that when he had run into the kitchen the day before to attack Fedka he had noticed in passing a large red box of matches in a corner on a shelf. Feeling with his hands, he made his way to the door on the left leading to the kitchen, found it, crossed the passage, and went down the steps. On the shelf, on the very spot where he had just recalled seeing it, he felt in the dark a full unopened box of matches. He hurriedly went up the steps again without striking a light, and it was only when he was near the cupboard, at the spot where he had struck Kirillov with the revolver and been bitten by him, that he remembered his bitten finger, and at the same instant was conscious that it was unbearably painful. Clenching his teeth, he managed somehow to light the candle-end, set it in the candlestick again, and looked about him: near the open casement, with his feet towards the right-hand corner, lay the dead body of Kirillov. The shot had been fired at the right temple and the bullet had come out at the top on the left, shattering the skull. There were splashes of blood and brains. The revolver was still in the suicide's hand

on the floor. Death must have been instantaneous. After a careful look round, Pyotr Stepanovitch got up and went out on tiptoe, closed the door, left the candle on the table in the outer room, thought a moment, and resolved not to put it out, reflecting that it could not possibly set fire to anything. Looking once more at the document left on the table, he smiled mechanically and then went out of the house, still for some reason walking on tiptoe. He crept through Fedka's hole again and carefully replaced the posts after him.

III

Precisely at ten minutes to six Pyotr Stepanovitch and Erkel were walking up and down the platform at the railway-station beside a rather long train. Pyotr Stepanovitch was setting off and Erkel was saying good-bye to him. The luggage was in, and his bag was in the seat he had taken in a second-class carriage. The first bell had rung already; they were waiting for the second. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked about him, openly watching the passengers as they got into the train. But he did not meet anyone he knew well; only twice he nodded to acquaintances—a merchant whom he knew slightly, and then a young village priest who was going to his parish two stations away. Erkel evidently wanted to speak of something of importance in the last moments, though possibly he did not himself know exactly of what, but he could not bring himself to begin! He kept fancying that Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed anxious to get rid of him and was impatient for the last bell.

"You look at every one so openly," he observed with some timidity, as though he would have warned him.

"Why not? It would not do for me to conceal myself at present. It's too soon. Don't be uneasy. All I am afraid of is that the devil might send Liputin this way; he might scent me out and race off here."

"Pyotr Stepanovitch, they are not to be trusted," Erkel brought out resolutely.

"Liputin?"

"None of them, Pyotr Stepanovitch."

"Nonsense! they are all bound by what happened yesterday. There isn't one who would turn traitor. People won't go to certain destruction unless they've lost their reason."

"Pyotr Stepanovitch, but they will lose their reason." Evidently that idea had already occurred to Pyotr Stepanovitch too, and so Erkel's observation irritated him the more.

“You are not in a funk too, are you, Erkel? I rely on you more than on any of them. I’ve seen now what each of them is worth. Tell them to-day all I’ve told you. I leave them in your charge. Go round to each of them this morning. Read them my written instructions to-morrow, or the day after, when you are all together and they are capable of listening again … and believe me, they will be by to-morrow, for they’ll be in an awful funk, and that will make them as soft as wax…. The great thing is that you shouldn’t be downhearted.”

“Ach, Pyotr Stepanovitch, it would be better if you weren’t going away.”

“But I am only going for a few days; I shall be back in no time.”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch,” Erkel brought out warily but resolutely, “what if you were going to Petersburg? Of course, I understand that you are only doing what’s necessary for the cause.”

“I expected as much from you, Erkel. If you have guessed that I am going to Petersburg you can realise that I couldn’t tell them yesterday, at that moment, that I was going so far for fear of frightening them. You saw for yourself what a state they were in. But you understand that I am going for the cause, for work of the first importance, for the common cause, and not to save my skin, as Liputin imagines.”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, what if you were going abroad? I should understand … I should understand that you must be careful of yourself because you are everything and we are nothing. I shall understand, Pyotr Stepanovitch.” The poor boy’s voice actually quivered.

“Thank you, Erkel…. Aie, you’ve touched my bad finger.” (Erkel had pressed his hand awkwardly; the bad finger was discreetly bound up in black silk.) “But I tell you positively again that I am going to Petersburg only to sniff round, and perhaps shall only be there for twenty-four hours and then back here again at once. When I come back I shall stay at Gaganov’s country place for the sake of appearances. If there is any notion of danger, I should be the first to take the lead and share it. If I stay longer in Petersburg I’ll let you know at once … in the way we’ve arranged, and you’ll tell them.” The second bell rang.

“Ah, then there’s only five minutes before the train starts. I don’t want the group here to break up, you know. I am not afraid; don’t be anxious about me. I have plenty of such centres, and it’s not much consequence; but there’s no harm in having as many centres as possible. But I am quite at ease about you, though I am leaving you almost alone with those idiots. Don’t be uneasy; they won’t turn traitor, they won’t have the pluck…. Ha ha, you going to-day too?” he cried suddenly in a quite different, cheerful

voice to a very young man, who came up gaily to greet him. “I didn’t know you were going by the express too. Where are you off to … your mother’s?”

The mother of the young man was a very wealthy landowner in a neighbouring province, and the young man was a distant relation of Yulia Mihailovna’s and had been staying about a fortnight in our town.

“No, I am going farther, to R——. I’ve eight hours to live through in the train. Off to Petersburg?” laughed the young man.

“What makes you suppose I must be going to Petersburg?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, laughing even more openly.

The young man shook his gloved finger at him.

“Well, you’ve guessed right,” Pyotr Stepanovitch whispered to him mysteriously. “I am going with letters from Yulia Mihailovna and have to call on three or four personages, as you can imagine—bother them all, to speak candidly. It’s a beastly job!”

“But why is she in such a panic? Tell me,” the young man whispered too. “She wouldn’t see even me yesterday. I don’t think she has anything to fear for her husband, quite the contrary; he fell down so creditably at the fire—ready to sacrifice his life, so to speak.”

“Well, there it is,” laughed Pyotr Stepanovitch. “You see, she is afraid that people may have written from here already … that is, some gentlemen…. The fact is, Stavrogin is at the bottom of it, or rather Prince K…. Ech, it’s a long story; I’ll tell you something about it on the journey if you like—as far as my chivalrous feelings will allow me, at least…. This is my relation, Lieutenant Erkel, who lives down here.”

The young man, who had been stealthily glancing at Erkel, touched his hat; Erkel made a bow.

“But I say, Verhovensky, eight hours in the train is an awful ordeal. Berestov, the colonel, an awfully funny fellow, is travelling with me in the first class. He is a neighbour of ours in the country, and his wife is a Garin (*née* de Garine), and you know he is a very decent fellow. He’s got ideas too. He’s only been here a couple of days. He’s passionately fond of whist; couldn’t we get up a game, eh? I’ve already fixed on a fourth—Pripuhlov, our merchant from T——with a beard, a millionaire—I mean it, a real millionaire; you can take my word for it…. I’ll introduce you; he is a very interesting money-bag. We shall have a laugh.”

“I shall be delighted, and I am awfully fond of cards in the train, but I am going second class.”

“Nonsense, that’s no matter. Get in with us. I’ll tell them directly to move you to the first class. The chief guard would do anything I tell him. What have you got?... a bag? a rug?”

“First-rate. Come along!”

Pyotr Stepanovitch took his bag, his rug, and his book, and at once and with alacrity transferred himself to the first class. Erkel helped him. The third bell rang.

“Well, Erkel.” Hurriedly, and with a preoccupied air, Pyotr Stepanovitch held out his hand from the window for the last time. “You see, I am sitting down to cards with them.”

“Why explain, Pyotr Stepanovitch? I understand, I understand it all!”

“Well, au revoir,” Pyotr Stepanovitch turned away suddenly on his name being called by the young man, who wanted to introduce him to his partners. And Erkel saw nothing more of Pyotr Stepanovitch.

He returned home very sad. Not that he was alarmed at Pyotr Stepanovitch’s leaving them so suddenly, but ... he had turned away from him so quickly when that young swell had called to him and ... he might have said something different to him, not “Au revoir,” or ... or at least have pressed his hand more warmly. That last was bitterest of all. Something else was beginning to gnaw in his poor little heart, something which he could not understand himself yet, something connected with the evening before.

CHAPTER VII. STEPAN TROFIMOVITCH’S LAST WANDERING

I

I am persuaded that Stepan Trofimovitch was terribly frightened as he felt the time fixed for his insane enterprise drawing near. I am convinced that he suffered dreadfully from terror, especially on the night before he started—that awful night. Nastasya mentioned afterwards that he had gone to bed late and fallen asleep. But that proves nothing; men sentenced to death sleep very soundly, they say, even the night before their execution. Though he set off by daylight, when a nervous man is always a little more confident (and the major, Virginsky’s relative, used to give up believing in God

every morning when the night was over), yet I am convinced he could never, without horror, have imagined himself alone on the high road in such a position. No doubt a certain desperation in his feelings softened at first the terrible sensation of sudden solitude in which he at once found himself as soon as he had left Nastasya, and the corner in which he had been warm and snug for twenty years. But it made no difference; even with the clearest recognition of all the horrors awaiting him he would have gone out to the high road and walked along it! There was something proud in the undertaking which allured him in spite of everything. Oh, he might have accepted Varvara Petrovna's luxurious provision and have remained living on her charity, "*comme un* humble dependent." But he had not accepted her charity and was not remaining! And here he was leaving her of himself, and holding aloft the "standard of a great idea, and going to die for it on the open road." That is how he must have been feeling; that's how his action must have appeared to him.

Another question presented itself to me more than once. Why did he run away, that is, literally run away on foot, rather than simply drive away? I put it down at first to the impracticability of fifty years and the fantastic bent of his mind under the influence of strong emotion. I imagined that the thought of posting tickets and horses (even if they had bells) would have seemed too simple and prosaic to him; a pilgrimage, on the other hand, even under an umbrella, was ever so much more picturesque and in character with love and resentment. But now that everything is over, I am inclined to think that it all came about in a much simpler way. To begin with, he was afraid to hire horses because Varvara Petrovna might have heard of it and prevented him from going by force; which she certainly would have done, and he certainly would have given in, and then farewell to the great idea forever. Besides, to take tickets for anywhere he must have known at least where he was going. But to think about that was the greatest agony to him at that moment; he was utterly unable to fix upon a place. For if he had to fix on any particular town his enterprise would at once have seemed in his own eyes absurd and impossible; he felt that very strongly. What should he do in that particular town rather than in any other? Look out for *ce marchand*? But what *marchand*? At that point his second and most terrible question cropped up. In reality there was nothing he dreaded more than *ce marchand*, whom he had rushed off to seek so recklessly, though, of course, he was terribly afraid of finding him. No, better simply the high road, better simply to set off for it, and walk along it and to think of nothing so long as he could put off thinking. The high road is something very very long, of which one cannot see the end—like human life, like human dreams. There is an idea in the open road, but what sort of idea is there in travelling with posting tickets? Posting tickets mean an end to ideas. *Vive la grande route* and then as God wills.

After the sudden and unexpected interview with Liza which I have described, he rushed on, more lost in forgetfulness than ever. The high road passed half a mile from Skvoreshniki and, strange to say, he was not at first aware that he was on it. Logical reasoning or even distinct consciousness was unbearable to him at this moment. A fine rain kept drizzling, ceasing, and drizzling again; but he did not even notice the rain. He did not even notice either how he threw his bag over his shoulder, nor how much more comfortably he walked with it so. He must have walked like that for nearly a mile or so when he suddenly stood still and looked round. The old road, black, marked with wheel-ruts and planted with willows on each side, ran before him like an endless thread; on the right hand were bare plains from which the harvest had long ago been carried; on the left there were bushes and in the distance beyond them a copse.

And far, far away a scarcely perceptible line of the railway, running aslant, and on it the smoke of a train, but no sound was heard. Stepan Trofimovitch felt a little timid, but only for a moment. He heaved a vague sigh, put down his bag beside a willow, and sat down to rest. As he moved to sit down he was conscious of being chilly and wrapped himself in his rug; noticing at the same time that it was raining, he put up his umbrella. He sat like that for some time, moving his lips from time to time and firmly grasping the umbrella handle. Images of all sorts passed in feverish procession before him, rapidly succeeding one another in his mind.

"Lise, Lise," he thought, "and with her *ce Maurice*.... Strange people.... But what was the strange fire, and what were they talking about, and who were murdered? I fancy Nastasya has not found out yet and is still waiting for me with my coffee ... cards? Did I really lose men at cards? H'm! Among us in Russia in the times of serfdom, so called.... My God, yes—Fedka!"

He started all over with terror and looked about him. "What if that Fedka is in hiding somewhere behind the bushes? They say he has a regular band of robbers here on the high road. Oh, mercy, I ... I'll tell him the whole truth then, that I was to blame ... and that I've been miserable about him *for ten years*. More miserable than he was as a soldier, and ... I'll give him my purse. H'm! *J'ai en tout quarante roubles; il prendra les roubles et il me tuera tout de même.*"

In his panic he for some reason shut up the umbrella and laid it down beside him. A cart came into sight on the high road in the distance coming from the town.

"*Grace à Dieu*, that's a cart and it's coming at a walking pace; that can't be dangerous. The wretched little horses here ... I always said that breed ... It was Pyotr Ilyitch though, he talked at the club about horse-breeding and I trumped him, *et puis* ... but what's that behind?... I believe there's a woman in the cart. A peasant and a

woman, *cela commence à être rassurant*. The woman behind and the man in front— *c'est très rassurant*. There's a cow behind the cart tied by the horns, *c'est rassurant au plus haut degré*."

The cart reached him; it was a fairly solid peasant cart. The woman was sitting on a tightly stuffed sack and the man on the front of the cart with his legs hanging over towards Stepan Trofimovitch. A red cow was, in fact, shambling behind, tied by the horns to the cart. The man and the woman gazed open-eyed at Stepan Trofimovitch, and Stepan Trofimovitch gazed back at them with equal wonder, but after he had let them pass twenty paces, he got up hurriedly all of a sudden and walked after them. In the proximity of the cart it was natural that he should feel safer, but when he had overtaken it he became oblivious of everything again and sank back into his disconnected thoughts and fancies. He stepped along with no suspicion, of course, that for the two peasants he was at that instant the most mysterious and interesting object that one could meet on the high road.

"What sort may you be, pray, if it's not uncivil to ask?" the woman could not resist asking at last when Stepan Trofimovitch glanced absent-mindedly at her. She was a woman of about seven and twenty, sturdily built, with black eyebrows, rosy cheeks, and a friendly smile on her red lips, between which gleamed white even teeth.

"You ... you are addressing me?" muttered Stepan Trofimovitch with mournful wonder.

"A merchant, for sure," the peasant observed confidently. He was a well-grown man of forty with a broad and intelligent face, framed in a reddish beard.

"No, I am not exactly a merchant, I ... I ... *moi c'est autre chose*." Stepan Trofimovitch parried the question somehow, and to be on the safe side he dropped back a little from the cart, so that he was walking on a level with the cow.

"Must be a gentleman," the man decided, hearing words not Russian, and he gave a tug at the horse.

"That's what set us wondering. You are out for a walk seemingly?" the woman asked inquisitively again.

"You ... you ask me?"

"Foreigners come from other parts sometimes by the train; your boots don't seem to be from hereabouts...."

"They are army boots," the man put in complacently and significantly.

"No, I am not precisely in the army, I ..."

“What an inquisitive woman!” Stepan Trofimovitch mused with vexation. “And how they stare at me ... *mais enfin*. In fact, it’s strange that I feel, as it were, conscience-stricken before them, and yet I’ve done them no harm.”

The woman was whispering to the man.

“If it’s no offence, we’d give you a lift if so be it’s agreeable.”

Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly roused himself.

“Yes, yes, my friends, I accept it with pleasure, for I’m very tired; but how am I to get in?”

“How wonderful it is,” he thought to himself, “that I’ve been walking so long beside that cow and it never entered my head to ask them for a lift. This ‘real life’ has something very original about it.”

But the peasant had not, however, pulled up the horse.

“But where are you bound for?” he asked with some mistrustfulness.

Stepan Trofimovitch did not understand him at once.

“To Hatovo, I suppose?”

“Hatov? No, not to Hatov’s exactly ... And I don’t know him though I’ve heard of him.”

“The village of Hatovo, the village, seven miles from here.”

“A village? *C’est charmant,* to be sure I’ve heard of it....”

Stepan Trofimovitch was still walking, they had not yet taken him into the cart. A guess that was a stroke of genius flashed through his mind.

“You think perhaps that I am ... I’ve got a passport and I am a professor, that is, if you like, a teacher ... but a head teacher. I am a head teacher. *Oui, c’est comme ça qu’on peut traduire.* I should be very glad of a lift and I’ll buy you ... I’ll buy you a quart of vodka for it.”

“It’ll be half a rouble, sir; it’s a bad road.”

“Or it wouldn’t be fair to ourselves,” put in the woman.

“Half a rouble? Very good then, half a rouble. *C’est encore mieux; j’ai en tout quarante roubles mais* ...”

The peasant stopped the horse and by their united efforts Stepan Trofimovitch was dragged into the cart, and seated on the sack by the woman. He was still pursued by the same whirl of ideas. Sometimes he was aware himself that he was terribly absent-minded, and that he was not thinking of what he ought to be thinking of and wondered at it. This consciousness of abnormal weakness of mind became at moments very painful and even humiliating to him.

“How ... how is this you’ve got a cow behind?” he suddenly asked the woman.

“What do you mean, sir, as though you’d never seen one,” laughed the woman.

“We bought it in the town,” the peasant put in. “Our cattle died last spring ... the plague. All the beasts have died round us, all of them. There aren’t half of them left, it’s heartbreaking.”

And again he lashed the horse, which had got stuck in a rut.

“Yes, that does happen among you in Russia ... in general we Russians ... Well, yes, it happens,” Stepan Trofimovitch broke off.

“If you are a teacher, what are you going to Hatovo for? Maybe you are going on farther.”

“I ... I’m not going farther precisely.... *C’est-à-dire,* I’m going to a merchant’s.”

“To Spasov, I suppose?”

“Yes, yes, to Spasov. But that’s no matter.”

“If you are going to Spasov and on foot, it will take you a week in your boots,” laughed the woman.

“I dare say, I dare say, no matter, *mes amis*, no matter.” Stepan Trofimovitch cut her short impatiently.

“Awfully inquisitive people; but the woman speaks better than he does, and I notice that since February 19,* their language has altered a little, and ... and what business is it of mine whether I’m going to Spasov or not? Besides, I’ll pay them, so why do they pester me.”

**February 19, 1861, the day of the Emancipation of the Serfs, is*

meant.—Translator’s note.

“If you are going to Spasov, you must take the steamer,” the peasant persisted.

“That’s true indeed,” the woman put in with animation, “for if you drive along the bank it’s twenty-five miles out of the way.”

“Thirty-five.”

“You’ll just catch the steamer at Ustyevo at two o’clock tomorrow,” the woman decided finally. But Stepan Trofimovitch was obstinately silent. His questioners, too, sank into silence. The peasant tugged at his horse at rare intervals; the peasant woman exchanged brief remarks with him. Stepan Trofimovitch fell into a doze. He was tremendously surprised when the woman, laughing, gave him a poke and he found himself in a rather large village at the door of a cottage with three windows.

“You’ve had a nap, sir?”

“What is it? Where am I? Ah, yes! Well … never mind,” sighed Stepan Trofimovitch, and he got out of the cart.

He looked about him mournfully; the village scene seemed strange to him and somehow terribly remote.

“And the half-rouble, I was forgetting it!” he said to the peasant, turning to him with an excessively hurried gesture; he was evidently by now afraid to part from them.

“We’ll settle indoors, walk in,” the peasant invited him.

“It’s comfortable inside,” the woman said reassuringly.

Stepan Trofimovitch mounted the shaky steps. “How can it be?” he murmured in profound and apprehensive perplexity. He went into the cottage, however. *“Elle l’a voulu”* he felt a stab at his heart and again he became oblivious of everything, even of the fact that he had gone into the cottage.

It was a light and fairly clean peasant’s cottage, with three windows and two rooms; not exactly an inn, but a cottage at which people who knew the place were accustomed to stop on their way through the village. Stepan Trofimovitch, quite unembarrassed, went to the foremost corner; forgot to greet anyone, sat down and sank into thought. Meanwhile a sensation of warmth, extremely agreeable after three hours of travelling in the damp, was suddenly diffused throughout his person. Even the slight shivers that spasmodically ran down his spine—such as always occur in particularly nervous people when they are feverish and have suddenly come into a warm room from the cold—became all at once strangely agreeable. He raised his head and the delicious fragrance of the hot pancakes with which the woman of the

house was busy at the stove tickled his nostrils. With a childlike smile he leaned towards the woman and suddenly said:

“What’s that? Are they pancakes? *Mais … c’est charmant*.”

“Would you like some, sir?” the woman politely offered him at once.

“I should like some, I certainly should, and … may I ask you for some tea too,” said Stepan Trofimovitch, reviving.

“Get the samovar? With the greatest pleasure.”

On a large plate with a big blue pattern on it were served the pancakes—regular peasant pancakes, thin, made half of wheat, covered with fresh hot butter, most delicious pancakes. Stepan Trofimovitch tasted them with relish.

“How rich they are and how good! And if one could only have *un doigt d’eau de vie*.”

“It’s a drop of vodka you would like, sir, isn’t it?”

“Just so, just so, a little, *un tout petit rien*.”

“Five farthings’ worth, I suppose?”

“Five, yes, five, five, five, *un tout petit rien*,” Stepan Trofimovitch assented with a blissful smile.

Ask a peasant to do anything for you, and if he can, and will, he will serve you with care and friendliness; but ask him to fetch you vodka—and his habitual serenity and friendliness will pass at once into a sort of joyful haste and alacrity; he will be as keen in your interest as though you were one of his family. The peasant who fetches vodka—even though you are going to drink it and not he and he knows that beforehand—seems, as it were, to be enjoying part of your future gratification. Within three minutes (the tavern was only two paces away), a bottle and a large greenish wineglass were set on the table before Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Is that all for me!” He was extremely surprised. “I’ve always had vodka but I never knew you could get so much for five farthings.”

He filled the wineglass, got up and with a certain solemnity crossed the room to the other corner where his fellow-traveller, the black-browed peasant woman, who had shared the sack with him and bothered him with her questions, had ensconced herself. The woman was taken aback, and began to decline, but after having said all that was prescribed by politeness, she stood up and drank it decorously in three sips, as women do, and, with an expression of intense suffering on her face, gave back the

wineglass and bowed to Stepan Trofimovitch. He returned the bow with dignity and returned to the table with an expression of positive pride on his countenance.

All this was done on the inspiration of the moment: a second before he had no idea that he would go and treat the peasant woman.

“I know how to get on with peasants to perfection, to perfection, and I’ve always told them so,” he thought complacently, pouring out the rest of the vodka; though there was less than a glass left, it warmed and revived him, and even went a little to his head.

“Je suis malade tout à fait, mais ce n’est pas trop mauvais d’être malade.”

“Would you care to purchase?” a gentle feminine voice asked close by him.

He raised his eyes and to his surprise saw a lady—*une dame et elle en avait l’air,* somewhat over thirty, very modest in appearance, dressed not like a peasant, in a dark gown with a grey shawl on her shoulders. There was something very kindly in her face which attracted Stepan Trofimovitch immediately. She had only just come back to the cottage, where her things had been left on a bench close by the place where Stepan Trofimovitch had seated himself. Among them was a portfolio, at which he remembered he had looked with curiosity on going in, and a pack, not very large, of American leather. From this pack she took out two nicely bound books with a cross engraved on the cover, and offered them to Stepan Trofimovitch.

“*Et … mais je crois que c’est l’Evangile* … with the greatest pleasure…. Ah, now I understand…. *Vous êtes ce qu’on appelle* a gospel-woman; I’ve read more than once…. Half a rouble?”

“Thirty-five kopecks,” answered the gospel-woman. “With the greatest pleasure. *Je n’ai rien contre l’Evangile,* and I’ve been wanting to re-read it for a long time….”

The idea occurred to him at the moment that he had not read the gospel for thirty years at least, and at most had recalled some passages of it, seven years before, when reading Renan’s “Vie de Jésus.” As he had no small change he pulled out his four ten-rouble notes—all that he had. The woman of the house undertook to get change, and only then he noticed, looking round, that a good many people had come into the cottage, and that they had all been watching him for some time past, and seemed to be talking about him. They were talking too of the fire in the town, especially the owner of the cart who had only just returned from the town with the cow. They talked of arson, of the Shpigulin men.

“He said nothing to me about the fire when he brought me along, although he talked of everything,” struck Stepan Trofimovitch for some reason.

“Master, Stepan Trofimovitch, sir, is it you I see? Well, I never should have thought it!... Don’t you know me?” exclaimed a middle-aged man who looked like an old-fashioned house-serf, wearing no beard and dressed in an overcoat with a wide turn-down collar. Stepan Trofimovitch was alarmed at hearing his own name.

“Excuse me,” he muttered, “I don’t quite remember you.”

“You don’t remember me. I am Anisim, Anisim Ivanov. I used to be in the service of the late Mr. Gaganov, and many’s the time I’ve seen you, sir, with Varvara Petrovna at the late Avdotya Sergyevna’s. I used to go to you with books from her, and twice I brought you Petersburg sweets from her....”

“Why, yes, I remember you, Anisim,” said Stepan Trofimovitch, smiling. “Do you live here?”

“I live near Spasov, close to the V—— Monastery, in the service of Marta Sergyevna, Avdotya Sergyevna’s sister. Perhaps your honour remembers her; she broke her leg falling out of her carriage on her way to a ball. Now her honour lives near the monastery, and I am in her service. And now as your honour sees, I am on my way to the town to see my kinsfolk.”

“Quite so, quite so.”

“I felt so pleased when I saw you, you used to be so kind to me,” Anisim smiled delightedly. “But where are you travelling to, sir, all by yourself as it seems.... You’ve never been a journey alone, I fancy?”

Stepan Trofimovitch looked at him in alarm.

“You are going, maybe, to our parts, to Spasov?”

“Yes, I am going to Spasov. *Il me semble que tout le monde va à Spassof.*”

“You don’t say it’s to Fyodor Matveyevitch’s? They will be pleased to see you. He had such a respect for you in old days; he often speaks of you now.”

“Yes, yes, to Fyodor Matveyevitch’s.”

“To be sure, to be sure. The peasants here are wondering; they make out they met you, sir, walking on the high road. They are a foolish lot.”

“I … I … Yes, you know, Anisim, I made a wager, you know, like an Englishman, that I would go on foot and I …”

The perspiration came out on his forehead.

“To be sure, to be sure.” Anisim listened with merciless curiosity. But Stepan Trofimovitch could bear it no longer. He was so disconcerted that he was on the point of getting up and going out of the cottage. But the samovar was brought in, and at the same moment the gospel-woman, who had been out of the room, returned. With the air of a man clutching at a straw he turned to her and offered her tea. Anisim submitted and walked away.

The peasants certainly had begun to feel perplexed: “What sort of person is he? He was found walking on the high road, he says he is a teacher, he is dressed like a foreigner, and has no more sense than a little child; he answers queerly as though he had run away from someone, and he’s got money!” An idea was beginning to gain ground that information must be given to the authorities, “especially as things weren’t quite right in the town.” But Anisim set all that right in a minute. Going into the passage he explained to every one who cared to listen that Stepan Trofimovitch was not exactly a teacher but “a very learned man and busy with very learned studies, and was a landowner of the district himself, and had been living for twenty-two years with her excellency, the general’s widow, the stout Madame Stavrogin, and was by way of being the most important person in her house, and was held in the greatest respect by every one in the town. He used to lose by fifties and hundreds in an evening at the club of the nobility, and in rank he was a councillor, which was equal to a lieutenant-colonel in the army, which was next door to being a colonel. As for his having money, he had so much from the stout Madame Stavrogin that there was no reckoning it”—and so on and so on.

“Mais c’est une dame et très comme il faut,” thought Stepan Trofimovitch, as he recovered from Anisim’s attack, gazing with agreeable curiosity at his neighbour, the gospel pedlar, who was, however, drinking the tea from a saucer and nibbling at a piece of sugar. “*Ce petit morceau de sucre, ce n’est rien*…. There is something noble and independent about her, and at the same time—gentle. *Le comme il faut tout pur,* but rather in a different style.”

He soon learned from her that her name was Sofya Matveyevna Ulitin and she lived at K——, that she had a sister there, a widow; that she was a widow too, and that her husband, who was a sub-lieutenant risen from the ranks, had been killed at Sevastopol.

“But you are still so young, *vous n’avez pas trente ans*.”

“Thirty-four,” said Sofya Matveyevna, smiling.

“What, you understand French?”

“A little. I lived for four years after that in a gentleman’s family, and there I picked it up from the children.”

She told him that being left a widow at eighteen she was for some time in Sevastopol as a nurse, and had afterwards lived in various places, and now she travelled about selling the gospel.

“*Mais, mon Dieu,* wasn’t it you who had a strange adventure in our town, a very strange adventure?”

She flushed; it turned out that it had been she.

“Ces vauriens, ces malheureux,” he began in a voice quivering with indignation; miserable and hateful recollections stirred painfully in his heart. For a minute he seemed to sink into oblivion.

“Bah, but she’s gone away again,” he thought, with a start, noticing that she was not by his side. “She keeps going out and is busy about something; I notice that she seems upset too.... *Bah, je deviens egoiste!*”

He raised his eyes and saw Anisim again, but this time in the most menacing surroundings. The whole cottage was full of peasants, and it was evidently Anisim who had brought them all in. Among them were the master of the house, and the peasant with the cow, two other peasants (they turned out to be cab-drivers), another little man, half drunk, dressed like a peasant but clean-shaven, who seemed like a townsman ruined by drink and talked more than any of them. And they were all discussing him, Stepan Trofimovitch. The peasant with the cow insisted on his point that to go round by the lake would be thirty-five miles out of the way, and that he certainly must go by steamer. The half-drunken man and the man of the house warmly retorted:

“Seeing that, though of course it will be nearer for his honour on the steamer over the lake; that’s true enough, but maybe according to present arrangements the steamer doesn’t go there, brother.”

“It does go, it does, it will go for another week,” cried Anisim, more excited than any of them.

“That’s true enough, but it doesn’t arrive punctually, seeing it’s late in the season, and sometimes it’ll stay three days together at Ustyevo.”

“It’ll be there to-morrow at two o’clock punctually. You’ll be at Spasov punctually by the evening,” cried Anisim, eager to do his best for Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Mais qu’est-ce qu’il a cet homme,” thought Stepan Trofimovitch, trembling and waiting in terror for what was in store for him.

The cab-drivers, too, came forward and began bargaining with him; they asked three roubles to Ustyevo. The others shouted that that was not too much, that that was the fare, and that they had been driving from here to Ustyevo all the summer for that fare.

“But ... it’s nice here too.... And I don’t want ...” Stepan Trofimovitch mumbled in protest.

“Nice it is, sir, you are right there, it’s wonderfully nice at Spasov now and Fyodor Matveyevitch will be so pleased to see you.”

“*Mon Dieu, mes amis,* all this is such a surprise to me.”

At last Sofya Matveyevna came back. But she sat down on the bench looking dejected and mournful.

“I can’t get to Spasov!” she said to the woman of the cottage.

“Why, you are bound to Spasov, too, then?” cried Stepan Trofimovitch, starting.

It appeared that a lady had the day before told her to wait at Hatovo and had promised to take her to Spasov, and now this lady had not turned up after all.

“What am I to do now?” repeated Sofya Matveyevna.

“*Mais, ma chère et nouvelle amie,* I can take you just as well as the lady to that village, whatever it is, to which I’ve hired horses, and to-morrow—well, to-morrow, we’ll go on together to Spasov.”

“Why, are you going to Spasov too?”

“*Mais que faire, et je suis enchanté!* I shall take you with the greatest pleasure; you see they want to take me, I’ve engaged them already. Which of you did I engage?” Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly felt an intense desire to go to Spasov.

Within a quarter of an hour they were getting into a covered trap, he very lively and quite satisfied, she with her pack beside him, with a grateful smile on her face. Anisim helped them in.

“A good journey to you, sir,” said he, bustling officiously round the trap, “it has been a treat to see you.”

“Good-bye, good-bye, my friend, good-bye.”

“You’ll see Fyodor Matveyevitch, sir ...”

“Yes, my friend, yes ... Fyodor Petrovitch ... only good-bye.”

II

“You see, my friend ... you’ll allow me to call myself your friend, n’est-ce pas?” Stepan Trofimovitch began hurriedly as soon as the trap started. “You see I ... *J’aime le peuple, c’est indispensable, mais il me semble que je ne m’avais jamais vu de près. Stasie ... cela va sans dire qu’elle est aussi du peuple, mais le vrai peuple,* that is, the real ones, who are on the high road, it seems to me they care for nothing, but where exactly I am going ... But let bygones be bygones. I fancy I am talking at random, but I believe it’s from being flustered.”

“You don’t seem quite well.” Sofya Matveyevna watched him keenly though respectfully.

“No, no, I must only wrap myself up, besides there’s a fresh wind, very fresh in fact, but ... let us forget that. That’s not what I really meant to say. *Chère et incomparable amie,* I feel that I am almost happy, and it’s your doing. Happiness is not good for me for it makes me rush to forgive all my enemies at once....”

“Why, that’s a very good thing, sir.”

“Not always, *chère innocente. L’Evangile ... voyez-vous, désormais nous prêcherons ensemble* and I will gladly sell your beautiful little books. Yes, I feel that that perhaps is an idea, *quelque chose de très nouveau dans ce genre.* The peasants are religious, *c’est admis,* but they don’t yet know the gospel. I will expound it to them.... By verbal explanation one might correct the mistakes in that remarkable book, which I am of course prepared to treat with the utmost respect. I will be of service even on the high road. I’ve always been of use, I always told *them* so *et à cette chère ingrate*.... Oh, we will forgive, we will forgive, first of all we will forgive all and always.... We will hope that we too shall be forgiven. Yes, for all, every one of us, have wronged one another, all are guilty!”

“That’s a very good saying, I think, sir.”

“Yes, yes.... I feel that I am speaking well. I shall speak to them very well, but what was the chief thing I meant to say? I keep losing the thread and forgetting.... Will you allow

me to remain with you? I feel that the look in your eyes and ... I am surprised in fact at your manners. You are simple-hearted, you call me 'sir,' and turn your cup upside down on your saucer ... and that horrid lump of sugar; but there's something charming about you, and I see from your features.... Oh, don't blush and don't be afraid of me as a man. *Chère et incomparable, pour moi une femme c'est tout.* I can't live without a woman, but only at her side, only at her side ... I am awfully muddled, awfully. I can't remember what I meant to say. Oh, blessed is he to whom God always sends a woman and ... and I fancy, indeed, that I am in a sort of ecstasy. There's a lofty idea in the open road too! That's what I meant to say, that's it—about the idea. Now I've remembered it, but I kept losing it before. And why have they taken us farther. It was nice there too, but here—*cela devien trop froid*. *A propos, j'ai en tout quarante roubles et voilà cet argent,* take it, take it, I can't take care of it, I shall lose it or it will be taken away from me.... I seem to be sleepy, I've a giddiness in my head. Yes, I am giddy, I am giddy, I am giddy. Oh, how kind you are, what's that you are wrapping me up in?"

"You are certainly in a regular fever and I've covered you with my rug; only about the money, I'd rather."

"Oh, for God's sake, *n'en parlons plus parce que cela me fait mal.* Oh, how kind you are!"

He ceased speaking, and with strange suddenness dropped into a feverish shivery sleep. The road by which they drove the twelve miles was not a smooth one, and their carriage jolted cruelly. Stepan Trofimovitch woke up frequently, quickly raised his head from the little pillow which Sofya Matveyevna had slipped under it, clutched her by the hand and asked "Are you here?" as though he were afraid she had left him. He told her, too, that he had dreamed of gaping jaws full of teeth, and that he had very much disliked it. Sofya Matveyevna was in great anxiety about him.

They were driven straight up to a large cottage with a frontage of four windows and other rooms in the yard. Stepan Trofimovitch waked up, hurriedly went in and walked straight into the second room, which was the largest and best in the house. An expression of fussiness came into his sleepy face. He spoke at once to the landlady, a tall, thick-set woman of forty with very dark hair and a slight moustache, and explained that he required the whole room for himself, and that the door was to be shut and no one else was to be admitted, "*parce que nous avons à parler. Oui, j'ai beaucoup à vous dire, chère amie.* I'll pay you, I'll pay you," he said with a wave of dismissal to the landlady.

Though he was in a hurry, he seemed to articulate with difficulty. The landlady listened grimly, and was silent in token of consent, but there was a feeling of something

menacing about her silence. He did not notice this, and hurriedly (he was in a terrible hurry) insisted on her going away and bringing them their dinner as quickly as possible, without a moment's delay.

At that point the moustached woman could contain herself no longer.

"This is not an inn, sir; we don't provide dinners for travellers. We can boil you some crayfish or set the samovar, but we've nothing more. There won't be fresh fish till to-morrow."

But Stepan Trofimovitch waved his hands, repeating with wrathful impatience: "I'll pay, only make haste, make haste."

They settled on fish, soup, and roast fowl; the landlady declared that fowl was not to be procured in the whole village; she agreed, however, to go in search of one, but with the air of doing him an immense favour.

As soon as she had gone Stepan Trofimovitch instantly sat down on the sofa and made Sofya Matveyevna sit down beside him. There were several arm-chairs as well as a sofa in the room, but they were of a most uninviting appearance. The room was rather a large one, with a corner, in which there was a bed, partitioned off. It was covered with old and tattered yellow paper, and had horrible lithographs of mythological subjects on the walls; in the corner facing the door there was a long row of painted ikons and several sets of brass ones. The whole room with its strangely ill-assorted furniture was an unattractive mixture of the town element and of peasant traditions. But he did not even glance at it all, nor look out of the window at the vast lake, the edge of which was only seventy feet from the cottage.

"At last we are by ourselves and we will admit no one! I want to tell you everything, everything from the very beginning."

Sofya Matveyevna checked him with great uneasiness.

"Are you aware, Stepan Trofimovitch?..."

"Comment, vous savez déjà mon nom?" He smiled with delight.

"I heard it this morning from Anisim Ivanovitch when you were talking to him. But I venture to tell you for my part ..."

And she whispered hurriedly to him, looking nervously at the closed door for fear anyone should overhear—that here in this village, it was dreadful. That though all the peasants were fishermen, they made their living chiefly by charging travellers every summer whatever they thought fit. The village was not on the high road but an out-of-

the-way one, and people only called there because the steamers stopped there, and that when the steamer did not call—and if the weather was in the least unfavourable, it would not—then numbers of travellers would be waiting there for several days, and all the cottages in the village would be occupied, and that was just the villagers' opportunity, for they charged three times its value for everything—and their landlord here was proud and stuck up because he was, for these parts, very rich; he had a net which had cost a thousand roubles.

Stepan Trofimovitch looked almost reproachfully at Sofya Matveyevna's extremely excited face, and several times he made a motion to stop her. But she persisted and said all she had to say: she said she had been there before already in the summer "with a very genteel lady from the town," and stayed there too for two whole days till the steamer came, and what they had to put up with did not bear thinking of. "Here, Stepan Trofimovitch, you've been pleased to ask for this room for yourself alone.... I only speak to warn you.... In the other room there are travellers already. An elderly man and a young man and a lady with children, and by to-morrow before two o'clock the whole house will be filled up, for since the steamer hasn't been here for two days it will be sure to come to-morrow. So for a room apart and for ordering dinner, and for putting out the other travellers, they'll charge you a price unheard of even in the capital...."

But he was in distress, in real distress. "*Assez, mon enfant,* I beseech you, *nous avons notre argent—et après, le bon Dieu*. And I am surprised that, with the loftiness of your ideas, you ... *Assez, assez, vous me tourmentez,"* he articulated hysterically, "we have all our future before us, and you ... you fill me with alarm for the future."

He proceeded at once to unfold his whole story with such haste that at first it was difficult to understand him. It went on for a long time. The soup was served, the fowl was brought in, followed at last by the samovar, and still he talked on. He told it somewhat strangely and hysterically, and indeed he was ill. It was a sudden, extreme effort of his intellectual faculties, which was bound in his overstrained condition, of course—Sofya Matveyevna foresaw it with distress all the time he was talking—to result immediately afterwards in extreme exhaustion. He began his story almost with his childhood, when, "with fresh heart, he ran about the meadows; it was an hour before he reached his two marriages and his life in Berlin. I dare not laugh, however. It really was for him a matter of the utmost importance, and to adopt the modern jargon, almost a question of struggling for existence." He saw before him the woman whom he had already elected to share his new life, and was in haste to consecrate her, so to speak. His genius must not be hidden from her.... Perhaps he had formed a very exaggerated estimate of Sofya Matveyevna, but he had already chosen her. He could

not exist without a woman. He saw clearly from her face that she hardly understood him, and could not grasp even the most essential part. "*Ce n'est rien, nous attendrons,* and meanwhile she can feel it intuitively.... My friend, I need nothing but your heart!" he exclaimed, interrupting his narrative, "and that sweet enchanting look with which you are gazing at me now. Oh, don't blush! I've told you already ..." The poor woman who had fallen into his hands found much that was obscure, especially when his autobiography almost passed into a complete dissertation on the fact that no one had been ever able to understand Stepan Trofimovitch, and that "men of genius are wasted in Russia." It was all "so very intellectual," she reported afterwards dejectedly. She listened in evident misery, rather round-eyed. When Stepan Trofimovitch fell into a humorous vein and threw off witty sarcasms at the expense of our advanced and governing classes, she twice made grievous efforts to laugh in response to his laughter, but the result was worse than tears, so that Stepan Trofimovitch was at last embarrassed by it himself and attacked "the nihilists and modern people" with all the greater wrath and zest. At this point he simply alarmed her, and it was not until he began upon the romance of his life that she felt some slight relief, though that too was deceptive. A woman is always a woman even if she is a nun. She smiled, shook her head and then blushed crimson and dropped her eyes, which roused Stepan Trofimovitch to absolute ecstasy and inspiration so much that he began fibbing freely. Varvara Petrovna appeared in his story as an enchanting brunette (who had been the rage of Petersburg and many European capitals) and her husband "had been struck down on the field of Sevastopol" simply because he had felt unworthy of her love, and had yielded her to his rival, that is, Stepan Trofimovitch.... "Don't be shocked, my gentle one, my Christian," he exclaimed to Sofya Matveyevna, almost believing himself in all that he was telling, "it was something so lofty, so subtle, that we never spoke of it to one another all our lives." As the story went on, the cause of this position of affairs appeared to be a blonde lady (if not Darya Pavlovna I don't know of whom Stepan Trofimovitch could have been thinking), this blonde owed everything to the brunette, and had grown up in her house, being a distant relation. The brunette observing at last the love of the blonde girl to Stepan Trofimovitch, kept her feelings locked up in her heart. The blonde girl, noticing on her part the love of the brunette to Stepan Trofimovitch, also locked her feelings in her own heart. And all three, pining with mutual magnanimity, kept silent in this way for twenty years, locking their feelings in their hearts. "Oh, what a passion that was, what a passion that was!" he exclaimed with a stifled sob of genuine ecstasy. "I saw the full blooming of her beauty" (of the brunette's, that is), "I saw daily with an ache in my heart how she passed by me as though ashamed she was so fair" (once he said "ashamed she was

so fat"). At last he had run away, casting off all this feverish dream of twenty years—*vingt ans*—and now here he was on the high road....

Then in a sort of delirium be began explaining to Sofya Matveyevna the significance of their meeting that day, "so chance an encounter and so fateful for all eternity." Sofya Matveyevna got up from the sofa in terrible confusion at last. He had positively made an attempt to drop on his knees before her, which made her cry. It was beginning to get dark. They had been for some hours shut up in the room....

"No, you'd better let me go into the other room," she faltered, "or else there's no knowing what people may think...."

She tore herself away at last; he let her go, promising her to go to bed at once. As they parted he complained that he had a bad headache. Sofya Matveyevna had on entering the cottage left her bag and things in the first room, meaning to spend the night with the people of the house; but she got no rest.

In the night Stepan Trofimovitch was attacked by the malady with which I and all his friends were so familiar—the summer cholera, which was always the outcome of any nervous strain or moral shock with him. Poor Sofya Matveyevna did not sleep all night. As in waiting on the invalid she was obliged pretty often to go in and out of the cottage through the landlady's room, the latter, as well as the travellers who were sleeping there, grumbled and even began swearing when towards morning she set about preparing the samovar. Stepan Trofimovitch was half unconscious all through the attack; at times he had a vision of the samovar being set, of someone giving him something to drink (raspberry tea), and putting something warm to his stomach and his chest. But he felt almost every instant that she was here, beside him; that it was she going out and coming in, lifting him off the bed and settling him in it again. Towards three o'clock in the morning he began to be easier; he sat up, put his legs out of bed and thinking of nothing he fell on the floor at her feet. This was a very different matter from the kneeling of the evening; he simply bowed down at her feet and kissed the hem of her dress.

"Don't, sir, I am not worth it," she faltered, trying to get him back on to the bed.

"My saviour," he cried, clasping his hands reverently before her. "*Vous êtes noble comme une marquise!* I—I am a wretch. Oh, I've been dishonest all my life...."

"Calm yourself!" Sofya Matveyevna implored him.

"It was all lies that I told you this evening—to glorify myself, to make it splendid, from pure wantonness—all, all, every word, oh, I am a wretch, I am a wretch!"

The first attack was succeeded in this way by a second—an attack of hysterical remorse. I have mentioned these attacks already when I described his letters to Varvara Petrovna. He suddenly recalled Lise and their meeting the previous morning. “It was so awful, and there must have been some disaster and I didn’t ask, didn’t find out! I thought only of myself. Oh, what’s the matter with her? Do you know what’s the matter with her?” he besought Sofya Matveyevna.

Then he swore that “he would never change,” that he would go back to her (that is, Varvara Petrovna). “We” (that is, he and Sofya Matveyevna) “will go to her steps every day when she is getting into her carriage for her morning drive, and we will watch her in secret.... Oh, I wish her to smite me on the other cheek; it’s a joy to wish it! I shall turn her my other cheek *comme dans votre livre!* Only now for the first time I understand what is meant by ... turning the other cheek. I never understood before!”

The two days that followed were among the most terrible in Sofya Matveyevna’s life; she remembers them with a shudder to this day. Stepan Trofimovitch became so seriously ill that he could not go on board the steamer, which on this occasion arrived punctually at two o’clock in the afternoon. She could not bring herself to leave him alone, so she did not leave for Spasov either. From her account he was positively delighted at the steamer’s going without him.

“Well, that’s a good thing, that’s capital!” he muttered in his bed. “I’ve been afraid all the time that we should go. Here it’s so nice, better than anywhere.... You won’t leave me? Oh, you have not left me!”

It was by no means so nice “here”, however. He did not care to hear of her difficulties; his head was full of fancies and nothing else. He looked upon his illness as something transitory, a trifling ailment, and did not think about it at all; he thought of nothing but how they would go and sell “these books.” He asked her to read him the gospel.

“I haven’t read it for a long time ... in the original. Some one may ask me about it and I shall make a mistake; I ought to prepare myself after all.”

She sat down beside him and opened the book.

“You read beautifully,” he interrupted her after the first line. “I see, I see I was not mistaken,” he added obscurely but ecstatically. He was, in fact, in a continual state of enthusiasm. She read the Sermon on the Mount.

“*Assez, assez, mon enfant,* enough.... Don’t you think that that is enough?”

And he closed his eyes helplessly. He was very weak, but had not yet lost consciousness. Sofya Matveyevna was getting up, thinking that he wanted to sleep. But he stopped her.

“My friend, I’ve been telling lies all my life. Even when I told the truth I never spoke for the sake of the truth, but always for my own sake. I knew it before, but I only see it now.... Oh, where are those friends whom I have insulted with my friendship all my life? And all, all! *Savez-vous* ... perhaps I am telling lies now; no doubt I am telling lies now. The worst of it is that I believe myself when I am lying. The hardest thing in life is to live without telling lies ... and without believing in one’s lies. Yes, yes, that’s just it.... But wait a bit, that can all come afterwards.... We’ll be together, together,” he added enthusiastically.

“Stepan Trofimovitch,” Sofya Matveyevna asked timidly, “hadn’t I better send to the town for the doctor?”

He was tremendously taken aback.

“What for? *Est-ce que je suis si malade? Mais rien de sérieux.* What need have we of outsiders? They may find, besides—and what will happen then? No, no, no outsiders and we’ll be together.”

“Do you know,” he said after a pause, “read me something more, just the first thing you come across.”

Sofya Matveyevna opened the Testament and began reading.

“Wherever it opens, wherever it happens to open,” he repeated.

“‘And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans ...’”

“What’s that? What is it? Where is that from?”

“It’s from the Revelation.”

“*Oh, je m’en souviens, oui, l’Apocalypse. Lisez, lisez,* I am trying our future fortunes by the book. I want to know what has turned up. Read on from there....”

“‘And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

“‘I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

“‘So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

“‘Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’”

“That too ... and that’s in your book too!” he exclaimed, with flashing eyes and raising his head from the pillow. “I never knew that grand passage! You hear, better be cold, better be cold than lukewarm, than only lukewarm. Oh, I’ll prove it! Only don’t leave me, don’t leave me alone! We’ll prove it, we’ll prove it!”

“I won’t leave you, Stepan Trofimovitch. I’ll never leave you!” She took his hand, pressed it in both of hers, and laid it against her heart, looking at him with tears in her eyes. (“I felt very sorry for him at that moment,” she said, describing it afterwards.)

His lips twitched convulsively.

“But, Stepan Trofimovitch, what are we to do though? Oughtn’t we to let some of your friends know, or perhaps your relations?”

But at that he was so dismayed that she was very sorry that she had spoken of it again. Trembling and shaking, he besought her to fetch no one, not to do anything. He kept insisting, “No one, no one! We’ll be alone, by ourselves, alone, *nous partirons ensemble*.”

Another difficulty was that the people of the house too began to be uneasy; they grumbled, and kept pestering Sofya Matveyevna. She paid them and managed to let them see her money. This softened them for the time, but the man insisted on seeing Stepan Trofimovitch’s “papers.” The invalid pointed with a supercilious smile to his little bag. Sofya Matveyevna found in it the certificate of his having resigned his post at the university, or something of the kind, which had served him as a passport all his life. The man persisted, and said that “he must be taken somewhere, because their house wasn’t a hospital, and if he were to die there might be a bother. We should have no end of trouble.” Sofya Matveyevna tried to speak to him of the doctor, but it appeared that sending to the town would cost so much that she had to give up all idea of the doctor. She returned in distress to her invalid. Stepan Trofimovitch was getting weaker and weaker.

“Now read me another passage.... About the pigs,” he said suddenly.

“What?” asked Sofya Matveyevna, very much alarmed.

“About the pigs ... that’s there too ... *ces cochons*. I remember the devils entered into swine and they all were drowned. You must read me that; I’ll tell you why afterwards. I want to remember it word for word. I want it word for word.”

Sofya Matveyevna knew the gospel well and at once found the passage in St. Luke which I have chosen as the motto of my record. I quote it here again:

"'And there was there one herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

"'Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

"'When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

"'Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.'"

"My friend," said Stepan Trofimovitch in great excitement "*savez-vous,* that wonderful and ... extraordinary passage has been a stumbling-block to me all my life ... *dans ce livre*.... so much so that I remembered those verses from childhood. Now an idea has occurred to me; *une comparaison*. A great number of ideas keep coming into my mind now. You see, that's exactly like our Russia, those devils that come out of the sick man and enter into the swine. They are all the sores, all the foul contagions, all the impurities, all the devils great and small that have multiplied in that great invalid, our beloved Russia, in the course of ages and ages. *Oui, cette Russie que j'aimais toujours*. But a great idea and a great Will will encompass it from on high, as with that lunatic possessed of devils ... and all those devils will come forth, all the impurity, all the rottenness that was putrefying on the surface ... and they will beg of themselves to enter into swine; and indeed maybe they have entered into them already! They are we, we and those ... and Petrusha and *les autres avec lui* ... and I perhaps at the head of them, and we shall cast ourselves down, possessed and raving, from the rocks into the sea, and we shall all be drowned—and a good thing too, for that is all we are fit for. But the sick man will be healed and 'will sit at the feet of Jesus,' and all will look upon him with astonishment.... My dear, *vous comprendrez après,* but now it excites me very much.... *Vous comprendrez après. Nous comprendrons ensemble.*"

He sank into delirium and at last lost consciousness. So it went on all the following day. Sofya Matveyevna sat beside him, crying. She scarcely slept at all for three nights, and avoided seeing the people of the house, who were, she felt, beginning to take some steps. Deliverance only came on the third day. In the morning Stepan Trofimovitch returned to consciousness, recognised her, and held out his hand to her. She crossed herself hopefully. He wanted to look out of the window. *"Tiens, un*

lac!" he said. "Good heavens, I had not seen it before!..." At that moment there was the rumble of a carriage at the cottage door and a great hubbub in the house followed.

III

It was Varvara Petrovna herself. She had arrived, with Darya Pavlovna, in a closed carriage drawn by four horses, with two footmen. The marvel had happened in the simplest way: Anisim, dying of curiosity, went to Varvara Petrovna's the day after he reached the town and gossiped to the servants, telling them he had met Stepan Trofimovitch alone in a village, that the latter had been seen by peasants walking by himself on the high road, and that he had set off for Spasov by way of Ustyevo accompanied by Sofya Matveyevna. As Varvara Petrovna was, for her part, in terrible anxiety and had done everything she could to find her fugitive friend, she was at once told about Anisim. When she had heard his story, especially the details of the departure for Ustyevo in a cart in the company of some Sofya Matveyevna, she instantly got ready and set off post-haste for Ustyevo herself.

Her stern and peremptory voice resounded through the cottage; even the landlord and his wife were intimidated. She had only stopped to question them and make inquiries, being persuaded that Stepan Trofimovitch must have reached Spasov long before. Learning that he was still here and ill, she entered the cottage in great agitation.

"Well, where is he? Ah, that's you!" she cried, seeing Sofya Matveyevna, who appeared at that very instant in the doorway of the next room. "I can guess from your shameless face that it's you. Go away, you vile hussy! Don't let me find a trace of her in the house! Turn her out, or else, my girl, I'll get you locked up for good. Keep her safe for a time in another house. She's been in prison once already in the town; she can go back there again. And you, my good man, don't dare to let anyone in while I am here, I beg of you. I am Madame Stavrogin, and I'll take the whole house. As for you, my dear, you'll have to give me a full account of it all."

The familiar sounds overwhelmed Stepan Trofimovitch. He began to tremble. But she had already stepped behind the screen. With flashing eyes she drew up a chair with her foot, and, sinking back in it, she shouted to Dasha:

"Go away for a time! Stay in the other room. Why are you so inquisitive? And shut the door properly after you."

For some time she gazed in silence with a sort of predatory look into his frightened face.

“Well, how are you getting on, Stepan Trofimovitch? So you’ve been enjoying yourself?” broke from her with ferocious irony.

“Chère,” Stepan Trofimovitch faltered, not knowing what he was saying, “I’ve learnt to know real life in Russia … *et je prêcherai l’Evangile.*”

“Oh, shameless, ungrateful man!” she wailed suddenly, clasping her hands. “As though you had not disgraced me enough, you’ve taken up with … oh, you shameless old reprobate!”

“Chère …” His voice failed him and he could not articulate a syllable but simply gazed with eyes wide with horror.

“Who is she?”

“*C’est un ange; c’était plus qu’un ange pour moi.* She’s been all night … Oh, don’t shout, don’t frighten her, *chère, chère* …”

With a loud noise, Varvara Petrovna pushed back her chair, uttering a loud cry of alarm.

“Water, water!”

Though he returned to consciousness, she was still shaking with terror, and, with pale cheeks, looked at his distorted face. It was only then, for the first time, that she guessed the seriousness of his illness.

“Darya,” she whispered suddenly to Darya Pavlovna, “send at once for the doctor, for Salzfish; let Yegorytch go at once. Let him hire horses here and get another carriage from the town. He must be here by night.”

Dasha flew to do her bidding. Stepan Trofimovitch still gazed at her with the same wide-open, frightened eyes; his blanched lips quivered.

“Wait a bit, Stepan Trofimovitch, wait a bit, my dear!” she said, coaxing him like a child. “There, there, wait a bit! Darya will come back and … My goodness, the landlady, the landlady, you come, anyway, my good woman!”

In her impatience she ran herself to the landlady.

“Fetch that woman back at once, this minute. Bring her back, bring her back!”

Fortunately Sofya Matveyevna had not yet had time to get away and was only just going out of the gate with her pack and her bag. She was brought back. She was so panic-stricken that she was trembling in every limb. Varvara Petrovna pounced on her

like a hawk on a chicken, seized her by the hand and dragged her impulsively to Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Here, here she is, then. I’ve not eaten her. You thought I’d eaten her.”

Stepan Trofimovitch clutched Varvara Petrovna’s hand, raised it to his eyes, and burst into tears, sobbing violently and convulsively.

“There, calm yourself, there, there, my dear, there, poor dear man! Ach, mercy on us! Calm yourself, will you?” she shouted frantically. “Oh, you bane of my life!”

“My dear,” Stepan Trofimovitch murmured at last, addressing Sofya Matveyevna, “stay out there, my dear, I want to say something here....”

Sofya Matveyevna hurried out at once.

“Chérie ... chérie ...” he gasped.

“Don’t talk for a bit, Stepan Trofimovitch, wait a little till you’ve rested. Here’s some water. Do wait, will you!”

She sat down on the chair again. Stepan Trofimovitch held her hand tight. For a long while she would not allow him to speak. He raised her hand to his lips and fell to kissing it. She set her teeth and looked away into the corner of the room.

“Je vous aimais,” broke from him at last. She had never heard such words from him, uttered in such a voice.

“H’m!” she growled in response.

“Je vous aimais toute ma vie ... vingt ans!”

She remained silent for two or three minutes.

“And when you were getting yourself up for Dasha you sprinkled yourself with scent,” she said suddenly, in a terrible whisper.

Stepan Trofimovitch was dumbfounded.

“You put on a new tie ...”

Again silence for two minutes.

“Do you remember the cigar?”

“My friend,” he faltered, overcome with horror.

“That cigar at the window in the evening ... the moon was shining ... after the arbour ... at Skvoreshniki? Do you remember, do you remember?” She jumped up from her place, seized his pillow by the corners and shook it with his head on it. “Do you remember, you worthless, worthless, ignoble, cowardly, worthless man, always worthless!” she hissed in her furious whisper, restraining herself from speaking loudly. At last she left him and sank on the chair, covering her face with her hands. “Enough!” she snapped out, drawing herself up. “Twenty years have passed, there’s no calling them back. I am a fool too.”

“Je vous aimais.” He clasped his hands again.

“Why do you keep on with your *aimais* and *aimais*? Enough!” she cried, leaping up again. “And if you don’t go to sleep at once I’ll ... You need rest; go to sleep, go to sleep at once, shut your eyes. Ach, mercy on us, perhaps he wants some lunch! What do you eat? What does he eat? Ach, mercy on us! Where is that woman? Where is she?”

There was a general bustle again. But Stepan Trofimovitch faltered in a weak voice that he really would like to go to sleep *une heure,* and then *un bouillon, un thé.... enfin il est si heureux*. He lay back and really did seem to go to sleep (he probably pretended to). Varvara Petrovna waited a little, and stole out on tiptoe from behind the partition.

She settled herself in the landlady’s room, turned out the landlady and her husband, and told Dasha to bring her *that* woman. There followed an examination in earnest.

“Tell me all about it, my good girl. Sit down beside me; that’s right. Well?”

“I met Stepan Trofimovitch ...”

“Stay, hold your tongue! I warn you that if you tell lies or conceal anything, I’ll ferret it out. Well?”

“Stepan Trofimovitch and I ... as soon as I came to Hatovo ...” Sofya Matveyevna began almost breathlessly.

“Stay, hold your tongue, wait a bit! Why do you gabble like that? To begin with, what sort of creature are you?”

Sofya Matveyevna told her after a fashion, giving a very brief account of herself, however, beginning with Sevastopol. Varvara Petrovna listened in silence, sitting up erect in her chair, looking sternly straight into the speaker’s eyes.

“Why are you so frightened? Why do you look at the ground? I like people who look me straight in the face and hold their own with me. Go on.”

She told of their meeting, of her books, of how Stepan Trofimovitch had regaled the peasant woman with vodka … “That’s right, that’s right, don’t leave out the slightest detail,” Varvara Petrovna encouraged her.

At last she described how they had set off, and how Stepan Trofimovitch had gone on talking, “really ill by that time,” and here had given an account of his life from the very beginning, talking for some hours. “Tell me about his life.”

Sofya Matveyevna suddenly stopped and was completely nonplussed.

“I can’t tell you anything about that, madam,” she brought out, almost crying; “besides, I could hardly understand a word of it.”

“Nonsense! You must have understood something.”

“He told a long time about a distinguished lady with black hair.” Sofya Matveyevna flushed terribly though she noticed Varvara Petrovna’s fair hair and her complete dissimilarity with the “brunette” of the story.

“Black-haired? What exactly? Come, speak!”

“How this grand lady was deeply in love with his honour all her life long and for twenty years, but never dared to speak, and was shamefaced before him because she was a very stout lady….”

“The fool!” Varvara Petrovna rapped out thoughtfully but resolutely.

Sofya Matveyevna was in tears by now.

“I don’t know how to tell any of it properly, madam, because I was in a great fright over his honour; and I couldn’t understand, as he is such an intellectual gentleman.”

“It’s not for a goose like you to judge of his intellect. Did he offer you his hand?”

The speaker trembled.

“Did he fall in love with you? Speak! Did he offer you his hand?” Varvara Petrovna shouted peremptorily.

“That was pretty much how it was,” she murmured tearfully. “But I took it all to mean nothing, because of his illness,” she added firmly, raising her eyes.

“What is your name?”

“Sofya Matveyevna, madam.”

“Well, then, let me tell you, Sofya Matveyevna, that he is a wretched and worthless little man…. Good Lord! Do you look upon me as a wicked woman?”

Sofya Matveyevna gazed open-eyed.

“A wicked woman, a tyrant? Who has ruined his life?”

“How can that be when you are crying yourself, madam?”

Varvara Petrovna actually had tears in her eyes.

“Well, sit down, sit down, don’t be frightened. Look me straight in the face again. Why are you blushing? Dasha, come here. Look at her. What do you think of her? Her heart is pure….”

And to the amazement and perhaps still greater alarm of Sofya Matveyevna, she suddenly patted her on the cheek.

“It’s only a pity she is a fool. Too great a fool for her age. That’s all right, my dear, I’ll look after you. I see that it’s all nonsense. Stay near here for the time. A room shall be taken for you and you shall have food and everything else from me … till I ask for you.”

Sofya Matveyevna stammered in alarm that she must hurry on.

“You’ve no need to hurry. I’ll buy all your books, and meantime you stay here. Hold your tongue; don’t make excuses. If I hadn’t come you would have stayed with him all the same, wouldn’t you?”

“I wouldn’t have left him on any account,” Sofya Matveyevna brought out softly and firmly, wiping her tears.

It was late at night when Doctor Salzfish was brought. He was a very respectable old man and a practitioner of fairly wide experience who had recently lost his post in the service in consequence of some quarrel on a point of honour with his superiors. Varvara Petrovna instantly and actively took him under her protection. He examined the patient attentively, questioned him, and cautiously pronounced to Varvara Petrovna that “the sufferer’s” condition was highly dubious in consequence of complications, and that they must be prepared “even for the worst.” Varvara Petrovna, who had during twenty years got accustomed to expecting nothing serious or decisive to come from Stepan Trofimovitch, was deeply moved and even turned pale. “Is there really no hope?”

“Can there ever be said to be absolutely no hope? But …” She did not go to bed all night, and felt that the morning would never come. As soon as the patient opened his

eyes and returned to consciousness (he was conscious all the time, however, though he was growing weaker every hour), she went up to him with a very resolute air.

“Stepan Trofimovitch, one must be prepared for anything. I’ve sent for a priest. You must do what is right....”

Knowing his convictions, she was terribly afraid of his refusing. He looked at her with surprise.

“Nonsense, nonsense!” she vociferated, thinking he was already refusing. “This is no time for whims. You have played the fool enough.”

“But ... am I really so ill, then?”

He agreed thoughtfully. And indeed I was much surprised to learn from Varvara Petrovna afterwards that he showed no fear of death at all. Possibly it was that he simply did not believe it, and still looked upon his illness as a trifling one.

He confessed and took the sacrament very readily. Every one, Sofya Matveyevna, and even the servants, came to congratulate him on taking the sacrament. They were all moved to tears looking at his sunken and exhausted face and his blanched and quivering lips.

“*Oui, mes amis,* and I only wonder that you ... take so much trouble. I shall most likely get up to-morrow, and we will ... set off.... *Toute cette cérémonie* ... for which, of course, I feel every proper respect ... was ...”

“I beg you, father, to remain with the invalid,” said Varvara Petrovna hurriedly, stopping the priest, who had already taken off his vestments. “As soon as tea has been handed, I beg you to begin to speak of religion, to support his faith.”

The priest spoke; every one was standing or sitting round the sick-bed.

“In our sinful days,” the priest began smoothly, with a cup of tea in his hand, “faith in the Most High is the sole refuge of the race of man in all the trials and tribulations of life, as well as its hope for that eternal bliss promised to the righteous.”

Stepan Trofimovitch seemed to revive, a subtle smile strayed on his lips.

“Mon père, je vous remercie et vous êtes bien bon, mais ...”

“No *mais* about it, no *mais* at all!” exclaimed Varvara Petrovna, bounding up from her chair. “Father,” she said, addressing the priest, “he is a man who ... he is a man who ... You will have to confess him again in another hour! That’s the sort of man he is.”

Stepan Trofimovitch smiled faintly.

“My friends,” he said, “God is necessary to me, if only because He is the only being whom one can love eternally.”

Whether he was really converted, or whether the stately ceremony of the administration of the sacrament had impressed him and stirred the artistic responsiveness of his temperament or not, he firmly and, I am told, with great feeling uttered some words which were in flat contradiction with many of his former convictions.

“My immortality is necessary if only because God will not be guilty of injustice and extinguish altogether the flame of love for Him once kindled in my heart. And what is more precious than love? Love is higher than existence, love is the crown of existence; and how is it possible that existence should not be under its dominance? If I have once loved Him and rejoiced in my love, is it possible that He should extinguish me and my joy and bring me to nothingness again? If there is a God, then I am immortal. *Voilà ma profession de foi*.”

“There is a God, Stepan Trofimovitch, I assure you there is,” Varvara Petrovna implored him. “Give it up, drop all your foolishness for once in your life!” (I think she had not quite understood his *profession de foi*.)

“My friend,” he said, growing more and more animated, though his voice broke frequently, “as soon as I understood ... that turning of the cheek, I ... understood something else as well. *J’ai menti toute ma vie,* all my life, all! I should like ... but that will do to-morrow.... To-morrow we will all set out.”

Varvara Petrovna burst into tears. He was looking about for someone.

“Here she is, she is here!” She seized Sofya Matveyevna by the hand and led her to him. He smiled tenderly.

“Oh, I should dearly like to live again!” he exclaimed with an extraordinary rush of energy. “Every minute, every instant of life ought to be a blessing to man ... they ought to be, they certainly ought to be! It’s the duty of man to make it so; that’s the law of his nature, which always exists even if hidden.... Oh, I wish I could see Petrusha ... and all of them ... Shatov ...”

I may remark that as yet no one had heard of Shatov’s fate—not Varvara Petrovna nor Darya Pavlovna, nor even Salzfish, who was the last to come from the town.

Stepan Trofimovitch became more and more excited, feverishly so, beyond his strength.

“The mere fact of the ever present idea that there exists something infinitely more just and more happy than I am fills me through and through with tender ecstasy—and glorifies me—oh, whoever I may be, whatever I have done! What is far more essential for man than personal happiness is to know and to believe at every instant that there is somewhere a perfect and serene happiness for all men and for everything.... The one essential condition of human existence is that man should always be able to bow down before something infinitely great. If men are deprived of the infinitely great they will not go on living and will die of despair. The Infinite and the Eternal are as essential for man as the little planet on which he dwells. My friends, all, all: hail to the Great Idea! The Eternal, Infinite Idea! It is essential to every man, whoever he may be, to bow down before what is the Great Idea. Even the stupidest man needs something great. Petrusha ... oh, how I want to see them all again! They don’t know, they don’t know that that same Eternal, Grand Idea lies in them all!”

Doctor Salzfish was not present at the ceremony. Coming in suddenly, he was horrified, and cleared the room, insisting that the patient must not be excited.

Stepan Trofimovitch died three days later, but by that time he was completely unconscious. He quietly went out like a candle that is burnt down. After having the funeral service performed, Varvara Petrovna took the body of her poor friend to Skvoreshniki. His grave is in the precincts of the church and is already covered with a marble slab. The inscription and the railing will be added in the spring.

Varvara Petrovna’s absence from town had lasted eight days. Sofya Matveyevna arrived in the carriage with her and seems to have settled with her for good. I may mention that as soon as Stepan Trofimovitch lost consciousness (the morning that he received the sacrament) Varvara Petrovna promptly asked Sofya Matveyevna to leave the cottage again, and waited on the invalid herself unassisted to the end, but she sent for her at once when he had breathed his last. Sofya Matveyevna was terribly alarmed by Varvara Petrovna’s proposition, or rather command, that she should settle for good at Skvoreshniki, but the latter refused to listen to her protests.

“That’s all nonsense! I will go with you to sell the gospel. I have no one in the world now.”

“You have a son, however,” Salzfish observed.

“I have no son!” Varvara Petrovna snapped out—and it was like a prophecy.

CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION

ALL THE CRIMES AND VILLAINIES THAT had been perpetrated were discovered with extraordinary rapidity, much more quickly than Pyotr Stepanovitch had expected. To begin with, the luckless Marya Ignatyevna waked up before daybreak on the night of her husband's murder, missed him and flew into indescribable agitation, not seeing him beside her. The woman who had been hired by Anna Prohorovna, and was there for the night, could not succeed in calming her, and as soon as it was daylight ran to fetch Arina Prohorovna herself, assuring the invalid that the latter knew where her husband was, and when he would be back. Meantime Arina Prohorovna was in some anxiety too; she had already heard from her husband of the deed perpetrated that night at Skvoreshniki. He had returned home about eleven o'clock in a terrible state of mind and body; wringing his hands, he flung himself face downwards on his bed and shaking with convulsive sobs kept repeating, "It's not right, it's not right, it's not right at all!" He ended, of course, by confessing it all to Arina Prohorovna—but to no one else in the house. She left him on his bed, sternly impressing upon him that "if he must blubber he must do it in his pillow so as not to be overheard, and that he would be a fool if he showed any traces of it next day." She felt somewhat anxious, however, and began at once to clear things up in case of emergency; she succeeded in hiding or completely destroying all suspicious papers, books, manifestoes perhaps. At the same time she reflected that she, her sister, her aunt, her sister-in-law the student, and perhaps even her long-eared brother had really nothing much to be afraid of. When the nurse ran to her in the morning she went without a second thought to Marya Ignatyevna's. She was desperately anxious, moreover, to find out whether what her husband had told her that night in a terrified and frantic whisper, that was almost like delirium, was true—that is, whether Pyotr Stepanovitch had been right in his reckoning that Kirillov would sacrifice himself for the general benefit.

But she arrived at Marya Ignatyevna's too late: when the latter had sent off the woman and was left alone, she was unable to bear the suspense; she got out of bed, and throwing round her the first garment she could find, something very light and unsuitable for the weather, I believe, she ran down to Kirillov's lodge herself, thinking that he perhaps would be better able than anyone to tell her something about her husband. The terrible effect on her of what she saw there may well be imagined. It is remarkable that she did not read Kirillov's last letter, which lay conspicuously on the table, overlooking it, of course, in her fright. She ran back to her room, snatched up

her baby, and went with it out of the house into the street. It was a damp morning, there was a fog. She met no passers-by in such an out-of-the-way street. She ran on breathless through the wet, cold mud, and at last began knocking at the doors of the houses. In the first house no one came to the door, in the second they were so long in coming that she gave it up impatiently and began knocking at a third door. This was the house of a merchant called Titov. Here she wailed and kept declaring incoherently that her husband was murdered, causing a great flutter in the house. Something was known about Shatov and his story in the Titov household; they were horror-stricken that she should be running about the streets in such attire and in such cold with the baby scarcely covered in her arms, when, according to her story, she had only been confined the day before. They thought at first that she was delirious, especially as they could not make out whether it was Kirillov who was murdered or her husband. Seeing that they did not believe her she would have run on farther, but they kept her by force, and I am told she screamed and struggled terribly. They went to Filipov's, and within two hours Kirillov's suicide and the letter he had left were known to the whole town. The police came to question Marya Ignatyevna, who was still conscious, and it appeared at once that she had not read Kirillov's letter, and they could not find out from her what had led her to conclude that her husband had been murdered. She only screamed that if Kirillov was murdered, then her husband was murdered, they were together. Towards midday she sank into a state of unconsciousness from which she never recovered, and she died three days later. The baby had caught cold and died before her.

Arina Prohorovna not finding Marya Ignatyevna and the baby, and guessing something was wrong, was about to run home, but she checked herself at the gate and sent the nurse to inquire of the gentleman at the lodge whether Marya Ignatyevna was not there and whether he knew anything about her. The woman came back screaming frantically. Persuading her not to scream and not to tell anyone by the time-honoured argument that "she would get into trouble," she stole out of the yard.

It goes without saying that she was questioned the same morning as having acted as midwife to Marya Ignatyevna; but they did not get much out of her. She gave a very cool and sensible account of all she had herself heard and seen at Shatov's, but as to what had happened she declared that she knew nothing, and could not understand it.

It may well be imagined what an uproar there was in the town. A new "sensation," another murder! But there was another element in this case: it was clear that a secret society of murderers, incendiaries, and revolutionists did exist, did actually exist. Liza's terrible death, the murder of Stavrogin's wife, Stavrogin himself, the fire, the ball for the benefit of the governesses, the laxity of manners and morals in Yulia

Mihailovna's circle.... Even in the disappearance of Stepan Trofimovitch people insisted on scenting a mystery. All sorts of things were whispered about Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. By the end of the day people knew of Pyotr Stepanovitch's absence too, and, strange to say, less was said of him than of anyone. What was talked of most all that day was "the senator." There was a crowd almost all day at Filipov's house. The police certainly were led astray by Kirillov's letter. They believed that Kirillov had murdered Shatov and had himself committed suicide. Yet, though the authorities were thrown into perplexity, they were not altogether hoodwinked. The word "park," for instance, so vaguely inserted in Kirillov's letter, did not puzzle anyone as Pyotr Stepanovitch had expected it would. The police at once made a rush for Skvoreshniki, not simply because it was the only park in the neighbourhood but also led thither by a sort of instinct because all the horrors of the last few days were connected directly or indirectly with Skvoreshniki. That at least is my theory. (I may remark that Varvara Petrovna had driven off early that morning in chase of Stepan Trofimovitch, and knew nothing of what had happened in the town.)

The body was found in the pond that evening. What led to the discovery of it was the finding of Shatov's cap at the scene of the murder, where it had been with extraordinary carelessness overlooked by the murderers. The appearance of the body, the medical examination and certain deductions from it roused immediate suspicions that Kirillov must have had accomplices. It became evident that a secret society really did exist of which Shatov and Kirillov were members and which was connected with the manifestoes. Who were these accomplices? No one even thought of any member of the quintet that day. It was ascertained that Kirillov had lived like a hermit, and in so complete a seclusion that it had been possible, as stated in the letter, for Fedka to lodge with him for so many days, even while an active search was being made for him. The chief thing that worried every one was the impossibility of discovering a connecting-link in this chaos.

There is no saying what conclusions and what disconnected theories our panic-stricken townspeople would have reached, if the whole mystery had not been suddenly solved next day, thanks to Lyamshin.

He broke down. He behaved as even Pyotr Stepanovitch had towards the end begun to fear he would. Left in charge of Tolkatchenko, and afterwards of Erkel, he spent all the following day lying in his bed with his face turned to the wall, apparently calm, not uttering a word, and scarcely answering when he was spoken to. This is how it was that he heard nothing all day of what was happening in the town. But Tolkatchenko, who was very well informed about everything, took into his head by the evening to throw up the task of watching Lyamshin which Pyotr Stepanovitch had laid upon him,

and left the town, that is, to put it plainly, made his escape; the fact is, they lost their heads as Erkel had predicted they would. I may mention, by the way, that Liputin had disappeared the same day before twelve o'clock. But things fell out so that his disappearance did not become known to the authorities till the evening of the following day, when, the police went to question his family, who were panic-stricken at his absence but kept quiet from fear of consequences. But to return to Lyamshin: as soon as he was left alone (Erkel had gone home earlier, relying on Tolkatchenko) he ran out of his house, and, of course, very soon learned the position of affairs. Without even returning home he too tried to run away without knowing where he was going. But the night was so dark and to escape was so terrible and difficult, that after going through two or three streets, he returned home and locked himself up for the whole night. I believe that towards morning he attempted to commit suicide but did not succeed. He remained locked up till midday—and then suddenly he ran to the authorities. He is said to have crawled on his knees, to have sobbed and shrieked, to have kissed the floor crying out that he was not worthy to kiss the boots of the officials standing before him. They soothed him, were positively affable to him. His examination lasted, I am told, for three hours. He confessed everything, everything, told every detail, everything he knew, every point, anticipating their questions, hurried to make a clean breast of it all, volunteering unnecessary information without being asked. It turned out that he knew enough, and presented things in a fairly true light: the tragedy of Shatov and Kirillov, the fire, the death of the Lebyadkins, and the rest of it were relegated to the background. Pyotr Stepanovitch, the secret society, the organisation, and the network were put in the first place. When asked what was the object of so many murders and scandals and dastardly outrages, he answered with feverish haste that "it was with the idea of systematically undermining the foundations, systematically destroying society and all principles; with the idea of nonplussing every one and making hay of everything, and then, when society was tottering, sick and out of joint, cynical and sceptical though filled with an intense eagerness for self-preservation and for some guiding idea, suddenly to seize it in their hands, raising the standard of revolt and relying on a complete network of quintets, which were actively, meanwhile, gathering recruits and seeking out the weak spots which could be attacked." In conclusion, he said that here in our town Pyotr Stepanovitch had organised only the first experiment in such systematic disorder, so to speak, as a programme for further activity, and for all the quintets—and that this was his own (Lyamshin's) idea, his own theory, "and that he hoped they would remember it and bear in mind how openly and properly he had given his information, and therefore might be of use hereafter." Being asked definitely how many quintets there were, he answered that there were immense numbers of them, that all Russia

was overspread with a network, and although he brought forward no proofs, I believe his answer was perfectly sincere. He produced only the programme of the society, printed abroad, and the plan for developing a system of future activity roughly sketched in Pyotr Stepanovitch's own handwriting. It appeared that Lyamshin had quoted the phrase about "undermining the foundation," word for word from this document, not omitting a single stop or comma, though he had declared that it was all his own theory. Of Yulia Mihailovna he very funnily and quite without provocation volunteered the remark, that "she was innocent and had been made a fool of." But, strange to say, he exonerated Nikolay Stavrogin from all share in the secret society, from any collaboration with Pyotr Stepanovitch. (Lyamshin had no conception of the secret and very absurd hopes that Pyotr Stepanovitch was resting on Stavrogin.) According to his story Nikolay Stavrogin had nothing whatever to do with the death of the Lebyadkins, which had been planned by Pyotr Stepanovitch alone and with the subtle aim of implicating the former in the crime, and therefore making him dependent on Pyotr Stepanovitch; but instead of the gratitude on which Pyotr Stepanovitch had reckoned with shallow confidence, he had roused nothing but indignation and even despair in "the generous heart of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch." He wound up, by a hint, evidently intentional, volunteered hastily, that Stavrogin was perhaps a very important personage, but that there was some secret about that, that he had been living among us, so to say, incognito, that he had some commission, and that very possibly he would come back to us again from Petersburg. (Lyamshin was convinced that Stavrogin had gone to Petersburg), but in quite a different capacity and in different surroundings, in the suite of persons of whom perhaps we should soon hear, and that all this he had heard from Pyotr Stepanovitch, "Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's secret enemy."

Here I will note that two months later, Lyamshin admitted that he had exonerated Stavrogin on purpose, hoping that he would protect him and would obtain for him a mitigation in the second degree of his sentence, and that he would provide him with money and letters of introduction in Siberia. From this confession it is evident that he had an extraordinarily exaggerated conception of Stavrogin's powers.

On the same day, of course, the police arrested Virginsky and in their zeal took his whole family too. (Arina Prohorovna, her sister, aunt, and even the girl student were released long ago; they say that Shigalov too will be set free very shortly because he cannot be classed with any of the other prisoners. But all that is so far only gossip.) Virginsky at once pleaded guilty. He was lying ill with fever when he was arrested. I am told that he seemed almost relieved; "it was a load off his heart," he is reported to have said. It is rumoured that he is giving his evidence without reservation, but with a

certain dignity, and has not given up any of his “bright hopes,” though at the same time he curses the political method (as opposed to the Socialist one), in which he had been unwittingly and heedlessly carried “by the vortex of combined circumstances.” His conduct at the time of the murder has been put in a favourable light, and I imagine that he too may reckon on some mitigation of his sentence. That at least is what is asserted in the town.

But I doubt whether there is any hope for mercy in Erkel’s case. Ever since his arrest he has been obstinately silent, or has misrepresented the facts as far as he could. Not one word of regret has been wrung from him so far. Yet even the sternest of the judges trying him has been moved to some compassion by his youth, by his helplessness, by the unmistakable evidence that he is nothing but a fanatical victim of a political impostor, and, most of all, by his conduct to his mother, to whom, as it appears, he used to send almost the half of his small salary. His mother is now in the town; she is a delicate and ailing woman, aged beyond her years; she weeps and positively grovels on the ground imploring mercy for her son. Whatever may happen, many among us feel sorry for Erkel.

Liputin was arrested in Petersburg, where he had been living for a fortnight. His conduct there sounds almost incredible and is difficult to explain. He is said to have had a passport in a forged name and quite a large sum of money upon him, and had every possibility of escaping abroad, yet instead of going he remained in Petersburg. He spent some time hunting for Stavrogin and Pyotr Stepanovitch. Suddenly he took to drinking and gave himself up to a debauchery that exceeded all bounds, like a man who had lost all reason and understanding of his position. He was arrested in Petersburg drunk in a brothel. There is a rumour that he has not by any means lost heart, that he tells lies in his evidence and is preparing for the approaching trial hopefully (?) and, as it were, triumphantly. He even intends to make a speech at the trial. Tolkatchenko, who was arrested in the neighbourhood ten days after his flight, behaves with incomparably more decorum; he does not shuffle or tell lies, he tells all he knows, does not justify himself, blames himself with all modesty, though he, too, has a weakness for rhetoric; he tells readily what he knows, and when knowledge of the peasantry and the revolutionary elements among them is touched upon, he positively attitudinises and is eager to produce an effect. He, too, is meaning, I am told, to make a speech at the trial. Neither he nor Liputin seem very much afraid, curious as it seems.

I repeat that the case is not yet over. Now, three months afterwards, local society has had time to rest, has recovered, has got over it, has an opinion of its own, so much so that some people positively look upon Pyotr Stepanovitch as a genius or at least as

possessed of “some characteristics of a genius.” “Organisation!” they say at the club, holding up a finger. But all this is very innocent and there are not many people who talk like that. Others, on the other hand, do not deny his acuteness, but point out that he was utterly ignorant of real life, that he was terribly theoretical, grotesquely and stupidly one-sided, and consequently shallow in the extreme. As for his moral qualities all are agreed; about that there are no two opinions.

I do not know whom to mention next so as not to forget anyone. Mavriky Nikolaevitch has gone away for good, I don’t know where. Old Madame Drozdov has sunk into dotage.... I have still one very gloomy story to tell, however. I will confine myself to the bare facts.

On her return from Ustyevo, Varvara Petrovna stayed at her town house. All the accumulated news broke upon her at once and gave her a terrible shock. She shut herself up alone. It was evening; every one was tired and went to bed early.

In the morning a maid with a mysterious air handed a note to Darya Pavlovna. The note had, so she said, arrived the evening before, but late, when all had gone to bed, so that she had not ventured to wake her. It had not come by post, but had been put in Alexey Yegorytch’s hand in Skvoreshniki by some unknown person. And Alexey Yegorytch had immediately set off and put it into her hands himself and had then returned to Skvoreshniki.

For a long while Darya Pavlovna gazed at the letter with a beating heart, and dared not open it. She knew from whom it came: the writer was Nikolay Stavrogin. She read what was written on the envelope: “To Alexey Yegorytch, to be given secretly to Darya Pavlovna.”

Here is the letter word for word, without the slightest correction of the defects in style of a Russian aristocrat who had never mastered the Russian grammar in spite of his European education.

“Dear Darya Pavlovna,—At one time you expressed a wish to be my nurse and made me promise to send for you when I wanted you. I am going away in two days and shall not come back. Will you go with me?

“Last year, like Herzen, I was naturalised as a citizen of the canton of Uri, and that nobody knows. There I’ve already bought a little house. I’ve still twelve thousand roubles left; we’ll go and live there for ever. I don’t want to go anywhere else ever.

“It’s a very dull place, a narrow valley, the mountains restrict both vision and thought. It’s very gloomy. I chose the place because there was a little house to be sold. If you don’t like it I’ll sell it and buy another in some other place.

“I am not well, but I hope to get rid of hallucinations in that air. It’s physical, and as for the moral you know everything; but do you know all?

“I’ve told you a great deal of my life, but not all. Even to you! Not all. By the way, I repeat that in my conscience I feel myself responsible for my wife’s death. I haven’t seen you since then, that’s why I repeat it. I feel guilty about Lizaveta Nikolaevna too; but you know about that; you foretold almost all that.

“Better not come to me. My asking you to is a horrible meanness. And why should you bury your life with me? You are dear to me, and when I was miserable it was good to be beside you; only with you I could speak of myself aloud. But that proves nothing. You defined it yourself, ‘a nurse’—it’s your own expression; why sacrifice so much? Grasp this, too, that I have no pity for you since I ask you, and no respect for you since I reckon on you. And yet I ask you and I reckon on you. In any case I need your answer for I must set off very soon. In that case I shall go alone.

“I expect nothing of Uri; I am simply going. I have not chosen a gloomy place on purpose. I have no ties in Russia—everything is as alien to me there as everywhere. It’s true that I dislike living there more than anywhere; but I can’t hate anything even there!

“I’ve tried my strength everywhere. You advised me to do this ‘that I might learn to know myself.’ As long as I was experimenting for myself and for others it seemed infinite, as it has all my life. Before your eyes I endured a blow from your brother; I acknowledged my marriage in public. But to what to apply my strength, that is what I’ve never seen, and do not see now in spite of all your praises in Switzerland, which I believed in. I am still capable, as I always was, of desiring to do something good, and of feeling pleasure from it; at the same time I desire evil and feel pleasure from that too. But both feelings are always too petty, and are never very strong. My desires are too weak; they are not enough to guide me. On a log one may cross a river but not on a chip. I say this that you may not believe that I am going to Uri with hopes of any sort.

“As always I blame no one. I’ve tried the depths of debauchery and wasted my strength over it. But I don’t like vice and I didn’t want it. You have been watching me of late. Do you know that I looked upon our iconoclasts with spite, from envy of their hopes? But you had no need to be afraid. I could not have been one of them for I never shared anything with them. And to do it for fun, from spite I could not either, not because I am afraid of the ridiculous—I cannot be afraid of the ridiculous—but

because I have, after all, the habits of a gentleman and it disgusted me. But if I had felt more spite and envy of them I might perhaps have joined them. You can judge how hard it has been for me, and how I've struggled from one thing to another.

"Dear friend! Great and tender heart which I divined! Perhaps you dream of giving me so much love and lavishing on me so much that is beautiful from your beautiful soul, that you hope to set up some aim for me at last by it? No, it's better for you to be more cautious, my love will be as petty as I am myself and you will be unhappy. Your brother told me that the man who loses connection with his country loses his gods, that is, all his aims. One may argue about everything endlessly, but from me nothing has come but negation, with no greatness of soul, no force. Even negation has not come from me. Everything has always been petty and spiritless. Kirillov, in the greatness of his soul, could not compromise with an idea, and shot himself; but I see, of course, that he was great-souled because he had lost his reason. I can never lose my reason, and I can never believe in an idea to such a degree as he did. I cannot even be interested in an idea to such a degree. I can never, never shoot myself.

"I know I ought to kill myself, to brush myself off the earth like a nasty insect; but I am afraid of suicide, for I am afraid of showing greatness of soul. I know that it will be another sham again—the last deception in an endless series of deceptions. What good is there in deceiving oneself? Simply to play at greatness of soul? Indignation and shame I can never feel, therefore not despair.

"Forgive me for writing so much. I wrote without noticing. A hundred pages would be too little and ten lines would be enough. Ten lines would be enough to ask you to be a nurse. Since I left Skvoreshniki I've been living at the sixth station on the line, at the stationmaster's. I got to know him in the time of debauchery five years ago in Petersburg. No one knows I am living there. Write to him. I enclose the address.

"Nikolay Stavrogin."

Darya Pavlovna went at once and showed the letter to Varvara Petrovna. She read it and asked Dasha to go out of the room so that she might read it again alone; but she called her back very quickly.

"Are you going?" she asked almost timidly.

"I am going," answered Dasha.

"Get ready! We'll go together."

Dasha looked at her inquiringly.

“What is there left for me to do here? What difficulty will it make? I’ll be naturalised in Uri, too, and live in the valley.... Don’t be uneasy, I won’t be in the way.”

They began packing quickly to be in time to catch the midday train. But in less than half an hour’s time Alexey Yegorytch arrived from Skvoreshniki. He announced that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had suddenly arrived that morning by the early train, and was now at Skvoreshniki but “in such a state that his honour did not answer any questions, walked through all the rooms and shut himself up in his own wing....”

“Though I received no orders I thought it best to come and inform you,” Alexey Yegorytch concluded with a very significant expression.

Varvara Petrovna looked at him searchingly and did not question him. The carriage was got ready instantly. Varvara Petrovna set off with Dasha. They say that she kept crossing herself on the journey.

In Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s wing of the house all the doors were open and he was nowhere to be seen.

“Wouldn’t he be upstairs?” Fomushka ventured.

It was remarkable that several servants followed Varvara Petrovna while the others all stood waiting in the drawing-room. They would never have dared to commit such a breach of etiquette before. Varvara Petrovna saw it and said nothing.

They went upstairs. There there were three rooms; but they found no one there.

“Wouldn’t his honour have gone up there?” someone suggested, pointing to the door of the loft. And in fact, the door of the loft which was always closed had been opened and was standing ajar. The loft was right under the roof and was reached by a long, very steep and narrow wooden ladder. There was a sort of little room up there too.

“I am not going up there. Why should he go up there?” said Varvara Petrovna, turning terribly pale as she looked at the servants. They gazed back at her and said nothing. Dasha was trembling.

Varvara Petrovna rushed up the ladder; Dasha followed, but she had hardly entered the loft when she uttered a scream and fell senseless.

The citizen of the canton of Uri was hanging there behind the door. On the table lay a piece of paper with the words in pencil: “No one is to blame, I did it myself.” Beside it on the table lay a hammer, a piece of soap, and a large nail—obviously an extra one in case of need. The strong silk cord upon which Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had hanged himself had evidently been chosen and prepared beforehand and was thickly

smeared with soap. Everything proved that there had been premeditation and consciousness up to the last moment.

At the inquest our doctors absolutely and emphatically rejected all idea of insanity.

THE END