

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS

A Novel

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PART THE FIRST

I.

We were wearing mourning for our mother, who had died in the autumn, and were living all alone, with Katya and Sonya, in the country.

Katya was an old friend of the house, the governess who had brought us all up and whom I remembered and loved as far back as I could remember myself. Sonya was my younger sister. We passed a gloomy and sad winter in our old house at Pokrovskoe. The weather was cold and windy, so that snow-drifts were blown higher than the windows ; the panes were nearly all the time frozen over and dim, and we went nowhere almost the whole winter. We had but few visitors, and such as came did not add merriment and joy to our house. All had sad faces; all spoke softly, as though afraid to waken somebody; they did not laugh, but sighed and frequently wept, as they looked at me, and especially at little Sonya in her black little dress. Death seemed still to be felt in the house ; the sorrow and terror of death was still in the atmosphere. Mamma's room

was closed, and I shivered and something drew me to look into that cold and empty room every time I passed by it on my way to bed.

I was then seventeen years old ; it was during that very year of my mother's death that she had intended to settle in the city in order to bring me out. My mother's loss was a great sorrow for me, but I must confess that back of this sorrow there was also the consciousness that I was young and pretty, as all were telling me, and that I was, in the meanwhile, killing the second winter in solitude in the country. Before the end of winter this feeling of pining and solitude and of simple tedium increased to such a degree that I did not leave my room, did not open the piano, and did not take a book into my hands. When Katya tried to persuade me to do something or other, I replied : " I do not feel like it, I can't," while a voice within me said: " Why should I? Why do something when my best time is passing fruitlessly? Why? " .And to this " why "

there was no other answer than tears.

I was told that I was getting thinner and less pretty during that time, but that did not even interest me. Why ? For whom ? It seemed to me that my whole life would have to pass in this lonely wilderness and helpless pining, from which I myself, alone, had no strength and even no desire to get away. Toward the end of winter Katya began to be afraid for me and made up her mind to take me abroad at all costs. But to do this money was needed, whereas we hardly knew what there was left after mother, and from day to day waited for the arrival of the guardian, who was to look into our affairs.

In March the guardian came.

" Thank God ! " Kdtya once said to me, while I was walking from one corner to another like a shadow, without work, without thoughts, without desires. " Sergyéy Mikhaylych has arrived. He has sent somebody to inquire about us, and he wanted to be here for dinner. Bestir yourself, dear Masha," she added, "or else what will he think of you ? He used to love you all so."

Sergyéy Mikhaylych was our near neighbour and a friend of our deceased father, though he was much younger than he. Not only did his arrival change our plans and give us a chance of leaving the country, but I had been accustomed from childhood to love and respect him, and Katya, advising me to bestir myself, had rightly guessed that it would pain me more to appear in an unfavourable light before Sergyéy Mikhaylych than before any other of my acquaintances. Not only did I, like everybody else in the house, beginning with Katya and Sonya, his godchild, and ending with the last coachman, love him by habit, but he had also a special meaning for me by a few words which mamma had used in reference to me. She had said that she would wish such a husband for me. At that time it had appeared strange and even disagreeable to me ; my hero was somebody quite different from him. My hero was thin, haggard, pale, and sad, while Sergyéy Mikhaylych was no longer in his first youth, tall, plump, and, as I thought, always merry. Yet, although these words of mamma's fell deep in my imagination as long back as six years ago, when I was but eleven, and he spoke " thou " to me, and played with me, and called me " violet," I sometimes asked myself with a pang of terror what I should do if he suddenly wanted to marry me.

Sergyéy Mikhaylych arrived before dinner, for which Kdtya added cream pastry and spinach sauce. I saw him through the window driving up to the house in a small sleigh, but the moment he drove around the corner I hastened into the drawing-room and intended to pretend that I had not expected him. But when I heard the thud of his feet in the antechamber, his loud voice, and Katya's steps, I could not hold myself, and went out to

meet him. He was holding Katya's hand, and speaking loud and smiling. When he saw me he stopped and for some time looked at me,

without greeting me. I felt ill at ease, and I knew that I was blushing.

" Oh, is it really you ? " he said, in his determined and simple manner, waving his hands and coming up to me. " How can one change so ? How you have grown ! A real violet ! You are now a whole rose-bush."

He took my hand into his large hand and pressed it firmly and sincerely, without giving me pain. I thought he was going to kiss my hand, and so I bent down to him, but he again pressed it and looked me straight in the eye with his firm and cheerful glance.

I had not seen him for six years. He had changed much ; he had aged, looked blacker, and his face was all overgrown with side-whiskers, which did not at all become him ; but his manner was as simple as before, and he had the same open, honest, large-featured face, intelligent, sparkling eyes, and gracious, almost childlike, smile.

Five minutes later he ceased being a guest, and became a familiar friend to all of us, even to the people, who, to judge from their readiness to serve him, were very much delighted with his arrival.

He acted quite differently from the neighbours who came after mother's demise and who considered it necessary to keep silent and weep, while staying at our house ; he, on the contrary, was talkative, merry, and did not say a word about mamma, so that at first this indifference appeared to me strange and even indecent in a man who was so near to us. But later I understood that it was not indifference, but sincerity, and I was thankful to him for it. In the evening Katya sat down in the old place in the drawing-room, as in mamma's lifetime, to pour out tea ; Sonya and I sat down by her side ; old Gridri brought him papa's old pipe, which he had found, and he, as of old, began to pace up and down in the room.

" What terrible changes have taken place in this house, when you come to think of it ! " he said, stopping.

" Yes," said Kdtya, with a sigh, and, covering the samovar with the lid, looked at him, ready to burst out into tears.

" I suppose you remember your papa," he turned to me.

" Not very much," I replied.

" How good it would have been for you now if he were with you ! " he said, looking softly and thoughtfully at my head above my eyes. " I was very fond of your father ! " he added, softer still, and I thought that his eyes became brighter.

" And then God took her ! " said Katya. She immediately put a napkin over the teapot, took out her handkerchief, and began to weep.

" Yes, terrible changes have taken place in this house," he

repeated, turning away. " Sonya, let me see your toys," he added, after awhile, and went into the parlour. I looked at Katya, my eyes filled with tears, as he went out.

" He is such a fine friend ! " she said.

Indeed, I felt somehow warm and good from the sympathy of this strange and good man.

In the drawing-room could be heard Sonya's scream, and his playing with Sonya. I sent his tea in to him ; we could hear him sitting down at the piano and striking the keys with Sdnya's hands.

" Mdrya Aleksandrovna ! " was heard his voice. " Come here, and play us something ! "

It was a pleasure to have him address me in such a simple and familiarly commanding tone ; I got up and walked over to him.

" Play this," he said, opening to a page of a book of Beethoven's sonatas, on which was the adagio of Quasi una fantasia. "We shall see how you play," he added, going away with his glass to the corner of the parlour.

For some reason I felt that I could not refuse him

and make excuses about my poor playing ! I submissively sat down at the piano and began to play as well as I could, although I was afraid of his opinion, knowing that he understood and loved music. The adagio was in keeping with that sentiment of reminiscence, called forth by the conversation at tea, and I think I played it fairly well. He would not let me play the scherzo.

" No, you do not play this well," he said, coming up to me, " so leave it alone ; but the first was not bad. You seem to understand music."

This moderate praise pleased me so much that I even blushed. It was so novel and agreeable for me to have him, the friend and equal of my father, speak with me seriously when left alone, and not as with a child, as he used to. Katya went up-stairs to put Sdnya to bed, and we were left alone in the parlour.

He told me about my father, how he had met him, and how they lived together when I was still sitting at my books and toys ; and my father for the first time, in his stories, presented himself to me as a simple and dear man, such as I had not known him before. He also asked me what I liked, what I read, what I intended to do, and gave me his advice. He was now to me not a joker and merry-maker, teasing me and making toys for me, but a serious, simple, and loving man, for whom I involuntarily felt respect and sympathy. I felt light and comfortable, and, at the same time, I was conscious of an involuntary tension, while speaking with him. I was afraid of every word of mine ; I was so anxious personally to gain his love which I

had so far acquired by dint of being my father's daughter.

Having put Sonya to bed, Katya joined us. She complained to him of my apathy, of which I had not told him anything.

" She has not told me the main thing," he said, smiling and reproachfully shaking his head at me.

" What was there to tell ? " I said. " It is very tedious, and it will pass." (I really felt now that not only would my tedium pass, but that it had passed already, and that there had been none at all.)

" It is not good not to be able to endure solitude," he said. " Are you really a young lady ? "

" Of course I am," I replied, laughing.

" No, she is not a nice young lady who is alive only so long as people admire her, and who lets herself go and to whom nothing is dear the moment she is left alone. Everything is for show for her, and nothing for herself."

" A fine opinion you have of me," I said, just to say something.

" No ! " he said, after a moment's silence. " There is good reason why you should resemble your father. There is in you something," and his kindly, attentive glance again flattered me and embarrassed me pleasantly.

Only now I noticed that his face, which was at first impression merry, had back of it a peculiar glance,— at first clear, and then ever more attentive and slightly sad.

" You ought not and should not feel dull," he said. " You have music which you understand, books, studies ; you have a whole life ahead of you, for which you can prepare yourself now, in order not to regret it later. In a year it will be too late."

He spoke to me like a father or uncle, and I felt that he constantly held himself back in order to be on a level with me. It was both aggravating to me to see him regard me as below him, and agreeable to see him try to be something different just for my sake alone.

The rest of the evening he spoke with Katya about business.

" Good-bye, dear friends," he said, getting up and walking over to me and taking my hand.

" When shall we see each other again ? " asked Katya.

" In the spring," he replied, still holding my hand.

" Now I will go to Danilovka (our other village) ; there I will see

how matters stand and will do what I can ; then I will travel to Moscow about my own business, and in the summer we shall meet again."

" Why are you going away for so long ? " I said, very sorrowfully. Indeed, I had hoped to see him every day, and I suddenly felt so miserable and so terribly afraid lest my ennui should return. Evidently this was all expressed in my glance and tone of voice.

" Busy yourself as much as possible, and don't become a hypochondriac," he said, as I thought, in too cold and simple a voice. " In the spring I will examine you," he added, letting my hand go, and without looking at me.

In the antechamber, where we were standing to see him off, he hurriedly put on his fur coat and again surveyed me with his glance. " He is trying in vain !" I thought. " Does he really think it gives me such pleasure for him to look at me ? He is a good man, a very good man – but that is all."

Still, that night Katya and I did not fall asleep for a long time, and we spoke not of him, but of where we should pass the coming summer, and where and how we should live in the winter. The terrible question " why ? " no longer presented itself to me. It seemed very simple and clear to me that one must live in order to be happy, and the future offered much happiness to me. It seemed as though our old, gloomy Pokrdvskoe house were suddenly filled with life and light.

II.

In the meantime spring came. My former pining was gone and was exchanged for a vernal meditative pining of incomprehensible hopes and desires. Although I lived differently from what I did in the beginning of winter, and busied myself with Sonya and music and reading, I frequently went into the garden and long, long strolled all alone down the avenues, or sat down on a bench, thinking God knows of what, and wishing and hoping God knows for what. At times I passed whole nights, especially moonlit nights, until morning at the window of my room; at times I, in nothing but my bodice, softly stole away from Katya to walk into the garden and run over the dew down to the pond, and once I even went into the field and all alone walked around the garden.

Now it is hard for me to recall and comprehend the dreams which at that time filled my imagination. When I do recall them I can hardly believe that those really were my dreams. They were then strange and remote from life.

At the end of May, Sergyéy Mikhaylych returned from his journey, as he had promised.

He arrived in the evening, when we did not expect him. We were sitting on the terrace and were getting ready to drink tea. The garden was clad in verdure, and the nightingales had taken up their abode in the clumps of bushes as early as St. Peter's Fast. The curly lilac bushes here and there seemed to be strewn on top with something white and lilac. These flowers were just getting ready to open out. The foliage in the birch avenue was all translucent in the setting sun. On the terrace there was a fresh shade. Heavy evening dew was soon to fall on the grass. In the courtyard beyond the garden could be heard the last sounds of day, the noise of the cattle driven to shelter. Fool Nikon was driving a barrel along the path before the terrace, and a cold stream of water from the sprinkler blackened the dug-up earth near the trunks of trees, the dahlias, and the supports.

On our terrace, on a white table-cloth, shone and boiled a brightly burnished samovar, and stood cream, cracknels, and pastry. Katya was with her plump hands carefully wiping off the cups. I could not wait for the tea, having grown hungry after my bath, and was eating bread with thick, fresh cream. I wore a gingham blouse with open sleeves, and my head was wrapped with a kerchief over my wet hair. Kätya was the first to see him through the window.

" Ah, Sergyéy Mikhäylych ! " she exclaimed, " we had just been speaking of you."

I got up and wanted to go away in order to change my clothes, but he met me just as I was at the door.

" No ceremonies in the country, please ! " he said, looking at my head wrapped in the kerchief, and smiling. " You are not ashamed before Grigori, and I am really like Grigdri to you." But it was just then that it appeared to me that he was not looking at me at all as Grigori did, and I was embarrassed.

" I will be back at once," I said, going away from him.

" I see nothing wrong in this ! " he called out after me.

" You look just like a young peasant woman."

"How strangely he looked at me," I thought, hastily changing my clothes up-stairs. " I am glad he has come : it will be jollier now." After taking a look at myself in the mirror I merrily ran down-stairs, and, without concealing my haste, walked out on the terrace out of breath. He was sitting at the table and was telling Katya about our affairs. He looked at me and smiled, and continued his conversation. Our affairs were, according to him, in excellent condition. All we had to do was to stay through the summer in the country, and then we could go to St. Petersburg for Sdnya's education, or abroad.

" Yes, if you could go with us abroad," said Kätya, " for we shall

be as alone there as in the woods."

" Oh, how I should like to travel around the world with you ! " he said, half in jest and half in earnest.

" All right, come, let us go around the world ! "

He smiled and shook his head.

" And your mother ? And business ? " he said. " Well, that is another matter. Tell me how you have passed your time. Have you again been a hypochondriac ? "

When I told him that in his absence I was busy and did not feel lonely, and Katya confirmed my words, he praised me and caressed me with his eyes like a child, as though he had a right to do it. It seemed to me a matter of necessity to tell him in detail and with absolute sincerity the good I had done, and to make my confession to him of all that which might have displeased him. The evening was so charming that after tea we remained on the terrace, and the conversation was so interesting to me that I did not notice how all human voices slowly died down around us. On all sides the flowers emitted a greater fragrance ; abundant dew watered the grass ; a nightingale sang out his trills in a lilac bush near by, and again grew silent when he heard our voices ; the starry heaven looked as though it had been lowered over us.

I noticed that it was getting dark only because a bat suddenly flew in noiselessly under the canvas of the terrace and whirred about my white kerchief. I pressed against the wall and was on the point of crying out, but the bat just as noiselessly and swiftly dashed out from underneath the awning and disappeared in the semi-darkness of the garden.

—"How I love your Pokrdvskoe estate!" he said, interrupting the conversation. " I should like to sit all my life on this terrace."

" All right, sit here," said Katya.

" Yes, sit here, but life does not sit."

"Why do you not get married?" asked Katya. "You would make an excellent husband."

" Because I like to sit ? " And he laughed out loud. " No, Katerina Karlovna, neither you nor I will ever marry. They have all long ago quit looking upon me as a man who can be married off. And I myself gave it up long before that. Truly, since then I have been feeling so well."

I thought that he was saying this with unnatural zeal.

" I declare ! You have passed thirty-six years of your life this way," said Katya.

" I should say I have," he continued. " All I care for now is to be sitting in one spot, whereas for marrying something else is demanded. Ask her," he added, indicating me with his head. " These girls have to be married off, and we will have our joy looking at them."

In his tone was expressed sadness and tension, which did not escape me. He was silent for a moment ; neither I nor Kdtya said anything.

"Suppose, now," he continued, turning around on his chair, " I should all of a sudden by some unfortunate mischance marry a seventeen-year-old girl, say Mash – Marya Aleksandrovna. This is a beautiful example, I am glad it is such – this is the very best example."

I laughed and could not for the life of me make out why he was glad that something was such –

" Well, tell me in truth, with your hand on your heart," he said, jokingly addressing me, " would it not be a misfortune for you to unite your life with an old man, who has lived his life, who only wants to sit, while God knows what is brewing within you and what you want ?

I felt ill at ease and was silent, not knowing what to answer.

" I am not proposing to you," he said, laughing ; " but do tell me, in all sincerity, you certainly are not dreaming of such a husband when you walk alone through the garden walks in the evening ? "

" It is not a misfortune – " I began.

" Well, but not the thing," he finished the sentence.

" Yes, but I may be mista – "

Again he interrupted me.

" Well, you see, she is quite right, and I am thankful to her for her sincerity, and am glad to have talked about it with her. More than that, it would be the greatest misfortune for me, too," he added.

" How strange you are ! Nothing has changed," said

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Katya and went out of the terrace to order the table set for supper.

Both of us grew silent after Katya had left us, and around us everything was quiet. Only a nightingale, no longer in the broken, indecisive trills of the evening, but in night-fashion, calmly and without haste, drowned the whole garden with his sounds, while

another, for the first time this evening, answered him from the ravine in the distance. The nearer nightingale grew silent, as though listening for a moment to him, and then burst forth more distinctly and tensely into a roll of sonorous trills. These voices resounded with majestic calm in their, to us, unfamiliar nocturnal world. The gardener went to the hothouse to sleep, and the steps of his thick boots, retreating, rang out upon the path. Somebody twice whistled piercingly at the foot of a hill, and all was quiet again. One could barely hear the swaying of the leaves ; the canvas of the terrace flapped, and, hovering in the air, the odour of something fragrant was wafted and spread upon the terrace. I felt awkward keeping silent after what had been said, but I did not know what to say. I looked at him. His sparkling eyes glanced at me in the semi-darkness.

" It is fine to live in the world ! " he muttered.

I for some reason drew a sigh.

« What ? "

" It is fine to live in the world ! " I repeated.

Again we were silent, and again I felt ill at ease. I could not get rid of the idea that I had grieved him by agreeing with him that he was old, and I wanted to console him, but I did not know how to do it."

" Good-bye," he said, rising, " my mother is waiting supper for me. I have hardly seen her to-day."

" I wanted to play a new sonata for you," I said.

"Another time," lie said, coldly, as I thought.

" Good-bye ! "

It now seemed to me even more than before that I had offended him, and I was sorry for him. Katya and I took him as far as the veranda, and we stood in the yard, looking down the road on which he disappeared. When the tramp of his horses died down I again walked around the house to the terrace and again began to look at the garden, and in the dewy mist, in which the sounds of the night hovered, I for a long time saw and heard all that which I wished to see and hear.

lie arrived a second, and a third time, and the awkwardness produced by the strange conversation which had taken place between us entirely disappeared and was never again renewed. In the course of the whole summer he came to see us two or three times a week ; I became so accustomed to him that when he stayed away for any length of time I felt ill at ease all alone, and I was angry with him and found that he acted badly in leaving me. He treated me like a dear young companion, asked all kinds of questions, invited a most

intimate frankness, advised, encouraged, and sometimes scolded and stopped me. Yet, notwithstanding all his efforts to be continually on a level with me, I felt that in addition to what I knew of him there was still a whole foreign world to which he deemed it necessary not to admit me, and this more powerfully maintained my respect for him and attracted me to him. I knew from Katya and from neighbours that, in addition to his care for his old mother, with whom he was living, in addition to his estate and our guardianship, he had some kind of business with the affairs of the nobility, for which he suffered much annoyance ; but how he looked upon all that, what his convictions, plans, and hopes were, I never was able to find out from him. The moment I turned the conversation to his affairs, he frowned in his peculiar manner, as though to say, " Please stop, – that does not concern you," and immediately changed the subject. At first that provoked me, but later I became so used to speaking only of matters which concerned me, that I found it quite natural.

Another thing which at first displeased me and later, on the contrary, gave me pleasure, was his complete indifference and seeming contempt for my looks. He never hinted, either by a-word or a glance, that I was goodlooking ; on the contrary, he frowned and laughed whenever they called me pretty in his presence. He even liked to find fault with my appearance and teased me about it. My fashionable dresses and coiffure, with which Katya liked to adorn me on holidays, only called forth his ridicule, which grieved good Katya and at first battled me. Katya, who had made up her mind that he liked me, was quite unable to understand how a man could help wishing to see the woman he liked in the best light possible. But I soon discovered what it was he wanted.

He wanted to believe that I had no coquetry. When I came to understand that, there was actually not a shade of coquetry left in me as regards my attire, my headdress, and my movements ; but instead of that there appeared a coquetry of simplicity, showing the white basting thread, at a time when I did not yet know how to be really simple.

I knew that he loved me, but I did not yet ask myself whether as a child or as a woman. I valued this love, and, feeling that he considered me to be the best girl in the world, I could not help wishing that he should abide in this deception, and I involuntarily deceived him ; but, deceiving him, I myself grew to be better. I felt that it was better and worthier for me to express to him the best sides of my soul, than of my body. I thought that he had at once properly valued my hair, hands, face, manners, whatever they were, good or bad, and that he knew them so well that I could add nothing to my exterior, but the desire to deceive. My soul he did not know, because he loved it, because it all the time grew and developed, and here I could deceive him, and so I did.

How free I felt in his presence when I came to see that! My groundless confusion and embarrassment of movements entirely disappeared in me. I felt that whether he saw me in front, from a

side, sitting, or standing, with my hair up or down, – he knew all of me, and I thought that he was satisfied with me such as I was. I think that if he, contrary to his habit, had suddenly said to me, as others had, that I had a pretty face, I should not have been pleased in the least. On the other hand, how bright and cheerful I felt when, after something I might have said, he looked fixedly at me and exclaimed in a touched voice, to which he tried to give a jesting turn :

« Yes, yes, there is something in you. You are a fine girl, I must tell you.”

And for what did I receive such praise, which filled my heart with pride and merriment ? For saying that I sympathized with Grigori's love for his grandchild, or for being moved to tears by a poem or novel which I had read, or for preferring Beethoven to Schulhoff. I wonder by what extraordinary sense I guessed what was good and what I ought to love, although at that time I had absolutely no knowledge of what was good and what ought to be loved.

He did not like the greater part of my former habits and tastes, and it sufficed for him to indicate by a motion of his brow, or by a glance, that he did not like that which I was going to say, or for him to make his peculiar, pitying, slightly contemptuous gesture, in order that I should immediately imagine that I no longer loved that which I had loved heretofore. At times he would be on the point of giving me some advice, when I would think that I already knew what he was going to say. He would ask me something, looking me in the eye, and his glance would extract from me the very thought which he wished. All my thoughts, all my feelings, were at that time not my own, but his thoughts and feelings, which had suddenly been made mine, and had passed into my life and had illumined it.

Quite imperceptibly to myself I began to look with different eyes at everything : at Katya, at our servants, at Sonya, at myself, and at my occupations. The books which before I had been reading, in order to kill time, suddenly became one of my best pleasures of life, simply because he and I had talked about the books, had read them together, and he had brought them to me.

Before, my occupations with Sonya, the lessons I gave her, were a hard obligation for me, which I endeavoured to carry out from a sense of duty. He watched a lesson, and it became a joy for me to follow Sonya's progress. Before, it seemed impossible for me to learn by rote a whole musical composition, but now, knowing that he would hear me, and probably praise me, I would play one passage forty times in succession, so that poor Kätya stuffed her ears with cotton, while I did not get tired at all. Even the same old sonatas now phrased themselves differently, and came out very different and much better.

Even Katya, whom I knew as I knew myself, and whom I loved, suddenly changed in my eyes. Only now I understood that she was not at all obliged to be a mother, friend, and slave to us, such as she was. I

understood all the self-sacrifice and loyalty of this loving being; I understood all I owed her, and I loved her more than ever.

He also taught me to look quite differently from the way I had before upon our people, the peasants, the manorial servants, the girls. It may seem laughable to say so, but up to my seventeenth year I had lived among these people a greater stranger to them than to people I had never seen ; it had never occurred to me that these people loved, hoped, and pitied, like myself. Our garden, our groves, our fields, which I had known so long, suddenly became new and beautiful to me. He was right in saying that there is but one undoubted happiness in life, and that was to live for another. Then that seemed strange to me, and I did not understand it; but this conviction had begun to penetrate my heart before it had reached my head.

He revealed to me a whole life of joys in the present, without changing anything in my life, without adding anything but himself to every impression. Everything which since my childhood had been speechless about me now received life. It was enough for him to come in order that all should become eloquent and seek entrance into my soul, filling it with happiness.

Frequently during this summer did I go up-stairs to my room and lie down on my bed, and instead of my former vernal pining, desires, and hopes of the future, the trepidation of the happiness in the present took possession of me. I could not fall asleep, got up, seated myself on Katya's bed, and told her that I was absolutely happy, which, as I now well remember, it was not at all necessary to tell her : she could see it herself. But she told me that she, too, did not need anything, and was very happy, and kissed me. I believed her, because it seemed to me so necessary and just that all should be happy. But Katya had time to think of sleep, and she frequently pretended to be angry, and drove me away from her bed, in order to go to sleep ; while I for a long time tried to analyze what it was that made me so happy. At times I got up and prayed ; I prayed with my own words, in order to thank God for the happiness which He had given me.

It was quiet in the room : Katya breathed evenly in her sleep ; the watch ticked near her ; and I turned around and whispered words, or crossed myself and kissed the cross on my neck. The door was closed ; the shutters were in the window ; a fly or a gnat, swaying, buzzed in one place. I wished I would never have to leave the room ; I did not want the morning to come ; I did not want this soulful atmosphere which surrounded me ever to be dispelled. It seemed to me that my dreams, thoughts, and prayers were living beings, living with me here in the darkness, flitting about my bed, standing over me. Every thought was his thought, and every feeling was his feeling. I did not know then that it was love ; I thought that it could always be so, that this sentiment could be had for the asking.

III.

One day during the harvest, Katya and Sdnya and I went after dinner to the garden, to our favourite bench in the shade of lindens above the ravine, beyond which the view opened on the forest and the field. Sergyéy Mikhaylych had not been with us for three days, and we were expecting him on that day, the more so since our clerk said that he had promised to come out to the field. At about two o'clock we saw him riding out on horseback to the rye-field. Katya sent for peaches and cherries, of which he was very fond, looked at me with a smile, lay down on the bench, and dozed off. I broke off a flat, crooked branch of a linden-tree, with lush leaves and juicy bark, which wet my hand, and, fanning Katya with it, continued to read, all the time tearing myself away from the book, in order to look at the field road over which he had to reach us. Sonya was building an arbour for her dolls at the root of an old linden-tree.

The day was hot and windless, and evaporations rose from the ground ; the clouds gathered and grew black,—a storm had been threatening since morning. I was agitated, as always before a storm. After noon the clouds began to scatter along the edges ; the sun swam out upon the clear sky ; only in one corner were there some peals of thunder, and through a heavy cloud which stood over the horizon and mingled with the dust on the fields, now and then pale zigzags of lightning flashed, reaching down to the ground. It was evident that the storm would scatter for the day, at least in our region.

On the road, which could be seen in spots back of the garden, uninterruptedly passed now large creaking wagons with sheaves, in slow procession, and now empty wagons swiftly coming toward them with a clatter, while legs quivered and shirts fluttered. The dense dust was neither-carried off', nor settled, but stood beyond the wicker fence between the translucent foliage of the garden trees.

Farther away on the threshing floor, the same voices were heard, the same creaking of the wheels, and the same yellow sheaves, which slowly passed by the fence, flew into the air, and under my eyes grew up oval houses, with their sharp, clearly defined roofs, and the figures of the peasants swarming upon them. In front, on the dusty field, also moved carts, and also could be seen mellow sheaves, and from the distance were also borne the sounds of the carts, of the voices, and of the songs.

The harvested field became opener and opener on one side, with balks overgrown with wormwood. On the right, down below, on the disorderly, harvested field, could be seen the bright dresses of the sheaf-binding women, bending down and swinging their arms, and the disorderly field was cleared off, and beautiful sheaves were stacked in many places. It looked as though suddenly summer had under my eyes changed to autumn. Dust and oppressive heat were everywhere,

except in our favourite spot in the garden. The labouring people spoke, dined, and moved about on all sides, in this dust and the sweltering heat of the burning sun.

Katya snored so sweetly under the white cambric handkerchief, on our cool bench ; the black, shining cherries looked so luscious on the plate ; our garments were so fresh and clean ; the water in the pitcher sparkled so merrily in the sun, and I was so happy !

"What is to be done?" thought I. "Is it my fault that I am so happy ? But how shall I share my happiness ? How and to whom shall I give all of myself and all my happiness ? "

The sun had disappeared behind the tops of the birch avenue ; the dust was settling in the field ; the distance could be seen more distinctly and brightly under the lateral illumination ; the clouds had entirely scattered ; in the yard of the threshing floor three new roofs of ricks could be seen, and the peasants had gone down from them ; the carts, with loud shouts, hurried by, apparently for the last time; the women, with rakes over their shoulders and sheaf-twine in their belts, went home with loud singing, and Sergyéy Mikhaylych was still not with us, although I had seen him long ago riding up the hill. Suddenly his figure appeared on the avenue, in the opposite direction from where I was expecting him (he had ridden around the ravine). He was walking toward me with rapid steps, his happy face beaming, and his cap held in his hand. Seeing that Katya was asleep, he compressed his lips, closed his eyes, and walked up on tiptoe ; I noticed at once that he was in that special mood of groundless merriment of which I was so fond in him, and which we denominated " wild transport." He was just like a schoolboy who had got away from his studies : his whole being, from his countenance to his feet, breathed contentment, happiness, and childlike vivacity.

" Good evening, young violet ! How are you ? Well ? " he said in a whisper, walking over to me and pressing my hand. " I am feeling fine," he replied to my question. "I am thirteen years old to-day, and I want to play horses, and climb trees."

" Are you in wild transport ?" I said, looking at his laughing eyes, and feeling that this " wild transport " was being communicated to me.

" Yes," he answered, winking with one eye and repressing a smile. " Only why should you strike the nose of Katerina Karlovna ? "

I had not noticed, as I was looking at him and continuing to fan with the branch, that I had knocked off the handkerchief from Katya, and now was brushing her face with the leaves. I burst out laughing.

" And she will say that she did not sleep," I said, in a whisper, as if not to waken Katya, but in reality because it simply gave me pleasure to speak in a whisper to him.

He moved his lips as if in imitation of my whisper, as though I had

spoken so softly that it was impossible to hear what I had said. Upon seeing the plate with the cherries, he grabbed it, as though by stealth, went up to Sonya under the linden, and sat down on her dolls. Sonya was at first angry, but he soon made up with her, and arranged a game with her, in which they had to contest in eating cherries.

" Do you want me to send for some more ? " I said, " or let us go there ourselves ! "

He took the plate, put some dolls upon it, and all three of us went up to the shed. Sonya ran, laughing, behind us, pulling his overcoat, to have him give her back her dolls. He gave them to her, and solemnly turned to me.

" Of course you are a violet," he said to me, still in a low voice, although there was no fear now of waking anybody. " The moment I came up to you after all this dust, heat, and work, I scented a violet, not a fragrant violet, you know, but that first, dark violet that smells of melting snow and vernal grass."

" Well, does everything about the estate go well ? " I asked him, in order to conceal the joyful embarrassment which his words had produced in me."

" Excellently ! These people are everywhere excellent. The more you know them the better you love them."

" Yes," I said, " before you came up I looked from the garden at the work, and I suddenly felt conscience-stricken because they were working, while I was so comfortable that - "

" Don't coquet with it, my friend," lie interrupted me, suddenly looking seriously, but graciously, into my eyes. " This is a sacred matter. God preserve us from making a display of it ! "

" I am saying this to you only."

" Yes, I know. Well, how are the cherries ? "

The shed was closed, and there were no gardeners around (he had sent them all to work). Sonya ran away for the key, but he did not wait for her return, and climbed up at the corner, raised the netting, and jumped down on the other side.

"Do you want some ?" I heard his voice from the other side. " Let me have the plate ! "

" No, I want to pick some myself! I will go for the key," I said, " Sonya will not find it - "

But, at the same time, I wanted to see what he was doing, how he looked, how he moved, when supposing that he was not watched. I simply did not want at that time to let him for a minute out of my

sight. I ran on tiptoe through the nettles around the shed, to the other side, which was lower, and, standing up on an empty barrel, so that the wall was lower than my breast, bent over into the shed. I surveyed the inside of the shed, with its old, bent trees and their broad, serrated leaves, from which hung down the heavy, luscious black cherries. I put my head under the netting, and back of a crooked bough of an old cherry-tree espied Sergyéy Mikhaylych.

He, no doubt, thought that I had gone and that no one saw him. Taking off his hat and closing his eyes, he sat on the ruins of an old cherry-tree, and carefully rolled into a ball a piece of cherry gum. He suddenly shrugged his shoulders, opened his eyes, and, muttering something, smiled. That word and smile were so unlike him that I felt conscience-stricken for watching him secretly. I thought that the word was "Masha!" "Impossible!" I thought. "Dear Masha!" he repeated, more softly and gently. Now I heard these two words quieu uiowuw^. My heart beat so strongly and I was suddenly seized by such an agitating joy, as though it were a forbidden joy, that I grasped the wall with my hands in order not to fall and give myself away.

He heard my motion, looked around in fright, and, suddenly lowering his eyes, blushed crimson, like a child. He wanted to say something to me, but could not, and his face flushed again and again. Yet he smiled, looking at me. I, too, smiled. His whole face was agleam with joy. He was no longer the old uncle, caressing and instructing me; he now was my equal, who loved and feared me, and whom I loved and feared. We said nothing, and only looked at each other. Suddenly he frowned; his smile and the sparkle of his eyes disappeared, and he again turned coldly and in a fatherly way toward me, as though we were doing something bad, and he had come to his senses and advised me to come to my senses.

"You had better climb down, or you will hurt yourself," he said. "And fix your hair! Just see what you look like!"

"Why does he pretend? Why does he want to give me pain?" I thought, indignantly. At that moment I was seized by an insuperable desire to embarrass him once more and to exert my strength on him.

"No, I want to pick them myself," I said, and, taking hold of the nearest branch, jumped with my feet on the wall. Before he had any time to support me, I jumped to the ground inside the shed.

"What foolish things you are doing!" he exclaimed, blushing again and, under the appearance of anger, trying to conceal his embarrassment. "You might have hurt yourself! And how will you get out of here?"

He was still more confused than before, but now this confusion of his no longer gave me pleasure, but frightened me. It was communicated to me; I blushed and,

avoiding him, and not knowing what to say, began to pick the

cherries, though I had nothing to put them in. I reproached myself, I regretted, I was afraid, and I thought that I had ruined myself for ever in his eyes with my action. We were both silent, and both felt oppressed.

Sonya came running up with the key, and she took us out of this oppressive situation. For a long time afterward we did not speak to each other, and both addressed Sdnya. When we returned to Katya, who assured us that she had not slept, but had heard everything, I calmed down, and he tried again to strike his patronizing, paternal tone, but he no longer was successful in it, and did not deceive me. I now vividly recalled the conversation which had taken place between us a few days before.

Katya had remarked how much easier it was for a man to love and express his love, than for a woman.

" A man can say that he loves, but a woman cannot," she said.

" But to me it seems that even a man must not and cannot say that he loves," he said.

" Why ?" I asked.

" Because that will always be a lie. What kind of a discovery is it that a man loves ? As if, when he says it, something clicks, – bang, – he loves. As if, the moment he pronounces the word, something unusual must happen, some phenomenon, – and they will fire off all the cannon. It seems to me," he continued, " that people who solemnly pronounce the words, ' I love you,' either deceive themselves, or, what is worse, deceive others."

" But how is a woman to find out that she is loved, if she is not told so ? " Katya asked.

" That I do not know," he replied. " Every man has his own words. If there is any sentiment, it will find its expression. When I read novels I always imagine what a puzzled face Lieutenant Stryélski, or Alfred, must have when he says, ' I love you, Eleonora ! ' and thinks that suddenly something unusual will take place ; nothing happens either to her or to him : the eyes and nose are the same, and everything is the same."

I even then, in this jest of his, felt something serious, which referred to me, but Katya would not allow him to treat lightly the heroes of novels.

"Your eternal paradoxes," she said. "Tell me, in truth, have you never told a woman that you loved her?"

" I have never told one so, and have never thrown myself on one knee," he replied, smiling, " and I never will."

" He need not tell me that he loves me," I now thought, vividly

recalling that conversation. " He loves me, I know it. All his attempts to appear indifferent will not change my belief."

He spoke very little with me all that evening, but in every word of his to Katya and to Sdnya, and in every motion and glance of his I saw love, and I did not doubt it. But I was provoked and felt pity for him because he considered it necessary to conceal his sentiment and to pretend being cold, when all was so evident, and when it was so easy and simple to be so impossibly happy. But I was tormented as if by a crime for having leaped down to him into the shed. It seemed to me that he would cease respecting me for it, and that he was angry with me.

After tea I went up to the piano, and he followed me.

" Play something ! I have not heard you for quite awhile," he said, catching up with me in the drawingroom.

" I meant to, Sergyéy Mikhaylych ! " I said, suddenly looking liim straight in the eye. " Are you not angry with me ? "

" For what ? " he asked.

" For not obeying you after dinner," I said, blushing.

He understood me, shook his head, and smiled. His glance said that I ought to be scolded, but that he did not feel himself equal to the task.

"There has been nothing, and we are friends again," I said, sitting down at the piano.

" Indeed we are ! " he said.

In the large, high-studded room there were but two candles on the piano ; the rest of space was merged in semi-darkness. A bright summer night peeped through the windows. Everything was quiet; only Katya's intermittent steps creaked in the dark drawing-room, and his horse, hitched beneath the window, snorted and beat its hoofs against the burdocks.

He was sitting back of me, so that I could not see him ; but everywhere, in the twilight of the room, in the sounds, in myself, I felt his presence. Every glance, every motion of his, wliich I did not see, reechoed in my heart. I was playing a sonata-fantasia by Mozart, which he had brought me, and which I had studied up in his presence and for his sake. I was not thinking at all of what I was playing, but I think I played well, and I then thought that he liked it. I felt the joy which he was experiencing, and, without looking at him, I felt the glance which he directed at me from behind.

I looked around at him quite involuntarily, while continuing unconsciously to move my fingers. His head stood out against the glimmering background of the night. He was sitting with his head

leaning on his arms and looking fixedly at me with his sparkling eyes. I smiled, seeing that glance, and stopped playing. He smiled, too, and reproachfully shook his head at my music, indicating that he wanted me to go on. When I was through, the moon had grown brighter and had risen high, and, in addition to the feeble light of the caudles, another, silvery light, which fell upon the floor, was coming in through the windows.

Katya said that it was atrocious to stop in the best place, and that I had played badly ; but he said that, on the contrary, I had never played so well as on that day, and began to walk from room to room, across the parlour to the drawing-room, and back again to the parlour, looking all the time at me and smiling. I, too, smiled ; I even wanted to laugh for no cause whatever, so glad was I of something that had happened but awhile before. The moment he disappeared through the door, I embraced Katya, with whom I was standing near the piano, and began to kiss her in my favourite spot, the plump neck under her chin ; every time he returned I pretended to look serious, and with difficulty restrained a laugh.

" What shall we do with her to-day ? " Kâtya said to him.

He did not answer and only made fun of me. He knew what was going on within me.

" See what a night ! " he said from the drawing-room, stopping in front of the door of the balcony opening into the garden -

We went up to him. It really was such a night as I never have seen since. The full moon stood back of us, over the house, so that it could not be seen, and half of the shadow of the roof, of the posts, and the canvas of the terrace, lay slantingly en raccourci on the sandy path and the greensward circle. Everything else was bright and bathed in the silver of the dew and of the moonlight. The broad flower-path, along one side of which lay slantingly the shadows of the dahlias and supports, was all lighted up and cold, sparkling with its unevenly crushed pebbles, and was lost in the mist and in the distance.

Back of the trees could be seen the bright roof of the hothouse, and a growing mist rose from the ravine. The lilac bushes, now somewhat stripped of their splendour, were illuminated down to the branches. All the dew-drenched flowers could be distinguished one from the other. In the avenues the light and the shadow mingled in such a way that the avenues appeared not as trees and paths, but as transparent, swaying, and quivering houses. On the right, in the shadow of the house, everything was black, formless, and terrible. So much the more brightly rose from this darkness the fantastically spreading top of the poplar, which, for some reason, had stopped strangely not far from the house, way above in the bright light, instead of flying far away, into the receding bluish sky.

" Come, let us take a walk ! " said I.

Katya consented, but said that I ought to put on my galoshes.

" It is not necessary, Katya," I said. " Sergyéy Mi-khaylych will give me his arm."

As though this could keep me from getting my feet wet ! But at that time that was quite comprehensible to all three of us, and did not seem in the least strange. He had never before offered me his arm, but now I took it myself, and he did not find it strange. All that world, that garden, that air, were not as I knew them.

As I looked down the avenue, in which we were walking, it seemed to me that it was impossible to go any farther, that there was the end of the world of possibilities, that all that must for ever be fettered in its beauty. But we moved on, and the magic wall of beauty receded, and let us in, and there, too, it seemed, were our familiar garden, trees, paths, and dry leaves. And, indeed, we walked over the paths, stepped on the circles of light and shadow, and dry leaves rustled under foot, and a fresh branchlet brushed my face. And, indeed, it was he who, evenly and softly striding at my side, cautiously held my arm, and, indeed, it was the same Katya who was walking in a row with us, with creaking step. And, no doubt, it was the moon in the sky that shone down upon us through the motionless branches –

But with every step the magic wall again closed up behind us and in front of us, and I ceased believing that it was possible to go farther ; I ceased believing in all that was.

" Oh, a frog ! " said Kätya.

" Who says that, and why ?" I thought. Then I recalled that it was Katya and that she was afraid of frogs, and I looked down at my feet. The tiny frog jumped and stood as though petrified before me, its small shadow appearing on the bright clay of the path.

« Are you not afraid ? " he asked.

I looked around at him. There was one linden wanting in the spot which we were passing, and I could clearly see his face. It was so beautiful and happy –

He said, " Are you not afraid ? " but I heard him say, " I love you, dear girl ! – I love you ! – I love you ! " repeated his glance, his hand ; and the light, the shadow, the air, everything repeated the same.

We made a circle around the whole garden. Katya was walking, with her mincing steps, at our side, and breathing heavily from fatigue. She said that it was time to turn back, and I was sorry for her, poor woman. " Why does she not feel the same that we are feeling ?" I thought. "Why are not all young and happy as this night and he and I?"

We returned home, but he did not leave for a long time, although the cocks had crowed, and all in the house were asleep, and his horse ever more frequently struck its hoofs against the burdocks and snorted beneath the window. Katya did not remind us of the time, and we, talking of the most trifling things, sat up, without knowing it, till three o'clock in the morning. The third cocks were crowing and dawn began to break when he left. He bade us good-bye as usual, without saying anything in particular ; but I knew that from that day on he was mine, and that I should not lose him.

The moment I was conscious of loving him, I told Katya everything. She was glad and touched by what I told her ; but the poor woman was able to fall asleep that night, while I walked for a long, long time up and down the terrace, went down into the garden, and, recalling every word and every motion, strolled through all the avenues in which we had walked together. I did not sleep all that night, and for the first time in my life saw the rising sun and the break of day. I have never since seen such a night and such a morning.

" Why does he not tell me outright that he loves me ? " I thought. "Why does he invent such difficulties and call himself an old man, when everything is so simple and beautiful ? Why does he lose the golden time, which, maybe, will never return ? Let him say, ' I love you ! ' let him say it in so many words ! Let him take my hand, bend his head over it, and say, ' I love you ! ' Let him blush and lower his eyes before me, and then I will tell him everything. No, I will not tell him, I will embrace him, press closely to him, and weep. But how if I am mistaken, and he does not love me ? " it suddenly flashed through my mind.

I was frightened at my sentiment, fearing that it might lead him and me God knows where, and I thought of my embarrassment in the shed, as I jumped down to him, and a heavy, heavy feeling oppressed my heart. Tears gushed from my eyes, and I began to pray. A strange thought and hope came to me, and it calmed me. I decided to fast from that day on, to take the sacrament upon my birthday, and on that very day to become his fiancée.

Wherefore ? Why ? How was it to happen ? I did not know at all, but I believed and knew from that minute on that it would be so. It was quite light, and people were beginning to get up, when I returned to my room.

IV.

It was the fast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and so no one in the house was surprised at my determination to fast.

All that week he did not come once to see us, and I was not only not surprised, agitated, or angry with him, but, on the contrary, was glad that he did not come, and expected him only on my birthday.

During that week I rose early in the morning, and, while they hitched up for me, walked all alone in the garden, passing over in my mind all my sins of the previous day and considering what I had to do in order to be satisfied with my day and not to sin even once. Then it seemed to me so easy to be entirely sinless. It seemed to me that all one had to do was to try a little.

The horses drove up ; I and Katya, or a maid, seated ourselves in the vehicle, and we drove to the church, which was three versts off. Every time I entered the church I bore in mind that people prayed for all " entering in the fear of God," and it was with this sentiment that I endeavoured to ascend the two grass-grown steps of the church entrance.

At that time there used to be no more than ten fasting peasant women and manorial servants. I tried to respond to their bows with considerate humility, and myself went to the candle box, which act I regarded as heroic, to get the candles from an old soldierly elder, and to put them up. Through the royal gate could be seen the covering of the altar, which mamma had embroidered; over the iconostasis stood two angels with stars, which, when I was young, had appeared so large to me, and a dove with a yellow halo, which at that time used to interest me very much. Back of the choir could be seen an indented basin, in which I had so often baptized the children of our manorial servants, and in which I myself had been baptized.

The old priest came out in the vestment made from the shroud of my father's coffin, and held the divine service in the same voice in which, as far back as I remembered, had been held the divine service in our house, – Sonya's baptism, the mass after father, and the funeral service of my mother. The same tremulous voice of the sexton was heard in the choir, and the same old woman, whom I remembered having always seen in the church at every service, stood bending at the wall, looking with tearful eyes at the image in the choir, pressing her folded fingers to her faded kerchief, and mumbling something with her toothless mouth.

All this was not merely a matter of curiosity to me and not merely near to me on account of the recollections which it evoked, – all this was great and holy in my eyes, and seemed to me full of deep meaning. I listened to every word of the prayer read, tried to respond to it with my feeling, and if I did not understand it, I mentally asked God to enlighten me, or substituted a prayer of my own in place of the one I did not hear distinctly.

When prayers of repentance were read, I recalled my past, and that childish, innocent past seemed to me so black in comparison with the bright condition of my soul, that I wept and was terrified at myself ; at the same time I felt that all that would be forgiven me, and that if there had been even more sins, repentance would have been so much sweeter for me.

When the priest, at the end of the service, said, « God's blessing

be with you ! " it seemed to me that I experienced a physical sensation of bliss momentarily communicated to me, as though a certain light and warmth entered my heart. The service was over; the father came out to ask me whether I did not need him, and when he was to come to our house to serve the evening mass ; I thanked him, being touched by what I thought he wished to do for me, and told him that I should walk or drive down myself.

"You wish to take the trouble yourself?" he would say to me.

I did not know what to reply, for fear of sinning in respect to pride.

After the mass I always dismissed the carriage, if I was without Katya, and returned home on foot, bowing low and in humility to all the passers-by and trying to find an opportunity for giving advice and sacrificing myself for some one, helping to lift up a wagon, rocking a baby, going out of the way, and stepping into the mud.

One evening I heard the clerk, who was reporting to Katya, say that the peasant Semén had come to ask for some boards for his daughter's coffin and a rouble for the mass, and that he had given him both.

" Are they so poor ? " I asked.

" They are, madam ! They have no salt," replied the clerk.

Something gave me a pang in my heart, and I was at the same time glad to hear it. I deceived Kdtya by telling her that I wanted to take a walk, but ran up-stairs, took my money (there was very little of it, but it was all I had), and, crossing myself, went myself down the terrace and through the garden to the village, to Semén's hut. It was at the edge of the village, and I, unseen by any one, went up to the window, put the money on the sill, and tapped at the window-pane. Somebody came out of the hut, making the door creak, and called out to me. I, trembling and chilled with fright, like a criminal, ran home.

Katya asked me where I had been and what the matter was with me, but I did not understand what she was saying to me, and did not answer her. Everything suddenly seemed to me so insignificant and petty. I locked myself up in my room, and for a long time walked in it up and down, all alone, unable to do or think anything, unable to give myself an account of my feeling. I thought of the joy of the whole family, of the words they would use in reference to the one that had placed the money there, and I was sorry I had not handed them the money in person. I also thought of what Sergyéy Mi-khaylych would say if he found out my act, and I rejoiced because nobody would ever know it. There was such joy in me, and all, myself included, appeared so bad to me, and I looked so meekly at myself and at others, that the thought of death came to me as a dream of happiness. I smiled, and prayed, and wept, and at that moment I loved everybody in the world and myself so passionately and so ardently !

In the intervals of the services I read the Gospel, and this book became ever more intelligible to me, and the story of that divine life grew ever more touching and simple, and the depths of feeling and thought, which I found in its teaching, grew ever more awful and impenetrable. But, then, how clear and simple everything seemed to me, when I, rising from that book, again scrutinized and analyzed the life which surrounded me !

It seemed to me that it was so hard to live badly, and so simple to love all and be loved. All were so good and gentle with me, and even Sdnya, whom I continued to instruct, was quite different : she tried to understand and please me, and to give me no cause for grief. As I was, so all were with me.

While passing in review all my enemies, whose forgiveness I should have to ask before going to confession, I recalled only one young lady, a neighbour of mine, of whom I had made fun in the presence of guests the year before, and who had stopped calling on us. I wrote her a letter, acknowledging my guilt and asking her pardon. She answered me by a letter, in which she herself asked forgiveness, and forgave me. I wept with joy, reading these simple lines, in which I then saw just such a deep and touching sentiment.

My nurse burst out into tears when I asked her forgiveness. " Why are they all so good to me ? Through what have I deserved such love ? " I asked myself. I involuntarily thought of Sergydy Mikhäylych and could not get him out of my mind. I could not do otherwise, and even did not consider it a sin. I now thought of him quite differently from that night, when I for the first time discovered that I loved him ; I thought of him as of myself, involuntarily connecting him with every thought of my future.

The crushing influence which I experienced in his presence now entirely disappeared from my imagination. I now felt myself as Iris equal, and I understood him from the height of the spiritual mood in which I was. That which before had seemed strange to me, now became intelligible. I now understood why he said that happiness consisted only in living for another, and I fully concurred with him. It seemed to me that together we should be so endlessly and calmly happy. I now dreamed, not of travels abroad, not of splendour, but of an entirely different, quiet, domestic life in the country, with eternal self-sacrifice, with eternal love for each other, and with the eternal consciousness of a gentle and helpful Providence in everything.

I went to communion, as I had expected, on my birthday. In my breast there was such a full happiness, when I on that day returned from church, that I was afraid of life, of every impression, of everything which might have impaired that happiness. But the moment we stepped from our vehicle on the porch we heard on the bridge the rumble of the familiar cabriolet, and I saw Sergydy Mi-khaylych. He congratulated me, and we went together to the drawing-room. Never since I had known him had I been so calm and collected with him as

upon that morning. I felt that within me there was a whole new world, which he did not understand, and which was above him. I did not experience the least embarrassment in his presence. He, no doubt, knew what the cause of it was, and was especially gentle and piously respectful to me. I went up to the piano, but he locked it and put the key in his pocket.

" Do not disturb your disposition," he said. " There is now in your soul a better music than any other in the world."

I was thankful to him for it, but at the same time it annoyed me a little to see him understand so easily and correctly that in my soul which was to remain a secret from everybody. At dinner he said that he had come to congratulate me and, at the same time, to bid us farewell, as he was going away to Moscow. As he said this he looked at Katya ; later he cast a passing glance at me, and I saw that he was afraid to notice agitation in my face. But I was surprised, and not agitated, and did not even ask him how long he was going to stay. I knew that he would tell it himself, and I knew that he would not leave at all. How did I know it ? I am now quite unable to account for it ; but on that memorable day it seemed to me that I knew everything which was and which would be. I was as if in a happy dream, when everything that takes place seems to have happened before, and I had known it all the while, and it would all be again, and I knew that it would all be.

He wanted to leave soon after dinner, but Kdtya, who was tired from the mass, had gone to take a nap, and he had to wait until she should wake up, in order to bid her good-bye. The sun was shining into the parlour, and we went out on the terrace. The moment we sat down I began to say that which was to decide the fate of my love, and began to say it no earlier and no later than at the moment when we sat down and when nothing had yet been said, when there had not yet been struck a peculiar tone or character of conversation which might have interfered with that which I intended to say. I myself do not understand whence came to me that calmness, determination, and precision of expression. I felt as though something independent of my will were speaking within me. He sat opposite me, leaning on the balustrade and, drawing a lilac branch toward him, picked the leaves from it. When I began to speak he let the branch go and leaned his head on his arm. This might have been the expression of an entirely calm or of a very agitated man.

"Why are you leaving?" I asked, significantly, with pauses, and looking straight at him.

He did not answer at once.

" Business ! " he muttered, lowering his head.

I saw how hard it was for him to tell an untruth in my presence and in response to my sincere question.

" Listen," I said, " you know what day this is for me. It is in many

things a very important day. If I ask you I am not doing so in order to show my sympathy for you (you know that I am used to you and that I love you) ; I ask it of you because I must know it. Why are you leaving ? ”

“ It is very hard for me to tell you the truth about my leaving,” he said. “ This week I have thought a great deal about you and about myself, and I have decided that I must leave. You know why, and, if you love me, you will not ask me.” He rubbed his brow with his hand and closed his eyes. “It is hard for me – but you can understand it.”

My heart began to beat violently.

“ I cannot understand,” I said, “ I cannot, but tell me, for God’s sake, for the sake of this day tell me – I can listen calmly to you,” I said.

He changed his position, glanced at me, and again drew the branch toward him.

“ Well,” he said, after a moment’s silence, in a voice which tried to appear firm, “ though it is stupid and impossible to tell it in words, although it is hard for me, I shall try to explain it to you,” he added, frowning, as though from physical pain.

“Well?” said I.

“ Let us suppose that there was a certain Mr. A-----,”

he said, “ an old gentleman, past his youth, and a certain Miss B----, a young, happy girl, who had seen neither

people, nor life. Having stood in certain familiar relations with her, he came to love her as a daughter and had the courage to love her otherwise.”

He stopped, but I did not interrupt him.

“ But he forgot that B-----was so young, that life was

still a plaything for her,” he suddenly continued, in a rapid and determined voice, without looking at me, “ and that it was easy enough to love her otherwise, and that that would please her. But he made a mistake, and he suddenly felt that another feeling, as heavy as repentance, was finding its way into his soul, and he was frightened. He was frightened at the thought that their former amicable relations would be disturbed, and he decided to leave before these relations should be disturbed.” Saying this, he again, as if carelessly, began to rub his eyes with his hand, and he closed them.

“ Why was he afraid to love her otherwise ?” I said, hardly above a whisper, keeping back my agitation, and my voice was even, but to

him it evidently appeared frivolous. He answered me almost in an offended tone :

" You are young," he said, " and I am not young. You want to play, and I need something else. Play, but not with me, or else I will believe you, and then it will not be well for me, while you will be sorry. So A----

said," he added - " Well, that is all nonsense : you know why I am leaving. Let us not talk again of it, if you please ! "

« Yes, yes ! Let us talk ! " I said, and tears quivered in my voice. " Did he love her or not ? "

He made no reply.

" If he did not love her, why did he play with her, as with a child ?" I muttered.

" Yes, yes, A----was to be blamed," he replied, swiftly

interrupting me, " but all was ended, and they parted - as friends."

" But that is terrible ! And is there no other end to it ? " I stammered, and was frightened at what I said.

" Yes, there is," he said, uncovering his agitated face and looking straight at me. "There are two different ends. But, for God's sake, do not interrupt me and listen calmly to what I have to say. Some say," he began, getting up and smiling a heavy, sickly smile, " some say that A---- went insane, senselessly fell in love with B----

and told her so - But she only laughed. For her this was a joke, but for him it was a whole life."

I shuddered and wanted to interrupt him, to tell him not to speak for me; but he kept me back, putting his hand on mine.

" Hold on," he said, in a trembling voice. " Others say that she took pity on him ; she, poor girl, who had seen no people, imagined that she really could love him and consented to be his wife. He, insane man, believed that all his life would begin anew ; but she herself saw that she had deceived him and that he had deceived her - Let us not speak of it again ! " he concluded, apparently unable to proceed, and silently walking up and down in front of me.

He said, " Let us not speak ! " but I saw that he was with all the power of his soul waiting for an answer from me. I wanted to speak, but could not: something was compressing my heart. I looked at him : he was pale, and his lower lip was quivering. I felt pity for him. I made an effort, and, suddenly, breaking the power of silence which held me fettered, spoke to him in a soft, inward voice, which, I was afraid, would break at any moment.

" And the third end ?" I said. I stopped, but he was silent. " And the third end is thajt he had not loved her, but had pained her, oh, so much, and that he thought that he was right in doing so and went away, priding himself on something. To you, and not to me, it may be a joke, but I have loved you from the first day," I repeated, and at the word " loved," my soft inward voice involuntarily passed into a desperate shriek, which frightened me.

He stood pale in front of me, his lip quivered ever more violently, and two tears stood on his cheeks.

" That is bad ! " I almost shouted, feeling that bad, unwept tears were choking me. " Why are you doing it ? " I said, rising, in order to go away from him.

But he did not let me go. His head lay on my knees ; his lips kissed my trembling hands, and his tears wet them.

" My God, if I had known," he muttered.

" Why ? Why ? " I kept repeating, but in my soul there was happiness, for ever departing happiness, which was never to return.

Five minutes later Sdnya ran up-stairs to Katya and cried at the top of her voice that Masha wanted to marry Sergyéy Mikhdylch.

V.

There was no reason for delaying our wedding, and neither I nor he wanted it delayed. It is true, Katya wanted to go to Moscow to buy things, and order the trousseau, and his mother demanded that, before marrying, he should get him a new carriage and furniture, and should have the house newly papered ; but both of us insisted that all that could be done later, if it was at all necessary, but that we should be married two weeks after my birthday, quietly, without a trousseau, without guests, without best men, suppers, champagne, and all the other conventional requisites of a wedding.

He told me that his mother was dissatisfied because the wedding was to be without music, without a mountain of trunks, and without a renovation of the whole house, unlike her wedding, which had cost thirty thousand, and that she, in all earnestness, and secretly from him, was rummaging through the trunks in the storeroom, and consulting with housekeeper Maryushka about all kinds of rugs, curtains, and trays, which were absolutely necessary for our happiness.

On my side, Katya was doing the same with nurse Kuzminishna, and it would not do to speak jestingly to her about the matter. She was firmly convinced that we, speaking of our future, were only making

love and talking nonsense, as is proper for people in such a condition, but that our material future happiness would depend on a correct cut and making of chemises and hemming of tablecloths and napkins.

Between Pokrdvskoe and Nikolskoe secret messages were carried all the time about what was being prepared in each place, and, although outwardly there seemed to be the ten derest of relations between Katya and his mother, there began already to be felt a certain hostile, but very refined, diplomacy. Tatyana Seménovna, his mother, with whom I now became more closely acquainted, was an exacting, stern housekeeper, and a lady of the old style. He loved her not only as a dutiful son, but as a man of feeling, regarding her as the best, the cleverest, the kindest, and most loving of women in the world. Tatyana Seménovna had always been kind to us, and especially to me, and she was glad that her son was getting married ; but when I called on her as a fiancée, it seemed to me that she wanted to make me feel that, as a match for her son, I could be better, and that it would not hurt me always to keep this in mind. I understood her very well and agreed with her.

During these last two weeks we saw each other every day. He arrived to dinner and remained until midnight. In spite of his assertion, – and I knew he was telling the truth, – that he could not live without me, he never passed a whole day with me and tried to attend to his business. Our external relations up to our wedding remained the same as before ; we addressed each other as " you ; " he did not even kiss my hand, and not only did not seek, but even avoided, occasions of being left alone with me, as though he were afraid to abandon himself to the too great and noxious tenderness which was in him. I do not know whether it was he or I who had changed, only I now felt myself to be his equal, no longer discovered in him that pretence of simplicity which had displeased me before, and frequently, with joy, saw before me, instead of a man inspiring respect and dread, a gentle boy abandoning himself to his happiness.

" So this is all there was in him ! " I frequently thought. " He is just such a person as I am, and nothing more." It now seemed to me that he was all of him before me, and that I knew him well. And all that which I found out about him was so simple, and harmonized so well with me. Even his plans of how we were to live were precisely my plans, except that they were more clearly and better defined in his words.

The weather during that time was bad, and we passed most of the time indoors. Our most intimate conversations took place in the corner between the piano and the window. From the black window-panes were reflected the short rays of the candle-light ; now and then rain-drops beat against or flowed down the shining panes. Rain pattered on the roof ; the water plashed in the puddle under the gutter; the air near the window felt damp. So much the brighter, warmer, and more cheerful was our corner.

" Do you know, I long ago wanted to tell you something," lie once

said, as we once sat late in that corner. " I thought about it all the time you were playing."

" Don't tell me anything, I know it all," I said.

" Yes, that is so, we won't speak of it."

"No, do tell me what it is!" I asked.

" It is this : Do you remember the story I told you about A----and B----? "

" Of course I remember that stupid story. I am glad it ended as it did - "

" Yes, it would not have taken much for all my happiness to vanish through my own fault. You saved me. But the main thing is that I was not telling the truth then, and I now want to say what I left unsaid."

" Please don't ! "

« Don't be afraid," he said, smiling. " I only want to justify myself. When I began to speak I wanted to reason."

" What is the good of reasoning ? " I said. " One must not do that ! "

" Yes, I reasoned badly. After all my disenchantments and blunders in life, as I arrived in the country, I said determinately that love was ended for me, that all there was left for me was the duty of living out my days. For a long time I had not asked myself what my feeling to you was, or to what it might lead me. I both hoped and did not hope ; now I thought that you were flirting, now I believed you, and did not know myself what I should do. But after that evening, - you remember when we strolled through the garden, - I became frightened : my present happiness appeared too great and impossible to me. What would happen if I allowed myself to hope in vain ? Of course, I was thinking only of myself, because I am a horrible egotist."

He grew silent, looking at me.

" It was by no means all nonsense which I was then saying. I had good reason for being afraid. I take so much from you and can give you so little. You are still a child ; you are a bud that will unfold itself ; you love for the first time, and I - "

" Tell me in all truth," I said, but suddenly I dreaded his answer ; "no, don't," I added.

"Whether I have loved before? Yes?" he said, at once guessing my thought. " I can tell you that. No, I have not. Never was there anything resembling that feeling - " Suddenly a heavy recollection

seemed to flash through his imagination. " No, and here I need your heart in order to have the right to love you," he said, sadly. " So did I not have cause for reflecting before telling you that I loved you ? What do I offer you ? Love, it is true."

" Is not that a great deal ? " I said, looking into his eyes.

" It is little, my dear, little for you," he continued. " You have beauty and youth ! Often now I do not sleep at night from happiness, and I think all the time of how we are going to live together. I had lived long, and it seemed to me that I had found what was necessary for happiness. A quiet, solitary life in our wilderness, with a chance of doing good to people, to whom it is so easy to do any good to which they are not yet accustomed ; then work, work, which seems to be profitable ; then rest, Nature, a book, music, love of my neighbour, – that was my happiness, beyond which I did not dream. And here I have, above it all, such a friend as you, and there may be a family, and everything which a man may wish."

" Yes," I said.

" For me, who have lived past my youth, yes, but not for you," he continued. " You have not yet lived ; you may wish to find happiness in something else, and, maybe, will find your happiness there. It seems to you that this is happiness because you love me."

" No, I always wished for and loved this quiet domestic life," I said. " You express precisely what I have been thinking."

He smiled.

" It only seems so to you, my friend. But this is not enough for you. You have beauty and youth," he repeated, thoughtfully.

I grew angry at his not believing me, and, as it were, reproaching me for my beauty and youth.

"For what, then, do you love me?" I said, angrily, " for my youth or for my own sake? "

" I do not know, but I love you," he replied, looking at me with his attentive, magnetic glance.

I did not answer, and involuntarily looked into his eyes. Suddenly something strange happened to me; at first I ceased seeing my surroundings: only his eyes seemed to sparkle in front of mine ; then it seemed to me that these eyes were in me, – everything became mixed, and I saw nothing, and had to close my eyes in order to tear myself away from the feeling of enjoyment and terror which this glance produced in me.

On the eve of the day appointed for our wedding the weather cleared off. After the rains, which had begun in the summer, there was the first cold and bright fall day. Everything was damp, cold, and

bright, and in the garden could be noticed for the first time the spaciousness, variegation, and bareness of autumn. The sky looked clear, cold, and pale.

I went to bed, happy in the thought that there would be good weather on the day of our wedding. On that day I awoke with the sun, and the thought that now was the day seemed to frighten and surprise me. I went into the garden. The sun had just risen, and shone checkered through the sear, yellowing leaves of the lindens. The road was strewn with rustling leaves. The wrinkled, bright bunches of the rowan-trees shone red on the branches among the frost-killed, scanty, curled-up leaves; the dahlias were wrinkled and black. The frost for the first time lay like silver on the pale green of the grass and on the broken burdocks near the house. On the clear, cold sky there was not, and could not be, a single cloud.

" Is it possible it is to-day ?" I asked myself, not being able to believe my happiness. " Is it possible to-morrow I shall awaken, not here, but in the strange Nikolskoe house with the columns ? Shall I not be waiting and meeting him, and in the evenings and nights speaking with Katya about him ? Shall I not be sitting with him at the piano in the Pokrovskoe house ?" I recalled that he had said the day before that he was coming for the last time, and Katya made me try on my wedding-gown, and said, " For to-morrow ; " and I believed for a moment, and again doubted.

" Is it possible that from to-day I shall be living there with my mother-in-law, without Nadézha, without old man Grigori, without Katya? Shall I not kiss my nurse before going to bed, and shall I not see her, according to her old habit, make the sign of the cross over me, and say, ' Good night, miss.' Shall I not be teaching Sonya and playing with her, and in the morning tapping the wall to her room and hearing her melodious laughter ? Is it possible that I shall from this day on become a stranger to myself, and that a new life of the realization of my hopes and desires will be opened up before me ? Will it be for ever, that new life ? "

I waited for him with impatience ; I felt so oppressed alone with my thoughts. He came early, and only in his presence did I fully believe that that day I was to become his wife, and that thought was no longer terrible to me.

Before dinner we went to our church to celebrate mass for my father.

" If he were alive now ! " I thought, as we were returning home, and I silently leaned on the arm of the man who had been the best friend of him of whom I was thinking. During the prayer, as I touched the cold stone of the chapel floor with my head, I so vividly thought of my father and so firmly believed that his spirit understood me and approved my choice, that it seemed to me that even now his spirit was hovering above us and that I felt his blessing upon me. My recollections, and hopes, and happiness, and sorrow mingled within me in one solemn and agreeable sensation, with which harmonized that immovable fresh air, that calm, that bareness of the fields, and the

pale sky, from which fell upon everything the bright but powerless beams which endeavoured to burn my cheek. It seemed to me that he with whom I was going understood and shared my feeling. He walked softly and in silence, and upon his face, at which I glanced now and then, there was expressed that partly sad, partly joyful solemnity which was in Nature and in my heart.

Suddenly he turned around to me, and I saw that he wanted to say something. " Suppose he should speak of something different from what I am thinking about ? " it occurred to me. But he spoke of my father, without mentioning him.

"He once said jokingly to me: ' Marry my Masha!'" he said.

" How happy he would be now," I said, pressing closer the arm that was supporting me.

" Yes, you were then a child," he continued, looking me in the eye. " I used then to kiss these eyes, and I loved them because they were like his, and I never thought that they ever would be dear to me for their own sake. I knew you then as Masha."

" Speak * thou ' to me," I said.

" I just, wanted to say ' thou ' to you," he said, " for now only you seem to be all mine," and a calm, happy, magnetic glance dwelt on me.

We were walking over an untrodden path, leading through a trampled stubble field. All we heard was our steps and our voices. On one side, beyond the ravine, as far as to the distant leafless grove, there ran a brownish stubble field, through which a peasant with his plough was laying out an ever-growing black strip. A herd of horses scattered at the foot of the hill looked as though they were near. On the other side and ahead of us, as far as the house, which could be seen back of it, lay the black, soft field of spring grain, here and there green in strips. The feebly warming sun gleamed over everything. On everything lay long, fleecy gossamers ; they flew in the air around us and lodged on the frost-dried stubbles, and settled on our eyes, hair, and dresses. When we spoke, our voices sounded and hovered motionless in the air above us, as though we alone were there amid this world and all alone under this azure vault, upon which, flaring up and quivering, played the feebly warming sun.

I, too, wanted to say " thou" to him, but I was embarrassed.

" Why dost thou walk so fast ? " I said, hurriedly and almost in a whisper, with an involuntary blush.

He walked slower, and glanced even more caressingly, more merrily and happily at me.

When we returned home his mother was already there, and so were the

guests, without whom it was impossible to get along, and I was not left alone with him until the time when we seated ourselves in the carriage after leaving the church, on our way to Nikolskoe.

The church was almost empty. I saw, with one eye only, his mother standing upright on a little rug near the choir, Katya in a cap with lilac ribbons and with tears upon her cheeks, and two or three manorial servants, who were looking curiously at me. I did not look at him, but felt his presence at my side.

I listened to the words of the prayers and repeated them, but there was no response to them in my soul. I could not pray, and looked dully at the images, the candles, the embroidered cross on the back of the priest's vestment, the iconostasis, the church window, and did not understand a thing. I felt that something unusual was taking place in me.

When the priest with the cross turned around toward us and congratulated us, saying that he had baptized me and that God had granted him the favour of marrying me, and Katya and his mother kissed us, and we could hear Grigori's voice calling the carriage, I was surprised and frightened, because everything was ended, and nothing unusual, corresponding to the mystery administered to us, had taken place in my soul. We kissed each other, and that kiss seemed so strange and foreign to our feeling. " And so that is all," I thought.

We went out of the church. The rumble of the wheels sounded hollow under the vault; a breath of fresh air fanned my face ; he put on his hat, and, taking me under my arms, helped me into the carriage. Through the window I saw the moon with its frost-ring. He sat down at my side and closed the carriage door. Something pinched my heart, as though I were offended by the confidence with which he did it.

Katya cried out for me to cover my head ; the wheels rattled over the stones, then over the soft road, and we drove away. I pressed myself into a corner and looked through the window at the distant bright fields and at the road, which ran along in the chill splendour of the moon.

I did not look at him, but felt his presence at my side. " Is this all I receive from the minute from which I had expected so much ? " I thought, and it appeared humiliating and offensive to me to be sitting so close to him. I turned around with the intention of saying something to him. But words did not come to me, as though my former feeling of tenderness had disappeared and given way to a sensation of affront and terror.

" I did not believe till this moment that it would be," he softly replied to my glance.

« Yes, but I feel for some reason terribly," I said.

" Do I cause this feeling, my dear ? " he said, taking my hand and

lowering his head upon it.

My hand lay lifeless in his, and my heart was pinched with cold.

" Yes," I whispered.

But suddenly my heart began to beat more violently ; my hand trembled and pressed his ; I began to feel warm ; my eyes in the semi-darkness searched out his, and I suddenly felt that I was not afraid of him, that that terror was love, – a new and much more tender and much stronger love than before. I felt that I was all his, and that I was happy in Ins power over me.

PART THE SECOND

I.

Days, weeks, two months of a solitary country life passed unnoticed, as I then thought ; and yet there was enough of feelings, agitations, and happiness in those two months to last for a lifetime. His dreams and mine about how we should arrange our country life were realized quite differently from what we had expected. But our life was not worse than our dreams.

There was not that stern labour, that attention to duties, that self-sacrifice and life for another, which I had imagined when I was a fiancée ; there was, on the contrary, nothing but a selfish sentiment of love for each other, a desire to be loved, a groundless, constant merriment and oblivion of everything in the world. It is true, he sometimes went into his cabinet, or to town on some business, and' looked after the farm ; but I saw that it cost him great labour to tear himself away from me. He himself confessed later that everything in the world, where I was not, appeared to him so nonsensical that he could not understand how he could busy himself with it.

It was the same with me. I read, occupied myself with music, with mamma, and with a school ; but all that I did only because it was connected with him and gained his approbation ; the moment the thought of him did not enter into any affair, my hands hung down, and it seemed so queer to me that there could be anything in the world except him. It may be that this was a bad, selfish feeling ; but it gave me happiness and raised me high above the rest of the world. Nobody else existed for me in the world, and I considered him the most beautiful and impeccable of men in the world ; for this reason I could not live for anything else but him, and I wished to be in his eyes such as he thought me to be. And, indeed, he regarded me as the first, the most beautiful woman in the world, endowed with all possible virtues ; and I endeavoured really to be that woman in

the eyes of the first and best man in the whole world.

Once he entered my room just as I was praying. I looked around at him and continued to pray. He sat down at the table in order not to disturb me and opened a book. But it seemed to me that he was looking at me, and I looked back at him. He smiled; I laughed, and could not pray.

"Have you prayed already?" I asked.

"Yes. Go ahead, and I will leave you."

"I hope you pray."

He wanted to go away, without replying; but I stopped him.

"My darling, do me the favour and say the prayers with me." He stood up near me and, awkwardly dropping his hands, with a serious face, hesitating, said the prayers. Now and then he turned around and looked for approval and succour in my face.

When he was through, I laughed and embraced him.

"You are doing it all! I feel as though I were just ten years old," he said, blushing and kissing my hands.

Our house was one of those old country dwellings in which, respecting and loving each other, several generations of the same family had lived. There was on everything the seal of good, honourable family reminiscences, which seemed to have become mine also the moment I entered the house.

The arrangement and order of the house was due to Tatyana Seménovna's care and was the same as before. It cannot be said that all was elegant and beautiful; but there was a plenty of everything, beginning with the servants and ending with the furniture and the food; everything was neat, durable, precise, and impressed one with respect. In the drawing-room the furniture was placed symmetrically; portraits hung upon the wall, and the floor was covered with home-made rugs and carpet-strips. In the divan-room there was an old grand, chiffonnières of two different styles, divans, and brass-covered and inlaid tables. In my cabinet, which had been furnished under Tatyana Seménovna's care, there stood the very best of furniture of all ages and shapes, and, among other things, an old pier-glass into which I at first could not look without feeling abashed, but which later became dear to me as an old friend.

Tatyana Seménovna was not heard, but everything in the house went like clockwork, although there were many superfluous people. All these people, who wore soft, heelless boots (Tatyana Seménovna regarded the creaking of soles and thud of heels as the most disagreeable thing in the world), seemed to be proud of their calling, trembled before their old mistress, looked upon my husband

and me with patronizing kindness, and seemed to be doing their work with special pleasure. Regularly every Saturday the floors were washed and the rugs were beaten ; on the first of every month mass was held at the house with water consecration ; every name-day of Tatyāna Seménovna and of her son (and of mine for the first time that autumn) there were celebrations, to which all the neighbourhood was invited. All that had been done in the same order as far back as Tatyana Seménovna could remember.

My husband did not interfere with the housekeeping, and attended only to the field labour and the peasants, and he worked hard. He got up even in winter very early, so that when I awoke he was gone. He generally returned to tea, which we drank alone, and at this time he was, after the troubles and tribulations of the field work, nearly always in that especially happy frame of mind which we had called " wild transport." I often demanded that he should tell me what he had been doing in the morning, and he told me such nonsense that we nearly died with laughter ; at times I demanded a serious account, and he kept back a smile and gave it to me. I looked at his eyes and at his moving lips, and could not understand anything ; I was simply glad to see him and to hear his voice.

" Repeat what I told you," he would say ; but I was quite unable to repeat it. It seemed so funny to me to have him talk not of himself or of me, but of something different. As though it made any difference to me what was going on there. Only much later did I begin to understand a little and to be interested in his cares.

Tatyana Semenovna did not go out before dinner ; she drank her tea alone and sent messengers to us to bid us good morning. In our especial, insanely happy world the voice from that other, proper, orderly corner of hers sounded so strange that I frequently could not hold back, and only laughed in response to the chambermaid who, folding her hands, announced in measured words that " Tatyana Semenovna has commanded me to find out how you rested after yesterday's outing, and she has ordered me to inform you that her side pained her all night, and that a stupid dog kept barking all night in the village, keeping her awake. She also commanded me to ask you how you liked the bread this morning, and begged me to remark that Taras did not bake this morning, but that it was Nikolasha's first trial, and that the baking was not bad, especially the cracknel rings, but he has browned the toast too much."

Up to dinner, we were not much together. I played or read alone ; he wrote and then went away ; at dinner, at four o'clock, we met in the drawing-room ; mamma sailed out from her room, and there appeared some gentlewomen and pilgrims, of whom two or three always lived in the house. Following an old custom, he regularly every day offered his arm to his mother ; but she demanded that he should give me the other, and so we regularly every day squeezed through the doors.

Mamma presided at dinner, and the conversation was carried on with reserved propriety and a certain solemnity. The simple words which my husband and I exchanged agreeably broke the solemnity of these

prandial meetings. Between mother and son there were frequently discussions and an exchange of banter. I was very fond of these discussions and of that banter, because in them was best expressed the tender and firm love which united them.

After dinner, mamma seated herself in the drawing-room in a large armchair and crushed some snuff, or cut the pages of newly received books, while we read aloud or went to the divan-room, to the piano. We read a great deal during that time, but music was our favourite and best enjoyment, every time striking new chords in our hearts and, as it were, revealing one to the other anew. When I played his favourite pieces, he sat down on a distant divan, where I could hardly see him, and, from a certain reserve of feeling, tried to conceal the impression which the music produced on him ; often, when he did not expect it, I got up from the piano, walked over to him, and tried to discover in his countenance the traces of agitation, the unnatural sparkle and moisture in his eyes, which he tried in vain to conceal from me. Mamma often wanted to take a look at us in the divan-room, but, apparently, she was afraid she would embarrass us, and so she sometimes walked through the divan-room with a quasi-serious and indifferent face, as though not noticing us ; but I knew that she had no cause for going to her room and coming so soon back again.

I served the evening tea in the large drawing-room, and again all the home-folk congregated at the table. This solemn meeting at the august samovar, and the distribution of glasses and cups, for a long time embarrassed me. It seemed to me that I was not yet worthy of that honour, that I was too young and frivolous to turn the faucet of such a huge samovar, to place a glass on Nikita's tray and say, " For Peter Ivanovich, for Marya Minichna," to ask, " Is it sweet enough ? " and to leave pieces of sugar for the nurse and worthy servants.

" Superb, superb," my husband would say. " Just like a grown person," and that embarrassed me only more.

After tea, mamma laid a solitaire, or listened to Marya Minichna's divination ; then she kissed and crossed us both, and we went to our chamber. More frequently, however, we sat up, the two of us, until past midnight, and that was the best and most agreeable time for us. He told me of his past; we made plans, sometimes philosophized, and tried to speak in as low a voice as possible, so that we should not be heard up-stairs, and that Tatyana Semenovna might not be informed of our staying up, for she demanded that we should go to bed early.

At times, when we were hungry, we softly went to the buffet-room, by Nikita's favour got out a cold lunch, and ate it by the light of one candle in my room. We lived together like strangers in this large old house, in which over everything stood the stern spirit of antiquity and of Tatyana Semenovna. Not only she, but the people, the old maids, the furniture, the pictures, inspired me with respect, with a certain dread and a consciousness that he and I were not quite in place here, and that we had to live quite carefully and

attentively here.

As I recall it now, I see that much – that restraining, invariable order and that mass of idle and curious people in our house – was uncomfortable and a nuisance; but at that time that very restraint only enhanced our love. Not only I, but even he did not show that there was anything which displeased us. On the contrary, he seemed to hide himself from anything that was bad.

Mamma's lackey, Dmitri Sidorov, a great lover of the pipe, used to go regularly every day, when we were in the divan-room, to my husband's cabinet to take some tobacco out of his box; it was a sight to see Sergyéy Mikhaylych walk over to me on tiptoes with an expression of merry dread and, threatening with the finger and winking to me, point to Dmitri Sidorov, who did not in the least suspect that he had been watched. When Dmitri Sidorov went away without noticing us, rejoicing that all had gone off favourably, as on all other occasions, my husband said that I was a joy, and kissed me. At times this calm, this readiness to forgive all, and this seeming indifference to everything did not please me ; I did not notice that the same was the case with me, and regarded it as a weakness. « He is just like a child that does not dare show his will," I thought.

" Ah, my dear," he once said to me when I told him that his weakness surprised me, " can a man be dissatisfied with anything when he is as happy as I am ? It is easier to yield than to bend others, of that I became convinced long ago, and there is no position such that one cannot be happy in it. And we are so happy. I cannot be angry ; for me there is now no such a thing as bad ; for me there is only that which is pitiful and amusing. Above everything else, le mieux est l'ennemi du bien. Would you believe it ? When I hear a bell, or receive a letter, or simply wake up, I feel terribly. It is terrible to have to live and see things change : there can be nothing better than the present."

I believed him, but did not understand him. I was so happy : it seemed to me that everything had to be just so and not otherwise, and that it was so with everybody, but that there was somewhere another, not a greater, but another, happiness.

Thus two months passed ; the winter came with its colds and snow-storms, and I, in spite of his being with me, began to feel lonely ; I began to feel that life was repeating itself, and that there was neither in me nor in him anything new, and that, on the contrary, we were returning to something old. He began to busy himself with his own affairs more than before, and I again began to think that there was in his soul a certain special world, to which he did not wish to admit me.

His habitual calm irritated me. I loved him not less than before, and I was not less happy in his love than before ; but my love stopped and no longer grew, and, outside of love, another restless feeling began to steal into my soul. It was not enough for me to

love after I had experienced the happiness of loving him.

I wanted motion, and not the calm current of life. I wanted agitation, dangers, and self-sacrifices for my sentiment. There was a surplus of strength in me which did not find a place in our calm life. I was beset by outbursts of pining which I, as something bad, tried to conceal from him, and by outbursts of unbounded tenderness and merriment, which frightened him. He had noticed my condition even before I had noticed it, and he proposed to me to settle in the city ; but I begged him not to go there and not to change our mode of life, not to disturb our happiness.

Indeed, I was happy, but I was tormented by the thought that this happiness cost me no labour, no sacrifice, while the power of labour and sacrifice vexed me. I loved him, and I saw that I was everything to him ; but I wanted everybody to see our love ; I wanted to be disturbed in my love, and yet persevere in my love for him.

My mind and even my feelings were occupied, but there was another feeling of youth and the necessity of motion which did not find any satisfaction in our quiet life. Why did he tell me that we could go to the city the moment I wanted it ? If he had not told me so, I might have come to understand that the feeling which vexed me was dangerous nonsense and my own fault, and that the sacrifice for which I was looking was before me, namely, in the suppression of that feeling. The thought that I could save myself from the tedium only by settling in the city involuntarily came to me ; and yet I felt ashamed and sorry to tear him away from everything which he loved.

In the meanwhile time passed. The snow drifted ever more against the walls of the house, and we were all alone, and we were still the same to each other; but somewhere there, in the splendour and noise, masses of people were agitated, suffered, and rejoiced, not thinking of us and our secluded existence. The worst for me was that I felt that with every day the habits of life fettered our life in one definite form ; that our feeling was getting less free, and that it submitted itself to the even, impassionate current of time. In the morning we were merry, at dinner respectful, in the evening tender.

" Good ! " I said to myself. " It is good to do good and live honourably, as he says ; but we shall have time for that ; but there is something for which I have the strength just now." I did not need that, I needed struggle; I wanted feeling to guide my life, and not life to guide my feeling. I wanted to walk up to a precipice with him and say, " Another step, and I shall hurl myself down there ; another motion, and I am for ever lost," and I wanted him, standing pale on the brink of the precipice, to take me up in his strong arms, to hold me over it, so as to make my heart beat in fright, and to carry me away whither he pleased.

This condition affected even my health, and my nerves became unstrung. One morning I felt worse than usual. He returned out of sorts from the office, which was rare with him. I immediately

noticed that, and asked him what the matter was ; but he did not wish to tell me, saying that it was not worth while. I learned later that the chief of the rural police had called up our peasants, and, out of malice to my husband, whom he did not like, had asked unlawful things of them and threatened them. My husband had not yet sufficiently digested it to be able to turn it all to ridicule, and so he was irritated and did not want to speak to me. But I thought that he did not wish to tell me about it because he regarded me as a child who could not understand that which interested him. I turned away from him, grew silent, and invited to tea Marya Minichna, who was visiting us.

After tea, which I got through with in a hurry, I took Marya Minichna to the divan-room, and began to speak in a loud voice with her about some nonsense, which was not in the least interesting to me. lie walked up and down the room, now and then casting a glance at us. These glances for some reason had the peculiar effect upon me of making me speak more and more, and even of making me laugh. Everything which I said and which Marya Minichna said seemed ridiculous to me.

Without saying a word to me, he went away to his cabinet and locked the door after him. The moment I no longer heard him, all my merriment suddenly disappeared, so that Marya Minichna was surprised, and began to ask me what the matter was with me. I sat down on the divan, without answering her, and felt like weeping. " What is lie brooding over ?" I thought. "No doubt some nonsense which seems of importance to him ; if he only told it to me, I would prove him that it was all bosh. No, he wants to think that I shall not understand him ; he wants to humble me with his majestic calm, and be right in regard to me. And so I am right, too, when I feel lonely and dull, when I want to live and move," I thought, " and not to stand in one place and feel time passing over me. I want to go forward, and with every day, with every' hour, I want something new, while he wants to stop, and to stop me with him. How easy that would be for him ! He does not need to take me to town for that ; all that is necessary is that he should be such as I am, without contorting or repressing himself, and that he should live simply. He himself advises me to be simple, but he is not simple. That's it ! "

I felt that tears rose in my heart, and that I was irritated against him. I was frightened at this irritation, and went to him. He was sitting in his cabinet and writing. When he heard my steps he for a moment looked around him with equanimity and calm, and continued to write. I did not like that glance; instead of walking over to him I stopped at the table at which he was writing, and, opening a book, began to look at it. He once more raised his eyes and looked at me.

" Masha, you are not in a good humour, are you ? " he said.

I answered him with a cold glance, which said : " Don't ask ! Please, none of your sweetness ! " He shook his head, and smiled timidly and gently, but for the first time he received no smile in reply to his.

" What has been the matter with you to-day ? " I asked.

" Why did you not tell me?"

" It does not amount to much : just some little annoyance ! " he replied. " Now I may tell it to you. Two peasants went to town - "

But I did not give him a chance of finishing.

" Why did you not tell me when I asked you about it at tea ? "

" I might have told you something stupid, because I was so angry then."

« But I wanted to know it then."

" Why ? "

" Why do you think that I am never able to help you in anything ? "

" I think ? " he said, throwing down the pen, " I think that I cannot live without you. You not only help me in everything, in everything, but you are doing everything. What an idea ! " he laughed. " I live by you alone. It seems to me that everything is good only because you are here, because I need you - "

" Yes, I know that ; I am a dear child who must be assuaged," I said, in such a tone that he looked at me in surprise, as though he had noticed that for the first time. " I do not want quietude. There is enough of it in you, more than enough," I added.

" So, you see, the matter is like this," he began hurriedly, interrupting me, apparently afraid to let me say all. " How would you judge about it ? "

" I do not want to now," I replied. I really was anxious to hear what he had to say, but it gave me pleasure to disturb his quietude. " I do not want to play life, I want to live," I said, " just as you are living."

Upon his face, where everything was generally so quickly and so vividly reflected, there was expressed pain and intensified attention.

" I want to live on an equality with you, with you - "

I could not finish my words, for there was such sorrow, such deep sorrow, expressed on his face. He was silent for awhile.

" Where is the inequality between us ? " he said. " Is it because I, and not you, bother with the chief of the rural police and with drunken peasants? - "

" Not in this alone," I said.

" For God's sake, my dear, understand me ! " he continued. " I know that we are always pained by troubles : I have lived long enough to know it. I love you, and consequently I cannot help wishing to save you troubles. In this my life, my love for you, consists : therefore do not keep me from living my life ! "

" You are always right ! " I said, without looking at him.

I was provoked because everything in his soul was again clear and calm, while I was annoyed and experienced a feeling akin to repentance.

" Masha, what is the matter with you ? " he said. " The question is not whether you are right or I, but something entirely different. What have you against me ? Do not answer me at once, but think it over, and tell me all you think. You are dissatisfied with me, and you are, no doubt, right, but let me understand where my fault lies ! "

How could I have revealed my soul to him ? I was now even more agitated because he had understood' me at once, because I was again as a child before him, and because I could not do a thing without his understanding and foreseeing it.

" I have nothing against you," I said. " I am simply lonely, and I do not want to be lonely. But you say that it ought to be so, and you are again right ! "

I said this and glanced at him. My aim was reached : his quiet had disappeared ; in his face there was an expression of fright and pain.

" Masha," he spoke, in a soft, agitated voice, " what we are doing now is no joke. Now our fate is being decided. I beg you not. to answer me, but to listen to what I have to say. Why do you want to torment me ? "

But I interrupted him :

" I know that you will be right. You had better not speak, because you are right," I said, coldly, as though not I, but an evil spirit within me, were speaking.

" If you only knew what you are doing • " he said, in a trembling voice.

I burst into tears, and I felt relief. He sat at my side and kept silent. I was both sorry for him and conscience-stricken for what I had done. I did not look at him. It seemed to me that he was that moment looking at me with a severe, or with a perplexed, glance. I turned around : his soft, gentle glance, as though asking forgiveness of me, was directed upon me. I took his hand, and said :

" Forgive me ! I do not know myself what I have been saying."

" Yes ; but I know what you have been saying, and you have been telling me the truth."

" What is it?" I said.

" That we must go to St. Petersburg," he said. "We have nothing to do here now."

" As you wish," I said.

He embraced and kissed me.

"Forgive me!" he said. "I am guilty in respect to you."

On that evening I played for him for a long time, while he walked up and down in the room and kept whispering something, mostly verses, and, at times, some most terrible nonsense, by which I could tell the mood he was in.

" What are you whispering this evening ?" I asked.

He stopped, thought for a moment, and, smiling, repeated two verses from Lermontov :

"* And he, insensate, asks for storms, As though in storms were rest for him! ' "

" Yes, he is more than a man; he knows everything! " I thought. " How can I help loving him ! "

I got up, took his hand, and began to walk with him, trying to keep step with him.

" Yes ?" he asked, smiling, and looking at me.

"Yes," I said, in a whisper; and we were both seized by a fit of merriment: our eyes laughed, and we made ever longer strides, and ever more walked on tiptoe. In the same gait we, to Grigori's great displeasure and to the surprise of mamma, who was laying out a solitaire in the drawing-room, walked through all the rooms to the dining-room ; here we stopped, looked at each other, and burst out laughing.

Two weeks later, before the holidays, we were in St. Petersburg.

II.

Our journey to St. Petersburg, a week in Moscow, his relatives and

mine, getting things settled in our new quarters, the road, the new cities, the new faces, all that passed like a dream. All that was so varied, so new and jolly, all that was so warmly and so brightly illuminated by his presence and his love, that my quiet country life appeared to me like something long past and insignificant.

To my great surprise, instead of displaying social pride and coldness, such as I had expected to find in people, all (not only my relatives, but even strangers) met me with such heartfelt kindness and hospitality that it seemed to me as though they had been doing nothing but thinking of me, as though they had just been waiting for me in order themselves to be happy. Just as unexpected for me was the discovery that my husband had many acquaintances, of whom he had never spoken to me, in what to me seemed to be the very best of social circles ; and often it affected me strangely and disagreeably to hear him pass severe judgment on some of those people, who appeared to me to be so good. I could not understand why he treated them so dryly, and why he tried to avoid many acquaintances which I thought to be flattering. I thought that the more people one knew the better, and that all of them were good people.

" We shall have to be careful in the city," he said, before our departure from the country. " Here we are small Crcesuses, but there we shall be in very moderate circumstances, and so we must not stay in the city longer than until Easter, nor make social calls, or else we shall become entangled ; and for your own sake I should not like to - "

" What is the use of society?" I replied. " We shall only get a glance at the theatres, at our relatives, shall listen to operas and good music, and before Easter we shall be back in the country."

But the moment we arrived in St. Petersburg all our plans were forgotten. I suddenly found myself in such a new and happy world, so many joys took possession of me, and such novel interests came up, that I immediately, even though unconsciously, refuted all my past and all the plans of that past.

"All that was only in joke, - it has not begun yet; but this is real life ! What else would it be ?" I thought. Disquietude and the beginning of loneliness, which had troubled me in the country, suddenly disappeared entirely, as though by magic. My love for my husband became calmer, and I was never assailed here by the thought that he might love me less. Indeed, I could not doubt his love : he grasped at once every thought of mine, shared every feeling, fulfilled every wish. His quiet disappeared, or, at least, no longer irritated me. Besides, I felt that in addition to his former love he here enjoyed the sight of me. Frequently, after a visit, or a new acquaintance, or an evening at our house, where I, inwardly trembling for fear of making mistakes, did my duties as a hostess, he would say: "You are a fine girl! First-rate! Keep up your courage ! Just right ! " and I was happy.

Soon after our arrival he wrote to his mother, and when he called me

in to add a few words to her, he would not let me see what he had written ; whereat I naturally insisted and read it. " You will not recognize Mdsha," he wrote, " and I myself do not recognize her. I wonder where she gets that sweet, graceful self-confidence, affability, and even worldly mind and charm. And all this is simple, dear, and good-natured. Everybody is delighted with her, and I myself don't get tired watching her, and, if such a thing were possible, would love her even more."

" Oh, so that is what I am ? " I thought. And I felt so merry and happy, and I thought that I loved him more than ever. My success with all our acquaintances was quite unexpected to me. I was told on all sides that I had especially pleased grandfather, or that aunty was in ecstasy over me ; or one man would tell me that there were no women like me in St. Petersburg ; or a woman would assure me that I had only to wish it, and I should be the most recherchée woman in society. Especially my husband's cousin, Princess D-----, a middle-

aged society lady, who suddenly took a great liking to me, more than anybody else, told me all kinds of flattering things which turned my head. When the cousin for the first time invited me to go to a ball with her, and asked my husband to let me go, he turned to me and, with a barely perceptible, sly smile, asked me whether I wanted to go. I nodded in sign of assent, and I felt that I was blushing.

" You act like a criminal that confesses what it is he wants," he said, smiling good-naturedly.

" But you told me that we must not go into society, and that you did not like it anyway," I answered, smiling, and looking at him with an entreating glance.

" If you are very anxious to go, we will go," he said.

" Really, we had better not."

" Do you want to? Very much so?" he again asked me.

I made no reply.

" Society is not the greatest calamity," he continued, " but unsatisfied social desires are both bad and abominable. We must go there by all means, and we will," he concluded, with determination.

" To tell you the truth," I said, " there was nothing in the world I wanted so much as this balk"

We went, and the pleasure which I experienced surpassed all my expectations. At the ball it appeared to me that I was, even more than before, the centre around which everything revolved, that it was only for me that this large hall was illuminated and the music played, and that this mass of people was congregated to admire me. All, beginning with the hair-dresser and chambermaid, and ending with the dancers and old gentlemen who paraded in the hall, seemed

to be telling me and making me feel that they loved me. The universal opinion, which had formed itself at this ball and of which my cousin informed me, was to the effect that I in no way resembled other women, that there was in me something especial, country-like, simple, and charming. That success flattered me so much that I frankly told my husband that I should like to attend two or three more balls that year, " in order to be satiated by them," I added, compromising with truth.

My husband gave his ready consent, and at first went with me with apparent pleasure, delighted at my success, and, seemingly, forgetting or refuting that which he had said before.

Later on, the life which we were living began to annoy him and hang heavy on him. But my mind was elsewhere: even though I at times noticed his concentrated and serious glance I did not understand its meaning. I was so beclouded by that love, suddenly provoked, as I thought, in all the strangers, and by that atmosphere of elegance, pleasure, and novelty, which I now breathed for the first time ; so suddenly had his crushing moral influence disappeared ; it was so pleasant for me not only to be his equal, but even his superior, in this society, and for this very reason to love him more than before and more independently, that I was unable to understand what his objections were to this society life.

I experienced a novel feeling of pride and contentment when, upon entering at a ball, all eyes were directed toward me, and he, as though abashed to acknowledge the possession of me before the crowd, hastened to leave me alone and to lose himself in the black mass of evening dresses. " Wait ! " I frequently thought, searching out with my eyes his unnoticeable, and sometimes lonely, figure in the corner of the hall. "Wait!" I thought. " We will get home, and you will understand and see for whom it was I was trying to be beautiful and brilliant, and what it is I this evening love most in all that surrounds me!" I was honestly convinced that my success gave me pleasure only because I thus had a chance of sacrificing it for him.

There was one thing in society which, I thought, might become dangerous to me, and that was the possibility of an infatuation for one of the men whom I met, and my husband's jealousy ; but he had such faith in me, and seemed to be so calm and composed, and all these young men seemed to me so insignificant in comparison with him, that in my opinion the only danger of society did not have any terrors for me. Still, the attentions I received from so many people in society afforded me pleasure, flattered my vanity, made me think that there was some merit in my love for my husband, and caused me to treat him with greater self-confidence and almost with greater carelessness.

" I saw you talk a little too excitedly with N----,"

I once, upon returning from a ball, said to him, threatening him with my finger, and giving the name of one of the well-known ladies of St. Petersburg, with whom he had actually talked on that evening.

I said this in order to stir him up, for he was so taciturn and dull.

" Ah, why do you say that ? Don't say that, Masha ! " he spoke through his teeth and frowning, as though from physical pain. "It does not at all fit you or me ! Leave that to others ! These false relations may spoil our real ones, and I still hope that our real relations will return."

I felt ashamed and kept silent.

" Will they return, Masha ? What do you think ? " he asked.

" They have never been spoiled and never will be," I said, feeling then that I was telling the truth.

" God grant it be so," he said. " It is about time we should return to the country."

He told me that only once ; on other occasions I thought that he was as well off as I, and I felt happy and joyful. " Even though at times it may be rather dull for him," I consoled myself, " I have felt ennui for his sake in the country. Even though our relations may have changed a little, everything will come back again as soon as we are left during the summer all alone with Tatyana Seménovna in our Nikolskoe house."

Thus the winter passed imperceptibly for me, and we, contrary to our plans, stayed through Easter at St. Petersburg. During Quasimodo week we were getting ready to leave : everything was packed, and my husband, who had already purchased the presents, and all kinds of things and flowers for our country home, was in a very happy frame of mind. His cousin suddenly arrived and begged me to stay until Saturday so as to have a chance of going with her to a reception at the house of Countess R----.

She said that Countess R----was very anxious to have me come, that Prince M----, who was then at St. Peters

burg, had wished ever since the last ball to meet me, and that he would come to the reception for this reason alone, and that he had said that I was the prettiest woman in Russia. The whole city was to be there, and, in short, it would be simply horrible if I did not go.

My husband was at the other end of the drawing-room, conversing with somebody.

" Well, are you going to come, Mary ? " said his cousin.

" We intend leaving for the country day after to-morrow," I replied hesitatingly, looking at my husband. Our eyes met, and he quickly turned away.

" I will persuade him to stay," said his cousin, " and we will go there Saturday to turn people's heads. You will, won't you ? "

"That would break up our plans, and we are all packed," I replied, beginning to succumb.

" She had better go this evening to pay her respects to the prince," my husband said at the other end of the drawing-room, in a repressed and irritated voice, such as I had never before heard in him.

" Ah, he is jealous ! I see this for the first time," the cousin laughed. " I am not persuading her for the sake of the prince, Sergyéy Mikhaylych, but for the sake of all of us. Countess R----- was so anxious to

see her ! "

" That depends on her," my husband said, coldly, going out.

I saw that he was agitated more than usual : that tormented me, and I gave the cousin no promise. The moment she left I went to my husband. He was walking up and down, lost in thought, and did not see or hear me, as I walked in on tiptoe.

" He is already thinking of the dear Nikdlskoe house," I thought, looking at him, " and of the morning coffee in the bright drawing-room, and of his fields, peasants, and evenings in the divan-room, and of the mysterious suppers at night. No!" I decided, "all the balls in the world and the flattery of all the princes in the world will I give for his joyful embarrassment and calm love."

I wanted to tell him that I would not go to the reception, when he suddenly turned around and, seeing me, frowned and lost the gentle and thoughtful expression of his face. Again his glance betrayed perspicacity, wisdom, and a patronizing calm. He did not want me to see him as a simple man ; he had always to stand on a pedestal, as a demigod, before me.

" What is it, my dear ? " he asked, turning to me in a careless and calm manner.

I made no reply. I was annoyed because he concealed himself from me and did not wish to remain such as I loved him.

" Do you want to go to the reception on Saturday ? " he asked me.

" I wanted to," I replied, " but you do not like it ; besides, everything is packed," I added.

He had never before glanced so coldly at me, or spoken so coldly with me.

" I will not leave before Tuesday, and will have the things

unpacked," he said, " and so you can go, if you want to. Do me the favour and go ! I will not leave before."

As always, when he was agitated, he began to pace through the room with an unsteady step, without looking at me.

" I positively cannot understand you," I said, standing in one spot and watching him with my eyes, " you say that you are always so calm." (He had never said it.) " Why do you speak so strangely to me ? I am ready for your sake to sacrifice that pleasure, and you ask me so ironically, as you have never spoken to me before, that I should go."

" Well ! You sacrifice" (he put special emphasis on the word), " and so do I. What more do you want ? It is a contest of magnanimity. What other domestic happiness do you wish ? "

This was the first time I heard such bitter and scornful words from him. His ridicule did not make me feel ashamed, but offended me, and his exasperation did not frighten me, but was communicated to me. Was it he, who had always been afraid of triteness in our relations, who had always been sincere and simple, that was saying this now ? And for what reason ? Because, indeed, I wanted to sacrifice to him a pleasure, in which I saw nothing wrong, and because but a * minute ago I had understood and loved him so well. Our rôles had changed : he avoided straight, simple words, and I sought them.

" You have changed very much," I said, with a sigh. " What wrong have I done to you ? It is not the reception, but something else that you are harbouring in your heart against me. Why that insincerity ? Were you not yourself formerly afraid of it ? Speak out, what have you against me?" – " What will he say ?" I thought, recalling with a feeling of self-satisfaction that he could not upbraid me for anything I might have done all winter.

I walked to the middle of the room, so that he was compelled to pass close to me, and kept looking at him. " He will come by and embrace me, and everything will be over," I thought, and I was even sorry that I should not have a chance of proving to him that he was in the wrong.

" You still do not understand me ? " he said.

" No."

" Well, then I will tell you. I am disgusted, for the first time disgusted, with what I feel and cannot help feeling." He stopped, apparently frightened at the rude sound of his voice.

" What is it ? " I asked, with tears of indignation in my eyes.

" I am disgusted because the prince has found you pretty, and because you for that reason run to meet him, forgetting your husband, and yourself, and your woman's dignity, and because you do

not wish to comprehend what your husband must feel for you, if the sense of dignity is lacking in you. You come, on the contrary, to tell your husband that you are sacrificing, that is as much as to say : ' It is a great happiness for me to show myself to his Highness, but I shall sacrifice it.' "

The farther he spoke, the more the sounds of his own voice excited him, and that voice sounded venomous, cruel, and rude. I had never seen him, or expected to see him, such. The blood rushed to my heart ; I was afraid, but, at the same time, the feeling of unmerited shame and offended self-love agitated me, and I wanted to avenge it.

" I have been expecting this for quite awhile," I said. << Talk, talk ! "

" I do not know what it is you have been expecting," lie continued, " but I could expect the very worst, seeing you every day in the mire, idleness, luxury of that stupid society, and I have lived – I have lived to feel to-day as pained and ashamed as never before, – pained because your friend with her dirty hands rummaged in my soul and began to speak of jealousy, of my jealousy, of whom ? of a man whom neither you nor I know. And you seem to be determined not to understand me, and you want to sacrifice for me what ? – I am ashamed for your sake, for your degradation ! – Sacrifice ! – " he repeated.

" Oh, so there is man's power ! " I thought. " It is to offend and humiliate a woman who is not guilty of anything. So those are a man's rights ! But I will never submit to them."

" No, I am not sacrificing anything for you," I muttered, feeling my nostrils expand in an unnatural way, and the blood leaving my face. " I will go to the reception on Saturday, I will, by all means."

" God give you as much pleasure as possible, only between us everything is ended ! " he exclaimed, in a fit of unrestrained rage. You will no longer torment me. I was a fool to – " he began once more, but his lips quivered, and it apparently cost him an effort to keep back that which he had intended to say.

I was afraid of him that moment, and I hated him. I wanted to tell him much and to avenge all my insults ; but, if I had opened my mouth, I should have wept, and thus should have lowered myself before him. I went silently out of the room ; but the moment I no longer heard his steps I was horrified at what we had been doing. I felt terribly at the thought that this union, which constituted all my happiness, would really be severed for ever, and I wanted to go back. " But is he sufficiently calm now to understand me when I shall silently extend my hand to him and look into his eyes ? " I thought. " Will he understand my magnanimity ? Suppose he should call my grief hypocrisy ? or should accept my repentance with the consciousness of right and with proud composure, and forgive me ? Why, why has he, whom I love so much, offended me so cruelly ? "

I went not to him, but to my room, where I sat alone for a long time and wept, in terror recalling every word of the conversation which had taken place between us, putting other words for these, adding new, good words, and again recalling, with terror and a feeling of insult, that which had happened. When I in the evening came out to tea, and met my husband in the presence of S----,

who was at our house, I understood that from that day on a whole abyss lay between us. S----asked me when

we should leave. I had no time to answer him.

" On Tuesday," replied my husband. " We shall attend the reception at Countess R----'s. You are going there,

aren't you ? " he turned to me.

I was frightened at the sound of that simple voice, and timidly glanced at my husband. His eyes were looking straight at me ; their glance was evil and scornful ; his voice was even and cold.

" Yes," I replied.

In the evening, when we were left alone, he came up to me and gave me his hand.

" Forget what I have told you ! " he said to me.

I took his hand. There was a quivering smile upon my countenance, and the tears were ready to flow ; but he took his hand away and, as though afraid of a sentimental scene, sat down on a chair at quite a distance from me.

" Does he really persist in considering himself right ? " I thought, and the explanation and request not to go to the reception, which I was about to make, stopped on my tongue.

" I must write to mother that we have put off our departure," he said, " or else she will worry."

" When do you expect to leave ?" I asked.

" On Tuesday, after the reception," he replied.

" I hope you are not doing it for my sake," I said, looking into his eyes ; but his eyes only looked, without telling me anything, as though they were veiled from me by something. His face suddenly appeared old and unpleasant to me.

We went to the reception, and there seemed to have been established good, friendly relations between us, but these relations were different from what they had been before.

I was sitting between sorûe ladies at the reception, when the prince walked over to me, so that I had to get up in order to speak with him. As I arose I involuntarily sought my husband with my eyes, and I saw that he had been looking at me from the other end of the hall, and that he turned his face away. I suddenly felt so ashamed and pained that I had a twinge of embarrassment, and my face and neck flushed under the glance of the prince. But I was compelled to stand and listen to what he was telling me, looking down upon me.

Our conversation did not last long ; he had no place near me to sit down, and he evidently felt that I was not at my ease with him. Our conversation was about the last ball, about where I passed the summer, and so forth. As he went away from me he expressed his wish to become acquainted with my husband, and later I saw them together and talking at the other end of the hall. The prince evidently said something about me, because he in the middle of his conversation turned, with a smile, in our direction.

My husband suddenly flew up, made a low bow, and walked away from the prince. I myself blushed : I was ashamed thinking what an idea the prince must have received of me, and especially of my husband. It seemed to me that everybody had noticed my awkward bashfulness while I was speaking with the prince, and that they had noticed my husband's strange act; God knows how they might interpret it ! and I was afraid they might know about my conversation with my husband.

The cousin took me home, and on my way we spoke about my husband. I could bear it no longer, and so told her everything that had taken place between us on account of that unfortunate reception. She calmed me down, saying that it was an entirely insignificant and very common misunderstanding, which would leave no traces behind ; she explained to me from her standpoint my husband's character, and found that he had become very incommunicative and proud ; I agreed with her, and I thought that I myself now judged him more calmly and understood him better.

But later, when my husband and I were left alone, that judgment about him lay like a crime upon my conscience, and I felt that the abyss that separated us had widened.

III.

From that day on our life and our relations changed. We no longer felt so happy, when left alone, as we had been. There were questions which we avoided, and it was easier for us to converse in presence of a third person than when left face to face. The moment the conversation turned on the life in the country or on the ball, imps seemed to be jumping about in our eyes, and we felt ill at ease if we had to look at each other, as though we felt in what place the abyss was, which separated us, and as though we were afraid to approach it.

I was convinced that he was proud and excitable, and I had to be cautious in order not to touch him on his weak points. I was convinced that I could not live without society, that the country was not for me, and that it was necessary to submit to that unfortunate taste. Both of us avoided direct allusions to these subjects, and falsely judged each other. We had long ago ceased being the most perfect people in the world to each other, but compared ourselves with others, and secretly judged one another.

I fell ill before our departure, and we went to a summer residence, instead of returning to the country ; from there my husband went himself to see his mother. When he left I was well enough to go with him, but he persuaded me to stay, claiming that he was afraid for my health. I was sure that he had no fears in regard to my health, but that he was afraid we should not be happy in the country ; I did not insist very- much, and so I remained.

Without him there was a void, and I felt lonely, but when he returned I saw that he no longer added to my life what he had brought to it before. Our former relations, when every thought and feeling which was not communicated to him weighed upon me as a crime, when every act and word of his appeared to me to be a sample of perfection, when we wanted to laugh from sheer joy, as we looked at each other, – these relations had so imperceptibly passed into other relations that we did not notice how they had disappeared.

With each of us there rose separate interests and cares, which we no longer tried to share in common. We were, indeed, no longer vexed by the fact that each of us had a separate world which was foreign to the other. We became accustomed to this thought, and a year later the little imps no longer bobbed in our eyes when we looked at each other.

His fits of merriment with me, his childishness, entirely disappeared ; there disappeared also his readiness to forgive and his indifference to everything, which used to provoke me so much before ; there was no longer that deep glance which used to confuse and delight me ; there were no longer any prayers and transports in common ; we even did not see each other much, for he was most of the time away, and he was not afraid or sorry to leave me alone ; I was all the time in society where I did not need him.

There were no more scenes and misunderstandings between us : I tried to please him ; he fulfilled all my wishes, and we seemingly loved each other.

When we were left alone, which happened but seldom, I experienced no joy, no agitation, no embarrassment with him ; it was as though I were alone. I knew very well that it was my husband, not a new, unknown man, but a good man, – my husband, whom I knew as I knew myself. I was convinced that I knew precisely what he would do, or say, or how he would look, and if he happened to do or look differently from what I expected, it always seemed to me that he

must be mistaken. I expected nothing of him. In short, he was my husband and nothing else.

It seemed to me that that was the way it ought to be, that there were no other relations, and that no other relations had ever existed between us. When he went away on some journey, I was at first lonely and felt terribly : without him I saw more clearly what his support meant for me ; when he came back, I fell upon his neck with joy, though two hours later I entirely forgot that joy, and I had nothing to talk about with him. Only in moments of calm, moderate tenderness, which were between us, I thought that something was not quite right, that I had some pain in my heart, and I thought I read the same in his eyes. I was conscious of that limit of tenderness, beyond which he seemed to be unwilling, and I was unable, to go. At times that made me sad, but there was no time to reflect upon anything, and I tried to forget the sorrow resulting from the indistinctly perceived change in the distractions which were always ready for me.

The society life, which at first had overwhelmed me by its splendour and by the flattery of my vanity, soon took complete possession of my inclinations, became a second nature, put its fetters upon me, and took up in my soul the place which had been prepared for sentiment. I no longer was myself, and was afraid to dwell on my condition. All my time, from late morning to late night, was taken up and did not belong to me, even if I did not drive out. This no longer gave me pleasure or ennui, but it seemed to me that thus, and not otherwise, it had always to be.

Thus three years passed, during which our relations remained the same, as though they had stopped and congealed, and could become neither worse nor better. During these three years two important events took place in our domestic life, but neither of them changed our relations : those were the birth of my first child and the death of Tatyana Semenovna.

At first the maternal feeling seized me so powerfully and produced such unexpected transports in me that I thought that a new life would begin for me ; but two months later, when I again began to go out in society, this sentiment kept diminishing and passed into habit and a cold performance of duty. My husband, on the contrary, after the birth of our first baby, became the same gentle and calm home-body he had been, and transferred his former tenderness and merriment to his child. Frequently, when I entered the nursery in my ball dress, in order to cross the child for the night, I found my husband there, and I noticed what I took to be his reproachful and stern glance directed at me, and I felt ashamed. I suddenly was horrified at my indifference for the child, and asked myself whether I really was worse than other women. " But what is to be done ?" I thought. " I love my son, but I can't sit whole days with him : I feel ennui, and I sha'n't pretend for anything in the world."

His mother's death was a great bereavement to him. He found it hard, he said, to live in Nikolskoe after her; although I was sorry for

her and sympathized with my husband in his loss, I now felt more at ease and happier in the country. All those three years we passed mainly in the city ; to the country I went only once for two months ; in the third year we went abroad.

We passed a summer at a watering-place.

I was then twenty-one years old. Our affairs, I thought, were in a flourishing condition ; from my domestic life I demanded nothing more than what it gave me ; all whom I knew seemed to love me ; my health was good, and my toilet was the best at the watering-place ; I knew that I was pretty ; the weather was beautiful ; an atmosphere of beauty and elegance surrounded me, and I was very merry. I was not as merry as I used to be at Nikolskoe, when I felt that I was happy in myself ; that I was happy because I had deserved that happiness; that my happiness was great, but ought to be greater still ; that I wanted more and more happiness. Then it had been different, but even that summer I was happy.

I wanted nothing ; I hoped for nothing, was afraid of nothing, and my life seemed to be full, and my conscience seemed to be calm. From among all the young men of that season there was not one whom I in any way distinguished from the rest, or even from old Prince K-----,

our ambassador, who paid court to me. One of them was young, another old, one a blond Englishman, another a Frenchman with a little beard, – they were all the same to me, but they were all necessary to me. They were all equally indifferent persons who formed the cheerful atmosphere of life which surrounded me.

Only one of them, I)-----, an Italian marquis, more

than the rest attracted my attention by the boldness with which he expressed his admiration for me. He never missed an opportunity of being with me, of dancing, driving out, being in the Casino, and so forth, and of telling me that I was beautiful. I saw him several times through the window near our house, and frequently the disagreeable, fixed glance of his sparkling eyes made me blush and turn around. He was young, handsome, elegant, and, above everything else, by his smile and the expression of his brow resembled my husband, though he was handsomer still. This resemblance startled me, though in general, in his lips, in his glance, in the long chin, there was in him, instead of the charm of an expression of kindness and the ideal composure of my husband, something coarse and animal. I then imagined that he was passionately in love with me, and I frequently thought of him with proud compassion. I at times tried to assuage him, to lead him up to a tone of semi-confidential, calm friendship, but he brusquely repelled all these attempts and continued disagreeably to embarrass me with his unexpressed passion, which was ready to burst forth at any time. Although I was not conscious of it, I was afraid of that man, and against my will frequently thought of him. My husband was acquainted with him, and he held himself colder and haughtier with him than with our other acquaintances, for whom he was only the husband of his wife.

At the end of the watering season T became ill, and for two weeks did not leave my room. When I for the first time after my illness went out in the evening to hear the music, I heard that while I was absent there had arrived the long expected Lady S-----, famous for her beauty.

There was a circle around me, and I was cheerfully received ; but a better circle was formed around the newly arrived lioness. Everybody about me spoke only of her and her beauty. She was pointed out to me, and she was indeed charming; but I was disagreeably affected by the self-contentment expressed in her face, and so I mentioned it. On that day, everything, which before had been merry, appeared dull. On the following day Lady S-----arranged an outing to the castle, which I declined.

Hardly anybody remained with me, and everything definitely changed in my eyes.

Everything and everybody seemed stupid and dull to me, and I felt like weeping, like getting through with the cure at once, and returning to Russia. There was some evil feeling in my soul, but I was not yet conscious of it. I announced myself in ill health and stopped appearing in grand society ; only in the morning did I go out to drink the waters, or I drove with L----M----, a Russian lady acquaintance, to look at the surrounding country. My husband was not there during that time: he had gone for a few days to Heidelberg, waiting for the end of the cure and for our return to Russia ; he seldom came to see me.

One day Lady S----- drew all society with her on a chase while L---- M---- and I after dinner drove

to the castle. As our carriage was going at a slow pace over a winding avenue between century-old chestnut trees, through which the beautiful and elegant Baden surroundings were revealed to us in the distance, as they lay illuminated by the rays of the setting sun, we fell into a serious conversation, such as we had never had before. L---- M-----, whom I had known for quite

a while, now for the first time presented herself to me as a good and clever woman, to whom it was possible to tell everything and with whom it was a pleasure to be friends. We spoke of family, of children, of the emptiness of society at the watering-place, and we wanted to go back to Russia, to the country, and felt both sad and good. We entered the castle under the influence of this serious feeling.

Within the walls it was shady and fresh ; the sun was playing above on the ruins ; somebody's steps and voices were heard. Through the door could be seen, as though in a frame, that charming, but for us Russians cold, Baden landscape. We sat down to rest ourselves, and silently looked at the setting sun. The voices were heard more

distinctly, and I thought my name was mentioned. I began to listen and involuntarily heard every word.

The voices were familiar to me : it was Marquis D----

and a Frenchman, Ids friend, whom I knew also. They were speaking of me and of Lady S-----. The Frenchman

was comparing us two, analyzing her beauty and mine. He was not saying anything offensive, but the blood rushed to my heart when I heard his words. He gave a

detailed account of what there was beautiful in me and in Lady 8----. I already had a baby, and Lady S-----

was only nineteen years old ; my braid was prettier, but the lady's waist was better ; the lady was a great lady, while " yours," he said, " is neither here nor there, just one of those petty Russian princesses, of whom there has been of late such an abundance here." He concluded that I did well in that I did not try to contest with Lady 8-----, and that I was absolutely buried in Baden.

" I am sorry for her."

" But if she will not be consoled with you - " he added, in a merry and harsh voice.

" If she goes away I will follow her," rudely remarked the voice with the Italian accent.

" Happy mortal ! He still can love ! " laughed the Frenchman.

" Love ! " said the voice and grew silent. " I cannot help loving ! Without it there is no life. The only good there is in life is to have love-affairs. Mine never stop in the middle, and I will bring this one to a successful issue."

" Bonne chance, mon ami," said the Frenchman.

We did not hear what followed because they went around the corner, and we heard their steps from the other side. They were going down the steps and a few minutes later they came out through a side door and were very much surprised to see us. I blushed when Marquis I)---- came up to me, and I felt terribly

when, upon leaving the castle, he offered me his arm. I could not refuse, and we walked to the carriage back of L---- M----, who was walking with his friend. I

was offended by what the Frenchman had said of me, though I secretly acknowledged that he mentioned only what I had felt ; but the words of the marquis surprised and provoked me by their coarseness. I was tormented by the thought that I had heard his words and that, in spite of it, he was not afraid of me.

I loathed his proximity to me, and, without looking at him, without answering him, and trying to keep my arm in such a way as not to hear him, I hurriedly walked behind L----M----and the Frenchman. The marquis

was saying something about the beautiful landscape, about the unexpected happiness of meeting me, and something else, but I was not listening to him. I was all that time thinking of my husband, of my son, of Russia. I was ashamed of something, sorry for something, desiring something, and was hurrying home to my lonely room in the Hotel de Bade, in order to reflect at liberty upon what was rising in my soul. But L---- M----

walked leisurely. To the carriage there was quite a distance yet, and my gentleman, I thought, persisted in slowing down his steps, as though attempting to stop me. " It is impossible ! " I thought, and determinately walked faster. But he positively held me back and even pressed my hand. L----M----turned around the corner, and

we were all alone. I felt terribly.

" Pardon me," I said, coldly, and wanted to free my hand, but the lace of the sleeve caught in his button. He bent with his breast toward me and began to unhook it, and his gloveless fingers touched my hand. A novel sensation, intermediate between terror and enjoyment, ran up my back like a chill. I looked at him so as to express with my cold glance all the loathing which I felt for him ; but instead, my glance expressed fright and agitation.

His burning, moist eyes, right near my face, looked passionately at me, at my neck, at my bosom ; both his hands were fingering my arm above the wrist ; his open lips were saying something: they were saying that he loved me, that I was everything to him ; and his lips came nearer to mine and his hands pressed mine more firmly and burned me.

A fire ran through my veins ; my eyes grew dark : I trembled, and the words with which I wanted to stop him dried up in my throat. Suddenly I felt a kiss on my cheek, and I, all in a tremble and chilling, stopped and glanced at him. Having no strength to say anything or to move, I, in expectancy, waited and wished for something. All that lasted but a moment. But that moment was terrible ! I saw all of him in that one moment.

I now understood his face so well, – that abrupt, low brow showing underneath his straw hat and resembling that of my husband ; that beautiful straight nose with the large, open nostrils, that long, sharply pointed, pomaded moustache and little beard, those cleanly shaven cheeks, and that sunburnt neck. I hated him, I was afraid of him, – he was so strange to me. But at that moment the agitation and passion of that strange man affected me so powerfully, I wanted so insuperably to abandon myself to the kisses of that coarse and beautiful mouth, to the embraces of those white hands with the thin

veins and with the rings on their fingers, and I was so drawn to throw myself headlong into the suddenly opened, attracting abyss of forbidden pleasures ! -

" I am so unfortunate," I thought, " so let more and more misfortunes be gathered upon my head."

He embraced me with one arm and bent down to my face. " Let more and more shame and sin be heaped upon my head."

" Je vous aime" he whispered, in that voice which so much resembled that of my husband. I thought of my husband and my child as of once dear beings between whom and me everything was now ended. But suddenly L----M----'s voice, calling me, was heard around the

bend of the road. I came to my senses, tore my hand away from him, and, without looking at him, almost ran up to L----M----. We seated ourselves in the car

riage, and only then I glanced at him. He doffed his hat and asked me something, smiling. He did not understand the inexpressible loathing which I experienced toward him at that moment.

My life appeared so unfortunate to me, my future so hopeless, the past so black ! L-----M----- was talking

to me, but I did not understand her words. It seemed to me that she was speaking to me only from a sense of pity, in order to conceal the contempt which I provoked in her. The kiss burned my cheek with shame, and the thought of my husband and child were intolerable to me.

When I was left alone in my room I thought that I should now be able to reflect upon my condition, but I felt terribly by myself. I did not finish the tea which was brought to me, and, without knowing why, I with feverish haste began to prepare myself to go to Heidelberg by the evening train.

When I sat down with the maid in the empty car, and the engine started, and the fresh air was wafted upon me through the window, I began to reflect, and the past and future began to present themselves more clearly to me. All my married life from the day we left for St. Petersburg suddenly presented itself to me in a new light and lay as a reproach upon my conscience. I now for the first time thought vividly of our early life in the country, and of our plans. For the first time the question occurred to me, " What have my pleasures during all that time been ? " and I felt myself guilty in respect to him.

" But why did he not stop me ? Why was he doublefaced before me ? Why did he avoid explanations, and why did he offend me ?" I asked myself. " Why did he not use all the power of love over me ? Or did he not love me ? " However guilty he may have been, the kiss of a strange man was there on my cheek, and I felt it. The nearer we came

to Heidelberg the more vividly did I think of my husband and the more terrible did the impending meeting appear to me. " I will tell him everything, everything ; I will cover everything with tears of repentance," I thought, " and he will forgive me." But I did not know myself what that " everything " was, and did not myself believe that he would forgive me.

The moment I entered my husband's room and saw his calm, though surprised, face, I felt that I had nothing to tell him, nothing to confess, and nothing to ask forgiveness for. I was to remain with the unuttered grief and repentance.

" What has made you come ? " he said. " I was going to come to you to-morrow." But, upon looking closer at my face, he seemed to be frightened. " What is it ? What is the matter with you ? " he said.

" Nothing," I replied, with difficulty keeping back my tears. " I have come to stay. Let us go to Russia to-morrow, if possible."

He for quite awhile looked silently and attentively at me.

" Tell me what has happened to you ! " he said.

I involuntarily blushed and lowered my eyes. In his eyes there flashed a feeling of provocation and anger. I was frightened at the thoughts which might come to him, and so I said, with an exercise of hypocrisy, of which I had not thought myself capable :

" Nothing has happened. I simply felt dull and lonely, and I have been thinking a great deal about our life and about you. I have so long been guilty in respect to you ! Why do you take me to places where you do not like to go ? I have long been guilty in respect to you," I repeated, and again tears stood in my eyes. " Let us go to the country, and for ever ! "

" Ah, my dear, let us avoid sentimental scenes ! " he said, coldly. " I am glad you want to go back to the country, because we have little money left; but as to being there for ever, that is an idle dream. I know that you will not endure it there. But, here, you had better drink some tea," he concluded, getting up, in order to call a servant.

I imagined everything he might think of me, and I was offended by the terrible thoughts which I ascribed to him, as I met the unsteady and apparently abashed glance which was directed upon me. " No, he does not want to, and he cannot, understand me!" I said that I wanted to go out to look at the baby, and went away from him. I wanted to be alone and weep, weep, weep.

IV.

The long unheated, empty Nikdlskoe house was again revived, but that which lived in it was not revived. Mamma was no more, and we were alone face to face. Now we no longer needed solitude,— it oppressed us. The winter passed the more disagreeably for me, since I was ill and did not regain my strength until after the birth of my second son. The relations between my husband and me remained as cold and friendly as during our city life, but in the country every deal, every wall and divan, reminded me of what he had been to me and of what I had lost. It seemed as though an unforgiven insult had come between us, as though he were punishing me for something and acting as though he did not notice it himself. There was nothing to ask forgiveness for, nor was there any cause for asking his mercy : he was punishing me only by not giving to me, as before, all of himself, all his soul ; but he did not give it to anybody or to anything, as though he no longer had it.

At times it occurred to me that he only pretended in order to vex me, and that the former feeling was still living in him, so I tried to rouse it. But he every time seemed to avoid explanations, as though suspecting me of duplicity, and was afraid of sentimentalities as of something ridiculous. His glance and tone said : " I know everything, I know everything. There is no use in talking ; I know everything you wish to say. I know also that you will say one thing and will do another."

At first I was offended by this fear of frankness, but later I became accustomed to the thought that it was not frankness, but the absence of any need of frankness. HI y tongue would not have moved now to tell him that I loved him, or to ask him to say the prayers with me, or to call him to listen to my music. Between us were felt certain conditions of propriety. We lived each apart, he with his occupations, in which I had no need and no desire to participate, and I with my idleness, which did not offend and grieve him as formerly. The children were too small yet, and could not unite us.

But spring came. Katya and Sonya came for the summer to the country ; our Nikolskoe house was being rebuilt, and so we moved to Pokrovskoe. It was the same old Pokrovskoe house, with its terrace, with the folding table and the piano in the light parlour, and with my old room with the white curtains, and my, as it were, forgotten girlish dreams. In tins room were two little beds, one, my old bed, in which I at night crossed tossing plump Kokdsha, and the other, a smaller one, from which Vanya's little face peeped out from his swaddling-clothes.

After crossing them I frequently stopped in the middle of the quiet room, and suddenly old, forgotten, youthful visions rose from all the corners, from the walls, from the curtains. Old voices began to sing girls' songs. Where were now those visions ? Where were those soft, sweet songs ? Everything which I had hardly dared to hope for had come to pass. My indistinct, mingling dreams had become a reality, and reality had become a heavy, hard, and cheerless life. And yet everything was the same: the same garden could be seen through the window; the same open space, the same road, the same

bench, over yonder above the ravine ; the same nightingales' songs were borne from the pond ; the same lilacs were in full bloom ; the same moon stood above the

house; and yet everything had changed so terribly, so impossibly !

All that could be so dear and near now was cold ! Just as of old we, Katya and I, now sat softly in the drawing-room, speaking of him. But Katya was wrinkled and sallow ; her eyes no longer sparkled with joy and hope, but expressed sympathetic grief and compassion. We no longer went into ecstasies over him as in former days : we judged him ; we did not marvel why and wherefore we were happy, and not as in former days did we wish to tell to the whole world what we were thinking about. We, like conspirators, whispered to each other, and for the hundredth time we asked ourselves why everything had become so sad.

He was still the same, only the wrinkle between his eyebrows was deeper, there were more gray hairs on his temples; but his deep, attentive glance was now continually shrouded from me. I, too, was still the same, but there was no love, and no desire to love, in me. There was no need of work, no contentment with myself. And my former religious ecstasies and my former love for him, my former fulness of life seemed so remote to me. I should not now have understood that which then had seemed so clear and just: the happiness of living for another. Why for another, when there was no pleasure even in living for myself ?

I had completely given up music ever since I left for St. Petersburg ; but now the old piano and the old music attracted me.

One day I was not well and I stayed at home ; Katya and Sonya had gone with him to Nikolskoe to look at the new structure. The tea-table was set ; I went down and, waiting for them, sat down at the piano. I opened the sonata " Quasi una fantasia," and began to play it. There was no one present to hear or see me, and the windows to the garden were open ; the familiar, sad, and solemn sounds were borne through the room. I finished the first part and, quite unconsciously, from old habit, turned around to the corner where he used to sit and listen to me. But he was not there. The long-untouched chair stood in its corner ; through the window a lilac-bush could be seen against the bright sunset, and the freshness of evening poured in through the open windows. I leaned against the piano, with both my hands covered my face, and fell to musing. I sat thus for a long time, painfully recalling the irretrievable past, and timidly thinking of the present. Ahead of me there seemed to be nothing, as though I wished nothing and hoped for nothing.

" Is it possible I have outlived myself ?" I thought. I raised my head in terror and, to forget myself and not to think, I again began to play the same andante. " My God ! " I thought, " forgive me if I am guilty, or return to me all that was so beautiful in my soul, or instruct me what to do and how to live now ! "

The noise of wheels could be heard on the grass, and before the porch and on the terrace could be heard the cautious, familiar steps, and they grew silent. My former feeling no longer responded to these familiar steps. When I was through, steps were heard behind me, and a hand lay on my shoulder.

" How clever of you to play this sonata," he said.

I was silent.

" Have you not yet had tea ? "

I gave a negative shake of my head and did not turn around, in order not to betray the traces of agitation which were still left on my face.

" They will be here soon. The horse was a little restive, and so they are walking down the highway," he said.

" Let us wait for them," I said, going out upon the terrace, in the hope that he would follow me ; but he asked about the children, and went out to them. Again his presence, his simple, kind voice bereft me of my conviction that I had lost anything. What else was I to wish for ? He was kind, gentle, and a good husband and father, - I did not know myself what was lacking.

I went out on the veranda and sat down under the canvas of the terrace upon the same bench I had sat upon on the day of our declaration of love. The sun had set ; it was getting dark and a gloomy vernal cloud hung over the house and garden ; only beyond the trees could be seen a clear strip of the sky with the dying twilight and an evening star just bursting into light. Over everything hovered the shadow of a light cloud, and everything was awaiting a light spring rain. The wind died down ; not one leaf, not one grass-blade was stirring ; the odour of the lilac-bushes and elders was so strong in the garden and upon the terrace that it seemed the whole air was in bloom: it came in gusts, now weakening, now growing stronger, and I felt like closing my eyes and seeing and hearing nothing, but inhaling that sweet fragrance.

The dahlias and rose-bushes, not yet in bloom, stretching out motionless in the black, dug-up earth of the gardenbed, seemed to be growing slowly upward along their white, planed-off supports. The frogs croaked lustily and penetratingly near the ravine, as though for the last time before the rain which would drive them into the water. One thin, incessant, aqueous sound rose above this din. The nightingales called each other at intervals, and could be heard agitatedly flitting from place to place. A nightingale this spring again tried to settle in the bush near the window, and as I came out I heard him fly over into the avenue, where he gave one roll of trills and grew silent, also in expectancy of something.

I endeavoured in vain to calm myself : I was waiting and feeling sorry for something.

He returned from up-stairs and sat down at my side.

"It looks as though our people will get wet," he said.

" Yes," I said, and we were both silent for quite awhile.

The windless cloud dropped lower and lower ; the air grew calmer, more fragrant and motionless, and suddenly a drop fell and seemed to rebound from the canvas awning of the terrace ; another broke against the pebbles of the path ; there was a splash against the burdocks, and there came down large drops of a refreshing, increasing rain. The nightingales and frogs were silenced ; only the thin, aqueous sound, though appearing more remote through the rain, was still in the air, and a bird, apparently finding shelter in the dry leaves, was uttering its even, monotonous sounds somewhere near the terrace. He arose and was on the point of leaving.

" Where are you going ? " I asked, holding him back. " It is so nice here."

" I must send them an umbrella and galoshes," he replied.

" It is not necessary : the rain will soon be over."

He agreed with me, and we remained near the balustrade of the terrace. I leaned with my arm on the slippery, wet rail and bent my head forward. The fresh rain dropped unevenly on my hair and neck. The cloud, growing lighter and thinner, exhausted itself over us; the even sound of the rain gave way to that of intermittent drops falling from above and from the leaves. Again the frogs croaked down below ; again the nightingales fluttered and began to trill, now on one side and now on another. Everything cleared up in front of us.

" How nice it is ! " he said, sitting down on the balustrade and passing his hand through my wet hair.

This simple caress acted upon me like a reproach, and I wanted to cry.

" What more does a man want ? " he said. " I am now so contented that I need nothing more : I am quite happy ! "

" You used to talk differently to me about your happiness," I thought to myself " No matter how great it was, you said that you wanted something more and more. Now you are satisfied and calm, while in my heart there seem to be unexpressed repentance and unwept tears."

"I, too, feel well," I said, "but I am also sad because everything before me is so nice. In me everything is so incoherent and empty, and I wish for something, while here it is so beautiful and quiet. Does not some pining mingle with your enjoyment of Nature, as though you wished for something of the past ? "

He took his hand away from my head and was silent for a moment.

" Yes, that used to be the case with me, especially in the spring," he said, as though recalling something. " I, too, used to sit up nights, wishing and hoping, and those were good nights ! But then everything was ahead, and now everything is behind. Now I am satisfied with what there is, and I feel fine," he concluded, with such careless confidence that, however painful it was for me to hear it, I believed that he was telling the truth.

" And you wish for nothing ?" I asked.

" Nothing impossible," he replied, guessing my sentiment. " You are getting your head wet," he added, caressing me like a child, and again passing his hand through my hair. " You envy the leaves and grass because the rain wets them ; you would like to be the grass, the leaves, and the rain, while I rejoice looking at them, as at anything in the world which is good, young, and happy."

" And you are not sorry for anything in the past ?" I continued to ask, feeling that my heart was getting heavier and heavier.

He mused awhile and again grew silent. I saw that he wanted to give me an entirely frank reply.

" No ! " he answered, briefly.

"It is not true! It is not true!" I said, turning around to him and looking him in the eye. "Are you not sorry for the past ? "

" No ! " he repeated once more. " I am thankful for it, but I do not regret the past."

" And would not like to bring it back ? " I asked.

He turned aside and began to look into the garden.

" I do not wish it any more than I should wish to have wings grow on me," he said. " It is not possible ! "

" Would you not improve the past ? Do you not reproach yourself or me ? "

" Never ! Everything was for the best ! "

" Listen ! " I said, touching his hand, that he might turn around to me. " Tell me why you never told me that you wanted me to live as you wanted ; why you gave me the liberty which I did not know how to use ; why you stopped teaching me. If you had only wanted to, and if you had guided me differently, there would have been nothing, nothing," I said, in a voice in which there was ever more strongly expressed cold vexation and reproach, and not my former love.

" What would there not have been ? " he said, turning to me in surprise. " There is nothing as it is. Everything is all right. All is very well," he added, smiling.

" Is it possible that he does not understand, or, worse still, that he does not want to understand ?" I thought, and tears stood in my eyes.

" It would not have happened that, although innocent in regard to you, I should be punished by your indifference and even contempt," I suddenly burst out. " It would not have happened that without any fault of mine you have suddenly taken ' away from me everything which was dear to me."

" What are you saying, my dear ? " he said, as though not understanding my words.

" No, let me speak now— You have taken away from me your confidence, love, respect even ; after all that has happened I will not believe that you love me. No, I must tell you at once what has been tormenting me so long," I again interrupted him. " Am I to be blamed for not knowing life, while you made me find it out for myself ? Am I to be blamed because now, when I myself have come to understand what is to be done, when I have been struggling for more than a year to return to you, you push me aside, as though not understanding what I want ? And you are doing this in such a way that I cannot reproach you, while I am guilty and wretched. Yes, you want to throw me again into that life which might have caused your misfortune and mine."

"In what way have I made you see this?" he asked me, with genuine terror and surprise.

" Did you not say yesterday, — and you have been saying it all the time, — that I shall not get used to our life here, and that we must again go to St. Petersburg for the winter, although that city is hateful to me ? " I continued. " Instead of supporting me, you avoid all frankness, every sincere and tender word with me. And then, when I shall have fallen completely, you will reproach me, and rejoice at my fall."

" Hold on, hold on ! " he said to me, sternly and coldly. " It is not good what you are saying there. It only proves that you are not well disposed toward me, that you do not — "

" That I do not love you ? Speak ! Speak ! " I finished for him, and tears burst forth from my eyes. I sat down on the bench, and covered my face with my handkerchief.

" That is the way he has understood me ! " I thought, trying to keep back the sobs that were strangling me. " Our former love is at an end," a voice said in my heart. He did not come up to me, did not console me. He was offended by what had told him. His voice was calm and dry.

" I do not know what it is you reproach me for," he began ; " if because I have not loved you as before - "

" Loved ! " I muttered into my handkerchief, and bitter tears flowed more copiously upon it.

"The fault is with time and with us. Each period has its own love - " He was silent. "Shall I tell you the whole truth, now that you want me to be frank ? Just as during that year, when I first knew you, I passed whole sleepless nights thinking of you, and stirred up my love, and that love grew and grew in my heart, even so in St. Petersburg and abroad I stayed awake terrible nights, breaking up and crushing the love which tormented me. I did not break it up, but I broke up that which tormented me, and I became quieter, while I still love you, but with another love."

" Yes, you call it love, but it is a torment," I muttered. " Why did you allow me to live in society, if it seemed so noxious to you that you would even have lost your love for me on account of it ? "

" Not society, my dear," he said.

"Why did you not make use of your power?" I continued. " Why did you not bind, or kill me ? I should be better off now than losing all that formed my happiness ; I should feel better and not so ashamed."

I again sobbed and covered my face.

Just then Katya and Sonya, cheerful and wet, came up on the terrace with loud talking and laughter; but, upon seeing us, they grew quiet and immediately went out.

We were long silent after they had gone; I wept all my tears, and felt easier. I looked up at him. He sat leaning his head on his arm and wanted to say something in reply to my glance, but only drew a deep sigh, and again leaned on his arm.

I walked over to him and took his arm away. He turned his thoughtful glance upon me.

" Yes," he said, as though continuing his thoughts, " all of us, but especially you women, must in person live through all the nonsense of life in order to return to life itself ; it is impossible to trust another in this matter. You were then far from having lived through all that charming and agreeable nonsense which I admired in you ; I have allowed you to live through it, and I have felt that I had no right to embarrass you, although for me that time had passed long ago."

" Why did you yourself go through all that nonsense and allow me to live through it, if you love me?" I said.

" Because you would have gladly believed me, but you could not do

that; you had to find it out for yourself, and you have."

"You reflected, you reflected a great deal," I said. " You loved little."

We were silent again.

" What you have just said is cruel, but it is true," he said, rising suddenly, and walking up and down the terrace. " Yes, it is true, I was to blame," he added, stopping in front of me. " Either I had no right to let myself love you at all, or I should have loved you more simply, yes."

" Let us forget everything," I said, timidly.

" No, what is past cannot be brought back, never," and his voice became softer as he said that.

" Everything has come back," I said, placing my hand upon his shoulder.

He took my hand away and pressed it.

" No, I did not tell the truth when I said that I did not regret the past. Yes, I regret it; I weep for that past love which is not and never can be again. Who is to be blamed for it ? I do not know. There is left a love, but not the one that was before : its place is left, but anguish has made that love lose its strength and sap, and there are only left recollections and gratitude ; but - "

« Don't speak that way ! " I interrupted him. " Let everything be as of old - It can be, can it not ? Yes ? " I asked, looking him in the eye. But his eyes were clear and calm, and they did not look deeply into mine.

As I was speaking I felt that what I wished and asked him for was no longer possible. He smiled a calm, gentle, and, as I thought, an old man's smile.

" How young you still are, and how old I am," he said. " There is no longer in me that which you seek. Why deceive myself ? " he added, continuing to smile himself.

I stood silently near him, but my soul became quieter.

" We shall not try to repeat life," he continued, " we shall not lie to ourselves. Thank God there are no longer the old troubles and agitations ! We have nothing to search for and be agitated about. We have found what we wanted, and enough happiness has fallen to our share. Now we must stand aside and give a chance to this one here," he said, pointing to the nurse who came up with Vanya and stopped at the door of the terrace. " That's the way, my dear," he concluded, bending my head to him and kissing it. Not a lover, but an old friend, was kissing me.

From the garden ever stronger and sweeter rose the fragrant freshness of night ; the sounds and the silence grew more solemn, and upon the sky the stars burned ever more frequently. I looked at him, and suddenly I felt lighter, as though that sickly moral nerve which had made me suffer had been removed from me. I suddenly understood clearly and calmly that the feeling of those days was irretrievably lost, like that time itself, and that it not only was impossible to bring it back, but that it would only cause hardships and embarrassment. And, when it comes to that, was that time which seemed to me so happy really so good ? And all that was so long, so long ago ! -

" Well, it is time to drink tea ! " he said, and we went together to the drawing-room. In the door I again met the nurse with Ványa. I took the child into my arms, covered his bared red little legs, pressed him close to me and kissed him, barely touching him with my lips. He moved his tiny hand with the sprawling, wrinkled fingers as though in sleep, and opened his dim little eyes as though looking for something or recalling something; suddenly these eyes were directed toward me, a spark of intelligence flashed through them, his fat lips puckered and opened for a smile. " Mine, mine, mine ! " I thought, with a blissful tension in all my limbs, pressing him to my breast and with difficulty restraining myself from causing him pain. I began to kiss his cold little feet, his stomach, his hands, and his little head, just covered with hair. My husband came up to me ; I quickly covered the baby's face and again uncovered it.

" Ivan Sergyéich ! " said my husband, touching his chin with his finger. But I quickly covered up Ivan Sergyéich. Nobody but me was to look for any length of time at him. I glanced at my husband ; his eyes laughed, looking into mine, and for the first time after a long interval it was again easy and a joy for me to look into his.

With that day ended my romance with my husband: the old sentiment became a precious, irretrievable reminiscence, and a new feeling of love for my children, and for the father of my children, laid the foundation for another, an entirely different and happy life, which has not ended even at the present moment.