On the Eve

by Ivan Turgenev

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ON THE EVE

A Novel

By Ivan Turgenev

Translated from the Russian By Constance Garnett

[With an introduction by Edward Garnett]

London: William Heinemann 1895

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INTRODUCTION

This exquisite novel, first published in 1859, like so many great works of art, holds depths of meaning which at first sight lie veiled under the simplicity and harmony of the technique. To the English reader On the Eve is a charmingly drawn picture of a quiet Russian household, with a delicate analysis of a young girl’s soul; but to Russians it is also a deep and penetrating diagnosis of the destinies of the Russia of

the fifties.

Elena, the Russian girl, is the central figure of the novel. In comparing her with Turgenev's other women, the reader will remark that he is allowed to come into closer spiritual contact with her than even with Lisa. The successful portraits of women drawn by men in fiction are generally figures for the imagination to play on; however much that is told to one about them, the secret springs of their character are left a little obscure, but when Elena stands before us we know all the innermost secrets of her character. Her strength of will, her serious, courageous, proud soul, her capacity for passion, all the play of her delicate idealistic nature troubled by the contradictions, aspirations, and unhappiness that the dawn of love brings to her, all this is conveyed to us by the simplest and the most consummate art. The diary (chapter xvi.) that Elena keeps is in itself a masterly revelation of a young girl's heart; it has never been equalled by any other novelist. How exquisitely Turgenev reveals his characters may be seen by an examination of the parts Shubin the artist, and Bersenyev the student, play towards Elena. Both young men are in love with her, and the description of their after relations as friends, and the feelings of Elena towards them, and her own self-communings are interwoven with unfaltering skill. All the most complex and baffling shades of the mental life, which in the hands of many latter-day novelists build up characters far too thin and too unconvincing, in the hands of Turgenev are used with deftness and certainty to bring to light that great kingdom which is always lying hidden beneath the surface, beneath the common-place of daily life. In the difficult art of literary perspective, in the effective grouping of contrasts in character and the criss-cross of the influence of the different individuals, lies the secret of Turgenev's supremacy. As an example the reader may note how he is made to judge Elena through six pairs of eyes. Her father's contempt for his daughter, her mother's affectionate bewilderment, Shubin's petulant criticism, Bersenyev's half hearted enthralment, Insarov's recognition, and Zoya's indifference, being the facets for converging light on Elena's sincerity and depth of

soul. Again one may note Turgenev's method for rehabilitating Shubin in our eyes; Shubin is simply made to criticise Stahov; the thing is done in a few seemingly careless lines, but these lines lay bare Shubin's strength and weakness, the fluidity of his nature. The reader who does not see the art which underlies almost every line of On the Eve is merely paying the highest tribute to that art; as often the clear waters of a pool conceal its surprising depth. Taking Shubin's character as an example of creative skill, we cannot call to mind any instance in the range of European fiction where the typical artist mind, on its lighter sides, has been analysed with such delicacy and truth as here by Turgenev. Hawthorne and others have treated it, but the colour seems to fade from their artist characters when a comparison is made between them and Shubin. And yet Turgenev's is but a sketch of an artist, compared with, let us say, the admirable figure of Roderick Hudson. The irresponsibility, alertness, the whimsicality and mobility of Shubin combine to charm and irritate the reader in the exact proportion that such a character affects him in actual life; there is not the least touch of exaggeration, and all the values are kept to a marvel. Looking at the minor characters, perhaps one may say that the husband, Stahov, will be the most suggestive, and not the least familiar character, to English households. His essentially masculine meanness, his self-complacency, his unconscious indifference to the opinion of others, his absurdity as 'un père de famille' is balanced by the foolish affection and jealousy which his wife, Anna Vassilyevna, cannot help feeling towards him. The perfect balance and duality of Turgenev's outlook is here shown by the equal cleverness with which he seizes on and quietly derides the typical masculine and typical feminine attitude in such a married life as the two Stahovs'.

Turning to the figure of the Bulgarian hero, it is interesting to find from the Souvenirs sur Tourguénev (published in 1887) that Turgenev's only distinct failure of importance in character drawing, Insarov, was not taken from life, but was the legacy of a friend Karateieff, who implored Turgenev to work out an unfinished

conception. Insarov is a figure of wood. He is so cleverly constructed, and the central idea behind him is so strong, that his wooden joints move naturally, and the spectator has only the instinct, not the certainty, of being cheated. The idea he incarnates, that of a man whose soul is aflame with patriotism, is finely suggested, but an idea, even a great one, does not make an individuality. And in fact Insarov is not a man, he is an automaton. To compare Shubin's utterances with his is to perceive that there is no spontaneity, no inevitability in Insarov. He is a patriotic clock wound up to go for the occasion, and in truth he is very useful. Only on his deathbed, when the unexpected happens, and the machinery runs down, do we feel moved. Then, he appears more striking dead than alive—a rather damning testimony to the power Turgenev credits him with. This artistic failure of Turgenev's is, as he no doubt recognised, curiously lessened by the fact that young girls of Elena's lofty idealistic type are particularly impressed by certain stiff types of men of action and great will-power, whose capacity for moving straight towards a certain goal by no means implies corresponding brain-power. The insight of a Shubin and the moral worth of a Bersenyev are not so valuable to the Elenas of this world, whose ardent desire to be made good use of, and to seek some great end, is best developed by strength of aim in the men they love.

And now to see what the novel before us means to the Russian mind, we must turn to the infinitely suggestive background. Turgenev's genius was of the same force in politics as in art; it was that of seeing aright. He saw his country as it was, with clearer eyes than any man before or since. If Tolstoi is a purer native expression of Russia's force, Turgenev is the personification of Russian aspiration working with the instruments of wide cosmopolitan culture. As a critic of his countrymen nothing escaped Turgenev's eye, as a politician he foretold nearly all that actually came to pass in his life, and as a consummate artist, led first and foremost by his love for his art, his novels are undying historical pictures. It is not that there is anything allegorical in his novels—allegory is at the furthest pole from his method: it is that

whenever he created an important figure in fiction, that figure is necessarily a revelation of the secrets of the fatherland, the soil, the race. Turgenev, in short, was a psychologist not merely of men, but of nations; and so the chief figure of On the Eve, Elena, foreshadows and stands for the rise of young Russia in the sixties. Elena is young Russia, and to whom does she turn in her prayer for strength? Not to Bersenyev, the philosopher, the dreamer; not to Shubin, the man carried outside himself by every passing distraction; but to the strong man, Insarov. And here the irony of Insarov being made a foreigner, a Bulgarian, is significant of Turgenev's distrust of his country's weakness. The hidden meaning of the novel is a cry to the coming men to unite their strength against the foe without and the foe within the gates; it is an appeal to them not only to hasten the death of the old regime of Nicolas I, but an appeal to them to conquer their sluggishness, their weakness, and their apathy. It is a cry for Men. Turgenev sought in vain in life for a type of man to satisfy Russia, and ended by taking no living model for his hero, but the hearsay Insarov, a foreigner. Russia has not yet produced men of this type. But the artist does not despair of the future. Here we come upon one of the most striking figures of Turgenev—that of Uvar Ivanovitch. He symbolises the ever-predominant type of Russian, the sleepy, slothful Slav of to-day, yesterday, and to-morrow. He is the Slav whose inherent force Europe is as ignorant of as he is himself. Though he speaks only twenty sentences in the book he is a creation of Tolstoian force. His very words are dark and of practically no significance. There lies the irony of the portrait. The last words of the novel, the most biting surely that Turgenev ever wrote, contain the whole essence of On the Eve. On the Eve of What? one asks. Time has given contradictory answers to the men of all parties. The Elenas of to-day need not turn their eyes abroad to find their counterpart in spirit; so far at least the pessimists are refuted: but the note of death that Turgenev strikes in his marvellous chapter on Venice has still for young Russia an ominous echo—so many generations have arisen eager, only to be flung aside helpless, that one asks, what of the

generation that fronts Autocracy to-day?

‘Do you remember I asked you, “Will there ever be men among us?” and you answered, “there will be. O primaeval force!” And now from here in “my poetic distance”, I will ask you again, “What do you say, Uvar Ivanovitch, will there be?”’

‘Uvar Ivanovitch flourished his fingers, and fixed his enigmatical stare into the far distance.’

This creation of an universal national type, out of the flesh and blood of a fat taciturn country gentleman, brings us to see that Turgenev was not merely an artist, but that he was a poet using fiction as his medium. To this end it is instructive to compare Jane Austen, perhaps the greatest English exponent of the domestic novel, with the Russian master, and to note that, while as a novelist she emerges favourably from the comparison, she is absolutely wanting in his poetic insight. How petty and parochial appears her outlook in Emma, compared to the wide and unflinching gaze of Turgenev. She painted most admirably the English types she knew, and how well she knew them! but she failed to correlate them with the national life; and yet, while her men and women were acting and thinking, Trafalgar and Waterloo were being fought and won. But each of Turgenev’s novels in some subtle way suggests that the people he introduces are playing their little part in a great national drama everywhere around us, invisible, yet audible through the clamour of voices near us. And so On the Eve, the work of a poet, has certain deep notes, which break through the harmonious tenor of the whole, and strangely and swiftly transfigure the quiet story, troubling us with a dawning consciousness of the march of mighty events. Suddenly a strange sense steals upon the reader that he is living in a perilous atmosphere, filling his heart with foreboding, and enveloping at length the characters themselves, all unconsciously awaiting disaster in the sunny woods and gardens of Kuntsovo. But not till the last chapters are reached does the English reader perceive that in recreating for him the mental atmosphere of a single educated

Russian household, Turgenev has been casting before his eyes the faint shadow of the national drama which was indeed played, though left unfinished, on the Balkan battlefields of 1876-7. Briefly, Turgenev, in sketching the dawn of love in a young girl's soul, has managed faintly, but unmistakably, to make spring and flourish in our minds the ineradicable, though hidden, idea at the back of Slav thought—the unification of the Slav races. How doubly welcome that art should be which can lead us, the foreigners, thus straight to the heart of the national secrets of a great people, secrets which our own critics and diplomatists must necessarily misrepresent. Each of Turgenev's novels may be said to contain a light-bringing rejoinder to the old-fashioned criticism of the Muscovite, current up to the rise of the Russian novel, and still, unfortunately, lingering among us; but On the Eve, of all the novels, contains perhaps the most instructive political lesson England can learn. Europe has always had, and most assuredly England has been over-rich in those alarm-monger critics, watchdogs for ever baying at Slav cupidity, treachery, intrigue, and so on and so on. It is useful to have these well-meaning animals on the political premises, giving noisy tongue whenever the Slav stretches out his long arm and opens his drowsy eyes, but how rare it is to find a man who can teach us to interpret a nation's aspirations, to gauge its inner force, its aim, its inevitability. Turgenev gives us such clues. In the respectful, if slightly forced, silence that has been imposed by certain recent political events on the tribe of faithful watchdogs, it may be permitted to one to say, that whatever England's interest may be in relation to Russia's development, it is better for us to understand the force of Russian aims, before we measure our strength against it. And a novel, such as On the Eve, though now nearly forty years old, and to the short-sighted out of date, reveals in a flash the attitude of the Slav towards his political destiny. His aspirations may have to slumber through policy or necessity; they may be distorted or misrepresented, or led astray by official action, but we confess that for us, On the Eve suggests the existence of a mighty lake, whose waters, dammed back for a while, are rising slowly, but are still some way

from the brim. How long will it take to the overflow? Nobody knows; but when the long winter of Russia's dark internal policy shall be broken up, will the snows, melting on the mountains, stream south-west, inundating the Valley of the Danube? Or, as the national poet, Pushkin, has sung, will there be a pouring of many Slavonian rivulets into the Russian sea, a powerful attraction of the Slav races towards a common centre to create an era of peace and development within, whereby Russia may rise free and rejoicing to face her great destinies? Hard and bitter is the shaping of nations. Uvar Ivanovitch still fixes his enigmatical stare into the far distance.

EDWARD GARNETT

January 1895.

THE NAMES OF THE CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK

NIKOLÁI [Nicolas] ARTÉMYEVITCH STÁHOV.

ÁNNA VASSÍLYEVNA.

ELÉNA [LÉNOTCHKA, Hélène] NIKOLÁEVNA.

ZÓYA [Zoë] NIKÍTISHNA MÜLLER.

ANDRÉI PETRÓVITCH BERSÉNYEV.

PÁVEL [Paul] YÁKOVLITCH (or YÁKOVITCH) SHÚBIN.

DMÍTRI NIKANÓROVITCH (or NIKANÓRITCH) INSÁROV.

YEGÓR ANDRÉITCH KURNATÓVSKY.

UVÁR IVÁNOVITCH STÁHOV.

AUGUSTÍNA CHRISTIÁNOVNA.

ÁNNUSHKA.

In transcribing the Russian names into English— a has the sound of a in father. e a

in pane. i ee. u oo. y is always consonantal except when it is the last letter of the word. g is always hard.

I

On one of the hottest days of the summer of 1853, in the shade of a tall lime-tree on the bank of the river Moskva, not far from Kuntsovo, two young men were lying on the grass. One, who looked about twenty-three, tall and swarthy, with a sharp and rather crooked nose, a high forehead, and a restrained smile on his wide mouth, was lying on his back and gazing meditatively into the distance, his small grey eyes half closed. The other was lying on his chest, his curly, fair head propped on his two hands; he, too, was looking away into the distance. He was three years older than his companion, but seemed much younger. His moustache was only just growing, and his chin was covered with a light curly down. There was something childishly pretty, something attractively delicate, in the small features of his fresh round face, in his soft brown eyes, lovely pouting lips, and little white hands. Everything about him was suggestive of the happy light-heartedness of perfect health and youth—the carelessness, conceit, self-indulgence, and charm of youth. He used his eyes, and smiled and leaned his head as boys do who know that people look at them admiringly. He wore a loose white coat, made like a blouse, a blue kerchief wrapped his slender throat, and a battered straw hat had been flung on the grass beside him.

His companion seemed elderly in comparison with him; and no one would have supposed, from his angular figure, that he too was happy and enjoying himself. He lay in an awkward attitude; his large head—wide at the crown and narrower at the base—hung awkwardly on his long neck; awkwardness was expressed in the very pose of his hands, of his body, tightly clothed in a short black coat, and of his long legs with their knees raised, like the hind-legs of a grasshopper. For all that, it was impossible not to recognise that he was a man of good education; the whole of his

clumsy person bore the stamp of good-breeding; and his face, plain and even a little ridiculous as it was, showed a kindly nature and a thoughtful habit. His name was Andrei Petrovitch Bersenyev; his companion, the fair-haired young man, was called Pavel Yakovlitch Shubin.

‘Why don’t you lie on your face, like me?’ began Shubin. ‘It’s ever so much nicer so; especially when you kick up your heels and clap them together—like this. You have the grass under your nose; when you’re sick of staring at the landscape you can watch a fat beetle crawling on a blade of grass, or an ant fussing about. It’s really much nicer. But you’ve taken up a pseudo-classical pose, for all the world like a ballet-dancer, when she reclines upon a rock of paste-board. You should remember you have a perfect right to take a rest now. It’s no joking matter to come out third! Take your ease, sir; give up all exertion, and rest your weary limbs!’

Shubin delivered this speech through his nose in a half-lazy, half-joking voice (spoilt children speak so to friends of the house who bring them sweetmeats), and without waiting for an answer he went on:

‘What strikes me most forcibly in the ants and beetles and other worthy insects is their astounding seriousness. They run to and fro with such a solemn air, as though their life were something of such importance! A man the lord of creation, the highest being, stares at them, if you please, and they pay no attention to him. Why, a gnat will even settle on the lord of creation’s nose, and make use of him for food. It’s most offensive. And, on the other hand, how is their life inferior to ours? And why shouldn’t they take themselves seriously, if we are to be allowed to take ourselves seriously? There now, philosopher, solve that problem for me! Why don’t you speak? Eh?’

‘What?’ said Bersenyev, starting.

‘What!’ repeated Shubin. ‘Your friend lays his deepest thoughts before you, and you don’t listen to him.’

‘I was admiring the view. Look how hot and bright those fields are in the sun.’ Bersenyev spoke with a slight lisp.

‘There’s some fine colour laid on there,’ observed Shubin. ‘Nature’s a good hand at it, that’s the fact!’

Bersenyev shook his head.

‘You ought to be even more ecstatic over it than I. It’s in your line: you’re an artist.’

‘No; it’s not in my line,’ rejoined Shubin, putting his hat on the back of his head. ‘Flesh is my line; my work’s with flesh—modelling flesh, shoulders, legs, and arms, and here there’s no form, no finish; it’s all over the place.... Catch it if you can.’

‘But there is beauty here, too,’ remarked Bersenyev.—‘By the way, have you finished your bas-relief?’

‘Which one?’

‘The boy with the goat.’

‘Hang it! Hang it! Hang it!’ cried Shubin, drawling—‘I looked at the genuine old things, the antiques, and I smashed my rubbish to pieces. You point to nature, and say “there’s beauty here, too.” Of course, there’s beauty in everything, even in your nose there’s beauty; but you can’t try after all kinds of beauty. The ancients, they didn’t try after it; beauty came down of itself upon their creations from somewhere or other—from heaven, I suppose. The whole world belonged to them; it’s not for us to be so large in our reach; our arms are short. We drop our hook into one little pool, and keep watch over it. If we get a bite, so much the better, if not——’

Shubin put out his tongue.

‘Stop, stop,’ said Bensenyev, ‘that’s a paradox. If you have no sympathy for beauty, if you do not love beauty wherever you meet it, it will not come to you even in your art. If a beautiful view, if beautiful music does not touch your heart; I mean, if you are not sympathetic——’

‘Ah, you are a confirmed sympathetic!’ broke in Shubin, laughing at the new title he had coined, while Bersenyev sank into thought.

‘No, my dear fellow,’ Shubin went on, ‘you’re a clever person, a philosopher, third graduate of the Moscow University; it’s dreadful arguing with you, especially for an ignoramus like me, but I tell you what; besides my art, the only beauty I love is in women... in girls, and even that’s recently.’

He turned over on to his back and clasped his hands behind his head.

A few instants passed by in silence. The hush of the noonday heat lay upon the drowsy, blazing fields.

‘Speaking of women,’ Shubin began again, ‘how is it no one looks after Stahov? Did you see him in Moscow?’

‘No.’

‘The old fellow’s gone clean off his head. He sits for whole days together at his Augustina Christianovna’s, he’s bored to death, but still he sits there. They gaze at one another so stupidly.... It’s positively disgusting to see them. Man’s a strange animal. A man with such a home; but no, he must have his Augustina Christianovna! I don’t know anything more repulsive than her face, just like a duck’s! The other day I modelled a caricature of her in the style of Dantan. It wasn’t half bad. I will show it you.’

‘And Elena Nikolaevna’s bust?’ inquired Bersenyev, ‘is it getting on?’

‘No, my dear boy, it’s not getting on. That face is enough to drive one to despair. The lines are pure, severe, correct; one would think there would be no difficulty in catching a likeness. It’s not as easy as one would think though. It’s like a treasure in a fairy-tale—you can’t get hold of it. Have you ever noticed how she listens? There’s not a single feature different, but the whole expression of the eyes is constantly changing, and with that the whole face changes. What is a sculptor—and a poor one too—to do with such a face? She’s a wonderful creature—a strange

creature,’ he added after a brief pause.

‘Yes; she is a wonderful girl,’ Bersenyev repeated after him.

‘And she the daughter of Nikolai Artemyevitch Stahov! And after that people talk about blood, about stock! The amusing part of it is that she really is his daughter, like him, as well as like her mother, Anna Vassilyevna. I respect Anna Vassilyevna from the depths of my heart, she’s been awfully good to me; but she’s no better than a hen. Where did Elena get that soul of hers? Who kindled that fire in her? There’s another problem for you, philosopher!’

But as before, the ‘philosopher’ made no reply. Bersenyev did not in general err on the side of talkativeness, and when he did speak, he expressed himself awkwardly, with hesitation, and unnecessary gesticulation. And at this time a kind of special stillness had fallen on his soul, a stillness akin to lassitude and melancholy. He had not long come from town after prolonged hard work, which had absorbed him for many hours every day. The inactivity, the softness and purity of the air, the consciousness of having attained his object, the whimsical and careless talk of his friend, and the image—so suddenly called up—of one dear to him, all these impressions different—yet at the same time in a way akin—were mingled in him into a single vague emotion, which at once soothed and excited him, and robbed him of his power. He was a very highly strung young man.

It was cool and peaceful under the lime-tree; the flies and bees seemed to hum more softly as they flitted within its circle of shade. The fresh fine grass, of purest emerald green, without a tinge of gold, did not quiver, the tall flower stalks stood motionless, as though enchanted. On the lower twigs of the lime-tree the little bunches of yellow flowers hung still as death. At every breath a sweet fragrance made its way to the very depths of the lungs, and eagerly the lungs inhaled it. Beyond the river in the distance, right up to the horizon, all was bright and glowing. At times a slight breeze passed over, breaking up the landscape and intensifying the brightness; a sunlit

vapour hung over the fields. No sound came from the birds; they do not sing in the heat of noonday; but the grasshoppers were chirping everywhere, and it was pleasant as they sat in the cool and quietness, to hear that hot, eager sound of life; it disposed to slumber and inclined the heart to reveries.

‘Have you noticed,’ began Bersenyev, eking out his words with gesticulations, ‘what a strange feeling nature produces in us? Everything in nature is so complete, so defined, I mean to say, so content with itself, and we understand that and admire it, and at the same time, in me at least, it always excites a kind of restlessness, a kind of uneasiness, even melancholy. What is the meaning of it? Is it that in the face of nature we are more vividly conscious of all our incompleteness, our indefiniteness, or have we little of that content with which nature is satisfied, but something else—I mean to say, what we need, nature has not?’

‘H’m,’ replied Shubin, ‘I’ll tell you, Andrei Petrovitch, what all that comes from. You describe the sensations of a solitary man, who is not living but only looking on in ecstasy. Why look on? Live, yourself, and you will be all right. However much you knock at nature’s door, she will never answer you in comprehensible words, because she is dumb. She will utter a musical sound, or a moan, like a harp string, but don’t expect a song from her. A living heart, now—that will give you your answer—especially a woman’s heart. So, my dear fellow, I advise you to get yourself some one to share your heart, and all your distressing sensations will vanish at once. “That’s what we need,” as you say. This agitation, and melancholy, all that, you know, is simply a hunger of a kind. Give the stomach some real food, and everything will be right directly. Take your place in the landscape, live in the body, my dear boy. And after all, what is nature? what’s the use of it? Only hear the word, love—what an intense, glowing sound it has! Nature—what a cold, pedantic expression. And so’ (Shubin began humming), ‘my greetings to Marya Petrovna! or rather,’ he added, ‘not Marya Petrovna, but it’s all the same! Voo me compreny.’

Bersenyev got up and stood with his chin leaning on his clasped hands. ‘What is there to laugh at?’ he said, without looking at his companion, ‘why should you scoff? Yes, you are right: love is a grand word, a grand feeling.... But what sort of love do you mean?’

Shubin too, got up. ‘What sort? What you like, so long as it’s there. I will confess to you that I don’t believe in the existence of different kinds of love. If you are in love——’

‘With your whole heart,’ put in Bersenyev.

‘Well, of course, that’s an understood thing; the heart’s not an apple; you can’t divide it. If you’re in love, you’re justified. And I wasn’t thinking of scoffing. My heart’s as soft at this moment as if it had been melted.... I only wanted to explain why nature has the effect on us you spoke of. It’s because she arouses in us a need for love, and is not capable of satisfying it. Nature is gently driving us to other living embraces, but we don’t understand, and expect something from nature herself. Ah, Andrei, Andrei, this sun, this sky is beautiful, everything around us is beautiful, still you are sad; but if, at this instant, you were holding the hand of a woman you loved, if that hand and the whole woman were yours, if you were even seeing with her eyes, feeling not your own isolated emotion, but her emotion—nature would not make you melancholy or restless then, and you would not be observing nature’s beauty; nature herself would be full of joy and praise; she would be re-echoing your hymn, because then you would have given her—dumb nature—speech!’

Shubin leaped on to his feet and walked twice up and down, but Bersenyev bent his head, and his face was overcast by a faint flush.

‘I don’t altogether agree with you,’ he began: ‘nature does not always urge us... towards love.’ (He could not at once pronounce the word.) ‘Nature threatens us, too; she reminds us of dreadful... yes, insoluble mysteries. Is she not destined to swallow us up, is she not swallowing us up unceasingly? She holds life and death as well;

and death speaks in her as loudly as life.'

'In love, too, there is both life and death,' interposed Shubin.

'And then,' Bersenyev went on: 'when I, for example, stand in the spring in the forest, in a green glade, when I can fancy the romantic notes of Oberon's fairy horn' (Bersenyev was a little ashamed when he had spoken these words)—'is that, too——'

'The thirst for love, the thirst for happiness, nothing more!' broke in Shubin. 'I, too, know those notes, I know the languor and the expectation which come upon the soul in the forest's shade, in its deep recesses, or at evening in the open fields when the sun sets and the river mist rises behind the bushes. But forest, and river, and fields, and sky, every cloud and every blade of grass sets me expecting, hoping for happiness, I feel the approach, I hear the voice of happiness calling in everything. "God of my worship, bright and gay!" That was how I tried to begin my sole poem; you must own it's a splendid first line, but I could never produce a second. Happiness! happiness! as long as life is not over, as long as we have the use of all our limbs, as long as we are going up, not down, hill! Damn it all!' pursued Shubin with sudden vehemence, 'we are young, and neither fools nor monsters; we will conquer happiness for ourselves!'

He shook his curls, and turned a confident almost challenging glance upwards to the sky. Bersenyev raised his eyes and looked at him.

'Is there nothing higher than happiness?' he commented softly.

'And what, for instance?' asked Shubin, stopping short.

'Why, for instance, you and I are, as you say, young; we are good men, let us suppose; each of us desires happiness for himself.... But is that word, happiness, one that could unite us, set us both on fire, and make us clasp each other's hands? Isn't that word an egoistic one; I mean, isn't it a source of disunion?'

'Do you know words, then, that unite men?'

‘Yes; and they are not few in number; and you know them, too.’

‘Eh? What words?’

‘Well, even Art—since you are an artist—Country, Science, Freedom, Justice.’

‘And what of love?’ asked Shubin.

‘Love, too, is a word that unites; but not the love you are eager for now; the love which is not enjoyment, the love which is self-sacrifice.’

Shubin frowned.

‘That’s all very well for Germans; I want to love for myself; I want to be first.’

‘To be first,’ repeated Bersenyev. ‘But it seems to me that to put one’s-self in the second place is the whole significance of our life.’

‘If all men were to act as you advise,’ commented Shubin with a plaintive expression, ‘none on earth would eat pine-apples; every one would be offering them to other people.’

‘That’s as much as to say, pine-apples are not necessary; but you need not be alarmed; there will always be plenty of people who like them enough to take the bread out of other men’s mouths to get them.’

Both friends were silent a little.

‘I met Insarov again the other day,’ began Bersenyev. ‘I invited him to stay with me; I really must introduce him to you—and to the Stahovs.’

‘Who is Insarov? Ah, to be sure, isn’t it that Servian or Bulgarian you were telling me about? The patriot? Now isn’t it he who’s at the bottom of all these philosophical ideas?’

‘Perhaps.’

‘Is he an exceptional individual?’

‘Yes.’

‘Clever? Talented?’

‘Clever—talented—I don’t know, I don’t think so.’

‘Not? Then, what is there remarkable in him?’

‘You shall see. But now I think it’s time to be going. Anna Vassilyevna will be waiting for us, very likely. What’s the time?’

‘Three o’clock. Let us go. How baking it is! This conversation has set all my blood aflame. There was a moment when you, too, ... I am not an artist for nothing; I observe everything. Confess, you are interested in a woman?’

Shubin tried to get a look at Bersenyev’s face, but he turned away and walked out of the lime-tree’s shade. Shubin went after him, moving his little feet with easy grace. Bersenyev walked clumsily, with his shoulders high and his neck craned forward. Yet, he looked a man of finer breeding than Shubin; more of a gentleman, one might say, if that word had not been so vulgarised among us.

II

The young men went down to the river Moskva and walked along its bank. There was a breath of freshness from the water, and the soft plash of tiny waves caressed the ear.

‘I would have another bathe,’ said Shubin, ‘only I’m afraid of being late. Look at the river; it seems to beckon us. The ancient Greeks would have beheld a nymph in it. But we are not Greeks, O nymph! we are thick-skinned Scythians.’

‘We have roussalkas,’ observed Bersenyev.

‘Get along with your roussalkas! What’s the use to me—a sculptor—of those children of a cold, terror-stricken fancy, those shapes begotten in the stifling hut, in the dark of winter nights? I want light, space.... Good God, when shall I go to Italy? When——’

‘To Little Russia, I suppose you mean?’

‘For shame, Andrei Petrovitch, to reproach me for an act of unpremeditated folly, which I have repented bitterly enough without that. Oh, of course, I behaved like a fool; Anna Vassilyevna most kindly gave me the money for an expedition to Italy, and I went off to the Little Russians to eat dumplings and——’

‘Don’t let me have the rest, please,’ interposed Bersenyev.

‘Yet still, I will say, the money was not spent in vain. I saw there such types, especially of women.... Of course, I know; there is no salvation to be found outside of Italy!’

‘You will go to Italy,’ said Bersenyev, without turning towards him, ‘and will do nothing. You will always be pluming your wings and never take flight. We know you!’

‘Stavasser has taken flight.... And he’s not the only one. If I don’t fly, it will prove that I’m a sea penguin, and have no wings. I am stifled here, I want to be in Italy,’ pursued Shubin, ‘there is sunshine, there is beauty.’

A young girl in a large straw hat, with a pink parasol on her shoulder, came into sight at that instant, in the little path along which the friends were walking.

‘But what do I see? Even here, there is beauty—coming to meet us! A humble artist’s compliments to the enchanting Zoya!’ Shubin cried at once, with a theatrical flourish of his hat.

The young girl to whom this exclamation referred, stopped, threatening him with her finger, and, waiting for the two friends to come up to her, she said in a ringing voice:

‘Why is it, gentlemen, you don’t come in to dinner? It is on the table.’

‘What do I hear?’ said Shubin, throwing his arms up. ‘Can it be that you, bewitching Zoya, faced such heat to come and look for us? Dare I think that is the meaning of your words? Tell me, can it be so? Or no, do not utter that word; I shall die of regret

on the spot.’

‘Oh, do leave off, Pavel Yakovlitch,’ replied the young girl with some annoyance. ‘Why will you never talk to me seriously? I shall be angry,’ she added with a little coquettish grimace, and she pouted.

‘You will not be angry with me, ideal Zoya Nikitishna; you would not drive me to the dark depths of hopeless despair. And I can’t talk to you seriously, because I’m not a serious person.’

The young girl shrugged her shoulders, and turned to Bersenyev.

‘There, he’s always like that; he treats me like a child; and I am eighteen. I am grown-up now.’

‘O Lord!’ groaned Shubin, rolling his eyes upwards; and Bersenyev smiled quietly.

The girl stamped with her little foot.

‘Pavel Yakovlitch, I shall be angry! Hélène was coming with me,’ she went on, ‘but she stopped in the garden. The heat frightened her, but I am not afraid of the heat. Come along.’

She moved forward along the path, slightly swaying her slender figure at each step, and with a pretty black-mittened little hand pushing her long soft curls back from her face.

The friends walked after her (Shubin first pressed his hands, without speaking, to his heart, and then flung them higher than his head), and in a few instants they came out in front of one of the numerous country villas with which Kuntsovo is surrounded. A small wooden house with a gable, painted a pink colour, stood in the middle of the garden, and seemed to be peeping out innocently from behind the green trees. Zoya was the first to open the gate; she ran into the garden, crying: ‘I have brought the wanderers!’ A young girl, with a pale and expressive face, rose from a garden bench near the little path, and in the doorway of the house appeared a lady in a lilac silk

dress, holding an embroidered cambric handkerchief over her head to screen it from the sun, and smiling with a weary and listless air.

III

Anna Vassilyevna Stahov—her maiden name was Shubin—had been left, at seven years old, an orphan and heiress of a pretty considerable property. She had very rich and also very poor relations; the poor relations were on her father's, the rich on her mother's side; the latter including the senator Volgin and the Princes Tchikurasov. Prince Ardalion Tchikurasov, who had been appointed her guardian, placed her in the best Moscow boarding-school, and when she left school, took her into his own home. He kept open house, and gave balls in the winter. Anna Vassilyevna's future husband, Nikolai Artemyevitch Stahov, captured her heart at one of these balls when she was arrayed in a charming rose-coloured gown, with a wreath of tiny roses. She had treasured that wreath all her life. Nikolai Artemyevitch Stahov was the son of a retired captain, who had been wounded in 1812, and had received a lucrative post in Petersburg. Nikolai Artemyevitch entered the School of Cadets at sixteen, and left to go into the Guards. He was a handsome, well-made fellow, and reckoned almost the most dashing beau at evening parties of the middling sort, which were those he frequented for the most part; he had not gained a footing in the best society. From his youth he had been absorbed by two ideals: to get into the Imperial adjutants, and to make a good marriage; the first ideal he soon discarded, but he clung all the more closely to the second, and it was with that object that he went every winter to Moscow. Nikolai Artemyevitch spoke French fairly, and passed for being a philosopher, because he was not a rake. Even while he was no more than an ensign, he was given to discussing, persistently, such questions as whether it is possible for a man to visit the whole of the globe in the course of his whole lifetime, whether it is possible for a man to know what is happening at the bottom of the sea; and he

always maintained the view that these things were impossible.

Nikolai Artemyevitch was twenty-five years old when he ‘hooked’ Anna Vassilyevna; he retired from the service and went into the country to manage the property. He was soon tired of country life, and as the peasants’ labour was all commuted for rent he could easily leave the estate; he settled in Moscow in his wife’s house. In his youth he had played no games of any kind, but now he developed a passion for loto, and, when loto was prohibited, for whist. At home he was bored; he formed a connection with a widow of German extraction, and spent almost all his time with her. In the year 1853 he had not moved to Kuntsovo; he stopped at Moscow, ostensibly to take advantage of the mineral waters; in reality, he did not want to part from his widow. He did not, however, have much conversation with her, but argued more than ever as to whether one can foretell the weather and such questions. Some one had once called him a frondeur; he was greatly delighted with that name. ‘Yes,’ he thought, letting the corners of his mouth drop complacently and shaking his head, ‘I am not easily satisfied; you won’t take me in.’ Nikolai Artemyevitch’s frondeurism consisted in saying, for instance, when he heard the word nerves: ‘And what do you mean by nerves?’ or if some one alluded in his presence to the discoveries of astronomy, asking: ‘And do you believe in astronomy?’ When he wanted to overwhelm his opponent completely, he said: ‘All that is nothing but words.’ It must be admitted that to many persons remarks of that kind seemed (and still seem) irrefutable arguments. But Nikolai Artemyevitch never suspected that Augustina Christianovna, in letters to her cousin, Theodolina Peterzelius, called him Mein Pinselchen.

Nikolai Artemyevitch’s wife, Anna Vassilyevna, was a thin, little woman with delicate features, and a tendency to be emotional and melancholy. At school, she had devoted herself to music and reading novels; afterwards she abandoned all that. She began to be absorbed in dress, and that, too, she gave up. She did, for a time, undertake her daughter’s education, but she got tired of that too, and handed her

over to a governess. She ended by spending her whole time in sentimental brooding and tender melancholy. The birth of Elena Nikolaevna had ruined her health, and she could never have another child. Nikolai Artemyevitch used to hint at this fact in justification of his intimacy with Augustina Christianovna. Her husband's infidelity wounded Anna Vassilyevna deeply; she had been specially hurt by his once giving his German woman, on the sly, a pair of grey horses out of her (Anna Vassilyevna's) own stable. She had never reproached him to his face, but she complained of him secretly to every one in the house in turn, even to her daughter. Anna Vassilyevna did not care for going out, she liked visitors to come and sit with her and talk to her; she collapsed at once when she was left alone. She had a very tender and loving heart; life had soon crushed her.

Pavel Yakovlitch Shubin happened to be a distant cousin of hers. His father had been a government official in Moscow. His brothers had entered cadets' corps; he was the youngest, his mother's darling, and of delicate constitution; he stopped at home. They intended him for the university, and strained every effort to keep him at the gymnasium. From his early years he began to show an inclination for sculpture. The ponderous senator, Volgin, saw a statuette of his one day at his aunt's—he was then sixteen—and declared that he intended to protect this youthful genius. The sudden death of Shubin's father very nearly effected a complete transformation in the young man's future. The senator, the patron of genius, made him a present of a bust of Homer in plaster, and did nothing more. But Anna Vassilyevna helped him with money, and at nineteen he scraped through into the university in the faculty of medicine. Pavel felt no inclination for medical science, but, as the university was then constituted, it was impossible for him to enter in any other faculty. Besides, he looked forward to studying anatomy. But he did not complete his anatomical studies; at the end of the first year, and before the examination, he left the university to devote himself exclusively to his vocation. He worked zealously, but by fits and starts; he used to stroll about the country round Moscow sketching and modelling

portraits of peasant girls, and striking up acquaintance with all sorts of people, young and old, of high and low degree, Italian models and Russian artists. He would not hear of the Academy, and recognised no one as a teacher. He was possessed of unmistakeable talent; it began to be talked about in Moscow. His mother, who came of a good Parisian family, a kind-hearted and clever woman, had taught him French thoroughly and had toiled and thought for him day and night. She was proud of him, and when, while still young in years, she died of consumption, she entreated Anna Vassilyevna to take him under her care. He was at that time twenty-one. Anna Vassilyevna carried out her last wish; a small room in the lodge of the country villa was given up to him.

IV

‘Come to dinner, come along,’ said the lady of the house in a plaintive voice, and they all went into the dining-room. ‘Sit beside me, Zoé,’ added Anna Vassilyevna, ‘and you, Hélène, take our guest; and you, Paul, please don’t be naughty and tease Zoé. My head aches to-day.’

Shubin again turned his eyes up to the ceiling; Zoé responded with a half-smile. This Zoé, or, to speak more precisely, Zoya Nikitishna Mueller, was a pretty, fair-haired, half-Russian German girl, with a little nose rather wide at the end, and tiny red lips. She sang Russian ballads fairly well and could play various pieces, both lively and sentimental, very correctly on the piano. She dressed with taste, but in a rather childish style, and even over-precisely. Anna Vassilyevna had taken her as a companion for her daughter, and she kept her almost constantly at her side. Elena did not complain of that; she was absolutely at a loss what to say to Zoya when she happened to be left alone with her.

The dinner lasted rather a long time; Bersenyev talked with Elena about university life, and his own plans and hopes; Shubin listened without speaking, ate with an

exaggerated show of greediness, and now and then threw comic glances of despair at Zoya, who responded always with the same phlegmatic smile. After dinner, Elena with Bersenyev and Shubin went into the garden; Zoya looked after them, and, with a slight shrug of her shoulders, sat down to the piano. Anna Vassilyevna began: ‘Why don’t you go for a walk, too?’ but, without waiting for a reply, she added: ‘Play me something melancholy.’

‘La dernière pensée de Weber?’ suggested Zoya.

‘Ah, yes, Weber,’ replied Anna Vassilyevna. She sank into an easy chair, and the tears started on to her eyelashes.

Meanwhile, Elena led the two friends to an arbour of acacias, with a little wooden table in the middle, and seats round. Shubin looked round, and, whispering ‘Wait a minute!’ he ran off, skipping and hopping to his own room, brought back a piece of clay, and began modelling a bust of Zoya, shaking his head and muttering and laughing to himself.

‘At his old tricks again,’ observed Elena, glancing at his work. She turned to Bersenyev, with whom she was continuing the conversation begun at dinner.

‘My old tricks!’ repeated Shubin. ‘It’s a subject that’s simply inexhaustible! To-day, particularly, she drove me out of all patience.’

‘Why so?’ inquired Elena. ‘One would think you were speaking of some spiteful, disagreeable old woman. She is a pretty young girl.’

‘Of course,’ Shubin broke in, ‘she is pretty, very pretty; I am sure that no one who meets her could fail to think: that’s some one I should like to—dance a polka with; I’m sure, too, that she knows that, and is pleased.... Else, what’s the meaning of those modest simpers, that discreet air? There, you know what I mean,’ he muttered between his teeth. ‘But now you’re absorbed in something else.’

And breaking up the bust of Zoya, Shubin set hastily to modelling and kneading the clay again with an air of vexation.

‘So it is your wish to be a professor?’ said Elena to Bersenyev.

‘Yes,’ he answered, squeezing his red hands between his knees. ‘That’s my cherished dream. Of course I know very well how far I fall short of being—to be worthy of such a high—I mean that I am too little prepared, but I hope to get permission for a course of travel abroad; I shall pass three or four years in that way, if necessary, and then——’

He stopped, dropped his eyes, then quickly raising them again, he gave an embarrassed smile and smoothed his hair. When Bersenyev was talking to a woman, his words came out more slowly, and he lisped more than ever.

‘You want to be a professor of history?’ inquired Elena.

‘Yes, or of philosophy,’ he added, in a lower voice—‘if that is possible.’

‘He’s a perfect devil at philosophy already,’ observed Shubin, making deep lines in the clay with his nail. ‘What does he want to go abroad for?’

‘And will you be perfectly contented with such a position?’ asked Elena, leaning on her elbow and looking him straight in the face.

‘Perfectly, Elena Nikolaevna, perfectly. What could be a finer vocation? To follow, perhaps, in the steps of Timofay Nikolaevitch ... The very thought of such work fills me with delight and confusion ... yes, confusion... which comes from a sense of my own deficiency. My dear father consecrated me to this work... I shall never forget his last words.’...

‘Your father died last winter?’

‘Yes, Elena Nikolaevna, in February.’

‘They say,’ Elena went on, ‘that he left a remarkable work in manuscript; is it true?’

‘Yes. He was a wonderful man. You would have loved him, Elena Nikolaevna.’

‘I am sure I should. And what was the subject of the work?’

‘To give you an idea of the subject of the work in few words, Elena Nikolaevna,

would be somewhat difficult. My father was a learned man, a Schellingist; he used terms which were not always very clear——’

‘Andrei Petrovitch,’ interrupted Elena, ‘excuse my ignorance, what does that mean, a Schellingist?’

Bersenyev smiled slightly.

‘A Schellingist means a follower of Schelling, a German philosopher; and what the philosophy of Schelling consists in——’

‘Andrei Petrovitch!’ cried Shubin suddenly, ‘for mercy’s sake! Surely you don’t mean to give Elena Nikolaevna a lecture on Schelling? Have pity on her!’

‘Not a lecture at all,’ murmured Bersenyev, turning crimson. ‘I meant——’

‘And why not a lecture?’ put in Elena. ‘You and I are in need of lectures, Pavel Yakovlitch.’

Shubin stared at her, and suddenly burst out laughing.

‘What are you laughing at?’ she said coldly, and almost sharply.

Shubin did not answer.

‘Come, don’t be angry,’ he said, after a short pause. ‘I am sorry. But really it’s a strange taste, upon my word, to discuss philosophy in weather like this under these trees. Let us rather talk of nightingales and roses, youthful eyes and smiles.’

‘Yes; and of French novels, and of feminine frills and fal-lals,’ Elena went on.

‘Fal-lals, too, of course,’ rejoined Shubin, ‘if they’re pretty.’

‘Of course. But suppose we don’t want to talk of frills? You are always boasting of being a free artist; why do you encroach on the freedom of others? And allow me to inquire, if that’s your bent of mind, why do you attack Zoya? With her it would be peculiarly suitable to talk of frills and roses?’

Shubin suddenly fired up, and rose from the garden seat. ‘So that’s it?’ he began in a nervous voice. ‘I understand your hint; you want to send me away to her, Elena

Nikolaevna. In other words, I'm not wanted here.'

'I never thought of sending you away from here.'

'Do you mean to say,' Shubin continued passionately, 'that I am not worthy of other society, that I am her equal; that I am as vain, and silly and petty as that mawkish German girl? Is that it?'

Elena frowned. 'You did not always speak like that of her, Pavel Yakovlitch,' she remarked.

'Ah! reproaches! reproaches now!' cried Shubin. 'Well, then I don't deny there was a moment—one moment precisely, when those fresh, vulgar cheeks of hers... But if I wanted to repay you with reproaches and remind you... Good-bye,' he added suddenly, 'I feel I shall say something silly.'

And with a blow on the clay moulded into the shape of a head, he ran out of the arbour and went off to his room.

'What a baby,' said Elena, looking after him.

'He's an artist,' observed Bersenyev with a quiet smile. 'All artists are like that. One must forgive them their caprices. That is their privilege.'

'Yes,' replied Elena; 'but Pavel has not so far justified his claim to that privilege in any way. What has he done so far? Give me your arm, and let us go along the avenue. He was in our way. We were talking of your father's works.'

Bersenyev took Elena's arm in his, and walked beside her through the garden; but the conversation prematurely broken off was not renewed. Bersenyev began again unfolding his views on the vocation of a professor, and on his own future career. He walked slowly beside Elena, moving awkwardly, awkwardly holding her arm, sometimes jostling his shoulder against her, and not once looking at her; but his talk flowed more easily, even if not perfectly freely; he spoke simply and genuinely, and his eyes, as they strayed slowly over the trunks of the trees, the sand of the path and

the grass, were bright with the quiet ardour of generous emotions, while in his soothed voice there was heard the delight of a man who feels that he is succeeding in expressing himself to one very dear to him. Elena listened to him very attentively, and turning half towards him, did not take her eyes off his face, which had grown a little paler—off his eyes, which were soft and affectionate, though they avoided meeting her eyes. Her soul expanded; and something tender, holy, and good seemed half sinking into her heart, half springing up within it.

V

Shubin did not leave his room before night. It was already quite dark; the moon—not yet at the full—stood high in the sky, the milky way shone white, and the stars spotted the heavens, when Bersenyev, after taking leave of Anna Vassilyevna, Elena, and Zoya, went up to his friend's door. He found it locked. He knocked.

'Who is there?' sounded Shubin's voice.

'I,' answered Bersenyev.

'What do you want?'

'Let me in, Pavel; don't be sulky; aren't you ashamed of yourself?'

'I am not sulky; I'm asleep and dreaming about Zoya.'

'Do stop that, please; you're not a baby. Let me in. I want to talk to you.'

'Haven't you had talk enough with Elena?'

'Come, come; let me in!'

Shubin responded by a pretended snore.

Bersenyev shrugged his shoulders and turned homewards.

The night was warm and seemed strangely still, as though everything were listening and expectant; and Bersenyev, enfolded in the still darkness, stopped involuntarily;

and he, too, listened expectant. On the tree-tops near there was a faint stir, like the rustle of a woman's dress, awaking in him a feeling half-sweet, half-painful, a feeling almost of fright. He felt a tingling in his cheeks, his eyes were chill with momentary tears; he would have liked to move quite noiselessly, to steal along in secret. A cross gust of wind blew suddenly on him; he almost shuddered, and his heart stood still; a drowsy beetle fell off a twig and dropped with a thud on the path; Bersenyev uttered a subdued 'Ah!' and again stopped. But he began to think of Elena, and all these passing sensations vanished at once; there remained only the reviving sense of the night freshness, of the walk by night; his whole soul was absorbed by the image of the young girl. Bersenyev walked with bent head, recalling her words, her questions. He fancied he heard the tramp of quick steps behind. He listened: some one was running, some one was overtaking him; he heard panting, and suddenly from a black circle of shadow cast by a huge tree Shubin sprang out before him, quite pale in the light of the moon, with no cap on his disordered curls.

'I am glad you came along this path,' he said with an effort. 'I should not have slept all night, if I had not overtaken you. Give me your hand. Are you going home?'

'Yes.'

'I will see you home then.'

'But why have you come without a cap on?'

'That doesn't matter. I took off my neckerchief too. It is quite warm.'

The friends walked a few paces.

'I was very stupid to-day, wasn't I?' Shubin asked suddenly.

'To speak frankly, you were. I couldn't make you out. I have never seen you like that before. And what were you angry about really? Such trifles!'

'H'm,' muttered Shubin. 'That's how you put it; but they were not trifles to me. You see,' he went on, 'I ought to point out to you that I—that—you may think what you

please of me—I—well there! I'm in love with Elena.'

'You in love with Elena!' repeated Bersenyev, standing still.

'Yes,' pursued Shubin with affected carelessness. 'Does that astonish you? I will tell you something else. Till this evening I still had hopes that she might come to love me in time. But to-day I have seen for certain that there is no hope for me. She is in love with some one else.'

'Some one else? Whom?'

'Whom? You!' cried Shubin, slapping Bersenyev on the shoulder.

'Me!'

'You,' repeated Shubin.

Bersenyev stepped back a pace, and stood motionless. Shubin looked intently at him.

'And does that astonish you? You are a modest youth. But she loves you. You can make your mind easy on that score.'

'What nonsense you talk!' Bersenyev protested at last with an air of vexation.

'No, it's not nonsense. But why are we standing still? Let us go on. It's easier to talk as we walk. I have known her a long while, and I know her well. I cannot be mistaken. You are a man after her own heart. There was a time when she found me agreeable; but, in the first place, I am too frivolous a young man for her, while you are a serious person, you are a morally and physically well-regulated person, you—hush, I have not finished, you are a conscientiously disposed enthusiast, a genuine type of those devotees of science, of whom—no not of whom—whereof the middle class of Russian gentry are so justly proud! And, secondly, Elena caught me the other day kissing Zoya's arms!'

'Zoya's?'

'Yes, Zoya's. What would you have? She has such fine shoulders.'

‘Shoulders?’

‘Well there, shoulders and arms, isn’t it all the same? Elena caught me in this unconstrained proceeding after dinner, and before dinner I had been abusing Zoya in her hearing. Elena unfortunately doesn’t understand how natural such contradictions are. Then you came on the scene, you have faith in—what the deuce is it you have faith in?... You blush and look confused, you discuss Schiller and Schelling (she’s always on the look-out for remarkable men), and so you have won the day, and I, poor wretch, try to joke—and all the while——’

Shubin suddenly burst into tears, turned away, and dropping upon the ground clutched at his hair.

Bersenyev went up to him.

‘Pavel,’ he began, ‘what childishness this is! Really! what’s the matter with you to-day? God knows what nonsense you have got into your head, and you are crying. Upon my word, I believe you must be putting it on.’

Shubin lifted up his head. The tears shone bright on his cheeks in the moonlight, but there was a smile on his face.

‘Andrei Petrovitch,’ he said, ‘you may think what you please about me. I am even ready to agree with you that I’m hysterical now, but, by God, I’m in love with Elena, and Elena loves you. I promised, though, to see you home, and I will keep my promise.’

He got up.

‘What a night! silvery, dark, youthful! How sweet it must be to-night for men who are loved! How sweet for them not to sleep! Will you sleep, Andrei Petrovitch?’

Bersenyev made no answer, and quickened his pace.

‘Where are you hurrying to?’ Shubin went on. ‘Trust my words, a night like this will never come again in your life, and at home, Schelling will keep. It’s true he did you

good service to-day; but you need not hurry for all that. Sing, if you can sing, sing louder than ever; if you can't sing, take off your hat, throw up your head, and smile to the stars. They are all looking at you, at you alone; the stars never do anything but look down upon lovers—that's why they are so charming. You are in love, I suppose, Andrei Petrovitch?... You don't answer me... why don't you answer?' Shubin began again: 'Oh, if you feel happy, be quiet, be quiet! I chatter because I am a poor devil, unloved, I am a jester, an artist, a buffoon; but what unutterable ecstasy would I quaff in the night wind under the stars, if I knew that I were loved!... Bersenyev, are you happy?'

Bersenyev was silent as before, and walked quickly along the smooth path. In front, between the trees, glimmered the lights of the little village in which he was staying; it consisted of about a dozen small villas for summer visitors. At the very beginning of the village, to the right of the road, a little shop stood under two spreading birch-trees; its windows were all closed already, but a wide patch of light fell fan-shaped from the open door upon the trodden grass, and was cast upwards on the trees, showing up sharply the whitish undersides of the thick growing leaves. A girl, who looked like a maid-servant, was standing in the shop with her back against the doorpost, bargaining with the shopkeeper; from beneath the red kerchief which she had wrapped round her head, and held with bare hand under her chin, could just be seen her round cheek and slender throat. The young men stepped into the patch of light; Shubin looked into the shop, stopped short, and cried 'Annushka!' The girl turned round quickly. They saw a nice-looking, rather broad but fresh face, with merry brown eyes and black eyebrows. 'Annushka!' repeated Shubin. The girl saw him, looked scared and shamefaced, and without finishing her purchases, she hurried down the steps, slipped quickly past, and, hardly looking round, went along the road to the left. The shopkeeper, a puffy man, unmoved by anything in the world, like all country shopkeepers gasped and gaped after her, while Shubin turned to Bersenyev with the words: 'That's... you see... there's a family here I know... so at their house...

you mustn't imagine' ... and, without finishing his speech, he ran after the retreating girl.

'You'd better at least wipe your tears away,' Bersenyev shouted after him, and he could not refrain from laughing. But when he got home, his face had not a mirthful expression; he laughed no longer. He had not for a single instant believed what Shubin had told him, but the words he had uttered had sunk deep into his soul.

'Pavel was making a fool of me,' he thought; '... but she will love one day... whom will she love?'

In Bersenyev's room there was a piano, small, and by no means new, but of a soft and sweet tone, though not perfectly in tune. Bersenyev sat down to it, and began to strike some chords. Like all Russians of good birth, he had studied music in his childhood, and like almost all Russian gentlemen, he played very badly; but he loved music passionately. Strictly speaking, he did not love the art, the forms in which music is expressed (symphonies and sonatas, even operas wearied him), but he loved the poetry of music: he loved those vague and sweet, shapeless, and all-embracing emotions which are stirred in the soul by the combinations and successions of sounds. For more than an hour, he did not move from the piano, repeating many times the same chords, awkwardly picking out new ones, pausing and melting over the minor sevenths. His heart ached, and his eyes more than once filled with tears. He was not ashamed of them; he let them flow in the darkness. 'Pavel was right,' he thought, 'I feel it; this evening will not come again.' At last he got up, lighted a candle, put on his dressing-gown, took down from the bookshelf the second volume of Raumer's History of the Hohenstaufen, and sighing twice, he set to work diligently to read it.

VI

Meanwhile, Elena had gone to her room, and sat down at the open window, her head

resting on her hands. To spend about a quarter of an hour every evening at her bedroom window had become a habit with her. At this time she held converse with herself, and passed in review the preceding day. She had not long reached her twentieth year. She was tall, and had a pale and dark face, large grey eyes under arching brows, covered with tiny freckles, a perfectly regular forehead and nose, tightly compressed lips, and a rather sharp chin. Her hair, of a chestnut shade, fell low on her slender neck. In her whole personality, in the expression of her face, intent and a little timorous, in her clear but changing glance, in her smile, which was, as it were, intense, in her soft and uneven voice, there was something nervous, electric, something impulsive and hurried, something, in fact, which could never be attractive to every one, which even repelled some.

Her hands were slender and rosy, with long fingers; her feet were slender; she walked swiftly, almost impetuously, her figure bent a little forward. She had grown up very strangely; first she idolised her father, then she became passionately devoted to her mother, and had grown cold to both of them, especially to her father. Of late years she had behaved to her mother as to a sick grandmother; while her father, who had been proud of her while she had been regarded as an exceptional child, had come to be afraid of her when she was grown up, and said of her that she was a sort of enthusiastic republican—no one could say where she got it from. Weakness revolted her, stupidity made her angry, and deceit she could never, never pardon. She was exacting beyond all bounds, even her prayers had more than once been mingled with reproaches. When once a person had lost her respect—and she passed judgment quickly, often too quickly—he ceased to exist for her. All impressions cut deeply into her heart; life was bitter earnest for her.

The governess to whom Anna Vassilyevna had entrusted the finishing of her daughter’s education—an education, we may remark in parenthesis, which had not even been begun by the languid lady—was a Russian, the daughter of a ruined official, educated at a government boarding school, a very emotional, soft-hearted,

and deceitful creature; she was for ever falling in love, and ended in her fiftieth year (when Elena was seventeen) by marrying an officer of some sort, who deserted her without loss of time. This governess was very fond of literature, and wrote verses herself; she inspired Elena with a love of reading, but reading alone did not satisfy the girl; from childhood she thirsted for action, for active well-doing—the poor, the hungry, and the sick absorbed her thoughts, tormented her, and made her heart heavy; she used to dream of them, and to ply all her friends with questions about them; she gave alms carefully, with unconscious solemnity, almost with a thrill of emotion. All ill-used creatures, starved dogs, cats condemned to death, sparrows fallen out of the nest, even insects and reptiles found a champion and protector in Elena; she fed them herself, and felt no repugnance for them. Her mother did not interfere with her; but her father used to be very indignant with his daughter, for her—as he called it—vulgar soft-heartedness, and declared there was not room to move for the cats and dogs in the house. ‘Lenotchka,’ he would shout to her, ‘come quickly, here’s a spider eating a fly; come and save the poor wretch!’ And Lenotchka, all excitement, would run up, set the fly free, and disentangle its legs. ‘Well, now let it bite you a little, since you are so kind,’ her father would say ironically; but she did not hear him. At ten years old Elena made friends with a little beggar-girl, Katya, and used to go secretly to meet her in the garden, took her nice things to eat, and presented her with handkerchiefs and pennies; playthings Katya would not take. She would sit beside her on the dry earth among the bushes behind a thick growth of nettles; with a feeling of delicious humility she ate her stale bread and listened to her stories. Katya had an aunt, an ill-natured old woman, who often beat her; Katya hated her, and was always talking of how she would run away from her aunt and live in ‘God’s full freedom’; with secret respect and awe Elena drank in these new unknown words, stared intently at Katya and everything about her—her quick black, almost animal eyes, her sun-burnt hands, her hoarse voice, even her ragged clothes—seemed to Elena at such times something particular and

distinguished, almost holy. Elena went back home, and for long after dreamed of beggars and God's freedom; she would dream over plans of how she would cut herself a hazel stick, and put on a wallet and run away with Katya; how she would wander about the roads in a wreath of corn-flowers; she had seen Katya one day in just such a wreath. If, at such times, any one of her family came into the room, she would shun them and look shy. One day she ran out in the rain to meet Katya, and made her frock muddy; her father saw her, and called her a slut and a peasant-wench. She grew hot all over, and there was something of terror and rapture in her heart. Katya often sang some half-brutal soldier's song. Elena learnt this song from her.... Anna Vassilyevna overheard her singing it, and was very indignant.

'Where did you pick up such horrors?' she asked her daughter.

Elena only looked at her mother, and would not say a word; she felt that she would let them tear her to pieces sooner than betray her secret, and again there was a terror and sweetness in her heart. Her friendship with Katya, however, did not last long; the poor little girl fell sick of fever, and in a few days she was dead.

Elena was greatly distressed, and spent sleepless nights for long after she heard of Katya's death. The last words of the little beggar-girl were constantly ringing in her ears, and she fancied that she was being called....

The years passed and passed; swiftly and noiselessly, like waters running under the snow, Elena's youth glided by, outwardly uneventful, inwardly in conflict and emotion. She had no friend; she did not get on with any one of all the girls who visited the Stahovs' house. Her parents' authority had never weighed heavily on Elena, and from her sixteenth year she became absolutely independent; she began to live a life of her own, but it was a life of solitude. Her soul glowed, and the fire died away again in solitude; she struggled like a bird in a cage, and cage there was none; no one oppressed her, no one restrained her, while she was torn, and fretted within. Sometimes she did not understand herself, was even frightened of herself.

Everything that surrounded her seemed to her half-senseless, half-incomprehensible. ‘How live without love? and there’s no one to love!’ she thought; and she felt terror again at these thoughts, these sensations. At eighteen, she nearly died of malignant fever; her whole constitution—naturally healthy and vigorous—was seriously affected, and it was long before it could perfectly recover; the last traces of the illness disappeared at last, but Elena Nikolaevna’s father was never tired of talking with some spitefulness of her ‘nerves.’ Sometimes she fancied that she wanted something which no one wanted, of which no one in all Russia dreamed. Then she would grow calmer, and even laugh at herself, and pass day after day unconcernedly; but suddenly some over-mastering, nameless force would surge up within her, and seem to clamour for an outlet. The storm passed over, and the wings of her soul drooped without flight; but these tempests of feeling cost her much. However she might strive not to betray what was passing within her, the suffering of the tormented spirit was expressed in her even external tranquillity, and her parents were often justified in shrugging their shoulders in astonishment, and failing to understand her ‘queer ways.’

On the day with which our story began, Elena did not leave the window till later than usual. She thought much of Bersenyev, and of her conversation with him. She liked him; she believed in the warmth of his feelings, and the purity of his aims. He had never before talked to her as on that evening. She recalled the expression of his timid eyes, his smiles—and she smiled herself and fell to musing, but not of him. She began to look out into the night from the open window. For a long time she gazed at the dark, low-hanging sky; then she got up, flung back her hair from her face with a shake of her head, and, herself not knowing why, she stretched out to it—to that sky—her bare chilled arms; then she dropped them, fell on her knees beside her bed, pressed her face into the pillow, and, in spite of all her efforts not to yield to the passion overwhelming her, she burst into strange, uncomprehending, burning tears.

VII

The next day at twelve o'clock, Bersenyev set off in a return coach to Moscow. He had to get some money from the post-office, to buy some books, and he wanted to seize the opportunity to see Insarov and have some conversation with him. The idea had occurred to Bersenyev, in the course of his last conversation with Shubin, to invite Insarov to stay with him at his country lodgings. But it was some time before he found him out; from his former lodging he had moved to another, which it was not easy to discover; it was in the court at the back of a squalid stone house, built in the Petersburg style, between Arbaty Road and Povarsky Street. In vain Bersenyev wandered from one dirty staircase to another, in vain he called first to a doorkeeper, then to a passer-by. Porters even in Petersburg try to avoid the eyes of visitors, and in Moscow much more so; no one answered Bersenyev's call; only an inquisitive tailor, in his shirt sleeves, with a skein of grey thread on his shoulder, thrust out from a high casement window a dirty, dull, unshorn face, with a blackened eye; and a black and hornless goat, clambering up on to a dung heap, turned round, bleated plaintively, and went on chewing the cud faster than before. A woman in an old cloak, and shoes trodden down at heel, took pity at last on Bersenyev and pointed out Insarov's lodging to him. Bersenyev found him at home. He had taken a room with the very tailor who had stared down so indifferently at the perplexity of a wandering stranger; a large, almost empty room, with dark green walls, three square windows, a tiny bedstead in one corner, a little leather sofa in another, and a huge cage hung up to the very ceiling; in this cage there had once lived a nightingale. Insarov came to meet Bersenyev directly he crossed the threshold, but he did not exclaim, 'Ah, it's you!' or 'Good Heavens, what happy chance has brought you?' He did not even say, 'How do you do?' but simply pressed his hand and led him up to the solitary chair in the room.

'Sit down,' he said, and he seated himself on the edge of the table.

‘I am, as you see, still in disorder,’ added Insarov, pointing to a pile of papers and books on the floor, ‘I haven’t got settled in as I ought. I have not had time yet.’

Insarov spoke Russian perfectly correctly, pronouncing every word fully and purely; but his guttural though pleasant voice sounded somehow not Russian. Insarov’s foreign extraction (he was a Bulgarian by birth) was still more clearly marked in his appearance; he was a young man of five-and-twenty, spare and sinewy, with a hollow chest and knotted fingers; he had sharp features, a hooked nose, blue-black hair, a low forehead, small, intent-looking, deep-set eyes, and bushy eyebrows; when he smiled, splendid white teeth gleamed for an instant between his thin, hard, over-defined lips. He was in a rather old but tidy coat, buttoned up to the throat.

‘Why did you leave your old lodging?’ Bersenyev asked him.

‘This is cheaper, and nearer to the university.’

‘But now it’s vacation.... And what could induce you to stay in the town in summer! You should have taken a country cottage if you were determined to move.’

Insarov made no reply to this remark, and offered Bersenyev a pipe, adding: ‘Excuse me, I have no cigarettes or cigars.’

Bersenyev began smoking the pipe.

‘Here have I,’ he went on, ‘taken a little house near Kuntsovo, very cheap and very roomy. In fact there is a room to spare upstairs.’

Insarov again made no answer.

Bersenyev drew at the pipe: ‘I have even been thinking,’ he began again, blowing out the smoke in a thin cloud, ‘that if any one could be found—you, for instance, I thought of—who would care, who would consent to establish himself there upstairs, how nice it would be! What do you think, Dmitri Nikanorovitch?’

Insarov turned his little eyes on him. ‘You propose my staying in your country house?’

‘Yes; I have a room to spare there upstairs.’

‘Thanks very much, Andrei Petrovitch; but I expect my means would not allow of it.’

‘How do you mean?’

‘My means would not allow of my living in a country house. It’s impossible for me to keep two lodgings.’

‘But of course I’—Bersenyev was beginning, but he stopped short. ‘You would have no extra expense in that way,’ he went on. ‘Your lodging here would remain for you, let us suppose; but then everything there is very cheap; we could even arrange so as to dine, for instance, together.’

Insarov said nothing. Bersenyev began to feel awkward.

‘You might at least pay me a visit sometime,’ he began, after a short pause. ‘A few steps from me there’s a family living with whom I want very much to make you acquainted. If only you knew, Insarov, what a marvellous girl there is there! There is an intimate friend of mine staying there too, a man of great talent; I am sure you would get on with him. [The Russian loves to be hospitable—of his friends if he can offer nothing else.] Really, you must come. And what would be better still, come and stay with me, do. We could work and read together.... I am busy, as you know, with history and philosophy. All that would interest you. I have a lot of books.’

Insarov got up and walked about the room. ‘Let me know,’ he said, ‘how much do you pay for your cottage?’

‘A hundred silver roubles.’

‘And how many rooms are there?’

‘Five.’

‘Then one may reckon that one room costs twenty roubles?’

‘Yes, one may reckon so.... But really it’s utterly unnecessary for me. It simply

stands empty.’

‘Perhaps so; but listen,’ added Insarov, with a decided, but at the same time good-natured movement of his head: ‘I can only take advantage of your offer if you agree to take the sum we have reckoned. Twenty roubles I am able to give, the more easily, since, as you say, I shall be economising there in other things.’

‘Of course; but really I am ashamed to take it.’

‘Otherwise it’s impossible, Andrei Petrovitch.’

‘Well, as you like; but what an obstinate fellow you are!’

Insarov again made no reply.

The young men made arrangements as to the day on which Insarov was to move. They called the landlord; at first he sent his daughter, a little girl of seven, with a large striped kerchief on her head; she listened attentively, almost with awe, to all Insarov said to her, and went away without speaking; after her, her mother, a woman far gone with child, made her appearance, also wearing a kerchief on her head, but a very diminutive one. Insarov informed her that he was going to stay at a cottage near Kuntsovo, but should keep on his lodging and leave all his things in their keeping; the tailor’s wife too seemed scared and went away. At last the man himself came in: he seemed to understand everything from the first, and only said gloomily: ‘Near Kuntsovo?’ then all at once he opened the door and shouted: ‘Are you going to keep the lodgings then?’ Insarov reassured him. ‘Well, one must know,’ repeated the tailor morosely, as he disappeared.

Bersenyev returned home, well content with the success of his proposal. Insarov escorted him to the door with cordial good manners, not common in Russia; and, when he was left alone, carefully took off his coat, and set to work upon sorting his papers.

VIII

On the evening of the same day, Anna Vassilyevna was sitting in her drawing-room and was on the verge of weeping. There were also in the room her husband and a certain Uvar Ivanovitch Stahov, a distant cousin of Nikolai Artemyevitch, a retired cornet of sixty years old, a man corpulent to the point of immobility, with sleepy yellowish eyes, and colourless thick lips in a puffy yellow face. Ever since he had retired, he had lived in Moscow on the interest of a small capital left him by a wife who came of a shopkeeper's family. He did nothing, and it is doubtful whether he thought of anything; if he did think, he kept his thoughts to himself. Once only in his life he had been thrown into a state of excitement and shown signs of animation, and that was when he read in the newspapers of a new instrument at the Universal Exhibition in London, the 'contro-bombardon,' and became very anxious to order this instrument for himself, and even made inquiries as to where to send the money and through what office. Uvar Ivanovitch wore a loose snuff-coloured coat and a white neckcloth, used to eat often and much, and in moments of great perplexity, that is to say when it happened to him to express some opinion, he would flourish the fingers of his right hand meditatively in the air, with a convulsive spasm from the first finger to the little finger, and back from the little finger to the first finger, while he articulated with effort, 'to be sure... there ought to... in some sort of a way.'

Uvar Ivanovitch was sitting in an easy chair by the window, breathing heavily; Nikolai Artemyevitch was pacing with long strides up and down the room, his hands thrust into his pockets; his face expressed dissatisfaction.

He stood still at last and shook his head. 'Yes;' he began, 'in our day young men were brought up differently. Young men did not permit themselves to be lacking in respect to their elders. And nowadays, I can only look on and wonder. Possibly, I am all wrong, and they are quite right; possibly. But still I have my own views of things; I was not born a fool. What do you think about it, Uvar Ivanovitch?'

Uvar Ivanovitch could only look at him and work his fingers.

‘Elena Nikolaevna, for instance,’ pursued Nikolai Artemyevitch, ‘Elena Nikolaevna I don’t pretend to understand. I am not elevated enough for her. Her heart is so large that it embraces all nature down to the least spider or frog, everything in fact except her own father. Well, that’s all very well; I know it, and I don’t trouble myself about it. For that’s nerves and education and lofty aspirations, and all that is not in my line. But Mr. Shubin... admitting he’s a wonderful artist—quite exceptional—that, I don’t dispute; to show want of respect to his elder, a man to whom, at any rate, one may say he is under great obligation; that I confess, dans mon gros bon sens, I cannot pass over. I am not exacting by nature, no, but there is a limit to everything.’

Anna Vassilyevna rang the bell in a tremor. A little page came in.

‘Why is it Pavel Yakovlitch does not come?’ she said, ‘what does it mean; I call him, and he doesn’t come?’

Nikolai Artemyevitch shrugged his shoulders.

‘And what is the object, may I ask, of your wanting to send for him? I don’t expect that at all, I don’t wish it even!’

‘What’s the object, Nikolai Artemyevitch? He has disturbed you; very likely he has checked the progress of your cure. I want to have an explanation with him. I want to know how he has dared to annoy you.’

‘I tell you again, that I do not ask that. And what can induce you ... devant les domestiques!’

Anna Vassilyevna flushed a little. ‘You need not say that, Nikolai Artemyevitch. I never... devant les domestiques... Fedushka, go and see you bring Pavel Yakovlitch here at once.’

The little page went off.

‘And that’s absolutely unnecessary,’ muttered Nikolai Artemyevitch between his teeth, and he began again pacing up and down the room. ‘I did not bring up the

subject with that object.’

‘Good Heavens, Paul must apologise to you.’

‘Good Heavens, what are his apologies to me? And what do you mean by apologies? That’s all words.’

‘Why, he must be corrected.’

‘Well, you can correct him yourself. He will listen to you sooner than to me. For my part I bear him no grudge.’

‘No, Nikolai Artemyevitch, you’ve not been yourself ever since you arrived. You have even to my eyes grown thinner lately. I am afraid your treatment is doing you no good.’

‘The treatment is quite indispensable,’ observed Nikolai Artemyevitch, ‘my liver is affected.’

At that instant Shubin came in. He looked tired. A slight almost ironical smile played on his lips.

‘You asked for me, Anna Vassilyevna?’ he observed.

‘Yes, certainly I asked for you. Really, Paul, this is dreadful. I am very much displeased with you. How could you be wanting in respect to Nikolai Artemyevitch?’

‘Nikolai Artemyevitch has complained of me to you?’ inquired Shubin, and with the same smile on his lips he looked at Stahov. The latter turned away, dropping his eyes.

‘Yes, he complains of you. I don’t know what you have done amiss, but you ought to apologise at once, because his health is very much deranged just now, and indeed we all ought when we are young to treat our benefactors with respect.’

‘Ah, what logic!’ thought Shubin, and he turned to Stahov. ‘I am ready to apologise to you, Nikolai Artemyevitch,’ he said with a polite half-bow, ‘if I have really

offended you in any way.'

'I did not at all... with that idea,' rejoined Nikolai Artemyevitch, still as before avoiding Shubin's eyes. 'However, I will readily forgive you, for, as you know, I am not an exacting person.'

'Oh, that admits of no doubt!' said Shubin. 'But allow me to be inquisitive; is Anna Vassilyevna aware precisely what constituted my offence?'

'No, I know nothing,' observed Anna Vassilyevna, craning forward her head expectantly.

'O Good Lord!' exclaimed Nikolai Artemyevitch hurriedly, 'how often have I prayed and besought, how often have I said how I hate these scenes and explanations! When one's been away an age, and comes home hoping for rest—talk of the family circle, intérieur, being a family man—and here one finds scenes and unpleasantnesses. There's not a minute of peace. One's positively driven to the club... or, or elsewhere. A man is alive, he has a physical side, and it has its claims, but here——'

And without concluding his sentence Nikolai Artemyevitch went quickly out, slamming the door.

Anna Vassilyevna looked after him. 'To the club!' she muttered bitterly: 'you are not going to the club, profligate? You've no one at the club to give away my horses to—horses from my own stable—and the grey ones too! My favourite colour. Yes, yes, fickle-hearted man,' she went on raising her voice, 'you are not going to the club, As for you, Paul,' she pursued, getting up, 'I wonder you're not ashamed. I should have thought you would not be so childish. And now my head has begun to ache. Where is Zoya, do you know?'

'I think she's upstairs in her room. The wise little fox always hides in her hole when there's a storm in the air.'

'Come, please, please!' Anna Vassilyevna began searching about her. 'Haven't you

seen my little glass of grated horse-radish? Paul, be so good as not to make me angry for the future.'

'How make you angry, auntie? Give me your little hand to kiss. Your horse-radish I saw on the little table in the boudoir.'

'Darya always leaves it about somewhere,' said Anna Vassilyevna, and she walked away with a rustle of silk skirts.

Shubin was about to follow her, but he stopped on hearing Uvar Ivanovitch's drawling voice behind him.

'I would... have given it you... young puppy,' the retired cornet brought out in gasps.

Shubin went up to him. 'And what have I done, then, most venerable Uvar Ivanovitch?'

'How! you are young, be respectful. Yes indeed.'

'Respectful to whom?'

'To whom? You know whom. Ay, grin away.'

Shubin crossed his arms on his breast.

'Ah, you type of the choice element in drama,' he exclaimed, 'you primeval force of the black earth, cornerstone of the social fabric!'

Uvar Ivanovitch's fingers began to work. 'There, there, my boy, don't provoke me.'

'Here,' pursued Shubin, 'is a gentleman, not young to judge by appearances, but what blissful, child-like faith is still hidden in him! Respect! And do you know, you primitive creature, what Nikolai Artemyevitch was in a rage with me for? Why I spent the whole of this morning with him at his German woman's; we were singing the three of us—"Do not leave me." You should have heard us—that would have moved you. We sang and sang, my dear sir—and well, I got bored; I could see something was wrong, there was an alarming tenderness in the air. And I began to tease them both. I was very successful. First she was angry with me, then with him;

and then he got angry with her, and told her that he was never happy except at home, and he had a paradise there; and she told him he had no morals; and I murmured "Ach!" to her in German. He walked off and I stayed behind; he came here, to his paradise that's to say, and he was soon sick of paradise, so he set to grumbling. Well now, who do you consider was to blame?'

'You, of course,' replied Uvar Ivanovitch.

Shubin stared at him. 'May I venture to ask you, most reverend knight-errant,' he began in an obsequious voice, 'these enigmatical words you have deigned to utter as the result of some exercise of your reflecting faculties, or under the influence of a momentary necessity to start the vibration in the air known as sound?'

'Don't tempt me, I tell you,' groaned Uvar Ivanovitch.

Shubin laughed and ran away. 'Hi,' shouted Uvar Ivanovitch a quarter of an hour later, 'you there... a glass of spirits.'

A little page brought the glass of spirits and some salt fish on a tray. Uvar Ivanovitch slowly took the glass from the tray and gazed a long while with intense attention at it, as though he could not quite understand what it was he had in his hand. Then he looked at the page and asked him, 'Wasn't his name Vaska?' Then he assumed an air of resignation, drank off the spirit, munched the herring and was slowly proceeding to get his handkerchief out of his pocket. But the page had long ago carried off and put away the tray and the decanter, eaten up the remains of the herring and had time to go off to sleep, curled up in a great-coat of his master's, while Uvar Ivanovitch still continued to hold the handkerchief before him in his opened fingers, and with the same intense attention gazed now at the window, now at the floor and walls.

IX

Shubin went back to his room in the lodge and was just opening a book, when

Nikolai Artemyevitch's valet came cautiously into his room and handed him a small triangular note, sealed with a thick heraldic crest. 'I hope,' he found in the note, 'that you as a man of honour will not allow yourself to hint by so much as a single word at a certain promissory note which was talked of this morning. You are acquainted with my position and my rules, the insignificance of the sum in itself and the other circumstances; there are, in fine, family secrets which must be respected, and family tranquillity is something so sacred that only êtres sans coeur (among whom I have no reason to reckon you) would repudiate it! Give this note back to me.—N. S.'

Shubin scribbled below in pencil: 'Don't excite yourself, I'm not quite a sneak yet,' and gave the note back to the man, and again began upon the book. But it soon slipped out of his hands. He looked at the reddening sky, at the two mighty young pines standing apart from the other trees, thought 'by day pines are bluish, but how magnificently green they are in the evening,' and went out into the garden, in the secret hope of meeting Elena there. He was not mistaken. Before him on a path between the bushes he caught a glimpse of her dress. He went after her, and when he was abreast with her, remarked:

'Don't look in my direction, I'm not worth it.'

She gave him a cursory glance, smiled cursorily, and walked on further into the depths of the garden. Shubin went after her.

'I beg you not to look at me,' he began, 'and then I address you; flagrant contradiction. But what of that? it's not the first time I've contradicted myself. I have just recollected that I have never begged your pardon as I ought for my stupid behaviour yesterday. You are not angry with me, Elena Nikolaevna, are you?'

She stood still and did not answer him at once—not because she was angry, but because her thoughts were far away.

'No,' she said at last, 'I am not in the least angry.' Shubin bit his lip.

'What an absorbed... and what an indifferent face!' he muttered. 'Elena Nikolaevna,'

he continued, raising his voice, ‘allow me to tell you a little anecdote. I had a friend, and this friend also had a friend, who at first conducted himself as befits a gentleman but afterwards took to drink. So one day early in the morning, my friend meets him in the street (and by that time, note, the acquaintance has been completely dropped) meets him and sees he is drunk. My friend went and turned his back on him. But he ran up and said, “I would not be angry,” says he, “if you refused to recognise me, but why should you turn your back on me? Perhaps I have been brought to this through grief. Peace to my ashes!”’

Shubin paused.

‘And is that all?’ inquired Elena.

‘Yes that’s all.’

‘I don’t understand you. What are you hinting at? You told me just now not to look your way.’

‘Yes, and now I have told you that it’s too bad to turn your back on me.’

‘But did I?’ began Elena.

‘Did you not?’

Elena flushed slightly and held out her hand to Shubin. He pressed it warmly.

‘Here you seem to have convicted me of a bad feeling,’ said Elena, ‘but your suspicion is unjust. I was not even thinking of avoiding you.’

‘Granted, granted. But you must acknowledge that at that minute you had a thousand ideas in your head of which you would not confide one to me. Eh? I’ve spoken the truth, I’m quite sure?’

‘Perhaps so.’

‘And why is it? why?’

‘My ideas are not clear to myself,’ said Elena.

‘Then it’s just the time for confiding them to some one else,’ put in Shubin. ‘But I

will tell you what it really is. You have a bad opinion of me.’

‘I?’

‘Yes you; you imagine that everything in me is half-humbug because I am an artist, that I am incapable not only of doing anything—in that you are very likely right—but even of any genuine deep feeling; you think that I am not capable even of weeping sincerely, that I’m a gossip and a slanderer,—and all because I’m an artist. What luckless, God-forsaken wretches we artists are after that! You, for instance, I am ready to adore, and you don’t believe in my repentance.’

‘No, Pavel Yakovlitch, I believe in your repentance and I believe in your tears. But it seems to me that even your repentance amuses you—yes and your tears too.’

Shubin shuddered.

‘Well, I see this is, as the doctors say, a hopeless case, casus incurabilis. There is nothing left but to bow the head and submit. And meanwhile, good Heavens, can it be true, can I possibly be absorbed in my own egoism when there is a soul like this living at my side? And to know that one will never penetrate into that soul, never will know why it grieves and why it rejoices, what is working within it, what it desires—whither it is going... Tell me,’ he said after a short silence, ‘could you never under any circumstances love an artist?’

Elena looked straight into his eyes.

‘I don’t think so, Pavel Yakovlitch; no.’

‘Which was to be proved,’ said Shubin with comical dejection. ‘After which I suppose it would be more seemly for me not to intrude on your solitary walk. A professor would ask you on what data you founded your answer no. I’m not a professor though, but a baby according to your ideas; but one does not turn one’s back on a baby, remember. Good-bye! Peace to my ashes!’

Elena was on the point of stopping him, but after a moment’s thought she too said:

‘Good-bye.’

Shubin went out of the courtyard. At a short distance from the Stahov’s house he was met by Bersenyev. He was walking with hurried steps, his head bent and his hat pushed back on his neck.

‘Andrei Petrovitch!’ cried Shubin.

He stopped.

‘Go on, go on,’ continued Shubin, ‘I only shouted, I won’t detain you—and you’d better slip straight into the garden—you’ll find Elena there, I fancy she’s waiting for you... she’s waiting for some one anyway.... Do you understand the force of those words: she is waiting! And do you know, my dear boy, an astonishing circumstance? Imagine, it’s two years now that I have been living in the same house with her, I’m in love with her, and it’s only just now, this minute, that I’ve, not understood, but really seen her. I have seen her and I lifted up my hands in amazement. Don’t look at me, please, with that sham sarcastic smile, which does not suit your sober features. Well, now, I suppose you want to remind me of Annushka. What of it? I don’t deny it. Annushkas are on my poor level. And long life to all Annushkas and Zoyas and even Augustina Christianovnas! You go to Elena now, and I will make my way to—Annushka, you fancy? No, my dear fellow, worse than that; to Prince Tchikurasov. He is a Maecenas of a Kazan-Tartar stock, after the style of Volgin. Do you see this note of invitation, these letters, R.S.V.P.? Even in the country there’s no peace for me. Addio!’ Bersenyev listened to Shubin’s tirade in silence, looking as though he were just a little ashamed of him. Then he went into the courtyard of the Stahovs’ house. And Shubin did really go to Prince Tchikurasov, to whom with the most cordial air he began saying the most insulting things. The Maecenas of the Tartars of Kazan chuckled; the Maecenas’s guests laughed, but no one felt merry, and every one was in a bad temper when the party broke up. So two gentlemen slightly acquainted may be seen when they meet on the Nevsky Prospect

suddenly grinning at one another and pursing up their eyes and noses and cheeks, and then, directly they have passed one another, they resume their former indifferent, often cross, and generally sickly, expression.

X

Elena met Bersenyev cordially, though not in the garden, but the drawing-room, and at once, almost impatiently, renewed the conversation of the previous day. She was alone; Nikolai Artemyevitch had quietly slipped away. Anna Vassilyevna was lying down upstairs with a wet bandage on her head. Zoya was sitting by her, the folds of her skirt arranged precisely about her, and her little hands clasped on her knees. Uvar Ivanovitch was reposing in the attic on a wide and comfortable divan, known as a ‘samo-son’ or ‘dozer.’ Bersenyev again mentioned his father; he held his memory sacred. Let us, too, say a few words about him.

The owner of eighty-two serfs, whom he set free before his death, an old Gottingen student, and disciple of the ‘Illuminati,’ the author of a manuscript work on ‘transformations or typifications of the spirit in the world’—a work in which Schelling’s philosophy, Swedenborgianism and republicanism were mingled in the most original fashion—Bersenyev’s father brought him, while still a boy, to Moscow immediately after his mother’s death, and at once himself undertook his education. He prepared himself for each lesson, exerted himself with extraordinary conscientiousness and absolute lack of success: he was a dreamer, a bookworm, and a mystic; he spoke in a dull, hesitating voice, used obscure and roundabout expressions, metaphorical by preference, and was shy even of his son, whom he loved passionately. It was not surprising that his son was simply bewildered at his lessons, and did not advance in the least. The old man (he was almost fifty, he had married late in life) surmised at last that things were not going quite right, and he placed his Andrei in a school. Andrei began to learn, but he was not removed from

his father's supervision; his father visited him unceasingly, wearying the schoolmaster to death with his instructions and conversation; the teachers, too, were bored by his uninvited visits; he was for ever bringing them some, as they said, far-fetched books on education. Even the schoolboys were embarrassed at the sight of the old man's swarthy, pockmarked face, his lank figure, invariably clothed in a sort of scanty grey dresscoat. The boys did not suspect then that this grim, unsmiling old gentleman, with his crane-like gait and his long nose, was at heart troubling and yearning over each one of them almost as over his own son. He once conceived the idea of talking to them about Washington: 'My young nurslings,' he began, but at the first sounds of his strange voice the young nurslings ran away. The good old Gottingen student did not lie on a bed of roses; he was for ever weighed down by the march of history, by questions and ideas of every kind. When young Bersenyev entered the university, his father used to drive with him to the lectures, but his health was already beginning to break up. The events of the year 1848 shook him to the foundation (it necessitated the re-writing of his whole book), and he died in the winter of 1853, before his son's time at the university was over, but he was able beforehand to congratulate him on his degree, and to consecrate him to the service of science. 'I pass on the torch to you,' he said to him two hours before his death. 'I held it while I could; you, too, must not let the light grow dim before the end.'

Bersenyev talked a long while to Elena of his father. The embarrassment he had felt in her presence disappeared, and his lisp was less marked. The conversation passed on to the university.

'Tell me,' Elena asked him, 'were there any remarkable men among your comrades?'

Bersenyev was again reminded of Shubin's words.

'No, Elena Nikolaevna, to tell you the truth, there was not a single remarkable man among us. And, indeed, where are such to be found! There was, they say, a good

time once in the Moscow university! But not now. Now it's a school, not a university. I was not happy with my comrades,' he added, dropping his voice.

'Not happy,' murmured Elena.

'But I ought,' continued Bersenyev, 'to make an exception. I know one student—it's true he is not in the same faculty—he is certainly a remarkable man.'

'What is his name?' Elena inquired with interest.

'Insarov Dmitri Nikanorovitch. He is a Bulgarian.'

'Not a Russian?'

'No, he is not a Russian,'

'Why is he living in Moscow, then?'

'He came here to study. And do you know with what aim he is studying? He has a single idea: the liberation of his country. And his story is an exceptional one. His father was a fairly well-to-do merchant; he came from Tirnova. Tirnova is now a small town, but it was the capital of Bulgaria in the old days when Bulgaria was still an independent state. He traded with Sophia, and had relations with Russia; his sister, Insarov's aunt, is still living in Kiev, married to a senior history teacher in the gymnasium there. In 1835, that is to say eighteen years ago, a terrible crime was committed; Insarov's mother suddenly disappeared without leaving a trace behind; a week later she was found murdered.'

Elena shuddered. Bersenyev stopped.

'Go on, go on,' she said.

'There were rumours that she had been outraged and murdered by a Turkish aga; her husband, Insarov's father, found out the truth, tried to avenge her, but only succeeded in wounding the aga with his poniard.... He was shot.'

'Shot, and without a trial?'

'Yes. Insarov was just eight years old at the time. He remained in the hands of

neighbours. The sister heard of the fate of her brother's family, and wanted to take the nephew to live with her. They got him to Odessa, and from there to Kiev. At Kiev he lived twelve whole years. That's how it is he speaks Russian so well.'

'He speaks Russian?'

'Just as we do. When he was twenty (that was at the beginning of the year 1848) he began to want to return to his country. He stayed in Sophia and Tirnova, and travelled through the length and breadth of Bulgaria, spending two years there, and learning his mother tongue over again. The Turkish Government persecuted him, and he was certainly exposed to great dangers during those two years; I once caught sight of a broad scar on his neck, from a wound, no doubt; but he does not like to talk about it. He is reserved, too, in his own way. I have tried to question him about everything, but I could get nothing out of him. He answers by generalities. He's awfully obstinate. He returned to Russia again in 1850, to Moscow, with the intention of educating himself thoroughly, getting intimate with Russians, and then when he leaves the university——'

'What then?' broke in Elena.

'What God wills. It's hard to forecast the future.'

For a while Elena did not take her eyes off Bersenyev.

'You have greatly interested me by what you have told me,' she said. 'What is he like, this friend of yours; what did you call him, Insarov?'

'What shall I say? To my mind, he's good-looking. But you will see him for yourself.'

'How so?'

'I will bring him here to see you. He is coming to our little village the day after tomorrow, and is going to live with me in the same lodging.'

'Really? But will he care to come to see us?'

‘I should think so. He will be delighted.’

‘He isn’t proud, then?’

‘Not the least. That’s to say, he is proud if you like, only not in the sense you mean. He will never, for instance, borrow money from any one.’

‘Is he poor?’

‘Yes, he isn’t rich. When he went to Bulgaria he collected some relics left of his father’s property, and his aunt helps him; but it all comes to very little.’

‘He must have a great deal of character,’ observed Elena.

‘Yes. He is a man of iron. And at the same time you will see there is something childlike and frank, with all his concentration and even his reserve. It’s true, his frankness is not our poor sort of frankness—the frankness of people who have absolutely nothing to conceal.... But there, I will bring him to see you; wait a little.’

‘And isn’t he shy?’ asked Elena again.

‘No, he’s not shy. It’s only vain people who are shy.’

‘Why, are you vain?’

He was confused and made a vague gesture with his hands.

‘You excite my curiosity,’ pursued Elena. ‘But tell me, has he not taken vengeance on that Turkish aga?’

Bersenyev smiled

‘Revenge is only to be found in novels, Elena Nikolaevna; and, besides, in twelve years that aga may well be dead.’

‘Mr. Insarov has never said anything, though, to you about it?’

‘No, never.’

‘Why did he go to Sophia?’

‘His father used to live there.’

Elena grew thoughtful.

‘To liberate one’s country!’ she said. ‘It is terrible even to utter those words, they are so grand.’

At that instant Anna Vassilyevna came into the room, and the conversation stopped.

Bersenyev was stirred by strange emotions when he returned home that evening. He did not regret his plan of making Elena acquainted with Insarov, he felt the deep impression made on her by his account of the young Bulgarian very natural... had he not himself tried to deepen that impression! But a vague, unfathomable emotion lurked secretly in his heart; he was sad with a sadness that had nothing noble in it. This sadness did not prevent him, however, from setting to work on the History of the Hohenstaufen, and beginning to read it at the very page at which he had left off the evening before.

XI

Two days later, Insarov in accordance with his promise arrived at Bersenyev’s with his luggage. He had no servant; but without any assistance he put his room to rights, arranged the furniture, dusted and swept the floor. He had special trouble with the writing table, which would not fit into the recess in the wall assigned for it; but Insarov, with the silent persistence peculiar to him succeeded in getting his own way with it. When he had settled in, he asked Bersenyev to let him pay him ten roubles in advance, and arming himself with a thick stick, set off to inspect the country surrounding his new abode. He returned three hours later; and in response to Bersenyev’s invitation to share his repast, he said that he would not refuse to dine with him that day, but that he had already spoken to the woman of the house, and would get her to send him up his meals for the future.

‘Upon my word!’ said Bersenyev, ‘you will fare very badly; that old body can’t cook a bit. Why don’t you dine with me, we would go halves over the cost.’

‘My means don’t allow me to dine as you do,’ Insarov replied with a tranquil smile.

There was something in that smile which forbade further insistence; Bersenyev did not add a word. After dinner he proposed to Insarov that he should take him to the Stahovs; but he replied that he had intended to devote the evening to correspondence with his Bulgarians, and so he would ask him to put off the visit to the Stahovs till next day. Bersenyev was already familiar with Insarov’s unbending will; but it was only now when he was under the same roof with him, that he fully realised at last that Insarov would never alter any decision, just in the same way as he would never fail to carry out a promise he had given; to Bersenyev—a Russian to his fingertips—this more than German exactitude seemed at first odd, and even rather ludicrous; but he soon got used to it, and ended by finding it—if not deserving of respect—at least very convenient.

The second day after his arrival, Insarov got up at four o’clock in the morning, made a round of almost all Kuntsovo, bathed in the river, drank a glass of cold milk, and then set to work. And he had plenty of work to do; he was studying Russian history and law, and political economy, translating the Bulgarian ballads and chronicles, collecting materials on the Eastern Question, and compiling a Russian grammar for the use of Bulgarians, and a Bulgarian grammar for the use of Russians. Bersenyev went up to him and began to discuss Feuerbach. Insarov listened attentively, made few remarks, but to the point; it was clear from his observations that he was trying to arrive at a conclusion as to whether he need study Feuerbach, or whether he could get on without him. Bersenyev turned the conversation on to his pursuits, and asked him if he could not show him anything. Insarov read him his translation of two or three Bulgarian ballads, and was anxious to hear his opinion of them. Bersenyev thought the translation a faithful one, but not sufficiently spirited. Insarov paid close attention to his criticism. From the ballads Bersenyev passed on to the present position of Bulgaria, and then for the first time he noticed what a change came over Insarov at the mere mention of his country: not that his face flushed nor his voice

grew louder—no! but at once a sense of force and intense onward striving was expressed in his whole personality, the lines of his mouth grew harder and less flexible, and a dull persistent fire glowed in the depths of his eyes. Insarov did not care to enlarge on his own travels in his country; but of Bulgaria in general he talked readily with any one. He talked at length of the Turks, of their oppression, of the sorrows and disasters of his countrymen, and of their hopes: concentrated meditation on a single ruling passion could be heard in every word he uttered.

‘Ah, well, there’s no mistake about it,’ Bersenyev was reflecting meanwhile, ‘that Turkish aga, I venture to think, has been punished for his father’s and mother’s death.’

Insarov had not had time to say all he wanted to say, when the door opened and Shubin made his appearance.

He came into the room with an almost exaggerated air of ease and good-humour; Bersenyev, who knew him well, could see at once that something had been jarring on him.

‘I will introduce myself without ceremony,’ he began with a bright and open expression on his face. ‘My name is Shubin; I’m a friend of this young man here’ (he indicated Bersenyev). ‘You are Mr. Insarov, of course, aren’t you?’

‘I am Insarov.’

‘Then give me your hand and let us be friends. I don’t know if Bersenyev has talked to you about me, but he has told me a great deal about you. You are staying here? Capital! Don’t be offended at my staring at you so. I’m a sculptor by trade, and I foresee I shall in a little time be begging your permission to model your head.’

‘My head’s at your service,’ said Insarov.

‘What shall we do to-day, eh?’ began Shubin, sitting down suddenly on a low chair, with his knees apart and his elbows propped on them. ‘Andrei Petrovitch, has your honour any kind of plan for to-day? It’s glorious weather; there’s a scent of hay and

dried strawberries as if one were drinking strawberry-tea for a cold. We ought to get up some kind of a spree. Let us show the new inhabitant of Kuntsov all its numerous beauties.' (Something has certainly upset him, Bersenyev kept thinking to himself.) 'Well, why art thou silent, friend Horatio? Open your prophetic lips. Shall we go off on a spree, or not?'

'I don't know how Insarov feels,' observed Bersenyev. 'He is just getting to work, I fancy.'

Shubin turned round on his chair.

'You want to work?' he inquired, in a somewhat condescending voice.

'No,' answered Insarov; 'to-day I could give up to walking.'

'Ah!' commented Shubin. 'Well, that's delightful. Run along, my friend, Andrei Petrovitch, put a hat on your learned head, and let us go where our eyes lead us. Our eyes are young—they may lead us far. I know a very repulsive little restaurant, where they will give us a very beastly little dinner; but we shall be very jolly. Come along.'

Half an hour later they were all three walking along the bank of the Moskva. Insarov had a rather queer cap with flaps, over which Shubin fell into not very spontaneous raptures. Insarov walked without haste, and looked about, breathing, talking, and smiling with the same tranquillity; he was giving this day up to pleasure, and enjoying it to the utmost. 'Just as well-behaved boys walk out on Sundays,' Shubin whispered in Bersenyev's ear. Shubin himself played the fool a great deal, ran in front, threw himself into the attitudes of famous statues, and turned somersaults on the grass; Insarov's tranquillity did not exactly irritate him, but it spurred him on to playing antics. 'What a fidget you are, Frenchman!' Bersenyev said twice to him. 'Yes, I am French, half French,' Shubin answered, 'and you hold the happy medium between jest and earnest, as a waiter once said to me.' The young men turned away from the river and went along a deep and narrow ravine between two walls of tall

golden rye; a bluish shadow was cast on them from the rye on one side; the flashing sunlight seemed to glide over the tops of the ears; the larks were singing, the quails were calling: on all sides was the brilliant green of the grass; a warm breeze stirred and lifted the leaves and shook the heads of the flowers. After prolonged wanderings, with rest and chat between (Shubin had even tried to play leap-frog with a toothless peasant they met, who did nothing but laugh, whatever the gentlemen might do to him), the young men reached the ‘repulsive little’ restaurant: the waiter almost knocked each of them over, and did really provide them with a very bad dinner with a sort of Balkan wine, which did not, however, prevent them from being very jolly, as Shubin had foretold; he himself was the loudest and the least jolly. He drank to the health of the incomprehensible but great Venelin, the health of the Bulgarian king Kuma, Huma, or Hroma, who lived somewhere about the time of Adam.

‘In the ninth century,’ Insarov corrected him.

‘In the ninth century?’ cried Shubin. ‘Oh, how delightful!’

Bersenyev noticed that among all his pranks, and jests and gaiety, Shubin was constantly, as it were, examining Insarov; he was sounding him and was in inward excitement, but Insarov remained as before, calm and straightforward.

At last they returned home, changed their dress, and resolved to finish the day as they had begun it, by going that evening to the Stahovs. Shubin ran on before them to announce their arrival.

XII

‘The conquering hero Insarov will be here directly!’ he shouted triumphantly, going into the Stahovs’ drawing-room, where there happened at the instant to be only Elena and Zoya.

‘Wer?’ inquired Zoya in German. When she was taken unawares she always used

her native language. Elena drew herself up. Shubin looked at her with a playful smile on his lips. She felt annoyed, but said nothing.

‘You heard,’ he repeated, ‘Mr. Insarov is coming here.’

‘I heard,’ she replied; ‘and I heard how you spoke of him. I am surprised at you, indeed. Mr. Insarov has not yet set foot in the house, and you already think fit to turn him into ridicule.’

Shubin was crestfallen at once.

‘You are right, you are always right, Elena Nikolaevna,’ he muttered; ‘but I meant nothing, on my honour. We have been walking together with him the whole day, and he’s a capital fellow, I assure you.’

‘I didn’t ask your opinion about that,’ commented Elena, getting up.

‘Is Mr. Insarov a young man?’ asked Zoya.

‘He is a hundred and forty-four,’ replied Shubin with an air of vexation.

The page announced the arrival of the two friends. They came in. Bersenyev introduced Insarov. Elena asked them to sit down, and sat down herself, while Zoya went off upstairs; she had to inform Anna Vassilyevna of their arrival. A conversation was begun of a rather insignificant kind, like all first conversations. Shubin was silently watching from a corner, but there was nothing to watch. In Elena he detected signs of repressed annoyance against him—Shubin—and that was all. He looked at Bersenyev and at Insarov, and compared their faces from a sculptor’s point of view. ‘They are neither of them good-looking,’ he thought, ‘the Bulgarian has a characteristic face—there now it’s in a good light; the Great-Russian is better adapted for painting; there are no lines, there’s expression. But, I dare say, one might fall in love with either of them. She is not in love yet, but she will fall in love with Bersenyev,’ he decided to himself. Anna Vassilyevna made her appearance in the drawing-room, and the conversation took the tone peculiar to summer villas—not the country-house tone but the peculiar summer visitor tone. It

was a conversation diversified by plenty of subjects; but broken by short rather wearisome pauses every three minutes. In one of these pauses Anna Vassilyevna turned to Zoya. Shubin understood her silent hint, and drew a long face, while Zoya sat down to the piano, and played and sang all her pieces through. Uvar Ivanovitch showed himself for an instant in the doorway, but he beat a retreat, convulsively twitching his fingers. Then tea was served; and then the whole party went out into the garden.... It began to grow dark outside, and the guests took leave.

Insarov had really made less impression on Elena than she had expected, or, speaking more exactly, he had not made the impression she had expected. She liked his directness and unconstraint, and she liked his face; but the whole character of Insarov—with his calm firmness and everyday simplicity—did not somehow accord with the image formed in her brain by Bersenyev's account of him. Elena, though she did not herself suspect it, had anticipated something more fateful. 'But,' she reflected, 'he spoke very little to-day, and I am myself to blame for it; I did not question him, we must have patience till next time... and his eyes are expressive, honest eyes.' She felt that she had no disposition to humble herself before him, but rather to hold out her hand to him in friendly equality, and she was puzzled; this was not how she had fancied men, like Insarov, 'heroes.' This last word reminded her of Shubin, and she grew hot and angry, as she lay in her bed.

'How did you like your new acquaintances?' Bersenyev inquired of Insarov on their way home.

'I liked them very much,' answered Insarov, 'especially the daughter. She must be a nice girl. She is excitable, but in her it's a fine kind of excitability.'

'You must go and see them a little oftener,' observed Bersenyev.

'Yes, I must,' said Insarov; and he said nothing more all the way home. He at once shut himself up in his room, but his candle was burning long after midnight.

Bersenyev had had time to read a page of Raumer, when a handful of fine gravel

came rattling on his window-pane. He could not help starting; opening the window he saw Shubin as white as a sheet.

‘What an irrepressible fellow you are, you night moth——’ Bersenyev was beginning.

‘Sh—’ Shubin cut him short; ‘I have come to you in secret, as Max went to Agatha I absolutely must say a few words to you alone.’

‘Come into the room then.’

‘No, that’s not necessary,’ replied Shubin, and he leaned his elbows on the window-sill, ‘it’s better fun like this, more as if we were in Spain. To begin with, I congratulate you, you’re at a premium now. Your belauded, exceptional man has quite missed fire. That I’ll guarantee. And to prove my impartiality, listen—here’s the sum and substance of Mr. Insarov. No talents, none, no poetry, any amount of capacity for work, an immense memory, an intellect not deep nor varied, but sound and quick, dry as dust, and force, and even the gift of the gab when the talk’s about his—between ourselves let it be said—tedious Bulgaria. What! do you say I am unjust? One remark more: you’ll never come to Christian names with him, and none ever has been on such terms with him. I, of course, as an artist, am hateful to him; and I am proud of it. Dry as dust, dry as dust, but he can crush all of us to powder. He’s devoted to his country—not like our empty patriots who fawn on the people; pour into us, they say, thou living water! But, of course, his problem is easier, more intelligible: he has only to drive the Turks out, a mighty task. But all these qualities, thank God, don’t please women. There’s no fascination, no charm about them, as there is about you and me.’

‘Why do you bring me in?’ muttered Bersenyev. ‘And you are wrong in all the rest; you are not in the least hateful to him, and with his own countrymen he is on Christian name terms—that I know.’

‘That’s a different matter! For them he’s a hero; but, to make a confession, I have a

very different idea of a hero; a hero ought not to be able to talk; a hero should roar like a bull, but when he butts with his horns, the walls shake. He ought not to know himself why he butts at things, but just to butt at them. But, perhaps, in our days heroes of a different stamp are needed.'

'Why are you so taken up with Insarov?' asked Bersenyev. 'Can you have run here only to describe his character to me?'

'I came here,' began Shubin, 'because I was very miserable at home.'

'Oh, that's it! Don't you want to have a cry again?'

'You may laugh! I came here because I'm at my wits' end, because I am devoured by despair, anger, jealousy.'

'Jealousy? of whom?'

'Of you and him and every one. I'm tortured by the thought that if I had understood her sooner, if I had set to work cleverly—But what's the use of talking! It must end by my always laughing, playing the fool, turning things into ridicule as she says, and then setting to and strangling myself.'

'Stuff, you won't strangle yourself,' observed Bersenyev.

'On such a night, of course not; but only let me live on till the autumn. On such a night people do die too, but only of happiness. Ah, happiness! Every shadow that stretches across the road from every tree seems whispering now: "I know where there is happiness... shall I tell you?" I would ask you to come for a walk, only now you're under the influence of prose. Go to sleep, and may your dreams be visited by mathematical figures! My heart is breaking. You, worthy gentlemen, see a man laughing, and that means to your notions he's all right; you can prove to him that he's humbugging himself, that's to say, he is not suffering.... God bless you!'

Shubin abruptly left the window. 'Annu-shka!' Bersenyev felt an impulse to shout after him, but he restrained himself; Shubin had really been white with emotion.

Two minutes later, Bersenyev even caught the sound of sobbing; he got up and opened the window; everything was still, only somewhere in the distance some one—a passing peasant, probably—was humming ‘The Plain of Mozdok.’

XIII

During the first fortnight of Insarov’s stay in the Kuntsovo neighbourhood, he did not visit the Stahovs more than four or five times; Bersenyev went to see them every day. Elena was always pleased to see him, lively and interesting talk always sprang up between them, and yet he often went home with a gloomy face. Shubin scarcely showed himself; he was working with feverish energy at his art; he either stayed locked up in his room, from which he would emerge in a blouse, smeared all over with clay, or else he spent days in Moscow where he had a studio, to which models and Italian sculptors, his friends and teachers, used to come to see him. Elena did not once succeed in talking with Insarov, as she would have liked to do; in his absence she prepared questions to ask him about many things, but when he came she felt ashamed of her plans. Insarov’s very tranquillity embarrassed her; it seemed to her that she had not the right to force him to speak out; and she resolved to wait; for all that, she felt that at every visit however trivial might be the words that passed between them, he attracted her more and more; but she never happened to be left alone with him—and to grow intimate with any one, one must have at least one conversation alone with him. She talked a great deal about him to Bersenyev. Bersenyev realised that Elena’s imagination had been struck by Insarov, and was glad that his friend had not ‘missed fire’ as Shubin had asserted. He told her cordially all he knew of him down to the minutest details (we often, when we want to please some one, bring our friends into our conversation, hardly ever suspecting that we are praising ourselves in that way), and only at times, when Elena’s pale cheeks flushed a little and her eyes grew bright and wide, he felt a pang in his heart

of that evil pain which he had felt before.

One day Bersenyev came to the Stahovs, not at the customary time, but at eleven o'clock in the morning. Elena came down to him in the parlour.

'Fancy,' he began with a constrained smile, 'our Insarov has disappeared.'

'Disappeared?' said Elena.

'He has disappeared. The day before yesterday he went off somewhere and nothing has been seen of him since.'

'He did not tell you where he was going?'

'No.'

Elena sank into a chair.

'He has most likely gone to Moscow,' she commented, trying to seem indifferent and at the same time wondering that she should try to seem indifferent.

'I don't think so,' rejoined Bersenyev. 'He did not go alone.'

'With whom then?'

'Two people of some sort—his countrymen they must have been—came to him the day before yesterday, before dinner.'

'Bulgarians! what makes you think so?'

'Why as far as I could hear, they talked to him in some language I did not know, but Slavonic... You are always saying, Elena Nikolaevna, that there's so little mystery about Insarov; what could be more mysterious than this visit? Imagine, they came to him—and then there was shouting and quarrelling, and such savage, angry disputing.... And he shouted too.'

'He shouted too?'

'Yes. He shouted at them. They seemed to be accusing each other. And if you could have had a peep at these visitors. They had swarthy, heavy faces with high cheek

bones and hook noses, both about forty years old, shabbily dressed, hot and dusty, looking like workmen—not workmen, and not gentlemen—goodness knows what sort of people they were.'

'And he went away with them?'

'Yes. He gave them something to eat and went off with them. The woman of the house told me they ate a whole huge pot of porridge between the two of them. They outdid one another, she said, and gobbled it up like wolves.'

Elena gave a faint smile.

'You will see,' she said, 'all this will be explained into something very prosaic.'

'I hope it may! But you need not use that word. There is nothing prosaic about Insarov, though Shubin does maintain——'

'Shubin!' Elena broke in, shrugging her shoulders. 'But you must confess these two good men gobbling up porridge——'

'Even Themistocles had his supper on the eve of Salamis,' observed Bersenyev with a smile.

'Yes; but then there was a battle next day. Any way you will let me know when he comes back,' said Elena, and she tried to change the subject, but the conversation made little progress. Zoya made her appearance and began walking about the room on tip-toe, giving them thereby to understand that Anna Vassilyevna was not yet awake.

Bersenyev went away.

In the evening of the same day a note from him was brought to Elena. 'He has come back,' he wrote to her, 'sunburnt and dusty to his very eyebrows; but where and why he went I don't know; won't you find out?'

'Won't you find out!' Elena whispered, 'as though he talked to me!'

XIV

The next day, at two o’clock, Elena was standing in the garden before a small kennel, where she was rearing two puppies. (A gardener had found them deserted under a hedge, and brought them to the young mistress, being told by the laundry-maids that she took pity on beasts of all sorts. He was not wrong in his reckoning. Elena had given him a quarter-rouble.) She looked into the kennel, assured herself that the puppies were alive and well, and that they had been provided with fresh straw, turned round, and almost uttered a cry; down an alley straight towards her was walking Insarov, alone.

‘Good-morning,’ he said, coming up to her and taking off his cap. She noticed that he certainly had got much sunburnt during the last three days. ‘I meant to have come here with Andrei Petrovitch, but he was rather slow in starting; so here I am without him. There is no one in your house; they are all asleep or out of doors, so I came on here.’

‘You seem to be apologising,’ replied Elena. ‘There’s no need to do that. We are always very glad to see you. Let us sit here on the bench in the shade.’

She seated herself. Insarov sat down near her.

‘You have not been at home these last days, I think?’ she began.

‘No,’ he answered. ‘I went away. Did Andrei Petrovitch tell you?’

Insarov looked at her, smiled, and began playing with his cap. When he smiled, his eyes blinked, and his lips puckered up, which gave him a very good-humoured appearance.

‘Andrei Petrovitch most likely told you too that I went away with some—unattractive people,’ he said, still smiling.

Elena was a little confused, but she felt at once that Insarov must always be told the truth.

‘Yes,’ she said decisively.

‘What did you think of me?’ he asked her suddenly.

Elena raised her eyes to him.

‘I thought,’ she said, ‘I thought that you always know what you’re doing, and you are incapable of doing anything wrong.’

‘Well—thanks for that. You see, Elena Nikolaevna,’ he began, coming closer to her in a confidential way, ‘there is a little family of our people here; among us there are men of little culture; but all are warmly devoted to the common cause. Unluckily, one can never get on without dissensions, and they all know me, and trust me; so they sent for me to settle a dispute. I went.’

‘Was it far from here?’

‘I went about fifty miles, to the Troitsky district. There, near the monastery, there are some of our people. At any rate, my trouble was not thrown away; I settled the matter.’

‘And had you much difficulty?’

‘Yes. One was obstinate through everything. He did not want to give back the money.’

‘What? Was the dispute over money?’

‘Yes; and a small sum of money too. What did you suppose?’

‘And you travelled over fifty miles for such trifling matters? Wasted three days?’

‘They are not trifling matters, Elena Nikolaevna, when my countrymen are involved. It would be wicked to refuse in such cases. I see here that you don’t refuse help even to puppies, and I think well of you for it. And as for the time I have lost, that’s no great harm; I will make it up later. Our time does not belong to us.’

‘To whom does it belong then?’

‘Why, to all who need us. I have told you all this on the spur of the moment, because

I value your good opinion. I can fancy how Andrei Petrovitch must have made you wonder!'

'You value my good opinion,' said Elena, in an undertone, 'why?'

Insarov smiled again.

'Because you are a good young lady, not an aristocrat... that's all.'

A short silence followed.

'Dmitri Nikanorovitch,' said Elena, 'do you know that this is the first time you have been so unreserved with me?'

'How's that? I think I have always said everything I thought to you.'

'No, this is the first time, and I am very glad, and I too want to be open with you. May I?'

Insarov began to laugh and said: 'You may.'

'I warn you I am very inquisitive.'

'Never mind, tell me.'

'Andrei Petrovitch has told me a great deal of your life, of your youth. I know of one event, one awful event.... I know you travelled afterwards in your own country.... Don't answer me for goodness sake, if you think my question indiscreet, but I am fretted by one idea.... Tell me, did you meet that man?'

Elena caught her breath. She felt both shame and dismay at her own audacity. Insarov looked at her intently, slightly knitting his brows, and stroking his chin with his fingers.

'Elena Nikolaevna,' he began at last, and his voice was much lower than usual, which almost frightened Elena, 'I understand what man you are referring to. No, I did not meet him, and thank God I did not! I did not try to find him. I did not try to find him: not because I did not think I had a right to kill him—I would kill him with a very easy conscience—but because now is not the time for private revenge, when

we are concerned with the general national vengeance—or no, that is not the right word—when we are concerned with the liberation of a people. The one would be a hindrance to the other. In its own time that, too, will come... that too will come,' he repeated, and he shook his head.

Elena looked at him from the side.

'You love your country very dearly?' she articulated timidly.

'That remains to be shown,' he answered. 'When one of us dies for her, then one can say he loved his country.'

'So that, if you were cut off all chance of returning to Bulgaria,' continued Elena, 'would you be very unhappy in Russia?'

Insarov looked down.

'I think I could not bear that,' he said.

'Tell me,' Elena began again, 'is it difficult to learn Bulgarian?'

'Not at all. It's a disgrace to a Russian not to know Bulgarian. A Russian ought to know all the Slavonic dialects. Would you like me to bring you some Bulgarian books? You will see how easy it is. What ballads we have! equal to the Servian. But stop a minute, I will translate to you one of them. It is about... But you know a little of our history at least, don't you?'

'No, I know nothing of it,' answered

Elena.

'Wait a little and I will bring you a book. You will learn the principal facts at least from it. Listen to the ballad then.... But I had better bring you a written translation, though. I am sure you will love us, you love all the oppressed. If you knew what a land of plenty ours is! And, meanwhile, it has been downtrodden, it has been ravaged,' he went on, with an involuntary movement of his arm, and his face darkened; 'we have been robbed of everything; everything, our churches, our laws,

our lands; the unclean Turks drive us like cattle, butcher us——’

‘Dmitri Nikanorovitch!’ cried Elena.

He stopped.

‘I beg your pardon. I can’t speak of this coolly. But you asked me just now whether I love my country. What else can one love on earth? What is the one thing unchanging, what is above all doubts, what is it—next to God—one must believe in? And when that country needs. ... Think; the poorest peasant, the poorest beggar in Bulgaria, and I have the same desire. All of us have one aim. You can understand what strength, what confidence that gives!’

Insarov was silent for an instant; then he began again to talk of Bulgaria. Elena listened to him with absorbed, profound, and mournful attention. When he had finished, she asked him once more:

‘Then you would not stay in Russia for anything?’

And when he went away, for a long time she gazed after him. On that day he had become a different man for her. When she walked back with him through the garden, he was no longer the man she had met two hours before.

From that day he began to come more and more often, and Bersenyev less and less often. A strange feeling began to grow up between the two friends, of which they were both conscious, but to which they could not give a name, and which they feared to analyse. In this way a month passed.

XV

Anna Vassilyevna, as the reader knows already, liked staying at home; but at times she manifested, quite unexpectedly, an irresistible longing for something out of the common, some extraordinary partie du plaisir, and the more troublesome the partie du plaisir was, the more preparations and arrangements it required, and the greater

Anna Vassilyevna's own agitation over it, the more pleasure it gave her. If this mood came upon her in winter, she would order two or three boxes to be taken side by side, and, inviting all her acquaintances, would set off to the theatre or even to a masquerade; in summer she would drive for a trip out of town to some spot as far off as possible. The next day she would complain of a headache, groan and keep her bed; but within two months the same craving for something 'out of the common' would break out in her again. That was just what happened now. Some one chanced to refer to the beautiful scenery of Tsaritsino before her, and Anna Vassilyevna suddenly announced an intention of driving to Tsaritsino the day after tomorrow. The household was thrown into a state of bustle; a messenger galloped off to Moscow for Nikolai Artemyevitch; with him galloped the butler to buy wines, pies, and all sorts of provisions; Shubin was commissioned to hire an open carriage—the coach alone was not enough—and to order relays of horses to be ready; a page was twice despatched to Bersenyev and Insarov with two different notes of invitation, written by Zoya, the first in Russian, the second in French; Anna Vassilyevna herself was busy over the dresses of the young ladies for the expedition. Meanwhile the partie du plaisir was very near coming to grief. Nikolai Artemyevitch arrived from Moscow in a sour, ill-natured, frondeurish frame of mind. He was still sulky with Augustina Christianovna; and when he heard what the plan was, he flatly declared that he would not go; that to go trotting from Kuntsovo to Moscow and from Moscow to Tsaritsino, and then from Tsaritsino again to Moscow, from Moscow again to Kuntsovo, was a piece of folly; and, 'in fact,' he added, 'let them first prove to my satisfaction, that one can be merrier on one spot of the globe than another spot, and I will go.' This, of course, no one could prove to his satisfaction, and Anna Vassilyevna was ready to throw up the partie du plaisir for lack of a solid escort; but she recollected Uvar Ivanovitch, and in her distress she sent to his room for him, saying: 'a drowning man catches at straws.' They waked him up; he came down, listened in silence to Anna Vassilyevna's proposition, and, to the general

astonishment, with a flourish of his fingers, he consented to go. Anna Vassilyevna kissed him on the cheek, and called him a darling; Nikolai Artemyevitch smiled contemptuously and said: quelle bourde! (he liked on occasions to make use of a ‘smart’ French word); and the following morning the coach and the open carriage, well-packed, rolled out of the Stahovs’ court-yard. In the coach were the ladies, a maid, and Bersenyev; Insarov was seated on the box; and in the open carriage were Uvar Ivanovitch and Shubin. Uvar Ivanovitch had himself beckoned Shubin to him; he knew that he would tease him the whole way, but there existed a queer sort of attachment, marked by abusive candour, between the ‘primeval force’ and the young artist. On this occasion, however, Shubin left his fat friend in peace; he was absent-minded, silent, and gentle.

The sun stood high in a cloudless blue sky when the carriage drove up to the ruins of Tsaritsino Castle, which looked gloomy and menacing, even at mid-day. The whole party stepped out on to the grass, and at once made a move towards the garden. In front went Elena and Zoya with Insarov; Anna Vassilyevna, with an expression of perfect happiness on her face, walked behind them, leaning on the arm of Uvar Ivanovitch. He waddled along panting, his new straw hat cut his forehead, and his feet twinged in his boots, but he was content; Shubin and Bersenyev brought up the rear. ‘We will form the reserve, my dear boy, like veterans,’ whispered Shubin to Bersenyev. ‘Bulgaria’s in it now!’ he added, indicating Elena with his eyebrows.

The weather was glorious. Everything around was flowering, humming, singing; in the distance shone the waters of the lakes; a light-hearted holiday mood took possession of all. ‘Oh, how beautiful; oh, how beautiful!’ Anna Vassilyevna repeated incessantly; Uvar Ivanovitch kept nodding his head approvingly in response to her enthusiastic exclamations, and once even articulated: ‘To be sure! to be sure!’ From time to time Elena exchanged a few words with Insarov; Zoya held the brim of her large hat with two fingers while her little feet, shod in light grey shoes with rounded toes, peeped coquettishly out from under her pink barège dress;

she kept looking to each side and then behind her. ‘Hey!’ cried Shubin suddenly in a low voice, ‘Zoya Nikitishna is on the lookout, it seems. I will go to her. Elena Nikolaevna despises me now, while you, Andrei Petrovitch, she esteems, which comes to the same thing. I am going; I’m tired of being glum. I should advise you, my dear fellow, to do some botanising; that’s the best thing you could hit on in your position; it might be useful, too, from a scientific point of view. Farewell!’ Shubin ran up to Zoya, offered her his arm, and saying: ‘Ihre Hand, Madame’ caught hold of her hand, and pushed on ahead with her. Elena stopped, called to Bersenyev, and also took his arm, but continued talking to Insarov. She asked him the words for lily-of-the-valley, clover, oak, lime, and so on in his language... ‘Bulgaria’s in it!’ thought poor Andrei Petrovitch.

Suddenly a shriek was heard in front; every one looked up. Shubin’s cigar-case fell into a bush, flung by Zoya’s hand. ‘Wait a minute, I’ll pay you out!’ he shouted, as he crept into the bushes; he found his cigar-case, and was returning to Zoya; but he had hardly reached her side when again his cigar-case was sent flying across the road. Five times this trick was repeated, he kept laughing and threatening her, but Zoya only smiled slyly and drew herself together, like a little cat. At last he snatched her fingers, and squeezed them so tightly that she shrieked, and for a long time afterwards breathed on her hand, pretending to be angry, while he murmured something in her ears.

‘Mischievous things, young people,’ Anna Vassilyevna observed gaily to Uvar Ivanovitch.

He flourished his fingers in reply.

‘What a girl Zoya Nikitishna is!’ said Bersenyev to Elena.

‘And Shubin? What of him?’ she answered.

Meanwhile the whole party went into the arbour, well known as Pleasant View arbour, and stopped to admire the view of the Tsaritsino lakes. They stretched one

behind the other for several miles, overshadowed by thick woods. The bright green grass, which covered the hill sloping down to the largest lake, gave the water itself an extraordinarily vivid emerald colour. Even at the water's edge not a ripple stirred the smooth surface. One might fancy it a solid mass of glass lying heavy and shining in a huge font; the sky seemed to drop into its depths, while the leafy trees gazed motionless into its transparent bosom. All were absorbed in long and silent admiration of the view; even Shubin was still; even Zoya was impressed. At last, all with one mind, began to wish to go upon the water. Shubin, Insarov, and Bersenyev raced each other over the grass. They succeeded in finding a large painted boat and two boatmen, and beckoned to the ladies. The ladies stepped into the boat; Uvar Ivanovitch cautiously lowered himself into it after them. Great was the mirth while he got in and took his seat. 'Look out, master, don't drown us,' observed one of the boatmen, a snubnosed young fellow in a gay print shirt. 'Get along, you swell!' said Uvar Ivanovitch. The boat pushed off. The young men took up the oars, but Insarov was the oniy one of them who could row. Shubin suggested that they should sing some Russian song in chorus, and struck up: 'Down the river Volga'... Bersenyev, Zoya, and even Anna Vassilyevna, joined in—Insarov could not sing—but they did not keep together; at the third verse the singers were all wrong. Only Bersenyev tried to go on in the bass, 'Nothing on the waves is seen,' but he, too, was soon in difficulties. The boatmen looked at one another and grinned in silence.

'Eh?' said Shubin, turning to them, 'the gentlefolks can't sing, you say?' The boy in the print shirt only shook his head. 'Wait a little snubnose,' retorted Shubin, 'we will show you. Zoya Nikitishna, sing us Le lac of Niedermeyer. Stop rowing!' The wet oars stood still, lifted in the air like wings, and their splash died away with a tuneful drip; the boat drifted on a little, then stood still, rocking lightly on the water like a swan. Zoya affected to refuse at first.... 'Allons' said Anna Vassilyevna genially.... Zoya took off her hat and began to sing: 'O lac, l'année à peine a fini sa carrière!'

Her small, but pure voice, seemed to dart over the surface of the lake; every word

echoed far off in the woods; it sounded as though some one were singing there, too, in a distinct, but mysterious and unearthly voice. When Zoya finished, a loud bravo was heard from an arbour near the bank, from which emerged several red-faced Germans who were picnicking at Tsaritsino. Several of them had their coats off, their ties, and even their waistcoats; and they shouted ‘bis!’ with such unmannerly insistence that Anna Vassilyevna told the boatmen to row as quickly as possible to the other end of the lake. But before the boat reached the bank, Uvar Ivanovitch once more succeeded in surprising his friends; having noticed that in one part of the wood the echo repeated every sound with peculiar distinctness, he suddenly began to call like a quail. At first every one was startled, but they listened directly with real pleasure, especially as Uvar Ivanovitch imitated the quail’s cry with great correctness. Spurred on by this, he tried mewing like a cat; but this did not go off so well; and after one more quail-call, he looked at them all and stopped. Shubin threw himself on him to kiss him; he pushed him off. At that instant the boat touched the bank, and all the party got out and went on shore.

Meanwhile the coachman, with the groom and the maid, had brought the baskets out of the coach, and made dinner ready on the grass under the old lime-trees. They sat down round the outspread tablecloth, and fell upon the pies and other dainties. They all had excellent appetites, while Anna Vassilyevna, with unflagging hospitality, kept urging the guests to eat more, assuring them that nothing was more wholesome than eating in the open air. She even encouraged Uvar Ivanovitch with such assurances. ‘Don’t trouble about me!’ he grunted with his mouth full. ‘Such a lovely day is a God-send, indeed!’ she repeated constantly. One would not have known her; she seemed fully twenty years younger. Bersenyev said as much to her. ‘Yes, yes.’ she said; ‘I could hold my own with any one in my day.’ Shubin attached himself to Zoya, and kept pouring her out wine; she refused it, he pressed her, and finished by drinking the glass himself, and again pressing her to take another; he also declared that he longed to lay his head on her knee; she would on no account permit him

‘such a liberty.’ Elena seemed the most serious of the party, but in her heart there was a wonderful sense of peace, such as she had not known for long. She felt filled with boundless goodwill and kindness, and wanted to keep not only Insarov, but Bersenyev too, always at her side.... Andrei Petrovitch dimly understood what this meant, and secretly he sighed.

The hours flew by; the evening was coming on. Anna Vassilyevna suddenly took alarm. ‘Ah, my dear friends, how late it is!’ she cried. ‘All good things must have an end; it’s time to go home.’ She began bustling about, and they all hastened to get up and walk towards the castle, where the carriages were. As they walked past the lakes, they stopped to admire Tsaritsino for the last time. The landscape on all sides was glowing with the vivid hues of early evening; the sky was red, the leaves were flashing with changing colours as they stirred in the rising wind; the distant waters shone in liquid gold; the reddish turrets and arbours scattered about the garden stood out sharply against the dark green of the trees. ‘Farewell, Tsaritsino, we shall not forget to-day’s excursion!’ observed Anna Vassilyevna.... But at that instant, and as though in confirmation of her words, a strange incident occurred, which certainly was not likely to be forgotten.

This was what happened. Anna Vassilyevna had hardly sent her farewell greeting to Tsaritsino, when suddenly, a few paces from her, behind a high bush of lilac, were heard confused exclamations, shouts, and laughter; and a whole mob of disorderly men, the same devotees of song who had so energetically applauded Zoya, burst out on the path. These musical gentlemen seemed excessively elevated. They stopped at the sight of the ladies; but one of them, a man of immense height, with a bull neck and a bull’s goggle eyes, separated from his companions, and, bowing clumsily and staggering unsteadily in his gait, approached Anna Vassilyevna, who was petrified with alarm.

‘Bonzhoor, madame,’ he said thickly, ‘how are you?’

Anna Vassilyevna started back.

‘Why wouldn’t you,’ continued the giant in vile Russian, ‘sing again when our party shouted bis, and bravo?’

‘Yes, why?’ came from the ranks of his comrades.

Insarov was about to step forward, but Shubin stopped him, and himself screened Anna Vassilyevna.

‘Allow me,’ he began, ‘honoured stranger, to express to you the heartfelt amazement, into which you have thrown all of us by your conduct. You belong, as far as I can judge, to the Saxon branch of the Caucasian race; consequently we are bound to assume your acquaintance with the customs of society, yet you address a lady to whom you have not been introduced. I assure you that I individually should be delighted another time to make your acquaintance, since I observe in you a phenomenal development of the muscles, biceps, triceps and deltoid, so that, as a sculptor, I should esteem it a genuine happiness to have you for a model; but on this occasion kindly leave us alone.’

The ‘honoured stranger’ listened to Shubin’s speech, his head held contemptuously on one side and his arms akimbo.

‘I don’t understand what you say,’ he commented at last. ‘Do you suppose I’m a cobbler or a watchmaker? Hey! I’m an officer, an official, so there.’

‘I don’t doubt that——’ Shubin was beginning.

‘What I say is,’ continued the stranger, putting him aside with his powerful arm, like a twig out of the path—‘why didn’t you sing again when we shouted bis? And I’ll go away directly, this minute, only I tell you what I want, this fräulein, not that madam, no, not her, but this one or that one (he pointed to Elena and Zoya) must give me einen Kuss, as we say in German, a kiss, in fact; eh? That’s not much to ask.’

‘Einen Kuss, that’s not much,’ came again from the ranks of his companions, ‘Ih! der Stakramenter!’ cried one tipsy German, bursting with laughter.

Zoya clutched at Insarov’s arm, but he broke away from her, and stood directly facing the insolent giant.

‘You will please to move off,’ he said in a voice not loud but sharp.

The German gave a heavy laugh, ‘Move off? Well, I like that. Can’t I walk where I please? Move off? Why should I move off?’

‘Because you have dared to annoy a lady,’ said Insarov, and suddenly he turned white, ‘because you’re drunk.’

‘Eh? me drunk? Hear what he says. Hören Sie das, Herr Provisor? I’m an officer, and he dares... Now I demand satisfaction! Einen Kuss will ich.’

‘If you come another step nearer——’ began Insarov.

‘Well? What then’

‘I’ll throw you in the water!’

‘In the water? Herr Je! Is that all? Well, let us see that, that would be very curious, too.’

The officer lifted his fists and moved forward, but suddenly something extraordinary happened. He uttered an exclamation, his whole bulky person staggered, rose from the ground, his legs kicking in the air, and before the ladies had time to shriek, before any one had time to realise how it had happened, the officer’s massive figure went plop with a heavy splash, and at once disappeared under the eddying water.

‘Oh!’ screamed the ladies with one voice.

‘Mein Gott!’ was heard from the other side.

An instant passed... and a round head, all plastered over with wet hair, showed above water, it was blowing bubbles, this head; and floundering with two hands just at its very lips. ‘He will be drowned, save him! save him!’ cried Anna Vassilyevna

to Insarov, who was standing with his legs apart on the bank, breathing heavily.

‘He will swim out,’ he answered with contemptuous and unsympathetic indifference. ‘Let us go on,’ he added, taking Anna Vassilyevna by the arm. ‘Come, Uvar Ivanovitch, Elena Nikolaevna.’

‘A—a—o—o’ was heard at that instant, the plaint of the hapless German who had managed to get hold of the rushes on the bank.

They all followed Insarov, and had to pass close by the party. But, deprived of their leader, the rowdies were subdued and did not utter a word; but one, the boldest of them, muttered, shaking his head menacingly: ‘All right... we shall see though... after that’; but one of the others even took his hat off. Insarov struck them as formidable, and rightly so; something evil, something dangerous could be seen in his face. The Germans hastened to pull out their comrade, who, directly he had his feet on dry ground, broke into tearful abuse and shouted after the ‘Russian scoundrels,’ that he would make a complaint, that he would go to Count Von Kizerits himself, and so on.

But the ‘Russian scoundrels’ paid no attention to his vociferations, and hurried on as fast as they could to the castle. They were all silent, as they walked through the garden, though Anna Vassilyevna sighed a little. But when they reached the carriages and stood still, they broke into an irrepressible, irresistible fit of Homeric laughter. First Shubin exploded, shrieking as if he were mad, Bersenyev followed with his gurgling guffaw, then Zoya fell into thin tinkling little trills, Anna Vassilyevna too suddenly broke down, Elena could not help smiling, and even Insarov at last could not resist it. But the loudest, longest, most persistent laugh was Uvar Ivanovitch’s; he laughed till his sides ached, till he choked and panted. He would calm down a little, then would murmur through his tears: ‘I—thought—what’s that splash—and there—he—went plop.’ And with the last word, forced out with convulsive effort, his whole frame was shaking with another

burst of laughter. Zoya made him worse. ‘I saw his legs,’ she said, ‘kicking in the air.’ ‘Yes, yes,’ gasped Uvar Ivanovitch, ‘his legs, his legs—and then splash!—there he plopped in!’

‘And how did Mr. Insarov manage it? why the German was three times his size?’ said Zoya.

‘I’ll tell you,’ answered Uvar Ivanovitch, rubbing his eyes, ‘I saw; with one arm about his waist, he tripped him up, and he went plop! I heard—a splash—there he went.’

Long after the carriages had started, long after the castle of Tsaritsino was out of sight, Uvar Ivanovitch was still unable to regain his composure. Shubin, who was again with him in the carriage, began to cry shame on him at last.

Insarov felt ashamed. He sat in the coach facing Elena (Bersenyev had taken his seat on the box), and he said nothing; she too was silent. He thought that she was condemning his action; but she did not condemn him. She had been scared at the first minute; then the expression of his face had impressed her; afterwards she pondered on it all. It was not quite clear to her what the nature of her reflections was. The emotion she had felt during the day had passed away; that she realised; but its place had been taken by another feeling which she did not yet fully understand. The partie de plaisir had been prolonged too late; insensibly evening passed into night. The carriage rolled swiftly along, now beside ripening cornfields, where the air was heavy and fragrant with the smell of wheat; now beside wide meadows, from which a sudden wave of freshness blew lightly in the face. The sky seemed to lie like smoke over the horizon. At last the moon rose, dark and red. Anna Vassilyevna was dozing; Zoya had poked her head out of window and was staring at the road. It occurred to Elena at last that she had not spoken to Insarov for more than an hour. She turned to him with a trifling question; he at once answered her, delighted. Dim sounds began stirring indistinctly in the air, as though thousands of voices were

talking in the distance; Moscow was coming to meet them. Lights twinkled afar off; they grew more and more frequent; at last there was the grating of the cobbles under their wheels. Anna Vassilyevna awoke, every one in the carriage began talking, though no one could hear what was said; everything was drowned in the rattle of the cobbles under the two carriages, and the hoofs of the eight horses. Long and wearisome seemed the journey from Moscow to Kuntsovo; all the party were asleep or silent, leaning with their heads pressed into their respective corners; Elena did not close her eyes; she kept them fixed on Insarov's dimly-outlined figure. A mood of sadness had come upon Shubin; the breeze was blowing into his eyes and irritating him; he retired into the collar of his cloak and was on the point of tears. Uvar Ivanovitch was snoring blissfully, rocking from side to side. The carriages came to a standstill at last. Two men-servants lifted Anna Vassilyevna out of the carriage; she was all to pieces, and at parting from her fellow travellers, announced that she was 'nearly dead'; they began thanking her, but she only repeated, 'nearly dead.' Elena for the first time pressed Insarov's hand at parting, and for a long while she sat at her window before undressing; Shubin seized an opportunity to whisper to Bersenyev:

'There, isn't he a hero; he can pitch drunken Germans into the river!'

'While you didn't even do that,' retorted Bersenyev, and he started homewards with Insarov.

The dawn was already showing in the sky when the two friends reached their lodging. The sun had not yet risen, but already the chill of daybreak was in the air, a grey dew covered the grass, and the first larks were trilling high, high up in the shadowy infinity of air, whence like a solitary eye looked out the great, last star.

XVI

Soon after her acquaintance with Insarov, Elena (for the fifth or sixth time) began a diary. Here are some extracts from it:

‘June.... Andrei Petrovitch brings me books, but I can’t read them. I’m ashamed to confess it to him; but I don’t like to give back the books, tell lies, say I have read them. I feel that would mortify him. He is always watching me. He seems devoted to me. A very good man, Andrei Petrovitch.... What is it I want? Why is my heart so heavy, so oppressed? Why do I watch the birds with envy as they fly past? I feel that I could fly with them, fly, where I don’t know, but far from here. And isn’t that desire sinful? I have here mother, father, home. Don’t I love them? No, I don’t love them, as I should like to love. It’s dreadful to put that in words, but it’s the truth. Perhaps I am a great sinner; perhaps that is why I am so sad, why I have no peace. Some hand seems laid on me, weighing me down, as though I were in prison, and the walls would fall on me directly. Why is it others don’t feel this? Whom shall I love, if I am cold to my own people? It’s clear, papa is right; he reproaches me for loving nothing but cats and dogs. I must think about that. I pray very little; I must pray.... Ah, I think I should know how to love!... I am still shy with Mr. Insarov. I don’t know why; I believe I’m not schoolgirlish generally, and he is so simple and kind. Sometimes he has a very serious face. He can’t give much thought to us. I feel that, and am ashamed in a way to take up his time. With Andrei Petrovitch it’s quite a different thing. I am ready to chat with him the whole day long. But he too always talks of Insarov. And such terrible facts he tells me about him! I saw him in a dream last night with a dagger in his hand. And he seemed to say to me, “I will kill you and I will kill myself!” What silliness!

‘Oh, if some one would say to me: “There, that’s what you must do!” Being good—isn’t much; doing good... yes, that’s the great thing in life. But how is one to do good? Oh, if I could learn to control myself! I don’t know why I am so often thinking of Mr. Insarov. When he comes and sits and listens intently, but makes no effort, no exertion himself, I look at him, and feel pleased, and that’s all, and when he goes, I always go over his words, and feel vexed with myself, and upset even. I can’t tell why. (He speaks French badly and isn’t ashamed of it—I like that.) I

always think a lot about new people, though. As I talked to him, I suddenly was reminded of our butler, Vassily, who rescued an old cripple out of a hut that was on fire, and was almost killed himself. Papa called him a brave fellow, mamma gave him five roubles, and I felt as though I could fall at his feet. And he had a simple face—stupid-looking even—and he took to drink later on....

‘I gave a penny to-day to a beggar woman, and she said to me, “Why are you so sorrowful?” I never suspected I looked sorrowful. I think it must come from being alone, always alone, for better, for worse! There is no one to stretch out a hand to me. Those who come to me, I don’t want; and those I would choose—pass me by.

‘... I don’t know what’s the matter with me to-day; my head is confused, I want to fall on my knees and beg and pray for mercy. I don’t know by whom or how, but I feel as if I were being tortured, and inwardly I am shrieking in revolt; I weep and can’t be quiet.... O my God, subdue these outbreaks in me! Thou alone canst aid me, all else is useless; my miserable alms-giving, my studies can do nothing, nothing, nothing to help me. I should like to go out as a servant somewhere, really; that would do me good.

‘What is my youth for, what am I living for, why have I a soul, what is it all for?

‘... Insarov, Mr. Insarov—upon my word I don’t know how to write—still interests me, I should like to know what he has within, in his soul? He seems so open, so easy to talk to, but I can see nothing. Sometimes he looks at me with such searching eyes—or is that my fancy? Paul keeps teasing me. I am angry with Paul. What does he want? He’s in love with me... but his love’s no good to me. He’s in love with Zoya too. I’m unjust to him; he told me yesterday I didn’t know how to be unjust by halves... that’s true. It’s very horrid.

‘Ah, I feel one needs unhappiness, or poverty or sickness, or else one gets conceited directly.

‘... What made Andrei Petrovitch tell me to-day about those two Bulgarians! He told

me it as it were with some intention. What have I to do with Mr. Insarov? I feel cross with Andrei Petrovitch.

‘... I take my pen and don’t know how to begin. How unexpectedly he began to talk to me in the garden to-day! How friendly and confiding he was! How quickly it happened! As if we were old, old friends and had only just recognised each other. How could I have not understood him before? How near he is to me now! And—what’s so wonderful—I feel ever so much calmer now. It’s ludicrous; yesterday I was angry with Andrei Petrovitch, and angry with him, I even called him Mr. Insarov, and to-day... Here at last is a true man; some one one may depend upon. He won’t tell lies; he’s the first man I have met who never tells lies; all the others tell lies, everything’s lying. Andrei Petrovitch, dear good friend, why do I wrong you? No! Andrei Petrovitch is more learned than he is, even, perhaps more intellectual. But I don’t know, he seems so small beside him. When he speaks of his country he seems taller, and his face grows handsome, and his voice is like steel, and... no... it seems as though there were no one in the world before whom he would flinch. And he doesn’t only talk.... he has acted and he will act. I shall ask him.... How suddenly he turned to me and smiled!... It’s only brothers that smile like that! Ah, how glad I am! When he came the first time, I never dreamt that we should so soon get to know each other. And now I am even pleased that I remained indifferent to him at first. Indifferent? Am I not indifferent then now?... It’s long since I have felt such inward peace. I feel so quiet, so quiet. And there’s nothing to write? I see him often and that’s all. What more is there to write?

‘... Paul shuts himself up, Andrei Petrovitch has taken to coming less often.... poor fellow! I fancy he... But that can never be, though. I like talking to Andrei Petrovitch; never a word of self, always of something sensible, useful. Very different from Shubin. Shubin’s as fine as a butterfly, and admires his own finery; which butterflies don’t do. But both Shubin and Andrei Petrovitch.... I know what I mean.

‘... He enjoys coming to us, I see that. But why? what does he find in me? It’s true our tastes are alike; he and I, both of us don’t care for poetry; neither of us knows anything of art. But how much better he is than I! He is calm, I am in perpetual excitement; he has chosen his path, his aim—while I—where am I going? where is my home? He is calm, but all his thoughts are far away. The time will come, and he will leave us for ever, will go home, there over the sea. Well? God grant he may! Any way I shall be glad that I knew him, while he was here.

‘Why isn’t he a Russian? No, he could not be Russian.

‘Mamma too likes him; she says: an unassuming young man. Dear mamma! She does not understand him. Paul says nothing; he guessed I didn’t like his hints, but he’s jealous of him. Spiteful boy! And what right has he? Did I ever... All that’s nonsense! What makes all that come into my head?

‘... Isn’t it strange though, that up till now, up to twenty, I have never loved any one! I believe that the reason why D.’s (I shall call him D.—I like that name Dmitri) soul is so clear, is that he is entirely given up to his work, his ideal. What has he to trouble about? When any one has utterly... utterly... given himself up, he has little sorrow, he is not responsible for anything. It’s not I want, but it wants. By the way, he and I both love the same flowers. I picked a rose this morning, one leaf fell, he picked it up.... I gave him the whole rose.

‘... D. often comes to us. Yesterday he spent the whole evening. He wants to teach me Bulgarian. I feel happy with him, quite at home, more than at home.

‘... The days fly past.... I am happy, and somehow discontent and I am thankful to God, and tears are not far off. Oh these hot bright days!

‘... I am still light-hearted as before, and only at times, and only a little, sad. I am happy. Am I happy?

‘... It will be long before I forget the expedition yesterday. What strange, new, terrible impressions when he suddenly took that great giant and flung him like a ball

into the water. I was not frightened ... yet he frightened me. And afterwards—what an angry face, almost cruel! How he said, “He will swim out!” It gave me a shock. So I did not understand him. And afterwards when they all laughed, when I was laughing, how I felt for him! He was ashamed, I felt that he was ashamed before me. He told me so afterwards in the carriage in the dark, when I tried to get a good view of him and was afraid of him. Yes, he is not to be trifled with, and he is a splendid champion. But why that wicked look, those trembling lips, that angry fire in his eyes? Or is it, perhaps, inevitable? Isn’t it possible to be a man, a hero, and to remain soft and gentle? “Life is a coarse business,” he said to me once lately. I repeated that saying to Andrei Petrovitch; he did not agree with D. Which of them is right? But the beginning of that day! How happy I was, walking beside him, even without speaking. ... But I am glad of what happened. I see that it was quite as it should be.

‘... Restlessness again... I am not quite well.... All these days I have written nothing in this book, because I have had no wish to write. I felt, whatever I write, it won’t be what is in my heart. ... And what is in my heart? I have had a long talk with him, which revealed a great deal. He told me his plan (by the way, I know now how he got the wound in his neck.... Good God! when I think he was actually condemned to death, that he was only just saved, that he was wounded....) He prophesies war and will be glad of it. And for all that, I never saw D. so depressed. What can he... he!... be depressed by? Papa arrived home from town and came upon us two. He looked rather queerly at us. Andrei Petrovitch came; I noticed he had grown very thin and pale. He reproved me, saying I behave too coldly and inconsiderately to Shubin. I had utterly forgotten Paul’s existence. I will see him, and try to smooth over my offence. He is nothing to me now... nor any one else in the world. Andrei Petrovitch talked to me in a sort of commiserating way. What does it all mean? Why is everything around me and within me so dark? I feel as if about me and within me, something mysterious were happening, for which I want to find the right word.... I

did not sleep all night; my head aches. What's the good of writing? He went away so quickly to-day and I wanted to talk to him.... He almost seems to avoid me. Yes, he avoids me.

'... The word is found, light has dawned on me! My God, have pity on me.... I love him!'

XVII

On the very day on which Elena had written this last fatal line in her diary, Insarov was sitting in Bersenyev's room, and Bersenyev was standing before him with a look of perplexity on his face. Insarov had just announced his intention of returning to Moscow the next day.

'Upon my word!' cried Bersenyev. 'Why, the finest part of the summer is just beginning. What will you do in Moscow? What a sudden decision! Or have you had news of some sort?'

'I have had no news,' replied Insarov; 'but on thinking things over, I find I cannot stop here.'

'How can that be?'

'Andrei Petrovitch,' said Insarov, 'be so kind... don't insist, please, I am very sorry myself to be leaving you, but it can't be helped.'

Bersenyev looked at him intently.

'I know,' he said at last, 'there's no persuading you. And so, it's a settled matter, is it?'

'Absolutely settled,' replied Insarov, getting up and going away.

Bersenyev walked about the room, then took his hat and set off for the Stahovs.

'You have something to tell me,' Elena said to him, directly they were left alone.

'Yes, how did you guess?'

‘Never mind; tell me what it is.’

Bersenyev told her of Insarov’s intention.

Elena turned white.

‘What does it mean?’ she articulated with effort.

‘You know,’ observed Bersenyev, ‘Dmitri Nikanorovitch does not care to give reasons for his actions. But I think... let us sit down, Elena Nikolaevna, you don’t seem very well.... I fancy I can guess what is the real cause of this sudden departure.’

‘What—what cause?’ repeated Elena, and unconsciously she gripped tightly Bersenyev’s hand in her chill fingers.

‘You see,’ began Bersenyev, with a pathetic smile, ‘how can I explain to you? I must go back to last spring, to the time when I began to be more intimate with Insarov. I used to meet him then at the house of a relative, who had a daughter, a very pretty girl I thought that Insarov cared for her, and I told him so. He laughed, and answered that I was mistaken, that he was quite heart-whole, but if anything of that sort did happen to him, he should run away directly, as he did not want, in his own words, for the sake of personal feeling, to be false to his cause and his duty. “I am a Bulgarian,” he said, “and I have no need of a Russian love——”

‘Well—so—now you——’ whispered Elena. She involuntarily turned away her head, like a man expecting a blow, but she still held the hand she had clutched.

‘I think,’ he said, and his own voice sank, ‘I think that what I fancied then has really happened now.’

‘That is—you think—don’t torture me!’ broke suddenly from Elena.

‘I think,’ Bersenyev continued hurriedly, ‘that Insarov is in love now with a Russian girl, and he is resolved to go, according to his word.’

Elena clasped his hand still tighter, and her head drooped still lower, as if she would

hide from other eyes the flush of shame which suddenly blazed over her face and neck.

‘Andrei Petrovitch, you are kind as an angel,’ she said, ‘but will he come to say goodbye?’

‘Yes, I imagine so; he will be sure to come. He wouldn’t like to go away——’

‘Tell him, tell him——’

But here the poor girl broke down; tears rushed streaming from her eyes, and she ran out of the room.

‘So that’s how she loves him,’ thought Bersenyev, as he walked slowly home. ‘I didn’t expect that; I didn’t think she felt so strongly. I am kind, she says:’ he pursued his reflections:... ‘Who can tell what feelings, what impulse drove me to tell Elena all that? It was not kindness; no, not kindness. It was all the accursed desire to make sure whether the dagger is really in the wound. I ought to be content. They love each other, and I have been of use to them.... The future go-between between science and the Russian public Shubin calls me; it seems as though it had been decreed at my birth that I should be a go-between. But if I’m mistaken? No, I’m not mistaken——’

It was bitter for Andrei Petrovitch, and he could not turn his mind to Raumer.

The next day at two o’clock Insarov arrived at the Stahovs’. As though by express design, there was a visitor in Anna Vassilyevna’s drawing-room at the time, the wife of a neighbouring chief-priest, an excellent and worthy woman, though she had had a little unpleasantness with the police, because she thought fit, in the hottest part of the day, to bathe in a lake near the road, along which a certain dignified general’s family used often to be passing. The presence of an outside person was at first even a relief to Elena, from whose face every trace of colour vanished, directly she heard Insarov’s step; but her heart sank at the thought that he might go without a word with her alone. He, too, seemed confused, and avoided meeting her eyes. ‘Surely he will not go directly,’ thought Elena. Insarov was, in fact, turning to take leave of

Anna Vassilyevna; Elena hastily rose and called him aside to the window. The priest's wife was surprised, and tried to turn round; but she was so tightly laced that her stays creaked at every movement, and she stayed where she was.

'Listen,' said Elena hurriedly; 'I know what you have come for; Andrei Petrovitch told me of your intention, but I beg, I entreat you, do not say good-bye to us to-day, but come here to-morrow rather earlier, at eleven. I must have a few words with you.'

Insarov bent his head without speaking.

'I will not keep you.... You promise me?'

Again Insarov bowed, but said nothing.

'Lenotchka, come here,' said Anna Vassilyevna, 'look, what a charming reticule.'

'I worked it myself,' observed the priest's wife.

Elena came away from the window.

Insarov did not stay more than a quarter of an hour at the Stahovs'. Elena watched him secretly. He was restless and ill at ease. As before, he did not know where to look, and he went away strangely and suddenly; he seemed to vanish.

Slowly passed that day for Elena; still more slowly dragged on the long, long night. Elena sat on her bed, her arms clasping her knees, and her head laid on them; then she walked to the window, pressed her burning forehead against the cold glass, and thought and thought, going over and over the same thoughts till she was exhausted. Her heart seemed turned to stone, she did not feel it, but the veins in her head throbbed painfully, her hair stifled her, and her lips were dry. 'He will come... he did not say good-bye to mamma... he will not deceive me... Can Andrei Petrovitch have been right? It cannot be... He didn't promise to come in words... Can I have parted from him for ever——?' Those were the thoughts that never left her, literally never left her; they did not come and come again; they were for ever turning like a mist

moving about in her brain. ‘He loves me!’ suddenly flashed through her, setting her whole nature on fire, and she gazed fixedly into the darkness; a secret smile parted her lips, seen by none, but she quickly shook her head, and clasped her hands behind her neck, and again her former thought hung like a mist about her. Before morning she undressed and went to bed, but she could not sleep. The first fiery ray of sunlight fell upon her room... ‘Oh, if he loves me!’ she cried suddenly, and unabashed by the light shining on her, she opened wide her arms... She got up, dressed, and went down. No one in the house was awake yet. She went into the garden, but in the garden it was peaceful, green, and fresh; the birds chirped so confidingly, and the flowers peeped out so gaily that she could not bear it. ‘Oh!’ she thought, ‘if it is true, no blade of grass is happy as I. But is it true?’ She went back to her room and, to kill time, she began changing her dress. But everything slipped out of her hands, and she was still sitting half-dressed before her looking-glass when she was summoned to morning tea. She went down; her mother noticed her pallor, but only said: ‘How interesting you are to-day,’ and taking her in in a glance, she added: ‘How well that dress suits you; you should always put it on when you want to make an impression on any one.’ Elena made no reply, and sat down in a corner. Meanwhile it struck nine o’clock; there were only two haurs now till eleven. Elena tried to read, then to sew, then to read again, then she vowed to herself to walk a hundred times up and down one alley, and paced it a hundred times; then for a long time she watched Anna Vassilyevna laying out the cards for patience... and looked at the clock; it was not yet ten. Shubin came into the drawing-room. She tried to talk to him, and begged his pardon, what for she did not know herself.... Every word she uttered did not cost her effort exactly, but roused a kind of amazement in herself. Shubin bent over her. She expected ridicule, raised her eyes, and saw before her a sorrowful and sympathetic face.... She smiled at this face. Shubin, too, smiled at her without speaking, and gently left her. She tried to keep him, but could not at once remember what to call him. At last it struck eleven. Then she began to wait, to wait, and to

listen. She could do nothing now; she ceased even to think. Her heart was stirred into life again, and began beating louder and louder, and strange, to say, the time seemed flying by. A quarter of an hour passed, then half an hour; a few minutes more, as Elena thought, had passed, when suddenly she started; the clock had struck not twelve, but one. ‘He is not coming; he is going away without saying good-bye.’... The blood rushed to her head with this thought. She felt that she was gasping for breath, that she was on the point of sobbing.... She ran to her own room, and fell with her face in her clasped hands on to the bed.

For half an hour she lay motionless; the tears flowed through her fingers on to the pillow. Suddenly she raised herself and sat up, something strange was passing in her, her face changed, her wet eyes grew dry and shining, her brows were bent and her lips compressed. Another half-hour passed. Elena, for the last time, strained her ears to listen: was not that the familiar voice floating up to her? She got up, put on her hat and gloves, threw a cape over her shoulders, and, slipping unnoticed out of the house, she went with swift steps along the road leading to Bersenyev’s lodging.

XVIII

Elena walked with her head bent and her eyes fixed straight before her. She feared nothing, she considered nothing; she wanted to see Insarov once more. She went on, not noticing that the sun had long ago disappeared behind heavy black clouds, that the wind was roaring by gusts in the trees and blowing her dress about her, that the dust had suddenly risen and was flying in a cloud along the road.... Large drops of rain were falling, she did not even notice it; but it fell faster and heavier, there were flashes of lightning and peals of thunder. Elena stood still looking round.... Fortunately for her, there was a little old broken-down chapel that had been built over a disused well not far from the place where she was overtaken by the storm. She ran to it and got under the low roof. The rain fell in torrents; the sky was

completely overcast. In dumb despair Elena stared at the thick network of fast-falling drops. Her last hope of getting a sight of Insarov was vanishing. A little old beggar-woman came into the chapel, shook herself, said with a curtsy: ‘Out of the rain, good lady,’ and with many sighs and groans sat down on a ledge near the well. Elena put her hand into her pocket; the old woman noticed this action and a light came into her face, yellow and wrinkled now, though once handsome. ‘Thank you, dear gracious lady,’ she was beginning. There happened to be no purse in Elena’s pocket, but the old woman was still holding out her hand.

‘I have no money, grannie,’ said Elena, ‘but here, take this, it will be of use for something.’

She gave her her handkerchief.

‘O-oh, my pretty lady,’ said the beggar, ‘what do you give your handkerchief to me for? For a wedding-present to my grandchild when she’s married? God reward you for your goodness!’

A peal of thunder was heard.

‘Lord Jesus Christ,’ muttered the beggar-woman, and she crossed herself three times. ‘Why, haven’t I seen you before,’ she added after a brief pause. ‘Didn’t you give me alms in Christ’s name?’

Elena looked more attentively at the old woman and recognised her.

‘Yes, grannie,’ she answered, ‘wasn’t it you asked me why I was so sorrowful?’

‘Yes, darling, yes. I fancied I knew you. And I think you’ve a heart-ache still. You seem in trouble now. Here’s your handkerchief, too, wet from tears to be sure. Oh, you young people, you all have the same sorrow, a terrible woe it is!’

‘What sorrow, grannie?’

‘Ah, my good young lady, you can’t deceive an old woman like me. I know what your heart is heavy over; your sorrow’s not an uncommon one. Sure, I have been

young too, darling. I have been through that trouble too. Yes. And I'll tell you something, for your goodness to me; you've won a good man, not a light of love, you cling to him alone; cling to him stronger than death. If it comes off, it comes off,—if not, it's in God's hands. Yes. Why are you wondering at me? I'm a fortune-teller. There, I'll carry away your sorrow with your handkerchief. I'll carry it away, and it's over. See the rain's less; you wait a little longer. It's not the first time I've been wet. Remember, darling; you had a sorrow, the sorrow has flown, and there's no memory of it. Good Lord, have mercy on us!'

The beggar-woman got up from the edge of the well, went out of the chapel, and stole off on her way. Elena stared after her in bewilderment. 'What does this mean?' she murmured involuntarily.

The rain grew less and less, the sun peeped out for an instant. Elena was just preparing to leave her shelter.... Suddenly, ten paces from the chapel, she saw Insarov. Wrapt in a cloak he was walking along the very road by which Elena had come; he seemed to be hurrying home.

She clasped the old rail of the steps for support, and tried to call to him, but her voice failed her... Insarov had already passed by without raising his head.

'Dmitri Nikanorovitch!' she said at last.

Insarov stopped abruptly, looked round.... For the first minute he did not know Elena, but he went up to her at once. 'You! you here!' he cried.

She walked back in silence into the chapel. Insarov followed Elena. 'You here?' he repeated.

She was still silent, and only gazed upon him with a strange, slow, tender look. He dropped his eyes.

'You have come from our house?' she asked.

'No... not from your house.'

‘No?’ repeated Elena, and she tried to smile. ‘Is that how you keep your promises? I have been expecting you ever since the morning.’

‘I made no promise yesterday, if you remember, Elena Nikolaevna.’

Again Elena faintly smiled, and she passed her hand over her face. Both face and hands were very white.

‘You meant, then, to go away without saying good-bye to us?’

‘Yes,’ replied Insarov in a surly, thick voice.

‘What? After our friendship, after the talks, after everything.... Then if I had not met you here by chance.’ (Elena’s voice began to break, and she paused an instant)... ‘you would have gone away like that, without even shaking hands for the last time, and you would not have cared?’

Insarov turned away. ‘Elena Nikolaevnas don’t talk like that, please. I’m not over happy as it is. Believe me, my decision has cost me great effort. If you knew——’

‘I don’t want to know,’ Elena interposed with dismay, ‘why you are going.... It seems it’s necessary. It seems we must part. You would not wound your friends without good reason. But, can friends part like this? And we are friends, aren’t we?’

‘No,’ said Insarov.

‘What?’ murmured Elena. Her cheeks were overspread with a faint flush.

‘That’s just why I am going away—because we are not friends. Don’t force me into saying what I don’t want to say, and what I won’t say.’

‘You used to be so open with me,’ said Elena rather reproachfully. ‘Do you remember?’

‘I used to be able to be open, then I had nothing to conceal; but now——’

‘But now?’ queried Elena.

‘But now... now I must go away. Goodbye.’

If, at that instant, Insarov had lifted his eyes to Elena, he would have seen that her face grew brighter and brighter as he frowned and looked gloomy; but he kept his eyes obstinately fixed on the ground.

‘Well, good-bye, Dmitri Nikanorovitch,’ she began. ‘But at least, since we have met, give me your hand now.’

Insarov was stretching out his hand. ‘No, I can’t even do that,’ he said, and turned away again.

‘You can’t?’

‘No, I can’t. Good-bye.’ And he moved away to the entrance of the chapel.

‘Wait a little longer,’ said Elena. ‘You seem afraid of me. But I am braver than you,’ she added, a faint tremor passing suddenly over her whole body. ‘I can tell you... shall I?... how it was you found me here? Do you know where I was going?’

Insarov looked in bewilderment at Elena.

‘I was going to you.’

‘To me?’

Elena hid her face. ‘You mean to force me to say that I love you,’ she whispered. ‘There, I have said it.’

‘Elena!’ cried Insarov.

She took his hands, looked at him, and fell on his breast.

He held her close to him, and said nothing. There was no need for him to tell her he loved her. From that cry alone, from the instant transformation of the whole man, from the heaving of the breast to which she clung so confidingly, from the touch of his finger tips in her hair, Elena could feel that she was loved. He did not speak, and she needed no words. ‘He is here, he loves me... what need of more?’ The peace of perfect bliss, the peace of the harbour reached after storm, of the end attained, that heavenly peace which gives significance and beauty even to death, filled her with its

divine flood. She desired nothing, for she had gained all. ‘O my brother, my friend, my dear one!’ her lips were whispering, while she did not know whose was this heart, his or her own, which beat so blissfully, and melted against her bosom.

He stood motionless, folding in his strong embrace the young life surrendered to him; he felt against his heart this new, infinitely precious burden; a passion of tenderness, of gratitude unutterable, was crumbling his hard will to dust, and tears unknown till now stood in his eyes.

She did not weep; she could only repeat, ‘O my friend, my brother!’

‘So you will follow me everywhere?’ he said to her, a quarter of an hour later, still enfolding her and keeping her close to him in his arms.

‘Everywhere, to the ends of the earth. Where you are, I will be.’

‘And you are not deceiving yourself, you know your parents will never consent to our marriage?’

‘I don’t deceive myself; I know that.’

‘You know that I’m poor—almost a beggar.’

‘I know.’

‘That I’m not a Russian, that it won’t be my fate to live in Russia, that you will have to break all your ties with your country, with your people.’

‘I know, I know.’

‘Do you know, too, that I have given myself up to a difficult, thankless cause, that I... that we shall have to expose ourselves not to dangers only, but to privation, humiliation, perhaps——’

‘I know, I know all—I love you——’

‘That you will have to give up all you are accustomed to, that out there alone among strangers, you will be forced perhaps to work——’

She laid her hand on his lips. ‘I love you, my dear one.’

He began hotly kissing her slender, rosy hand. Elena did not draw it away from his lips, and with a kind of childish delight, with smiling curiosity, watched how he covered with kisses, first the palm, then the fingers....

All at once she blushed and hid her face upon his breast.

He lifted her head tenderly and looked steadily into her eyes. ‘Welcome, then, my wife, before God and men!’

XIX

An hour later, Elena, with her hat in one hand, her cape in the other, walked slowly into the drawing-room of the villa. Her hair was in slight disorder; on each cheek was to be seen a small bright spot of colour, the smile would not leave her lips, her eyes were nearly shutting and half hidden under the lids; they, too, were smiling. She could scarcely move for weariness, and this weariness was pleasant to her; everything, indeed, was pleasant to her. Everything seemed sweet and friendly to her. Uvar Ivanovitch was sitting at the window; she went up to him, laid her hand on his shoulder, stretched a little, and involuntarily, as it seemed, she laughed.

‘What is it?’ he inquired, astonished.

She did not know what to say. She felt inclined to kiss Uvar Ivanovitch.

‘How he splashed!’ she explained at last.

But Uvar Ivanovitch did not stir a muscle, and continued to look with amazement at Elena. She dropped her hat and cape on to him.

‘Dear Uvar Ivanovitch,’ she said, ‘I am sleepy and tired,’ and again she laughed and sank into a low chair near him.

‘H’m,’ grunted Uvar Ivanovitch, flourishing his fingers, ‘then you ought—yes——’

Elena was looking round her and thinking, ‘From all this I soon must part... and strange—I have no dread, no doubt, no regret.... No, I am sorry for mamma.’ Then

the little chapel rose again before her mind, again her voice was echoing in it, and she felt his arms about her. Joyously, though faintly, her heart fluttered; weighed down by the languor of happiness. The old beggar-woman recurred to her mind. ‘She did really bear away my sorrow,’ she thought. ‘Oh, how happy I am! how undeservedly! how soon!’ If she had let herself go in the least she would have melted into sweet, endless tears. She could only restrain them by laughing. Whatever attitude she fell into seemed to her the easiest, most comfortable possible; she felt as if she were being rocked to sleep. All her movements were slow and soft; what had become of her awkwardness, her haste? Zoya came in; Elena decided that she had never seen a more charming little face; Anna Vassilyevna came in; Elena felt a pang—but with what tenderness she embraced her mother and kissed her on the forehead near the hair, already slightly grey! Then she went away to her own room; how everything smiled upon her there! With what a sense of shamefaced triumph and tranquillity she sat down on her bed—the very bed on which, only three hours ago, she had spent such bitter moments! ‘And yet, even then, I knew he loved me,’ she thought, ‘even before... Ah, no! it’s a sin. You are my wife,’ she whispered, hiding her face in her hands and falling on her knees.

Towards the evening, she grew more thoughtful. Sadness came upon her at the thought that she would not soon see Insarov. He could not without awakening suspicion remain at Bersenyev’s, and so this was what he and Elena had resolved on. Insarov was to return to Moscow and to come over to visit them twice before the autumn; on her side she promised to write him letters, and, if it were possible, to arrange a meeting with him somewhere near Kuntsov. She went down to the drawing-room to tea, and found there all the household and Shubin, who looked at her sharply directly she came in; she tried to talk to him in a friendly way as of old, but she dreaded his penetration, she was afraid of herself. She felt sure that there was good reason for his having left her alone for more than a fortnight. Soon Bersenyev arrived, and gave Insarov’s respects to Anna Vassilyevna with an

apology for having gone back to Moscow without calling to take leave of her. Insarov's name was for the first time during the day pronounced before Elena. She felt that she reddened; she realised at the same time that she ought to express regret at the sudden departure of such a pleasant acquaintance; but she could not force herself to hypocrisy, and continued to sit without stirring or speaking, while Anna Vassilyevna sighed and lamented. Elena tried to keep near Bersenyev; she was not afraid of him, though he even knew part of her secret; she was safe under his wing from Shubin, who still persisted in staring at her—not mockingly but attentively. Bersenyev, too, was thrown into perplexity during the evening: he had expected to see Elena more gloomy. Happily for her, an argument sprang up about art between him and Shubin; she moved apart and heard their voices as it were through a dream. By degrees, not only they, but the whole room, everything surrounding her, seemed like a dream—everything: the samovar on the table, and Uvar Ivanovitch's short waistcoat, and Zoya's polished finger-nails, and the portrait in oils of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovitch on the wall; everything retreated, everything was wrapped in mist, everything ceased to exist. Only she felt sorry for them all. 'What are they living for?' she thought.

'Are you sleepy, Lenotchka?' her mother asked her. She did not hear the question.

'A half untrue insinuation, do you say?' These words, sharply uttered by Shubin, suddenly awakened Elena's attention. 'Why,' he continued, 'the whole sting lies in that. A true insinuation makes one wretched—that's unchristian—and to an untrue insinuation a man is indifferent—that's stupid, but at a half true one he feels vexed and impatient. For instance, if I say that Elena Nikolaevna is in love with one of us, what sort of insinuation would that be, eh?'

'Ah, Monsieur Paul,' said Elena, 'I should like to show myself vexed, but really I can't. I am so tired.'

'Why don't you go to bed?' observed Anna Vassilyevna, who was always drowsy in

the evening herself, and consequently always eager to send the others to bed. ‘Say good-night to me, and go in God’s name; Andrei Petrovitch will excuse you.’

Elena kissed her mother, bowed to all and went away. Shubin accompanied her to the door. ‘Elena Nikolaevna,’ he whispered to her in the doorway, ‘you trample on Monsieur Paul, you mercilessly walk over him, but Monsieur Paul blesses you and your little feet, and the slippers on your little feet, and the soles of your little slippers.’

Elena shrugged her shoulders, reluctantly held out her hand to him—not the one Insarov had kissed—and going up to her room, at once undressed, got into bed, and fell asleep. She slept a deep, unstirring sleep, as even children rarely sleep—the sleep of a child convalescent after sickness, when its mother sits near its cradle and watches it, and listens to its breathing.

XX

‘Come to my room for a minute,’ Shubin said to Bersenyev, directly the latter had taken leave of Anna Vassilyevna: ‘I have something to show you.’

Bersenyev followed him to his attic. He was surprised to see a number of studies, statuettes, and busts, covered with damp cloths, set about in all the corners of the room.

‘Well I see you have been at work in earnest,’ he observed to Shubin.

‘One must do something,’ he answered. ‘If one thing doesn’t do, one must try another. However, like a true Corsican, I am more concerned with revenge than with pure art. Trema, Bisanzia!’

‘I don’t understand you,’ said Bersenyev.

‘Well, wait a minute. Deign to look this way, gracious friend and benefactor, my vengeance number one.’

Shubin uncovered one figure, and Bersenyev saw a capital bust of Insarov, an excellent likeness. The features of the face had been correctly caught by Shubin to the minutest detail, and he had given him a fine expression, honest, generous, and bold.

Bersenyev went into raptures over it.

‘That’s simply exquisite!’ he cried. ‘I congratulate you. You must send it to the exhibition! Why do you call that magnificent work your vengeance?’

‘Because, sir, I intended to offer this magnificent work as you call it to Elena Nikolaevna on her name day. Do you see the allegory? We are not blind, we see what goes on about us, but we are gentlemen, my dear sir, and we take our revenge like gentlemen.... But here,’ added Shubin, uncovering another figure, ‘as the artist according to modern aesthetic principles enjoys the enviable privilege of embodying in himself every sort of baseness which he can turn into a gem of creative art, we in the production of this gem, number two, have taken vengeance not as gentlemen, but simply en canaille.’

He deftly drew off the cloth, and displayed to Bersenyev’s eyes a statuette in Dantan’s style, also of Insarov. Anything cleverer and more spiteful could not be imagined. The young Bulgarian was represented as a ram standing on his hind-legs, butting forward with his horns. Dull solemnity and aggressiveness, obstinacy, clumsiness and narrowness were simply printed on the visage of the ‘sire of the woolly flock,’ and yet the likeness to Insarov was so striking that Bersenyev could not help laughing.

‘Eh? is it amusing?’ said Shubin. ‘Do you recognise the hero? Do you advise me to send it too to the exhibition? That, my dear fellow, I intend as a present for myself on my own name day.... Your honour will permit me to play the fool.’

And Shubin gave three little leaps, kicking himself behind with his heels.

Bersenyev picked up the cloth off the floor—and threw it over the statuette.

‘Ah, you, magnanimous’—began Shubin. ‘Who the devil was it in history was so particularly magnanimous? Well, never mind! And now,’ he continued, with melancholy triumph, uncovering a third rather large mass of clay, ‘you shall behold something which will show you the humility and discernment of your friend. You will realise that he, like a true artist again, feels the need and the use of self-castigation. Behold!’

The cloth was lifted and Bersenyev saw two heads, modelled side by side and close as though growing together.... He did not at once know what was the subject, but looking closer, he recognised in one of them Annushka, in the other Shubin himself. They were, however, rather caricatures than portraits. Annushka was represented as a handsome fat girl with a low forehead, eyes lost in layers of fat, and a saucily turned-up nose. Her thick lips had an insolent curve; her whole face expressed sensuality, carelessness, and boldness, not without goodnature. Himself Shubin had modelled as a lean emaciated rake, with sunken cheeks, his thin hair hanging in weak wisps about his face, a meaningless expression in his dim eyes, and his nose sharp and thin as a dead man’s.

Bersenyev turned away with disgust. ‘A nice pair, aren’t they, my dear fellow?’ said Shubin; ‘won’t you graciously compose a suitable title? For the first two I have already thought of titles. On the bust shall be inscribed: “A hero resolving to liberate his country.” On the statuette: “Look out, sausage-eating Germans!” And for this work what do you think of “The future of the artist Pavel Yakovlitch Shubin?” Will that do?’

‘Leave off,’ replied Bersenyev. ‘Was it worth while to waste your time on such a ——’ He could not at once fix on a suitable word.

‘Disgusting thing, you mean? No, my dear fellow, excuse me, if anything ought to go to the exhibition, it’s that group.’

‘It’s simply disgusting,’ repeated Bersenyev. ‘And besides, it’s nonsense. You have

absolutely no such degrading tendencies to which, unhappily, our artists have such a frequent bent. You have simply libelled yourself.'

'Do you think so?' said Shubin gloomily. 'I have none of them, and if they come upon me, the fault is all one person's. Do you know,' he added, tragically knitting his brows, 'that I have been trying drinking?'

'Nonsense?'

'Yes, I have, by God,' rejoined Shubin; and suddenly grinning and brightening,—'but I didn't like it, my dear boy, the stuff sticks in my throat, and my head afterwards is a perfect drum. The great Lushtchihin himself—Harlampy Lushtchihin—the greatest drunkard in Moscow, and a Great Russian drunkard too, declared there was nothing to be made of me. In his words, the bottle does not speak to me.'

Bersenyev was just going to knock the group over but Shubin stopped him.

'That'll do, my dear boy, don't smash it; it will serve as a lesson, a scare-crow.'

Bersenyev laughed.

'If that's what it is, I will spare your scarecrow then,' he said. And now, 'Long live eternal true art!'

'Long live true art!' put in Shubin. 'By art the good is better and the bad is not all loss!'

The friends shook hands warmly and parted.

XXI

Elena's first sensation on awakening was one of happy consternation. 'Is it possible? Is it possible?' she asked herself, and her heart grew faint with happiness. Recollections came rushing on her... she was overwhelmed by them. Then again she was enfolded by the blissful peace of triumph. But in the course of the morning,

Elena gradually became possessed by a spirit of unrest, and for the remainder of the day she felt listless and weary. It was true she knew now what she wanted, but that made it no easier for her. That never-to-be forgotten meeting had cast her for ever out of the old groove; she was no longer at the same standpoint, she was far away, and yet everything went on about her in its accustomed order, everything pursued its own course as though nothing were changed; the old life moved on its old way, reckoning on Elena's interest and co-operation as of old. She tried to begin a letter to Insarov, but that too was a failure; the words came on to paper either lifeless or false. Her diary she had put an end to by drawing a thick stroke under the last line. That was the past, and every thought, all her soul, was turned now to the future. Her heart was heavy. To sit with her mother who suspected nothing, to listen to her, answer her and talk to her, seemed to Elena something wicked; she felt the presence of a kind of falseness in her, she suffered though she had nothing to blush for; more than once an almost irresistible desire sprang up in her heart to tell everything without reserve, whatever might come of it afterwards. 'Why,' she thought, 'did not Dmitri take me away then, from that little chapel, wherever he wanted to go? Didn't he tell me I was his wife before God? What am I here for?' She suddenly began to feel shy of every one, even of Uvar Ivanovitch, who was flourishing his fingers in more perplexity than ever. Now everything about her seemed neither sweet nor friendly, nor even a dream, but, like a nightmare, lay, an immovable dead load, on her heart; seeming to reproach her and be indignant with her, and not to care to know about her....'You are ours in spite of everything,' she seemed to hear. Even her poor pets, her ill-used birds and animals looked at her—so at least she fancied—with suspicion and hostility. She felt conscience-stricken and ashamed of her feelings. 'This is my home after all,' she thought, 'my family, my country.'... 'No, it's no longer your country, nor your family,' another voice affirmed within her. Terror was overmastering her, and she was vexed with her own feebleness. The trial was only beginning and she was losing patience already... Was this what she had promised?

She did not soon gain control of herself. But a week passed and then another.... Elena became a little calmer, and grew used to her new position. She wrote two little notes to Insarov, and carried them herself to the post: she could not for anything—through shame and through pride—have brought herself to confide in a maid. She was already beginning to expect him in person.... But instead of Insarov, one fine morning Nikolai Artemyevitch made his appearance.

XXII

No one in the house of the retired lieutenant of guards, Stahov, had ever seen him so sour, and at the same time so self-confident and important as on that day. He walked into the drawing-room in his overcoat and hat, with long deliberate stride, stamping with his heels; he approached the looking-glass and took a long look at himself, shaking his head and biting his lips with imperturbable severity. Anna Vassilyevna met him with obvious agitation and secret delight (she never met him otherwise); he did not even take off his hat, nor greet her, and in silence gave Elena his doe-skin glove to kiss. Anna Vassilyevna began questioning him about the progress of his cure; he made her no reply. Uvar Ivanovitch made his appearance; he glanced at him and said, ‘bah!’ He usually behaved coldly and haughtily to Uvar Ivanovitch, though he acknowledged in him ‘traces of the true Stahov blood.’ Almost all Russian families of the nobility are convinced, as is well known, of the existence of exceptional hereditary characteristics, peculiar to them alone; we have more than once heard discussions ‘among ourselves’ of the Podsalaskinsky ‘noses,’ and the ‘Perepreyevsky’ necks. Zoya came in and sat down facing Nikolai Artemyevitch. He grunted, sank into an armchair, asked for coffee, and only then took off his hat. Coffee was brought him; he drank a cup, and looking at everybody in turn, he growled between his teeth, ‘Sortes, s’il vous plaît,’ and turning to his wife he added, ‘et vous, madame, restez, je vous prie.’

They all left the room, except Anna Vassilyevna. Her head was trembling with agitation. The solemnity of Nikolai Artemyevitch's preparations impressed her. She was expecting something extraordinary.

'What is it?' she cried, directly the door was closed.

Nikolai Artemyevitch flung an indifferent glance at Anna Vassilyevna.

'Nothing special; what a way you have of assuming the air of a victim at once!' he began, quite needlessly dropping the corners of his mouth at every word. 'I only want to forewarn you that we shall have a new guest dining here to-day.'

'Who is it?'

'Kurnatovsky, Yegor Andreyevitch. You don't know him. The head secretary in the senate.'

'He is to dine with us to-day?'

'Yes.'

'And was it only to tell me this that you made every one go away?'

Nikolai Artemyevitch again flung a glance—this time one of irony—at Anna Vassilyevna.

'Does that surprise you? Defer your surprise a little.'

He ceased speaking. Anna Vassilyevna too was silent for a little time.

'I could have wished——' she was beginning.

'I know you have always looked on me as an "immoral" man,' began Nikolai Artemyevitch suddenly.

'I!' muttered Anna Vassilyevna, astounded.

'And very likely you are right. I don't wish to deny that I have in fact sometimes given you just grounds for dissatisfaction' ("my greys!" flashed through Anna Vassilyevna's head), 'though you must yourself allow, that in the condition, as you

are aware, of your constitution——’

‘And I make no complaint against you, Nikolai Artemyevitch.’

‘C’est possible. In any case, I have no intention of justifying myself. Time will justify me. But I regard it as my duty to prove to you that I understand my duties, and know how to care for—for the welfare of the family entrusted—entrusted to me.’

‘What’s the meaning of all this?’ Anna Vassilyevna was thinking. (She could not guess that the preceding evening at the English club a discussion had arisen in a corner of the smoking-room as to the incapacity of Russians to make speeches. ‘Which of us can speak? Mention any one!’ one of the disputants had exclaimed. ‘Well, Stahov, for instance,’ had answered the other, pointing to Nikolai Artemyevitch, who stood up on the spot almost squealing with delight.)

‘For instance,’ pursued Nikolai Artemyevitch, ‘my daughter Elena. Don’t you consider that the time has come for her to take a decisive step along the path—to be married, I mean to say. All these intellectual and philanthropic pursuits are all very well, but only up to a certain point, up to a certain age. It’s time for her to drop her mistiness, to get out of the society of all these artists, scholars, and Montenegrins, and do like everybody else.’

‘How am I to understand you?’ asked Anna Vassilyevna.

‘Well, if you will kindly listen,’ answered Nikolai Artemyevitch, still with the same dropping of the corners of his lips, ‘I will tell you plainly, without beating about the bush. I have made acquaintance, I have become intimate with this young man, Mr. Kurnatovsky, in the hope of having him for a son-in-law. I venture to think that when you see him, you will not accuse me of partiality or precipitate judgment.’ (Nikolai Artemyevitch was admiring his own eloquence as he talked.) ‘Of excellent education—educated in the highest legal college—excellent manners, thirty-three years old, and upper-secretary, a councillor, and a Stanislas cross on his neck. You, I

hope, will do me the justice to allow that I do not belong to the number of those pères de famille who are mad for position; but you yourself told me that Elena Nikolaevna likes practical business men; Yegor Andreyevitch is in the first place a business man; now on the other side, my daughter has a weakness for generous actions; so let me tell you that Yegor Andreyevitch, directly he had attained the possibility—you understand me—the possibility of living without privation on his salary, at once gave up the yearly income assigned him by his father, for the benefit of his brothers.'

'Who is his father?' inquired Anna Vassilyevna.

'His father? His father is a man well-known in his own line, of the highest moral character, un vrai stoïcien, a retired major, I think, overseer of all the estates of the Count B——'

'Ah!' observed Anna Vassilyevna.

'Ah! why ah?' interposed Nikolai Artemyevitch. 'Can you be infected with prejudice?'

'Why, I said nothing——' Anna Vassilyevna was beginning.

'No, you said, ah!—However that may be, I have thought it well to acquaint you with my way of thinking; and I venture to think—I venture to hope Mr. Kurnatovsky will be received à bras ouverts. He is no Montenegrin vagrant.'

'Of course; I need only call Vanka the cook and order a few extra dishes.'

'You are aware that I will not enter into that,' said Nikolai Artemyevitch; and he got up, put on his hat, and whistling (he had heard some one say that whistling was only permissible in a country villa and a riding court) went out for a stroll in the garden. Shubin watched him out of the little window of his lodge, and in silence put out his tongue at him.

At ten minutes to four, a hackney-carriage drove up to the steps of the Stahovs's

villa, and a man, still young, of prepossessing appearance, simply and elegantly dressed, stepped out of it and sent up his name. This was Yegor Andreyevitch Kurnatovsky.

This was what, among other things, Elena wrote next day to Insarov:

‘Congratulate me, dear Dmitri, I have a suitor. He dined with us yesterday: papa made his acquaintance at the English club, I fancy, and invited him. Of course he did not come yesterday as a suitor. But good mamma, to whom papa had made known his hopes, whispered in my ear what this guest was. His name is Yegor Andreyevitch Kurnatovsky; he is upper-secretary to the Senate. I will first describe to you his appearance. He is of medium height, shorter than you, and a good figure; his features are regular, he is close-cropped, and wears large whiskers. His eyes are rather small (like yours), brown, and quick; he has a flat wide mouth; in his eyes and on his lips there is a perpetual sort of official smile; it seems to be always on duty there. He behaves very simply and speaks precisely, and everything about him is precise; he moves, laughs, and eats as though he were doing a duty. “How carefully she has studied him!” you are thinking, perhaps, at this minute. Yes; so as to be able to describe him to you. And besides, who wouldn’t study her suitor! There’s something of iron in him—and dull and empty at the same time—and honest; they say he is really very honest. You, too, are made of iron; but not like this man. At dinner he sat next me, and facing us sat Shubin. At first the conversation turned on commercial undertakings; they say he is very clever in business matters, and was almost throwing up his government post to take charge of a large manufacturing business. Pity he didn’t do it! Then Shubin began to talk about the theatre; Mr. Kurnatovsky declared and—I must confess—without false modesty, that he has no ideas about art. That reminded me of you—but I thought; no, Dmitri and I are ignorant of art in a very different way though. This man seemed to mean, “I know nothing of it, and it’s quite superfluous, still it may be admitted in a well-ordered state.” He seems, however, to think very little about Petersburg and comme il faut:

he once even called himself one of the proletariat. ‘We are working people,’ he said; I thought if Dmitri had said that, I shouldn’t have liked it; but he may talk about himself, he may boast if he likes. With me he is very attentive; but I kept feeling that a very, very condescending superior was talking with me. When he means to praise any one, he says So-and-so is a man of principle—that’s his favourite word. He seems to be self-confident, hardworking, capable of self-sacrifice (you see, I am impartial), that’s to say, of sacrificing his own interest; but he is a great despot. It would be woeful to fall into his power! At dinner they began talking about bribes.

‘“I know,” he said, “that in many cases the man who accepts a bribe is not to blame; he cannot do otherwise. Still, if he is found out, he must be punished without mercy.”

‘I cried, “Punish an innocent man!”

‘“Yes; for the sake of principle.”

‘“What principle?” asked Shubin. Kurnatovsky seemed annoyed or surprised, and said, “That needs no explanation.”

‘Papa, who seems to worship him, put in “of course not”; and to my vexation the conversation stopped there. In the evening Bersenyev came and got into a terrific argument with him. I have never seen our good Andrei Petrovitch so excited. Mr. Kurnatovsky did not at all deny the utility of science, universities, and so on, but still I understood Andrei Petrovitch’s indignation. The man looks at it all as a sort of gymnastics. Shubin came up to me after dinner, and said, “This fellow here and some one else (he can never bring himself to utter your name) are both practical men, but see what a difference; there’s the real living ideal given to life; and here there’s not even a feeling of duty, simply official honesty and activity without anything inside it.” Shubin is clever, and I remembered his words to tell you; but to my mind there is nothing in common between you. You have faith, and he has not; for a man cannot have faith in himself only.

‘He did not go away till late; but mamma had time to inform me that he was pleased with me, and papa is in ecstasies. Did he say, I wonder, that I was a woman of principle? I was almost telling mamma that I was very sorry, but I had a husband already. Why is it papa dislikes you so? Mamma, we could soon manage to bring round.

‘Oh, my dear one! I have described this gentleman in such detail to deaden my heartache. I don’t live without you; I am constantly seeing you, hearing you. I look forward to seeing you—only not at our house, as you intended—fancy how wretched and ill at ease we should be!—but you know where I wrote to you—in that wood. Oh, my dear one! How I love you!’

XXIII

Three weeks after Kurnatovsky’s first visit, Anna Vassilyevna, to Elena’s great delight, returned to Moscow, to her large wooden house near Prechistenka; a house with columns, white lyres and wreaths over every window, with an attic, offices, a palisade, a huge green court, a well in the court and a dog’s kennel near the well. Anna Vassilyevna had never left her country villa so early, but this year with the first autumn chills her face swelled; Nikolai Artemyevitch for his part, having finished his cure, began to want his wife; besides, Augustina Christianovna had gone away on a visit to her cousin in Revel; a family of foreigners, known as ‘living statues,’ des poses plastiques, had come to Moscow, and the description of them in the Moscow Gazette had aroused Anna Vassilyevna’s liveliest curiosity. In short, to stay longer at the villa seemed inconvenient, and even, in Nikolai Artemyevitch’s words, incompatible with the fulfilment of his ‘cherished projects.’ The last fortnight seemed very long to Elena. Kurnatovsky came over twice on Sundays; on other days he was busy. He came really to see Elena, but talked more to Zoya, who was much pleased with him. ‘Das ist ein Mann!’ she thought to herself, as she

looked at his full manly face and listened to his self-confident, condescending talk. To her mind, no one had such a wonderful voice, no one could pronounce so nicely, ‘I had the hon-our,’ or, ‘I am most de-lighted.’ Insarov did not come to the Stahovs, but Elena saw him once in secret in a little copse by the Moskva river, where she arranged to meet him. They hardly had time to say more than a few words to each other. Shubin returned to Moscow with Anna Vassilyevna; Bersenyev, a few days later.

Insarov was sitting in his room, and for the third time looking through the letters brought him from Bulgaria by hand; they were afraid to send them by post. He was much disturbed by them. Events were developing rapidly in the East; the occupation of the Principalities by Russian troops had thrown all men’s minds into a ferment; the storm was growing—already could be felt the breath of approaching inevitable war. The fire was kindling all round, and no one could foresee how far it would go—where it would stop. Old wrongs, long cherished hopes—all were astir again. Insarov’s heart throbbed eagerly; his hopes too were being realised. ‘But is it not too soon, will it not be in vain?’ he thought, tightly clasping his hands. ‘We are not ready, but so be it! I must go.’

Something rustled lightly at the door, it flew quickly open, and into the room ran Elena.

Insarov, all in a tremor, rushed to her, fell on his knees before her, clasped her waist and pressed it close against his head.

‘You didn’t expect me?’ she said, hardly able to draw her breath, she had run quickly up the stairs. ‘Dear one! dear one!—so this is where you live? I’ve quickly found you. The daughter of your landlord conducted me. We arrived the day before yesterday. I meant to write to you, but I thought I had better come myself. I have come for a quarter of an hour. Get up, shut the door.’

He got up, quickly shut the door, returned to her and took her by the hands. He could

not speak; he was choking with delight. She looked with a smile into his eyes... there was such rapture in them... she felt shy.

‘Stay,’ she said, fondly taking her hand away from him, ‘let me take off my hat.’

She untied the strings of her hat, flung it down, slipped the cape off her shoulders, tidied her hair, and sat down on the little old sofa. Insarov gazed at her, without stirring, like one enchanted.

‘Sit down,’ she said, not lifting her eyes to him and motioning him to a place beside her.

Insarov sat down, not on the sofa, but on the floor at her feet.

‘Come, take off my gloves,’ she said in an uncertain voice. She felt afraid.

He began first to unbutton and then to draw off one glove; he drew it half off and greedily pressed his lips to the slender, soft wrist, which was white under it.

Elena shuddered, and would have pushed him back with the other hand; he began kissing the other hand too. Elena drew it away, he threw back his head, she looked into his face, bent above him, and their lips touched.

An instant passed... she broke away, got up, whispered ‘No, no,’ and went quickly up to the writing-table.

‘I am mistress here, you know, so you ought not to have any secrets from me,’ she said, trying to seem at ease, and standing with her back to him. ‘What a lot of papers! what are these letters?’

Insarov knitted his brows. ‘Those letters?’ he said, getting up, ‘you can read them.’

Elena turned them over in her hand. ‘There are so many of them, and the writing is so fine, and I have to go directly... let them be. They’re not from a rival, eh?... and they’re not in Russian,’ she added, turning over the thin sheets.

Insarov came close to her and fondly touched her waist. She turned suddenly to him, smiled brightly at him and leant against his shoulder.

‘Those letters are from Bulgaria, Elena; my friends write to me, they want me to come.’

‘Now? To them?’

‘Yes... now, while there is still time, while it is still possible to come.’

All at once she flung both arms round his neck, ‘You will take me with you, yes?’

He pressed her to his heart. ‘O my sweet girl, O my heroine, how you said that! But isn’t it wicked, isn’t it mad for me, a homeless, solitary man, to drag you with me... and out there too!’

She shut his mouth.... ‘Sh—or I shall be angry, and never come to see you again. Why isn’t it all decided, all settled between us? Am I not your wife? Can a wife be parted from her husband?’

‘Wives don’t go into war,’ he said with a half-mournful smile.

‘Oh yes, when they can’t stay behind, and I cannot stay here?’

‘Elena, my angel!.. but think, I have, perhaps, to leave Moscow in a fortnight. I can’t think of university lectures, or finishing my work.’

‘What!’ interrupted Elena, ‘you have to go soon? If you like, I will stop at once this minute with you for ever, and not go home, shall I? Shall we go at once?’

Insarov clasped her in his arms with redoubled warmth. ‘May God so reward me then,’ he cried, ‘if I am doing wrong! From to-day, we are one for ever!’

‘Am I to stay?’ asked Elena.

‘No, my pure girl; no, my treasure. You shall go back home to-day, only keep yourself in readiness. This is a matter we can’t manage straight off; we must plan it out well. We want money, a passport——’

‘I have money,’ put in Elena. ‘Eighty roubles.’

‘Well, that’s not much,’ observed Insarov; ‘but everything’s a help.’

‘But I can get more. I will borrow. I will ask mamma.... No, I won’t ask mamma for any.... But I can sell my watch.... I have earrings, too, and two bracelets... and lace.’

‘Money’s not the chief difficulty, Elena; the passport; your passport, how about that?’

‘Yes, how about it? Is a passport absolutely necessary?’

‘Absolutely.’

Elena laughed. ‘What a queer idea! I remember when I was little... a maid of ours ran away. She was caught, and forgiven, and lived with us a long while... but still every one used to call her Tatyana, the runaway. I never thought then that I too might perhaps be a runaway like her.’

‘Elena, aren’t you ashamed?’

‘Why? Of course it’s better to go with a passport. But if we can’t——’

‘We will settle all that later, later, wait a little,’ said Insarov. ‘Let me look about; let me think a little. We will talk over everything together thoroughly. I too have money.’

Elena pushed back the hair that fell over on his forehead.

‘O Dmitri! how glorious it will be for us two to set off together!’

‘Yes,’ said Insarov, ‘but there, when we get there——’

‘Well?’ put in Elena, ‘and won’t it be glorious to die together too? but no, why should we die? We will live, we are young. How old are you? Twenty-six?’

‘Yes, twenty-six.’

‘And I am twenty. There is plenty of time before us. Ah, you tried to run away from me? You did not want a Russian’s love, you Bulgarian! Let me see you trying to escape from me now! What would have become of us, if I hadn’t come to you then!’

‘Elena, you know what forced me to go away.’

‘I know; you were in love, and you were afraid. But surely you must have suspected that you were loved?’

‘I swear on my honour, Elena, I didn’t.’

She gave him a quick unexpected kiss. ‘There, I love you for that too. And goodbye.’

‘You can’t stop longer?’ asked Insarov.

‘No, dearest. Do you think it’s easy for me to get out alone? The quarter of an hour was over long ago.’ She put on her cape and hat. ‘And you come to us to-morrow evening. No, the day after to-morrow. We shall be constrained and dreary, but we can’t help that; at least we shall see each other. Good-bye. Let me go.’

He embraced her for the last time. ‘Ah, take care, you have broken my watch-chain. Oh, what a clumsy boy! There, never mind. It’s all the better. I will go to Kuznetsky bridge, and leave it to be mended. If I am asked, I can say I have been to Kuznetsky bridge.’ She held the door-handle. ‘By-the-way, I forgot to tell you, Monsieur Kurnatovsky will certainly make me an offer in a day or two. But the answer I shall make him—will be this——’ She put the thumb of her left hand to the tip of her nose and flourished the other fingers in the air. ‘Good-bye till we see each other again. Now, I know the way... And don’t lose any time.’

Elena opened the door a little, listened, turned round to Insarov, nodded her head, and glided out of the room.

For a minute Insarov stood before the closed door, and he too listened. The door downstairs into the court slammed. He went up to the sofa, sat down, and covered his eyes with his hands. Never before had anything like this happened to him. ‘What have I done to deserve such love?’ he thought. ‘Is it a dream?’

But the delicate scent of mignonette left by Elena in his poor dark little room told of her visit. And with it, it seemed that the air was still full of the notes of a young voice, and the sound of a light young tread, and the warmth and freshness of a young

girlish body.

XXIV

Insarov decided to await more positive news, and began to make preparations for departure. The difficulty was a serious one. For him personally there were no obstacles. He had only to ask for a passport—but how would it be with Elena? To get her a passport in the legal way was impossible. Should he marry her secretly, and should they then go and present themselves to the parents?... ‘They would let us go then,’ he thought ‘But if they did not? We would go all the same. But suppose they were to make a complaint... if... No, better try to get a passport somehow.’

He decided to consult (of course mentioning no names) one of his acquaintances, an attorney, retired from practice, or perhaps struck off the rolls, an old and experienced hand at all sorts of clandestine business. This worthy person did not live near; Insarov was a whole hour in getting to him in a very sorry droshky, and, to make matters worse, he did not find him at home; and on his way back got soaked to the skin by a sudden downpour of rain. The next morning, in spite of a rather severe headache, Insarov set off a second time to call on the retired attorney. The retired attorney listened to him attentively, taking snuff from a snuff-box decorated with a picture of a full-bosomed nymph, and glancing stealthily at his visitor with his sly, and also snuff-coloured little eyes; he heard him to the end, and then demanded ‘greater definiteness in the statement of the facts of the case’; and observing that Insarov was unwilling to launch into particulars (it was against the grain that he had come to him at all) he confined himself to the advice to provide himself above all things with ‘the needful,’ and asked him to come to him again, ‘when you have,’ he added, sniffing at the snuff in the open snuff-box, ‘augmented your confidence and decreased your diffidence’ (he talked with a broad accent). ‘A passport,’ he added, as though to himself, ‘is a thing that can be arranged; you go a journey, for instance;

who's to tell whether you're Marya Bredihin or Karolina Vogel-meier?' A feeling of nausea came over Insarov, but he thanked the attorney, and promised to come to him again in a day or two.

The same evening he went to the Stahovs. Anna Vassilyevna met him cordially, reproached him a little for having quite forgotten them, and, finding him pale, inquired especially after his health. Nikolai Artemyevitch did not say a single word to him; he only stared at him with elaborately careless curiosity; Shubin treated him coldly; but Elena astounded him. She was expecting him; she had put on for him the very dress she wore on the day of their first interview in the chapel; but she welcomed him so calmly, and was so polite and carelessly gay, that no one looking at her could have believed that this girl's fate was already decided, and that it was only the secret consciousness of happy love that gave fire to her features, lightness and charm to all her gestures. She poured out tea in Zoya's place, jested, chattered; she knew Shubin would be watching her, that Insarov was incapable of wearing a mask, and incapable of appearing indifferent, and she had prepared herself beforehand. She was not mistaken; Shubin never took his eyes off her, and Insarov was very silent and gloomy the whole evening. Elena was so happy that she even felt an inclination to tease him.

'Oh, by the way,' she said to him suddenly, 'is your plan getting on at all?'

Insarov was taken aback.

'What plan?' he said.

'Why, have you forgotten?' she rejoined, laughing in his face; he alone could tell the meaning of that happy laugh: 'Your Bulgarian selections for Russian readers?'

'Quelle bourde!' muttered Nikolai Artemyevitch between his teeth.

Zoya sat down to the piano. Elena gave a just perceptible shrug of the shoulders, and with her eyes motioned Insarov to the door. Then she twice slowly touched the table with her finger, and looked at him. He understood that she was promising to see him

in two days, and she gave him a quick smile when she saw he understood her. Insarov got up and began to take leave; he felt unwell. Kurnatovsky arrived. Nikolai Artemyevitch jumped up, raised his right hand higher than his head, and softly dropped it into the palm of the chief secretary. Insarov would have remained a few minutes longer, to have a look at his rival. Elena shook her head unseen; the host did not think it necessary to introduce them to one another, and Insarov departed, exchanging one last look with Elena. Shubin pondered and pondered, and threw himself into a fierce argument with Kurnatovsky on a legislative question, about which he had not a single idea.

Insarov did not sleep all night, and in the morning he felt very ill; he set to work, however, putting his papers into order and writing letters, but his head was heavy and confused. At dinner time he began to be in a fever; he could eat nothing. The fever grew rapidly worse towards evening; he had aching pains in all his limbs, and a terrible headache. Insarov lay down on the very little sofa on which Elena had lately sat; he thought: ‘It serves me right for going to that old rascal,’ and he tried to sleep.... But the illness had by now complete mastery of him. His veins were throbbing violently, his blood was on fire, his thoughts were flying round like birds. He sank into forgetfulness. He lay like a man felled by a blow on his face, and suddenly, it seemed to him, some one was softly laughing and whispering over him: he opened his eyes with an effort, the light of the flaring candle smote him like a knife.... What was it? the old attorney was before him in an Oriental silk gown belted with a silk handkerchief, as he had seen him the evening before.... ‘Karolina Vogelmeier,’ muttered his toothless mouth. Insarov stared, and the old man grew wide and thick and tall, he was no longer a man, he was a tree.... Insarov had to climb along its gnarled branches. He clung, and fell with his breast on a sharp stone, and Karolina Vogelmeier was sitting on her heels, looking like a pedlar-woman, and lisping: ‘Pies, pies, pies for sale’; and there were streams of blood and swords flashing incessantly.... Elena! And everything vanished in a crimson chaos.

XXV

‘There’s some one here looks like a locksmith or something of the sort,’ Bersenyev was informed the following evening by his servant, who was distinguished by a severe deportment and sceptical turn of mind towards his master; ‘he wants to see you.’

‘Ask him in,’ said Bersenyev.

The ‘locksmith’ entered. Bersenyev recognised in him the tailor, the landlord of Insarov’s lodgings.

‘What do you want?’ he asked him.

‘I came to your honour,’ began the tailor, shifting from one foot to the other, and at times waving his right hand with his cuff clutched in his three last fingers. ‘Our lodger, seemingly, is very ill.’

‘Insarov?’

‘Yes, our lodger, to be sure; yesterday morning he was still on his legs, in the evening he asked for nothing but drink; the missis took him some water, and at night he began talking away; we could hear him through the partition-wall; and this morning he lies without a word like a log, and the fever he’s in, Lord have mercy on us! I thought, upon my word, he’ll die for sure; I ought to send word to the police station, I thought. For he’s so alone; but the missis said: “Go to that gentleman,” she says, “at whose country place our lodger stayed; maybe he’ll tell you what to do, or come himself.” So I’ve come to your honour, for we can’t, so to say——’

Bersenyev snatched up his cap, thrust a rouble into the tailor’s hand, and at once set off with him post haste to Insarov’s lodgings.

He found him lying on the sofa, unconscious and not undressed. His face was terribly changed. Bersenyev at once ordered the people of the house to undress him and put him to bed, while he rushed off himself and returned with a doctor. The

doctor prescribed leeches, mustard-poultices, and calomel, and ordered him to be bled.

‘Is he dangerously ill?’ asked Bersenyev.

‘Yes, very dangerously,’ answered the doctor. ‘Severe inflammation of the lungs; peripneumonia fully developed, and the brain perhaps affected, but the patient is young. His very strength is something against him now. I was sent for too late; still we will do all that science dictates.’

The doctor was young himself, and still believed in science.

Bersenyev stayed the night. The people of the house seemed kind, and even prompt directly there was some one to tell them what was to be done. An assistant arrived, and began to carry out the medical measures.

Towards morning Insarov revived for a few minutes, recognised Bersenyev, asked: ‘Am I ill, then?’ looked about him with the vague, listless bewilderment of a man dangerously ill, and again relapsed into unconsciousness. Bersenyev went home, changed his clothes, and, taking a few books along with him, he returned to Insarov’s lodgings. He made up his mind to stay there, at least for a time. He shut in Insarov’s bed with screens, and arranged a little place for himself by the sofa. The day passed slowly and drearily. Bersenyev did not leave the room except to get his dinner. The evening came. He lighted a candle with a shade, and settled down to a book. Everything was still around. Through the partition wall could be heard suppressed whispering in the landlord’s room, then a yawn, and a sigh. Some one sneezed, and was scolded in a whisper; behind the screen was heard the patient’s heavy, uneven breathing, sometimes broken by a short groan, and the uneasy tossing of his head on the pillow.... Strange fancies came over Bersenyev. He found himself in the room of a man whose life was hanging on a thread, the man whom, as he knew, Elena loved.... He remembered that night when Shubin had overtaken him and declared that she loved him, him, Bersenyev! And now.... ‘What am I to do

now?' he asked himself. 'Let Elena know of his illness? Wait a little? This would be worse news for her than what I told her once before; strange how fate makes me the go-between between them!' He made up his mind that it was better to wait a little. His eyes fell on the table covered with heaps of papers... 'Will he carry out his dreams?' thought Bersenyev. 'Can it be that all will come to nothing?' And he was filled with pity for the young life struck down, and he vowed to himself to save it.

The night was an uneasy one. The sick man was very delirious. Several times Bersenyev got up from his little sofa, approached the bed on tip-toe, and listened with a heavy heart to his disconnected muttering. Only once Insarov spoke with sudden distinctness: 'I won't, I won't, she mustn't....' Bersenyev started and looked at Insarov; his face, suffering and death-like at the same time, was immovable, and his hands lay powerless. 'I won't,' he repeated, scarcely audibly.

The doctor came in the morning, shook his head and wrote fresh prescriptions. 'The crisis is a long way off still,' he said, putting on his hat.

'And after the crisis?' asked Bersenyev.

'The crisis may end in two ways, aut Caesar aut nihil.

The doctor went away. Bersenyev walked a few times up and down the street; he felt in need of fresh air. He went back and took up a book again. Raumer he had finished long ago; he was now making a study of Grote.

Suddenly the door softly creaked, and the head of the landlord's daughter, covered as usual with a heavy kerchief, was cautiously thrust into the room.

'Here is the lady,' she whispered, 'who gave me a silver piece.'

The child's head vanished quickly, and in its place appeared Elena.

Bersenyev jumped up as if he had been stung; but Elena did not stir, nor cry out. It seemed as if she understood everything in a single instant. A terrible pallor overspread her face, she went up to the screen, looked behind it, threw up her arms,

and seemed turned to stone.

A moment more and she would have flung herself on Insarov, but Bersenyev stopped her. ‘What are you doing?’ he said in a trembling whisper, ‘you might be the death of him!’

She was reeling. He led her to the sofa, and made her sit down.

She looked into his face, then her eyes ran over him from head to foot, then stared at the floor.

‘Will he die?’ she asked so coldly and quietly that Bersenyev was frightened.

‘For God’s sake, Elena Nikolaevna,’ he began, ‘what are you saying? He is ill certainly—and rather seriously—but we will save him; I promise you that.’

‘He is unconscious?’ she asked in the same tone of voice as before.

‘Yes, he is unconscious at present. That’s always the case at the early stage of these illnesses, but it means nothing, nothing—I assure you. Drink some water.’

She raised her eyes to his, and he saw she had not heard his answer.

‘If he dies,’ she said in the same voice, ‘I will die too.’

At that instant Insarov uttered a slight moan; she trembled all over, clutched at her head, then began untying the strings of her hat.

‘What are you doing?’ Bersenyev asked her.

‘I will stay here.’

‘You will stay—for long?’

‘I don’t know, perhaps all day, the night, always—I don’t know.’

‘For God’s sake, Elena Nikolaevna, control yourself. I could not of course have any expectation of seeing you here; but still I—assume you have come for a short time. Remember they may miss you at home.’

‘What then?’

‘They will look for you—find you——’

‘What then?’

‘Elena Nikolaevna! You see. He cannot now protect you.’

She dropped her head, seemed lost in thought, raised a handkerchief to her lips, and convulsive sobs, tearing her by their violence, were suddenly wrung from her breast. She threw herself, face downwards, on the sofa, trying to stifle them, but still her body heaved and throbbed like a captured bird.

‘Elena Nikolaevna—for God’s sake,’ Bersenyev was repeating over her.

‘Ah! What is it?’ suddenly sounded the voice of Insarov.

Elena started up, and Bersenyev felt rooted to the spot. After waiting a little, he went up to the bed. Insarov’s head lay on the pillow helpless as before; his eyes were closed.

‘Is he delirious?’ whispered Elena.

‘It seems so,’ answered Bersenyev, ‘but that’s nothing; it’s always so, especially if——’

‘When was he taken ill?’ Elena broke in.

‘The day before yesterday; I have been here since yesterday. Rely on me, Elena Nikolaevna. I will not leave him; everything shall be done. If necessary, we will have a consultation.’

‘He will die without me,’ she cried, wringing her hands.

‘I give you my word I will let you hear every day how his illness goes on, and if there should be immediate danger——’

‘Swear you will send for me at once whenever it may be, day or night, write a note straight to me—I care for nothing now. Do you hear? you promise you will do that?’

‘I promise before God’

‘Swear it.’

‘I swear.’

She suddenly snatched his hand, and before he had time to pull it away, she had bent and pressed her lips to it.

‘Elena Nikolaevna, what are you——’ he stammered.

‘No—no—I won’t have it——’ Insarov muttered indistinctly, and sighed painfully.

Elena went up to the screen, her handkerchief pressed between her teeth, and bent a long, long look on the sick man. Silent tears rolled down her cheeks.

‘Elena Nikolaevna,’ Bersenyev said to her, ‘he might come to himself and recognise you; there’s no knowing if that wouldn’t do harm. Besides, from hour to hour I expect the doctor.’

Elena took her hat from the sofa, put it on and stood still. Her eyes strayed mournfully over the room. She seemed to be remembering....

‘I cannot go away,’ she whispered at last.

Bersenyev pressed her hand: ‘Try to pull yourself together,’ he said, ‘calm yourself; you are leaving him in my care. I will come to you this very evening.’

Elena looked at him, said: ‘Oh, my good, kind friend!’ broke into sobs and rushed away.

Bersenyev leaned against the door. A feeling of sorrow and bitterness, not without a kind of strange consolation, overcame him. ‘My good, kind friend!’ he thought and shrugged his shoulders.

‘Who is here?’ he heard Insarov’s voice.

Bersenyev went up to him. ‘I am here, Dmitri Nikanorovitch. How are you? How do you feel?’

‘Are you alone?’ asked the sick man.

‘Yes.’

‘And she?’

‘Whom do you mean?’ Bersenyev asked almost in dismay.

Insarov was silent. ‘Mignonette,’ he murmured, and his eyes closed again.

XXVI

For eight whole days Insarov lay between life and death. The doctor was incessantly visiting him, interested as a young man in a difficult case. Shubin heard of Insarov’s critical position, and made inquiries after him. His compatriots—Bulgarians—came; among them Bersenyev recognised the two strange figures, who had puzzled him by their unexpected visit to the cottage; they all showed genuine sympathy, some offered to take Bersenyev’s place by the patient’s bed-side; but he would not consent to that, remembering his promise to Elena. He saw her every day and secretly reported to her—sometimes by word of mouth, sometimes in a brief note—every detail of the illness. With what sinkings of the heart she awaited him, how she listened and questioned him! She was always on the point of hastening to Insarov herself; but Bersenyev begged her not to do this: Insarov was seldom alone. On the first day she knew of his illness she herself had almost fallen ill; directly she got home, she shut herself up in her room; but she was summoned to dinner, and appeared in the dining-room with such a face that Anna Vassilyevna was alarmed, and was anxious to put her to bed. Elena succeeded, however, in controlling herself. ‘If he dies,’ she repeated, ‘it will be the end of me too.’ This thought tranquillised her, and enabled her to seem indifferent. Besides no one troubled her much; Anna Vassilyevna was taken up with her swollen face; Shubin was working furiously; Zoya was given up to pensiveness, and disposed to read Werther; Nikolai Artemyevitch was much displeased at the frequent visits of ‘the scholar,’ especially as his ‘cherished projects’ in regard to Kurnatovsky were making no way; the

practical chief secretary was puzzled and biding his time. Elena did not even thank Bersenyev; there are services for which thanks are cruel and shameful. Only once at her fourth interview with him—Insarov had passed a very bad night, the doctor had hinted at a consultation—only then she reminded him of his promise. ‘Very well, then let us go,’ he said to her. She got up and was going to get ready. ‘No,’ he decided, ‘let us wait till to-morrow.’ Towards evening Insarov was rather better.

For eight days this torture was prolonged. Elena appeared calm; but she could eat nothing, and did not sleep at night. There was a dull ache in all her limbs; her head seemed full of a sort of dry burning smoke. ‘Our young lady’s wasting like a candle,’ her maid said of her.

At last by the ninth day the crisis was passing over. Elena was sitting in the drawing-room near Anna Vassilyevna, and, without knowing herself what she was doing, was reading her the Moscow Gazette; Bersenyev came in. Elena glanced at him—how rapid, and fearful, and penetrating, and tremulous, was the first glance she turned on him every time—and at once she guessed that he brought good news. He was smiling; he nodded slightly to her, she got up to go and meet him.

‘He has regained consciousness, he is saved, he will be quite well again in a week,’ he whispered to her.

Elena had stretched out her arm as though to ward off a blow, and she said nothing, only her lips trembled and a flush of crimson overspread her whole face. Bersenyev began to talk to Anna Vassilyevna, and Elena went off to her own room, dropped on her knees and fell to praying, to thanking God. Light, shining tears trickled down her cheeks. Suddenly she was conscious of intense weariness, laid her head down on the pillow, whispered ‘poor Andrei Petrovitch!’ and at once fell asleep with wet cheeks and eyelashes. It was long since she had slept or wept.

XXVII

Bersenyev's words turned out only partly true; the danger was over, but Insarov gained strength slowly, and the doctor talked of a complete undermining of the whole system. The patient left his bed for all that, and began to walk about the room; Bersenyev went home to his own lodging, but he came every day to his still feeble friend; and every day as before he informed Elena of the state of his health. Insarov did not dare to write to her, and only indirectly in his conversations with Bersenyev referred to her; but Bersenyev, with assumed carelessness, told him about his visits to the Stahovs, trying, however, to give him to understand that Elena had been deeply distressed, and that now she was calmer. Elena too did not write to Insarov; she had a plan in her head.

One day Bersenyev had just informed her with a cheerful face that the doctor had already allowed Insarov to eat a cutlet, and that he would probably soon go out; she seemed absorbed, dropped her eyes.

'Guess, what I want to say to you,' she said. Bersenyev was confused. He understood her.

'I suppose,' he answered, looking away, 'you want to say that you wish to see him.'

Elena crimsoned, and scarcely audibly, she breathed, 'Yes.'

'Well, what then? That, I imagine, you can easily do.'—'Ugh!' he thought, 'what a loathsome feeling there is in my heart!'

'You mean that I have already before...' said Elena. 'But I am afraid—now he is, you say, seldom alone.'

'That's not difficult to get over,' replied Bersenyev, still not looking at her. 'I, of course, cannot prepare him; but give me a note. Who can hinder your writing to him as a good friend, in whom you take an interest? There's no harm in that. Appoint—I mean, write to him when you will come.

'I am ashamed,' whispered Elena.

‘Give me the note, I will take it.’

‘There’s no need of that, but I wanted to ask you—don’t be angry with me, Andrei Petrovitch—don’t go to him to-morrow!’

Bersenyev bit his lip.

‘Ah! yes, I understand; very well, very well,’ and, adding two or three words more, he quickly took leave.

‘So much the better, so much the better,’ he thought, as he hurried home. ‘I have learnt nothing new, but so much the better. What possessed me to go hanging on to the edge of another man’s happiness? I regret nothing; I have done what my conscience told me; but now it is over. Let them be! My father was right when he used to say to me: “You and I, my dear boy, are not Sybarites, we are not aristocrats, we’re not the spoilt darlings of fortune and nature, we are not even martyrs—we are workmen and nothing more. Put on your leather apron, workman, and take your place at your workman’s bench, in your dark workshop, and let the sun shine on other men! Even our dull life has its own pride, its own happiness!”’

The next morning Insarov got a brief note by the post. ‘Expect me,’ Elena wrote to him, ‘and give orders for no one to see you. A. P. will not come.’

XXVIII

Insarov read Elena’s note, and at once began to set his room to rights; asked his landlady to take away the medicine-glasses, took off his dressing-gown and put on his coat. His head was swimming and his heart throbbing from weakness and delight. His knees were shaking; he dropped on to the sofa, and began to look at his watch. ‘It’s now a quarter to twelve,’ he said to himself. ‘She can never come before twelve: I will think of something else for a quarter of an hour, or I shall break down altogether. Before twelve she cannot possibly come.’

The door was opened, and in a light silk gown, all pale, all fresh, young and joyful, Elena came in, and with a faint cry of delight she fell on his breast.

‘You are alive, you are mine,’ she repeated, embracing and stroking his head. He was almost swooning, breathless at such closeness, such caresses, such bliss.

She sat down near him, holding him fast, and began to gaze at him with that smiling, and caressing, and tender look, only to be seen shining in the eyes of a loving woman.

Her face suddenly clouded over.

‘How thin you have grown, my poor Dmitri,’ she said, passing her hand over his neck; ‘what a beard you have.’

‘And you have grown thin, my poor Elena,’ he answered, catching her fingers with his lips.

She shook her curls gaily.

‘That’s nothing. You shall see how soon we’ll be strong again! The storm has blown over, just as it blew over and passed away that day when we met in the chapel. Now we are going to live.’

He answered her with a smile only.

‘Ah, what a time we have had, Dmitri, what a cruel time! How can people outlive those they love? I knew beforehand what Andrei Petrovitch would say to me every day, I did really; my life seemed to ebb and flow with yours. Welcome back, my Dmitri!’

He did not know what to say to her. He was longing to throw himself at her feet.

‘Another thing I observed,’ she went on, pushing back his hair—‘I made so many observations all this time in my leisure—when any one is very, very miserable, with what stupid attention he follows everything that’s going on about him! I really sometimes lost myself in gazing at a fly, and all the while such chill and terror in my

heart! But that's all past, all past, isn't it? Everything's bright in the future, isn't it?'

'You are for me in the future,' answered Insarov, 'so it is bright for me.'

'And for me too! But do you remember, when I was here, not the last time—no, not the last time,' she repeated with an involuntary shudder, 'when we were talking, I spoke of death, I don't know why; I never suspected then that it was keeping watch on us. But you are well now, aren't you?'

'I'm much better, I'm nearly well.'

'You are well, you are not dead. Oh, how happy I am!'

A short silence followed.

'Elena?' said Insarov.

'Well, my dearest?'

'Tell me, did it never occur to you that this illness was sent us as a punishment?'

Elena looked seriously at him.

'That idea did come into my head, Dmitri. But I thought: what am I to be punished for? What duty have I transgressed, against whom have I sinned? Perhaps my conscience is not like other people's, but it was silent; or perhaps I am guilty towards you? I hinder you, I stop you.'

'You don't stop me, Elena; we will go together.'

'Yes, Dmitri, let us go together; I will follow you.... That is my duty. I love you.... I know no other duty.'

'O Elena!' said Insarov, 'what chains every word of yours fastens on me!'

'Why talk of chains?' she interposed. 'We are free people, you and I. Yes,' she went on, looking musingly on the floor, while with one hand she still stroked his hair, 'I experienced much lately of which I had never had any idea! If any one had told me beforehand that I, a young lady, well brought up, should go out from home alone on all sorts of made-up excuses, and to go where? to a young man's lodgings—how

indignant I should have been! And that has all come about, and I feel no indignation whatever. Really!' she added, and turned to Insarov.

He looked at her with such an expression of adoration, that she softly dropped her hand from his hair over his eyes.

'Dmitri!' she began again, 'you don't know of course, I saw you there in that dreadful bed, I saw you in the clutches of death, unconscious.'

'You saw me?'

'Yes.'

He was silent for a little. 'And Bersenyev was here?'

She nodded.

Insarov bowed down before her. 'O Elena!' he whispered, 'I don't dare to look at you.'

'Why? Andrei Petrovitch is so good. I was not ashamed before him. And what have I to be ashamed of? I am ready to tell all the world that I am yours.... And Andrei Petrovitch I trust like a brother.'

'He saved me!' cried Insarov. 'He is the noblest, kindest of men!'

'Yes... And do you know I owe everything to him? Do you know that it was he who first told me that you loved me? And if I could tell you everything.... Yes, he is a noble man.'

Insarov looked steadily at Elena. 'He is in love with you, isn't he?'

Elena dropped her eyes. 'He did love me,' she said in an undertone.

Insarov pressed her hand warmly. 'Oh you Russians,' he said, 'you have hearts of pure gold! And he, he has been waiting on me, he has not slept at night. And you, you, my angel.... No reproaches, no hesitations... and all this for me, for me——'

'Yes, yes, all for you, because they love you. Ah, Dmitri! How strange it is! I think I have talked to you of it before, but it doesn't matter, I like to repeat it, and you will

like to hear it. When I saw you the first time——’

‘Why are there tears in your eyes?’ Insarov interrupted her.

‘Tears? Are there?’ She wiped her eyes with her handkerchief. ‘Oh, what a silly boy! He doesn’t know yet that people weep from happiness. I wanted to tell you: when I saw you the first time, I saw nothing special in you, really. I remember, Shubin struck me much more at first, though I never loved him, and as for Andrei Petrovitch—oh, there was a moment when I thought: isn’t this he? And with you there was nothing of that sort; but afterwards—afterwards—you took my heart by storm!’

‘Have pity on me,’ began Insarov. He tried to get up, but dropped down on to the sofa again at once.

‘What’s the matter with you?’ inquired Elena anxiously.

‘Nothing.... I am still rather weak. I am not strong enough yet for such happiness.’

‘Then sit quietly. Don’t dare to move, don’t get excited,’ she added, threatening him with her finger. ‘And why have you left off your dressing-gown? It’s too soon to begin to be a dandy! Sit down and I will tell you stories. Listen and be quiet. To talk much is bad for you after your illness.’

She began to talk to him about Shubin, about Kurnatovsky, and what she had been doing for the last fortnight, of how war seemed, judging from the newspapers, inevitable, and so directly he was perfectly well again, he must, without losing a minute, make arrangements for them to start. All this she told him sitting beside him, leaning on his shoulder....

He listened to her, listened, turning pale and red. Sometimes he tried to stop her; suddenly he drew himself up.

‘Elena,’ he said to her in a strange, hard voice ‘leave me, go away.’

‘What?’ she replied in bewilderment ‘You feel ill?’ she added quickly.

‘No... I’m all right... but, please, leave me now.’

‘I don’t understand you. You drive me away?.. What are you doing?’ she said suddenly; he had bent over from the sofa almost to the ground, and was pressing her feet to his lips. ‘Don’t do that, Dmitri.... Dmitri——’

He got up.

‘Then leave me! You see, Elena, when I was taken ill, I did not lose consciousness at first; I knew I was on the edge of the abyss; even in the fever, in delirium I knew, I felt vaguely that it was death coming to me, I took leave of life, of you, of everything; I gave up hope.... And this return to life so suddenly; this light after the darkness, you—you—near me, with me—your voice, your breath.... It’s more than I can stand! I feel I love you passionately, I hear you call yourself mine, I cannot answer for myself... You must go!’

‘Dmitri,’ whispered Elena, and she nestled her head on his shoulder. Only now she understood him.

‘Elena,’ he went on, ‘I love you, you know that; I am ready to give my life for you.... Why have you come to me now, when I am weak, when I can’t control myself, when all my blood’s on fire... you are mine, you say... you love me——’

‘Dmitri,’ she repeated; she flushed all over, and pressed still closer to him.

‘Elena, have pity on me; go away, I feel as if I should die.... I can’t stand these violent emotions... my whole soul yearns for you ... think, death was almost parting us.. and now you are here, you are in my arms... Elena——’

She was trembling all over. ‘Take me, then,’ she whispered scarcely above her breath.

XXIX

Nikolai Artemyevitch was walking up and down in his study with a scowl on his

face. Shubin was sitting at the window with his legs crossed, tranquilly smoking a cigar.

‘Leave off tramping from corner to corner, please,’ he observed, knocking the ash off his cigar. ‘I keep expecting you to speak; there’s a rick in my neck from watching you. Besides, there’s something artificial, melodramatic in your striding.’

‘You can never do anything but joke,’ responded Nikolai Artemyevitch. ‘You won’t enter into my position, you refuse to realise that I am used to that woman, that I am attached to her in fact, that her absence is bound to distress me. Here it’s October, winter is upon us. ... What can she be doing in Revel?’

‘She must be knitting stockings—for herself; for herself—not for you.’

‘You may laugh, you may laugh; but I tell you I know no woman like her. Such honesty; such disinterestedness.’

‘Has she cashed that bill yet?’ inquired Shubin.

‘Such disinterestedness,’ repeated Nikolai Artemyevitch; ‘it’s astonishing. They tell me there are a million other women in the world, but I say, show me the million; show me the million, I say; ces femmes, qu’on me les montre! And she doesn’t write—that’s what’s killing me!’

‘You’re eloquent as Pythagoras,’ remarked Shubin; ‘but do you know what I would advise you?’

‘What?’

‘When Augustina Christianovna comes back—you take my meaning?’

‘Yes, yes; well, what?’

‘When you see her again—you follow the line of my thought?’

‘Yes, yes, to be sure.’

‘Try beating her; see what that would do.’

Nikolai Artemyevitch turned away exasperated.

‘I thought he was really going to give me some practical advice. But what can one expect from him! An artist, a man of no principles——’

‘No principles! By the way, I’m told your favourite Mr. Kurnatovsky, the man of principle, cleaned you out of a hundred roubles last night. That was hardly delicate, you must own now.’

‘What of it? We were playing high. Of course, I might expect—but they understand so little how to appreciate him in this house——’

‘That he thought: get what I can!’ put in Shubin: ‘whether he’s to be my father-in-law or not, is still on the knees of the gods, but a hundred roubles is worth something to a man who doesn’t take bribes.’

‘Father-in-law! How the devil am I his father-in-law? Vous rêvez, mon cher. Of course, any other girl would be delighted with such a suitor. Only consider: a man of spirit and intellect, who has gained a position in the world, served in two provinces——’

‘Led the governor in one of them by the nose,’ remarked Shubin.

‘Very likely. To be sure, that’s how it should be. Practical, a business man——’

‘And a capital hand at cards,’ Shubin remarked again.

‘To be sure, and a capital hand at cards. But Elena Nikolaevna.... Is there any understanding her? I should be glad to know if there is any one who would undertake to make out what it is she wants. One day she’s cheerful, another she’s dull; all of a sudden she’s so thin there’s no looking at her, and then suddenly she’s well again, and all without any apparent reason——’

A disagreeable-looking man-servant came in with a cup of coffee, cream and sugar on a tray.

‘The father is pleased with a suitor,’ pursued Nikolai Artemyevitch, breaking off a lump of sugar; ‘but what is that to the daughter! That was all very well in the old

patriarchal days, but now we have changed all that. Nous avons changé tout ça. Nowadays a young girl talks to any one she thinks fit, reads what she thinks fit; she goes about Moscow alone without a groom or a maid, just as in Paris; and all that is permitted. The other day I asked, “Where is Elena Nikolaevna?” I’m told she has gone out. Where? No one knows. Is that—the proper thing?’

‘Take your coffee, and let the man go,’ said Shubin. ‘You say yourself that one ought not devant les domestiques’ he added in an undertone.

The servant gave Shubin a dubious look, while Nikolai Artemyevitch took the cup of coffee, added some cream, and seized some ten lumps of sugar.

‘I was just going to say when the servant came in,’ he began, ‘that I count for nothing in this house. That’s the long and short of the matter. For nowadays every one judges from appearances; one man’s an empty-headed fool, but gives himself airs of importance, and he’s respected; while another, very likely, has talents which might—which might gain him great distinction, but through modesty——’

‘Aren’t you a born statesman?’ asked Shubin in a jeering voice.

‘Give over playing the fool!’ Nikolai Artemyevitch cried with heat. ‘You forget yourself! Here you have another proof that I count for nothing in this house, nothing!’

‘Anna Vassilyevna ill-uses you... poor fellow!’ said Shubin, stretching. ‘Ah, Nikolai Artemyevitch, we’re a pair of sinners! You had much better be getting a little present ready for Anna Vassilyevna. It’s her birthday in a day or two, and you know how she appreciates the least attention on your part.’

‘Yes, yes,’ answered Nikolai Artemyevitch hastily. ‘I’m much obliged to you for reminding me. Of course, of course; to be sure. I have a little thing, a dressing-case, I bought it the other day at Rosenstrauch’s; but I don’t know really if it will do.’

‘I suppose you bought it for her, the lady at Revel?’

‘Why, certainly.—I had some idea.’

‘Well, in that case, it will be sure to do.’ Shubin got up from his seat.

‘Are we going out this evening, Pavel Yakovlitch, eh?’ Nikolai Artemyevitch asked with an amicable leer.

‘Why yes, you are going to your club.’

‘After the club... after the club.’

Shubin stretched himself again.

‘No, Nikolai Artemyevitch, I want to work to-morrow. Another time.’ And he walked off.

Nikolai Artemyevitch scowled, walked twice up and down the room, took a velvet box with the dressing-case out of the bureau and looked at it a long while, rubbing it with a silk handkerchief. Then he sat down before a looking-glass and began carefully arranging his thick black hair, turning his head to right and to left with a dignified countenance, his tongue pressed into his cheek, never taking his eyes off his parting. Some one coughed behind his back; he looked round and saw the manservant who had brought him in his coffee.

‘What do you want?’ he asked him.

‘Nikolai Artemyevitch,’ said the man with a certain solemnity, ‘you are our master?’

‘I know that; what next!’

‘Nikolai Artemyevitch, graciously do not be angry with me; but I, having been in your honour’s service from a boy, am bound in dutiful devotion to bring you——’

‘Well what is it?’

The man shifted uneasily as he stood.

‘You condescended to say, your honour,’ he began, ‘that your honour did not know where Elena Nikolaevna was pleased to go. I have information about that.’

‘What lies are you telling, idiot?’

‘That’s as your honour likes, but I saw our young lady three days ago, as she was pleased to go into a house!’

‘Where? what? what house?’

‘In a house, near Povarsky. Not far from here. I even asked the doorkeeper who were the people living there.’

Nikolai Artemyevitch stamped with his feet.

‘Silence, scoundrel! How dare you?... Elena Nikolaevna, in the goodness of her heart, goes to visit the poor and you... Be off, fool!’

The terrified servant was rushing to the door.

‘Stop!’ cried Nikolai Artemyevitch. ‘What did the doorkeeper say to you?’

‘Oh no—nothing—he said nothing—He told me—a stu—student——’

‘Silence, scoundrel! Listen, you dirty beast; if you ever breathe a word in your dreams even——’

‘Mercy on us——’

‘Silence! if you blab—if any one—if I find out—you shall find no hiding-place even underground! Do you hear? You can go!’

The man vanished.

‘Good Heavens, merciful powers! what does it mean?’ thought Nikolai Artemyevitch when he was left alone. ‘What did that idiot tell me? Eh? I shall have to find out, though, what house it is, and who lives there. I must go myself. Has it come to this!... Un laquais! Quelle humiliation!’

And repeating aloud: ‘Un laquais!’ Nikolai Artemyevitch shut the dressing-case up in the bureau, and went up to Anna Vassilyevna. He found her in bed with her face tied up. But the sight of her sufferings only irritated him, and he very soon reduced her to tears.

XXX

Meanwhile the storm gathering in the East was breaking. Turkey had declared war on Russia; the time fixed for the evacuation of the Principalities had already expired, the day of the disaster of Sinope was not far off. The last letters received by Insarov summoned him urgently to his country. His health was not yet restored; he coughed, suffered from weakness and slight attacks of fever, but he was scarcely ever at home. His heart was fired, he no longer thought of his illness. He was for ever rushing about Moscow, having secret interviews with various persons, writing for whole nights, disappearing for whole days; he had informed his landlord that he was going away shortly, and had presented him already with his scanty furniture. Elena too on her side was getting ready for departure. One wet evening she was sitting in her room, and listening with involuntary depression to the sighing of the wind, while she hemmed handkerchiefs. Her maid came in and told her that her father was in her mother's room and sent for her there. 'Your mamma is crying,' she whispered after the retreating Elena, 'and your papa is angry.'

Elena gave a slight shrug and went into Anna Vassflyevna's room. Nikolai Artemyevitch's kind-hearted spouse was half lying on a reclining chair, sniffing a handkerchief steeped in eau de Cologne; he himself was standing at the hearth, every button buttoned up, in a high, hard cravat, with a stiffly starched collar; his deportment had a vague suggestion of some parliamentary orator. With an orator's wave of the arm he motioned his daughter to a chair, and when she, not understanding his gesture, looked inquiringly at him, he brought out with dignity, without turning his head: 'I beg you to be seated.' Nikolai Artemyevitch always used the formal plural in addressing his wife, but only on extraordinary occasions in addressing his daughter.

Elena sat down.

Anna Vassilyevna blew her nose tearfully. Nikolai Artemyevitch thrust his fingers

between his coat-buttons.

‘I sent for you, Elena Nikolaevna,’ he began after a protracted silence, ‘in order to have an explanation with you, or rather in order to ask you for an explanation. I am displeased with you—or no—that is too little to say: your behaviour is a pain and an outrage to me—to me and to your mother—your mother whom you see here.’

Nikolai Artemyevitch was giving vent only to the few bass notes in his voice. Elena gazed in silence at him, then at Anna Vassilyevna and turned pale.

‘There was a time,’ Nikolai Artemyevitch resumed, ‘when daughters did not allow themselves to look down on their parents—when the parental authority forced the disobedient to tremble. That time has passed, unhappily: so at least many persons imagine; but let me tell you, there are still laws which do not permit—do not permit—in fact there are still laws. I beg you to mark that: there are still laws——’

‘But, papa,’ Elena was beginning.

‘I beg you not to interrupt me. Let us turn in thought to the past. I and Anna Vassilyevna have performed our duty. I and Anna Vassilyevna have spared nothing in your education: neither care nor expense. What you have gained from our care—is a different question; but I had the right to expect—I and Anna Vassilyevna had the right to expect that you would at least hold sacred the principles of morality which we have—que nous avons inculqués, which we have instilled into you, our only daughter. We had the right to expect that no new “ideas” could touch that, so to speak, holy shrine. And what do we find? I am not now speaking of frivolities characteristic of your sex, and age, but who could have anticipated that you could so far forget yourself——’

‘Papa,’ said Elena, ‘I know what you are going to say———’

‘No, you don’t know what I am going to say!’ cried Nikolai Artemyevitch in a falsetto shriek, suddenly losing the majesty of his oratorical pose, the smooth dignity of his speech, and his bass notes. ‘You don’t know, vile hussy!’

‘For mercy’s sake, Nicolas,’ murmured Anna Vassilyevna, ‘vous me faites mourir?’

‘Don’t tell me que je vous fais mourir, Anna Vassilyevna! You can’t conceive what you will hear directly! Prepare yourself for the worst, I warn you!’

Anna Vassilyevna seemed stupefied.

‘No,’ resumed Nikolai Artemyevitch, turning to Elena, ‘you don’t know what I am going to say!’

‘I am to blame towards you——’ she began.

‘Ah, at last!’

‘I am to blame towards you,’ pursued Elena, ‘for not having long ago confessed——’

‘But do you know,’ Nikolai Artemyevitch interrupted, ‘that I can crush you with one word?’

Elena raised her eyes to look at him.

‘Yes, madam, with one word! It’s useless to look at me!’ (He crossed his arms on his breast.) ‘Allow me to ask you, do you know a certain house near Povarsky? Have you visited that house?’ (He stamped.) ‘Answer me, worthless girl, and don’t try to hide the truth. People, people, servants, madam, de vils laquais have seen you, as you went in there, to your——’

Elena was crimson, her eyes were blazing.

‘I have no need to hide anything,’ she declared. ‘Yes, I have visited that house.’

‘Exactly! Do you hear, do you hear, Anna Vassilyevna? And you know, I presume, who lives there?’

‘Yes, I know; my husband.’

Nikolai Artemyevitch’s eyes were starting out of his head.

‘Your——’

‘My husband,’ repeated Elena; ‘I am married to Dmitri Nikanorovitch Insarov.’

‘You?—married?’—was all Anna Vassilyevna could articulate.

‘Yes, mamma.... Forgive me. A fortnight ago, we were secretly married.’

Anna Vassilyevna fell back in her chair; Nikolai Artemyevitch stepped two paces back.

‘Married! To that vagrant, that Montenegrin! the daughter of Nikolai Stahov of the higher nobility married to a vagrant, a nobody, without her parents’ sanction! And you imagine I shall let the matter rest, that I shall not make a complaint, that I will allow you—that you—that——To the nunnery with you, and he shall go to prison, to hard labour! Anna Vassilyevna, inform her at once that you will cut off her inheritance!’

‘Nikolai Artemyevitch, for God’s sake,’ moaned Anna Vassilyevna.

‘And when and how was this done? Who married you? where? how? Good God! what will all our friends think, what will the world say! And you, shameless hypocrite, could go on living under your parents’ roof after such an act! Had you no fear of—the wrath of heaven?’

‘Papa’ said Elena (she was trembling from head to foot but her voice was steady), ‘you are at liberty to do with me as you please, but you need not accuse me of shamelessness, and hypocrisy. I did not want—to give you pain before, but I should have had to tell you all myself in a few days, because we are going away—my husband and I—from here next week.’

‘Going away? Where to?’

‘To his own country, to Bulgaria.’

‘To the Turks!’ cried Anna Vassilyevna and fell into a swoon.

Elena ran to her mother.

‘Away!’ clamoured Nikolai Artemyevitch, seizing his daughter by the arm, ‘away,

unworthy girl!'

But at that instant the door of the room opened, and a pale face with glittering eyes appeared: it was the face of Shubin.

'Nikolai Artemyevitch!' he shouted at the top of his voice, 'Augustina Christianovna is here and is asking for you!'

Nikolai Artemyevitch turned round infuriated, threatening Shubin with his fist; he stood still a minute and rapidly went out of the room.

Elena fell at her mother's feet and embraced her knees.

* * *

Uvar Ivanovitch was lying on his bed. A shirt without a collar, fastened with a heavy stud enfolded his thick neck and fell in full flowing folds over the almost feminine contours of his chest, leaving visible a large cypress-wood cross and an amulet. His ample limbs were covered with the lightest bedclothes. On the little table by the bedside a candle was burning dimly beside a jug of kvas, and on the bed at Uvar Ivanovitch's feet was sitting Shubin in a dejected pose.

'Yes,' he was saying meditatively, 'she is married and getting ready to go away. Your nephew was bawling and shouting for the benefit of the whole house; he had shut himself up for greater privacy in his wife's bedroom, but not merely the maids and the footmen, the coachman even could hear it all! Now he's just tearing and raving round; he all but gave me a thrashing, he's bringing a father's curse on the scene now, as cross as a bear with a sore head; but that's of no importance. Anna Vassilyevna's crushed, but she's much more brokenhearted at her daughter leaving her than at her marriage.'

Uvar Ivanovitch flourished his fingers.

'A mother,' he commented, 'to be sure.'

'Your nephew,' resumed Shubin, 'threatens to lodge a complaint with the

Metropolitan and the General-Governor and the Minister, but it will end by her going. A happy thought to ruin his own daughter! He'll crow a little and then lower his colours.'

'They'd no right,' observed Uvar Ivanovitch, and he drank out of the jug.

'To be sure. But what a storm of criticism, gossip, and comments will be raised in Moscow! She's not afraid of them.... Besides she's above them. She's going away... and it's awful to think where she's going—to such a distance, such a wilderness! What future awaits her there? I seem to see her setting off from a posting station in a snow-storm with thirty degrees of frost. She's leaving her country, and her people; but I understand her doing it. Whom is she leaving here behind her? What people has she seen? Kurnatovsky and Bersenyev and our humble selves; and these are the best she's seen. What is there to regret about it? One thing's bad; I'm told her husband—the devil, how that word sticks in my throat!—Insarov, I'm told, is spitting blood; that's a bad lookout. I saw him the other day: his face—you could model Brutus from it straight off. Do you know who Brutus was, Uvar Ivanovitch?'

'What is there to know? a man to be sure.'

'Precisely so: he was a "man." Yes he's a wonderful face, but unhealthy, very unhealthy.'

'For fighting... it makes no difference,' observed Uvar Ivanovitch.

'For fighting it makes no difference, certainly; you are pleased to express yourself with great justice to-day; but for living it makes all the difference. And you see she wants to live with him a little while.'

'A youthful affair,' responded Uvar Ivanovitch.

'Yes, a youthful, glorious, bold affair. Death, life, conflict, defeat, triumph, love, freedom, country.... Good God, grant as much to all of us! That's a very different thing from sitting up to one's neck in a bog, and pretending it's all the same to you, when in fact it really is all the same. While there—the strings are tuned to the

highest pitch, to play to all the world or to break!'

Shubin's head sank on to his breast.

'Yes,' he resumed, after a prolonged silence, 'Insarov deserves her. What nonsense, though! No one deserves her... Insarov... Insarov ... What's the use of pretended modesty? We'll own he's a fine fellow, he stands on his own feet, though up to the present he has done no more than we poor sinners; and are we such absolutely worthless dirt? Am I such dirt, Uvar Ivanovitch? Has God been hard on me in every way? Has He given me no talents, no abilities? Who knows, perhaps, the name of Pavel Shubin will in time be a great name? You see that bronze farthing there lying on your table. Who knows; some day, perhaps in a century, that bronze will go to a statue of Pavel Shubin, raised in his honour by a grateful posterity!'

Uvar Ivanovitch leaned on his elbow and stared at the enthusiastic artist.

'That's a long way off,' he said at last with his usual gesture; 'we're speaking of other people, why bring in yourself?'

'O great philosopher of the Russian world!' cried Shubin, 'every word of yours is worth its weight in gold, and it's not to me but to you a statue ought to be raised, and I would undertake it. There, as you are lying now, in that pose; one doesn't know which is uppermost in it, sloth or strength! That's how I would cast you in bronze. You aimed a just reproach at my egoism and vanity! Yes! yes! it's useless talking of one's-self; it's useless bragging. We have no one yet, no men, look where you will. Everywhere—either small fry, nibblers, Hamlets on a small scale, self-absorbed, or darkness and subterranean chaos, or idle babblers and wooden sticks. Or else they are like this: they study themselves to the most shameful detail, and are for ever feeling the pulse of every sensation and reporting to themselves: "That's what I feel, that's what I think." A useful, rational occupation! No, if we only had some sensible men among us, that girl, that delicate soul, would not have run away from us, would not have slipped off like a fish to the water! What's the meaning of it, Uvar

Ivanovitch? When will our time come? When will men be born among us?'

'Give us time,' answered Uvar Ivanovitch; 'they will be——'

'They will be? soil of our country! force of the black earth! thou hast said: they will be. Look, I will write down your words. But why are you putting out the candle?'

'I'm going to sleep; good-bye.'

XXXI

Shubin had spoken truly. The unexpected news of Elena's marriage nearly killed Anna Vassilyevna. She took to her bed. Nikolai Artemyevitch insisted on her not admitting her daughter to her presence; he seemed to be enjoying the opportunity of showing himself in the fullest sense the master of the house, with all the authority of the head of the family; he made an incessant uproar in the household, storming at the servants, and constantly saying: 'I will show you who I am, I will let you know—you wait a little!' While he was in the house, Anna Vassilyevna did not see Elena, and had to be content with Zoya, who waited on her very devotedly, but kept thinking to herself: 'Diesen Insarof vorziehen—und wem?' But directly Nikolai Artemyevitch went out—and that happened pretty often, Augustina Christianovna had come back in sober earnest—Elena went to her mother, and a long time her mother gazed at her in silence and in tears.

This dumb reproach, more deeply than any other, cut Elena to the heart; at such moments she felt, not remorse, but a deep, boundless pity akin to remorse.

'Mamma, dear mamma!' she would repeat, kissing her hands; 'what was I to do? I'm not to blame, I loved him, I could not have acted differently. Throw the blame on fate for throwing me with a man whom papa doesn't like, and who is taking me away from you.'

'Ah!' Anna Vassilyevna cut her short, 'don't remind me of that. When I think where

you mean to go, my heart is ready to burst!'

'Dear mamma,' answered Elena, 'be comforted; at least, it might have been worse; I might have died.'

'But, as it is, I don't expect to see you again. Either you will end your days there in a tent somewhere'—Anna Vassilyevna pictured Bulgaria as something after the nature of the Siberian swamps,—'or I shall not survive the separation——'

'Don't say that, mamma dearest, we shall see each other again, please God. There are towns in Bulgaria just as there are here.'

'Fine towns there, indeed! There is war going on there now; wherever you go, I suppose they are firing cannons off all the while... Are you meaning to set off soon?'

'Soon... if only papa. He means to appeal to the authorities; he threatens to separate us.'

Anna Vassilyevna turned her eyes heavenwards.

'No, Lenotchka, he will not do that. I would not myself have consented to this marriage. I would have died first; but what's done can't be undone, and I will not let my daughter be disgraced.'

So passed a few days. At last Anna Vassilyevna plucked up her courage, and one evening she shut herself up alone with her husband in her room. The whole house was hushed to catch every sound. At first nothing was to be heard; then Nikolai Artemyevitch's voice began to tune up, then a quarrel broke out, shouts were raised, even groans were discerned.... Already Shubin was plotting with the maids and Zoya to rush in to the rescue; but the uproar in the bedroom began by degrees to grow less, passed into quiet talk, and ceased. Only from time to time a faint sob was to be heard, and then those, too, were still. There was the jingling of keys, the creak of a bureau being unfastened.... The door was opened, and Nikolai Artemyevitch appeared. He looked surlily at every one who met him, and went out to the club; while Anna Vassilyevna sent for Elena, embraced her warmly, and, with bitter tears

flowing down her cheeks, she said:

‘Everything is settled, he will not make a scandal, and there is nothing now to hinder you from going—from abandoning us.’

‘You will let Dmitri come to thank you?’ Elena begged her mother, as soon as the latter had been restored a little.

‘Wait a little, my darling, I cannot bear yet to see the man who has come between us. We shall have time before you go.’

‘Before we go,’ repeated Elena mournfully.

Nikolai Artemyevitch had consented ‘not to make a scandal,’ but Anna Vassilyevna did not tell her daughter what a price he had put on his consent. She did not tell her that she had promised to pay all his debts, and had given him a thousand roubles down on the spot. Moreover, he had declared decisively to Anna Vassilyevna that he had no wish to meet Insarov, whom he persisted in calling ‘the Montenegrin vagrant,’ and when he got to the club, he began, quite without occasion, talking of Elena’s marriage, to his partner at cards, a retired general of engineers. ‘You have heard,’ he observed with a show of carelessness, ‘my daughter, through the higher education, has gone and married a student.’ The general looked at him through his spectacles, muttered, ‘H’m!’ and asked him what stakes would he play for.

XXXII

The day of departure drew near. November was already over; the latest date for starting had come. Insarov had long ago made his preparations, and was burning with anxiety to get out of Moscow as soon as possible. And the doctor was urging him on. ‘You need a warm climate,’ he told him; ‘you will not get well here.’ Elena, too, was fretting with impatience; she was worried by Insarov’s pallor, and his emaciation. She often looked with involuntary terror at his changed face. Her position in her parents’ house had become insupportable. Her mother mourned over

her, as over the dead, while her father treated her with contemptuous coldness; the approaching separation secretly pained him too, but he regarded it as his duty—the duty of an offended father—to disguise his feelings, his weakness. Anna Vassilyevna at last expressed a wish to see Insarov. He was taken up to her secretly by the back stairs. After he had entered her room, for a long time she could not speak to him, she could not even bring herself to look at him; he sat down near her chair, and waited, with quiet respectfulness, for her first word. Elena sat down close, and held her mother's hand in hers. At last Anna Vassilyevna raised her eyes, saying: 'God is your judge, Dmitri Nikanorovitch'—she stopped short: the reproaches died away on her lips. 'Why, you are ill,' she cried: 'Elena, your husband's ill!'

'I have been unwell, Anna Vassilyevna,' answered Insarov; 'and even now I am not quite strong yet: but I hope my native air will make me perfectly well again.'

'Ah—Bulgaria!' murmured Anna Vassilyevna, and she thought: 'Good God, a Bulgarian, and dying; a voice as hollow as a drum; and eyes like saucers, a perfect skeleton; his coat hanging loose on his shoulders, his face as yellow as a guinea, and she's his wife—she loves him—it must be a bad dream. But——' she checked herself at once: 'Dmitri Nikanorovitch,' she said, 'are you absolutely, absolutely bound to go away?'

'Absolutely, Anna Vassilyevna.'

Anna Vassilyevna looked at him.

'Ah, Dmitri Nikanorovitch, God grant you never have to go through what I am going through now. But you will promise me to take care of her—to love her. You will not have to face poverty while I am living!'

Tears choked her voice. She opened her arms, and Elena and Insarov flung themselves into her embrace.

The fatal day had come at last. It had been arranged that Elena should say good-bye

to her parents at home, and should start on the journey from Insarov's lodgings. The departure was fixed for twelve o'clock. About a quarter of an hour before the appointed time Bersenyev arrived. He had expected to find Insarov's compatriots at his lodgings, anxious to see him off; but they had already gone before; and with them the two mysterious persons known to the reader (they had been witnesses at Insarov's wedding). The tailor met the 'kind gentlemen' with a bow; he, presumably, to drown his grief, but possibly to celebrate his delight at getting the furniture, had been drinking heavily; his wife soon led him away. In the room everything was by this time ready; a trunk, tied up with cord, stood on the floor. Bersenyev sank into thought: many memories came rushing upon him.

Twelve o'clock had long ago struck; and the driver had already brought round the horses, but the 'young people' still did not appear. At last hurrying steps were heard on the stairs, and Elena came out escorted by Insarov and Shubin. Elena's eyes were red; she had left her mother lying unconscious; the parting had been terrible. Elena had not seen Bersenyev for more than a week: he had been seldom of late at the Stahovs'. She had not expected to meet him; and crying, 'You! thank you!' she threw herself on his neck; Insarov, too, embraced him. A painful silence followed. What could these three say to one another? what were they feeling in their hearts? Shubin realised the necessity of cutting short everything painful with light words.

'Our trio has come together again,' he began, 'for the last time. Let us submit to the decrees of fate; speak of the past with kindness; and in God's name go forward to the new life! In God's name, on our distant way,' he began to hum, and stopped short. He felt suddenly ashamed and awkward. It is a sin to sing where the dead are lying: and at that instant, in that room, the past of which he had spoken was dying, the past of the people met together in it. It was dying to be born again in a new life—doubtless—still it was death.

'Come, Elena,' began Insarov, turning to his wife, 'I think everything is done?

Everything paid, and everything packed. There's nothing more except to take the box down.' He called his landlord.

The tailor came into the room, together with his wife and daughter. He listened, slightly reeling, to Insarov's instructions, dragged the box up on to his shoulders, and ran quickly down the staircases, tramping heavily with his boots.

'Now, after the Russian custom, we must sit down,' observed Insarov.

They all sat down; Bersenyev seated himself on the old sofa, Elena sat next him; the landlady and her daughter squatted in the doorway. All were silent; all smiled constrainedly, though no one knew why he was smiling; each of them wanted to say something at parting, and each (except, of course, the landlady and her daughter, they were simply rolling their eyes) felt that at such moments it is only permissible to utter common-places, that any word of importance, of sense, or even of deep feeling, would be somehow out of place, almost insincere. Insarov was the first to get up, and he began crossing himself. 'Farewell, our little room!' he cried.

Then came kisses, the sounding but cold kisses of leave-taking, good wishes—half expressed—for the journey, promises to write, the last, half-smothered words of farewell.

Elena, all in tears, had already taken her seat in the sledge; Insarov had carefully wrapped her feet up in a rug; Shubin, Bersenyev, the landlord, his wife, the little daughter, with the inevitable kerchief on her head, the doorkeeper, a workman in a striped bedgown, were all standing on the steps, when suddenly a splendid sledge, harnessed with spirited horses, flew into the courtyard, and from the sledge, shaking the snow off the collar of his cloak, leapt Nikolai Artemyevitch.

'I am not too late, thank God,' he cried, running up to their sledge. 'Here, Elena, is our last parental benediction,' he said, bending down under the hood, and taking from his pocket a little holy image, sewn in a velvet bag, he put it round her neck. She began to sob, and kiss his hands; and the coachman meantime pulled out of the

forepart of the sledge a half bottle of champagne, and three glasses.

‘Come!’ said Nikolai Artemyevitch—and his own tears were trickling on to the beaver collar of his cloak—‘we must drink to—good journey—good wishes——’ He began pouring out the champagne: his hands were shaking, the foam rose over the edge and fell on to the snow. He took one glass, and gave the other two to Elena and Insarov, who by now was seated beside her. ‘God give you——’ began Nikolai Artemyevitch, and he could not go on: he drank off the wine; they, too, drank off their glasses. ‘Now you should drink, gentlemen,’ he added, turning to Shubin and Bersenyev, but at that instant the driver started the horses. Nikolai Artemyevitch ran beside the sledge. ‘Mind and write to us,’ he said in a broken voice. Elena put out her head, saying: ‘Good-bye, papa, Andrei Petrovitch, Pavel Yakovlitch, good-bye all, good-bye, Russia!’ and dropped back in her place. The driver flourished his whip, and gave a whistle; the sledge, its runners crunching on the snow, turned out of the gates to the right and disappeared.

XXXIII

It was a bright April day. On the broad lagoon which separates Venice from the narrow strip of accumulated sea sand, called the Lido, a gondola was gliding—swaying rhythmically at every push made by the gondolier as he leaned on the big pole. Under its low awning, on soft leather cushions, were sitting Elena and Insarov.

Elena’s features had not changed much since the day of her departure from Moscow, but their expression was different; it was more thoughtful and more severe, and her eyes had a bolder look. Her whole figure had grown finer and more mature, and the hair seemed to lie in greater thickness and luxuriance along her white brow and her fresh cheeks. Only about her lips, when she was not smiling, a scarcely perceptible line showed the presence of a hidden constant anxiety. In Insarov’s face, on the

contrary, the expression had remained the same, but his features had undergone a cruel change. He had grown thin, old, pale and bent; he was constantly coughing a short dry cough, and his sunken eyes shone with a strange brilliance. On the way from Russia, Insarov had lain ill for almost two months at Vienna, and only at the end of March had he been able to come with his wife to Venice; from there he was hoping to make his way through Zara to Servia, to Bulgaria; the other roads were closed. The war was now at its height about the Danube; England and France had declared war on Russia, all the Slavonic countries were roused and were preparing for an uprising.

The gondola put in to the inner shore of the Lido. Elena and Insarov walked along the narrow sandy road planted with sickly trees (every year they plant them and every year they die) to the outer shore of the Lido, to the sea.

They walked along the beach. The Adriatic rolled its muddy-blue waves before them; they raced into the shore, foaming and hissing, and drew back again, leaving fine shells and fragments of seaweed on the beach.

‘What a desolate place!’ observed Elena ‘I’m afraid it’s too cold for you here, but I guess why you wanted to come here.’

‘Cold!’ rejoined Insarov with a rapid and bitter smile, ‘I shall be a fine soldier, if I’m to be afraid of the cold. I came here... I will tell you why. I look across that sea, and I feel as though here, I am nearer my country. It is there, you know,’ he added, stretching out his hand to the East, ‘the wind blows from there.’

‘Will not this wind bring the ship you are expecting?’ said Elena. ‘See, there is a white sail, is not that it?’

Insarov gazed seaward into the distance to where Elena was pointing.

‘Renditch promised to arrange everything for us within a week,’ he said, ‘we can rely on him, I think.... Did you hear, Elena,’ he added with sudden animation, ‘they say the poor Dalmatian fishermen have sacrificed their dredging weights—you

know the leads they weigh their nets with for letting them down to the bottom—to make bullets! They have no money, they only just live by fishing; but they have joyfully given up their last property, and now are starving. What a nation!'

'Aufgepasst!' shouted a haughty voice behind them. The heavy thud of horse's hoofs was heard, and an Austrian officer in a short grey tunic and a green cap galloped past them—they had scarcely time to get out of the way.

Insarov looked darkly after him.

'He was not to blame,' said Elena, 'you know, they have no other place where they can ride.'

'He was not to blame,' answered Insarov 'but he made my blood boil with his shout, his moustaches, his cap, his whole appearance. Let us go back.'

'Yes, let us go back, Dmitri. It's really cold here. You did not take care of yourself after your Moscow illness, and you had to pay for that at Vienna. Now you must be more cautious.'

Insarov did not answer, but the same bitter smile passed over his lips.

'If you like,' Elena went on, 'we will go along to the Canal Grande. We have not seen Venice properly, you know, all the while we have been here. And in the evening we are going to the theatre; I have two tickets for the stalls. They say there's a new opera being given. If you like, we will give up to-day to one another; we will forget politics and war and everything, we will forget everything but that we are alive, breathing, thinking together; that we are one for ever—would you like that?'

'If you would like it, Elena,' answered Insarov, 'it follows that I should like it too.'

'I knew that,' observed Elena with a smile, 'come, let us go.'

They went back to the gondola, took their seats, told the gondolier to take them without hurry along the Canal Grande.

No one who has not seen Venice in April knows all the unutterable fascinations of

that magic town. The softness and mildness of spring harmonise with Venice, just as the glaring sun of summer suits the magnificence of Genoa, and as the gold and purple of autumn suits the grand antiquity of Rome. The beauty of Venice, like the spring, touches the soul and moves it to desire; it frets and tortures the inexperienced heart like the promise of a coming bliss, mysterious but not elusive. Everything in it is bright, and everything is wrapt in a drowsy, tangible mist, as it were, of the hush of love; everything in it is so silent, and everything in it is kindly; everything in it is feminine, from its name upwards. It has well been given the name of 'the fair city.' Its masses of palaces and churches stand out light and wonderful like the graceful dream of a young god; there is something magical, something strange and bewitching in the greenish-grey light and silken shimmer of the silent water of the canals, in the noiseless gliding of the gondolas, in the absence of the coarse din of a town, the coarse rattling, and crashing, and uproar. 'Venice is dead, Venice is deserted,' her citizens will tell you, but perhaps this last charm—the charm of decay—was not vouchsafed her in the very heyday of the flower and majesty of her beauty. He who has not seen her, knows her not; neither Canaletto nor Guardi (to say nothing of later painters) has been able to convey the silvery tenderness of the atmosphere, the horizon so close, yet so elusive, the divine harmony of exquisite lines and melting colours. One who has outlived his life, who has been crushed by it, should not visit Venice; she will be cruel to him as the memory of unfulfilled dreams of early days; but sweet to one whose strength is at its full, who is conscious of happiness; let him bring his bliss under her enchanted skies; and however bright it may be, Venice will make it more golden with her unfading splendour.

The gondola in which Insarov and Elena were sitting passed Riva dei Schiavoni, the palace of the Doges, and Piazzetta, and entered the Grand Canal. On both sides stretched marble palaces; they seemed to float softly by, scarcely letting the eye seize or absorb their beauty. Elena felt herself deeply happy; in the perfect blue of her heavens there was only one dark cloud—and it was in the far distance; Insarov

was much better that day. They glided as far as the acute angle of the Rialto and turned back. Elena was afraid of the chill of the churches for Insarov; but she remembered the academy delle Belle Arti, and told the gondolier to go towards it. They quickly walked through all the rooms of that little museum. Being neither connoisseurs nor dilettantes, they did not stop before every picture; they put no constraint on themselves; a spirit of light-hearted gaiety came over them. Everything seemed suddenly very entertaining. (Children know this feeling very well.) To the great scandal of three English visitors, Elena laughed till she cried over the St Mark of Tintoretto, skipping down from the sky like a frog into the water, to deliver the tortured slave; Insarov in his turn fell into raptures over the back and legs of the sturdy man in the green cloak, who stands in the foreground of Titian's Ascension and holds his arms outstretched after the Madonna; but the Madonna—a splendid, powerful woman, calmly and majestically making her way towards the bosom of God the Father—impressed both Insarov and Elena; they liked, too, the austere and reverent painting of the elder Cima da Conegliano. As they were leaving the academy, they took another look at the Englishmen behind them—with their long rabbit-like teeth and drooping whiskers—and laughed; they glanced at their gondolier with his abbreviated jacket and short breeches—and laughed; they caught sight of a woman selling old clothes with a knob of grey hair on the very top of her head—and laughed more than ever; they looked into one another's face—and went off into peals of laughter, and directly they had sat down in the gondola, they clasped each other's hand in a close, close grip. They reached their hotel, ran into their room, and ordered dinner to be brought in. Their gaiety did not desert them at dinner. They pressed each other to eat, drank to the health of their friends in Moscow, clapped their hands at the waiter for a delicious dish of fish, and kept asking him for live frutti di mare; the waiter shrugged his shoulders and scraped with his feet, but when he had left them, he shook his head and once even muttered with a sigh, poveretti! (poor things!) After dinner they set off for the theatre.

They were giving an opera of Verdi's, which though, honestly speaking, rather vulgar, has already succeeded in making the round of all the European theatres, an opera, well-known among Russians, La Traviata. The season in Venice was over, and none of the singers rose above the level of mediocrity; every one shouted to the best of their abilities. The part of Violetta was performed by an artist, of no renown, and judging by the cool reception given her by the public, not a favourite, but she was not destitute of talent. She was a young, and not very pretty, black-eyed girl with an unequal and already overstrained voice. Her dress was ill-chosen and naively gaudy; her hair was hidden in a red net, her dress of faded blue satin was too tight for her, and thick Swedish gloves reached up to her sharp elbows. Indeed, how could she, the daughter of some Bergamese shepherd, know how Parisian dames aux camélias dress! And she did not understand how to move on the stage; but there was much truth and artless simplicity in her acting, and she sang with that passion of expression and rhythm which is only vouchsafed to Italians. Elena and Insarov were sitting alone together in a dark box close to the stage; the mirthful mood which had come upon them in the academy delle Belle Arti had not yet passed off. When the father of the unhappy young man who had fallen into the snares of the enchantress came on to the stage in a yellow frock-coat and a dishevelled white wig, opened his mouth awry, and losing his presence of mind before he had begun, only brought out a faint bass tremolo, they almost burst into laughter. ... But Violetta's acting impressed them.

'They hardly clap that poor girl at all,' said Elena, 'but I like her a thousand times better than some conceited second-rate celebrity who would grimace and attitudinise all the while for effect. This girl seems as though it were all in earnest; look, she pays no attention to the public.'

Insarov bent over the edge of the box, and looked attentively at Violetta.

'Yes,' he commented, 'she is in earnest; she's on the brink of the grave herself.'

Elena was mute.

The third act began. The curtain rose—Elena shuddered at the sight of the bed, the drawn curtains, the glass of medicine, the shaded lamps. She recalled the near past. ‘What of the future? What of the present?’ flashed across her mind. As though in response to her thought, the artist’s mimic cough on the stage was answered in the box by the hoarse, terribly real cough of Insarov. Elena stole a glance at him, and at once gave her features a calm and untroubled expression; Insarov understood her, and he began himself to smile, and softly to hum the tune of the song.

But he was soon quiet. Violetta’s acting became steadily better, and freer. She had thrown aside everything subsidiary, everything superfluous, and found herself; a rare, a lofty delight for an artist! She had suddenly crossed the limit, which it is impossible to define, beyond which is the abiding place of beauty. The audience was thrilled and astonished. The plain girl with the broken voice began to get a hold on it, to master it. And the singer’s voice even did not sound broken now; it had gained mellowness and strength. Alfredo made his entrance; Violetta’s cry of happiness almost raised that storm in the audience known as fanatismo, beside which all the applause of our northern audiences is nothing. A brief interval passed—and again the audience were in transports. The duet began, the best thing in the opera, in which the composer has succeeded in expressing all the pathos of the senseless waste of youth, the final struggle of despairing, helpless love. Caught up and carried along by the general sympathy, with tears of artistic delight and real suffering in her eyes, the singer let herself be borne along on the wave of passion within her; her face was transfigured, and in the presence of the threatening signs of fast approaching death, the words: ‘Lascia mi vivero—morir si giovane’ (let me live—to die so young!) burst from her in such a tempest of prayer rising to heaven, that the whole theatre shook with frenzied applause and shouts of delight.

Elena felt cold all over. Softly her hand sought Insarov’s, found it, and clasped it

tightly. He responded to its pressure; but she did not look at him, nor he at her. Very different was the clasp of hands with which they had greeted each other in the gondola a few hours before.

Again they glided along the Canal Grande towards their hotel. Night had set in now, a clear, soft night. The same palaces met them, but they seemed different. Those that were lighted up by the moon shone with pale gold, and in this pale light all details of ornaments and lines of windows and balconies seemed lost; they stood out more clearly in the buildings that were wrapped in a light veil of unbroken shadow. The gondolas, with their little red lamps, seemed to flit past more noiselessly and swiftly than ever; their steel beaks flashed mysteriously, mysteriously their oars rose and fell over the ripples stirred by little silvery fish; here and there was heard the brief, subdued call of a gondolier (they never sing now); scarcely another sound was to be heard. The hotel where Insarov and Elena were staying was on the Riva dei Schiavoni; before they reached it they left the gondola, and walked several times round the Square of St. Mark, under the arches, where numbers of holiday makers were gathered before the tiny cafes. There is a special sweetness in wandering alone with one you love, in a strange city among strangers; everything seems beautiful and full of meaning, you feel peace and goodwill to all men, you wish all the same happiness that fills your heart. But Elena could not now give herself up without a care to the sense of her happiness; her heart could not regain its calm after the emotions that had so lately shaken it; and Insarov, as he walked by the palace of the Doges, pointed without speaking to the mouths of the Austrian cannons, peeping out from the lower arches, and pulled his hat down over his eyes. By now he felt tired, and, with a last glance at the church of St. Mark, at its cupola, where on the bluish lead bright patches of phosphorescent light shone in the rays of the moon, they turned slowly homewards.

Their little room looked out on to the lagoon, which stretches from the Riva del Schiavoni to the Giudecca. Almost facing their hotel rose the slender tower of S.

George; high against the sky on the right shone the golden ball of the Customs House; and, decked like a bride, stood the loveliest of the churches, the Redentore of Palladio; on the left were the black masts and rigging of ships, the funnels of steamers; a half-furled sail hung in one place like a great wing, and the flags scarcely stirred. Insarov sat down at the window, but Elena did not let him admire the view for long; he seemed suddenly feverish, he was overcome by consuming weakness. She put him to bed, and, waiting till he had fallen asleep, she returned to the window. Oh, how still and kindly was the night, what dovelike softness breathed in the deep-blue air! Every suffering, every sorrow surely must be soothed to slumber under that clear sky, under that pure, holy light! ‘O God,’ thought Elena, ‘why must there be death, why is there separation, and disease and tears? or else, why this beauty, this sweet feeling of hope, this soothing sense of an abiding refuge, an unchanging support, an everlasting protection? What is the meaning of this smiling, blessing sky; this happy, sleeping earth? Can it be that all that is only in us, and that outside us is eternal cold and silence? Can it be that we are alone... alone... and there, on all sides, in all those unattainable depths and abysses—nothing is akin to us; all, all is strange and apart from us? Why, then, have we this desire for, this delight in prayer?’ (Morir si giovane was echoing in her heart.)... ‘Is it impossible, then, to propitiate, to avert, to save... O God! is it impossible to believe in miracle?’ She dropped her head on to her clasped hands. ‘Enough,’ she whispered. ‘Indeed enough! I have been happy not for moments only, not for hours, not for whole days even, but for whole weeks together. And what right had I to happiness?’ She felt terror at the thought of her happiness. ‘What, if that cannot be?’ she thought. ‘What, if it is not granted for nothing? Why, it has been heaven... and we are mortals, poor sinful mortals.... Morir si giovane. Oh, dark omen, away! It’s not only for me his life is needed!

‘But what, if it is a punishment,’ she thought again; ‘what, if we must now pay the penalty of our guilt in full? My conscience was silent, it is silent now, but is that a

proof of innocence? O God, can we be so guilty! Canst Thou who hast created this night, this sky, wish to punish us for having loved each other? If it be so, if he has sinned, if I have sinned,' she added with involuntary force, 'grant that he, O God, grant that we both, may die at least a noble, glorious death—there, on the plains of his country, not here in this dark room.

'And the grief of my poor, lonely mother?' she asked herself, and was bewildered, and could find no answer to her question. Elena did not know that every man's happiness is built on the unhappiness of another, that even his advantage, his comfort, like a statue needs a pedestal, the disadvantage, the discomfort of others.

'Renditch!' muttered Insarov in his sleep.

Elena went up to him on tiptoe, bent over him, and wiped the perspiration from his face. He tossed a little on his pillow, and was still again.

She went back again to the window, and again her thoughts took possession of her. She began to argue with herself, to assure herself that there was no reason to be afraid. She even began to feel ashamed of her weakness. 'Is there any danger? isn't he better?' she murmured. 'Why, if we had not been at the theatre to-day, all this would never have entered my head.'

At that instant she saw high above the water a white sea-gull; some fisherman had scared it, it seemed, for it flew noiselessly with uncertain course, as though seeking a spot where it could alight. 'Come, if it flies here,' thought Elena, 'it will be a good omen.' ... The sea-gull flew round in a circle, folded its wings, and, as though it had been shot, dropped with a plaintive cry in the distance behind a dark ship. Elena shuddered; then she was ashamed of having shuddered, and, without undressing, she lay down on the bed beside Insarov, who was breathing quickly and heavily.

XXXIV

Insarov waked late with a dull pain in his head, and a feeling, as he expressed it, of

disgusting weakness all over. He got up however.

‘Renditch has not come?’ was his first question.

‘Not yet,’ answered Elena, and she handed him the latest number of the Osservatore Triestino, in which there was much upon the war, the Slav Provinces, and the Principalities. Insarov began reading it; she busied herself in getting some coffee ready for him. Some one knocked at the door.

‘Renditch,’ both thought at once, but a voice said in Russian, ‘May I come in?’ Elena and Insarov looked at each other in astonishment; and without waiting for an answer, an elegantly dressed young man entered the room, with a small sharp-featured face, and bright little eyes. He was beaming all over, as though he had just won a fortune or heard a most delightful piece of news.

Insarov got up from his seat.

‘You don’t recognise me,’ began the stranger, going up to him with an easy air, and bowing politely to Elena, ‘Lupoyarov, do you remember, we met at Moscow at the E——’s.’

‘Yes, at the E——’s,’ replied Insarov.

‘To be sure, to be sure! I beg you to present me to your wife. Madam, I have always had the profoundest respect for Dmitri Vassilyevitch’ (he corrected himself)—‘for Nikanor Vassilyevitch, and am very happy to have the pleasure at last of making your acquaintance. Fancy,’ he continued, turning to Insarov, ‘I only heard yesterday evening that you were here. I am staying at this hotel too. What a city! Venice is poetry—that’s the only word for it! But one thing’s really awful: the cursed Austrians meeting one at every turn! ah, these Austrians! By the way, have you heard, there’s been a decisive battle on the Danube: three hundred Turkish officers killed, Silistria taken; Servia has declared its independence. You, as a patriot, ought to be in transports, oughtn’t you? Even my Slavonic blood’s positively on fire! I advise you to be more careful, though; I’m convinced there’s a watch kept on you.

The spies here are something awful! A suspicious-looking man came up to me yesterday and asked: “Are you a Russian?” I told him I was a Dane. But you seem unwell, dear Nikanor Vassilyevitch. You ought to see a doctor; madam, you ought to make your husband see a doctor. Yesterday I ran through the palaces and churches, as though I were crazy. I suppose you’ve been in the palace of the Doges? What magnificence everywhere! Especially that great hall and Marino Faliero’s place: there’s an inscription: decapitati pro criminibus. I’ve been in the famous prisons too; that threw me into indignation, you may fancy. I’ve always, you remember perhaps, taken an interest in social questions, and taken sides against aristocracy—well, that’s where I should like to send the champions of aristocracy—to those dungeons. How well Byron said: I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs; though he was an aristocrat too. I was always for progress—the younger generation are all for progress. And what do you say to the Anglo-French business? We shall see whether they can do much, Boustrapa and Palmerston. You know Palmerston has been made Prime Minister. No, say what you like, the Russian fist is not to be despised. He’s awfully deep that Boustrapa! If you like I will lend you Les Châtiments de Victor Hugo—it’s marvellous—L’avenir, le gendarme de Dieu—rather boldly written, but what force in it, what force! That was a fine saying, too, of Prince Vyazemsky’s: “Europe repeats: Bash-Kadik-Lar keeping an eye on Sinope.” I adore poetry. I have Proudhon’s last work, too—I have everything. I don’t know how you feel, but I’m glad of the war; only as I’m not required at home, I’m going from here to Florence, and to Rome. France I can’t go to—so I’m thinking of Spain—the women there, I’m told, are marvellous! only such poverty, and so many insects. I would be off to California—we Russians are ready to do anything—but I promised an editor to study the question of the commerce of the Mediterranean in detail. You will say that’s an uninteresting, special subject, but that’s just what we need, specialists; we have philosophised enough, now we need the practical, the practical. But you are very unwell, Nikanor Vassilyevitch, I am tiring you, perhaps, but still I must stay a

little longer.'

And for a long time Lupoyarov still babbled on in the same way, and, as he went away, he promised to come again.

Worn out by the unexpected visit, Insarov lay down on the sofa. 'So this,' he said, mournfully looking at Elena, 'is your younger generation! There are plenty who show off, and give themselves airs, while at heart they are as empty chatterboxes as that worthy.'

Elena made no reply to her husband; at that instant she was far more concerned at Insarov's weakness than at the character of the whole younger generation in Russia. She sat down near him, and took up some work. He closed his eyes, and lay without moving, white and thin. Elena glanced at his sharp profile, at his emaciated hands, and felt a sudden pang of terror.

'Dmitri,' she began.

He started. 'Eh? Has Renditch come?'

'Not yet—but what do you think—you are in a fever, you are really not quite well, shouldn't we send for a doctor?'

'That wretched gossip has frightened you. There's no necessity. I will rest a little, and it will pass off. After dinner we will go out again—somewhere.'

Two hours passed. Insarov still lay on the sofa, but he could not sleep, though he did not open his eyes. Elena did not leave his side; she had dropped her work upon her knee, and did not stir.

'Why don't you go to sleep?' she asked at last.

'Wait a little.' He took her hand, and placed it under his head. 'There—that is nice. Wake me at once directly Renditch comes. If he says the ship is ready, we will start at once. We ought to pack everything.'

'Packing won't take long,' answered Elena.

‘That fellow babbled something about a battle, about Servia,’ said Insarov, after a short interval. ‘I suppose he made it all up. But we must, we must start. We can’t lose time. Be ready.’

He fell asleep, and everything was still in the room.

Elena let her head rest against the back of her chair, and gazed a long while out of the window. The weather had changed for the worse; the wind had risen. Great white clouds were scudding over the sky, a slender mast was swaying in the distance, a long streamer, with a red cross on it, kept fluttering, falling, and fluttering again. The pendulum of the old-fashioned clock ticked drearily, with a kind of melancholy whirr. Elena shut her eyes. She had slept badly all night; gradually she, too, fell asleep.

She had a strange dream. She thought she was floating in a boat on the Tsaritsino lake with some unknown people. They did not speak, but sat motionless, no one was rowing; the boat was moving by itself. Elena was not afraid, but she felt dreary; she wanted to know who were these people, and why she was with them? She looked and the lake grew broader, the banks vanished—now it was not a lake but a stormy sea: immense blue silent waves rocked the boat majestically; something menacing, roaring was rising from the depths; her unknown companions jumped up, shrieking, wringing their hands... Elena recognised their faces; her father was among them. But a kind of white whirlwind came flying over the waves—everything was turning round, everything was confounded together.

Elena looked about her; as before, all around was white; but it was snow, snow, boundless plains of snow. And she was not now in a boat, but travelling, as she had come from Moscow, in a sledge; she was not alone; by her side was sitting a little creature muffled in an old cloak; Elena looked closely; it was Katya, her poor little friend. Elena was seized with terror. ‘Why, isn’t she dead?’ she thought.

‘Katya, where are we going together?’ Katya did not answer, and nestled herself

closer in her little cloak; she was freezing. Elena too was cold; she looked along the road into the distance; far away a town could be seen through the fine drifting snow. High white towers with silvery cupolas... ‘Katya, Katya, is it Moscow? No,’ thought Elena, ‘it is Solovetsky Monastery; it’s full of little narrow cells like a beehive; it’s stifling, cramping there—and Dmitri’s shut up there. I must rescue him.’... Suddenly a grey, yawning abyss opened before her. The sledge was falling, Katya was laughing. ‘Elena, Elena!’ came a voice from the abyss.

‘Elena!’ sounded distinctly in her ears. She raised her head quickly, turned round, and was stupefied: Insarov, white as snow, the snow of her dream, had half risen from the sofa, and was staring at her with large, bright, dreadful eyes. His hair hung in disorder on his forehead and his lips parted strangely. Horror, mingled with an anguish of tenderness, was expressed on his suddenly transfigured face.

‘Elena!’ he articulated, ‘I am dying.’

She fell with a scream on her knees, and clung to his breast.

‘It’s all over,’ repeated Insarov: ‘I’m dying... Good-bye, my poor girl! good-bye, my country!’ and he fell backwards on to the sofa.

Elena rushed out of the room, began calling for help; a waiter ran for a doctor. Elena clung to Insarov.

At that instant in the doorway appeared a broad-shouldered, sunburnt man, in a stout frieze coat and a low oil-skin hat. He stood still in bewilderment.

‘Renditch!’ cried Elena, ‘it’s you! Look, for God’s sake, he’s ill! What’s wrong? Good God! He went out yesterday, he was talking to me just now.’

Renditch said nothing and only moved on one side. There slipped quickly past him a little figure in a wig and spectacles; it was a doctor living in the same hotel. He went up to Insarov.

‘Signora,’ he said, after the lapse of a few minutes, ‘the foreign gentleman is

dead—il Signore forestiere e morte—of aneurism in combination with disease of the lungs.'

XXXV

The next day, in the same room, Renditch was standing at the window; before him, wrapped in a shawl, sat Elena. In the next room, Insarov lay in his coffin. Elena's face was both scared and lifeless; two lines could be seen on her forehead between her eyebrows; they gave a strained expression to her fixed eyes. In the window lay an open letter from Anna Vassilyevna. She begged her daughter to come to Moscow if only for a month, complained of her loneliness, and of Nikolai Artemyevitch, sent greetings to Insarov, inquired after his health, and begged him to spare his wife.

Renditch was a Dalmatian, a sailor, with whom Insarov had become acquainted during his wanderings in his own country, and whom he had sought out in Venice. He was a dry, gruff man, full of daring and devoted to the Slavonic cause. He despised the Turks and hated the Austrians.

'How long must you remain at Venice?' Elena asked him in Italian. And her voice was as lifeless as her face.

'One day for freighting and not to rouse suspicions, and then straight to Zara. I shall have sad news for our countrymen. They have long been expecting him; they rested their hopes on him.'

'They rested their hopes on him,' Elena repeated mechanically.

'When will you bury him?' asked Renditch.

Elena not at once replied, 'To-morrow.'

'To-morrow? I will stop; I should like to throw a handful of earth into his grave. And you will want help. But it would have been better for him to lie in Slavonic earth.'

Elena looked at Renditch.

‘Captain,’ she said, ‘take me and him and carry us across to the other side of the sea, away from here. Isn’t that possible?’

Renditch considered: ‘Possible certainly, but difficult. We shall have to come into collision with the damned authorities here. But supposing we arrange all that and bury him there, how am I to bring you back?’

‘You need not bring me back.’

‘What? where will you stop?’

‘I shall find some place for myself; only take us, take me.’

Renditch scratched the back of his head.

‘You know best; but it’s all very difficult. I will, I will try; and you expect me here in two hours’ time.’

He went away. Elena passed into the next room, leaned against the wall, and for a long time stood there as though turned to stone. Then she dropped on her knees, but she could not pray. There was no reproach in her heart; she did not dare to question God’s will, to ask why He had not spared, pitied, saved, why He had punished her beyond her guilt, if she were guilty. Each of us is guilty by the fact that he lives; and there is no one so great a thinker, so great a benefactor of mankind that he might hope to have a right to live for the service he has done.... Still Elena could not pray; she was a stone.

The same night a broad-bottomed boat put off from the hotel where the Insarovs lived. In the boat sat Elena with Renditch and beside them stood a long box covered with a black cloth. They rowed for about an hour, and at last reached a small two-masted ship, which was riding at anchor at the very entrance of the harbour. Elena and Renditch got into the ship; the sailors carried in the box. At midnight a storm had arisen, but early in the morning the ship had passed out of the Lido.

During the day the storm raged with fearful violence, and experienced seamen in Lloyd's offices shook their heads and prophesied no good. The Adriatic Sea between Venice, Trieste, and the Dalmatian coast is particularly dangerous.

Three weeks after Elena's departure from Vienna, Anna Vassilyevna received the following letter in Moscow:—

'My DEAR PARENTS.—I am saying goodbye to you for ever. You will never see me again. Dmitri died yesterday. Everything is over for me. To-day I am setting off with his body to Zara. I will bury him, and what will become of me, I don't know. But now I have no country but Dmitri's country. There, they are preparing for revolution, they are getting ready for war. I will join the Sisters of Mercy; I will tend the sick and the wounded. I don't know what will become of me, but even after Dmitri's death, I will be faithful to his memory, to the work of his whole life. I have learnt Bulgarian and Servian. Very likely, I shall not have strength to live through it all for long—so much the better. I have been brought to the edge of the precipice and I must fall over. Fate did not bring us together for nothing; who knows?—perhaps I killed him; now it is his turn to draw me after him. I sought happiness, and I shall find—perhaps death. It seems it was to be thus: it seems it was a sin.... But death covers all and reconciles all; does it not? Forgive me all the suffering I have caused you; it was not under my control. But how could I return to Russia; What have I to do in Russia?

'Accept my last kisses and blessings, and do not condemn me.

R.'

* * *

Nearly five years have passed since then, and no further news of Elena has come. All letters and inquiries were fruitless; in vain did Nikolai Artemyevitch himself make a journey to Venice and to Zara after peace was concluded. In Venice he learnt what is already known to the reader, but in Zara no one could give him any positive

information about Renditch and the ship he had taken. There were dark rumours that some years back, after a great storm, the sea had thrown up on shore a coffin in which had been found a man's body... But according to other more trustworthy accounts this coffin had not been thrown up by the sea at all, but had been carried over and buried near the shore by a foreign lady, coming from Venice; some added that they had seen this lady afterwards in Herzegovina, with the forces which were there assembled; they even described her dress, black from head to foot. However it was, all trace of Elena had disappeared beyond recovery for ever; and no one knows whether she is still living, whether she is hidden away somewhere, or whether the petty drama of life is over—the little ferment of her existence is at an end; and she has found death in her turn. It happens at times that a man wakes up and asks himself with involuntary horror, 'Can I be already thirty ... forty... fifty? How is it life has passed so soon? How is it death has moved up so close?' Death is like a fisher who catches fish in his net and leaves them for a while in the water; the fish is still swimming but the net is round him, and the fisher will draw him up—when he thinks fit.

* * *

What became of the other characters of our story?

Anna Vassilyevna is still living; she has aged very much since the blow that has fallen on her; is less complaining, but far more wretched. Nikolai Artemyevitch, too, has grown older and greyer, and has parted from Augustina Christianovna.... He has taken now to abusing everything foreign. His housekeeper, a handsome woman of thirty, a Russian, wears silk dresses and gold rings and bracelets. Kurnatovsky, like every man of ardent temperament and dark complexion, a devoted admirer of pretty blondes, married Zoya; she is in complete subjection to him and has even given up thinking in German. Bersenyev is in Heidelberg; he has been sent abroad at the expense of government; he has visited Berlin and Paris and is not wasting his time;

he has become a thoroughly efficient professor. The attention of the learned public has been caught by his two articles: ‘On some peculiarities of ancient law as regards judicial sentences,’ and ‘On the significance of cities in civilisation.’ It is only a pity that both articles are written in rather a heavy style, disfigured by foreign words. Shubin is in Rome; he is completely given up to his art and is reckoned one of the most remarkable and promising of young sculptors. Severe tourists consider that he has not sufficiently studied the antique, that he has ‘no style,’ and reckon him one of the French school; he has had a great many orders from the English and Americans. Of late, there has been much talk about a Bacchante of his; the Russian Count Boboshkin, the well-known millionaire, thought of buying it for one thousand scudi, but decided in preference to give three thousand to another sculptor, French pur sang, for a group entitled, ‘A youthful shepherdess dying for love in the bosom of the Genius of Spring.’ Shubin writes from time to time to Uvar Ivanovitch, who alone has remained quite unaltered in all respects. ‘Do you remember,’ he wrote to him lately, ‘what you said to me that night, when poor Elena’s marriage was made known, when I was sitting on your bed talking to you? Do you remember I asked you, “Will there ever be men among us?” and you answered “There will be.” O primeval force! And now from here in “my poetic distance,” I will ask you again: “What do you say, Uvar Ivanovitch, will there be?”’

Uvar Ivanovitch flourished his fingers and fixed his enigmatical stare into the far distance.

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