

The Decembrists

Drafts of an attempt to write a sequel to War and Peace

Leo Tolstoy

1868

Contents

FIRST FRAGMENT	3
I	3
II	10
III	17
SECOND FRAGMENT	25
THIRD FRAGMENT	32

FIRST FRAGMENT

I

IT happened not long ago, in the reign of the Emperor Alexander II.,—in our epoch of civilization, of progress, of *questions*, of the regeneration of Russia, etc.,—the time when the victorious Russian army had returned from Sevastopol, which had just been surrendered to the enemy, when all Russia was celebrating its triumph in the destruction of the Black Sea fleet, and White-walled Moscow had gone forth to meet and congratulate the remains of the crews of that fleet, and reach them a good Russian glass of vodka, and in accordance with the good Russian custom offer them the bread and salt of hospitality,¹ and bow their heads to the ground; at the time when Russia in the person of perspicacious virgin-politicians bewailed the destruction of its favorite dreams about celebrating the Te Deum in the cathedral of Saint Sophia and the severely felt loss of two great men dear to the fatherland, who had been killed during the war (one carried away by his desire to hear the Te Deum as soon as possible in the said cathedral and who fell on the plains of Vallachia, for that very reason leaving two squadrons of hussars on those same plains; the other an invaluable man distributing tea, other people's money, and sheets to the wounded, and not stealing either); at the time when from all sides, from all branches of human activity, in Russia, great men sprang up like mushrooms—colonels, administrators, economists, writers, orators, and simply great men, without any vocation or object; at the time when at the jubilee of a Moscow actor, public sentiment, strengthened by a toast, began to demand the punishment of all criminals; when formidable committees from Petersburg were galloping away toward the south, to apprehend, discover, and punish the evil-doers of the commissary department; when in all the cities, dinners with speeches were given to the heroes of Sevastopol, and these men who came with amputated arms and legs were given trifles as remembrances, and they were met on bridges and highways; at the time when oratorical talents were so rapidly spreading among the people that a single tapster everywhere and on every occasion wrote and printed, and, having learned by heart, made at dinners such powerful addresses that the keepers of order had, as a general thing, to employ repressive measures against the eloquence of the tapster; when in the English club itself they reserved a special room for the discussion of public affairs; when new periodicals made their appearance under the most diversified appellations—journals developing European principles on a European soil, but with a Russian point of view, and journals exclusively on Russian soil developing Russian principles, but with a European point of view; when suddenly so many periodicals appeared that it seemed as if all names were exhausted—the *Viestnik* (Messenger), and the *Slovo* (Word), and the *Besyeda* (Discussion), and the *Nabliudatyel* (Spectator), and the *Zvezda* (Star), and the *Orel* (Eagle), and many others—and notwithstanding this, new ones and ever new ones kept appearing; a time when pleiads of writers and thinkers kept appearing, proving that science is popular, and is not popular, and is unpopular, and the like,

¹ *Khlyeb-sol.*

and a pleiad of writer-artists, describing the grove and the sunrise and the thunder-storm and the love of the Russian maiden and the laziness of a single chinovnik and the bad behavior of many other functionaries; at the time when from all sides came up *questions*—as in 1856 they called all those currents of circumstances to which no one could obtain a categorical answer—questions of military schools,² of universities, of the censorship, of verbal law-proceedings relating to finance, banks, police, emancipation, and many others, and all were trying to raise still new questions, all were giving experimental answers to them, were writing, reading, talking, arranging projects, all the time wishing to correct, to annihilate, to change, and all the Russians, as one man, found themselves in indescribable enthusiasm,—a state of things which has been witnessed twice in Russia during the nineteenth century—the first time when in 1812 we thrashed Napoleon I., and the second time when in 1856 Napoleon III. thrashed us—great and never-to-be-forgotten epoch of the regeneration of the Russian people. Like that Frenchman, who said that no one had ever lived at all who had not lived during the great French Revolution, so I also do not hesitate to say that any one who was not living in Russia in the year '56 does not know what life is.

He who writes these lines not only lived at that time, but was actively at work then. Moreover, he himself stayed in one of the trenches before Sevastopol for several weeks. He wrote about the Crimean war a work which brought him great fame, and in this he clearly and circumstantially described how the soldiers fired their guns from the bastions, how wounds were bandaged at the ambulance stations, and how the dead were buried in the graveyard. Having accomplished these exploits, the writer of these lines spent some time at the heart of the empire, in a rocket establishment, where he received his laurels for his exploits. He saw the enthusiasm of both capitals and of the whole people, and he experienced in himself how Russia was able to reward genuine service. The powerful ones of that world all sought his acquaintance, shook hands with him, gave him dinners, kept inviting him out, and, in order to elicit from him the particulars of the war, told him their own sentiments. Consequently the writer of these lines may well appreciate that great unforgettable epoch.

But that does not concern us now.

One evening about this time two conveyances and a sledge were standing at the entrance of the best hotel in Moscow. A young man was just going in to inquire about rooms. An old man was sitting in one of the carriages with two ladies, and was discussing about the Kuznetsky Bridge at the time of the French Invasion.

It was the continuation of a conversation which had been begun on their first arrival at Moscow, and now the old, white-bearded man, with his fur shuba thrown open, was calmly going on with it, still sitting in the carriage, as if he intended to spend the night there. His wife and daughter listened to him, but kept looking at the door, not without impatience. The young man came out again accompanied by the Swiss and the hallboy.

“Well, how is it, Sergyei?” asked the mother, looking out so that the lamplight fell on her weary face.

Either because it was his usual custom, or to prevent the Swiss from mistaking him for a lackey, as he was dressed in a half-shuba, Sergyei replied in French that they could have rooms, and he opened the carriage door. The old man for an instant glanced at his son, and fell back once more into the dark depths of the carriage, as if this affair did not concern him at all.

“There was no theater then.”

² *Voprosui kadetskikh korpusof.*

“Pierre,” said his wife, pulling him by the cloak, but he continued:—

“Madame Chalmé was on the Tverskaya ...”

From the depths of the carriage rang out a young, merry laugh.

“Papa, come,—you are talking nonsense.”

The old man seemed at last to realize that they had reached their destination, and he looked round.

“Come, step out.”

He pulled his hat over his eyes and obediently got out of the carriage. The Swiss offered him his arm, but, convinced that the old man was perfectly able to take care of himself, he immediately proffered his services to the elder lady.

Natalya Nikolayevna, the lady, by her sable cloak, and by the slowness of her motions in getting out, and by the way in which she leaned heavily on his arm, and by the way in which, without hesitation, she immediately took her son’s arm and walked up the steps, impressed the man as a woman of great distinction. He could not distinguish the young woman from the maids that dismounted from the second carriage; she, just as they, carried a bundle and a pipe, and walked behind. Only by her laughing, and the fact that she called the old man “father,” did he know it.

“Not that way, papa, turn to the right,” said she, detaining him by the sleeve of his coat. “To the right.”

And on the stairway, above the stamping of feet, the opening of doors, and the panting of the elderly lady, was heard the same laughter which had rung out in the carriage, and which any one hearing would have surely exclaimed: “What a jolly laugh! I wish I could laugh like that.”

The son, Sergyeï, had been busied with all the material conditions on the way; and, while busied with them, made up for his lack of knowledge by the energy characteristic of his five and twenty years and his bustling activity, which filled him with satisfaction. Twenty times, at least, and apparently without any sufficient cause, dressed in but a single paletot, he had run down to the sledge and up the steps again, shivering with the cold, and taking two or three steps at a time with his long, young legs. Natalya Nikolayevna begged him not to catch cold, but he assured her that there was no danger, and he kept giving orders, slamming doors, and going and coming; and, even after he was convinced that everything now rested on the servants and muzhiks alone, he several times made a tour of all the rooms, entering the drawing-room by one door and going out by another, trying to find something more to do.

“Tell me, papa, will you go to the bath? Do you know where it is?” he asked.

Papa was in a brown study, and seemed to be entirely unable to account for his present environment. He was slow in replying. He heard the words, but they made no impression on him. Suddenly he comprehended.

“Yes, yes, yes; please find out; ... at the Kamennoi Most.”

The head of the family, with quick, nervous step, crossed the room and sat down in an arm-chair.

“Well, now we must decide what is to be done,—how to get settled,” said he. “Help me, children; be quick about it! Be good and take hold and get things arranged, and then to-morrow we will send Serozha with a note to sister Mary Ivanovna, to Nikitin, or we will go ourselves. How is that, Natasha? But now let us get settled.”

“To-morrow is Sunday; I hope that you will go to service first, before you do anything else, Pierre,” said his wife, who was kneeling before a trunk and opening it.

"Oh, it is Sunday, is it? Assuredly; we will go to the Uspyensky Cathedral. That will note the beginning of our return. My God! when I recall the last time I was in the Uspyensky Cathedral ... do you re- member, Natasha? But that is not the matter in hand."

And the head of the family leaped up from the chair in which he had only just sat down.

"But now we must get established."

Yet, without doing anything to help, he walked from one room into the other. "Tell me, will you drink some tea? Or are you tired, and would you rather rest?"

"Yes, yes," replied his wife, taking something from the trunk, "but I thought you were going to the bath."

"Yes ... in my day it used to be on the Kamunnoï Most. Serozha, just go and find out if the baths are still at the Kamunnoï Most.—Here, Serozha and I will take this room. Serozha, do you like this one?"

But Serozha had already gone to find out about the baths. "No," the old man went on to say, "that won't do at all. You won't have a passage directly into the drawing-room. What do you think about it, Natasha?"

"Don't you worry, Pierre, everything will be arranged," replied Natasha from the next room, into which the muzhiks were carrying various articles. But Pierre had come under the influence of the excitement and enthusiasm caused by his return.

"See here, don't disturb Serozha's things; there, they've brought his snow-shoes into the drawing-room." And he himself picked them up, and with extraordinary carefulness, as if the whole future order of their establishment depended on it, placed them against the lintel of the door, and pressed them close to it. But the shoes would not stay put, and as soon as Pierre had left them they fell with a crash across the door. Natalya Nikolayevna frowned and shuddered, but, when she saw the cause of the disturbance, she said:—

"Sonya, pick them up, my love."

"Pick them up, my love," echoed her husband. "And I am going to see the landlord. Don't make any changes in our arrangements. We must talk it all over with him first."

"Better send for him, Pierre. Why do you disturb yourself?"

Pierre acquiesced in this.

"Sonya, do you attend to this, please.... M. Cavalier; tell him that we want to talk things over with him."

"Chevalier, papa," said Sonya, and she started to go.

Natalya Nikolayevna, who was giving orders in a low voice, and moving about quietly from room to room, now with a drawer, now with a pipe, now with a cushion, gradually and imperceptibly reducing the heaps of articles into order, and getting everything into its place, remarked, as she passed Sonya:—

"Don't go yourself; send a servant."

While the man was gone after the landlord, Pierre employed his spare moments, under the pretext of assisting his wife, in rumpling up some of her gowns, and then he tumbled over a half-emptied trunk. Catching by the wall to keep from falling, the Dekabrist looked round with a smile. His wife, it seemed, was too busy to notice; but Sonya looked at him with such mischievous eyes that it seemed as if she were asking his permission to laugh out loud. He readily gave her that permission, and laughed himself with such a hearty laugh that all who were in the room, his wife as well as the maid-servant and the muzhik, joined in.

This laughter still more cheered up the old man; he discovered that the divan in the room taken by his wife and daughter was placed inconveniently for them, notwithstanding the fact that they assured him to the contrary and begged him not to trouble himself. Just as he, with the assistance of the muzhik, was trying to move it to another place, the French landlord entered the room.

“You asked for me?” asked the landlord, curtly; and, as a proof of his indifference, if not his disdain, he deliberately took out his handkerchief, deliberately unfolded it, and deliberately blew his nose.

“Yes, my dear friend,” said Piotr Ivanovitch, approaching him. “You see, we ourselves do not know how long we shall be here, my wife and I.” And Piotr Ivanovitch, who had the weakness of seeing an intimate in every man, began to tell him his circumstances and plans.

Mr. Chevalier did not share this way of men, and was not interested in the particulars communicated by Piotr Ivanovitch; but the excellent French which the Dekabrist spoke,—a French which, as every one knows, has something of the nature of a patent of respectability in Russia,—and the aristocratic ways of the newcomers, caused him to have a higher opinion of them than before.

“In what way can I aid you?” he asked.

This question did not embarrass Piotr Ivanovitch. He expressed his desire to have rooms, tea, a samovar, luncheon, dinner, food for his servants,—in a word, all those things for which hotels are intended to provide; and when Mr. Chevalier, amazed at the innocence of the old man, who, it may be surmised, thought that he had reached the Trukhmensky steppe, or that all these things were to be furnished as a free gift, explained that his desires would be fully gratified, Piotr Ivanovitch reached the height of enthusiasm.

“There, that is excellent! very good! Then we will arrange it so. Now; how then, please ...”

But he began to feel ashamed of talking about himself exclusively, and so he proceeded to ask Mr. Chevalier about his family and affairs.

Sergyëi Petrovitch, returning, showed evident signs of dissatisfaction at his father’s behavior. He noticed the landlord’s irritation, and he reminded his father of the bath. But Piotr Ivanovitch was greatly interested in the question how a French hotel could succeed in Moscow in 1856, and how Madame Chevalier spent her time. At last the landlord bowed, and asked if there was anything they wished to order.

“Will you have some tea, Natasia. Yes? Tea, then, if you please, and we will have another talk, *mon cher monsieur!*—What a splendid man! ”

“But are you going to the bath, papa?”

“Oh, then we don’t need any tea.”

Thus the only result of the conference with the newcomers was snatched away from the landlord.

Accordingly Piotr Ivanovitch was now proud and happy with the arrangements that he had made. The drivers who came to get their vodka-money annoyed him because Serozha had no small change, and Piotr Ivanovitch was about to send for the landlord again, when the happy thought occurred to him that he ought not to be the only gay one that evening, and restored him to his good humor. He took out two three-ruble notes, and, pressing one into the hand of one of the drivers, said, “This is for you,” — Piotr Ivanovitch had the custom of addressing all persons without exception, save the members of his own family, with the formal second person, plural, *vui*—“and this is for you,” said he, thrusting the bank-note into the man’s palm, somewhat as men

do when they pay a doctor for his visit. After all these matters had been attended to, he went to his bath.

Sonya sat down on the divan, and, supporting her head on her hand, laughed heartily.

“Oh, how good it is, mamma; oh, how good it is!”

Then she put up her feet on the divan, stretched herself out, lay back, and thus fell asleep, with the sound, silent sleep of a girl of eighteen after a journey which had lasted a month and a half.

Natalya Nikolayevna, who was still busy in her sleeping-room, apparently heard with her maternal ear that Sonya was not stirring, and went in to see for herself. She took a cushion, and with her large white hand, raising the girl’s rosy head, laid it gently on the cushion. Sonya sighed deeply, settled her shoulders, and let her head rest on the pillow, not saying “*merci*,” but taking it as a matter of course.

“Not there, not there, Gavrilovna, Katya,” said Natalya Nikolayevna, addressing the two maid-servants who were making a bed; and with one hand, as it were in passing, smoothing her daughter’s disordered locks. Without delaying, and without haste, Natalya Nikolayevna put things in order, and by the time her husband and son returned everything was in readiness,—the trunks were removed from the rooms; in Pierre’s sleeping-room everything was just as it had been for years and years at Irkutsk; his khalat, his pipe, his tobacco-box, his *eau sucré*, the Gospels which he read at night, and even a little image fastened in some way above the beds, to the luxurious wall-hangings of the rooms of Chevalier, who did not employ this form of adornment, though that evening they made their appearance in all the rooms of the third suite of the hotel.

Natalya Nikolayevna, having got things arranged to rights, put on her collar and cuffs, which in spite of the long journey she had kept clean, brushed her hair, and sat down opposite the table. Her beautiful black eyes had a far-away look; she gazed, and rested!

It would seem that she rested, not from the labor of getting settled only, not from the journey only, not from her weary years only; she rested, it seemed, from her whole life; and the far distance into which she gazed, where in imagination she saw the living faces of dear ones, that was the rest for which she sighed. Whether it was the exploit of love which she had performed for her husband’s sake, or the love which she had felt for her children when they were small, whether it was her heavy loss, or the peculiarity of her character, any one, looking at this woman, must have certainly comprehended that nothing more from her was to be expected, that she had already, and long ago, given herself to life, and that nothing remained for her. There remained a certain beautiful and melancholy dignity of worth, like old memories, like moonlight. It was impossible to imagine her otherwise than surrounded by reverence and all the amenities of life. That she should ever be hungry and eat ravenously, or that she should ever wear soiled linen, that she should ever stumble or forget to blow her nose, was utterly unthinkable. It was a physical impossibility! Why this was so, I do not know; but her every motion was majesty, grace, sympathy for all those that enjoyed the sight of her.

“*Sie pflegen und weben*

Himmlische Rosen ins irdische Leben.”

She knew that couplet and liked it, but she was not guided by it. Her whole nature was the expression of this thought; her whole life unconsciously devoted to the weaving of invisible roses into the lives of those with whom she came into contact. She accompanied her husband to Siberia purely because she loved him; she did what she might do for him, and she involuntarily did everything for him. She made his bed for him, she packed his things, she prepared his dinner

and tea for him, and above all, she was always where he was, and greater happiness no woman could give her husband.

In the drawing-room the samovar was singing on the round table. Before it sat Natalya Nikolayevna. Sonya was wrinkling up her forehead and smiling under her mother's hand, which tickled her, when with trimmed finger-tips and shining cheeks and brows,—the father's bald spot was especially brilliant,—fresh clean linen and dark hair and beaming faces, the men came into the room.

"It has grown lighter since you have come in," said Natalya Nikolayevna. "Ye powers,³ how white."

For years she had said this every Saturday, and every Saturday Pierre had experienced a sense of modesty and satisfaction. They sat down at the table; there was a smell of tea and tobacco, the voices of the parents and the children were heard, and of the servants who in the same room were carrying away the cups. They recalled the amusing things which had happened on the road, they praised Sonya's mode of dressing her hair, they chatted and laughed. Geographically they had all been transported five thousand versts into an entirely different and alien environment, but morally they were that evening still at home, just the same as their peculiar lonely family life had made them. Of this there was to be no morrow. Piotr Ivanovitch sat down near the samovar and smoked his pipe. He was not gay at all.

"Well, here we are back again," said he, "and I am glad that we shall not see any one this evening; this evening will be the last that we shall spend together as a family;" and he drank these words down with a great swallow of tea.

"Why the last, Pierre?"

"Why? Because the young eagles have been taught to fly; they will have to be building their own nests, and so they will be flying off each in his own direction." ...

"How absurd," exclaimed Sonya, taking his glass from him, and smiling as she smiled at everything. "The old nest is good enough."

"The old nest is a wretched nest; the father-eagle could not build it; he got into a cage; his young ones were hatched in the cage and he was let out only when his wings were no longer able to bear him aloft. No, the young eagles will have to build their nests higher, more successfully, nearer to the sun. They are his young, in order that his example may aid them; but the old eagle, as long as he has his eyes, will look out for them, and if he becomes blind will listen for them ... give me a little rum, more, more ... there, that will do!"

"Let us see who will leave the others first," remarked Sonya, giving her mother a fleeting glance, as if she reproached herself for speaking before her. "Let us see who will leave the others first," she repeated. "I have no fear for myself or for Serozha either."

Serozha was striding up and down the room and thinking how the next day he would order some new clothes, and trying to decide whether he would go himself or send for the tailor, and so he was not interested in the conversation between Sonya and his father.

Sonya laughed.

"What is the matter with you? What is it?" asked their father.

"You are younger than we are, papa, ever so much younger, that is a fact," said she, and again she laughed.

³ *Batyushka.*

“How is that?” exclaimed the old man, and the gloomy frown on his brow melted away in an affectionate and, at the same time, rather scornful smile.

Natalya Nikolayevna leaned out from behind the samovar, which prevented her from seeing her husband.

“Sonya is right. You are only sixteen years old, Pierre. Serozha is younger in his feelings, but you are younger than he in spirit. I can foresee what he will do, but you are still capable of surprising me.”

Whether it was that the old man recognized the justice of the remark, or being flattered by it did not know what answer to make, he went on smoking in silence, drinking his tea, and only letting his eyes flash. But Serozha, with the egotism characteristic of youth, for the first time began to feel interested in what was said about him, joined the conversation, and assured them that he was really old, that his coming to Moscow and the new life which was opening before him did not rejoice him in the least, that he was perfectly calm in his thought and expectations of the future.

“Nevertheless this is the last evening,” repeated Piotr Ivanovitch. “To-morrow it will no longer be the same.”

And once more he filled up his glass with rum. And for some time longer he sat by the tea-table with an expression on his face as if he had much to say, but there was no one to listen. He kept pouring out the rum until his daughter surreptitiously carried away the bottle.

II

When Mr. Chevalier returned to his own room, after he had been up-stairs to arrange for his guests, he communicated his observations concerning the newcomers to the partner of his life, who, dressed in laces and silk, had her place in the Paris fashion behind the desk; in the same room sat several of the *habitués* of the establishment. Serozha, while he was down-stairs, had noticed that room and its occupants. You, probably, have also noticed it if ever you have been in Moscow.

If you, a modest man, not acquainted with Moscow, have arrived too late for a dinner invitation, have been mistaken in your supposition that the hospitable Muscovites will invite you to dinner and they have not invited you, or if you simply desire to dine in the best hotel, you will go into the anteroom. Three or four lackeys will dart forward; one of them will take your shuba from you and congratulate you on the new year, or the carnival, or your return, or will simply remark that it is a long time since you were there, although you may never have been at that establishment in your life. You go in, and the first thing that strikes your eyes is a covered table, spread, as it seems to you at the first instant, with an endless collection of edibles. But this is only an optical delusion, since the larger part of the space on this table is occupied by pheasants in their feathers, indigestible lobsters, baskets with scents, and pomade and vials with cosmetics and comfits. Only if you search carefully you will find vodka and a crust of bread with butter and a piece of fish under a wire fly-screen, perfectly useless in Moscow in the month of December, but there because they are used in that way in Paris.

A little farther on, beyond the table, you will see in front of you the room in which sits the French woman behind the desk, always with a disgusting exterior, and yet with the cleanest of cuffs and in the most charming of modish gowns. Next the Frenchwoman you will see an officer

with unbuttoned coat, sipping vodka and reading a newspaper, and a pair of civil or military legs stretched out in a velvet chair, and you will hear a chatter of French and more or less genuine and hearty laughter.

If you wish to find out what is going on in that room, then I should advise you not to go into it, but simply to keep your eyes open as you go by, pretending that you want to obtain a tartine. Otherwise you would be greeted with a questioning silence and with the eyes of the *habitués* of the room fixed on you, and probably you will put your tail between your legs and take refuge at one of the tables in the big “hall” or in the winter garden. There no one will disturb you. These tables are for the general public, and there in your solitude you may call the *garçon* and order truffles, as much as you please. This room with the French woman exists for the select gilded youth of Moscow, and to become one of the chosen is not so easy as it may seem to you.

Mr. Chevalier, returning to this room, told his spouse that the man from Siberia was a bore, but on the other hand his son and daughter were young people such as could be brought up only in Siberia.

“You ought to look at the daughter, what a rose she is!”

“Oh, he loves fresh young women—this old man does!” exclaimed one of the guests, who was smoking a cigar.

The conversation, of course, was carried on in French, but I translate it into Russian, as I shall do throughout this story.

“Oh, I am very fond, too, of them,” replied Mr. Chevalier. “Women are my passion. Don’t you believe me?”

“Hear that, Madame Chevalier,” cried a stout young Cossack officer, who was deeply in the debt of the establishment and liked to chat with the landlady.

“Why, you see he shares my taste,” said Chevalier, tapping the stout officer on the epaulet.

“And so the little Sibiryatchka is pretty, is she?”

Chevalier put his fingers together and kissed them.

Whereupon ensued among the occupants a very gay and confidential conversation. It concerned the stout officer; he smiled as he listened to what was said about him.

“Can he have such mutable tastes,” shouted one man through the laughter. “Mademoiselle Clarisse, you know Strugof likes above all things, next to women, hens’ legs.”

Although Mademoiselle Clarisse, from behind her desk, did not see the wit of this remark, she broke out into laughter as silvery as her bad teeth and declining years allowed.

“Has the Siberian girl awakened such thoughts in him?” and again they all laughed harder than ever. Even Mr. Chevalier almost died with laughing, adding, “*Ce vieux coquin*,” and patting the Cossack officer on the head and shoulders.

“But who are they—these Sibiryaki—manufacturers or merchants?” asked one of the gentlemen when the laughter had somewhat subsided.

“Nikit! Go and ask the gentleman who has just come for his passport,” said Mr. Chevalier. “We Alexander, Autocrat.” ...

Chevalier was just beginning to read the passport which was brought him, when the Cossack officer snatched the paper out of his hands, but his face suddenly expressed amazement.

“Well, now, guess who it is,” said he; “all of you know him by reputation.”

“How can we guess, tell us.” ...

“Well, Abd-el Kader, ha, ha, ha.... Well, Cagliostro, ha, ha, ha.... Well, then, Peter III., ha, ha, ha.” ...

“Well, then, read for yourselves.” ...

The Cossack officer unfolded the paper and read: the former Prince Piotr Ivanovitch and one of those Russian names which every one knows and pronounces with a certain respect and pleasure when speaking of any one bearing that name, as of a personal friend or intimate.

We will call it Labazof.

The Cossack officer vaguely remembered that this Piotr Labazof was a person of some consequence in '25, and that he was sent to the mines of Siberia as a convict, but why he was famous he did not remember very well.

The others knew nothing about it, and they replied:—

“Oh, yes, famous,” just exactly as they would have likewise said “Famous” of Shakespeare who wrote the “Æneid”!

The most that they knew about him was what the stout officer said,—that he was the brother of Prince Ivan, uncle of the Chikins, the Countess Prunk, yes, “famous.” ...

“Why, he must be very rich if he is a brother of Prince Ivan,” remarked one of the young men. “If they have restored his estates to him. They have restored their property to some.”

“How many of these exiles are coming back nowadays,” remarked another person present. “Truly I don't believe there were so many sent as have already returned. Yes, Zhikinsky, tell us that story about the eighteenth of the month,” said he, addressing an officer of light infantry, reputed as a clever story-teller.

“Yes, tell us it.”

“In the first place, it is genuine truth and happened here, at Chevalier's, in the large ‘hall.’ Three Dekabrists came here to dinner. They took seats at one table, they ate, they drank, they talked. Now opposite them was sitting a man of respectable appearance, of about the same age, and he kept listening to what they had to say about Siberia:—‘And do you know Nerchinsk?’—‘Why, yes, I lived there.’—‘And do you know Tatyana Ivanovna?’—‘Why, of course I do.’—‘Permit me to ask if you were also exiled?’—‘Yes, I had to suffer that misfortune.’—‘And you?’—‘We were all sent on the 14th of December. Strange that we don't know you, if you also were among those sent on the 14th. Will you tell us your name?’—‘Feodorof.’—‘Were you also on the 14th?’—‘No, on the 18th.’—‘How on the 18th?’—‘18th of September; for a gold watch; I was falsely charged with stealing it, and though I was innocent, I had to go.’”

All burst out laughing except the narrator, who with a preternaturally solemn face looked at his hearers each and all, and swore that it was a true story.

Shortly after this tale one of the gilded youths got up and went to his club. After passing through the room furnished with tables, where old men were playing cards; after turning into the “infernalnaya” where already the famous “Puchin” was beginning his game against the “assembled crowd”; after lingering awhile near one of the billiard-tables at which a little old man of distinction was making chance shots; and after glancing into the library where some general was reading sedately over his glasses, holding his newspaper far from his eyes, and where a literary young man, striving not to make a noise, was turning over the files of papers,—the gilded youth sat down on a divan in the billiard-room with another man, who like himself belonged to the same gilded youth, and was playing backgammon.

It was the luncheon day, and there were present many gentlemen who were frequenters of the club. Among the number was Ivan Pavlovitch Pakhtin. He was a man of forty, of medium height, pale complexion, stout, with wide shoulders and hips, with a bald head, a shiny, jolly, smooth-shaven face. Though he did not play backgammon, he joined Prince D—, with whom

he was on intimate terms, and he did not refuse the glass of champagne which was offered to him. He arranged himself so comfortably after his dinner, slightly smoothing the seat of his trousers, that any one would think he had been sitting there a century, smoking his cigar, sipping his champagne, and happily conscious of the nearness of princes and counts and the sons of ministers. The tidings of the return of the Labazofs disturbed his equanimity. "Where are you going, Pakhtin?" asked the son of a minister, who in the interval of his play, noticed that Pakhtin got up, pulled down his waistcoat, and drank his champagne in great swallows.

"Seviernikof invited me," said Pakhtin, feeling a certain unsteadiness in his legs, "say, are you going?"

Anastasya, Anastasya, otvoryai-ka vorota.

This was a gipsy song that was in great vogue at the time.

"Perhaps so. And you?"

"How should I go, an old married man?"

"There now."

Pakhtin, smiling, went to find Seviernikof in the "glass room." He liked to have his last word take the form of a jest. And so it was now.

"Tell me, how is the countess's health?" he asked, as he joined Seviernikof, who did not know him at all, but, as Pakhtin conjectured, would consider it of the greatest importance to know of the Labazofs' return. Seviernikof had been himself somewhat implicated in the affair of December 14, and was a friend of the Dekabrists.

The countess's health was much better, and Pakhtin was very glad of it.

"Did you know that Labazof got back to-day, and is staying at Chevalier's?"

"What is that you say? Why, we are old friends. How glad I am. He has grown old, poor fellow. His wife wrote my wife ..."

But Seviernikof did not cite what she wrote. His partner, who was playing without trumps, made some mistake. While talking with Ivan Pavlovitch, he kept his eye on them, but now suddenly he threw his whole body on the table, and, pounding on it with his hands, proved that he ought to have played a seven.

Ivan Pavlovitch got up and went to another table, joined the conversation there, and communicated to another important man his news, again got up and did the same thing at a third table. All these men of distinction were very glad to hear of Labazof's return, so that when Ivan Pavlovitch came back to the billiard-room again he no longer doubted, as he had at first, whether it was the proper thing to be glad of Labazof's return, and no longer employed any periphrasis about the ball, or the article in the *Viestnik*, or any one's health, or the weather, but broke his news at once with an enthusiastic account of the happy return of the famous Dekabrist. The little old man, who was still making vain attempts to hit the white ball with his cue, was, in Pakhtin's opinion, most likely to be rejoiced by the news. He went to him.

"You play remarkably well, your highness," said Pakhtin, just as the little old man struck his cue full in the marker's red waistcoat, signifying by this that he wished it chalked.

The title of address⁴ was not spoken at all as you would suppose, with any servility,—oh, no, that would have been impossible in 1856. Ivan Pavlovitch called this old man simply by his given name and patronymic, and the title was given partly as a joke on those who did use it, and partly

⁴ *Vashe vuisokoprevaskhadityelstvo.*

to let it be known that “we know with whom we are speaking, and yet we like to have a bit of sport and that is a fact; “ at any rate, it was very subtle.

“I have just heard that Piotr Labazof has got back. He has arrived to-day from Siberia with his whole family.”

Pakhtin uttered these words at the instant that the little old man was aiming at his ball again—this was his misfortune.

“If he has come back such a hare-brained fellow as he was when he was sent off, there is nothing to be rejoiced over,” said the little old man, gruffly, provoked at his incomprehensible lack of success.

This reply disconcerted Ivan Pavlovitch; once more he did not know whether it was the proper thing to be glad of Labazof’s return, and in order definitely to settle his doubts he directed his steps to the room where the men of intellect collected to talk, the men who knew the significance and object of everything, who knew everything, in one word. Ivan Pavlovitch had the same pleasant relations with the *habitués* of the “intellectual room” as he had with the gilded youth and the dignitaries. To tell the truth, he was out of his place in the “intellectual room,” but no one was surprised when he entered and sat down on a divan. The talk was turning on the question in what year and on what subject a quarrel had occurred between two Russian journals. Taking advantage of a moment’s silence, Ivan Pavlovitch communicated his tidings, not at all as a matter to rejoice over, nor as a matter of little account, but as if it were connected with the conversation. But immediately, by the way the “intellectuals”—I employ this word to signify the *habitués* of the “intellectual room”—received the tidings and began to discuss it, immediately Ivan Pavlovitch understood that here at least this tidings was investigated, and that here only it would take such a form as he could safely carry it further, and “*savoir à quoi s’en tenir*.”

“Labazof was the only one left,” said one of the “intellectuals.” “Now all of the Dekabrists who are alive have returned to Russia.”

“He was one of the band of famous ...” said Pakhtin, in a still experimental tone of voice, ready to make this quotation either comic or serious.

“Undoubtedly Labazof was one of the most important men of that time,” began one of the “intellectuals.” “In 1819 he was ensign of the Semyonovsky regiment and was sent abroad with despatches for Duke Z—. Then he came back, and in 1824 was admitted to the first Masonic lodge. All the Masons of that time met at D—’s and at his house. You see, he was very rich; Prince Z—, Feodore D—, Ivan P—, those were his most intimate friends. And so his uncle, Prince Vissarion, in order to remove the young man from their society, brought him to Moscow.”

“Excuse me, Nikolai Stepanovitch,” interrupted another of the “intellectuals.” “It seems to me that that was in 1823, because Vissarion Labazof was appointed commander of the third Corps in 1824 and was in Warsaw. He took him on his own staff as aide, and after his dismissal brought him here. However, excuse me, I interrupted you.” ...

“Oh, no, you finish the story.”

“No, I beg of you.”

“No, you finish; you ought to know about it better than I do, and besides, your memory and knowledge have been satisfactorily shown here.”

“Well, in Moscow he resigned, contrary to his uncle’s wishes,” proceeded the one whose “memory and knowledge had been satisfactorily shown.” “And here around him formed another society of which he was the head and heart, if one may so express oneself. He was rich, had a good intellect, was cultivated. They say he was remarkably lovable. My aunt used to say that she never

knew a man more charming. And here, just before the conspiracy, he married one of the Krinskys." ...

"The daughter of Nikolai Krinsky, the one who before Borodino ... oh, yes, the famous one," interrupted some one.

"Oh, yes. Her enormous property is his now, but his own estate, which he inherited, went to his younger brother, Prince Ivan, who is now Ober-hoff-kafermeister—that is what he called it—and was minister. Best of all was his behavior toward his brother," continued the narrator. "When he was arrested the only thing that he had time to destroy was his brother's letters and papers."

"Was his brother implicated?"

The narrator did not reply "yes," but compressed his lips and closed his eyes significantly.

"Then to all questions Piotr Labazof inflexibly denied everything that would reflect on his brother, and for this reason he was punished more severely than the others. But what is best of all is that Prince Ivan got possession of his whole property, and never sent a grosh to him."

"They say that Piotr Labazof himself renounced it," remarked one of the listeners.

"Yes, but he renounced it simply because Prince Ivan, just before the coronation, wrote him that if he did not take it they would confiscate the property, and that he had children and obligations, and that now he was not in a condition to restore anything. Piotr replied in two lines: 'Neither I nor my heirs have or wish to have any claim to the estate assigned to you by law.' And nothing further. Why should he? And Prince Ivan swallowed it down, and with rapture locked this document and various bonds into his strong-box and showed it to no one." ...

One of the peculiarities of the "intellectual" room consisted in the fact that its *habitués* knew, when they wanted to know, everything that was done in the world, however much of a secret it was.

"Nevertheless it is a question," said a new speaker, "whether it would be fair to take from Prince Ivan's children the property which they have had ever since they were young, and which they supposed they had a right to."

The conversation thus took an abstract turn which did not interest Pakhtin.

He felt the necessity of finding fresh persons to communicate his tidings to, and he got up and made his way leisurely through the rooms, stopping here and there to talk. One of his fellow-members delayed him to tell him the news of the Labazofs' return.

"Who doesn't know it?" replied Ivan Pavlovitch, smiling calmly as he started for the front door. The news had gone entirely round the circle and was coming back to him again. There was nothing left for him to do at the club, so he went to a reception. It was not a formal reception, but a "salon," where every evening callers were received. There were present eight ladies and one old colonel, and all of them were awfully bored. Pakhtin's assurance of bearing and his smiling face had the effect of immediately cheering up the ladies and girls. The tidings was all the more apropos from the fact that there was present the old Countess Fuchs with her daughter. When Pakhtin repeated almost word for word all he had heard in the "intellectual" room, Madame Fuchs, shaking her head and amazed to think how old she was, began to recall how she had once ridden horseback with Natasha Krinsky before she was married to Labazof.

"Her marriage was a very romantic story, and it all took place under my eyes. Natasha was almost engaged to Miatlin, who was afterward killed in a duel with Debro. Just at that time Prince Piotr came to Moscow, fell in love with her, and made her an offer. Only her father, who was very favorably inclined to Miatlin and was especially afraid of Labazof as a Mason—her father refused his consent. But the young man continued to meet her at balls, everywhere, and

he made friends with Miatlin, and asked him to withdraw. Miatlin consented. Labazof persuaded her to elope with him. She had already agreed to do so, but repented at the last moment"—the conversation was carried on in French—"she went to her father and told him that all was ready for their elopement, and that she could leave him, but that she hoped for his generosity. And in fact her father forgave her, all took her part, and he gave his consent. And so the wedding took place, and it was a gay wedding! Who of us dreamed that within a year she would follow him to Siberia? She was an only daughter, the richest and handsomest heiress of that time. The Emperor Alexander always paid her attention at balls, and how many times he danced with her. The Countess G. gave a *bal costumé*, if I remember rightly; and she went as a Neapolitan girl, wonderfully beautiful. Whenever the Emperor came to Moscow he would ask: *Que fait la belle Napolitaine?* And suddenly this woman, in a delicate condition,—her baby was born on the way,—without a moment's hesitation, without making any preparations, without packing her trunks, just as she was, when they arrested him, followed him for five thousand versts."

"Oh, what a wonderful woman," exclaimed the hostess.

"And both he and she were such uncommon people," said still another woman. "I have been told, but I don't know whether it is true or not, that everywhere in Siberia where they work in the mines, or whatever it is called, the convicts who were with them became better from associating with them."

"Yes; but she never worked in the mines," corrected Pakhtin.

That is what the year '56 was! Three years before no one had a thought for the Labazofs, and if any one remembered them, it was with that inexplicable sense of terror with which one speaks of the recently dead. Now how vividly all their former relations were remembered, all their admirable qualities were brought up, and every lady already began to form plans for securing a monopoly of the Labazofs, and by means of them to attract other guests.

"Their son and daughter have come with them," said Pakhtin.

"If only they are as handsome as their mother was!" said the Countess Fuchs ... however, their father also was very, very handsome."

"How could they educate their children there?" queried the hostess.

"They say they are admirably educated. They say the young man is so handsome, so likeable! and educated as if he had been brought up in Paris."

"I predict a great success for the young lady," said a very handsome girl. "All these Siberian ladies have about them something pleasantly trivial, and every one likes it."

"Yes, that is so," said another girl.

"So we have still another wealthy match," said a third girl.

The old colonel, who was of German extraction, and three years before had come to Moscow to make a rich marriage, decided that it was for his interest, as soon as possible, before the young men found out about this, to get an introduction to her, and offer himself. The girls and ladies had almost precisely the same thought regarding the young man from Siberia.

"This must be and is my fate," thought one girl who for eight years had been vainly launched on society. "It must have been for the best that that stupid cavalier guardsman did not offer himself to me. I should surely have been unhappy."

"Well, they will all grow yellow with jealousy when this young man like the rest falls in love with me," thought a young and beautiful woman.

Whatever is said of the provincialism of small towns, there is nothing worse than the provincialism of high society. There one finds no new faces, but society is ready to take up with any

new persons as soon as once they appear; here it is rarely that, as now with the Labazofs, people are acknowledged as belonging to their circle and received, and the sensation produced by these new personages was even stronger than would have been the case in a district city.

III

“Moscow, oh, Mother Moscow, white-walled city!”⁵ exclaimed Piotr Ivanovitch, rubbing his eyes the next morning and listening to the sound of bells that floated above the Gazetnui Pereulok.

Nothing so vividly recalls the past as sounds; and these peals of the Moscow bells, together with the sight of the white wall seen from the window and the rattle of wheels, so vividly recalled to him not only that Moscow which he had known thirty-five years before, but also that Moscow with its Kreml, its roofs, its Ivans, and the rest which he had borne in his heart, that he felt a childish delight in the fact that he was a Russian and that he was in Moscow.

There appeared a Bukhara khalat, flung open over a broad chest in a chintz shirt, a pipe with an amber mouthpiece, a lackey with gentle manners, tea, the scent of tobacco; a loud impetuous voice of a man was heard in Chevalier’s rooms; morning kisses were exchanged, and the voices of daughter and son intermingled, and the Dekabrist was just as much at home as in Irkutsk or as he would have been in New York or Paris.

As I should not wish to present to my readers my Dekabrist hero as above all weaknesses, it must be confessed in the interests of truth that Piotr Ivanovitch shaved himself with the greatest care, combed his hair, and looked into the mirror. He was dissatisfied with his coat, which had been none too well mended in Siberia, and twice he unbuttoned and buttoned up his waistcoat.

Natalya Nikolayevna came into the drawing-room with her black moire gown rustling, with such sleeves and laces on her cap, that, although it was entirely out of the prevalent fashion, still it was so devised that it not only was not *ridicule* but on the contrary *distingué*. But in case of ladies this is a peculiar sixth sense, and sagacity is not to be compared with it.

Sonya was likewise so constituted that, although everything she wore was at least two years behind the style, still one could find no fault with it. The mother wore what was dark and simple; the daughter what was light and gay.

Serozha had only just woke up, and the ladies went without him to mass. The father and the mother sat behind, the daughter in front. Vasili sat on the box, and an izvoshchik’s cab carried them to the Kreml. When they entered, the ladies adjusted their gowns, and Piotr Ivanovitch took Natalya Nikolayevna on his arm, and, hanging his head, entered the doors of the cathedral. Few—either merchants, or officers, or the common people—could have known who these strangers were. Who was that deeply sunburnt and decrepit old man with the straight and circling wrinkles, indicative of a laborious life—wrinkles of a kind never met with at the English club—with his hair and beard white as snow, with his proud yet kindly glance and his energetic movements? Who was that tall lady with her air of distinction and her large beautiful eyes, so weary and so dim? Who was that strong, fresh, well-proportioned girl, dressed so unfashionably, and yet so self-assured? Of the merchant class or not of the merchant class? Germans or not Germans? People of rank? Apparently not, and yet evidently people of distinction.

⁵ *Moskva-to, Moskva-to matushka byelokamennaya.*

Thus thought those that saw them in the church, and consequently they all even more willingly made haste to step aside and to let them pass than if they were men with heavy epaulets.

Piotr Ivanovitch held himself as majestically as at his entrance, and said his prayers with dignity and solemnity, not forgetting himself.

Natalya Nikolayevna knelt lightly, taking out her handkerchief, and she wept many tears during the time of the Kheruvimskaya song. Sonya evidently seemed to be making an effort to control herself so as to say her prayers. The service did not appeal to her, but she did not look round; she crossed herself assiduously.

Serozha stayed at home partly because he slept over, partly because he did not like to stand during the service; it made his feet swell, and he never could understand why it was that to travel on snow-shoes forty versts did not trouble him in the least, while to stand during the twelve Gospels caused him the greatest physical pain; but his chief excuse was that he needed new clothes.

He dressed and went to the Kuznetsky Most. He had plenty of money. His father had made it a rule ever since his son was twenty-one years old, to give him as much money as he wanted. It was in his power to leave his father and mother absolutely penniless.

What a pity about the two hundred and fifty silver rubles which he wasted in Kuntz's ready-made clothing establishment! Any one of the gentlemen who passed Serozha on the street would have gladly taught him, and would have considered it a pleasure to go with him to show him what to get; but, as usually happens, he was alone in the throng, and he went along the Kuznetsky Most in his cap, opened the door, and emerged from there in a cinnamon-colored semi-dress-coat, cut narrow,—they were worn wide,—in black trousers, cut wide,—they were worn narrow,—and in a flowered satin waistcoat which not one of the gentlemen who frequented the special room at Chevalier's would have permitted himself to bestow on his lackey; and these things Serozha bought largely because Kuntz was in perplexity about the young man's slender figure, and, as he was in the habit of saying to all his customers, he declared that he had never seen the like before.

Serozha knew that he had a good figure, but the praise of a stranger like Kuntz greatly flattered him. He went out minus his two hundred and fifty rubles; and yet he was very badly dressed, so badly in fact that his new clothes within two days went into the possession of Vasili, and this episode always remained an unpleasant recollection for Serozha. When he reached the hotel again he went down-stairs and took his seat in the large room, also looking into the Chevalier's private room, and he called for such strange dishes for his breakfast that the garçon when he went into the kitchen had to laugh. But nevertheless he asked for a newspaper and pretended to read it. When the garçon, presuming on the youth's inexperience, began to ask him questions, Serozha bade him go to his place and his face grew red. But he spoke so haughtily that the man obeyed him. His mother, his father, and sister when they returned home found likewise that his new clothes were admirable.

Do you remember that delightful feeling of childhood when on your name-day you were dressed up in your best, and were taken to mass, and then, returning home with the festival in your clothes, in your face, and in your soul, you found guests and toys waiting for you? You knew that on that day you had no lessons, that your elders also rejoiced with you, that for the entire house that day was exceptional and joyous; you knew that you alone were the sole cause of this enthusiasm, and that whatever you did, it would be forgiven you; and it seemed strange that people in the street were not also rejoicing with you, just as your friends were, and everything

sounded louder and the lights were brighter; in a word, it was the festival feeling. Such a feeling did Piotr Ivanovitch experience on returning from church.

Pakhtin's evening labors had not been in vain; instead of toys Piotr Ivanovitch, when he reached his rooms, found a number of visiting cards of influential Muscovites who in '56 counted it their bounden duty to show the distinguished exile all possible attention, although three years before they would not have cared to see him. In the eyes of Chevalier, the Swiss, and the people of the hotel, the arrival of so many carriages with inquiries for Piotr Ivanovitch in one single morning multiplied their respect and obsequiousness tenfold. All this stood for the name-day gifts for Piotr Ivanovitch. However experienced in life a man may be, wise as he may be, the manifestation of respect from men who are themselves respected by the great majority of men is always pleasant. Piotr Ivanovitch felt gay at heart when Chevalier, bowing, proposed to him to change his rooms for better ones, and begged him to make known whatever he would like done for his comfort, and assured him that he counted it an honor to have him a guest at his hotel; and, so it was when, glancing over the cards and again throwing them into the card-receiver, he mentioned the names of Count S—, Prince D—, and the like. Natalya Nikolayevna declared that she would receive no one, but would go immediately to Marya Ivanovna's, and to this Piotr Ivanovitch agreed, although he would have been glad to talk with many of the visitors.

Only one of the visitors succeeded in forcing the countersign. This was Pakhtin. If this man had been asked why he had come from Pretchistenka to the Gazetnui Pereulok, he would not have been able to give any satisfactory excuse, except that he liked anything which was new and interesting, and so he had come to look at Piotr Ivanovitch as at a curiosity. It might be thought that he would have felt a little hesitation at intruding with such an excuse on a perfect stranger to him. But it was quite the contrary. Piotr Ivanovitch and his son and Sofya Petrovna were dumfounded. Natalya Nikolayevna was too much of a *grande dame* to be confused at any such thing. A weary look from her beautiful black eyes rested calmly on Pakhtin. Pakhtin was fresh, self-satisfied, and very genial, as usual. He and Marya Ivanovna were friends.

"Ah!" said Natalya Nikolayevna.

"Well, not exactly friends—our years, you know, but she has always been very kind to me."

Pakhtin had been long a worshiper of Piotr Ivanovitch; he knew his companions. He hoped he might be useful to the newcomers. He had intended to have come the evening before; but had not been able to manage it, and he begged them to excuse him, and so he sat down and talked for a long time.

"Yes, I will tell you that I have found many changes in Russia since I went away," said Piotr Ivanovitch, in reply to a question. As soon as Piotr Ivanovitch began to speak it was worth while to notice with what respectful attention Pakhtin listened to every word which fell from the old man's lips, and how, at every phrase or word, Pakhtin, by a nod, a smile, or a motion of the eyes, let it be understood that he was listening, and taking in all the force of words and phrases so memorable. The weary eyes approved this manoeuver. Sergyei Petrovitch, it seemed, was afraid that his father's talk would not be worth the hearer's attention. Sofya Petrovna, on the contrary, smiled with that slight smile of satisfaction characteristic of people who detect the ridiculous side of a man. It seemed to her that nothing was to be expected from this man, that he was a "softy"⁶ as she and her brother called a certain kind of man.

⁶ *Shiushka*.

Piotr Ivanovitch explained that during his journey he had remarked many great changes which pleased him.

“Beyond doubt the people—the peasantry—are greatly improved; there has come to be greater recognition in them of their dignity,” said he, as if repeating an old phrase.

“And I must say, that the people interest me, and always have interested me, more than anything else. I firmly believe that the strength of Russia is not in us, but in the common people.”

Piotr Ivanovitch, with a warmth characteristic of him, communicated his more or less original ideas concerning a number of important subjects. We shall have to hear them more at length. Pakhtin was enraptured, and expressed his perfect agreement with everything:—

“You will surely have to make the acquaintance of the Aksatofs; you will allow me to present them to you, prince? You know his new journal is now to be permitted; the first number will be out to-morrow. I have read his wonderful article on the orderliness of the theory of science in the abstract. Thoroughly interesting. There is still another article of his—the history of Serbia in the eleventh century, of that famous voyevode Karbovanietz; also very interesting. On the whole it is a great stride in advance.”

“Oh, yes,” said Piotr Ivanovitch. But all this news evidently did not interest him; he did not even know the names and services of these men whom Pakhtin spoke about as if they were universally known. Natalya Nikolayevna, however, not scorning the necessity of knowing all these men and conditions, remarked in her husband’s exculpation that Pierre received the journals very late, but he read them very assiduously.

“Papa, are we going to auntie’s?” asked Sonya, coming in.

“Yes, but we must have luncheon first. Wouldn’t you like something?”

Pakhtin, of course, refused; but Piotr Ivanovitch, with hospitality peculiarly Russian, and characteristic of himself, insisted on Pakhtin’s having something to eat and drink. He himself drank a small glass of vodka and a cup of Bordeaux. Pakhtin noticed that, when he drank the wine, Natalya Nikolayevna unexpectedly turned away from the glass, and the son looked at his father’s hand. After the wine, Piotr Ivanovitch replied to Pakhtin’s questions as to what he thought about the new literature, the new tendencies, about the war, about the peace. Pakhtin knew how to unite the most divergent topics into one disconnected but fluent conversation.

To these questions Piotr Ivanovitch immediately launched into a general *profession de foi*, and either the wine, or the topic of conversation, caused him to grow so excited that tears stood in his eyes, and Pakhtin grew enthusiastic and even wept; he did not hesitate to express his conviction that Piotr Ivanovitch was far ahead of the most advanced liberals, and that he ought to be the leader of all parties. Piotr Ivanovitch’s eyes flashed; he had faith in all Pakhtin said to him, and he would have continued the conversation much longer if Sofya Petrovna had not conspired with Natalya Nikolayevna to put on her mantilla, and had not herself come in to get Piotr Ivanovitch.

He was going to drink up the rest of his wine, but Sofya Petrovna took it herself.

“What do you mean?”

“I haven’t had any yet, papa. Excuse me.”

He smiled.

“Well, we must go to Marya Ivanovna’s. You pardon us, Mr. Pakhtin.”

And Piotr Ivanovitch went out, carrying his head high. In the vestibule he fell in with a general who had come to pay his respects to his old friend. They had not met for thirty-five years. The general had no teeth and was bald.

"Why, how fresh you are," said he, "Siberia must be better than Petersburg. Are these your family? Pray present me! What a fine young man your son is. Then you will dine with us to-morrow?"

"Yes, yes, certainly."

On the doorstep they met the famous Chikhayef, also an old acquaintance.

"How did you know that I had come?"

"It would be a shame for Moscow, if it was not known; it was a shame that you were not met at the barriers. If you are going out to dine, it must be at your sister's, Marya Ivanovna's. Well, that is excellent; I shall be there also."

Piotr Ivanovitch always had the look of a proud man for those who could not penetrate that exterior and read his expression of unspeakable goodness and susceptibility; but now Natalya Nikolayevna admired him for his unusual majesty, and Sofya Petrovna's eyes smiled as she looked at him.

They reached Marya Ivanovna's.

Marya Ivanova was Piotr Ivanovitch's godmother and was ten years his senior. She was an old maid.

Her story and how she failed to secure a husband, and how she lived in her youth, I shall tell in some other place.

She had lived uninterruptedly in Moscow. She had neither great intellect nor great wealth, and she did not value her relatives, on the contrary; but there was not a man who would not value her friendship. She was so convinced that all ought to value her, that all did value her. There were young liberals from the university who did not acknowledge her power, but these gentlemen conspired only in her absence. All it required was for her to walk with her imperial gait into the drawing-room, to speak in her calm manner, to smile her caressing smile, and they were subjected. Her circle included every one. She looked on Moscow and treated it as her own household. Her special friends consisted of young people and intellectual men; women she did not like. She had also those sycophants, male and female, whom, for some reason or other, our literature has included in the general scorn it lavishes on the Hungarian cloak and on generals. But Marya Ivanovna considered that it was better for the ruined gambler Skopin and the "grass widow" Byesheva to live with her than in poverty, and so she supported them.

There were two powerful feelings in Marya Ivanovna's present existence; they were her two brothers. Piotr Ivanovitch was her idol. Prince Ivan was her detestation. She did not know that Piotr Ivanovitch had come, she had been at mass, and was at the present moment drinking her coffee. The vicar of Moscow, Byesheva, and Skopin were sitting at the table. Marya Ivanovna was telling them of the young Count V—, the son of Count P. Z—, who had just returned from Sevastopol and with whom she was in love—for she was always having passions. He was to dine with her that day.

The vicar got up and took his leave. Marya Ivanovna did not attempt to detain him. She was a latitudinarian in this respect; she was pious, but she did not like monks. She made sport of girls who ran after them, and she said boldly that, in her opinion, monks were the same kind of people as we poor sinners, and that salvation was to be obtained in the world better than in monasteries.

"Give out word that I am not receiving," said she. "I am going to write to Pierre; I don't understand why he has not come yet. Probably Natalya Nikolayevna is ill."

Marya Ivanovna was convinced that Natalya Nikolayevna did not like her, and was her enemy. She could never forgive her because it was Natalya Nikolayevna, and not she, his sister, who gave

him her property and went with him to Siberia, and because her brother had definitely refused to accept this sacrifice when she had got ready to go with him. After thirty-five years she was beginning to believe her brother in his assertion that Natalya Nikolayevna was the best woman in the world, and his guardian angel; but she was jealous of her, and she kept imagining that she was a wicked woman.

She got up, went through the "hall," and was starting for her library when the door opened, and the gray-haired Byesheva's wrinkled face, expressing a joyous terror, appeared in the doorway.

"Marya Ivanovna, prepare your mind," said she.

"A letter?"

"No, something more important."

But, before she had a chance to finish her sentence, a man's loud voice was heard in the vestibule.

"Where is she? You go on, Natasha."

"It is he!" exclaimed Marya Ivanovna, and with long, firm steps she went to her brother. She met him as if she had parted with him only the day before.

"When did you arrive? Where are you staying? How did you come—by carriage?" Such questions as this did Marya Ivanovna put, as she went with him into the drawing-room; nor did she wait or listen to his replies, but kept looking, with wide-open eyes, now at one, now at another of them. Byesheva was amazed at such calmness, or indifference rather, and did not approve of it. They all smiled; the conversation languished. Marya Ivanovna relapsed into silence, and kept looking at her brother gravely.

"How are you?" asked Piotr Ivanovitch, taking her hand, and smiling.

Piotr Ivanovitch addressed his sister with the plural pronoun "vui," and she used the singular "tui." Marya Ivanovna looked once more at the gray beard and the bald head, at his teeth, at the wrinkles around his eyes, at his sunburned face, and she knew it all.

"Here is my Sonya."

But she did not look at her.

"What a foo ..."

Her voice broke; she seized her brother's bald head with both her big white hands. "What a fool you were," she was going to say, "that you did not give me warning," but her bosom and shoulders shook, her face grew convulsed, and she began to sob, while still pressing the bald head to her bosom, and repeating:—

"What a fool-l you were not to give me notice."

Piotr Ivanovitch no longer seemed to himself such a great man, or so important, as he had seemed to be when he stood on the doorsteps of the Hotel Chevalier. He was seated in an arm-chair, but his head was in his sister's arms, and his nose was squeezed against her corset, and something tickled his nose, and his hair was tumbled, and tears were in his eyes. But still he liked it.

When this ebullition of happy tears had passed, Marya Ivanovna realized and believed in the reality of what had happened, and began to study them all. But several times again, during the course of that day, when it came over her what he had once been, and what she had once been, and what they were now, and when her imagination vividly pictured their past unhappiness, and their former happiness and their former love, she would again spring up, and say:—

"What a fool you were, Petrushka; what a fool not to give me warning. Why did you not come directly to me? I would have taken you in," said Marya Ivanovna. "At any rate, you will dine with

me. It won't be a bore to you, Sergyei, for a young hero from Sevastopol is coming. But don't you know the son of Nikolai Mikhaïlovitch? He is a writer who has already written something. I have not read it yet, but it is praised, and he is a fine young fellow. I will have him invited. Chikhayef also wanted to come. Well, he is a chatterbox. I don't like him. He's been to see you already. And have you seen Nikita? Now all that is rubbish. What do you intend to do? And how is your health, Natalie? Where did you get this handsome lad and lassie?"

But the conversation kept flagging.

Before dinner Natalya Nikolayevna and the children went to see the old aunt. The brother and sister were left alone together, and he began to unfold his plans.

"Sonya is grown up; we shall have to bring her out; of course we shall live in Moscow," said Marya Ivanovna.

Not for the world."

"Serozha will have to go into the service."

"Not for the world."

"You are as crazy as ever."

Nevertheless, she had a great fondness for the "crazy" one.

"We shall have to settle down here, then go into the country and show the children everything."

"My rule is not to interfere in family affairs," said Marya Ivanovna, who was now growing calm after her excitement, "and I never give advice. But that a young man should go into the service I have always thought, and think so still, but now more than ever. You have no idea, Petrusha, what young men are nowadays. I know them all; here is Prince Dmitri's son,—he has entirely failed. Yes, and what is more, they are to blame for it. You see, I am not afraid of any one; I am an old woman, and it is not well."

And she began to talk about the government. She was dissatisfied with the excessive freedom granted to every one.

"They have done one good thing,—they let you come home. That is good."

Petrusha began to speak in the government's defense, but Marya Ivanovna was of a different nature from Pakhtin's. She would not argue with him; she instantly grew heated.

"Now, here you are defending it? Why do you defend it? I see you are just the same, just as unreasonable as ever."

Piotr Ivanovitch held his peace, but smiled faintly, showing that he was not convinced, but that he did not wish to quarrel with Marya Ivanovna.

"You smile. We know what that means. You don't want to discuss with me, with an old woman," said she, gayly and soothingly, and looking at her brother more keenly, more cleverly, than one would have expected from an old woman with such strong features. "Yes, you'd better not discuss, little friend. You see, I have lived seventy years. And I have not lived to be a fool, either; but I have seen some things and learned some things; I have not read your books, and I don't intend to read them, either. What rubbish there is in books."

"Now tell me how my children please you," said Piotr Ivanovitch, with the same smile.

"Well, well, now," said his sister, threatening him, "don't get on to the subject of your children yet; we will talk about that by and by. But here is something I want to tell you. You are such an unpractical man. I can see it by your eyes you are just what you always have been. And now they will make much of you. That is the fashion now; you are all in the style. Yes, yes, I see it in your eyes that you are just the same impracticable fellow that you always were," she added, replying to his smile. "You had better keep in the background. I pray to Christ our God to keep you from

all these modern liberals. God knows what they are up to. This thing is sure; it will end badly. Our government is keeping quiet now, but by and by it will show its claws; mark my word, I am afraid you will get entangled again. Give it up, it's all folly; you have children."

"You see you don't know me now, Marya Ivanovna," said her brother.

"Very good, but we shall see. Either I don't know you, or you don't know yourself. I have only said what was in my mind, and if you heed me, well and good. But now let us talk about Serozha. What do you think about him?"—She was going to say, "He does not please me very much;" but she said—"He resembles his mother; they are as alike as two drops of water. Now there is your Sonya. She pleases me very much; there is something very sweet and frank about her. Very pretty. Where is she, where is Sonyushka? Yes, I had forgotten about her."

"What can I say? Sonya will make a good wife and a good mother, but Serozha is clever, very clever, no one can deny that. He is an excellent scholar, though he is rather lazy. He has a great aptitude for the natural sciences. We were very fortunate; we had a splendid, splendid tutor for him. He wants to enter the university; to have lectures on the natural sciences, chemistry ..."

"If you only knew, Petrusha, how I pity them," said she, in a tone of genuine, softened, and even submissive melancholy. "So sorry, so sorry! Their whole life before them. What won't they have to endure!"

"Well, we must hope that they will be more fortunate than we were."

"God grant it, God grant it! Oh, life is hard, Petrusha! Now listen to me in one thing. Don't go into subtleties, my dear. What a fool you are, Petrusha, oh, what a fool! However, I made some arrangements. I have invited some people, and what shall I give them to eat?"

She gave a little sob, turned round, and rang the bell.

"Call Taras."

"Is the old man still with you?" asked her brother.

"Yes, he is still here. But you'll see he is only a boy in comparison with me."

Taras was surly and blunt, but he undertook to do everything.

Shortly after, elated with the cold and their joy, came in Natalya Nikolayevna and Sonya, their gowns rustling. Serozha had remained to make some more purchases.

"Let me look at her."

Marya Ivanovna clasped her face between her two hands.

Natalya Nikolayevna told what she had been doing.

SECOND FRAGMENT

(Variant of the First Chapter)

The lawsuit brought by the proprietor, Ivan Apuikhtin, retired lieutenant of the guard, for the possession of four thousand desyatins of land occupied by his neighbors, the crown-peasants of the village of Izlegoshchi, in the district of Krasnoslobodsky, government of Penza, had been decided at the first trial, by the District Court, in favor of the peasants, through the clever pleading of Ivan Mironof their advocate, and an enormous *datcha*, or parcel, of land, part forest, and part cultivated, cleared by Apuikhtin's serfs, fell into the hands of the peasants in 1815; and in 1816 the peasants sowed this land and harvested the crops. The profit of this irregular action of the peasants surprised all the neighborhood and the peasants themselves.

This success of the peasants was explained solely by the fact that Ivan Petrovitch Apuikhtin, a man of very sweet and peaceable nature, and no lover of lawsuits, though he was convinced of his rights in the matter, had taken no measures against the peasants. Ivan Mironof, however, a peasant who had studied law, a dry, hawk-nosed, educated muzhik, who had been *golova*, or head man, and had been about as collector of taxes, made an assessment of fifty kopeks apiece from each of the men, and spent this money to the best advantage in bribes, and cleverly conducted the whole affair to a successful issue.

But shortly after the decision of the District Court, Apuikhtin, seeing his danger, gave a power of attorney to a skilful lawyer, Ilya Mitrofanof, who appealed the case to the higher court against the decision of the District Court. Ilya Mitrofanof conducted the affair so cleverly that, in spite of the efforts of Ivan Mironof, the peasants' advocate, notwithstanding all the considerable gifts of money presented by him to the members of the tribunal, the decision of the District was reversed in favor of the proprietor, and the land once more had to be given up by the peasants, and their advocate had to make the announcement to them. Their advocate, Ivan Mironof, explained to the assembled peasants, that the gentlemen of the government had "lengthened the proprietor's arm and spoiled the affair entirely," so they were going to take away the land from them again; but that the proprietor's business would fall through because his petition had already been written to the senate, and there was a man there who had faithfully promised to do the right thing in the senate, and that then the land would be forever granted to the peasants: all that was wanted was a fresh assessment of a ruble apiece from every soul among them. The peasants voted to collect the money, and once more they intrusted the whole affair to Ivan Mironof. Having got the money, Mironof went to Petersburg.

When the season for plowing opened in Holy Week, 1817—it came late that year—the peasants of Izlegoshchi met in an assembly and began to discuss whether they should cultivate the disputed land that year; and notwithstanding the fact that Apuikhtin's manager had come during Lent with an order to them not to plow his land, and to render account of the rye that they had harvested the year before, nevertheless the peasants, for the very reason that they had already sowed their winter crop on the disputed land, and because Apuikhtin, not wishing to be too hard on them, was trying to give them a fair chance, decided to cultivate the disputed land, and to take hold of it

before they did anything else. On the very day the peasants went to plow the Berestof datcha, on Maundy Thursday, Ivan Petrovitch Apuikhtin, who had been fasting during Holy Week, partook of the communion and went early in the morning to the church in the village of Izlegoshchi, of which he was a parishioner, and there, being unwitting of the peasants' action, attended mass amiably with the church elder.

Ivan Petrovitch made confession in the afternoon and had the vespers performed at his house; in the morning he himself read the precepts, and at eight o'clock he left his house. They were expecting him at mass. As he stood at the altar where he usually stood, Ivan Petrovitch reasoned rather than prayed; and so he was dissatisfied with himself. He, like many men of his time, indeed of all times, felt that his attitude toward the faith was not clear. He was now fifty years old, he had never neglected the Church ritual, he went to church regularly and fasted once a year; in talking with his only daughter he had tried to ground her in the fundamentals of the true faith: but if any one had asked him exactly what he himself believed, he would have found it hard to decide what answer to give. Especially on this particular day he felt his heart melt within him, and, as he stood by the altar, instead of saying the prayers, he kept thinking how strangely everything was arranged in this world: here he was, almost an old man, who had fasted perhaps forty times in his life, and he knew that all his domestics and all in the church regarded him as a model, took him as an example, and he felt himself bound to set this example in relation to religion; but here he did not know anything, and before long it would be time for him to die, and for the life of him he could not tell whether what he was giving his people as an example was true or not. And it was strange to him how all—as he could see—took it for granted that old people were firm in the faith and knew what was necessary and what was not necessary—so he had always thought of old people; and here he was an old man, and yet he really did not know and was just as uncertain as he had been when he was twenty; hitherto he had disguised this fact, but now he acknowledged it.

Just as when he was a child the thought had sometimes occurred to him during service to crow like a cock, so now all sorts of ridiculous notions went through his brain; but here he was, an old man, reverently bowing, resting the aged bones of his hand on the flagging of the floor, and here was Father Vasili showing evident signs of timidity in performing the service before him, and “thus by our zeal we encourage his!”

“But if they only knew what notions were flying through my head. But it is sin, it is sin, I must conquer it by prayer,” said he to himself as the service began; and as he listened to the significance of the Ektenia,¹ he tried to pray, and in fact his emotions speedily carried him over into the spirit of prayer, and he began to realize his sins, and all that he had confessed.

A pleasant old man, walking evenly in bark shoes which had lost their shape, with a bald spot in the midst of his thick gray hair, wearing a shuba with a patch half way down the back, came up to the altar, bowed to the ground, shook back his hair, and went behind the altar to place the candles.

This was the church *starosta*, or elder, Ivan Feodotof, one of the best muzhiks of the village of Izlegoshchi. Ivan Petrovitch knew him. The sight of this grave, firm face led Ivan Petrovitch into a new trend of thought. He was one of the muzhiks that wanted to get his land away from him, and one of the best and richest of the married farmers who needed land, who knew how to till it, and with good reason.

¹ Liturgy in behalf of the Emperor and his family.

His grave face, his reverent obeisance, his dignified walk, the neatness of his attire,—his leg-wrappers clung round his calves like stockings, and the fastenings were symmetrically crossed so that they were the same on both,—his whole appearance, seemed to express reproach and animosity to all that was of the earth.

“Now I have asked forgiveness of my wife and of my daughter Mani, and of my servant Volodya, and now I must ask also this man’s forgiveness and forgive him,” said Ivan Petrovitch, and he determined to go and ask forgiveness of Ivan Feodotof after the service.

And so he did.

There were few people in the church. The majority made their devotions in the first or the fourth week of Lent. So that now there were only about forty men and women who had not been able to attend the services earlier, besides a few old men—devoted church attendants from among Apuikhtin’s house servants and those of his rich neighbors, the Chernuishefs. There were among them an old lady, a relative of the Chernuishefs, who lived with them, and the widow of a sacristan, whose son the Chernuishefs, out of sheer kindness, had educated and made a man of, and who was now serving as a functionary in the senate.

Between matins and mass comparatively few remained in the church. The peasant men and women stayed outside. There remained two beggar women, sitting in one corner, whispering together and occasionally glancing at Ivan Petrovitch with an evident desire to wish his health and talk with him, and two lackeys, his own lackey, in livery, and the Chernuishefs’, who had come with the old lady. These two were also whispering together with great animation when Ivan Petrovitch came out from behind the altar, and as soon as they saw him they stopped talking.

There was still another woman in the high head-dress decorated with glass beads, and a white shuba, which she wrapped round a sick infant, trying to keep it from screaming. Then there was still another, a hunchbacked old woman also in a peasant head-dress, but decorated with woolen tags, and in a white kerchief tied in old woman’s fashion, and wearing a gray *chuprun*, or sack, with cocks embroidered down the back, and she knelt in the middle of the church, bowing toward an ancient image which was placed between the grated windows, and covered with a new towel with red ends, and she prayed so fervently, solemnly, and passionately, that it was impossible to avoid noticing her.

Before going to speak to the church elder, who was standing at the closet, kneading the candle-ends into a ball of wax, Ivan Petrovitch paused to glance at this old woman praying. She prayed very fluently. She knelt as straight as one could when addressing an image; all of her limbs were composed with mathematical symmetry, the toes of her bark shoes touched the stone flagging in exactly the same spot, her body was bent back as far as the hump on her back permitted, her arms were folded with absolute regularity across her stomach, her head was thrown back, and her wrinkled face, with an expression of modest entreaty, with dim eyes was turning directly toward the towel-covered ikon. After she had remained motionless in such a position for a minute or less, but still a definitely determined time, she drew a long sigh, and, withdrawing her right hand, with a wide swing she raised it higher than her head-dress, touched the crown of her head with her closed fingers, and thus widely made the sign of the cross on her abdomen and on her shoulders, and then bringing it back again she bowed her head down to her hands, spread according to rule on the ground, and once more she lifted herself and once more repeated the whole operation.

“There is true prayer,” said Ivan Petrovitch to himself, as he looked at her; “not such as us sinners offer; here is faith, though I know that she addresses her image or her towel or the jewels

on the image, as they all do. But it is all right. Why not? Each person has his own creed,” said he to himself; “she prays to an image, and here I consider it necessary to beg pardon of a muzhik!”

And he started to find the starosta, involuntarily looking about the church to see if any one was watching his proposed action, which was both pleasing and humiliating to him. It was disagreeable to him to have the old women—beggars, he called them,—see him, but most disagreeable of all was it to have Mishka, his lackey, see him; in Mishka’s presence—he knew his keen, shrewd wit—he felt that he had not the power to seek Ivan Feodotof. And he beckoned Mishka to come to him.

“What do you wish?”

“Please go, brother, and get me the rug from the calash, it is so damp here for one’s legs.”

“I will do so.”

And as soon as Mishka had left the church, Ivan Petrovitch immediately went to Ivan Feodotof.

Ivan Feodotof was abashed, just as if he had been detected in some misdemeanor, as soon as his barin drew near. His bashfulness and nervous movements made a strange contrast with his grave face and his curly steel-gray hair and beard. “Do you wish a ten-kopek candle,” he asked, lifting the cover of his desk, and only occasionally raising his large handsome eyes to his barin.

“No, I need no candle. Ivan, I ask you to pardon me for Christ’s sake, if I have in any way offended you.... Pardon me, for Christ’s sake,” he repeated, bowing low.

Ivan Feodotof was wholly dumfounded, and at a loss what to say, but at last he said, with a gentle smirk, collecting his wits:—

“God pardons. As far as I know I have nothing to complain of from you. God pardons, there is no offense,” he hastily repeated.

“Still ...”

“God pardons, Ivan Petrovitch. Then you will have two ten-kopek candles?”

“Yes, two.”

“He’s an angel, just an angel; he begs pardon of a mean peasant. O Lord, he is truly an angel!” exclaimed the deacon’s wife, who wore an old black capote and a black kerchief. “And just what we ought to expect.”

“Ah, Paramonovna,” exclaimed Ivan Petrovitch, turning to her. “Are you preparing for the sacrament? I ask your pardon also, for Christ’s sake.”

“God pardons, oh, you angel,² my kind benefactor, let me kiss your hand.”

“There, that will do, that will do! You know I don’t like that sort of thing,” said Ivan Petrovitch, smiling, and he went to the altar.

The mass, as it was ordinarily performed in the Izlegoshchi parish, was of short duration, the more so because there were few participants. When the “holy gates” were opened after “Our Father” had been said, Ivan Petrovitch glanced at the northern door to summon Mishka to take his shuba. When the priest noticed this movement, he sternly beckoned to the deacon; the deacon almost ran and summoned the lackey Mikhail. Ivan Petrovitch was in a self-satisfied and happy frame of mind, but this obsequiousness and the expression of deference shown by the priest who was officiating at mass, again distracted him, his thin, curved, smooth-shaven lips grew still more curved, and a flash of satire came into his kindly eyes.

² *Batyushka, angel tui moi.*

"It is just as if I were his general," said he to himself, and he instantly remembered the words spoken by his German tutor, whom he once took with him to the altar to witness the Russian service; how this German had amused him and angered his wife by saying:—

"*Der Pop war ganz böse, dass ich ihm Alles nachgesehen hatte.*³ It also occurred to him how a young Turk had once declared that there was no God, because he had nothing more to eat.

"And here I am taking the communion," he said to himself, and, frowning, he performed the reverences.

And, taking off his bearskin shuba, and remaining only in a blue coat with bright buttons and a high white cravat and waistcoat and close-fitting trousers in heelless boots with pointed toes, he went in his quiet, unobtrusive, and easy gait to bow before the images of the church. And again even here he met with the same complaisance on the part of the participants, who made room for him.

"They seem to be saying, *après vous s'il en reste,*" he remarked to himself, as he made his obeisances to the very ground, with an awkwardness which arose from the fact that he had to find the mean between what might be irreverence and hypocrisy. At last the doors opened. He followed the priest in the reading of the prayer repeating the *yako razboïnika*,⁴ they covered his cravat with the sacred veil, and he partook of the sacrament, and of the tepid water in the ancient vessel, and placed his coins in the ancient plates. He listened to the last prayers, bowed low toward the cross, and, putting on his shuba, left the church acknowledging the salutations and experiencing a pleasant sensation of a good work accomplished. As he left the church he again fell in with Ivan Feodotovitch.

"Thank you, thank you," said he, in reply to his salutation. "Tell me, are you going to plow soon?"

"The boys have begun, the boys have begun," replied Ivan Feodotovitch, even more timidly than usual. He supposed that Ivan Petrovitch already knew where the men of Izlegoshchi had gone to plow. "Well, it has been wet, been wet. It is yet early, as yet it is early."

Ivan Petrovitch went to the memorial of his father and mother, bowed low, and then took his seat in his calash drawn by six horses with outrider.

"Well, thank the Lord," said he to himself, as he swayed gently on the soft easy springs, and gazed up at the spring sky with scattered clouds, and at the bare ground, and at the white spots of still unmelted snow, and at the closely twisted tail of the off horse, and breathed in the joyous, fresh spring air which was especially pleasant after the atmosphere of the church.

"Thank God that I have partaken of the communion, and thank God that I can take a little snuff."

And he took out his snuff-box and long held the tobacco between his thumb and finger, and with the same hand, not applying the snuff, he raised his hat in reply to the low bows of the people whom he met, especially the women scrubbing their chairs and benches in front of their doorsteps, as the calash with a swift dash of the spanking horses went splashing and dashing through the muddy street of the village of Izlegoshchi.

Ivan Petrovitch, anticipating the pleasant sensation of the tobacco, held the snuff between his thumb and finger all the way through the village, even till after they had got beyond the bad place at the foot of the hill, up which the coachman evidently could not drive without difficulty;

³ The priest was very angry, because I kept watching him all the time.

⁴ "Like a malefactor."

he gathered up the reins, settled himself better in his seat, and shouted to the outrider to keep to the ice. When they had passed beyond the bridge and had got out of the broken ice and mud, Ivan Petrovitch, looking at two lapwings rising above the ravine, took his snuff, and, feeling that it was rather cool, he put on his gloves, wrapped himself up, sunk his chin into his high cravat, and said to himself, almost aloud, the word "*slavno*," glorious, which was his favorite expression whenever everything seemed good to him.

During the night the snow had fallen, and even when Ivan Petrovitch was going to church the snow had not wholly melted, but was soft; but now, although there was no sun, the snow was almost liquid, and along the highway, by which he had to drive for three versts before he reached the side road to Chirakovo, there were only gleams of snow on the last year's grass growing between the ruts. The horses trampled through the viscous mud on the black road. But for the fat, well-fed horses of his team it was no effort to draw the calash, and it seemed to go of itself, not only over the grass where the black tracks were left, but also through the mud itself.

"Ivan Petrovitch gave himself up to pleasant thoughts; he thought about his home, his wife, and his daughter.

"Masha will meet me on the steps, and with enthusiasm. She will see in me such a saint! She is a strange, sweet girl; only she takes everything to heart so. And the *rôle* which I have to play before her—the *rôle* of dignity and importance—has already begun to seem to me serious and ridiculous. If she only knew how much I stand in awe of her," he said to himself. "Well, Kato"—that was his wife—"will probably be in good spirits to-day—really in good spirits, and the day will be excellent. Not as it was last week, owing to those Proshkinsky peasant women. She is a wonderful creature. And how afraid of her I am. But what is to be done about it? She herself is not happy."

Then he recalled a famous anecdote about a calf; how a proprietor who had quarreled with his wife was one day sitting at his window and saw a calf gamboling. "I would marry you," said the proprietor; and again he smiled, deciding everything puzzling and difficult, as was his wont, by a jest, generally directed against himself.

At the third verst, near the chapel, the postilion turned off to the left to take the cross-road, and the coachman shouted to him because he turned so short it struck the shaft horses with the pole, and from here on the calash rolled almost all the way down hill. Before they reached the house, the postilion looked at the coachman and pointed at something; the coachman looked at the lackey and also pointed at something. And they all gazed in one direction.

"What are you looking at?" asked Ivan Petrovitch.

"Wild geese," said Mikhaïla.

"Where?"

But, though he strained his eyes, he could not see anything.

"Yonder, there is a forest, and beyond is a cloud, and there between, if you will be good enough to look."

Still Ivan Petrovitch could not see anything. "Well, it is time for them. A week from to-day will be Annunciation."

"So it will."

"Well, go ahead."

At the little lodge Mishka jumped down from the foot-board and examined the road, then climbed back again, and the calash rolled smoothly along by the edge of the pond into the park,

mounted the driveway, passed the ice-house and the laundry, from which the water was dripping, and skilfully rounding up stopped at the porch. The Chernuishefs' britchka was only just driving away from the yard. Immediately some people came hurrying down from the house: a surly-looking old man, Daniluitch, with side-whiskers, Nikola, Mikhaïla's brother, and the boy Pavlushka, and behind them a girl with large black eyes and red arms bare above the elbows, and also with open neck.

"Marya Ivanovna, Marya Ivanovna. Where are you? Here, your mamasha is getting anxious about you. Come," said the voice of the stout Katerina in the background.

But the little girl did not heed her; as her father expected, she seized him by the hand, and looked at him with a peculiar look.

"Tell me, papenka, have you had the sacrament," she asked, with a sort of terror.

"Yes, I have had the sacrament. Why, were you afraid that I was such a sinner that they would not let me have it?"

The little girl was evidently shocked at her father's levity on such a solemn occasion. She sighed, and as she went with him she held him by the hand and kissed it.

"Who has come?"

"It is young Chernuishef. He is in the drawing-room."

"Has mamma got up? What is she doing?"

"Mamenka is better to-day. She is sitting down-stairs."

In the passage-way Ivan Petrovitch met the nurse Yevpraksia, his foreman Andreï Ivanovitch, and his surveyor, who was staying there to divide the land. All congratulated Ivan Petrovitch. In the drawing-room were sitting Luiza Karlovna Turgoni, for ten years a friend of the family, an *émigrée* governess, and a young man of sixteen, Chernuishef, with his French tutor.

THIRD FRAGMENT

(Variant of the First Chapter)

On the 14th of August, 1817, the sixth department of the Controlling Senate rendered a decision in the lawsuit between the “ekonom”¹ peasants of the village of Izlegoshchi and Prince Chernuishef, granting the land that was in dispute to the peasants.

This decision was unexpected and serious, and unfortunate for Chernuishef. The suit had been dragging along already for five years. Having been brought originally by the advocate of the rich and populous village of Izlegoshchi, it had been gained by the peasants in the District Court; but when Prince Chernuishef, by the advice of Ilya Mitrofanof, a solicitor, a domestic serf belonging to Prince Saltuikof, hired by him, appealed the case, he won it, and, moreover, the Izlegoshchi peasants were punished by having six of them, who had insulted the surveyor, sent to the mines.

After this, Prince Chernuishef, with a good-natured carelessness characteristic of him, was perfectly at ease, the more because he knew well that he had never “usurped” any land of the peasants, as it had been said in the peasants’ petition. If any land had ever been “usurped” it had been done by his father, but since then more than forty years had passed away. He knew that the peasants of the village of Izlegoshchi even without this land were prosperous, that they did not need it, and that they were good neighbors of his, and he could not understand why they were “mad” with him.

He knew that he had never injured any one, and that he had no wish to injure any one; he had always lived with charity to all and that was all he wanted to do, and so he did not believe that they wanted to do him any wrong: he detested litigation, and therefore he had not labored in the senate, notwithstanding the advice and admonition of his attorney, Ilya Mitrofanof. Having disregarded the term of the appeal, he lost the case in the senate, and lost it in such a manner that ruin stared him in the face. According to the decree of the senate not only were five thousand desyatins of land to be taken from him, but on account of his illegal use of the land he was obliged to pay the peasants 107,000 rubles.

Prince Chernuishef had had eight thousand serfs, but all his estates were mortgaged; he had many debts, and this decision of the senate ruined him together with all his great family. He had a son and five daughters. He woke up when it was too late to do anything in the senate. According to Ilya Mitrofanof he had one way of salvation; that was to petition the Emperor and appeal the case to the imperial council. For this it was necessary personally to address one of the ministers or one of the members of the council, or even—and this would be still better—the Emperor himself. Having decided on this plan of action, Prince Grigori Ivanovitch, in the autumn of 1817, left his beloved Studentso, where he always lived, and went with his whole family to Moscow. He went to Moscow and not to Petersburg, because during the autumn of that year the sovereign, with his court, and all his highest dignitaries, and a part of the Guard in which Grigori Ivanovitch’s

¹ *Ekonomichesky krestyanin* was formerly a peasant who belonged to a monastery and was subject to an ekonom or steward.

son served, was to be in Moscow for the ceremony of dedicating the cathedral of the Saviour in memory of the deliverance of Russia from the invasion of the French.

Even in August immediately after the receipt of the horrible news of the decision of the senate, Prince Grigori Ivanovitch found himself in Moscow. His steward had been sent on in advance to make ready his private house on the Arbata; a baggage-train was sent on with furniture, servants, horses, equipages, and provisions. In September the prince, with his whole family in seven carriages drawn by his own horses, reached Moscow, and settled down in their mansion. His relatives and friends, who had come to Moscow from the country or from Petersburg, began to gather in Moscow in September; the Moscow life with all its gayeties, the arrival of his son, the coming out of his daughters, and the success of his eldest daughter, Aleksandra, the one blonde among all the dark Chernuishefs, so occupied and engrossed the prince, that notwithstanding the fact that he was spending there in Moscow all the remainder of his substance,—in case he had to pay his fine,—he kept forgetting his chief business, and was annoyed and bored when Ilya Mitrofanof mentioned it, and he kept putting off doing anything to further the success of his affairs.

Ivan Mironovitch Baushkin, the chief advocate of the muzhiks, who had carried the lawsuit through the senate with such zeal, who knew all the ways and means of dealing with the secretaries and head clerks, and who had so cleverly spent at Petersburg in the form of bribes the ten thousand rubles collected from the muzhiks, had also now put an end to his activity and had returned to the village; where, with the reward for his success and with the money not expended in bribes, he had bought a piece of woodland of a neighboring proprietor, and had established in it an office.² The lawsuit in the highest instance was at an end, and by good rights the affair should now take care of itself.

Of all those that had been entangled in this affair, the only ones who could not forget it were the six muzhiks, who had been for seven months in prison, and their families deprived of their head men. But there was nothing to be done about it. There they were in the Krasnoslobodsky prison, and their families were struggling to get along without them. There was no one to petition. Even Ivan Mironovitch declared that there was nothing he could do in their behalf; that this was not an affair of the “mir” or of the civil court, but a criminal case. The muzhiks were in prison and no one was working in their behalf; only the family of Mikhaïl Gerasimovitch, especially his old woman, Tikhonovna, could not acquiesce in the fact that her “golden one,” her old man, Gerasimitch, was confined in prison with a shaven head. Tikhonovna could not remain in peace. She besought Mironovitch to work for her; Mironovitch refused. Then she resolved herself to go, and pray God to release her old man. The year before she had vowed to go on a pilgrimage to the saints, and yet for lack of leisure, and because she did not like to leave the house in the care of her sisters-in-law, who were young, she had postponed it for a year. Now that she had become poor, and Gerasimitch was in prison, she remembered her vow. She let her household cares have the go-by, and with a deacon’s wife of her village, she started in on her pilgrimage. At first they went to the district where the old man was in prison; they carried him some shirts, and thence they went to Moscow, passing through the governmental city.

On the way Tikhonovna related the story of her misfortune, and the deacon’s wife advised her to petition the Tsar, who, she had heard, was to be at Penza, telling her what were the chances of pardon. When the pilgrims reached Penza they learned that the Tsar’s brother, the Grand Duke

² *Izba-kontora.*

Nikolai Pavlovitch, and not the Tsar himself, had already come to Penza. Coming forth from the cathedral at Penza, Tikhonovna forced her way through the line, threw herself on her knees, and began to beg for her lord and master. The Grand Duke was amazed, the governor was angry, and the old woman was arrested. After a day's detention she was set free, and went on to Troitsa. At this monastery Tikhonovna prepared for the sacrament, and made confession to Father Paisi. At confession she told all her misfortune, and confessed how she had tried to offer her petition to the Tsar's brother. Father Paisi told her there was no sin in that, and that she was on the right track, and that it was no sin to petition the Tsar, and then he let her go. Also at Khotkovo she stopped with "an inspired woman,"³ and this woman advised her to present her petition to the Tsar himself. Tikhonovna, on her way back with the deacon's wife, went to Moscow to visit the saints there. There she learned that the Tsar was in Moscow, and it seemed to her that God had commanded her to petition the Tsar. All she had to do was to get the petition written. At Moscow the pilgrims stopped at an inn. They asked for a night's lodgings; it was granted them. After supper the deacon's wife lay down on the oven, but Tikhonovna lay down on a bench, placing her *kotomka*, or birch-bark wallet, under her head, and went to sleep. In the morning, before it was light, Tikhonovna got up, awakened the deacon's wife, and came down into the court before the dvornik had called them.

"You are up early, baushka,"⁴ said he.

"You see we are going to matins, benefactor," replied Tikhonovna.

"God go with you, baushka. Christ save you," said the dvornik; and the pilgrim women started for the Kreml.

After attending matins and mass, and having kissed the holy things, the two old women, with difficulty finding their way, went to the Chernuishefs'. The deacon's wife said that the old lady Chernuishef had strongly urged her to stop there, that she always received all pilgrims.

"There we shall find a man to help with the petition," said the deacon's wife, and the two pilgrims went wandering along the streets, asking the way as they went. The deacon's wife had been there once, but had forgotten where it was. Twice they were almost crushed, men shouted at them, and scolded them. Once a police officer grasped the deacon's wife by the shoulder, and gave her a push, forbidding them to pass through the street on which they were walking, and directing them into a wilderness of lanes. Tikhonovna did not know that they were driven out of Vozdvizhenka for the very reason that the Tsar himself, of whom she was all the time thinking, and to whom she was going to write and present the petition, was to ride along that very street.

The deacon's wife, as always, walked heavily and painfully. Tikhonovna, as usual, went along with a free and easy gait, like a young woman. The pilgrims paused at the very gates. The deacon's wife did not know the place; a new izba had been built there; it had not been there before. But when the deacon's wife saw a well and pump at one corner of the dvor she recognized it. The dogs began to bark, and sprang toward the old women who appeared with staves.

"Don't be afraid, they won't hurt you," cried the dvornik. "Back, you rascals," said he to the dogs, waving his broom at them. "You see they are country dogs, and they hanker after country folks. Come round this way. God keeps the frost off."

³ *Blazhennaya*, an eccentric, fanatic woman.

⁴ *S Bogom*, *baushka*; *baushka* for *babushka*, old woman.

But the deacon's wife, afraid of the dogs, pitifully mumbling, sat down on a bench at the gate, and asked the dvornik to take the dogs away. Tikhonovna, bowing low before the dvornik, and leaning on her staff, spreading wide her legs, tightly bound with leg-wrappers, halted near the other, calmly looking ahead, and waiting for the dvornik, who was coming toward them.

"Whom do you want?" asked the dvornik.

"Don't you know us, benefactor? Isn't your name Yegor?" asked the deacon's wife. "We have been on a pilgrimage, and here we have come to her excellency."

"You are from Izlegoshchi," said the dvornik. "Are you not the old deacon's wife? Well, well! Come into the izba. They will receive you. No one is ever turned away. But who is this woman?"

He pointed to Tikhonovna.

"I am from Izlegoshchi. I am Gerasim's wife; I was a Fadeyef," said Tikhonovna. "I am from Izlegoshchi too."

"Is that so? I have heard your man is in jail. Is that so?"

Tikhonovna made no reply. She only sighed, and with a powerful gesture shifted her wallet and her shuba on her back.

The deacon's wife asked if the old princess was at home, and, learning that she was, asked to be taken to her. Then she asked after her son, who had been made a functionary, and through the prince's favor was serving in Petersburg. The dvornik could not answer her question, and he took them along a planked walk, across the yard, into the common izba. The old women entered the izba, which was full of people, women and children, young and old, domestic serfs, and there they bowed low toward the images. The laundress and the old princess's chambermaid immediately recognized the deacon's wife and immediately engaged her in conversation; they took her wallet from her, and sat her down at a table, and offered her something to eat.

Tikhonovna, meantime, crossing herself toward the images and greeting every one, stood by the door waiting to be invited in. At the very door, by the first window, sat an old man mending boots.

"Sit down, babushka; why do you stand? Sit down here and take off your wallet," said he.

"There is no room in there for her to sit down. Take her into the dark room,"⁵ remarked some woman.

"Ah, here we have Madame de Chalmé," said a young lackey, pointing to the cocks on the back of Tikhonovna's zipun; "stockings and slippers too!" He pointed to her leg wrappers and bark shoes—novelties for Moscow.

"You ought to have some like them, Parasha."

"Come, come into the izba. I will show you the way."

And the old cobbler, thrusting in his awl, got up, but as he caught sight of a young girl he called to her and bade her lead the old woman into the kitchen.

Tikhonovna not only paid no heed to what was said around her and about her, but she did not even hear it or notice it. Ever since she had left her home she had been impressed with the sense of the necessity of laboring in God's service, and with one other feeling which had come into her soul she knew not how—the necessity of presenting the petition. As she left the sitting-room where the people were, she went close to the deacon's wife, and bowing low said:—

⁵ *Chornaya izba*, dark room of the hut, in contradistinction to the *chistaya izba*, the room where there is no oven.

“For Christ’s sake, Matushka Paramonovna, don’t forget my business. Ask if there isn’t some man.”

“What does the old woman want?”

“She has a grievance, and the people advise her to present a petition to the Tsar.”

“Go straight to the Tsar and take it,” said the joker of a lackey.

“Oh, fool, what an ill-bred fool,” said the old cobbler. “I will teach you with my last, in spite of your good coat, not to make sport of old women.”

The lackey began to call names, but the old man, not heeding him, led Tikhonovna into the kitchen. Tikhonovna was glad to be sent out from the crowded sitting-room and led into the “black” izba which the coachmen frequented. In the sitting-room everything was too clean and the people were all clean, and Tikhonovna did not feel at home. But in the coachmen’s “black” izba it was like the hut of a peasant, and Tikhonovna was much more contented. The room was finished in spruce, and measured about twenty-one feet, and dark, with a great stove and with sleeping-benches and berths, and the newly laid floor was all trampled over with mud. When Tikhonovna entered the izba she found there the cook, a white, ruddy, fat peasant woman with the sleeves of her chintz dress rolled up, laboriously putting a pot into the oven with an oven-hook; then a fine-looking young coachman practising the balalaika, and a crooked-legged old man with a full, white, soft beard sitting on the sleeping-bench, with a skein of silk in his mouth, sewing something delicate and beautiful; a ragged, dark young man in a shirt and blue trousers, with a surly face, chewing bread, was sitting on a bench near the stove, leaning his head on both hands, supported on his knees.

The barefooted girl with shining eyes ran with her light young legs in advance of the old woman, and opened the door, which was dripping with steam, and whined with her high-pitched voice:—

“Auntie Marina, Simonutch sends this old woman to you and tells you to give her something to eat. She is from our parts, and has been making a pilgrimage to the saints with Paramonovna. They are giving Paramonovna some tea, and Vlashevna sends this one to you.”

The fluent little girl would have continued still longer talking glibly; the words seemed to flow from her mouth, and she evidently liked to hear her own voice. But Marina, who was sweating over the oven, not having settled to her satisfaction the pot of shchi which stuck half way in the oven, cried out angrily to her:—

“Now, that’ll do. Stop your chatter; how can we feed any more old women; we can’t even feed our own. Curse you,” she cried, to the pot which almost tipped over as it moved from its hearth on which it had stuck.

But having once got her pot settled she looked round, and seeing the pleasant-faced Tikhonovna with her wallet and in regular country attire, kissing the cross and bowing low to the corner where the images were, she instantly felt compunction for her words; and, apparently bethinking her of the labors which tormented her, and putting her hand to her breast where below the collar-bone the buttons fastened her dress, she felt to see if one was unfastened, and, putting her hand to her head, she pulled back the knot of her kerchief which covered her well-oiled hair, and thus she stood leaning on her oven-fork waiting for the greeting of the pleasant-looking old woman. Having bowed for the last time to the image, Tikhonovna turned round and bowed to the three directions.

“God be your refuge! I wish your health,”⁶ said she.

“We ask your blessing, auntie,” said the tailor.

“Thank you, babushka, take off your wallet. There is a place for you,” said the cook, pointing to the bench where the ragged man sat. “Make yourself at home, if you can. How cold it is growing, isn’t it?”

The ragged fellow, scowling still more angrily, got up, moved along, and, still chewing his bread, kept his eyes fixed on the old woman. The young coachman bowed low, and, ceasing to strum his instrument, began to tune up the strings of his balalaïka, looking first at the old woman, then at the tailor, not knowing how to treat the old woman: whether with deference as it seemed to him proper, because the old woman wore the same kind of attire as his babushka and the mother of his house did—he was a postilion taken from among the muzhiks—or banteringly, as he would have liked to do, and as it seemed to him the suitable thing for him in his present position in his blue poddevka and his top boots. The tailor closed one eye and seemed to smile, pushing the skein of silk to one side of his mouth, and he also looked at her. Marina started to put in another pot, but, though she was busy with her work, she looked at the old woman as she cleverly and deftly took off her wallet, and, endeavoring not to incommode any one, stowed it under the bench. Nastka ran to her and helped her; she took out from under the bench the boots which were in the way of the wallet.

“Uncle Pankrat,” she cried, addressing the surly man, “I have your boots here; what shall I do with them?”

“The devil take them; throw them into the oven,” said the surly man, flinging them into the farther corner.

“Come here, you wise one, Nastka,” said the tailor; “the journeyman needs some one to pacify him.”

“Christ save you, little girl. It is so comfortable,” said Tikhonovna. “Only, my dear young man, we have disturbed you,” said the old woman, addressing Pankrat.

“It is of no consequence,” said Pankrat.

Tikhonovna sat down on the bench, taking off her zipun and carefully folding it up, and then she began to take off her foot-gear. First of all, she unwound her cords, which she had smoothed with the greatest solicitude for this pilgrimage; then she unwound carefully the lamb’s-wool white leg-wrappers, and, carefully folding them, laid them on her wallet.

While she was unwinding the second leg, Marina awkwardly again caught the pot on something, and it spilt over, and she began once more to scold, grasping it with her oven-hook.

“Something has evidently burnt out the hearth. You ought to have it plastered,” said Tikhonovna.

“How can I get it plastered? The chimney is not right; you put in two loaves of bread a day, you take out some, but the others are spoiled.”

In answer to Marina’s complaints about the loaves and the burnt-out hearth, the tailor stood up in defense of the conveniences of the Chernuishevsky house, and he explained how they had come suddenly to Moscow, that the whole izba had been built in three weeks, and the oven set up; and there were at least a hundred domestics, all of whom had to be fed.

“It’s evident it is hard work. It is a great establishment,” said Tikhonovna.

“And where did God bring you from, babushka?” asked the tailor.

⁶ *Bog pomotch, zdravstvuite.*

And immediately Tikhonovna, while still continuing to divest herself of her wraps, told whence she came and where she had been and how she was on her way home. But she said nothing about the petition. The conversation went on uninterruptedly. The tailor learned all about the old woman, and the old woman learned about the awkward and handsome Marina, how her husband was a soldier and she had been taken as a cook, that the tailor himself was making kaftans for the coachmen, that the little girl who ran errands was the housekeeper's orphan, and that the shaggy, surly Pankrat was in the employ of the overseer, Ivan Vasilyevitch.

Pankrat left the izba, stumbling at the door; the tailor told how he was such a clownish peasant, but to-day was particularly surly. That afternoon he had broken two of the overseer's windows, and that day they were going to flog him at the stable. Ivan Vasilyevitch is coming now to attend to the flogging. The little coachman was a countryman taken to be postilion,⁷ and he is growing up, and is now getting his hand in to take care of the horses, and he plays the balalaïka, but he is not very skilled at it....

⁷ The old peasant calls the German word *Vorreiter*, *foletorii*.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Leo Tolstoy
The Decembrists
Drafts of an attempt to write a sequel to War and Peace
1868

Retrieved on 9th June 2021 from en.wikisource.org

The three chapters of the romance here printed under the name of the “Dekabristui” were written even before the author had begun “War and Peace.” At this time he was planning a story, the principal characters of which were to be the conspirators who planned the December Insurrection; but he did not go on with it because, in his efforts at bringing to life the time of the Dekabrists, he involuntarily went back in thought to the preceding time period, to the past of his heroes. Gradually before the author opened ever deeper and deeper the sources of those phenomena which he was designing to describe: the families, the education, the social conditions, etc., of his chosen characters. At last he paused at the time of the war with Napoleon, which he described in “War and Peace.” At the end of that romance are evident the symptoms of that awakening which was reflected in the events of December 27, 1825.

Afterward the author once more took up “The Dekabrists,” and wrote two other beginnings, which are here printed. Such was the origin of the fragments here presented; it is probable that it will never be finished.—Publishers’ Note.

Translated by Nathan Haskell Dole.

theanarchistlibrary.org