

THE DECEMBRISTS
Fragments of a Novel

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THE DECEMBRISTS

A Novel

FIRST FRAGMENT

i.

This happened not long ago, in the reign of Alexander II, in our days of civilization, progress, questions, regeneration of Russia, and so forth, and so forth ; at a time when the victorious Russian army was returning from Sevastopol, surrendered to the enemy ; when all of Russia celebrated the annihilation of the Black Sea fleet, and white-stoned Moscow received and congratulated with this happy event the remainders of the crews of that fleet, offering them a good Russian cup of vodka, and bread and salt, according to the good Russian custom, and bowing down to their feet. It was that time when Russia, in the person of far-sighted virgin politicians, lamented the shattered dream of a Te Deum in the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and the loss of two great men, so painful for the country, who had perished during the war (one, who had been carried away by the desire to celebrate the Te Deum in the above-mentioned cathedral at the earliest time possible, and who fell in the fields of Wallachia, but who, at least, left two squadrons of hussars in the same fields, and the other, an unappreciated man, who had distributed tea,

other people's money, and bed-sheets to the wounded, without stealing any of these things) ; that time, when on all sides, in all branches of human activities, great men

– generals, administrators, economists, writers, orators, and simply great men, without any especial calling or purpose – sprang up in Russia like mushrooms ; that time, when, at the jubilee of a Moscow actor, there appeared the public opinion, confirmed by a toast, which began to rebuke all the criminals, – when menacing commissions galloped south from St. Petersburg, to convict and punish the evil-doers of the commissariat, – when in all the cities dinners with speeches were given to the heroes of Sevastopol, and when to them,

with arms and legs tom off, toasts were drunk, on meeting them on the bridges and on the highways ; that time, when oratorical talents developed so rapidly in the nation that a certain dram-shopkeeper everywhere and upon all occasions wrote and printed and recited by rote at dinners such strong speeches, that the guardians of the peace had to take repressive measures against the dram-shopkeeper's eloquence, – when in the very English club a special room was set aside for the discussion of public matters,

– when periodicals sprang up under the most diversified standards, – periodicals that evolved European principles on a European basis, but with a Russian world conception, and periodicals on an exclusively Russian basis, but with a European world conception, – when suddenly there appeared so many periodicals that all names seemed to be exhausted, – " The Messenger," and " The Word," and " The Speaker," and " The Observer," and " The Star," and " The Eagle," and many more, and, in spite of it, there appeared ever new names ; that time, when the constellation of philosophic writers made its appearance to prove that science was national, and not national, and nonnational, and so forth, and the constellation of artistic writers, who described a grove, and the sunrise, and a storm, and the love of a Russian maiden, and the indolence of a certain official, and the bad conduct of many officials ; that time, when on all sides appeared questions (as in the year '56 they called every concourse of circumstances, of which no one could make any sense), questions of cadet corps, universities, censorship, oral judicature, finance, banking, police, emancipation, and many more : – everybody tried to discover ever new questions, everybody tried to solve them, wrote, read, spoke, made projects, wanted to mend everything, destroy, change, and all Russians, like one man, were in indescribable ecstasy.

That is a state of affairs which has been twice repeated in the Russia of the nineteenth century, – the first time, when in the year '12 we repulsed Napoleon I., and the second time, when in the year '56 we were repulsed by Napoleon III. Great, unforgettable time of the regeneration of the Russian people! Like the Frenchman who said that he has not lived who has not lived through the great French Revolution, I venture to say that he who has not lived through the year '56 in Russia does not know what life is. The writer of these lines not only lived through that time, but was one of the actors of that period. Not only did he pass several weeks in one of the blindages of Sevastopol, but he also wrote a work on the Crimean War, which brought him great fame, and in which he described clearly and minutely how the soldiers fired their guns from the bastions, how the wounds were dressed at the ambulance, and how they buried people in the cemetery. Having achieved these deeds, the writer of these lines arrived in the centre of the empire, – a rocket

establishment, – where he cut the laurels for his deeds. He saw the transports of the two capitals and of the whole nation, and experienced in his person to what extent Russia knew how to reward real deserts. The mighty of this world sought his friendship, pressed his hands, gave him dinners, urged him to come to their houses, and, in order to learn the details of the war from him, informed him of their own sentimentalities. Consequently the writer of these lines can appreciate that great and memorable time. But that is another matter.

At that very time, two vehicles on wheels and a sleigh were standing at the entrance of the best Moscow hotel. A young man ran through the door, to find out about quarters. In one of the vehicles sat an old man with two ladies. He was talking about the condition of Blacksmith Bridge in the days of the French. It was the continuation of a conversation started as they entered Moscow, and now the old man with the white beard, in his unbuttoned fur coat, calmly continued his conversation in the vehicle, as though he intended to stay in it overnight. His wife and daughter listened to him, but kept looking at the door with some impatience. The young man emerged from the door with the porter and room servant.

" Well, Sergyéy," asked the mother, thrusting her emaciated face out into the glare of the lamplight.

Either because it was his habit, or because he did not wish the porter to take him for a lackey on account of the short fur coat which he wore, Sergyéy replied in French that there were rooms to be had, and opened the carriage door. The old man looked for a moment at his son, and again turned to the dark corner of the vehicle, as though nothing else concerned him :

" There was no theatre then."

" Pierre ! " said his wife, lifting her cloak ; but he continued :

" Madame Chalmé was in Tverskaya Street – "

Deep in the vehicle could be heard a youthful, sonorous laugh.

" Papa, step out ! You are forgetting where we are."

The old man only then seemed to recall that they had arrived, and looked around him.

" Do step out ! "

He pulled his cap down, and submissively passed through the door. The porter took him under his arm, but, seeing that the old man was walking well, he at once offered his services to the lady. Judging from the sable cloak, and from the time it took for her to emerge, and from the way she pressed down on his arm, and from the way she, leaning on her son's arm, walked straight toward the porch, without looking to either side, Natalya Nikolaevna, his wife, seemed to the

porter to be an important personage. He did not even separate the young lady from the maids, who climbed out from the other vehicle ; like them, she carried a bundle and a pipe, and walked behind. He recognized her only by her laughing and by her calling the old man father.

" Not that way, father,— to the right ! " she said, taking hold of the sleeve of his sheepskin coat. "To the right."

On the staircase there resounded, through the noise of the steps, the doors, and the heavy breathing of the elderly lady, the same laughter which had been heard in the vehicle, and about which any one who heard it thought : " How excellently she laughs, — I just envy her."

Their son, Sergyéy, had attended to all the material conditions on the road, and, though he lacked knowledge of the matter, he had attended to it with the energy and self-satisfying activity which are characteristic of twenty-five years of age. Some twenty times, and apparently for no important reason, he ran down to the sleigh in his greatcoat, and ran up-stairs again, shivering in the cold and taking two or three steps at a time with his long, youthful legs. Natalya Nikolaevna asked him not to catch a cold, but he said that it was all right, and continued to give orders, slamming doors, and walking, and, when it seemed that only the servants and peasants had to be attended to, he several times walked through all the rooms, leaving the drawing-room by one door, and coming in through another, as though he were looking for something else to do.

" Well, papa, will you be driven to the bath-house ? Shall I find out ? " he asked.

His papa was deep in thought and, it seemed, was not at all conscious of where he was. He did not answer at once. He heard the words, but did not comprehend them. Suddenly he comprehended.

" Yes, yes, yes.' Find out, if you please, at Stone Bridge."

The head of the family walked through the rooms with hasty, agitated steps, and seated himself in a chair.

" Now we must decide what to do, how to arrange matters," he said. " Help along, children, lively ! Like good fellows, drag things around, put them up, and tomorrow we shall send Serézha with a note to sister Marya Ivanovna, to the Nikitins, or we shall go there ourselves. Am I right, Natasha ? But now, fix things ! "

" To-morrow is Sunday. I hope, Fierre, that first of all you will go to mass," said his wife, kneeling in front of a trunk and opening it.

" That is so, it is Sunday ! We shall by all means all of us go to the Cathedral of the Assumption. Thus will our return begin. 0 Lord ! When I think of the day when I was for the last time in the

Cathedral of the Assumption ! Ho you remember, Natasha? But that is another matter."

And the head of the family rose quickly from the chair, on which he had just seated himself.

" Now we must settle down ! "

And without doing anything, he kept walking from one room to another.

" Well, shall we drink tea ? Or are you tired, and do you want to rest ? "

« Yes, yes," replied his wife, taking something out from the trunk. " You wanted to go to the bath-house, did you not ? "

" Yes – in my day it was near Stone Bridge. Serézha, go and find out whether there is still a bath-house near Stone Bridge. This room here Serézha and I shall occupy. Serézha ! Will you be comfortable here ? "

But Serézha had gone to find out about the bath-house.

" No, that will not do," he continued. " You will not have a straight passage to the drawing-room. What do you think, Natasha ? "

" Calm yourself, Pierre, everything will come out all right," Natasha said, from another room, where peasants were bringing in things.

But Pierre was still under the influence of that ecstatic mood which the arrival had evoked in him.

« Look there, – don't mix up Serézha's things ! You have thrown his snow-shoes down in the drawing-room." And he himself picked them up and with great care, as though the whole future order of the quarters depended upon it, leaned them against the door-post and tried to make them stand there. But the snow-shoes did not stick to it, and, the moment Pierre walked away from them, fell with a racket across the door. Natalya Nikolaevna frowned and shuddered, but, seeing the cause of the fall, she said :

" Sdnya, darling, pick them up ! "

" Pick them up, darling," repeated the husband, " and I will go to the landlord, or else you will never get done. I must talk things over with him."

" You had better send for him, Pierre. Why should you trouble yourself ? "

Pierre assented.

" Sdnya, bring him here, what do you call him ? M. Cavalier, if you please. Tell him that we want to speak about everything."

" Chevalier, papa," said Sonya, ready to go out.

Natdlya Nikoläevna, who was giving her commands in a soft voice, and was softly stepping from room to room, now with a box, now with a pipe, now with a pillow, imperceptibly finding places for a mountain of baggage, in passing Sonya, had time to whisper to her :

" Do not go yourself, but send a man ! "

While a man went to call the landlord, Pierre used his leisure, under the pretext of aiding his consort, in crushing a garment of hers and in stumbling against an empty box. Steadying himself with his hand against the wall, the Decembrist looked around with a smile ; but Sonya was looking at him with such smiling eyes that she seemed to be waiting for permission to laugh. He readily granted her that permission, and himself burst out into such a good-natured laugh that all those who were in the room, his wife, the maids, and the peasants, laughed with him. This laughter animated the old man still more. He discovered that the divan in the room for his wife and daughter was not standing very conveniently for them, although they affirmed the opposite, and asked him to calm himself. Just as he was trying with his own hands to help a peasant to change the position of that piece of furniture, the landlord, a Frenchman, entered the room.

" You sent for me," the landlord asked sternly and, in proof of his indifference, if not contempt, slowly drew out his handkerchief, slowly unfolded it, and slowly cleared his nose.

" Yes, my dear sir," said Peter Ivanovich, stepping up toward him, " you see, we do not know ourselves how long we are going to stay here, I and my wife – " and Peter Ivanovich, who had the weakness of seeing a neighbour in every man, began to expound his plans and affairs to him.

M. Chevalier did not share that view of people and was not interested in the information communicated to him by Peter Ivanovich, but the good French which Peter Ivanovich spoke (the French language, as is known, is something like rank in Russia) and his lordly manner somewhat raised the landlord's opinion about the newcomers.

" What can I do for you ? " he asked.

This question did not embarrass Peter Ivanovich. He expressed his desire to have rooms, tea, a samovdr, supper, dinner, food for the servants, in short, all those things for which hotels exist, and when M. Chevalier, marvelling at the innocence of the old man, who apparently imagined that he was in the Trukhmén steppe, or supposed that all these things would be given him without pay, informed him that he could have all those things, Peter Ivanovich was in ecstasy.

" Now that is nice ! Very nice ! And so we shall get things all fixed. Well, then please – " but he felt embarrassed to be speaking all the time about himself, and he began to ask M. Chevalier about his family and his business. When Sergyéy Petrovich returned to the room, he did not seem to approve of his father's address ; he observed the landlord's dissatisfaction, and reminded his father of the bath. But Peter Ivanovich was interested in the question of how a French hotel could be run in Moscow in the year '56, and of how Madame Chevalier passed her time. Finally the landlord himself bowed and asked him whether he was not pleased to order anything.

" We will have tea, Natdsha. Yes ? Tea, then, if you please! We will have some other talks, my dear monsieur ! What a charming man ! "

" And the bath, papa ? "

" Oh, yes, then we shall have no tea."

Thus the only result from the conversation with the newly arrived guests was taken from the landlord. But Peter Ivanovich was now proud and happy of his arrange-

ments. The drivers, who came to ask a pourboire, vexed him, because Serézha had no change, and Peter Ivanovich was on the point of sending once more for the landlord, but the happy thought that others, too, ought to be happy on that evening helped him out of that predicament. He took two three-rouble bills, and, sticking one bill into the hand of one of the drivers, he said, " This is for you " (Peter Ivanovich was in the habit of saying " you " to all without exception, unless to a member of his family) ; " and this is for you," he said, transferring the other bill from the palm of his hand to that of the driver, in some such manner as people do when paying a doctor for a visit. After attending to all these things, he was taken to the bath-house.

Sdnya, who was sitting on the divan, put her hand under her head and burst out laughing.

" Oh, how nice it is, mamma ! Oh, how nice ! "

Then she placed her feet on the divan, stretched herself, adjusted herself, and fell into the sound, calm sleep of a healthy girl of eighteen years of age, after six weeks on the road. Natalya Nikolaevna, who was still busy taking out things in her sleeping-room, heard, no doubt with her maternal ear, that Sonya was not stirring, and went out to take a look at her. She took a pillow and, raising the girl's reddened, dishevelled head with her large white hand, placed her on the pillow. Sonya drew a deep, deep sigh, shrugged her shoulders, and put her head on the pillow, without saying " Merci" as though that had all been done of its own accord.

" Not on that bed, not on that, Gavrilovna, Katya," Natalya Nikolaevna immediately turned to the maids who were making a bed,

and with one hand, as though in passing, she adjusted the straying hair of her daughter. Without stopping and without hurrying, Natalya Nikolaevna dressed herself, and upon the arrival of her husband and her son everything was ready : the trunks were no

She knew those verses and loved them, but was not guided by them. All her nature was an expression of that thought ; all her life was this one unconscious weaving of invisible roses in the lives of those with whom she came in contact. She had followed her husband to Siberia only because she loved him ; she had not thought what she could do for him, and instinctively had done everything. She had made his bed, had put away his things, had prepared his dinner and his tea, and, above all, had always been where he was, and no woman could have given more happiness to her husband.

In the drawing-room the samovar was boiling on the round table. Natalya Nikolaevna sat near it. Sdnya wrinkled her face and smiled under her mother's hand, which was tickling her, when father and son, with wrinkled finger-tips and glossy cheeks and foreheads (the father's bald spot was particularly glistening), with fluffy white and black hair, and with beaming countenances, entered the room.

" It has grown brighter since you have come in," said Natalya Nikolaevna. " O Lord, how white you are ! "

She had been saying that each Saturday, for several decades, and each Saturday Pierre experienced bashfulness and delight, whenever he heard that. They seated themselves at the table ; there was an odour of tea and of the pipe, and there were heard the voices of the parents, the children, and the servants, who received their cups in the same room. They recalled everything funny that had happened on the road, admired Sonya's hair-dressing, and laughed. Geographically they were all transferred a distance of five thousand versts, into an entirely different, strange milieu, but morally they were that evening still at home, just such as the peculiar, long, solitary family life had made them to be. It will not be so to-morrow. Peter Ivanovich seated himself near the samovar, and lighted his pipe. He was not in a cheerful mood.

" So here we are," he said, " and I am glad that we shall not see any one to-night; this is the last evening we shall pass with the family," and he washed these words down with a large mouthful of tea.

" Why the last, Pierre? "

" Why ? Because the eaglets have learned to fly, and they have to make their own nests, and from here they will fly each in a different direction - "

" What nonsense ! " said Sonya, taking his glass from him, and smiling at him, as she smiled at everything. « The old nest is good enough ! "

" The old nest is a sad nest ; the old man did not know how to make it, – he was caught in a cage, and in the cage he reared his young ones, and was let out only when his wings no longer would hold him up. No, the eaglets must make their nests higher up, more auspiciously, nearer to the sun ; that is what they are his children for, that his example might serve them ; but the old one will look on, so long as he is not blind, and will listen, when he becomes blind – Pour in some rum, more, more – enough ! "

"We shall see who is going to leave," replied Sonya, casting a cursory glance at her mother, as though she felt uneasy speaking in her presence. " We shall see who is going to leave," she continued. " I am not afraid for myself, neither am I for Serézha." (Serezha was walking up and down in the room, thinking of how clothes would be ordered for him to-morrow, and wondering whether he had better go to the tailor, or send for him ; he was not interested in Sonya's conversation with his father.) Sonya began to laugh.

" What is the matter ? What ? " asked her father.

" You are younger than we, papa. Much younger, indeed," she said, again bursting out into a laugh.

"Indeed!" said the old man, and his austere wrinkles formed themselves into a gentle, and yet contemptuous, smile.

Natalya Nikoldevna bent away from the samovar which prevented her seeing her husband.

" Sdnya is right. You are still sixteen years old, Pierre. Serézha is younger in feelings, but you are younger in soul. I can foresee what he will do, but you will astound me yet."

Whether he recognized the justice of this remark, or was flattered by it, he did not know what reply to make, and only smoked in silence, drank his tea, and beamed with his eyes. But Serézha, with characteristic egoism of youth, interested in what was said about him, entered into the conversation and affirmed that he was really old, that his arrival in Moscow and the new life, which was opening before him, did not gladden him in the least, and that he calmly reflected on the future and looked forward toward it.

" Still, it is the last evening," repeated Peter Ivanovich. " It will not be again to-morrow."

And he poured a little more rum into his glass. He sat for a long time at the tea-table, with an expression as though he wished to say many things, but had no hearers. He moved up the rum toward him, but his daughter softly carried away the bottle.

II.

When M. Chevalier, who had been up-stairs to look after his guests, returned to his room and gave the benefit of his observations on the

newcomers to his life companion, in laces and a silk garment, who in Parisian fashion was sitting back of the counter, several habitual visitors of the establishment were sitting in the room. Serézha, who had been down-stairs, had taken notice of that room and of its visitors. If you have been in Moscow, you have, no doubt, noticed that room yourself.

If you, a modest man who do not know Moscow, have missed a dinner to which you are invited, or have made a mistake in your calculations, imagining that the hospitable Muscovites would invite you to dinner, or simply wish to dine in the best restaurant, you enter the lackeys' room. Three or four lackeys jump up: one of them takes off your fur coat and congratulates you on the occasion of the New Year, or of the Butter-week, or of your arrival, or simply remarks that you have not called for a long while, though you have never been in that establishment before.

You enter, and the first thing that strikes your eyes is a table set, as you in the first moment imagine, with an endless quantity of palatable dishes. But that is only an optical illusion, for the greater part of that table is occupied by pheasants in feather, raw lobsters, boxes with perfume and pomatum, and bottles with cosmetics and candy. Only at the very edge, if you look well, will you find the vodka and a piece of bread with butter and sardines, under a wire globe, which is quite useless in Moscow in the month of December, even though it is precisely such as those which are used in Paris. Then, beyond the table, you see the room, where behind a counter sits a Frenchwoman, of extremely repulsive exterior, but wearing the cleanest of gloves and a most exquisite, fashionable gown. Near the Frenchwoman you will see an officer in unbuttoned uniform, taking a dram of védka,, a civilian reading a newspaper, and somebody's military or civilian legs lying on a velvet chair, and you will hear French conversation, and more or less sincere, loud laughter.

If you wish to know what is going on in that room, I should advise you not to enter within, but only to look in, as though merely passing by to take a sandwich. Otherwise you will feel ill at ease from the interrogative silence and glances, and you will certainly take your tail between your legs and skulk away to one of the tables in the large hall, or to the winter garden. Nobody will keep you from doing so. These tables are for everybody, and there, in your solitude, you may call Dey a garçon and order as many truffles as you please. The room with the Frenchwoman, however, exists for the select, golden Moscow youth, and it is not so easy to find your way among the select as you imagine.

On returning to this room, M. Chevalier told his wife that the gentleman from Siberia was dull, but that his son and daughter were fine people, such as could be raised only in Siberia.

" You ought just to see the daughter ! She is a little rose-bush ! "

"Oh, this old man is fond of fresh-looking women," said one of the

guests, who was smoking a cigar. (The conversation, of course, was carried on in French, but I render it in Russian, as I shall continue to do in this story.)

« Oh, I am very fond of them ! " replied M. Chevalier. " Women are my passion. Do you not believe me ? "

« Do you hear, Madame Chevalier ? " shouted a stout officer of Cossacks, who owed a big bill in the institution and was fond of chatting with the landlord.

" He shares my taste," said M. Chevalier, patting the stout man on his epaulet.

" And is this Siberian young lady really pretty ? "

M. Chevalier folded his fingers and kissed them.

After that the conversation between the guests became confidential and very jolly. They were talking about the stout officer ; he smiled as he listened to what they were saying about him.

"How can one have such perverted taste!" cried one, through the laughter. " Mlle. Clarisse ! You know, Strugov prefers such of the women as have chicken calves."

Though Mlle. Clarisse did not understand the salt of that remark, she behind her counter burst out into a laughter as silvery as her bad teeth and advanced years permitted.

"Has the Siberian lady turned him to such thoughts?" and she laughed more heartily still. M. Chevalier himself roared with laughter, as he said :

" Ce vieux coquin," patting the officer of Cossacks on his head and shoulders.

" But who are they, those Siberians ? Mining proprietors or merchants ? " one of the gentlemen asked, during a pause in the laughter.

" Nikita, ask ze passport from ze chentleman zat as come," said M. Chevalier.

"We, Alexander, ze Autocrat – " M. Chevalier began to read the passport, which had been brought in the meantime, but the officer of Cossacks tore it out of his hands, and his face expressed surprise.

" Guess who it is," he said, " for you all know him by reputation."

" How can we guess ? Show it to us ! Well, Abdel Kader, ha, ha, ha ! Well, Cagliostro– Well, Peter 111. – ha, ha, ha, ha ! "

" Well, read it ! "

The officer of Cossacks unfolded the paper and read the name of him who once had been Prince Peter Ivanovich, and the family name which everybody knows and pronounces with a certain respect and pleasure, when speaking of a person bearing that name, as of a near and familiar person. We shall call him Labdzov. The officer of Cossacks had a dim recollection that this Peter Labázov had been something important in the year '25, and that he had been sent to hard labour, – but what he had been famous for, he did not exactly know. But of the others not one knew anything about him, and they replied :

" Oh, yes, the famous prince," just as they would have said, " Of course, he is famous ! " about Shakespeare, who had written the " Æneid." But they recognized him from the explanations of the stout officer, who told them that he was a brother of Prince Ivfin, an uncle of the Chikins, of Countess Prut, in short, the well-known –

" He must be very rich, if he is a brother of Prince Ivan," remarked one of the young men, « if the fortune has been returned to him. It has been returned to some."

« What a lot of exiles are returning nowadays ! " remarked another. " Really, fewer seem to have been sent away, than are returning now. Zhikinski, tell us that story of the 18th!" he turned to an officer of sharpshooters, who had the reputation of being a good storyteller.

" Do tell it ! "

" In the first place, it is a true story, and happened here, at Chevalier's, in the large hall. Three Decembrists came to have their dinner. They were sitting at one table, eating, drinking, talking. Opposite them sat down a gentleman of respectable mien, of about the same age, and he listened to their talking about Siberia. He asked them something, they exchanged a few words, began to converse, and it turned out that he, too, was from Siberia.

" ' And do you know Nerchinsk ? ' "

" ' Indeed I do, I lived there. ' "

" ' And do you know Tatyana Ivanovna ? ' "

" ' Of course I do! ' "

" ' Permit me to ask you, – were you, too, exiled ? ' "

" < Yes, I had the misfortune to suffer, and you ? ' "

We are all exiles of the 14th of December. It is strange that we should not know you, if you, too, were exiled for the 14th. Permit me to know your name!'

" ' Fédorov. ' "

"«Also for the 14th ?'

No, for the 18th.'

" ' For the 18th ?'

" ' For the 18th of September, for a gold watch. I was falsely accused of having stolen it, and I suffered, though innocent.' "

All of them rolled in laughter, except the story-teller, who with a most serious face looked at the outstretched hearers and swore that it was a true story.

Soon after the story one of the young men got up and went to the club. He passed through the halls which were filled with tables at which old men were playing whist; turned into the "infernial region," where the famous " Puchin " had begun his game against the " company;" stood for awhile near one of the billiard-tables, where, holding on to the cushion, a distinguished old man was fumbling around and with difficulty striking a ball ; looked into the library, where a general, holding a newspaper a distance away from him, was reading it slowly above his glasses, and a registered young man turned the leaves of one periodical after another, trying to make no noise ; and finally seated himself on a divan in the billiard-room, near some young people who were playing pyramids, and who were as much gilded as he was.

It was a day of dinners, and there were there many gentlemen who always frequented the club. Among them was Ivan Vavflovich Pakhtin. He was a man of about forty years of age, of medium stature, fair-com-plexioned, with broad shoulders and hips, with a bare head, and a glossy, happy, clean-shaven face. He was not playing at pyramids, but had just sat down beside Prince D----, with whom he was on " thou " terms, and

had accepted a glass of champagne which had been offered to him. He had located himself so comfortably after the dinner, having quietly unbuckled his trousers at the back, that it looked as though he could sit there all his life, smoking a cigar, drinking champagne, and feeling the proximity of princes, counts, and the children of ministers. The news of the arrival of the Labäzovs interfered with his calm.

" Where are you going, Päkhtin," said a minister's son, having noticed during the game that Päkhtin had got up, pulled his waistcoat down, and emptied his champagne in a large gulp.

« Syévernikov has invited me," said Päkhtin, feeling a restlessness in his legs. " Well, will you go there ? "

" Anastasya, Anastäsyä, please unlock the door for me." That was a well-known gipsy-song, which was in vogue at that time.

" Perhaps. And you ? "

" Where shall I, an old married man, go ? "

« Well ! "

Päkhtin, smiling, went to the glass hall, to join Syévernikov. He was fond of having his last word appear to be a joke. And so it came out at that time, too.

" Well, how is the countess's health ? " he asked, walking over to Syévernikov, who had not called him at all, but who, according to Pakhtin's surmise, should more than any one else learn of the arrival of the Labäzovs. Syévernikov had somehow been mixed up with the affair of the 14th, and was a friend of the Decembrists. The countess's health was much better, and Pakhtin was very glad to hear it.

" Do you know, Labäzov has arrived ; he is staying at Chevalier's."

" You don't say so ! We are old friends. How glad I am ! How glad ! The poor old fellow must have grown old. His wife wrote to my wife – "

But Syévernikov did not finish saying what it was she had written, because his partners, who were playing without trumps, had made some mistake. While speaking with Ivan Pavlovich, he kept an eye on them, and now he leaned forward with his whole body against the table, and, thumping it with his hands, he tried to prove that they ought to have played from the seven. Ivän Pävlo-vich got up and, going up to another table, in the middle of a conversation informed another worthy gentleman of his bit of news, again got up, and repeated the same at a third table. The worthy gentlemen were all glad to hear of the arrival of the Labäzovs, so that, upon returning to the billiard-room, Ivan Pävlovich, who at first had had his misgivings about whether he had to rejoice in the return of the Labäzovs, or not, no longer started with an introduction about the ball, about an article in the Messenger, about health, or weather, but approached everybody directly with the enthusiastic announcement of the safe return of the famous Decembrist.

The old man, who was still vainly endeavouring to hit the white ball with his cue, would, in Päkhtin's opinion, be very much delighted to hear the news. He went up to him.

" Are you playing well, your Excellency ? " he said, just as the old man stuck his cue into the marker's red waistcoat, wishing to indicate that it had to be chalked.

" Your Excellency " was not said, as you might think, from a desire of being subservient (no, that was not the fashion in '56). Ivän Pävlovich was in the habit of calling the old man by his name and patronymic, but this was said partly as a joke on men who spoke that way, partly in order to hint that he knew full well to whom he was

talking, and yet was taking liberties, and partly in truth :
altogether it was a very delicate jest.

" I have just learned that Peter Labázov has returned. Straight from Siberia, with his whole family."

' These words Päkhtin pronounced just as the old man again missed his ball, for such was his bad luck.

" If he has returned as cracked as he went away, there is no cause for rejoicing," gruffly said the old man, who was irritated by his incomprehensible failure.

This statement vexed Ivän Pävlovich, and again he was at a loss whether there was any cause for rejoicing at Labâzov's return, and, in order fully to settle his doubt, he directed his steps to a room, where generally assembled the clever people, who knew the meaning and value of each thing, and, in short, knew everything. Ivan Pavlovich was on the same footing of friendship with the frequenters of the intellectual room as with the gilded youths and with the dignitaries. It is true, he had no special place of his own in the intellectual room, hut nobody was surprised to see him enter and seat himself on a divan. They were just discussing in what year and upon what occasion there had taken place a quarrel between two Russian journalists. Waiting for a moment of silence, Ivdn Pavlovich communicated his bit of news, not as something joyous, nor as an unimportant event, but as though part of the conversation. But immediately, from the way the " intellectuals " (I use the word " intellectuals " as a name for the frequenters of the "intellectual" room) received the news and began to discuss it, Ivan Pavlovich understood that it belonged there, and that only there would it receive such an elaboration as to enable him to carry it farther and savoir à quoi s'en tenir.

"Labâzov was the only one who was wanting," said one of the intellectuals ; " now all the living Decembrists have returned to Russia."

" He was one of the herd of the famous – " said Pâkh-tin, still with an inquisitive glance, prepared to make that quotation both jocular and serious.

" Indeed, Labazov was one of the most remarkable men of that time," began an intellectual. "In 1819 he was an ensign of the Seménovski regiment, and was sent abroad with messages to Duke Z----. Then he returned

and in the year '24 was received in the First Masonic lodge. The Masons of that time used all to gather at the house of D---- and at his house. He was very

rich. Prince Zh-----, Fédor D-----, Ivan P-----, those

were Iris nearest friends. Then his uncle, Prince Visarion, to

remove the young man from that society, took him to Moscow.”

“ Pardon me, Nikolay Stepanovich,” another intellectual interrupted him, “ it seems to me that that happened in the year '23, because Visarion Labázov was appointed a commander of the Third Corps in '24, and was then in Warsaw. He had offered him an adjutantship, and after his refusal, he was removed. However, pardon me for interrupting you.”

“ Not at all. Proceed ! ”

“ Pardon me ! ”

“ Proceed ! You ought to know that better than I, and, besides, your memory and knowledge have been sufficiently attested here.”

“ In Moscow he against his uncle's will left the army,” continued the one whose memory and knowledge had been attested, “ and there he gathered around him a second society, of which he was the progenitor and the heart, if it be possible so to express it. He was rich, handsome, clever, educated ; they say he was exceedingly amiable. My aunt used to tell me that she did not know a more bewitching man. Here he married Miss Krinski, a few months before the revolt broke out.”

“ The daughter of Nikolay Krinski, the one of Borodino fame, you know,” somebody interrupted him.

“ Well, yes. Her immense fortune he still possesses, but his own paternal estate passed over to his younger brother, Prince Ivan, who is now Ober-Hof-Kaffermeister ” (he gave him some such name) “ and was a minister.”

“ The best thing is what he did for his brother,” continued the narrator. “ When he was arrested, there was one thing which he succeeded in destroying, and that was his brother's letters and documents.”

“ Was his brother mixed up in it, too ? ”

The narrator did not say “ Yes,” but compressed his lips and gave a significant wink.

“ Then, during all the inquests Peter Labázov kept denying everything which concerned his brother, and so suffered more than the rest. But the best part of it is that Prince Ivan got all the property, and never sent a penny to his brother.”

« They say that Peter Labázov himself declined it,” remarked one of the hearers.

“ Yes ; but he declined it only because Prince Ivan wrote him before the coronation, excusing himself and saying that if he had not taken it, it would have been confiscated, and that he had children and

debts, and that now he was unable to return it to him. Peter Labâzov replied to him in two lines : ' Neither I nor my heirs have any right, nor can have any right, to the property legally appropriated by you.' That was all. How was that? And Prince Ivân swallowed it, and in delight locked up that document with the notes in a safe, and showed it to no one."

One of the peculiarities of the intellectual room was that its visitors knew, whenever they wanted to know, everything that was taking place in the world, no matter how secret the event might have been.

" Still it is a question," said a new interlocutor, " whether it was just to deprive the children of Prince Ivân of the property, with which they have grown up and have been educated, and to which they thought they had a right."

Thus the conversation was transferred to an abstract sphere, which did not interest Pâkhtin.

He felt the necessity of communicating the news to fresh people, and so he rose and, speaking to the right and to the left, walked from one hall to another. One of his fellow officers stopped him to give him the news of Labâzov's arrival.

" Who does not know that ? " replied Ivân Pâvlovich, with a calm smile, turning to the exit. The news had had time to complete its circle, and was again returning to him.

There was nothing else to do in the club, and he went to an evening party. It was not a special entertainment, but a salon where guests were received any evening. There were there eight ladies, and one old colonel, and all found it terribly dull. Pâkhtin's firm gait alone and his smiling face cheered the ladies and maidens. And the news was the more appropriate, since the old Countess Fuks and her daughter were present in the salon. When Pâkhtin told nearly word for word what he had heard in the intellectual room, Madame Fuks, shaking her head and marvelling at her old age, began to recall how she used to go out together with Natâsha Krfnski, the present Princess Labâzov.

" Her marriage is a very romantic story, and all that happened under my eyes. Natâsha was almost engaged to Myâtlin, who was later killed in a duel with Debras. Just then Prince Peter arrived in Moscow, fell in love with her, and proposed to her. But her father, who wanted Myâtlin very much, - they were, in general, afraid of Labâzov because he was a Mason, - refused him. The young man continued to see her at balls, everywhere, and became friendly with Myâtlin, whom he begged to decline. Myâtlin agreed to do so, and he persuaded her to elope. She, too, agreed, but the last repentance ----" (the conversation was taking place in French), " and she went to her father and said that everything was ready for the elopement, and she could leave him, but hoped for his magnanimity. And, indeed, her father forgave her, - everybody begged for her, - and gave his

consent. Thus the wedding was celebrated, and it was a jolly wedding ! Who of us thought that a year later she would follow him to Siberia ! She, an only daughter, the most beautiful, the richest woman of that time. Em-

peror Alexander always used to notice her at balls, and had danced with her so often. Countess G---- gave a

bal costume, - I remember it as though it were to-day,- and she was a Neapolitan maid, oh, so charming ! Whenever he came to Moscow, he used to ask, ' que fait la belle Napolitaine ? ' And suddenly this woman, in such a condition (she bore a child on the way), did not stop for a moment to think, without preparing anything, without collecting her things, just as she was, when they took him, followed him a distance of five thousand versts."

" Oh, what a remarkable woman ! " said the hostess.

« Both he and she were remarkable people," said another lady. "I have been told, - I don't know whether it is true, - that wherever they worked in the mines in Siberia, or whatever it is called, the convicts, who were with them, improved in their presence."

" But she has never worked in the mines," Bakhtin corrected her.

How much that year '56 meant! Three years before no one had been thinking of the LaMzovs, and if any one recalled them, it was with that unaccountable feeling of dread with which one speaks of one lately dead ; but now they vividly recalled all the former relations, all the beautiful qualities, and each lady was making a plan for getting the monopoly of the Labàzovs, in order to treat the other guests to them.

« Their son and their daughter have come with them," said Bakhtin.

« If they are only as handsome as their mother used to be," said Countess Fuks. "Still, their father, too, was very, very handsome."

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

" They say, nicely. They say that the young man is as nice, as amiable, and as cultured as though he had been brought up in Baris."

" I predict great success to that young person," said a homely spinster. " All those Siberian ladies have something pleasantly trivial about them, which everybody, however, likes."

" Yes, yes," said another spinster.

" Here we have another rich prospective bride," said a third spinster.

The old colonel, of German origin, who had come to Moscow three years before, in order to marry a rich girl, decided as quickly as

possible, before the young people knew anything about it, to present himself and propose. But the spinsters and ladies thought almost the same about the young Siberian.

"No doubt that is the one I am destined to marry," thought a spinster who had been going out for eight years.

"No doubt it was for the best that that stupid officer of the Chevalier Guards did not propose to me. I should certainly have been unhappy."

"Well, they will again grow yellow with envy, if this one, too, falls in love with me," thought a young and pretty lady.

We hear much about the provincialism of small towns, – but there, is nothing worse than the provincialism of the upper classes. There are no new persons there, and society is prepared to receive all kinds of new persons, if they should make their appearance ; but they are rarely, very rarely, recognized as belonging to their circle and accepted, as was the case with the Labàzovs, and the sensation produced by them is stronger than in a provincial town.

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"This is Moscow, white-stoned Mother Moscow," said Beter Ivänovich, rubbing his eyes in the morning, and listening to the tolling of the bells which was proceeding from Gazette Lane. Nothing so vividly resurrects the past as sounds, and these sounds of the Moscow bells, combined with the sight of a white wall opposite the window, and with the rumbling of wheels, so vividly reminded him not only of the Moscow which he had known thirty-five years before, but also of the Moscow with the Kremlin, with the palaces, with Ivan the bell, and so forth, which he had been carrying in his heart, that he experienced a childish joy at being a Russian, and in Moscow.

There appeared the Bukhara morning-gown, wide open over the broad chest with its chintz shirt, the pipe with its amber, the lackey with soft manners, tea, the odour of tobacco; a loud, male voice was heard in Chevalier's apartments ; there resounded the morning kisses, and the voices of daughter and son, and the Decembrist was as much at home as in Irkutsk, and as he would have been in New York or in Paris.

No matter how much I should like to present to my readers the Decembrist hero above all foibles, I must confess, for truth's sake, that Peter Ivrlnovich took great pains in shaving and combing himself, and in looking at himself in the mirror. He was dissatisfied with the garments, which had been made in Siberia with little elegance, and two or three times he buttoned and unbuttoned his coat.

But Natalya Nikolaevna entered the drawing-room, rustling with her black moire gown, with mittens and with ribbons in her cap, which, though not according to the latest fashion, were so arranged that,

far from making her appear ridicule, they made her look distinguée. For this ladies have a special sixth sense and perspicacity, which cannot be compared to anything.

Sdnya, too, was so dressed that, although she was two years behind in fashion, she could not be reproached in any way. On her mother everything was dark and simple, and on the daughter bright and cheerful.

Serézha had just awakened, and so they went by themselves to mass. Father and mother sat in the back seat, and their daughter was opposite them. Vasili climbed on the box, and the hired carriage took them to the Kremlin. When they got out of the carriage, the ladies adjusted their robes, and Peter Ivanovich took the arm of his Natalya Nikolaevna, and, throwing back his head, walked up to the door of the church. Many people, merchants, officers, and everybody else, could not make out what kind of people they were.

Who was that old man with his old sunburnt, and still unblanched face, with the large, straight work wrinkles of a peculiar fold, different from the wrinkles acquired in the English club, with snow-white hair and beard, with a good, proud glance and energetic movements? Who was that tall lady with that determined gait, and those weary, dimmed, large, beautiful eyes? Who was that fresh, stately, strong young lady, neither fashionable, nor timid? Merchants? No, no merchants. Germans? No, no Germans. Gentlefolk? No, they are different, – they are distinguished people. Thus thought those who saw them in church, and for some reason more readily and cheerfully made way for them than for men in thick epaulets. Peter Ivanovich bore himself just as majestically as at the entrance, and prayed quietly, with reserve, and without forgetting himself. Natalya Nikolaevna glided down on her knees, took out a handkerchief, and wept much during the cherubical song. Sdnya seemed to be making an effort over herself in order to pray. Devotion did not come to her, but she did not look around, and diligently made the signs of the cross.

Serézha stayed at home, partly because he had overslept himself, partly because he did not like to stand through a mass, which made his legs faint, – a matter he was unable to understand, since it was a mere trifle for him to walk forty miles on snow-shoes, whereas standing through twelve pericopes was the greatest physical torture for him, – but chiefly because he felt that more than anything he needed a new suit of clothes. He dressed himself and went to Blacksmith Bridge. He had plenty of money. His father had made it a rule, ever since his son had passed his twenty-first year, to let him have as much money as he wished. It lay with him to leave his parents entirely without money.

How sorry I am for the 250 roubles which he threw away in Kuntz's shop of ready-made clothes! Any one of the gentlemen who met Serézha would have been only too happy to show him around, and would have regarded it as a piece of happiness to go with him to get his clothes made. But, as it was, he was a stranger in the crowd, and,

making his way in his cap along Blacksmith Bridge, he went to the end, without looking into the shops, opened the door, and came out from it in a cinnamon-coloured half-dress coat, which was tight (though at that time they wore wide coats), and in loose black trousers (though they wore tight trousers), and in a flowery atlas waistcoat, which not one of the gentlemen, who were in Chevalier's special room, would have allowed their lackeys to wear, and bought a number of other things ; on the other hand, Kuntz marvelled at the young man's slender waist, the like of which, as he explained to everybody, he had never seen. Serézha knew that he had a beautiful waist, and he was very much flattered by the praise of a stranger, such as Kuntz was.

He came out with 250 roubles less, but was dressed badly, in fact so badly that his apparel two days later passed over into Vasili's possession and always remained a disagreeable memory for Serézha.

At home he went down-stairs, seated himself in the large hall, looking now and then into the sanctum, and ordered a breakfast of such strange dishes that the servant in the kitchen had to laugh. Then he asked for a periodical, and pretended to be reading. When the servant, encouraged by the inexperience of the young man, addressed some questions to him, Serézha said, " Go to your plactz! " and blushed. But he said this so proudly that the servant obeyed. Mother, father, and daughter, upon returning home, found Ins clothes excellent.

Do you remember that joyous sensation of childhood, when you were dressed up for your name-day and taken to mass, and when, upon returning with a holiday expression in your clothes, upon your countenance, and in your soul, you found toys and guests at home ? You knew that on that day there would be no classes, that even the grown-ups celebrated on that day, and that that was a day of exceptions and pleasures for the whole house ; you knew that you alone were the cause of that holiday, and that you would be forgiven, no matter what you might do, and you were surprised to see that the people in the streets did not celebrate along with your home folk, and the sounds were more audible, and the colours brighter, - in short, a name-day sensation. It was a sensation of that kind that Peter Ivänovich experienced on his return from church.

Pdkhtin's solicitude of the evening before did not pass in vain : instead of toys Peter Ivdnovich found at home several visiting-cards of distinguished Muscovites, who, in the year '56, regarded it as their peremptory duty to show every attention possible to a famous exile, whom they would under no consideration have wished to see three years before. In the eyes of Chevalier, the porter, and the servants of the hotel, the appearance of carriages asking for Peter Ivanovich, on that one morning increased their respect and subserviency tenfold.

All those were name-day toys for Peter Ivdnovich. No matter how much tried in life, how clever a man may be, the expression of respect

from people respected by a

begged to be excused, and sat down and talked for a long time.

" Yes, I must tell you, I have found many changes in Russia since then," Peter Ivanovich said, in reply to a question.

The moment Peter Ivanovich began to speak, you ought to have seen with what respectful attention Pakh-tin received every word that flew out of the mouth of the distinguished old man, and how after each sentence, at times after a word, Pakhtin with a nod, a smile, or a motion of his eyes gave him to understand that he had received and accepted the memorable sentence or word.

The weary glance approved of that manœuvre. Ser-gyéy Petrdvich seemed to be afraid lest his father's conversation should not be weighty enough, corresponding to the attention of the hearer. Sonya Petrovna, on the contrary, smiled that imperceptible self-satisfied smile which people smile who have caught a man's ridiculous side. It seemed to her that nothing was to be got from him, that he was a " shyushka," as she and her brother nicknamed a certain class of people.

Peter Ivanovich declared that during his journey he had seen enormous changes, which gave him pleasure.

" There is no comparison, the masses – the peasants – stand so much higher now, have so much greater consciousness of their dignity," he said, as though repeating some old phrases. " I must say that the masses have always interested me most. I am of the opinion that the strength of Russia does not lie in us, but in the masses," and so forth.

Peter Ivanovich with characteristic zeal evolved his more or less original ideas in regard to many important subjects. We shall hear more of them in fuller form. Pakhtin was melting for joy, and fully agreed with him in everything.

" You must by all means meet the Aksatovs. Will you

permit me to introduce them to you, prince ? You know they have permitted him to publish his periodical. Tomorrow, they say, the first number will appear. I have also read his remarkable article on the consistency of the theory of science in the abstract. Remarkably interesting. Another article, the history of Servia in the eleventh century, of that famous general Karbovanets, is also very interesting. Altogether an enormous step."

" Indeed," said Peter Ivanovich. But he was apparently not interested in all these bits of information ; he did not even know the names and merits of all those men whom Pâkhtin quoted as universally known.

But Natalya Nikolaevna, without denying the necessity of knowing all

these men and conditions, remarked in justification of her husband that Pierre received his periodicals very late. He read entirely too much.

" Papa, shall we not go to aunty ? " asked Sdnya, upon coming in.

" We shall, but we must have our breakfast. Won't you have anything ? "

Pâkhtin naturally declined, but Peter Ivanovich, with the hospitality characteristic of every Russian and of him in particular, insisted that Pâkhtin should eat and drink something. He himself emptied a wine-glass of vddka and a tumbler of Bordeaux. Pâkhtin noticed that as he was filling his glass, Natalya accidentally turned away from it, and the son cast a peculiar glance on his father's hands.

After the wine, Peter Ivanovich, in response to Pakh-tin's questions about what his opinion was in respect to the new literature, the new tendency, the war, the peace (Pâkhtin had a knack of uniting the most diversified subjects into one senseless but smooth conversation), in response to these questions Peter Tvânovich at once replied with one general profession de foi, and either under the influence of the wine, or of the subject of the conversation, he became so excited that tears appeared in his eyes, and Pâkhtin, too, was in ecstasy, and himself became tearful, and without embarrassment expressed Ids conviction that Peter Ivânovich was now in advance of all the foremost men and should become the head of all the parties. Peter Ivânovich's eyes became inflamed, - he believed what Pâkhtin was telling him, - and he would have continued talking for a long time, if Sonya Petrdvna had not schemed to get Natâlya Nikolâevna to put on her mantilla, and had not come herself to raise Peter Ivânovich from his seat. He poured out the rest of the wine into a glass, but Sonya Petrovna drank it.

" What is this ? "

" I have not had any yet, papa, pardon."

He smiled.

" Well, let us go to Mârya Ivânovna's. You will excuse us, Monsieur Pâkhtin."

And Peter Ivânovich left the room, carrying his head high. In the vestibule he met a general, who had come to call on his old acquaintance. They had not seen each other for thirty-five years. The general was toothless and bald.

" How fresh you still are ! " he said. " Evidently Siberia is better than St. Petersburg. These are your family, - introduce me to them ! What a fine fellow your son is ! So to dinner to-morrow ? "

" Yes, yes, by all means."

On the porch they met the famous Chikhâev, another old acquaintance.

" How did you find out that I had arrived ? "

" It would be a shame for Moscow if it did not know it. It is a shame that you were not met at the barrier. Where do you dine? No doubt with your sister, Mârya Ivâ-novna. Very well, I shall be there myself."

Peter Ivânovich always had the aspect of a proud man for one who could not through that exterior make out the expression of unspeakable goodness and impressionableness ; but just then even Marya Nikolaevna was delighted to see his unwonted dignity, and Sonya Petrovna smiled with her eyes, as she looked at him. They arrived at the house of Marya Ivanovna. Marya Ivanovna was Peter Ivanovich's godmother and ten years his senior. She was an old maid.

Her history, why she did not get married, and how she had passed her youth, I will tell some time later.

She had lived uninterruptedly for forty years in Moscow. She had neither much intelligence, nor great wealth, and she did not think much of connections, – on the contrary ; and there was not a man who did not respect her. She was so convinced that everybody ought to respect her that everybody actually respected her. There were some young liberals from the university who did not recognize her power, but these gentlemen made a bold front only in her absence. She needed only to enter the drawing-room with her royal gait, to say something in her calm manner, to smile her kindly smile, and they were vanquished. Her society consisted of everybody. She looked upon all of Moscow as her home folk, and treated them as such. She had friends mostly among the young people and clever men, but women she did not like. She had also dependents, whom our literature has for some reason included with the Hungarian woman and with generals in one common class for contempt ; but Marya Ivdnovna considered it better for Skopin, who had been ruined in cards, and Madame Byéshev, whom her husband had driven away, to be living with her than in misery, and so she kept them.

But the two great passions in Marya Ivanovna's present life were her two brothers. Peter Ivanovich was her idol. Prince Ivan was hateful to her. She had not known that Peter Ivanovich had arrived ; she had attended mass, and was just finishing her coffee.

At the table sat the vicar of Moscow, Madame Byéshev, and Skopin. Marya Ivanovna was telling them about young Count V----, the son of P----Z----, who

had returned from Sevastopol, and with whom she was in love. (She had some passion all the time.) He was to dine with her on that day. The vicar got up and bowed himself out. Mârya Ivanovna did not keep him, – she was a freethinker in this respect : she was pious, but had no use for monks and laughed at the ladies that ran after them,

and boldly asserted that in her opinion monks were just such men as we sinful people, and that it was better to find salvation in the world than in a monastery.

" Give the order not to receive anybody, my dear," she said, " I will write to Pierre. I cannot understand why he is not coming. No doubt, Natalya Nikolaevna is ill."

Marya Ivanovna was of the opinion that Natälyä Niko-Idevna did not like her and was her enemy. She could not forgive her because it was not she, his sister, who had given up her property and had followed him to Siberia, but Natalya Nikolaevna, and because her brother had definitely declined her offer when she got ready to go with him. After thirty-five years she was beginning to believe that Natalya Nikolaevna was the best woman in the world and his guardian angel ; but she was envious, and it seemed all the time to her that she was not a good woman.

She got up, took a few steps in the parlour, and was on the point of entering the cabinet when the door opened, and Madame Byéshev's wrinkled, grayish face, expressing joyous terror, was thrust through the door.

" Marya Ivanovna, prepare yourself," she said.

" A letter ? "

" No, something better- "

But before she had a chance to finish, a man's loud voice was heard in the antechamber:

" Where is she ? Go, NaUsha."

" He ! " muttered Marya Ivanovna, walking with long, firm steps toward her brother. She met them all as though she had last seen them the day before.

" When didst thou arrive ? Where have you stopped ? How have you come, - in a carriage ? " Such were the questions which Marya Ivanovna put, walking with them to the drawing-room and not hearing the answers, and looking with large eyes, now upon one, and now upon another. Madame Byéshev was surprised at this calm, even indifference, and did not approve of it. They all smiled ; the conversation died down, and Marya Ivànovna looked silently and seriously at her brother.

" How are you ? " asked Peter Ivanovich, taking her hand, and smiling.

Peter Ivanovich said " you " to her, though she had said " thou." Mdrya Ivanovna once more looked at his gray beard, his bald head, his teeth, his wrinkles, his eyes, his sunburnt face, and recognized all that.

" Here is my Sdnya."

But she did not look around.

" What a stup- " her voice faltered, and she took hold of his bald head with her large white hands. " What a stupid you are," she had intended to say, " not to have prepared me," but her shoulders and breast began to tremble, her old face twitched, and she burst out into sobs, pressing to her breast his bald head, and repeating : " What a stupid you are not to have prepared me ! "

Peter Ivanovich no longer appeared as such a great man to himself, not so important as he had appeared on Chevalier's porch. His back was resting against a chair, but his head was in his sister's arms, his nose was pressed against her corset, his nose was tickled, his hair dishevelled, and there were tears in his eyes. But he felt happy.

When this outburst of joyous tears was over, Mdrya Ivanovna understood what had happened and believed it, and began to examine them all. But several times during the course of the day, whenever she recalled what he had been then, and what she had been, and what they were now, and whenever the past misfortunes, and past joys and loves, vividly rose in her imagination, she was again seized by emotion, and got up and repeated : " What a stupid you are, Pierre, what a stupid not to have prepared me ! "

"Why did you not come straight to me? I should have found room for you," said Marya Ivänovna. " At least, stay to dinner. You will not feel lonesome, Ser-gydy, - a young, brave Sevastopol soldier is dining here to-day. Do you not know Nikolay Mikhaylovich's son ? He is a writer, - has written something nice. I have not read it, but they praise it, and he is a dear fellow, - I shall send for him. Chikhaev, too, wanted to come. He is a babbler, - I do not like him. Has he already called on you ? Have you seen Nikita ? That is all nonsense. What do you intend to do ? How are you, how is your health, Natalya? What are you going to do with this young fellow, and with this beauty ?"

But the conversation somehow did not flow.

Before dinner Natalya Nikoldevna went with the children to an old aunt ; brother and sister were left alone, and he began to tell her of his plans.

" Sonya is a young lady, she has to be taken out ; consequently, we are going to live in Moscow," said Märya Ivanovna.

" Never."

" Serézha has to serve."

" Never."

" You are still as crazy as ever."

But she was just as fond of the crazy man.

" First we must stay here, then go to the country, and show everything to the children."

" It is my rule not to interfere in family matters," said Marya Ivanovna, after calming down from her agitation, " and not to give advice. A young man has to serve, that I have always thought, and now more than ever. You do not know, Pierre, what these young men nowadays are. I know them all : there, Prince Dmitri's son is all ruined. Their own fault. I am not afraid of anybody, I am an old woman. It is not good." And she began to talk about the government. She was dissatisfied with it for the excessive liberty which was given to everything. " The one good thing they have done was to let you out. That is good."

Pierre began to defend it, but Marya Ivanovna was not Pakhtin : they could come to no terms. She grew excited.

" What business have you to defend it ? You are just as senseless as ever, I see."

Peter Ivanovich grew silent, with a smile which showed that he did not surrender, but that he did not wish to quarrel with Mdrya Ivanovna.

" You are smiling. We know that. You do not wish to discuss with me, a woman," she said, merrily and kindly, and casting a shrewd, intelligent glance at her brother, such as could not be expected from her old, large-featured face. " You could not convince me, my friend. I am ending my three score and ten. I have not been a fool all that time, and have seen a thing or two. I have read none of your books, and I never will. There is only nonsense in them ! "

"Well, how do you like my children? Serézha?" Peter Ivanovich said, with the same smile.

" Wait, wait ! " his sister replied, with a threatening gesture. " Don't switch me off on your children ! We shall have time to talk about them. Here is what I wanted to tell you. You are a senseless man, as senseless as ever, I see it in your eye. Now they are going to carry you in their arms. Such is the fashion. You are all in vogue now. Yes, yes, I see by your eyes that you are as senseless as ever," she added, in response to his smile. " Keep away, I implore you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, from those modern liberals. God knows what they are up to. I know it. It will not end well. Our government is silent just now, but when it comes later to showing up the nails, you will recall my words. I am afraid lest you should get mixed up in things again. Give it up ! It is all nonsense. You have children."

" Evidently you do not know me, Marya Ivdnovna," said her brother.

"All right, all right, we shall see. Either I do not know you, or you do not know yourself. I just told you what I had on my heart, and if you will listen to me, well and good. Now we can talk about Serézha. What kind of a lad is he ? " She wanted to say, " I do not like him very much," but she only said : " He resembles his mother remarkably : they are like two drops of water. Sénya is you all over, – I like her very much, very much – so sweet and open. She is a dear. Where is she, Sénya ? Yes, I forgot."

" How shall I tell you ? Sénya will make a good wife and a good mother, but my Serézha is clever, very clever, – nobody will take that from him. He studied well, – a little lazy. He is very fond of the natural sciences. We have been fortunate: we had an excellent, excellent teacher. He wants to enter the university, – to attend lectures on the natural sciences, chemistry – "

Mdrya Ivdnovna scarcely listened when her brother began to speak of the natural sciences. She seemed to feel sad, especially when he mentioned chemistry. She heaved a deep sigh and replied directly to that train of thoughts which the natural sciences evoked in her.

" If you knew how sorry I am for them, Pierre," she said, with sincere, calm, humble sadness. " So sorry, so sorry. A whole life before them. Oh, how much they will suffer yet ! "

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

" God grant it, God grant it ! It is hard to live, Pierre ! Take this one advice from me, my dear: don't philosophize ! What a stupid you are, Pierre, oh, what a stupid ! But I must attend to matters. I have invited a lot of people, but how am I going to feed them ? " She flared up, turned away, and rang the bell

« Call Taras ! "

" Is the old man still with you ? "

"Yes ; why, he is a boy in comparison with me."

Tards was angry and clean, but he undertook to get everything done.

Soon Natalya Nikoldevna and Sonya, a gleam with cold and happiness, and rustling in their dresses, entered the room; Serézha was still out, attending to some purchases.

" Let me get a good look at her ! "

Marya Ivanovna took her face. Natdlya Nikoldevna began to tell something.

THE DECEMBRISTS

THE DECEMBRISTS

THE DECEMBRISTS

SECOND FRAGMENT

(Variant of the First Chapter)

The litigation " about the seizure in the Government of Pénza, County of Krasnoslobodsk, by the landed proprietor and ex-lieutenant of the Guards, Ivan Apykhtin, of four thousand desyatlnas of land from the neighbouring Crown peasants of the village of Izlegoshcha," was through the solicitude of the peasants' representative, Ivan Mir6-nov, decided in the court of the first instance – the County Court – in favour of the peasants, and the enormous parcel of land, partly in forest, and partly in ploughings which had been broken by Apukhtin's serfs, in the year 1815 returned into the possession of the peasants, and they in the year 1816 sowed in this land and harvested.

The winning of this irregular case by the peasants surprised all the neighbours and even the peasants themselves. This success of theirs could be explained only on the supposition that Ivan Petrovich Apykhtin, a very meek, peaceful man, who was opposed to litigations and was convinced of the righteousness of this matter, had taken no measures against the action of the peasants. On the other hand, Ivan Mironov, the peasants' representative, a dry, hook-nosed, literate peasant, who had been a township elder and had acted in the capacity of collector of taxes, had collected fifty kopeks from each peasant, which money he cleverly applied in the distribution of presents, and had very shrewdly conducted the whole affair.

Immediately after the decision handed down by the County Court, Apÿkhtin, seeing the danger, gave a power of attorney to the shrewd manumitted serf, Ilya Mitrofanov, who appealed to the higher court against the decision of the County Court. Ilya Mitrofanov managed the affair so shrewdly that, in spite of all the cunning of the peasants' representative, Ivän Mirdnov, in spite of the considerable presents distributed by him to the members of the higher court, the case was retried in the Government Court in favour of the proprietor, and the land was to go back to him from the peasants, of which fact their representative was duly informed.

The representative, Ivan Mironov, told the peasants at the meeting of the Commune that the gentleman in the Government capital had pulled the proprietor's leg and had " mixed up " the whole business, so that they wanted to take the land back again, but that the proprietor would not be successful, because he had a petition all written up to be sent to the Senate, and that then the land would be

for ever confirmed to the peasants ; all they had to do was to collect a rouble from each soul. The peasants decided to collect the money and again to entrust the whole matter to Ivdn Mironov. When Mironov had all the money in his hands, he went to St. Petersburg.

When, in the year 1817, during Passion-week, – it fell late that year, – the time came to plough the ground, the Izlegdshcha peasants began to discuss at a meeting whether they ought to plough the land under litigation daring that year, or not ; and, although Apykhtin's clerk had come to see them during Lent with the order that they should not plough the land and should come to some agreement with him in regard to the rye already planted in what had been the doubtful, and now was Apukhtin's land, the peasants, for the very reason that the winter crop had been sowed on the debatable land, and because Apukhtin, in his desire to avoid being unfair to them, wished to arbitrate the matter with them, decided to plough the land under litigation and to take possession of it before touching any other fields.

On the very day when the peasants went out to plough, which was Maundy Thursday, Ivan Petrdvich Apükhtin, who had been preparing himself for communion during the Passion-week, went to communion, and early in the morning drove to the church in the village of Izlegdshcha, of which he was a parishioner, and there he, without knowing anything about the matter, amicably chatted with the church elder. Ivan Petrdvich had been to confession the night before, and had attended vigils at home ; in the morning he had himself read the Rules, and at eight o'clock had left the house. They waited for him with the mass. As he stood at the altar, where he usually stood, Ivan Petrdvich rather reflected than prayed, which made him dissatisfied with himself.

Like many people of that time, and, so far as that goes, of all times, he was not quite clear in matters of religion, lie was past fifty years of age ; he never omitted carrying out any rite, attended church, and went to communion once a year ; in talking to his only daughter, he instructed her in the articles of faith ; but, if he had been asked whether he really believed, he would not have known what to reply.

On that day more than on any other, he felt meek of spirit, and, standing at the altar, he, instead of praying, thought of how strangely everything was constructed in the world : there he was, almost an old man, taking the communion for perhaps the fortieth time in his life, and he knew that everybody, all his home folk and all the people in the church, looked at him as a model and took him for an example, and he felt himself obliged to act as an example in matters of religion, whereas he himself did not know anything, and soon, very soon, he would die, and even if he were killed he could not tell whether that in which he was showing an example to others was true. And it also seemed strange to him how every one considered – that he saw – old people to be firm and to know what was necessary and what not (thus he always thought about old men), and there he was old and positively failed to know, and was just as frivolous as

he had been twenty years before ; the only difference was that formerly he did not conceal it, while now he did. Just as in his childhood it had occurred to him during the service that he might crow like a cock, even so now all kinds of foolish things passed through his mind, and he, the old man, reverentially bent his head, touching the flagstones of the church with the old knuckles of his hands, and Father Vasili was evidently timid in celebrating mass in his presence, and incited to zeal by his zeal.

"If they only knew what foolish things are running through my head ! But that is a sin, a sin ; I must pray," he said to himself, when the service commenced ; and, trying to catch the meaning of the responses, he began to pray. Indeed, he soon transferred himself in feeling to the prayer and thought of his sins and of everything which he regretted.

A respectable-looking old man, bald-headed, with thick gray hair, dressed in a fur coat with a new white patch on one-half of his back, stepping evenly with his out-toeing bast shoes, went up to the altar, bowed low to him, tossed his hair, and went beyond the altar to place some tapers. This was the church elder, Ivan Feddtov, one of the best peasants of the village of Izlegoshcha. Ivan Petrovich knew him. The sight of this stern, firm face led Ivan Petrovich to a new train of thoughts. He was one of those peasants who wanted to take the land away from him, and one of the best and richest married farmers, who needed the land, who could manage it, and had the means to work it. His stem aspect, ceremonious bow, and measured gait, and the exactness of his wearing-apparel,— the leg-rags fitted his legs like stockings and the laces crossed each other symmetrically on either leg, — all his appearance seemed to express rebuke and enmity on account of the land.

" I have asked forgiveness of my wife, of Mdnia " (his daughter), " of the nurse, of my valet, Volodya, but it is his forgiveness that I ought to ask for, and I ought to forgive him," thought Ivan Petrovich, and he decided that after matins he would ask Ivan Feddtov to forgive him.

And so he did.

There were but few people in church. The country people were in the habit of going to communion in the first and in the fourth week. Now there were only forty men and women present, who had not had time to go to communion before, a few old peasant women, the church servants, and the manorial people of the Apukhtins and his rich neighbours, the Chernyshevs. There was also there an old woman, a relative of the Chernyshevs, who was living with them, and a deacon's widow, whose son the Chernyshevs, in the goodness of their hearts, had educated and made a man of, and who now was serving as an official in the Senate. Between the matins and the mass there were even fewer people left in the church. There were left two beggar women, who were sitting in the corner and conversing with each other and looking at Ivan Petrovich with the evident desire to congratulate him and talk with him, and two lackeys, — one his own,

in livery, and the other, Chernyshev's, who had come with the old woman. These two were also whispering in an animated manner to each other, just as Ivdn Petrd-vich came out from the altar-place ; when they saw him, they grew silent. There was also a woman in a tall head-gear with a pearl face-ornament and in a white fur coat, with which she covered up a sick child, who was crying, and whom she was attempting to quiet ; and another, a stooping old woman, also in a head-gear, but with a woollen face-ornament and a white kerchief, which was tied in the fashion of old women, and in a gray gathered coat with an iris-design on the back, who, kneeling in the middle of the church, and turning to an old image between two latticed windows, over which hung a new scarf with red edges, was praying so fervently, solemnly, and impassionately that one could not fail directing one's attention to her.

Before reaching the elder, who, standing at the little safe, was kneading over the remnants of some tapers into one piece of wax, Ivan Petrovich stopped to take a look at the praying woman. The old woman was praying well. She knelt as straight as it was possible to kneel in front of the image; all the members of her body were mathematically symmetrical; her feet behind her pressed with the tips of her bast shoes at the same angle against the stone floor; her body was bent back, to the extent to which her stooping shoulders permitted her to do so ; her hands were quite regularly placed below her abdomen ; her head was thrown back, and her face, with an expression of bashful commiseration, wrinkled, and with a dim glance, was turned straight toward the image with the scarf. Having remained in an immobile position for a minute or less, – evidently a definite space of time,– she heaved a deep sigh and, taking her right hand away, swung it above her head-gear, touched the crown of her head with folded fingers, and made ample crosses by carrying her hand down again to her abdomen and to her shoulders ; then she swayed back and dropped her head on her hands, which were placed evenly on the floor, and again raised herself, and repeated the same.

" Now she is praying," Ivan Petrdvich thought, as he looked at her. " She does it differently from us sinners: this is faith, though I know that she is praying to her own image, or to her scarf, or to her adornment on the image, just like the rest of them. All right. What of it ? " he said to himself, " every person has his own faith : she prays to her image, and I consider it necessary to beg the peasant's forgiveness."

And he walked over to the elder, instinctively scrutinizing the church in order to see who was going to see his deed, which both pleased and shamed him. It was disagreeable to him, because the old beggar women would see it, and more disagreeable still, because Mishka, his lackey, would see it. In the presence of Mishka, – he knew how wide-awake and shrewd he was, – he felt that he should not have the strength to walk up to Ivan Fe-ddtov. He beckoned to Mishka to come up to him.

" What is it you wish ? "

« Co, my dear, and bring me the rug from the carriage, for it is too damp here for my feet.»

“ Yes, sir.”

When Mishka went away, Ivän Petrdvich at once went up to Ivan Fedotov. Ivan Fedotov was disconcerted, like a guilty person, at the approach of the gentleman. Timidity and hasty motions formed a queer contradiction to his austere face and curly steel-gray hair and beard.

“Do you wish a dime taper?” he said, raising the desk, and now and then casting his large, beautiful eyes upon the master.

“ No, I do not want a taper, Ivan. I ask you to forgive me for Christ’s sake, if I have in any way offended you. Forgive me, for Christ’s sake,” Ivan Petrdvich repeated, with a low bow.

Ivan Fedotov completely lost his composure and began to move restlessly, but when he comprehended it all, he smiled a gentle smile :

“ God forgives,” he said. “ It seems to me, I have received do offence from you. God will forgive you, – I have not been offended by you,” he hastened to repeat.

« Still – ”

“ God will forgive you, Ivan Petrovich. So you want two dime tapers ? ”

“ Yes, two.”

“He is an angel, truly, an angel. He begs even a base peasant to forgive him. 0 Lord, true angels,” muttered the deacon’s widow, in an old black capote and black kerchief. “ Truly, we ought to understand that.”

“Ah, Paramonovna ! ” Ivan Petrovich turned to her. “ Are you getting ready for communion, too ? You, too, must forgive me, for Christ’s sake.”

“ God will forgive you, sir, angel, merciful benefactor ! Let me kiss your hand ! ”

“ That will do, that will do, you know I do not like that,” said Ivan Petrovich, smiling, and going away from the altar.

The mass, as always, did not take long to celebrate in the parish of Izlegoshcha, the more so since there were few communicants. Just as, after the Lord’s Prayer, the regal doors were closed, Ivdn Petrdvich looked through the north door, to call Mishka to take off his fur coat. When the priest saw that motion, he angrily beckoned to the

deacon, and the deacon almost ran out to call in the lackey. Ivan Petrovich was in a pretty good humour, but this subserviency and expression of respect from the priest who was celebrating mass again soured him entirely ; his thin, bent, shaven lips were bent still more and his kindly eyes were lighted up by sarcasm.

" He acts as though I were his general," he thought, and immediately he thought of the words of the German tutor, whom he had once taken to the altar to attend a Russian divine service, and who had made him laugh and had angered his wife, when he said, " Der Pop war ganz böse, dass ich ihm Alles nachgesehen hatte." He also recalled the answer of the young Turk that there was no God, because he had eaten up the last piece of him. " And here I am going to communion," he thought, and, frowning, he made a low obeisance.

He took off his bear-fur coat, and in his blue dress coat with bright buttons and in his tall white neckerchief and waistcoat, and tightly fitting trousers, and heeled, sharp-toed boots, went with his soft, modest, and light gait to make his obeisances to the large images. Here he again met that same obsequiousness from the other communicants, who gave up their places to him.

" They act as though they said, 'Après vous, s'il en reste,' " he thought, awkwardly making side obeisances ; this awkwardness was due to the fact that he was trying to find that mean in which there would be neither disrespect, nor hypocrisy. Finally the doors were opened. He said the prayer after the priest, repeating the words, " As a robber ; " his neckerchief was covered with the chalice cloth, and he received his communion and the lukewarm water in the ancient dipper, having put new silver twentykopek pieces on ancient plates; after hearing the last prayers, he kissed the cross and, putting on his fur coat left the church, receiving congratulations and experiencing the pleasant sensation of having everything over. As he left the church, he again fell in with Ivan Fedotov.

" Thank you, thank you ! " he replied to his congratulations. " Well, are you going to plough soon ? "

" The boys have gone out, the boys have," replied Ivan Fedotov, more timidly even than before. He supposed that Ivan Petrovich knew whither the Izlegoshcha peasants had gone out to plough. "It is damp, though. Damp it is. It is early yet, early it is."

Ivan Petrovich went up to his parents' monument, bowed to it, and went back to be helped into his six-in-hand with an outrider.

" Well, thank God," he said to himself, swaying on the soft, round springs and looking at the vernal sky with the scattering clouds, at the bared earth and the white spots of unmelted snow, and at the tightly braided tail of a side horse, and inhaling the fresh spring air, which was particularly pleasant after the air in the church.

" Thank God that I have been through the communion, and thank God that I now may take a pinch of snuff." And he took out his snuff-box

and for a long time held the pinch between his fingers, smiling and, without letting the pinch out of the hand, raising his cap in response to the low bows of the people on the way, especially of the women, who were washing the tables and chairs in front of their houses, just as the carriage at a fast trot of the large horses of the six-in-hand plashed and clattered through the mud of the street of the village of Izle-gdshcha.

Ivan Petrovich held the pinch of snuff, anticipating the pleasure of snuffing, not only down the whole village, but even until they got out of a bad place at the foot of a hill, toward which the coachman descended not without anxiety : he held up the reins, seated himself more firmly, and shouted to the outrider to go over the ice. When they went around the bridge, over the bed of the river, and scrambled out of the breaking ice and mud, Ivan Petrovich, looking at two plovers that rose from the hollow, took the snuff and, feeling chilly, put on his glove, wrapped himself in his fur coat, plunged his chin into the high neckerchief, and said to himself, almost aloud, « Glorious ! " which he was in the habit of saying secretly to himself whenever he felt well.

In the night snow had fallen, and when Ivan Petrovich had driven to church the snow had not yet disappeared, but was soft ; now, though there was no sun, it was all melted from the moisture, and on the highway, on which he had to travel for three versts before turning into Chirakévo, the snow was white only in last year's grass, which grew in parallel lines along the ruts ; but on the black road the horses splashed through the viscous mud. The good, well-fed, large horses of his own stud had no difficulty in pulling the carriage, and it just rolled over the grass, where it left black marks, and over the mud, without being at all detained. Ivan Petrdivch was having pleasant reveries ; he was thinking of his home, his wife, and his daughter.

" Manya will meet me at the porch, and with delight. She will see such holiness in me ! She is a strange, sweet girl, but she takes everything too much to heart. The rôle of importance and of knowing everything that is going on in this world, which I must play before her, is getting to be too serious and ridiculous. If she knew that I am afraid of her ! " he thought. " Well, Kato," (his wife) " will no doubt be in good humour to-day, she will purposely be in good humour, and we shall have a fine day. It will not be as it was last week on account of the Proshkin women. What a remarkable creature ! How afraid of her I am ! What is to be done ? She does not like it herself." And he recalled a famous anecdote about a calf. A proprietor, having quarrelled with his wife, was sitting at a window, when he saw a frisky calf : " I should like to get you married ! " he said. And Ivan Petrdivch smiled again, according to his custom solving every difficulty and every perplexity by a joke, which generally was directed against himself.

At the third verst, near a chapel, the outrider bore to the left, into a cross-road, and the coachman shouted to him for having turned in so abruptly that the centre horses were struck by the shaft ; and

the carriage almost glided all the way down-hill. Before reaching the house, the outrider looked back at the coachman and pointed to something ; the coachman looked back at the lackey, and indicated something to him. And all of them looked in the same direction.

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

" Geese," said Mishka.

« Where ? "

Though he strained his vision, he could not see them.

" There they are. There is the forest, and there is the cloud, so be pleased to look between the two."

Ivān Petrovich could not see anything.

" It is time for them. Why, it is less than a week to Annunciation."

" That's so."

" Well, go on ! "

Near a puddle, Mishka jumped down from the footboard and tested the road, again climbed up, and the carriage safely drove on the pond dam in the garden, ascended the avenue, drove past the cellar and the laundry, from which water was falling, and nimbly rolled up and stopped at the porch. The Chernÿshev calash had just left the yard. From the house at once ran the servants: gloomy old Danilych with the side whiskers, Nikolay, Mishka's brother, and the boy Pavlushka ; and after them came a girl with large black eyes and red arms, which were bared above the elbow, and with just such a bared neck.

" Marya Ivanovna, Marya Ivanovna ! Where are you going ? Your mother will be worried. You will have time," was heard the voice of fat Katerina behind her.

But the girl paid no attention to her ; just as her father had expected her to do, she took hold of his arm and looked at him with a strange glance.

" Well, papa, have you been to communion ? " she asked, as though in dread.

" Yes. You look as though you were afraid that I am such a sinner that I could not receive the communion."

The girl was apparently offended by her father's jest at such a solemn moment. She heaved a sigh and, following him, held his hand, which she kissed.

" Who is here ? "

" Young Chernyshev. He is in the drawing-room."

" Is mamma up ? How is she ? "

" Mamma feels better to-day. She is sitting downstairs."

In the passage room Ivan Petrovich was met by nurse Evprakséya, clerk Andréy Ivanovich, and a surveyor, who was living at the house, in order to lay out some land. All of them congratulated Ivan Petrovich. In the drawing-room sat Luiza Karlovna Trugoni, for ten years a friend of the house, an emigrant governess, and a young man of sixteen years, Chernyshev, with his French tutor.

THE DECEMBRISTS

THIRD FRAGMENT

(Variant of the First Chapter)

On the 2d of August, 1817, the sixth department of the Directing Senate handed down a decision in the debatable land case between the economic peasants of the village of Izlegdshcha and Chernyshev, which was in favour of the peasants and against Chernyshev. This decision was an unexpected and important calamitous event for Chernyshev. The case had lasted five years. It had been begun by the attorney of the rich village of Izlegdshcha with its three thousand inhabitants, and was won by the peasants in the County Court ; but when, with the advice of lawyer Ilyä Mitrofanov, a manorial servant bought of Prince Saltykov, Prince Chernyshev carried the case to the Government, he won it and besides, the Izlegoshcha peasants were punished by having six of them, who had insulted the surveyor, put in jail.

After that, Prince Chernyshev, with his good-natured and merry carelessness, entirely acquiesced, the more so since he knew full well that he had not " appropriated " any land of the peasants, as was said in the petition of the peasants. If the land was " appropriated," his father had done it, and since then more than forty years had passed. He knew that the peasants of the village of Izlegdshcha were getting along well without that land, had no need of it, and lived on terms of friendship with him, and was unable to understand why they had become so infuriated against him. He knew that he never offended and never wished to offend any one, that he lived in peace with everybody, and that he never wished to do otherwise, and so could not believe that any one should think of offending him. He hated litigations, and so did not defend his case in the Senate, in spite of the advice and earnest solicitations of his lawyer, Ilyd Mitrofanov ; by allowing the time for the appeal to

lapse, he lost the case in the Senate, and lost it in such a way that he was confronted with complete ruin. By the decree of the Senate he not only was to be deprived of five thousand desyas of land, but also, for the illegal tenure of that land, was to be mulcted to the amount of 107,000 roubles in favour of the peasants.

Prince Chernyshev had eight thousand souls, but all the estates were mortgaged and he had large debts, so that this decree of the Senate ruined him with his whole large family. He had a son and five daughters. He thought of his case when it was too late to attend to it in the Senate. According to Ilya Mitrofanov's words there was but one salvation, and that was, to petition the sovereign and to transfer the case to the Imperial Council. To obtain this it was necessary in person to approach one of the ministers or a member of the Council, or, better still, the emperor himself. Taking all that into consideration, Prince Grigori Ivanovich in the fall of the year 1817 with his whole family left his beloved estate of Studénets, where he had lived so long without leaving it, and went to Moscow. He started for Moscow, and not for St. Petersburg, because in the fall of that year the emperor with his whole-court, with all the highest dignitaries, and with part of the Guards, in which the son of Grigori Ivanovich was serving, was to arrive in Moscow to lay the corner-stone of the Church of the Saviour in commemoration of the liberation of Russia from the French invasion.

In August, immediately after receiving the terrible news of the decree of the Senate, Prince Grigori Ivanovich got ready to go to Moscow. At first the majordomo was sent away to fix the prince's own house on the Arbat ; then was sent out a caravan with furniture, servants, horses, carriages, and provisions. In September the prince with his whole family travelled in seven carriages, drawn by his own horses, and, after arriving in Moscow, settled in his house. Relatives, friends, visitors from the province and from St. Petersburg began to assemble in Moscow in the month of September. The Moscow life, with its entertainments, the arrival of his son, the débuts of his daughters, and the success of his eldest daughter, Aleksandra, the only blonde among all the brunettes of the Chernyshevs, so much occupied and diverted the prince's attention that, in spite of the fact that here in Moscow he was spending everything which would be left to him after paying all he owed, he forgot his affair and was annoyed and tired whenever Ilya Mitrofanov talked of it, and undertook nothing for the success of his case.

Ivan Mironovich Baushkin, the chief attorney of the peasants, who had conducted the case against the prince with so much zeal in the Senate, who knew all the approaches to the secretaries and departmental chiefs, and who had so skilfully distributed the ten thousand roubles, collected from the peasants, in the shape of presents, now himself brought his activity to an end and returned to the village, where, with the money collected for him as a reward and with what was left of the presents, he bought himself a grove from a neighbouring proprietor and built there a hut and an office. The case was finished in the court of the highest instance, and everything would now proceed of its own accord.

The only ones of those concerned in the case who could not forget it were the six peasants who were passing their seventh month in jail, and their families that were left without their heads. But nothing could be done in the matter. They were imprisoned in Krasnoslobdsk, and their families tried to get along as well as they could. Nobody could be invoked in the case. Ivan Mirénovich himself said that he could not take it up, because it was not a communal, nor a civil, but a criminal case. The peasants were in prison, and nobody paid any attention to them ; but one family, that of Mikhail Gerasimovich, particularly his -wife Tikhonovna, could not get used to the idea that the precious old man, Gerasimovich, was sitting in prison with a shaven head. Tikhonovna could not rest quiet. She begged Mironovich to take the case, but he declined it. Then she decided to go herself to pray to God for the old man. She had made a vow the year before that she would go on a pilgrimage to a saint, and had delayed it for another year only because she had had no time and did not wish to leave the house to the young daughters-in-law. Now that the misfortune had happened and Gerasimovich was put into jail, she recalled her vow ; she turned her back on her house and, together with the deacon's wife of the same village, got ready to go on the pilgrimage.

First they went to the county seat to see her old man in the prison and to take him some shirts; from there they went through the capital of the Government to Moscow. On her way Tikhonovna told the deacon's wife of her sorrow, and the latter advised her to petition the emperor who, it was said, was to be in Pénza, telling her of various cases of pardon granted by him.

When the pilgrims arrived in Pénza, they heard that there was there, not the emperor, but his brother Grand Duke Nikolay Pavlovich. When he came out of the cathedral, Tikhonovna pushed herself forward, dropped down on her knees, and began to beg for her husband. The grand duke was surprised, the governor was angry, and the old woman was taken to the lockup. The next day she was let out and she proceeded to Trditsa. In Troitsa she went to communion and confessed to Father Falsi. At the confession she told him of her sorrow, and repented having petitioned the brother of the Tsar. Father Falsi told her that there was no sin in that and that there was no sin in petitioning the Tsar even in a just case, and dismissed her. In Khdtkov she called on the blessed abbess, and she ordered her to petition the Tsar himself.

On their way back, Tikhonovna and the deacon's wife stopped in Moscow to see the saints. Here she heard, that the Tsar was there, and she thought that it was evidently God's command that she should petition the Tsar. All that had to be done was to write the petition.

In Moscow the pilgrims stopped in a hostelry. They begged permission to stay there overnight; they were allowed to do so. After supper the deacon's wife lay down on the oven, and Tikhonovna, placing her wallet under her head, lay down on a bench and fell asleep. In the

morning, before daybreak, Tikhonovna got up, woke the deacon's wife, and went out. The innkeeper spoke to her just as she walked into the yard.

" You are up early, granny," he said.

" Before we get there, it will be time for matins," Tikhonovna replied.

" God be with you, granny ! "

« Christ save you ! " said Tikhonovna, and the pilgrims went to the Kremlin.

After standing through the matins and the mass, and having kissed the relics, the old women, with difficulty making their way, arrived at the house of the Chernyshevs. The deacon's wife said that the old lady had given her an urgent invitation to stop at her house, and had ordered that all pilgrims should be received.

" There we shall find a man who will write the petition," said the deacon's wife, and the pilgrims started to blunder through the streets and ask their way. The deacon's wife had been there before, but had forgotten where it was. Two or three times they were almost crushed, and people shouted at them and scolded them. Once a policeman took the deacon's wife by the shoulder and, giving her a push, forbade her to walk through the street on which they were, and directed them through a forest of lanes. Tikhonovna did not know that they were driven off the Vozdvizhenka for the very reason that through that street was to drive the Tsar, of whom she was thinking all the time, and to whom she intended to give the petition.

The deacon's wife walked, as always, heavily and complainingly, while Tikhonovna, as usual, walked lightly and briskly, with the gait of a young woman. At the gate the pilgrims stopped. The deacon's wife did not recognize the house: there was there a new hut which she had not seen before ; but on scanning the well with the pumps in the corner of the yard, she recognized it all. The dogs began to bark and made for the women with the staffs.

" Don't mind them, aunties, they will not touch you. Away there, accursed ones ! " the janitor shouted to the dogs, raising the broom on them. " They are themselves from the country, and just see them bark at country people ! Come this way ! You will stick in the mud, – God has not given any frost yet."

But the deacon's wife, frightened by the dogs, and muttering in a whining tone, sat down on a bench near the gate and asked the janitor to take her by. Tikhonovna made her customary bow to the janitor and, leaning on her crutch and spreading her feet, which were tightly covered with leg-rags, stopped' near her, looking as always calmly in front of her and waiting for the janitor to come up to them.

" Whom do you want ? " the janitor asked.

" Do you not recognize us, dear man ? Is not your name Egor?" asked the deacon's wife. "We are coming back from the saints, and so are calling on her Serenity."

"You are from Izlegdshcha," said the janitor. "You are the wife of the old deacon, – of course. All right, all right. Go to the house ! Everybody is received here,

– nobody is refused. And who is this one ? "

He pointed to Tikhonovna.

" From Izlegoshcha, Gerasimovich's wife, – used to be Fadyéev's, – I suppose you know her ? " said Tikhonovna. " I myself am from Izlegoshcha."

" Of course ! They say your husband has been put into jail."

Tikhonovna made no reply ; she only sighed and with a strong motion threw her wallet and fur coat over her shoulder.

The deacon's wife asked whether the old lady was at home and, hearing that she was, asked him to announce them to her. Then she asked about her son, who was an official and, thanks to the prince's influence, was serving in St. Petersburg. The janitor could not give her any information about him and directed them over a walk, which crossed the yard, to the servants' house. The old women went into the house, which was full of people,

– women, children, both old and young, – all of them manorial servants, and prayed turning to the front corner. The deacon's wife was at once recognized by the laundress and the old lady's maid, and she was at once surrounded and overwhelmed with questions : they took off her wallet, placed her at the table, and offered her something to eat. In the meantime Tikhonovna, having made the sign ok the cross to the images and saluted everybody, was standing at the door, waiting to be invited in. At the very door, in front of the first window, sat an old man, making boots.

" Sit down, granny ! Don't stand up. Sit down here, and take off your wallet," he said.

" There is not enough room to turn around as it is. Take her to the ' black ' room," said a woman.

" This comes straight from Madame Chalmé," said a young lackey, pointing to the iris design on Tikhonovna's peasant coat, " and the pretty stockings and shoes."

He pointed to her leg-rags and bast shoes, which were new, as she had specially put them on for Moscow.

" Parāsha, you ought to have such."

" If you are to go to the ' black ' room, all right ; I will take you there." And the old man stuck in his awl and got up ; but, on seeing a little girl, he called her to take the old woman to the black room.

Tikhonovna not only paid no attention to what was being said in her presence and of her, but did not even look or listen. From the time that she entered the house, she was permeated with the feeling of the necessity of working for God and with the other feeling, which had entered her soul, she did not know when, of the necessity of handing the petition. Leaving the clean servant room, she walked over to the deacon's wife and, bowing, said to her:

" Mother Paramdnovna, for Christ's sake do not forget about my affair ! See whether you can't find a man."

" What does that woman need ? "

" She has suffered insult, and people have advised her to hand a petition to the Tsar."

" Take her straight to the Tsar ! " said the jesting lackey.

" Oh, you fool, you rough fool," said the old shoemaker. "I will teach you a lesson with this last, then you will know how to grin at old people."

The lackey began to scold, but the old man, paying no attention to him, took Tikhonovna to the black room.

Tikhonovna was glad that she was sent out of the baking-room, and was taken to the black, the coachmen's room. In the baking-room everything looked clean, and the people were all clean, and Tikhonovna did not feel at ease there. The black coachmen's room was more like the inside of a peasant house, and Tikhonovna was more at home there. The black hut was a dark pine building, twenty by twenty feet, with a large oven, bed places, and hanging-beds, and a newly paved, dirt-covered floor. When Tikhonovna entered the room, there were there the cook, a white, ruddy-faced, fat, manorial woman, with the sleeves of her chintz dress rolled up, who with difficulty was moving a pot in the oven with an oven-fork ; then a young, small coachman, who was learning to play the balaldyka ; an old man with an unshaven, soft white beard, who was sitting on a bed place with his bare feet and, holding a skein of silk between his lips, was

sewing on some fine, good material, and a shaggy-haired, swarthy young man, in a shirt and blue trousers, with a coarse face, who, chewing bread, was sitting on a bench at the oven and leaning his head on both his arms, which were steadied against his knees.

Barefoot Nastka with sparkling eyes ran into the room with her lithe, bare feet, in front of the old woman, jerking open the door, which stuck fast from the steam within, and squeaking in her thin voice :

" Aunty Marina, Simonych sends this old woman, and says that she should be fed. She is from our parts : she has been with Paramonovna to worship the saints. Para-monovna is having tea, - Vlasevna has sent for her - "

The garrulous little girl would have gone on talking for quite awhile yet ; the words just poured forth from her and, apparently, it gave her pleasure to hear her own voice. But Marina, who was in a perspiration, and who had not yet succeeded in pushing away the pot with the beet soup, which had caught in the hearth, shouted angrily at her :

" Stop your babbling ! What old woman am I to feed now ? I have enough to do to feed our own people. Shoot you ! " she shouted to the pot, which came very near falling down, as she removed it from the spot where it was caught.

But when she was satisfied in regard to the pot, she looked around and, seeing trim Tikhonovna with her wallet and correct peasant attire, making the sign of the cross and bowing low toward the front corner, felt ashamed of her words and, as though regaining her consciousness after the cares which had worn her out, she put her hand to her breast, where beneath the collar-bone buttons clasped her dress, and examined it to see whether it was buttoned, and then put her hands to her head to fasten the knot of the kerchief, which covered her greasy hair, and took up an attitude, leaning against the oven-fork and waiting for the salute of the trim old woman. Tikhonovna made her last low obeisance to God, and turned around and saluted in three directions.

" God aid you, good day ! " she said.

" You are welcome, aunty ! " said the tailor.

" Thank you, granny, take off your wallet ! Sit down here," said the cook, pointing to a bench where sat the shaggy-haired man. " Move a little, can't you ? Are you stuck fast ? "

The shaggy man, scowling more angrily still, rose, moved away, and, continuing to chew, riveted his eyes on the old woman. The young coachman made a bow and, stopping his playing, began to tighten the strings of his balalayka, looking now at the old woman, and now at the tailor, not knowing how to treat the old woman, - ' whether respectfully, as he thought she ought to be treated, because the old

woman wore the same kind

“When are you going to plaster it? The chimney never cools off : twice a day you have to bake bread ; one set is taken out, and the other is started.”

In response to Marina’s complaint about the breadbaking and the burnt-out hearth, the tailor defended the ways of the Chernyshev house and said that they had suddenly arrived in Moscow, that the hut was built and the oven put up in three weeks, and that there were nearly one hundred servants who had to be fed.

“ Of course, lots of cares. A large establishment,” Tikhonovna confirmed him.

“ Whence does God bring you ? ” the tailor turned to her.

And Tikhonovna, continuing to take off her foot-gear, at once told him where she came from, whither she had gone, and how she was going home. She did not say anything about the petition. The conversation never broke off. The tailor found out everything about the old woman, and the old woman heard all about awkward, pretty Manna. She learned that Manna’s husband was a soldier, and she was made a cook ; that the tailor was making caftans for the driving coachmen ; that the stewardess’s errand girl was an orphan, and that shaggy-haired, gloomy Pankrät was a servant of the clerk, Ivän Vasilevich.

Pankrät left the room, slamming the door. The tailor told her that he was a gruff peasant, but that on that day he was particularly rude because the day before he had smashed the clerk’s knickknacks on the window, and that he was going to be flogged to-day in the stable. As soon as Ivän Vasilevich should come, he would be flogged. The little coachman was a peasant lad, who had been made an outrider, and now that he was grown he had nothing to do but attend to the horses, and strum the balaläyka. But he was not much of a hand at it.