FROM THE MEMOIRS OF PRINCE D. NEKHLYÛDOV

Lucerne

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Last night I arrived in Lucerne and stopped in the Schweizerhof, the best hotel here.

" Lucerne, chief town of the canton, lying on the shore of the lake of Lucerne," says Murray, " is one of the most romantic spots in Switzerland ; three chief roads meet here ; and only one hour's distance by steamboat is Mount Rigi, from which is to be had one of the most magnificent views in the world."

Whether justly or not, the other Guides say the same, and therefore there are here an endless number of travellers of all nations, especially of Englishmen.

The superb five-story-high building of the Schweizerhof was lately built on the quay, right over the shore of the lake, in the very place where anciently used to be a covered, winding wooden bridge, with turrets at the corners and images on the rafters. Now, thanks to the enormous rush caused by the English, by their needs, their tastes, and their money, the old bridge was torn down and in its place was built a flagstone quay, as straight as a cane ; upon the quay were put up straight, square five-story buildings ; in front of the buildings they

planted two rows of linden-trees, with their supports, and between the lindens, as is proper, were placed green benches. This is a pleasure-ground ; and here walk up and down English women in Swiss straw hats and English gentlemen in solid and comfortable clothes, and take pleasure out of their production. Very likely these quays, and houses, and lindens, and Englishmen are all right in some places, — they certainly are not here, amidst this strangely majestic and, at the same time, inexpressibly harmonious and gentle Nature.

When I went up-stairs to my room and opened the window facing the lake, the beauty of this water, of these mountains, and of this sky in the first moment literally blinded and shook me. I experienced an internal unrest and the necessity of giving some expression to that

superabundance with which my heart brimmed over. I wanted at that moment to embrace somebody, embrace him hard, tickle and pinch him, — in general, do . something unusual with him and with myself.

It was past six o'clock in the evening. It had been raining all day, and it was clearing up now. The lake, as blue as burning sulphur, with the dots of boats and their vanishing tracks, immovable, smooth, seemingly convex, spread out before the windows between the variegated green shores, passed into the distance, narrowing between two enormous promontories, and, darkling, leaned against and disappeared in the mountains, clouds, and glaciers, piled one above the other.

In the foreground are the moist, light green, receding shores with reeds, meadows, gardens, and villas ; farther away are the dark green, overgrown promontories with the ruins of castles ; in the background is the crumpled vista of pale lilac mountains, with their fantastic, rocky, and dimly white snow-covered summits ; and all is bathed in the gentle, transparent azure of the atmosphere, and illumined by the warm rays of the sunset piercing the rent heaven. Neither on the lake, nor on the mountains, nor on the sky was there one single precise line, not one single precise colour, not one moment like another,— everywhere motion, unsymmetricalness, fantastic shapes, endless mixture and variety of shades and lines, and over all calm, softness, unity, and the insistence of the beautiful.

And here amid the indefinite, mixed, free beauty, in the very front of my window, stupidly and artificially tower the white, cane-shaped quay, the lindens with their supports, and the green benches, — miserable, trite, human productions, not welded, like the distant villas and ruins, with the general harmony, but, on the contrary, coarsely contradicting it. My glance continually and involuntarily came in conflict with this terrible straight quay, and mentally wanted to brush it aside and destroy it, like a black spot on the nose, right under the eye, but the quay with the walking Englishmen remained, and I involuntarily endeavoured to find a view-point from which I should not see it. I finally found a way of looking so, and until dinner I enjoyed all by myself that incomplete, but so much the more sweetly tormenting, sensation, which one experiences during a solitary contemplation of the beauties of Nature.

At half-past seven I was called to dinner. In a large, superbly appointed room of the lower story two long tables were set for at least- one hundred people. The silent motion of the gathering guests, the rustling of women's dresses, the light steps, the soft remarks to the most polite and elegant waiters, lasted about three minutes ; then all the seats were taken by men and women, dressed exceedingly well, even richly, and, in general, with extreme neatness.

As generally in Switzerland, the greater part of the guests are English, consequently the chief characteristics of the table d'hôte are severe, legalized propriety, incoin-municativeness, based not on

pride, but on unsociableness, and seclusive contentment in a comfortable and agreeable satisfaction of one’s needs. On all sides glisten the whitest of laces, the whitest of collars, the whitest of teeth, both natural and false, the whitest of faces and hands. But the countenances, many of which are very beautiful, express only the consciousness of their own well-being and a complete inattention to all that surrounds them, if it has no direct relation to their persons, and the whitest of hands, in rings and in mittens, move only to adjust collars, carve beef, and fill the glasses with wine — no spiritual agitation is reflected in their motions.

Families now and then exchange a few words in a soft voice about some dish, or wine, or the beautiful view from Mount Figi. Lonely travellers of both sexes sit lonely and silent side by side, not even looking at each other. If, occasionally, out of these hundred people, two speak with each other, the subject for conversation is sure to be the weather and the ascent of Mount Rigi. The knives and forks are barely audible as they move on the plates ; little food is taken at a time ; peas and vegetables are invariably eaten with the fork. The waiters, involuntarily submitting to the universal taciturnity, ask in a whisper what wine is desired.

At such dinners I always feel oppressed, unhappy, and, finally, sad. It seems to me all the time that I am guilty of something, that I am being punished as in my childhood, when, if I was naughty, I was put on a chair with the ironical remark, " Rest yourself, my dear ! ” while my youthful blood was beating in my veins, and in the other room could be heard the merry shouts of my brothers.

Formerly I tried to rebel against this feeling of oppression which I experienced during such dinners, but in vain ; all these dead countenances have an insuperable effect upon me, and I become as dead as they. I wish nothing, think nothing, and do not even observe. At first I tried to speak with my neighbours ; but I received no other answers than those phrases which apparently had been repeated one hundred thousand times in the same spot and one hundred thousand times by the same person. And yet, all these people are not stupid and unfeeling ; no doubt, in many of these congealed people there is going on just such an inner life as in me, and in many it is much more complex and interesting. Why, then, do they deprive themselves of one of the best pleasures of life, the enjoyment of each other, the enjoyment of their fellow men ?

How different it was in our French pension, where we, twenty people of the most varied nations, professions, and characters, under the influence of French sociability, used to come together at the common table as at a game ! Here, at once, from one end of the table to the other, the conversation, seasoned with jokes and puns, though frequently in broken language, became universal. There everybody prattled whatever happened to pass through his mind, unconcerned about the result; there we had our philosopher, our debater, our bel esprit, our butt,— everything was in common.

There we soon after dinner removed the table, and, no matter whether

in time or not, began to dance la polka over the dusty carpet until late in the evening. There we were, it is true, coquettish, not very clever, and respectable people, but still we were men. The Spanish countess with her romantic adventures, the Italian abbot who declaimed the Divine Comedy after dinner, the American doctor who had access to the Tuileries, the young playwright with the long hair, the lady pianist who, according to her own words, had composed the best polka in the world, the unfortunate and pretty widow with three rings on every finger, — we all treated each other in a human and friendly, though superficial, manner, and carried away, some of us light, and others genuine, sincere memories.

But at the English tables d'hote I frequently think, as I look at these laces, ribbons, rings, pomaded hair, and silk dresses, how many live women would be happy and would make others happy in these ornaments. It is a strange thought, how many friends and lovers, the happiest of friends and lovers, may be sitting side by side without knowing it. And, God knows why, they will never know it, and will never give each other that happiness which it is so easy for them to give and which they desire so much.

I felt sad, as always after such dinners, and, without finishing my dessert, I went out, in the unhappiest of moods, to stroll up and down the city. The narrow, dirty streets without illumination, the closing shops, the meeting with drunken men, and with women going for water, or flitting, with hats on, along the walls of the side streets and looking around, not only did not dispel my melancholy mood, but even intensified it. It was quite dark in the streets when I, without looking around me, without any thoughts in my head, walked toward the house, hoping in sleep to rid myself of my gloomy disposition. I felt terribly cold at heart, lonely and oppressed, as sometimes happens without any visible cause when arriving in a new place.

I was walking down the quay toward the Schweizerhof, looking at nothing but my feet, when I was suddenly startled by the sounds of some strange but exceedingly agreeable and sweet music. These sounds immediately had a vivifying effect upon me, as though a bright, merry light had penetrated my soul. I felt happy and joyful. Aly dormant attention again was directed to the objects surrounding me. The beauty of the night and of the lake, to which I had been indifferent before, suddenly impressed me soothingly, like a novelty.

I involuntarily, at a flash, noticed the murky sky, with the gray tufts against the dark azure, lighted up by the rising moon, and the dark green smooth lake, with the little lights reflected in it, and in the distance the mist-covered mountains, and the croaking of the frogs at Freschenburg, and the fresh piping of the quails in the dewy grass on the other shore. And directly in front of me, in the spot from which issued the sounds, and upon which my attention was mainly directed, I saw in the half-darkness a group of men crowding in a semicircle in the middle of the street, and in front of the group, some distance away, a tiny man in a black dress. Back of the

group and of the man, against the dark, gray and blue, rent heaven, there were delineated several black, slender poplars of a garden, and there towered majestically on both sides of an ancient cathedral two severe spires.

I came nearer and the sounds became more distinct. I could clearly make out the distant chords of a guitar, sweetly tremulous in the night air, and several voices, which, intercepting each other, did not sing the theme, but now and then, singing out the most prominent passages, indicated it. The theme was something in the nature of a sweet, graceful mazurka. The voices seemed now near, now remote ; now could be heard a tenor, now a bass, and now a guttural falsetto, with the warbling Tyrolese yodels. It was not a song, but a light, masterful sketch of a song. I could not make out what it was ; but it was beautiful. These passionate, feeble chords of the guitar, that sweet, soft tune, and that lonely figure of the black little man, amid the fantastic surroundings of the dark lake, the translucent moon, and the two silently towering immense spires and black poplars, — all that was strange, but inexpressibly beautiful, or seemed to me to be so.

All the mingled and involuntary impressions of life suddenly received meaning and charm for me, as though a fresh, fragrant flower had bloomed out in my soul. Instead of fatigue, distraction, indifference for everything in the world, which I had experienced but a minute ago, I suddenly felt a need of love, a fulness of hope, and a causeless joy of life. " What is there to wish, what to desire ?” I uttered, involuntarily : " Here it is, — you are on all sides surrounded by beauty and poetry. Inhale it in broad, full draughts with all the strength you have ! Enjoy yourself ! What else do you need? All is yours, all the bliss!”

I went nearer. The little man turned out to be a wandering Tyrolean. He was standing before the windows of the hotel, with one foot forward and his head thrown up, and, strumming the guitar, was singing his graceful song in a variety of voices. I at once felt tenderness for this man and gratitude for the change which he had caused in me. The singer, so far as I could make out, was dressed in an old black coat ; his hair was black and short, and his head was covered with the commonest kind of an old burgher’s cap. There was nothing aristocratic in his attire, but his dashing, childishly merry pose and motions, combined with his tiny stature, produced a pathetic, and, at the same time, an amusing effect.

In the entrance, in the windows and balconies of the magnificently illuminated hotel, stood wide-skirted ladies, gleaming in their adornments, gentlemen in the whitest of collars, and the porter and lackey in gold-embroidered liveries. In the street, in the semicircle of the crowd and farther away, in the boulevard under the lindens, had stopped and gathered elegantly dressed waiters, cooks in the whitest of caps and blouses, maidens embracing each other, and strollers. All seemed to experience the same sensation which I was experiencing. All stood in silence around the singer and listened attentively to him. Everything was quiet ; only in the

intervals of the song from somewhere in the distance was borne over the water the even sound of a hammer, and from Freschenburg came the voices of the frogs in loose trills, interrupted by the moist, monotonous piping of the quails.

The little man, in the dark, in the middle of the street, trilled, like a nightingale, couplet after couplet and song after song. Although I had stepped up close to him, his singing continued to cause me great pleasure. His small voice was extremely pleasing; but the tenderness, the good taste, and the feeling of moderation, with which he handled this voice, were unusual and betrayed immense natural talent in him. The refrain for each couplet he sang differently, and it was obvious that these graceful variations came to him freely and instantly.

In the crowd, and above in the Schweizerhof, and below in the boulevard, was frequently heard a whisper of approval and reigned a respectful silence. The balconies and windows were ever more filled with dressed-up ladies and gentlemen, posing picturesquely in the light of the illumination of the hotel. Strollers stopped, and, in the shadow of the quay, men and women stood everywhere in groups near the lindens. Near me, smoking cigars, stood, somewhat removed from the rest of the crowd, an aristocratic waiter and cook. The cook strongly felt the charm of the music, and at every high falsetto note winked in ecstatic perplexity to the waiter and nudged him with his elbow, with an expression which said : " Well, how is that ? " The waiter, by whose broad smile I could judge of the pleasure which the singing was causing him, replied to the cook’s nudging with a shrug of the shoulders, which showed that it was hard to surprise him, and that he had heard much better singing than that.

In the interval of a song, while the singer was clearing his throat, I asked the waiter who he was, and whether he frequently came there.

" He comes about twice a summer,” replied the waiter. " He is from Aargau, — a beggar.”

" Are there many such ?” I asked.

" Yes, yes,” replied the lackey, without exactly understanding what it was I was asking him, but later, making out my question, he added : " Oh, no ! He is the only one here that I know of. There are no others.”

Just then the little man finished his first song, nimbly turned over his guitar, and said something to himself in his German patois, which I could not understand, but which provoked guffaws in the crowd around him.

" What did he say ? ” I asked.

“He says that his throat is dry, and that he would like to drink some wine,” the waiter who was standing near by translated for me.

" Is he fond of drinking ? "

" They are all like that," replied the waiter, smiling, and waving his hand toward him.

The singer took off his cap, and, swinging his guitar, walked over to the house. He threw back his head and turned to the gentlemen who were standing at the windows and on the balconies:

" Messieurs et mesdames," he said, in a half-Italian and half-German accent, and with such intonations as sleight-of-hand performers employ when addressing an audience : " Si tous croyez que je gagne quelque chose, tous tous trompez ; je ne suis qu'un paurre tiaple."

He stopped and was silent for a moment ; but no one gave him anything. He again swung his guitar and said :

" A present, messiezers et mesdames, je tous chanterai l'air du Righi."

Above, the public was silent, but continued to stand in expectation of the next song; below, in the crowd, there was laughter, no doubt because he expressed himself so strangely, and because they gave him nothing. I gave him a few centimes ; he nimbly threw them from one hand into another, stuck them into his vest pocket, and, putting on his cap, once more began to sing a graceful, sweet Tyrolese song, which he called I'air du Righi. This song, which he had left for the end, was even better than the rest, and on all sides and in the swollen crowd were heard sounds of approval.

He finished his song. Again he swung his guitar ; he took off his cap, held it in front of him, made two steps toward the windows, and again repeated his incomprehensible phrase : " Messieurs et mesdames, si tous croyez que je gagne quelque chose," which he evidently regarded as very fine and clever ; but in his voice and movements I now noticed a certain indecision and childlike timidity, which were quite striking in connection with his short stature.

The elegant public stood just as picturesquely on the balconies and in the windows, bathed in the light and shining in their costly attires ; some spoke to each other in properly subdued voices, apparently about the singer, who was standing before them with extended hand, while others looked attentively and with curiosity down upon the black little figure ; on one balcony could be heard the sonorous, merry laughter of a young girl. In the crowd below, the conversation and laughter grew louder and louder.

The singer for the third time repeated his phrase, in a still feebler voice; he did not even finish it, but again extended his hand with the cap, and immediately dropped it again. For the second time not one of these brilliantly attired people, who had come out to hear him, threw him down a penny. The crowd laughed out pitilessly.

The little singer, it seemed to me, grew smaller still. He took the guitar into his other hand, raised his cap on his head, and said : " Messieurs et mesdames, je tous remercie et je tous souhaite une bonne nuit," and put on bis cap.

The crowd roared with merry laughter. By degrees the fine ladies and gentlemen disappeared from the balconies, calmly conversing with each other. The strolls were resumed on the boulevard. The street, which was silent during the singing, was again lively ; a few people looked at the singer from a distance, without coming nearer, and laughed. I heard the little man mumble something ; he turned round, and, as though becoming smaller still, with rapid steps walked toward the town. The merry strollers, who had been looking at him, continued to watch him from a distance and laughed.

I was completely at a loss to understand what it meant, and, standing in one spot, senselessly peered info the darkness, watching the receding tiny man, who rapidly strode, with large steps, toward the town, and the laughing strollers, who followed him with their eyes. I was pained and grieved, and, above everything else, ashamed for the little man, for the crowd, for myself, as if it were I who had asked for money and had received none, and as if they were laughing at me. I, too, without looking round, with a pinched heart, striding rapidly, went home, on the veranda of the Schweizerhof. I gave no account to myself of what I was experiencing; but something heavy, something unsolved, filled my heart and pressed it down.

In the superb, illuminated entrance I met the porter, who politely stepped aside, and an English family. The firmly built, handsome, tall man, with black English sidewhiskers, wearing a black hat and holding a plaid on his arm and an expensive cane in his hand, was walking lazily and self-confidently, linking arms with a lady in a gray silk dress and a cap with shining ribbons and exquisite laces. By their side walked a pretty, fresh-looking young lady, in a graceful Swiss hat with a feather à la mousquetaire, from underneath which soft, long, light blond locks fell over her white face. In front leaped about a ten-year-old ruddy girl, with plump, white knees, which could be seen underneath the finest of laces.

« A superb night," said the lady, in a sweet, happy voice, just as I was passing.

“ Obe /” lazily growled the Englishman, who, apparently, was so comfortable in life that he did not even feel like talking. Life in this world seemed to be so calm, comfortable, clean, and easy for all of them, in their motions and countenances there was expressed such indifference to the life of every stranger, and such conviction that the porter would step aside before them and bow to them, and that upon returning, they would find a clean, comfortable bed and rooms, and that it all must be so, and that they had a right to it all, — that I suddenly involuntarily opposed to them the itinerant singer, who, tired, perhaps hungry, in shame was now running away from the laughing crowd, — and I understood why such a heavy stone

was weighing upon my heart, and I felt an inexpressible rage against these people. I twice passed before that Englishman, with inexpressible joy not stepping aside either time and pushing him with my elbow, and, running down the steps, rushed into the darkness, in the direction of the town, where the little man had disappeared.

Having caught up with three men who were walking together, I asked them where the singer was ; they laughed and pointed him out in front of them. He was walking alone, with rapid steps ; no one came near him, and he, so I thought, was still mumbling something angrily. I came abreast with him and proposed to him to go somewhere and drink a bottle of wine with him. He kept walking just as fast and looked displeased at me ; but when he made out what I wanted, he stopped.

" Well, I won't refuse it, if you are so kind," he said. " Near by there is a small café where we may go in, — it is such a simple one," he added, pointing to a dramshop which was still open.

His word " simple '' involuntarily made me wish to go not to the simple café, but to the Schweizerhof, there where all were who had heard him. Although he several times, in timid agitation, refused to go to the Schweizerhof, saying that it was too elegant, I insisted upon it, and he, pretending that he was no longer embarrassed and swinging his guitar, walked back with me along the quay. The moment I had moved up to the singer a few idle strollers went up to us, listened to what I was saying, and now, having taken counsel with each other, walked after us up to the entrance, apparently expecting another performance from the Tyrolean.

I asked the waiter, whom I met in the vestibule, for a bottle of wine. The waiter, smiling, looked at us and, without making any reply, rushed past us. The head waiter, to whom I addressed the same request, listened seriously to me and, surveying from head to foot the small, timid figure of the singer, sternly told the porter to take us to the hall on the left. This hall was the wine-room for common people. In a corner of this room a hunchbacked woman was washing dishes, and all the furniture consisted of bare wooden tables and chairs. The waiter who came to serve us, looking at us with a meek, scornful smile, and putting his hands in his pockets, was talking to the hunchbacked dishwasher about something. He evidently tried to let us know that, although according to his social standing and dignity he regarded himself as incomparably higher than the singer, it not only did not offend him to wait on us, but even gave him genuine amusement.

" Do you wish simple wine ? " he said, —with a knowing look, winking at me and throwing his napkin from one arm to the other.

" Champagne, and of the very best," I said, trying to assume a most haughty and majestic look. But neither the champagne nor my haughty and majestic look had any effect upon the waiter : he smiled, stood awhile looking at us, leisurely cast a glance at his gold watch, and

with soft steps, as though out for a stroll, walked out of the room. He soon returned with the wine and with two more waiters. The two sat down near the dishwasher and, with cheerful attention and a meek smile on their faces, eyed us as parents eye their dear children when they are well behaved at play. The hunchbacked dishwasher seemed to be the only one who looked at us not scornfully, but sympathetically.

Although it was very hard and awkward for me, under the fire of these waiters' eyes, to chat with the singer and to treat him, I tried to do my work as independently as possible. In the light I surveyed him better. He was a tiny, well-proportioned, sinewy man, almost a midget, with bristly black hair, large, black, teary eyes, deprived of their lashes, and an exceedingly pleasing, small, sweetly curved little mouth. He had small side-whiskers and short hair, and wore the simplest and poorest kind of clothes. He was dirty, ragged, sunburnt, and had, in general, the aspect of a labourer. He more resembled a poor peddler than an artist. Only in his ever moist, gleaming eyes and puckering mouth was there something original and touching. He might have been taken for anywhere from twenty-five to forty years ; in reality, he was thirty-eight years old.

This is what he with good-natured readiness and apparent sincerity told of his life. He was from Aargau. He had lost his parents in childhood, and had no other relatives. He never had any possessions. He had been apprenticed to a joiner ; but twenty-two years ago he had been attacked by caries in his hand, which deprived him of the possibility of working. He had had a love for singing since childhood, and he began to sing. Foreigners now and then gave him money. He made a profession of it, bought himself a guitar, and had been wandering for eighteen years through Switzerland and Italy, singing in front of hotels.

His whole baggage consisted of the guitar and a purse, in which there were now only one franc and a half, just enough to pay for his supper and night's lodging. It was now the eighteenth time that he had made his annual summer round of all the best, most frequented parts of Switzerland, Zurich, Lucerne, Interlaken, Chamouni, and so forth ; over the St. Bernard he passes into Italy, and again returns over the St. Gothard or through Savoy. It is now getting hard for him to walk because he feels that the pain in his feet, which he calls the Glieder sucht, is increasing with every year, when he catches a cold, and because his eyes and voice are getting weaker. In spite of this, he is now on his way to Interlaken, Aix-les-Bains, and, over the small St. Bernard, to Italy, of which he is particularly fond ; he seems, in general, to be very well satisfied with his life. When I asked him why he returned home, and whether he had any relatives there, or a house and land, his little mouth, puckering up, gathered into a merry smile, and he answered me : " Oui, le sïicre est bon, il est doux pour les enfants ! " winking to the waiters.

I did not understand anything, but the group of waiters laughed.

" There is nothing there, or I would not be going around like this," he explained to me. " I come home because something draws me back to my home."

He again, with a sly and self-contented smile, repeated the phrase, " Oui, le sucre est bon," and laughed good-naturedly. The waiters were satisfied and laughed, but the hunchbacked dishwasher looked seriously with her kindly eyes at the little man and lifted his cap which he had allowed to fall down from the bench during his conversation. I had noticed that itinerant singers, acrobats, and even sleight-of-hand performers, like to call themselves artists, and so I several times hinted to my interlocutor that he was an artist; he did not at all acknowledge these qualities in himself, but looked upon his business simply as a means of gaining a livelihood. When I asked him whether he did not himself compose the songs which he sang, he wondered at such a strange question, and replied that he was not equal to it, and that they were old Tyrolese songs.

" But the song of Rigi, I suppose, is not old," I said.

" Yes, it was composed about fifteen years ago. There was a German in Basies, a very clever man, and it was he who composed it. An excellent song ! You see, he wrote it for the travellers."

He began, translating into French, to give me the words of the song of Rigi, which he liked so much:

"«If you wish to walk up the Rigi, You need no shoes as far as Weggis (Because you go there by steamboat), And from Weggis take a big stick, And link arms with a maiden, And go and drink a glass of wine. Only do not drink too much, Because he who wants to drink Hust first earn it.'

" Oh, it is an excellent song ! " he concluded.

The waiters obviously found this song very nice, for they came closer to us.

" And who composed the music ?" I asked.

"Nobody. You know, to sing for foreigners you must have something new."

When ice was brought to us and I filled my companion's glass with champagne, he apparently felt ill at ease, and moved restlessly on his bench, looking around at the waiters. We clinked glasses to the health of artists ; he drank half a glass and found it necessary to fall to musing and thoughtfully to frown.

" I have not drunk such wine for a long time, je ne

vous dis que ça. In Italy the d'Asti wine is good, but this is

better still. Ah, Italy ! It is glorious to be there ! " he added.

" Yes, there they appreciate music and artists," I said, wishing to take him back to the failure before the Schweizerhof.

« No," he replied, " there I cannot afford anybody any pleasure with my music. The Italians themselves are musicians such as there are no other in the world ; but I stick to my Tyrolese songs, — that is something new for them."

" Well, are the gentlemen more liberal there ? " I continued, wishing to make him share my rage at the inmates of the Schweizerhof. " It would not happen there, as it did here, that, in an immense hotel where rich people live, one hundred should listen to an artist and not give him anything, would it ? "

My question had an entirely different effect upon him from what I had expected. He did not even think of murmuring against them ; on the contrary, in my remark he saw a reflection upon his talent, which did not call for any reward, and tried to justify himself before me.

" You can't always receive much," he replied. " Sometimes my voice gives out, — or I am tired ; to-day I walked nine hours and sang almost all day. That is hard. The aristocrats are great gentlemen, and sometimes they do not wish to hear Tyrolese songs."

" Still, it is not right not to give anything," I repeated.

He could not understand my remark.

" It is not that," he said, " but the main thing is on est très serré pour la police, that's where the trouble is. Here, according to the republican laws, you are not permitted to sing, but in Italy you may walk about as much as you please, and no one will say a word to you. Here, if they want to let you, they let you, and if they don't want to, they can put you even in jail."

" Is it possible ? "

" Yes. If you were once told not to, and you keep it up, they can put you in jail. I was three months in jail," he said, smiling, as though this were one of his pleasantest recollections.

" Ah, that is terrible ! " I said. " For what ? "

" This is so according to their new republican laws," he continued, with animation. " They do not wish to consider that a poor man must live somehow. If I were not a cripple I would work. Do I hurt any one by my singing ? What is this ? Rich people may live as they please, but îin pauvre tiaple like myself may not even live. What laws of the republic are these ? If so, we do not want a republic,— is it not so, dear sir ? We do not want a republic, — but we want — we want simply — we want " — he hesitated awhile — " we want natural

laws.”

I filled up his glass.

" You are not drinking,” I said to him.

He took the glass in his hand and bowed to me.

“ I know what you want,” he said, blinking and threatening me with a finger. " You want to get me drunk so as to see what I shall do ; but no, you won’t succeed.”

" Why should I get you drunk ?” I said. " I only wanted to afford you pleasure.”

He evidently was sorry for having offended me by his bad interpretation of my intention ; he became embarrassed, got up, and pressed my elbow.

" No, no,” he said, looking at me with an imploring expression of his moist eyes, " I am only jesting.”

Thereupon he pronounced a terribly mixed up, sly phrase, by which he meant to say that I was all the same a good fellow.

“Je ne vous dis que ça ! ” he concluded.

Thus we continued to drink and talk, while the waiters continued without embarrassment to watch us, and, it

seemed, to make fun of us. Notwithstanding my interest in the conversation, I could not help noticing them, and, I confess, I grew angrier and angrier. One of them got up, walked over to the little man, and, looking at the crown of his head, began to smile. I had a charge of rage ready against the inmates of the Schw’eizerhof, which I had not yet had a chance of letting loose, and now, I must confess, this waiter audience roiled me. The porter entered the room without taking off his cap, and, leaning on the table, sat down near me. This latter circumstance, touching my vanity and egotism, set me off completely. I gave vent to that oppressive rage which had been gathering in me all evening. Why does he bow to me humbly in the entrance when I am alone, and why does he now, when I am sitting with an itinerant singer, rudely locate himself near me ? I was infuriated with that boiling rage of indignation, which I love and even fan in myself whenever it besets me, because it acts soothingly upon me, and gives me, at least for a short time, a certain extraordinary pliability, energy, and power of all physical and moral faculties.

I jumped up from my seat.

" What are you laughing at ? ” 1 shouted at the waiter, feeling that my face was growing pale, and my lips were involuntarily jerking.

“ I am not laughing, I am just so,” replied the waiter, receding from me.

" No, you are laughing at this gentleman. What right have you to be here and to sit here, when there are guests in the room ? Don’t dare stay here ! ” I cried.

The porter got up with a growl and moved toward the door.

" What right have you to laugh at this gentleman and to sit near him when he is a guest and you are a waiter ? Why did you not laugh at me to-day at dinner, and seat yourself near me ? Is it because he is poorly clad and sings in the street ? is it ? while I wear good clothes ? He is poor, but he is a thousand times better than you, I am convinced of that, because he has not offended any one, while you are insulting him.”

" But I am not doing anything, please,” said my enemy, the waiter. " I do not keep him from sitting here.”

The waiter did not understand me, and my German speech was lost on him. The rude porter tried to take the waiter's part, but I attacked him with such violence that he pretended that he, too, did not understand me, and waved his hand. The hunchbacked dishwasher, either because she noticed my heated condition and was afraid of scandal, or because she shared my opinion, took my part, and, trying to stand between me and the porter, begged him to be quiet, saying that I was right, and asked me to calm myself. “Der Herr hat Recht; Sie haben Recht” she kept repeating.

The singer presented a most wretched, frightened appearance, and, evidently not comprehending the cause of my excitement or what it was I wanted, begged me to go away as soon as possible from there. But a malignant garrulity burned stronger and stronger within me. I recalled everything: the crowd which had laughed at him and the audience which had not given him anything, and I did not want to quiet down for anything in the world. I think that if the waiters and the porter had not been so yielding, I should have enjoyed a fight with them, or I should have whacked the defenceless English young lady with a stick over her head. If at that moment I had been at Sevastopol, it would have given me pleasure to rush headlong to cut and slash in the English trenches.

" Why did you take this gentleman and me to this and not to the other hall ? Eh ?” I pressed the porter, seizing his arm in order to keep him from escaping. " What right did you have to decide by looks that this gentleman must be in this and not in the other hall ? Are not all who pay equal in hotels ? Not only in a republic, but anywhere in the world ? Damn your republic ! You call this equality! You would not have dared to take the Englishmen to this room, those very Englishmen who had listened to this gentleman for nothing, that is, who each one of them stole from him a few centimes, which they ought to have given him. How did you dare to assign to us this hall ? "

“ The other hall is closed,” replied the porter.

"No," I shouted, “it is not true, the hall is not closed ! "

" Then you know better."

“ I know, I know that you are lying.”

The porter turned his shoulder to me.

" Ah, what is the use of talking ? ” he mumbled.

“No, not ‘what is the use of talking,’” I shouted, « but take me this minute to the other hall ! "

In spite of the request of the hunchbacked woman and the singer’s entreaties to go home, I called for the head waiter and went to the hall with my companion. When the head waiter heard my raving voice and saw my agitated face, he did not try to dispute with me, but said to me with contemptuous politeness that I could go wherever I pleased. I could not give the porter the lie, because he had concealed himself before I entered the hall.

The hall was really open and illuminated, and at one of the tables an Englishman and a lady were sitting at supper. Although we were shown to a separate table, I sat down with the dirty singer near the Englishman, and ordered the unfinished bottle brought in.

The Englishman and the lady looked, at first in surprise, and then in anger, at the little man, who was sitting near me more dead than alive ; they said something to each other, and she pushed away her plate, rustled with her silk dress, and both disappeared. I could see the Englishman beyond the glass door saying something angrily to a waiter, all the time pointing in our direction with his hand. The waiter moved up to the door and looked through it. I was expecting, with a pang of joy, that they would come to take us out, and that, at last, I should have a chance of pouring forth my indignation upon them. But, luckily, they left us alone, though then it displeased me.

The singer, who before had refused the wine, now hastened to empty the bottle in order to get away as soon as possible. Still, I thought, he feelingly thanked me for the treat. His tearful eyes became even more tearful and shining, and he uttered to me the strangest and most intricate phrase of gratitude. And yet the phrase, in which he said that if all honoured an artist the way I had done, he would be happy, and that he wished me all happiness, was very agreeable to me.

We walked together out into the vestibule. Here stood the waiters and my enemy, the porter, who, I thought, was complaining of me to them. They seemed all of them to look upon me as an insane man. I allowed the little man to come abreast with all that public, and

here I took off my cap with all the respectfulness which I was able to express in my person, and pressed his hand with the ossified and dried-up finger. The waiters acted as though they did not pay the least attention to me, and only one of them laughed a sardonic laugh.

When the singer, bowing himself out, disappeared in the darkness, I went up-stairs, wishing to forget in sleep all these impressions and the foolish, childlike anger which had so suddenly beset me. But, feeling myself too much agitated for sleep, I again went into the street, in order to walk around until I should become calmed down, and, I must confess, with the dim hope of finding an opportunity •of quarrelling with the porter, the waiter, or the Englishman, and of proving to them all their cruelty and, above everything else, their injustice. However, I met no one but the porter, who, upon seeing me, turned his back to me, and I began all sole alone to walk up and down the quay.

Here it is, the strange fate of poetry, I reflected, after quieting down a little. All love and seek it, wish and seek it alone in life, and nobody acknowledges its power, nobody esteems this highest good of the world, nor esteems and thanks those who give it to people. Ask whomever you wish, ask all the inmates of the Schweizerhof what the highest good in the world is, and all of them, or ninety-nine in every hundred, assuming a sardonic expression, will tell you that the highest good of the world is money.

" It may be this idea does not please you and does not comport with your exalted ideas," he will tell you, " but what is to be done, since human life is so constituted that money alone forms the happiness of man ? I could not help letting my reason see the world as it is," he will add, " that is, see the truth."

Wretched is your mind, wretched the happiness which you wish, and you yourself are a miserable being, not knowing what you need— Why have you all left your country, relatives, occupations, and money affairs, and congregated in the small Swiss town of Lucerne ? Why did you all pour forth this evening upon the balconies and in respectful silence listen to the song of a little mendicant ? And if he had chosen to sing longer, you would still have been silent and would have listened. What? For money, even for millions, could you be driven out of your country and collected in this small corner, in Lucerne ? For money could you all have been gathered on the balconies and be compelled for half an hour to stand in silence and motionless ?

No ! There is one thing which causes you to act and which eternally will move you more powerfully than all the other movers of life, and that is the need of poetry which you do not acknowledge, but which you feel, and will eternally feel, as long as there is anything human left in you. The word " poetry " is ridiculous to you, — you use it as a scornful reproach ; you admit the love for a poetical something in children and silly maidens, but still you laugh at them ; for yourselves you need something positive.

However, it is the children who look soundly at life ; they love and know what a man must love and what gives happiness, while life has so enmeshed and debauched you that you laugh at that which alone you love, and seek only that which you hate and which causes your unhappiness. You are so enmeshed that you do not understand the obligation which you have to the poor Tyrolean who has afforded you a pure enjoyment, and at the same time you feel obliged to humble yourselves before a lord for nothing, without gain or pleasure, and for some reason to sacrifice for him your peace and comfort. What nonsense ! What insoluble insipidity !

But it is not that which has most affected me this evening. Tins ignorance of that which gives happiness, this unconsciousness of poetical enjoyments I almost understand, or have become accustomed to, having frequently met with it [in life ; nor was the unconscious cruelty of the crowd anything new to me. Whatever the advocates of the popular spirit may say, the crowd may be a union of good people, but they touch each other only by their base, animal sides, and express only the weakness and cruelty of human nature. But how could you, children of a free, humane nation, you Christians, you, simply men, answer with coldness and ridicule to a pure enjoyment afforded you by an unfortunate mendicant ? But no, there are refuges for beggars in your country. There are no beggars, there must not be, and there must not be the feeling of compassion upon which beggardom is based.

which conceal or reveal long-known facts. But the incident which took place at Lucerne on the 7th of July seems to me to be entirely new and strange, and refers not to the eternal, bad sides of human nature, but to a certain epoch of social evolution. This is not a fact for the history of human actions, but for the history of progress and for civilization.

Why is this inhuman fact, which is impossible in any German, French, or Italian village, possible here, where civilization, freedom, and equality have been carried to the highest point, where the most civilized travellers from the most civilized nations congregate ? Why have these developed, humane people, who are in general capable of every honourable and humane work, no heartfelt human feeling for a personal good act? Why do these people, who in their parliament, their meetings, and their societies are greatly concerned about the condition of the unmarried Chinese in India, about the dissemination of Christianity and culture in Africa, about the foundation of societies for the betterment of the whole human race, not find in their souls the first, primitive feeling of man to man ? Is it possible they have not that feeling, and that its place is occupied by vanity, ambition, and selfishness, which guide them in their parliament, their meetings, and their societies ? Is it possible that the dissemination of a sensible, self-loving association of men, called civilization, destroys and contradicts the demands of an instinctive and loving association ? And is this that equality for which so much innocent blood has been spilled and so many crimes have been committed ? Can nations, like children, be happy in the

mere sound of the word equality?

Equality before the law ? Does the whole life of people take place in the sphere of the law ? Only one thousandth part of it is subject to law ; the other part takes place outside of it, in the sphere of social customs

and conceptions. In society the waiter is better dressed than the singer, and he with impunity insults him. I am better dressed than the waiter, and I with impunity insult the waiter. The porter regards himself as higher, and the singer as lower than the waiter ; when I joined the singer, he regarded himself as our equal, and became rude. I grew insolent to the porter, and the porter acknowledged himself to be lower than I. The waiter was insolent with the singer, and the singer considered himself lower than he. Is that a free, what people call a positively free, country, where there is even one citizen who is put in jail because he, doing nobody any harm, interfering with nobody, does the one thing he can do in order not to starve ?

An unfortunate, miserable being is man with his need of positive solutions, cast into this eternally moving, endless ocean of good and evil, of facts, of reflections and contradictions ! Men have been struggling and labouring for ages to segregate the good on one side, and the evil on the other. Ages pass, and no matter what the unprejudiced mind may have added to the scales of good and evil, the balance does not waver, and on each side there is just as much good as evil.

If man but learned not to judge and not to think sharply and positively, and not to give answers to questions given to him only that they might always remain questions ! If he only understood that every idea is both false and just! False — on account of its one-sidedness, on account of the impossibility of man’s embracing the whole truth ; and just — as an expression of one side of human tendencies. They have made subdivisions for themselves in this eternally moving, endless, endlessly mixed chaos of good and evil ; they have drawn imaginary Unes on this sea, and now are waiting for this sea to cleave apart, as though there were not millions of other subdivisions from an entirely different point of view, in another plane. It is true,— these new subdivisions are worked out by the ages, hut millions of these ages have passed and still will pass.

Civilization is good, barbarism evil ; freedom is good, enslavement evil. It is this imaginary knowledge which destroys the instinctive, most blissful primitive demands of good in human nature. And who will define to me what freedom is, what despotism, what civilization, what barbarism ? And where are the limits of the one and of the other ? In whose soul is this measure of good and evil so imperturbable that he can measure with it the fleeting, mixed facts ? Whose mind is so large as to embrace and weigh all the facts even of the immovable past? And who has seen a condition such that good and evil did not exist side by side in it ? And how do I know but that I see more of the one than of the other because I do not

stand in the proper place ? And who is able so completely to tear his mind away from life, even for a moment, independently to cast a bird’s-eye view upon it ?

There is one, but one impeccable leader, the Universal Spirit, who penetrates us all as one and each separately, who imparts to each the tendency toward that which is right ; that same Spirit, who orders the tree to grow toward the sun, orders the flower to cast seeds in the fall, and orders us unconsciously to press together.

This one, impeccable, blissful voice is drowned by the boisterous, hasty development of civilization. Who is the greater man and the greater barbarian, — the lord, who upon seeing the singer’s soiled garment, angrily rushed away from the table, who for his labours did not give him one millionth of his possessions, and who now, well-fed and sitting in a lighted, comfortable room, calmly judges of the affairs of China, finding all the murders committed there justified, — or the little singer, who, risking imprisonment, with a franc in his pocket, has for

twenty years harmlessly wandered through mountains and valleys, bringing consolation to people with his singing, who has been insulted, who was almost kicked out to-day, and who, tired, hungry, humiliated, went away to sleep somewhere on rotting straw ?

Just then I heard in the town, amid the dead silence of the night, far, far away, the guitar of the little man and his voice.

No, 1 involuntarily said to myself, you have no right to pity him and to be indignant at the lord’s well-being. Who has weighed the internal happiness which lies in the soul of each of these men ? He is sitting somewhere on a dirty threshold, looking into the gleaming moonlit heaven, and joyfully singing amid the soft, fragrant night ; in his heart there is no reproach, no malice, no regret. And who knows what is going on now in the souls of all these people, behind these rich, high walls ? Who knows whether there is in all of them as much careless, meek joy of life and agreement with the world as lives in the soul of this little man ?

Endless is the mercy and all-wisdom of Him who has permitted and has commanded all these contradictions to exist. Only to you, insignificant worm, who are boldly, unlawfully trying to penetrate His laws, His intentions, — only to you do they appear as contradictions. He meekly looks down from His bright, immeasurable height and enjoys the endless harmony in which you all move contradictorily and endlessly. In your pride you thought you could tear yourself away from the universal law. No, even you, with your petty little indignation at the waiters, even you have responded to the harmonious necessity of the eternal and the endless.