

MEMOIRS OF A MARKER

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It was about three o'clock. The following gentlemen were playing : the big guest (that's the way our people called him), the prince (the one that travels with him all the time), and then the whiskered gentleman, the little hussar, Oliver, the one that was an actor, and the Pan,<sup>1</sup> There was a good crowd of people.

The big guest was playing with the prince. I was just walking all around the table, with the rest in my hand, and counting : ten and forty-eight, twelve and forty-eight. You know what it is to be a marker : I had not had a bite in my mouth, and had not slept for two nights, still I had to keep calling out and taking out the balls. As I was counting, I looked around, and saw a new gentleman had come in through the door: he just looked, and looked, and then sat down on a sofa. All right.

" I wonder who he may be ? What kind of a fellow, I mean ? " was what I thought to myself.

He was neatly dressed, so neatly, as though the garments had just come from the tailor: checkered tricot trousers, fashionable coat, short plush waistcoat, and gold chain, with all kinds of things hanging down from it.

He was neatly dressed, and he himself looked neater still : he was slender, tall, hair curled toward the front,

i Polish and Little-Russian word, meaning "gentleman."

latest fashion, and his face white, with ruddy cheeks, - well, in short, a fine fellow.

Of course, in our business, we see a lot of people : big bugs, and all kinds of trash ; and so, though you are a marker, you learn to size up people, that is, in case you have some gumption in politics.

I looked at the gentleman, and I saw that he was sitting quietly and was not acquainted with any one, and his dress was the pink of perfection. So I thought to myself : " He is either a foreigner, one of those Englishmen, or some transient count. Though he looks young, he is a somebody." Oliver was sitting near him, and he even shied from him.

The game was finished ; the big one had lost, and he shouted to me :

"You," says he, " are lying. You are not counting right, – you are looking sidewise all the time."

He cursed, flung down the cue, and went away. Curse them ! He is in the habit of playing a fifty-rouble game with the prince, and here he has lost a bottle of Macon, and is out of sorts. Such is his character. Many a time he plays with the prince until two o'clock at night ; they don't put any money into the pocket, and I know that neither the one nor the other has any, and that they are only putting on.

" From twenty-five a corner," says he, " is it a go ? "

« It is ! "

Let me just yawn, or not put a ball right, – a man is not made of stone ! – then I catch it.

" We are not playing for chips, but for money ! "

This one gets after me worse than anybody else.

Well, all right. After the big one left, the prince turned to the new gentleman :

" Wouldn't you like to have a game with me ?"

" With pleasure," says he.

While he was sitting he looked a regular doll, and such an important man ; but the moment he got up and walked over to the table, he lost his courage, – not exactly lost his courage, but evidently he was not in spirits. Either he did not feel comfortable in his new clothes, or he was afraid because they were all looking on, – only there was not that go to him. He was walking somehow sidewise, and catching his trousers in the table pockets, and if he began to chalk the cue, he dropped the chalk. If he did make a ball, he kept looking around and blushing. Not so the prince : he was used to it. He chalked the cue and his hand, rolled up his sleeve, and smashed the balls into the pockets, small though he was.

They played two or three games, – I do not remember which, – when the prince put down the cue and said :

" Permit me to ask your name."

" Nekhlyudov," says he.

" Your father," says he, " commanded a corps ? "

" Yes," says he.

Then they began talking in French, and I could not understand them.

I suppose they went over their families.

" Au revoir," said the prince. " I am very glad to have made your acquaintance."

He washed his hands and went to get something to eat, while the other remained at the table with the cue, pushing the balls.

Of course, it is our business to be as rude to a new man as possible, so I began to pile up the balls. He blushed and said :

" May I play some more ? "

" Of course," says I ; " that is what a billiard-table is for."

At the same time I paid no attention to him, but put away the cues.

" Do you want to play with me ? "

" Of course, sir," says I.

He put down the balls.

" Shall it be a crawl ? "

" What is a crawl ? " says he.

" It's like this," says I, " you pay me half a rouble, and I crawl under the table."

Of course, not having seen such a thing, it seemed strange to him, and he laughed.

" All right," says he.

" Very well." So I say : " How much will you give me?"

" Do you play worse than I ? " says he.

" Naturally," says I, " there are few players here who can take it up with you."

We began to play. He really thought he was a great one : he banged the balls dreadfully. The Pan sat there and kept repeating all the time :

" Now that is a ball ! That is a hit ! "

But what was it ? It is true he hit the balls, but there was no calculation in them. As is proper, I lost the first game ; I crawled under the table, groaning. Then Oliver and the Pan jumped up from their places and struck the floor with the cues.

" Fine ! More ! " they cried. " More ! "

They were crying " More! " but the Pan would for half a rouble not only crawl under the table but under the Blue Bridge as well. He kept shouting :

" Fine ! But you have not yet wiped up all the dust ! "

I am Petrushka the marker, and, I think, everybody knows me. There was Tyurik, and now it is Petrushka the marker.

Of course I did not show my game : I lost another.

" I," says I, " cannot play with you, sir."

He laughed. Later, when I had won three games,— and he had forty-nine and I nothing, — I put the cue down on the table and said :

" Sir, shall you go the whole ? "

" What do you mean ? " says he.

" Either you owe me three roubles, or nothing."

" What," says he, " am I playing with you for money ? Fool ! "

He even blushed.

Very well. He lost the game.

" Enough," says he.

He drew out his pocketbook, — it was such a new one, bought in an English shop ; he opened it, and I saw he wanted to show off. It was chockful of money, — nothing but hundred-rouble bills.

« I have no small change here."

He fetched three roubles out of his purse.

" Here are two roubles for the games, and the rest is for you, to buy drinks with."

I thanked him most humbly. I saw he was a fine gentleman ! It would not hurt to crawl under the table for such a one. The pity was he would not play for money ; if he did, I should have managed to pull twenty or forty roubles out of him.

When the Pan saw the money which the young gentleman had, " Should you not like to play a game with me ? " says he. " You play so nicely." He approached him like a fox.

" No," says he, " excuse me; I have no time." And he went away.

I do not know who he really was, I mean the Pan. Somebody called him

Pan, and that name has remained with him ever since. He used to sit day in and day out in the billiard-room, looking on. He was not invited to any game; but he sat there, smoking a pipe which he carried with him. He played a clean game.

All right. Nekhlyudov came a second time, and a third time ; he began to come often. He would arrive in the morning and in the evening. The English game, pool, fifteen-ball game, – he learned everything. He grew bolder, became acquainted with everybody, and began to play a decent game. Of course, he was a young man, of a great family, with money, – and so everybody respected him. But he once had a quarrel with the big guest.

The whole thing started from mere trilles.

They were playing pool: the prince, the big guest, Nekhlyudov, Oliver, and somebody else. Nekhlyudov was standing near the stove and speaking with some one, and it was the big one's turn to play. It so happened that his ball was exactly opposite the stove ; it was a tight place, and he liked to play with a swinging stroke.

Either he did not see Nekhlyudov, or, maybe, he did it on purpose, only as he swung back to strike his ball, he gave Nekhlyudov an awful whack in the chest with the butt. The poor fellow just groaned. Well? He was so rude, – he did not even excuse himself. He went on playing and did not even look at him ; and he grumbled :

" What business has one to stand there ? I lost a ball through it. There is plenty of room elsewhere."

The other went up to him, and he was so pale, and he said to him politely, as though nothing had happened :

" You ought to ask my pardon first, sir. You have pushed me," says he.

" I do not feel like asking any pardon now. I ought to have won," says he, " and now," says he, " somebody else will make my ball."

So he again says to him :

" You must ask my pardon ! "

« Get away," says he. " Don't bother me ! "

And he kept looking at his ball.

Nekhlyudov went up closer to him, and took him by the arm.

" You are a boor, dear sir," says he.

Though he was slender and young, like a fair maiden, there was fight in him : his eyes burned, as though he wanted to eat him up. The big guest was a tall, strong man, and no match for Nekhlyudov.

" What ? " says he, " I am a boor ? "

He just shouted at him and raised his hand on him. Then all that were there seized their arms, and they were pulled away from each other.

They palavered, and then Nekhlyudov said :

" He must give me satisfaction, – he has insulted me."

" I do not want to hear anything about satisfaction, – he is a mere boy, and nothing more. I will pull his ears for him."

" If you do not wish to give me satisfaction," says he, " you are not a gentleman."

And he almost burst out weeping.

" You," says he, " are an urchin, and you can't insult me."

Well, they were taken apart, to different rooms, as is always done under the circumstances. Nekhlyudov and the prince were friends. " Go," says he, " for the Lord's sake, and persuade him – "

The prince went. The big one said :

" I," says he, " am not afraid of anything. I will have no explanations with an urchin. I won't, and that is the end of it."

Well, they spoke and spoke, and stopped ; but the big guest quit coming to our place.

What a rooster he was in respect to this matter, – how ambitious – I mean Nekhlyudov ; but he did not have much gumption in anything else. I remember once :

« Whom have you here ? the prince said to Nekhlyudov.

" Nobody," says he.

" How," says he, " nobody ? "

" Why should there be ? " says he.

" Why should there be ? "

" I," says he, " have lived so until now, so why can't I keep it up?"

" You did live so ? Impossible ! "

And he roared with laughter, and the whiskered gentleman roared, too. They just made fun of him.

" You mean to say, never ? " they said.

" Never ! "

They almost died with laughter. I immediately saw that they were making fun of him, and so I watched to see what would happen.

" Let us go there at once," said the prince.

" No, for nothing in the world," says he.

" Nonsense ! It is too ridiculous," says he. " Come ! " They drove away.

They came back about one o'clock. They sat down to supper. There were a lot of them, – the very finest gentlemen : Atänov, Prince Razin, Count Shustäkh, Mfr-tsov. And they all congratulated Nekhlyudov and laughed. They called me in, and I saw that they were very jolly.

" Congratulate the gentleman," they said.

" On what ? " says I.

What was it he said ? I do not remember whether he said imitation or initiation.

" I have the honour," says I, " to congratulate you."

He sat there, blushing and smiling. How they did laugh !

All right. Then they came to the billiard-room, and they were all so jolly; he walked over to the billiard-table, leaned over it, and said :

" You," says he, " find it funny, but I am sad. Why," says he, " did I do it ? I shall never in my life forgive you, prince," says he.

And he just burst out into tears. Of course, he did not know himself what he was saying. The prince walked over to him, smiling.

" Nonsense ! That will do ! Come, let us go home, Anatoli ! "

" I sha'n't go anywhere," says he. " Why did I do it ? " And he wept more than ever. He would not leave the table. That's what comes of a young man not being used to it –

And so he used to come often to our establishment. He once came with the prince and the whiskered gentleman who always went with the prince. The gentlemen called Inin Fedotka. He had such high cheek-bones, and he was so homely, but he was neatly dressed and travelled in a coach. I really can't make out why they liked him so much. " Fedotka here, Fedotka there," and they gave him to eat and drink,

and paid his bills. He was such a cheat : if he lost, he did not pay, but if he won, look out ! He had everything of the best – and he walked with the prince, linking arms with him.

" You," says he, " are lost without me. I am Fedot," says he, " like the rest I am not."

What a jester ! Very well. They arrived. They said :

" Let us three have a pool ! "

" All right," says he.

They began to play at three-rouble stakes. Nekhlyudov and the prince were talking together.

" You just see," says he, " what a pretty foot she has. No," says he, " not her foot, her braid is beautiful."

Of course, they paid no attention to the game, for they were talking together all the time. Fedotka kept his head level and rolled them off nicely, while they either missed or made fouls. He pocketed six roubles from each. He and the prince had God knows what kind of count between them, for they never paid each other, but Nekhlyudov drew out two green bills and handed them to him. " No," says he, " I will not take the money from you. Let us play a straight game : qui tout double, that –is, either double or nothing."

I placed the balls. Fedotka got the lead, and they began to play. Nekhlyudov scattered the balls, just to show off. At times he would hesitate at the game. " No," says he, "it is too easy." But Fedotka did not forget his advantage, and just waited for a chance. Of course, he did not at first show his game, and won a game as though by chance.

" Let us play for the whole," says he.

" All right."

He won again.

" It began with a trifle," says he. " I do not want to win so much from you. Does it go for the whole ? "

" It goes."

Whatever it was, fifty roubles was quite a sum and so Nekhlyudov began to ask, " Let us play for the whole." And so it went, further and further, growing larger and larger, until he had made 280 roubles on him. Fedotka knew what to do : he always lost a straight game, and won a double. The prince sat and looked on, and when he saw that it was getting serious, he said :

" Assez ! "

Not a bit of it ! They kept increasing the stakes.

Finally it went so far that Nekhlyudov owed him more than five hundred roubles. Fedotka put down the cue and said :

" Haven't you enough ? I am tired."

In reality he was ready to play until daybreak, provided there was money in it : of course, it was all calculation with him. The other wanted now to play worse than ever : " Let us have one more ! "

" No, upon my word, I am tired. Come," says he, " upstairs ; there you may have your revenge."

Up-stairs the gentlemen played cards.

Ever since Fedotka did him up, he began to come every day to our establishment. He would play a game or two, and then he would go up-stairs.

God knows what went on up-stairs, only he became a different man; but everything went right with Fedotka.

Formerly he used to come fashionably dressed, clean, his beard and hair nicely trimmed, but now he looked right only in the morning ; when he came back from upstairs it was hard to recognize him.

Once he came down that way with the prince, and he was pale, and his lips quivered, and he spoke excitedly.

" I will not permit him," says he, " to tell me (what did he call it) that I am not civil, or some such word, and that he will not play with me. I," says he, " have paid out five thousand to him, and so he might have been more careful before others."

" Come now," says the prince, " is it worth while to be angry with Fedotka?"

" No," says he, " I will not leave it so."

" Stop ! " says he. " How can you so lower yourself as to have an affair with Fedotka?"

" But there were strangers present."

" What of it if there were ? " says he. " If you want me to I will make him ask your forgiveness this very minute."

" No," says he.

Then they muttered something in French, and I could not understand them. Well? That very evening he again ate supper with Fedotka, and the old friendship was renewed.

All right. Once he came all alone.

" Well," says he, " do I play well ? "

Of course, it is our business to please everybody, so I said : " Very well !" But it was not well at all ; he just knocked the balls at random, without any calculation. From the time he had taken up with Fedotka, he began to play for money. Before, he would not play for the supper or for the champagne. The prince would say :

" Let us play for a bottle of champagne ! "

" No," says he, " I will order a bottle brought anyway. Ho there, bring us a bottle ! "

But now he played only for money. He came every day to our place ; either he played billiards with some one or he went up-stairs. So I began to think, Why should others profit by him, and not I ?

" Well, sir," I said to him, " you have not played with me for quite awhile."

So we began to play.

When I had won about ten half-roubles of him, I said :

" Would you like, sir, to play for the whole ? "

He was silent. He did not call me fool as the time before. And so we began to play, all the time for the whole amount, until I won about eighty roubles of him. Well ? He began to play with me every day. He would just wait for no one to be present, for before strangers he was, naturally, ashamed to play with the marker. Once he became quite excited, and he owed me about sixty roubles.

" Do you want," says he, " to play for the whole ? "

" It goes," says I.

I won.

" Hundred and twenty against hundred and twenty ? "

" It goes," says I.

I won once more.

"Two hundred and forty against two hundred and forty ? "

" Is it not a little too much ? " says I.

He was silent. We began to play ; again my game.

" Four hundred and eighty against four hundred and eighty ? "

I said :

" I do not wish to take advantage of you, sir. Let it be one hundred roubles, or else leave it as it is."

How he yelled out at me ! Otherwise he was such a meek man.

" Play, or don't play ! "

I saw there was nothing to do.

" Three hundred and eighty," says I, " if you please."

Of course, I lost on purpose.

I gave him forty points. He had fifty-two, and I thirty-six. He let himself loose on the yellow ball and made eighteen points. Mine was on the roll.

I hit the ball so that it should jump out; but no, it turned out a double. Again it was my game.

" Listen," says he, " Peter " (he did not call me Petrushka), " I cannot pay you the whole now ; but in two months I could pay you three thousand if it were necessary."

And he himself blushed dreadfully, and his voice trembled.

" All right, sir," says I.

He put away the cue. He walked up and down, and the perspiration just rolled down from him.

" Peter," says he, " let us play for the whole ! "

He almost wept as he said this.

I said :

" What use is there in playing, sir ! "

" Come, let us play ! "

He brought me a cue himself. I took the cue, and so threw all the balls down on the table so that they fell down on the floor, - of course I had to show off. I said to him :

" All right, sir ! "

He was in such a hurry that he himself lifted up a ball. I thought to myself : " I won't get the seven hundred roubles, so I might as well lose." I began to make blunders. Well ?

" Why," says he, " do you purposely play so badly ? "

His own hands were trembling ; and when a ball rolled toward a pocket, he opened wide his fingers, screwed up his mouth, and his head and hands stretched out toward the pocket. I said to him :

" You don't help the ball that way, sir."

All right. So he won this game, and I said :

" One hundred and eighty roubles are against you and one hundred and fifty games; but I want to get my supper."

I put up the cue and went out.

I sat down at a small table, near the door, and began to watch him to see that he would do. Well ?

He walked and walked, – I suppose he thought nobody saw him, – and kept pulling his hair, – and again he walked, and mumbled, and tore his hair dreadfully !

Then I did not see him for about eight days. He came once to the dining-room, and he looked so gloomy, and did not go to the billiard-room.

The prince noticed him :

" Come, let us have a game ! " says he.

" No," says he, " I will not play again."

" Come, now, let us have a game ! "

"No," says he, "I will not go. It will do you no good, if I go, but it will make me feel bad."

So he did not come for about ten days. Then, on a holiday, he came in his evening dress, – evidently he had been out calling, – and he remained the whole day ; he played all the time ; he came back the next and the third day– Everything went as of old. I wanted to play with him again.

" No," says he, " I will not play with you. The one hundred and eighty roubles which I owe you, you will get next month if you call at my house."

Very well. I called in a month.

" Upon my word," says he, " I have no money. Come back on Thursday ! "

I came on Thursday, – he had such fine apartments.

" Is the gentleman at home ? " says I.

" He is resting," they said.

" All right, I will wait."

He had a valet of his own ; he was such a gray-haired old man, – so simple and artless. We began to talk together.

" What," says he, " are we doing here ? My master has been squandering all his money, and there is no honour nor advantage for us from this St. Petersburg. As we were coming from the village we thought that we should be calling on princes, counts, and generals, as we used to do when the lady – the kingdom of heaven be hers – was alive ; we thought that we should get some regal maiden, with a dowry, and we should live hi right lordly fashion. But it turns out that we are only running from one restaurant to another – it's very bad ! Princess Rtishchev is an aunt of ours, and Prince Boro-týntsev is our grandfather. Well ? He was there only once, at Christmas, and otherwise does not show up there. The people just make fun of me : \* Your master,' they say, 'is not a bit like his father.' So I once said to him :

" ' Why, sir, do you not call on your aunt ? She is anxious to see you.'

" ' It is dull there, Demyan y ch,' says he.

" It is dreadful – all the pleasure he finds is in restaurants. If he only served, but no, that he won't do. He is doing nothing but playing cards, and so forth ; such things never lead to anything good – Oh, we are perishing, perishing for nothing ! The defunct lady – the kingdom of heaven be hers – has left us a very fine estate of more than three thousand souls, and there was more than three hundred thousand roubles' worth of timber. He has mortgaged everything, has sold the timber, ruined the estate, and there is nothing left. Without the mas-ter the superintendent is naturally more than the master. What does he care ? All he wants is to fill his pockets, if everything goes to the dogs. The other day two peasants came to complain in the name of the whole estate.

" ' He has completely ruined the estate,' they said.

" Well ? He read the complaint, gave the peasants ten roubles each, and said : ' I will soon be there myself. As soon as I get money,' says he, ' I will pay my debts, and then I will go to the country.'

" How can he pay what he owes, when we have been doing nothing but making debts ? This one winter which we have been here we have squandered eighty thousand at the very least ; now there is not a silver rouble in the house. All this comes from his virtue. He is such a simple master. It is this which ruins him so, ruins him so completely."

The old man almost wept.

He awoke at about eleven o'clock, and he called me in.

" They have not sent me any money," says he, " but it is not my fault. Shut the door," says he.

I shut the door.

" Here," says he, " take my watch or diamond scarf-pin, and pawn it. They will give you more than one hundred and eighty roubles for it, and when I get the money I will redeem it," says he.

" Well, sir, if you have no money, it can't be helped ;

I will take the watch. I will do it for you."

I saw that the watch was worth at least three hundred roubles.

All right. I pawned the watch for one hundred roubles, and brought him the receipt.

" You will owe me eighty roubles, and you can redeem the watch yourself."

He has been owing me these eighty roubles ever since.

And thus he began to come to our place every day. I do not know what kind of calculations they had, but he always came with the prince, or he went with Fedotka up-stairs to play. The three had some very queer accounts : now this one gave to that one, now that one to this one, and I could not make out who was owing whom.

He used to come to us for about two years in this manner. But he now looked quite different: he grew bold, and sometimes went so far as to borrow a rouble from me with which to pay the cabman ; and he played with the prince at a hundred roubles a game.

He now looked gloomy, lean, and yellow. When he came, he at once asked for a wine-glass of absinthe, a lunch of anchovy sandwiches, and port with them ; then he became more cheerful.

Once he came before dinner, during the Butter-week, and began to play with some hussar.

" Do you wish," says he, " to make the game interesting ? "

" I don't mind it," says he. " What shall it be ? "

" A bottle of Clos-Vougeot, if you wish."

" It goes."

All right. The hussar won the game, and they sat down to eat. When they were at the table, Nekhlyudov said :

" Simon ! A bottle of Clos-Vougeot ; be sure and have it well warmed."

Simon went away and brought the dinner, but not the bottle.

" Where is the wine ? "

Simon ran away and brought the roast.

" Let us have the wine," says he.

Simon was silent.

" Are you crazy ? We are finishing our dinner, and the wine is not yet here. Who would drink wine with the dessert ? "

Simon ran away.

" The proprietor," says he, " wants to see you."

He blushed all over, and jumped out from behind the table.

« What is it," says he, " that he wants ? "

The proprietor was standing at the door.

" I cannot trust you any more," says he, " if you do not pay me your bill."

« I told you," says he, " that I would pay you about the 1st."

" As you please, but I cannot give you on trust all Vie time, and receive nothing. As it is I lose," says he, " tens of thousands in debts."

" Don't say that, mon cher !" says he. " You may trust me. Send me a bottle, and I will try and pay you as soon as possible."

And he himself ran away.

" Why have they called you out ? " says the hussar.

" He asked me a certain thing."

" It would be a line thing," says the hussar, " to drink a glass of warm wine now."

" Well, Simon ? "

Aly Simon ran away. Again there was no wine, nothing. Pretty bad. He rushed away from the table, and came to me.

"For God's sake, Petrushka, let me have six roubles ! "

He looked beside himself.

" I have no money, upon my word, and, as it is, you owe me a great deal."

" I will give you forty for six," says he, " in a week."

" If I had any I should not dare refuse it to you ; but, upon my word, I have no money."

Well? He jumped away, set his teeth, clenched his fists, ran up and down the corridor like one mad, and banged his forehead.

" O Lord," says he, " what is this ? "

He did not even go back to the dining-room, but jumped into a carriage, and drove off.

How they laughed at him ! The hussar said :

" Where is the gentleman that has been dining with me ? "

" He has gone," they said to him.

" How gone ? What word did he leave ? "

" He did not leave any word. He just sat down in the carriage, and rode off."

i " He is a fine goose," says he.

Well, I thought that after such disgrace he would not come back. But no, he came back on the following evening. He went to the billiard-room, and brought with him some kind of a box. He took off his overcoat.

" Let us play," says he.

He scowled and looked angry.

We played a game.

" Enough," says he. " Bring me pen and paper ! I want to write a letter."

Without thinking much I brought some paper and put it on the table in the small room.

" It's all ready, sir," says I.

Very well. He sat down at the table. He kept writing and writing,

and muttering something all the time. Then he jumped up, with a frown :

" Go and see whether my carriage is there ! "

It was on a Friday of Butter-week when there were no guests present : they were all attending balls.

I went to find out about the carriage, but I had barely gone outside the door, when he called :

" Petrushka ! Petrushka ! " as though he were frightened.

I returned. I saw he stood up, as pale as a sheet, and looked at me.

" Have you called me, sir ? "

He was silent.

" What do you wish ? " says I.

He was silent.

" Oh, yes ! Let us play one more game," says he.

Very well. He won the game.

" Well," says he, " have I learned to play a good game ? "

" Yes," says I.

« That's it. Go now, and find out about the carriage ! " He himself walked up and down in the room.

Without thinking about anything, I went out on the porch. I saw that there was no carriage there, so I went back.

As I was walking back I heard a sound, as though some one had thumped with the cue. I walked into the billiard-room, and there was a strange odour there.

Lo, there he was lying on the floor, all in blood, and the pistol was thrown away near him. I was so frightened that I could not say a word.

He jerked and jerked his leg, and now stretched himself. Then he seemed to snore and began to spread himself out.

Why this misfortune happened to him, why he took his life, God alone knows. He left that piece of paper, otherwise I can't make it out at all.

Queer things happen in the world !

" God has given me everything which a man can wish : wealth, a name, intelligence, noble striving. I wanted to enjoy myself, and have trampled in the mud everything good that there was in me.

" I am not disgraced, not unhappy, have committed no crime ; but I have done something worse : I have killed my feelings, my reason, my youth.

" I am enmeshed in a dirty net, from which I cannot free myself, and to which I cannot become accustomed. I am constantly falling, falling, and I feel my fall and cannot stop.

" What has ruined me ? Did I have any strong passion which might justify me ? No.

" I have pleasant recollections !

" One terrible minute of oblivion, which I shall never forget, made me come to my senses. I was horrified when I saw what an immeasurable abyss divided me from what I wished to be and could be. In my imagination arose hopes, dreams, and thoughts of youth.

" Where are those bright thoughts of life, of eternity, of God, which used to fill my soul with such distinctness and force ? Where is the objectless power of love which with cheering heat warmed my soul ? • • • • •

" Oh, how good and happy I might have been, if I had continued on the path which, upon entering life, my fresh mind and childlike, genuine feelings had discovered ! More than once did I try to leave the rut in which my life was running, and to get back to this bright path. I said to myself, ' I will employ all the powers which I have,' and I could not. When I was left alone, I felt awkward and strange in regard to myself. When I was with others, I did not hear my inner voice at all, and I fell lower and lower.

" Finally I reached the terrible conviction that I could not rise, stopped thinking of it, and wanted to forget myself ; but hopeless repentance agitated me more strongly still. Then I was for the first time assailed by the thought of suicide.

" I used to think that the proximity of death would elevate my soul. I was mistaken. In fifteen minutes I shall be no more, and my view has not changed. I see, hear, think in the same way ; there is the same strange inconsistency, frailness, and frivolity in my thoughts."