

NIKOLAI LESKOV

LADY MACBETH
OF MTSENSK



■ RUSSIAN CLASSIC LITERATURE ■

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Nikolai Semyonovich Leskov

**Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk and
Other Stories / Леди Макбет
Мценского уезда и другие
повести. Книга для чтения на
английском языке
(Чтение в оригинале (Каро))**

В сборник вошли повести и рассказы Н. С. Лескова, русского классика XIX века, подарившего мировой литературе «Очарованного странника» и «Леди Макбет...», «Тупейного художника» и «Левшу».

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Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

Chapter One

In our parts such characters sometimes turn up that, however many years ago you met them, you can never recall them without an inner trembling. To the number of such characters belongs the merchant's wife Katerina Lvovna Izmailova, who once played out a terrible drama, after which our gentlefolk, in someone's lucky phrase, started calling her the *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

Katerina Lvovna was not born a beauty, but she was a woman of very pleasing appearance. She was only twenty-three years old; not tall, but shapely, with a neck as if carved from marble, rounded shoulders, a firm bosom, a fine, straight little nose, lively black eyes, a high and white brow, and very black, almost blue-black hair. She was from Tuskar in Kursk province and was given in marriage to our merchant Izmailov, not out of love or any sort of attraction, but just so, because Izmailov sent a matchmaker to propose, and she was a poor girl and could not choose her

suitors. The house of Izmailov was not the least in our town: they traded in white flour, kept a big rented mill in the district, had orchards outside town, and in town had a fine house. Generally, they were well-to-do merchants. Besides, the family was very small: the father-in-law, Boris Timofeich Izmailov, was already nearly eighty, a long-time widower; his son, Zinovy Borisych, Katerina Lvovna's husband, was a little over fifty; then there was Katerina Lvovna, and that was all. In the five years of Katerina Lvovna's marriage to Zinovy Borisych, she had had no children. Nor did Zinovy Borisych have children from his first wife, with whom he had lived for some twenty years before becoming a widower and marrying Katerina Lvovna. He thought and hoped that God might grant an heir to his merchant name and capital from his second marriage; but in that he was again unlucky with Katerina Lvovna.

This childlessness greatly distressed Zinovy Borisych, and not only Zinovy Borisych, but also old Boris Timofeich, and even Katerina Lvovna herself was much grieved by it. For one thing, exceeding boredom in the merchant's locked-up tower, with its high walls and watchdogs running

loose, had more than once filled the merchant's young wife with pining, to the point of stupefaction, and she would have been glad, God knows how glad, to nurse a little child; and for another thing, she was also sick of reproaches: "Why marry, what's the point of marrying; why bind a man's fate, barren woman?" – as if she really had committed some crime against her husband, and against her father-in-law, and against their whole honorable merchant family.

For all its ease and plenty, Katerina Lvovna's life in her father-in-law's house was most boring. She went visiting very little, and if she did go with her husband to call on his merchant friends, that was also no joy. They were all strict people: they watched how she sat, and how she walked, and how she stood. But Katerina Lvovna had an ardent nature, and when she had lived in poverty as a young girl, she had been accustomed to simplicity and freedom, running to the river with buckets, swimming under the pier in nothing but a shift, or throwing sunflower husks over the garden gate at some young fellow passing by. Here it was all different. Her father-in-law and husband got up as early as could be, had their tea

at six o'clock, and went about their business, while she dilly-dallied from room to room alone. It was clean everywhere, it was quiet and empty everywhere, icon lamps shone before the icons, and nowhere in the house was there a living sound, a human voice.

Katerina Lvovna would wander and wander about the empty rooms, start yawning with boredom, and climb the stairs to her marital bedroom in the small, high mezzanine. There, too, she sat, looked at how they hung up hemp or poured out flour by the storehouse – again she would start to yawn, and she was glad of it: she would doze off for an hour or two, then wake up – again the same Russian boredom, the boredom of a merchant's house, from which they say you could even happily hang yourself. Katerina Lvovna was not a lover of reading, and besides there were no books in their house except for the lives of the Kievan saints.

Katerina Lvovna lived a boring life in the rich house of her father-in-law during the five years of her marriage to her unaffectionate husband; but, as often happens, no one paid the slightest attention to this boredom of hers.

Chapter Two

In the sixth spring of Katerina Lvovna's marriage, the Izmailovs' mill dam burst. At that time, as if on purpose, a lot of work had been brought to the mill, and the breach proved enormous: water went under the lower sill, and to stop it up slapdash was impossible. Zinovy Borisych drove people to the mill from all around and sat there constantly himself; the business in town was managed by the old man alone, and Katerina Lvovna languished at home for whole days as alone as could be. At first she was still more bored without her husband, but then it came to seem even better to her: she felt freer by herself. Her heart had never really gone out to him, and without him there was at least one less commander over her.

Once Katerina Lvovna was sitting at the window on her upper floor, yawning, yawning, thinking of nothing in particular, and she finally felt ashamed to be yawning. And the weather outside was so wonderful: warm, bright, cheerful, and through the green wooden lattice of the garden various birds could be seen flitting from

branch to branch in the trees.

“What in fact am I yawning for?” thought Katerina Lvovna. “I might at least get up and go for a walk in the yard or a stroll in the garden.”

Katerina Lvovna threw on an old damask jacket and went out.

Outside it was so bright and the air was so invigorating, and in the gallery by the storehouses there was such merry laughter.

“What are you so glad about?” Katerina Lvovna asked her father-in-law’s clerks.

“You see, dearest Katerina Lvovna, we’ve been weighing a live sow,” an old clerk replied.

“What sow?”

“This sow Aksinya here, who gave birth to a son Vassily and didn’t invite us to the christening,” a fine fellow with a handsome, impudent face framed in jet-black curls and a barely sprouting beard told her boldly and merrily.

At that moment the fat mug of the ruddy cook Aksinya peeked out of a flour tub hung on a balance beam.

“Fiends, sleek-sided devils,” the cook swore, trying to catch hold of the iron beam and climb out of the swinging tub.

“Weighs two hundred and fifty pounds before dinner, and once she’s eaten a load of hay, there won’t be weights enough,” the handsome young fellow again explained, and, overturning the tub, he dumped the cook out onto the sacking piled in the corner.

The woman, cursing playfully, began putting herself to rights.

“Well, and how much might I weigh?” Katerina Lvovna joked, and, taking hold of the ropes, she stepped onto the plank.

“A hundred and fifteen pounds,” the same handsome young Sergei said, throwing weights onto the balance. “Amazing!”

“What’s amazing?”

“That you weigh over a hundred pounds, Katerina Lvovna. I reckoned a man could carry you around in his arms the whole day and not get tired out, but only feel the pleasure it gave him.”

“What, you mean I’m not a human being or something? You’d get tired for sure,” Katerina Lvovna replied, blushing slightly, not used to such talk and feeling a sudden surge of desire to loosen up and speak her fill of merry and playful words.

“God, no! I’d carry you all the way to happy Araby,” Sergei replied to her remark.

“Your reckoning’s off, young fellow,” said the little peasant doing the pouring. “What is it makes us heavy? Is it our body gives us weight? Our body, my dear man, means nothing in the scales: our strength, it’s our strength gives us weight – not the body!”

“In my girlhood I was awfully strong,” Katerina Lvovna said, again not restraining herself. “It wasn’t every man who could beat me.”

“Well, then, your hand please, ma’am, if that’s really true,” the handsome fellow asked.

Katerina Lvovna became embarrassed but held out her hand.

“Aie, the ring, it hurts, let go!” Katerina Lvovna cried, when Sergei pressed her hand in his, and she shoved him in the chest with her free hand.

The young man let go of his mistress’s hand, and her shove sent him flying two steps back.

“Mm-yes, and you reckoned she’s just a woman,” the little peasant said in surprise.

“Then suppose we try wrestling,” Sergei retorted, tossing back his curls.

“Well, go on,” replied Katerina Lvovna, brightening up, and she cocked her elbows.

Sergei embraced the young mistress and pressed her firm breasts to his red shirt. Katerina Lvovna was just trying to move her shoulders, but Sergei lifted her off the floor, held her in his arms, squeezed her, and gently sat her down on the overturned measuring tub.

Katerina Lvovna did not even have time to show her vaunted strength. Getting up from the tub, red as could be, she straightened the jacket that had fallen from her shoulders and quietly started out of the storehouse, but Sergei coughed dashingly and shouted:

“Come on, you blessed blockheads! Pour, look sharp, get a move on; if there’s a plus, the better for us.”

It was as if he had paid no attention to what had just happened.

“He’s a skirt-chaser, that cursed Seryozhka,” the cook Aksinya was saying as she trudged after Katerina Lvovna. “The thief’s got everything – the height, the face, the looks. Whatever woman you like, the scoundrel knows straight off how to cajole her, and he cajoles her and leads her into sin.

And he's fickle, the scoundrel, as fickle as can be!"

"And you, Aksinya..." said the young mistress, walking ahead of her, "that is, your boy, is he alive?"

"He is, dearest, he is – what could happen to him? Whenever they're not wanted, they live."

"Where did you get him?"

"Ehh, just from fooling around – you live among people after all – just from fooling around."

"Has he been with us long, this young fellow?"

"Who? You mean Sergei?"

"Yes."

"About a month. He used to work for the Kopchonovs, but the master threw him out." Aksinya lowered her voice and finished: "They say he made love to the mistress herself... See what a daredevil he is!"

Chapter Three

A warm milky twilight hung over the town. Zinovy Borisych had not yet returned from the dam. The father-in-law, Boris Timofeich, was also not at home: he had gone to a friend's name day party and had even told them not to expect him for supper. Katerina Lvovna, having nothing to do, had an early meal, opened the window in her room upstairs, and, leaning against the window frame, was husking sunflower seeds. The people in the kitchen had supper and went their ways across the yard to sleep: some to the sheds, some to the storehouses, some up into the fragrant haylofts. The last to leave the kitchen was Sergei. He walked about the yard, unchained the watchdogs, whistled, and, passing under Katerina Lvovna's window, glanced at her and made a low bow.

"Good evening," Katerina Lvovna said softly to him from her lookout, and the yard fell silent as a desert.

"Mistress!" someone said two minutes later at Katerina Lvovna's locked door.

"Who is it?" Katerina Lvovna asked,

frightened.

“Please don’t be frightened: it’s me, Sergei,” the clerk replied.

“What do you want, Sergei?”

“I have a little business with you, Katerina Lvovna: I want to ask a small thing of your honor; allow me to come in for a minute.”

Katerina Lvovna turned the key and let Sergei in.

“What is it?” she asked, going back to the window.

“I’ve come to you, Katerina Lvovna, to ask if you might have some book to read. I’m overcome with boredom.”

“I have no books, Sergei: I don’t read them,” Katerina Lvovna replied.

“Such boredom!” Sergei complained.

“Why should you be bored?”

“For pity’s sake, how can I not be bored? I’m a young man, we live like in some monastery, and all I can see ahead is that I may just waste away in this solitude till my dying day. It sometimes even leads me to despair.”

“Why don’t you get married?”

“That’s easy to say, mistress – get married!

Who can I marry around here? I'm an insignificant man: no master's daughter will marry me, and from poverty, as you're pleased to know yourself, Katerina Lvovna, our kind are all uneducated. As if they could have any proper notion of love! Just look, if you please, at what notion there is even among the rich. Now you, I might say, for any such man as had feeling in him, you would be a comfort all his own, but here they keep you like a canary in a cage."

"Yes, it's boring for me," escaped Katerina Lvovna.

"How not be bored, mistress, with such a life! Even if you had somebody on the side, as others do, it would be impossible for you to see him."

"Well, there you're... it's not that at all. For me, if I'd had a baby, I think it would be cheerful with the two of us."

"As for that, if you'll allow me to explain to you, mistress, a baby also happens for some reason, and not just so. I've lived among masters for so many years now, and seen what kind of life women live among merchants, don't I also understand? As the song goes: 'Without my dearie, life's all sad and dreary,' and that dreariness, let me

explain to you, Katerina Lvovna, wrings my own heart so painfully, I can tell you, that I could just cut it out of my breast with a steel knife and throw it at your little feet. And it would be easier, a hundred times easier for me then...”

Sergei’s voice trembled.

“What are you doing talking to me about your heart? That’s got nothing to do with me. Go away...”

“No, please, mistress,” said Sergei, trembling all over and taking a step towards Katerina Lvovna. “I know, I see very well and even feel and understand, that it’s no easier for you than for me in this world; except that now,” he said in the same breath, “now, for the moment, all this is in your hands and in your power.”

“What? What’s that? What have you come to me for? I’ll throw myself out the window,” said Katerina Lvovna, feeling herself in the unbearable power of an indescribable fear, and she seized hold of the windowsill.

“Oh, my life incomparable, why throw yourself out?” Sergei whispered flippantly, and, tearing the young mistress from the window, he took her in a firm embrace.

“Oh! Oh! Let go of me,” Katerina Lvovna moaned softly, weakening under Sergei’s hot kisses, and involuntarily pressing herself to his powerful body.

Sergei picked his mistress up in his arms like a child and carried her to a dark corner.

A hush fell over the room, broken only by the measured ticking of her husband’s pocket watch, hanging over the head of Katerina Lvovna’s bed; but it did not interfere with anything.

“Go,” said Katerina Lvovna half an hour later, not looking at Sergei and straightening her disheveled hair before a little mirror.

“Why should I leave here now?” Sergei answered her in a happy voice.

“My father-in-law will lock the door.”

“Ah, my soul, my soul! What sort of people have you known, if a door is their only way to a woman? For me there are doors everywhere – to you or from you,” the young fellow replied, pointing to the posts that supported the gallery.

Chapter Four

Zinovy Borisych did not come home for another week, and all that week, every night till broad daylight, his wife made merry with Sergei.

During those nights in Zinovy Borisych's bedroom, much wine from the father-in-law's cellar was drunk, and many sweetmeats were eaten, and many were the kisses on the mistress's sugary lips, and the toyings with black curls on the soft pillow. But no road runs smooth forever; there are also bumps.

Boris Timofeich was not sleepy: the old man wandered about the quiet house in a calico night-shirt, went up to one window, then another, looked out, and the red shirt of the young fellow Sergei was quietly sliding down the post under his daughter-in-law's window. There's news for you! Boris Timofeich leaped out and seized the fellow's legs. Sergei swung his arm to give the master a hearty one on the ear, but stopped, considering that it would make a big to-do.

"Out with it," said Boris Timofeich. "Where have you been, you thief you?"

"Wherever I was, I'm there no longer, Boris

Timofeich, sir,” replied Sergei.

“Spent the night with my daughter-in-law?”

“As for where I spent the night, master, that I do know, but you listen to what I say, Boris Timofeich: what’s done, my dear man, can’t be undone; at least don’t bring disgrace on your merchant house. Tell me, what do you want from me now? What satisfaction would you like?”

“I’d like to give you five hundred lashes, you serpent,” replied Boris Timofeich.

“The guilt is mine – the will is yours,” the young man agreed. “Tell me where to go, and enjoy yourself, drink my blood.”

Boris Timofeich led Sergei to his stone larder and lashed him with a whip until he himself had no strength left. Sergei did not utter a single moan, but he chewed up half his shirtsleeve with his teeth.

Boris Timofeich abandoned Sergei to the larder until the mincemeat of his back healed, shoved a clay jug of water at him, put a heavy padlock on the door, and sent for his son.

But to go a hundred miles on a Russian country road is not a quick journey even now, and for Katerina Lvovna to live an extra hour without

Sergei had already become intolerable. She suddenly unfolded the whole breadth of her awakened nature and became so resolute that there was no stopping her. She found out where Sergei was, talked to him through the iron door, and rushed to look for the keys. "Let Sergei go, papa" – she came to her father-in-law.

The old man simply turned green. He had never expected such insolent boldness from his sinful but until then always obedient daughter-in-law.

"What do you mean, you such-and-such," he began shaming Katerina Lvovna.

"Let him go," she said. "I swear on my conscience, there's been nothing bad between us yet."

"Nothing bad!" he said, gnashing his teeth. "And what were you doing during the nights? Plumping up your husband's pillows?"

But she kept at it: "Let him go, let him go."

"In that case," said Boris Timofeich, "here's what you'll get: once your husband comes, you honest wife, we'll whip you in the stable with our own hands, and I'll send that scoundrel to jail tomorrow."

So Boris Timofeich decided; but his decision was not to be realized.

Chapter Five

In the evening, Boris Timofeich ate a bit of buckwheat kasha with mushrooms and got heartburn; then suddenly there was pain in the pit of his stomach; he was seized with terrible vomiting, and towards morning he died, just as the rats died in his storehouses, Katerina Lvovna having always prepared a special food for them with her own hands, using a dangerous white powder entrusted to her keeping.

Katerina Lvovna delivered her Sergei from the old man's stone larder and, with no shame before people's eyes, placed him in her husband's bed to rest from her father-in-law's beating; and the father-in-law, Boris Timofeich, they buried without second thoughts, according to the Christian rule. Amazingly enough, no one thought anything of it: Boris Timofeich had died, died from eating mushrooms, as many had died from eating them. They buried Boris Timofeich hastily, without even waiting for his son, because the weather was warm, and the man sent to the mill

for Zinovy Borisych had not found him there. He had had the chance to buy a woodlot cheaply another hundred miles away: he had gone to look at it and had not properly told anyone where he was going.

Having settled this matter, Katerina Lvovna let herself go entirely. She had not been a timid one before, but now there was no telling what she would think up for herself; she strutted about, gave orders to everyone in the house, and would not let Sergei leave her side. The servants wondered about it, but Katerina Lvovna's generous hand managed to find them all, and the wondering suddenly went away. "The mistress is having an intrigue with Sergei, that's all," they figured. "It's her business, she'll answer for it."

Meanwhile, Sergei recovered, unbent his back, and, again the finest of fellows, a bright falcon, walked about beside Katerina Lvovna, and once more they led a most pleasant life. But time raced on not only for them: the offended husband, Zinovy Borisych, was hurrying home after his long absence.

Chapter Six

In the yard after lunch it was scorching hot, and the darting flies were unbearably annoying. Katerina Lvovna closed the bedroom shutters, covered the window from inside with a woolen shawl, and lay down to rest with Sergei on the merchant's high bed. Katerina Lvovna sleeps and does not sleep, she is in some sort of daze, her face is bathed in sweat, and her breathing is hot and heavy. Katerina Lvovna feels it is time for her to wake up, time to go to the garden and have tea, but she simply cannot get up. At last the cook came and knocked on the door: "The samovar's getting cold under the apple tree," she said. Katerina Lvovna turned over with effort and began to caress the cat. And the cat goes rubbing himself between her and Sergei, and he's so fine, gray, big, and fat as can be... and he has whiskers like a village headman. Katerina Lvovna feels his fluffy fur, and he nuzzles her with his nose: he thrusts his blunt snout into her resilient breast and sings a soft song, as if telling her of love. "How did this tomcat get here?" Katerina Lvovna thinks. "I've set cream on the windowsill: the vile

thing's sure to lap it up. He should be chased out," she decided and was going to grab him and throw him out, but her fingers went through him like mist. "Where did this cat come from anyway?" Katerina Lvovna reasons in her nightmare. "We've never had any cat in our bedroom, and look what a one has got in!" She again went to take hold of him, and again he was not there. "Oh, what on earth is this? Can it really be a cat?" thought Katerina Lvovna. She was suddenly dumbstruck, and her drowsiness and dreaming were completely driven away. Katerina Lvovna looked around the room – there is no cat, there is only handsome Sergei lying there, pressing her breast to his hot face with his powerful hand.

Katerina Lvovna got up, sat on the bed, kissed Sergei, kissed and caressed him, straightened the rumpled featherbed, and went to the garden to have tea; and the sun had already dropped down quite low, and a wonderful, magical evening was descending upon the thoroughly heated earth.

"I slept too long," Katerina Lvovna said to Aksinya as she seated herself on the rug under the blossoming apple tree to have tea. "What could it mean, Aksinyushka?" she asked the cook,

wiping the saucer with a napkin herself.

“What’s that, my dear?”

“It wasn’t like in a dream, but a cat kept somehow nudging into me wide awake.”

“Oh, what are you saying?”

“Really, a cat nudging.”

Katerina Lvovna told how the cat was nudging into her.

“And why were you caressing him?”

“Well, that’s just it! I myself don’t know why I caressed him.”

“A wonder, really!” the cook exclaimed.

“I can’t stop marveling myself.”

“It’s most certainly about somebody sidling up to you, or something else like that.”

“But what exactly?”

“Well, what exactly – that’s something nobody can explain to you, my dear, what exactly, only there will be something.”

“I kept seeing a crescent moon in my dream and then there was this cat,” Katerina Lvovna went on.

“A crescent moon means a baby.”

Katerina Lvovna blushed.

“Shouldn’t I send Sergei here to your honor?”

Aksinya hazarded, offering herself as a confidante.

“Well, after all,” replied Katerina Lvovna, “you’re right, go and send him: I’ll have tea with him here.”

“Just what I say, send him here,” Aksinya concluded, and she waddled duck-like to the garden gate.

Katerina Lvovna also told Sergei about the cat.

“Sheer fantasy,” replied Sergei.

“Then why is it, Seryozha, that I’ve never had this fantasy before?”

“There’s a lot that never was before! Before I used just to look at you and pine away, but now – ho-ho! – I have your whole white body.”

Sergei embraced Katerina Lvovna, spun her in the air, and playfully landed her on the fluffy rug.

“Oh, my head is spinning!” said Katerina Lvovna. “Seryozha, come here; sit beside me,” she called, lying back and stretching herself out in a luxurious pose.

The young fellow, bending down, went under the low apple tree, all bathed in white flowers, and sat on the rug at Katerina Lvovna’s feet.

“So you pined for me, Seryozha?”

“How I pined!”

“How did you pine? Tell me about it.”

“How can I tell about it? Is it possible to describe how you pine? I was heartsick.”

“Why is it, Seryozha, that I didn’t feel you were suffering over me? They say you can feel it.”

Sergei was silent.

“And why did you sing songs, if you were longing for me? Eh? Didn’t I hear you singing in the gallery?” Katerina Lvovna went on asking tenderly.

“So what if I sang songs? A mosquito also sings all his life, but it’s not for joy,” Sergei answered drily.

There was a pause. Katerina Lvovna was filled with the highest rapture from these confessions of Sergei.

She wanted to talk, but Sergei sulked and kept silent.

“Look, Seryozha, what paradise, what paradise!” Katerina Lvovna exclaimed, looking through the dense branches of the blossoming apple tree that covered her at the clear blue sky in which there hung a fine full moon.

The moonlight coming through the leaves and

flowers of the apple tree scattered the most whimsical bright spots over Katerina Lvovna's face and whole recumbent body; the air was still; only a light, warm breeze faintly stirred the sleepy leaves and spread the subtle fragrance of blossoming herbs and trees. There was a breath of something languorous, conducive to laziness, sweetness, and obscure desires.

Receiving no answer, Katerina Lvovna fell silent again and went on looking at the sky through the pale pink apple blossoms. Sergei, too, was silent; only he was not interested in the sky. His arms around his knees, he stared fixedly at his boots.

A golden night! Silence, light, fragrance, and beneficent, vivifying warmth. Far across the ravine, beyond the garden, someone struck up a resounding song; by the fence, in the bird-cherry thicket, a nightingale trilled and loudly throbbed; in a cage on a tall pole a sleepy quail began to rave, and a fat horse sighed languidly behind the stable wall, and outside the garden fence a merry pack of dogs raced noiselessly across the green and disappeared into the dense black shadow of the half-ruined old salt depots.

Katerina Lvovna propped herself on her elbow and looked at the tall garden grass; and the grass played with the moonbeams, broken up by the flowers and leaves of the trees. It was all gilded by these intricate bright spots, which flashed and trembled on it like live, fiery butterflies, or as if all the grass under the trees had been caught in a lunar net and were swaying from side to side.

“Ah, Seryozhechka, how lovely!” Katerina Lvovna exclaimed, looking around.

Sergei looked around indifferently.

“Why are you so joyless, Seryozha? Or are you already tired of my love?”

“Why this empty talk!” Sergei answered drily, and, bending down, he lazily kissed Katerina Lvovna.

“You’re a deceiver, Seryozha,” Katerina Lvovna said jealously, “you’re insubstantial.”

“Such words don’t even apply to me,” Sergei replied in a calm tone.

“Then why did you kiss me that way?”

Sergei said nothing at all.

“It’s only husbands and wives,” Katerina Lvovna went on, playing with his curls, “who shake the dust off each other’s lips like that. Kiss

me so that these young apple blossoms over us fall to the ground. Like this, like this," Katerina Lvovna whispered, twining around her lover and kissing him with passionate abandon.

"Listen to what I tell you, Seryozha," Katerina Lvovna began a little later. "Why is it that the one and only word they say about you is that you're a deceiver?"

"Who's been yapping about me like that?"

"Well, people talk."

"Maybe I deceived the unworthy ones."

"And why were you fool enough to deal with unworthy ones? With unworthy ones there shouldn't be any love."

"Go on, talk! Is that sort of thing done by reasoning? It's all temptation. You break the commandment with her quite simply, without any of these intentions, and then she's there hanging on your neck. That's love for you!"

"Now listen, Seryozha! How it was with those others I don't know and don't want to know; only since you cajoled me into this present love of ours, and you know yourself that I agreed to it as much by my own will as by your cunning, if you deceive me, Seryozha, if you exchange me for

anybody else, no matter who, then – forgive me, friend of my heart – I won't part with you alive.”

Sergei gave a start.

“But Katerina Lvovna, my bright light!” he began. “Look at how things are with us. You noticed just now that I'm pensive today, but you don't consider how I could help being pensive. It's like my whole heart's drowned in clotted blood!”

“Tell me, Sergei, tell me your grief.”

“What's there to tell? Right now, first off, with God's blessing, your husband comes back, and you, Sergei Filippych, off with you, take yourself to the garden yard with the musicians, and watch from under the shed how the candle burns in Katerina Lvovna's bedroom, while she plumps up the featherbed and goes to sleep with her lawful Zinovy Borisych.”

“That will never be!” Katerina Lvovna drawled gaily and waved her hand.

“How will it never be? It's my understanding that anything else is even quite impossible for you. But I, too, have a heart in me, Katerina Lvovna, and I can see my suffering.”

“Ah, well, enough about all that.”

Katerina Lvovna was pleased with this expression of Sergei's jealousy, and she laughed and again started kissing him.

"And to repeat," Sergei went on, gently freeing his head from Katerina Lvovna's arms, bare to the shoulders, "and to repeat, I must say that my most insignificant position has made me consider this way and that way more than once and maybe more than a dozen times. If I were, so to speak, your equal, a gentleman or a merchant, never in my life would I part with you, Katerina Lvovna. But as it is, consider for yourself, what sort of man am I next to you? Seeing now how you're taken by your lily-white hands and led to the bedroom, I'll have to endure it all in my heart, and maybe I'll turn into a man who despises himself forever. Katerina Lvovna! I'm not like those others who find it all the same, so long as they get enjoyment from a woman. I feel what a thing love is and how it sucks at my heart like a black serpent."

"Why do you keep talking to me about all this?" Katerina Lvovna interrupted him.

She felt sorry for Sergei.

"Katerina Lvovna! How can I not talk about it?"

How? When maybe it's all been explained to him and written to him already, and maybe in no great space of time, but even by tomorrow there'll be no trace of Sergei left on the premises?"

"No, no, don't speak of it, Seryozha! Never in the world will it happen that I'm left without you," Katerina Lvovna comforted him with the same caresses. "If things start going that way... either he or I won't live, but you'll stay with me."

"There's no way that can follow, Katerina Lvovna," Sergei replied, shaking his head mournfully and sadly. "I'm not glad of my own life on account of this love. I should have loved what's worth no more than me and been content with it. Can there be any permanent love between us? Is it any great honor for you having me as a lover? I'd like to be your husband before the pre-eternal holy altar: then, even considering myself as always lesser than you, I could still show everybody publicly how I deserve my wife by my honoring her..."

Katerina Lvovna was bemused by these words of Sergei, by this jealousy of his, by this wish of his to marry her – a wish that always pleases a

woman, however brief her connection with the man before marriage. Katerina Lvovna was now ready, for the sake of Sergei, to go through fire, through water, to prison, to the cross. He made her fall so in love with him that her devotion to him knew no measure. She was out of her mind with happiness; her blood boiled, and she could no longer listen to anything. She quickly stopped Sergei's lips with her palm and, pressing his head to her breast, said:

“Well, now I know that I'm going to make a merchant of you and live with you in the most proper fashion. Only don't upset me for nothing, while things still haven't gotten there.”

And again there were kisses and caresses.

The old clerk, asleep in the shed, began to hear through his sound sleep, in the stillness of the night, now whispering and quiet laughter, as if mischievous children were discussing some wicked way to mock a feeble old man; now ringing and merry guffaws, as if lake mermaids were tickling somebody. It was all Katerina Lvovna frolicking and playing with her husband's young clerk, basking in the moonlight and rolling on the soft rug. White young blossoms

from the leafy apple tree poured down on them, poured down, and then stopped pouring down. Meanwhile, the short summer night was passing; the moon hid behind the steep roofs of the tall storehouses and looked askance at the earth, growing dimmer and dimmer; a piercing cat duet came from the kitchen roof, then spitting, angry snarling, after which two or three cats, losing hold, tumbled noisily down a bunch of boards leaning against the roof.

“Let’s go to sleep,” Katerina Lvovna said slowly, as if worn out, getting up from the rug and, just as she had lain there, in nothing but her shift and white petticoat, she went off across the quiet, the deathly quiet merchant’s yard, and Sergei came behind her carrying the rug and her blouse, which she had thrown off during their mischief-making.

Chapter Seven

As soon as Katerina Lvovna blew out the candle and lay down, completely undressed, on the soft featherbed, sleep drew its cloak over her head. Having had her fill of play and pleasure, Katerina Lvovna fell asleep so soundly that her leg sleeps and her arm sleeps; but again she hears through her sleep how the door seems to open again and last night's cat drops like a heavy lump onto the bed.

"What, really, is this punishment with the cat?" the tired Katerina Lvovna reasoned. "I just now locked the door on purpose, with my own hands, the window is shut, and he's here again. I'll throw him out right now." Katerina Lvovna went to get up, but her sleepy arms and legs refuse to serve her; and the cat walks all over her, and purrs in such a peculiar way, as if he were speaking human words. Katerina Lvovna even got gooseflesh all over.

"No," she thinks, "the only thing to do is make sure to bring some holy water to bed tomorrow, because this peculiar cat has taken to me."

But the cat purrs in her ear, buries his snout,

and then speaks clearly: "What sort of cat am I! As if I'm a cat! It's very clever of you, Katerina Lvovna, to reason that I'm not a cat at all, but the distinguished merchant Boris Timofeich. Only I'm feeling bad now, because my guts are all burst inside me from my daughter-in-law's little treat. That's why I've been reduced down like this," he purrs, "and now seem like a cat to those with little understanding of who I really am. Well, how's life going for you, Katerina Lvovna? Are you keeping faithfully to your law? I've come from the cemetery on purpose to see how you and Sergei Filippyich warm your husband's bed. Purr-purr, but I can't see anything. Don't be afraid of me: you see, my eyes rotted out from your little treat. Look into my eyes, my friend, don't be afraid!"

Katerina Lvovna looked and screamed to high heaven. Again the cat is lying between her and Sergei Filippyich, and the head of this cat Boris Timofeich is as big as the dead man's, and in place of eyes there are two fiery circles spinning, spinning in opposite directions!

Sergei woke up, calmed Katerina Lvovna, and fell asleep again; but sleep had totally deserted

her – luckily.

She lies with open eyes and suddenly hears a noise as if someone has climbed the gate in the yard. Now the dogs come rushing, then quiet down – must have started fawning. Now another minute passes, and the iron latch clicks, and the door opens. “Either I’m imagining it all, or it’s my Zinovy Borisych come home, because the door’s been opened with the spare key,” thought Katerina Lvovna, and she hurriedly gave Sergei a shove.

“Listen, Seryozha,” she said, and she propped herself on her elbow and pricked up her ears.

Someone was indeed coming up the stairs, stepping carefully on one foot after the other, approaching the locked door of the bedroom.

Katerina Lvovna quickly leaped out of bed in nothing but her shift and opened the window. At the same moment, barefoot Sergei jumped out onto the gallery and twined his legs around the post, which he had more than once used to climb down from his mistress’s bedroom.

“No, don’t, don’t! Lie down here... don’t go far,” Katerina Lvovna whispered and threw his shoes and clothes out to him, and herself darted

back under the blanket and lay waiting.

Sergei obeyed Katerina Lvovna: he did not slide down the post, but huddled on the gallery under a bast mat.

Meanwhile, Katerina Lvovna hears her husband come to the door and listen, holding his breath. She even hears the quickened beating of his jealous heart; but it is not pity but wicked laughter that is bursting from Katerina Lvovna.

“Go searching for yesteryear,” she thinks to herself, smiling and breathing like an innocent babe.

This lasted for some ten minutes; but Zinovy Borisych finally got tired of standing outside the door and listening to his wife sleeping: he knocked.

“Who’s there?” Katerina Lvovna called out, not at once and as if in a sleepy voice.

“It’s me.”

“Is that you, Zinovy Borisych?”

“It’s me,” replied Zinovy Borisych. “As if you don’t hear!”

Katerina Lvovna jumped up just as she was, in her shift, let her husband into the room, and dove back into the warm bed.

“It’s getting cold before dawn,” she said, wrapping the blanket around her.

Zinovy Borisych came in looking around, said a prayer, lit a candle, and glanced around again.

“How’s your life going?” he asked his spouse.

“Not bad,” answered Katerina Lvovna and, getting up, she began to put on a calico bed jacket.

“Shall I set up the samovar?” she asked.

“Never mind, call Aksinya, let her do it.”

Katerina Lvovna quickly slipped her bare feet into her shoes and ran out. She was gone for about half an hour. During that time she started the samovar herself and quietly fluttered out to Sergei on the gallery.

“Stay here,” she whispered.

“How long?” Sergei asked, also in a whisper.

“Oh, what a dimwit you are! Stay till I tell you.”

And Katerina Lvovna herself put him back in his former place.

From out there on the gallery, Sergei could hear everything that went on in the bedroom. He hears the door open again and Katerina Lvovna return to her husband. He hears every word.

“What were you doing there so long?” Zinovy Borisych asked his wife.

“Setting up the samovar,” she replied calmly.

There was a pause. Sergei hears Zinovy Borisych hang up his coat on the coat rack. Now he is washing, snorting and splashing water all over; now he asks for a towel; the talk begins again.

“Well, so how is it you buried papa?” the husband inquires.

“Just so,” says the wife, “he died, we buried him.”

“And what an astonishing thing it was!”

“God knows,” Katerina Lvovna replied and rattled the cups.

Zinovy Borisych walked mournfully about the room.

“Well, and how have you passed your time here?” Zinovy Borisych again began asking his wife.

“Our joys here, I expect, are known to everybody: we don’t go to balls, nor to theaters likewise.”

“And it seems you take little joy in your husband,” Zinovy Borisych hazarded, glancing out of

the corner of his eye.

“We’re not so young as to lose our minds when we meet. How do you want me to rejoice? Look how I’m bustling, running around for your pleasure.”

Katerina Lvovna ran out again to fetch the samovar and again sprang over to Sergei, pulled at him, and said: “Look sharp, Seryozha!”

Sergei did not quite know what it was all about, but he got ready anyhow.

Katerina Lvovna came back, and Zinovy Borisych was kneeling on the bed, hanging his silver watch with a beaded chain on the wall above the headboard.

“Why is it, Katerina Lvovna, that you, in your solitary situation, made the bed up for two?” he suddenly asked his wife somehow peculiarly.

“I kept expecting you,” replied Katerina Lvovna, looking at him calmly.

“I humbly thank you for that... And this little object now, how does it come to be lying on your bed?”

Zinovy Borisych picked up Sergei’s narrow woolen sash from the sheet and held it by one end before his wife’s eyes.

Katerina Lvovna did not stop to think for a moment.

“Found it in the garden,” she said, “tied up my skirt with it.”

“Ah, yes!” Zinovy Borisych pronounced with particular emphasis. “We’ve also heard a thing or two about your skirts.”

“What is it you’ve heard?”

“All about your nice doings.”

“There are no such doings of mine.”

“Well, we’ll look into that, we’ll look into everything,” Zinovy Borisych replied, moving his empty cup towards his wife.

Katerina Lvovna was silent.

“We’ll bring all these doings of yours to light, Katerina Lvovna,” Zinovy Borisych went on after a long pause, scowling at his wife.

“Your Katerina Lvovna is not so terribly frightened. She’s not much afraid of that,” she replied.

“What? What?” cried Zinovy Borisych, raising his voice.

“Never mind – drop it,” replied his wife.

“Well, you’d better look out! You’re getting a bit too talkative!”

“Why shouldn’t I be talkative?” Katerina Lvovna retorted.

“You’d better watch yourself.”

“There’s no reason for me to watch myself. Wagging tongues wag something to you, and I have to take all kinds of insults on myself! That’s a new one!”

“Not wagging tongues, but certain knowledge about your amours.”

“About what amours?” cried Katerina Lvovna, blushing unfeignedly.

“I know what.”

“If you know, then speak more clearly!”

Zinoviy Borisych was silent and again moved the empty cup towards his wife.

“Clearly there’s nothing to talk about,” Katerina Lvovna answered with disdain, defiantly throwing a teaspoon onto her husband’s saucer. “Well, tell me, who have they denounced to you? Who is my lover according to you?”

“You’ll find out, don’t be in such a hurry.”

“Is it Sergei they’ve been yapping about?”

“We’ll find out, we’ll find out, Katerina Lvovna. My power over you no one has taken away and no one can take away... You’ll talk

yourself...”

“Ohh, I can’t bear that!” Katerina Lvovna gnashed her teeth and, turning white as a sheet, unexpectedly rushed out the door.

“Well, here he is,” she said a few seconds later, leading Sergei into the room by the sleeve. “Question him and me about what you know. Maybe you’ll find out a lot more than you’d like!”

Zinoviy Borisych was at a loss. He glanced now at Sergei, who was standing in the doorway, now at his wife, who calmly sat on the edge of the bed with her arms crossed, and understood nothing of what was approaching.

“What are you doing, you serpent?” he barely brought himself to utter, not getting up from his armchair.

“Question us about what you know so well,” Katerina Lvovna replied insolently. “You thought you’d scare me with a beating,” she went on, winking significantly. “That will never be; but what I knew I would do to you, even before these threats of yours, that I am going to do.”

“What’s that? Get out!” Zinoviy Borisych shouted at Sergei.

“Oh, yes!” Katerina Lvovna mocked.

She nimbly locked the door, put the key in her pocket, and again sprawled on the bed in her little jacket.

“Now, Seryozhechka, come here, come, darling,” she beckoned the clerk to her.

Sergei shook his curls and boldly sat down by his mistress.

“Oh, Lord! My God! What is this? What are you doing, you barbarians!?” cried Zinovy Borisych, turning all purple and getting up from his chair.

“What? You don’t like it? Look, look, my bright falcon, how beautiful!”

Katerina Lvovna laughed and passionately kissed Sergei in front of her husband.

At the same moment, a deafening slap burned on her cheek, and Zinovy Borisych rushed for the open window.

Chapter Eight

“Ah... ah, so that’s it!.. Well, my dear friend, thank you very much. That’s just what I was waiting for!” Katerina Lvovna cried. “Now it’s clear... it’s going to be my way, not yours...”

In a single movement she pushed Sergei away from her, quickly threw herself at her husband, and before Zinovy Borisych had time to reach the window, she seized him by the throat from behind with her slender fingers and threw him down on the floor like a damp sheaf of hemp.

Having fallen heavily and struck the back of his head with full force against the floor, Zinovy Borisych lost his mind completely. He had never expected such a quick denouement. The first violence his wife used on him showed him that she was ready for anything, if only to be rid of him, and that his present position was extremely dangerous. Zinovy Borisych realized it all instantly in the moment of his fall and did not cry out, knowing that his voice would not reach anyone’s ear but would only speed things up still more. He silently shifted his eyes and rested them with an expression of anger, reproach, and suffering on

his wife, whose slender fingers were tightly squeezing his throat.

Zinovy Borisych did not defend himself; his arms, with tightly clenched fists, lay stretched out and twitched convulsively. One of them was quite free; the other Katerina Lvovna pinned to the floor with her knee.

“Hold him,” she whispered indifferently to Sergei, turning to her husband herself.

Sergei sat on his master, pinning down both his arms with his knees, and was about to put his hands around his throat under Katerina Lvovna’s, but just then he cried out desperately himself. Seeing his offender, blood vengeance aroused all the last strength in Zinovy Borisych: with a terrible effort, he tore his pinned-down arms from under Sergei’s knees and, seizing Sergei by his black curls, sank his teeth into his throat like a beast. But that did not last long: Zinovy Borisych at once uttered a heavy moan and dropped his head.

Katerina Lvovna, pale, almost breathless, stood over her husband and her lover; in her right hand was a heavy metal candlestick, which she held by the upper end, the heavy part down.

A thin trickle of crimson blood ran down Zinovy Borisych's temple and cheek.

"A priest," Zinovy Borisych moaned dully, throwing his head back with loathing as far as he could from Sergei, who was sitting on him. "To confess," he uttered still more indistinctly, trembling and looking from the corner of his eye at the warm blood thickening under his hair.

"You'll be all right like this," Katerina Lvovna whispered.

"Well, no more dawdling with him," she said to Sergei. "Squeeze his throat well and good."

Zinovy Borisych wheezed.

Katerina Lvovna bent down, pressed her own hands to Sergei's hands, which lay on her husband's throat, and put her ear to his chest. After five quiet minutes, she stood up and said: "Enough, he's had it."

Sergei also stood up and let out a long breath. Zinovy Borisych lay dead, with a crushed throat and a bruised temple. Under his head on the left side was a small spot of blood which, however, was no longer pouring from the clotted wound stopped up with hair.

Sergei carried Zinovy Borisych to the cellar

under the floor of the same stone larder where he himself had been locked up so recently by the late Boris Timofeich and returned to the room upstairs. Meanwhile, Katerina Lvovna, having rolled up the sleeves of her bed jacket and tucked her skirt up high, was carefully washing off with a soapy sponge the bloodstain left by Zinovy Borisych on the floor of his bedroom. The water was not yet cold in the samovar from which Zinovy Borisych had steamed his little merchant's soul in poisoned tea, and the stain was washed away without a trace.

Katerina Lvovna took the copper basin and soapy sponge.

"Light, here," she said to Sergei, going to the door. "Lower, hold it lower," she said, carefully studying all the floorboards over which Sergei had dragged Zinovy Borisych to the cellar.

In only two places on the painted floor were there two tiny spots the size of a cherry. Katerina Lvovna rubbed them with the sponge and they disappeared.

"That'll teach you not to sneak up to your wife like a thief and spy on her," said Katerina Lvovna, straightening up and glancing in the dir-

ection of the larder.

“Finished off,” said Sergei, and he jumped at the sound of his own voice.

When they returned to the bedroom, a thin red strip of dawn was cutting across the east and, lightly gilding the blossom-covered apple trees, peeked through the green slats of the garden fence into Katerina Lvovna’s room.

The old clerk, a short coat thrown over his shoulders, crossing himself and yawning, came trudging through the yard from the shed to the kitchen.

Katerina Lvovna carefully drew the shutter closed and looked Sergei over attentively, as if she wished to see into his soul.

“So now you’re a merchant,” she said, laying her white hands on Sergei’s shoulders.

Sergei made no reply.

His lips were trembling, he was shaking feverishly. Katerina Lvovna’s lips were merely cold.

After two days, Sergei had big callouses on his hands from the pick and heavy spade; but Zinovy Borisych was laid away so nicely in his cellar that, without the help of his widow or her lover, no one would have been able to find him before

the general resurrection.

Chapter Nine

Sergei went around with his neck wrapped in a crimson kerchief and complained of a swelling in his throat. Meanwhile, before the traces left on Sergei by Zinovy Borisych's teeth had healed, Katerina Lvovna's husband was missed. Sergei himself began speaking of him even more often than others. He would sit by the gate in the evening with other young fellows and say: "Really, lads, how is it the master hasn't turned up yet?"

The young fellows were also surprised.

And then news came from the mill that the master had hired horses and gone home long ago. The driver who had taken him said that Zinovy Borisych had seemed to be in distress and had dismissed him somehow strangely: about two miles from town, near the monastery, he got off the cart, took his bag, and walked away. Hearing this story, everybody was still more surprised.

Zinovy Borisych had vanished, and that was that.

A search was made, but nothing was discovered: the merchant had vanished into thin air.

From the testimony of the arrested driver, it was learned only that the merchant had gotten out by the monastery on the river and walked away. The matter was never clarified, but meanwhile Katerina Lvovna, in her position as a widow, lived freely with Sergei. There were random surmises that Zinovy Borisych was here or there, but Zinovy Borisych still did not return, and Katerina Lvovna knew better than anyone that it was quite impossible for him to return.

A month went by like that, and another, and a third, and Katerina Lvovna felt herself heavy.

“The capital will be ours, Seryozhechka; I have an heir,” she said to Sergei, and she went to complain to the town council that, thus and so, she felt she was pregnant, and the business was stagnating: let her take charge of it all.

A commercial venture should not go to waste. Katerina Lvovna was her husband’s lawful wife: there were no apparent debts, which meant they ought to let her. And so they did.

Katerina Lvovna lived like a queen; and at her side Sergei was now called Sergei Filippyich; and then smack, out of nowhere, came a new calamity. Somebody wrote to the town headman from

Livny saying that Boris Timofeich had not traded all on his own capital, that more money than his own had been invested in the business, the money of his young nephew Fyodor Zakharovich Lyamin, and that the matter had to be looked into and not left in the hands of Katerina Lvovna alone. The news came, the headman talked about it with Katerina Lvovna, and then a week later, bang, an old lady arrives from Livny with a little boy.

“I am the late Boris Timofeich’s cousin,” she says, “and this is my nephew, Fyodor Lyamin.”

Katerina Lvovna received them.

Sergei, watching this arrival from the courtyard, and the reception Katerina Lvovna gave the new arrivals, turned white as a sheet.

“What’s wrong?” asked his mistress, noticing his deathly pallor, when he came in after the arrivals and stopped in the front room, studying them.

“Nothing,” he replied, turning from the front room to the hallway. “I’m just thinking, how lovely is Livny,” he finished with a sigh, closing the door to the hallway behind him.

“Well, what are we to do now?” Sergei Fil-

ippykh asked Katerina Lvovna, sitting with her at night over the samovar. "Now our whole business together is turned to dust."

"Why to dust, Seryozha?"

"Because now it will all be divided. Why sit here managing a futile business?"

"Will it be too little for you, Seryozha?"

"It's not about me; I only doubt we'll be as happy as before."

"Why is that? Why won't we be happy, Seryozha?"

"Because, loving you as I do, Katerina Lvovna, I'd like to see you as a real lady, and not as you've lived so far," replied Sergei Filippykh. "But now, on the contrary, it turns out that with reduced capital we'll have to descend to an even lower level than before."

"What do I care about that, Seryozha?"

"It may be, Katerina Lvovna, that you're not at all interested, but for me, since I respect you, and again looking at it with other people's eyes, base and envious as they are, it will be terribly painful. You may think as you like, of course, but I, having my own considerations, will never manage to be happy in these circumstances."

And Sergei played over and over on that same note for Katerina Lvovna, that because of Fedya Lyamin he had become the unhappiest of men, deprived of the opportunity to exalt and distinguish her before the entire merchant estate. Sergei wound up each time by saying that, if it were not for this Fedya, the child would be born to Katerina Lvovna less than nine months after her husband disappeared, she would get all the capital, and then there would be no end or measure to their happiness.

Chapter Ten

And then Sergei suddenly stopped talking about the heir altogether. As soon as the talk of him ceased on Sergei's lips, Fedya Lyamin came to lodge in Katerina Lvovna's mind and heart. She became pensive and even less affectionate towards Sergei. Whether she slept, or tended the business, or prayed to God, in her mind there was one and the same thing: "How can it be? Why should I be deprived of capital because of him? I've suffered so much, I've taken so much sin upon my soul," thought Katerina Lvovna, "and he comes and takes it from me without any

trouble... Well and good if he was a man, but he's a child, a little boy..."

There was an early frost outside. Of Zinovy Borisych, naturally, no word came from anywhere. Katerina Lvovna was getting bigger and went about deep in thought; in town there was much beating of drums to do with her, figuring out how and why the young Izmailov woman, who had always been barren, thin as a pin, had suddenly started swelling out in front. And the young co-heir, Fedya Lyamin, walked about the yard in a light squirrel-skin coat, breaking the ice on the potholes.

"Hey, Fyodor Ignatych! Hey, you merchant's son!" the cook Aksinya would shout at him, running across the yard. "Is it fitting for you, a merchant's son, to go poking in puddles?"

But the co-heir, who troubled Katerina Lvovna and her beloved object, kicked up his feet serenely like a little goat and slept still more serenely opposite his doting old aunt, never thinking or imagining that he had crossed anyone's path or diminished anyone's happiness.

Fedya finally ran himself into the chicken pox, with a cold and chest pains attached, and the boy

took to his bed. First they treated him with herbs and balms, and then they sent for the doctor.

The doctor came calling, prescribed medications, the old aunt herself gave them to the boy by the clock, and then sometimes asked Katerina Lvovna.

“Take the trouble, Katerinushka,” she would say, “you’re big with child yourself, you’re awaiting God’s judgment – take the trouble.”

Katerina Lvovna never refused her. When the old woman went to the evening vigil to pray for “the child Fyodor who is lying in sickbed” or to the early liturgy so as to include him in the communion, Katerina Lvovna sat with the sick boy and gave him water and his medications at the proper time.

So the old woman went to the all-night vigil on the eve of the feast of the Entrance and asked Katerinushka to look after Fedyushka. By then the boy was already getting better.

Katerina Lvovna went into Fedya’s room, and he was sitting on his bed in his squirrel-skin coat, reading the lives of the saints.

“What are you reading, Fedya?” Katerina Lvovna asked, sitting down in the armchair.

“I’m reading the Lives, auntie.”

“Interesting?”

“Very interesting, auntie.”

Katerina Lvovna propped her head on her hand and began watching Fedya’s moving lips, and suddenly it was as if demons came unleashed, and all her former thoughts descended on her of how much evil this boy had caused her and how good it would be if he were not there.

“But then again,” thought Katerina Lvovna, “he’s sick; he’s being given medications... anything can happen in illness... All you have to say is that the doctor prescribed the wrong medicine.”

“Is it time for your medicine, Fedya?”

“If you please, auntie,” the boy replied and, having swallowed the spoonful, added: “It’s very interesting, auntie, what’s written about the saints.”

“Read, then,” Katerina Lvovna let fall and, passing her cold gaze around the room, rested it on the frost-patterned windows.

“I must tell them to close the shutters,” she said and went out to the drawing room, and from there to the reception room, and from there to

her room upstairs, and sat down.

Some five minutes later Sergei silently came to her upstairs, wearing a fleece jacket trimmed with fluffy sealskin.

“Have they closed the shutters?” Katerina Lvovna asked him.

“Yes,” Sergei replied curtly, removed the snuff from the candle with a pair of snuffers, and stood by the stove.

Silence ensued.

“Tonight’s vigil won’t be ending soon?” asked Katerina Lvovna.

“It’s the eve of a great feast; they’ll make a long service of it,” replied Sergei.

Again there was a pause.

“I must go to Fedya: he’s there alone,” Katerina Lvovna said, getting up.

“Alone?” asked Sergei, glancing sidelong at her.

“Alone,” she replied in a whisper, “what of it?”

And between their eyes flashed something like a web of lightning, but they did not say a word more to each other.

Katerina Lvovna went downstairs, walked through the empty rooms: there was total silence

everywhere; the icon lamps burned quietly; her own shadow flitted over the walls; the windows behind their closed shutters began to thaw out and weep. Fedya sits and reads. Seeing Katerina Lvovna, he only says:

“Auntie, please take this book, and give me, please, that one from the icon shelf.”

Katerina Lvovna did as her nephew asked and handed him the book.

“Won’t you go to sleep, Fedya?”

“No, auntie, I’ll wait for my old aunt.”

“Why wait for her?”

“She promised to bring me some blessed bread from the vigil.”

Katerina Lvovna suddenly went pale, her own child turned for the first time under her heart, and she felt a chill in her breast. She stood for a while in the middle of the room and then went out, rubbing her cold hands.

“Well!” she whispered, quietly going into her bedroom and finding Sergei again in the same position by the stove.

“What?” Sergei asked barely audibly and choked.

“He’s alone.”

Sergei scowled and started breathing heavily.

“Let’s go,” said Katerina Lvovna, abruptly turning to the door.

Sergei quickly took off his boots and asked:

“What shall I take?”

“Nothing,” Katerina Lvovna replied under her breath and quietly led him after her by the hand.

Chapter Eleven

The sick boy gave a start and lowered the book to his knees when Katerina Lvovna came into his room for the third time.

“What’s wrong, Fedya?”

“Oh, auntie, I got frightened of something,” he said, smiling anxiously and pressing himself to the corner of the bed.

“What are you frightened of?”

“Who is it that came with you, auntie?”

“Where? Nobody came, dearest.”

“Nobody?”

The boy leaned towards the foot of the bed and, narrowing his eyes, looked in the direction of the door through which his aunt had come, and was reassured.

“I probably imagined it,” he said.

Katerina Lvovna stood leaning her elbow on the headboard of her nephew's bed.

Fedya looked at his aunt and remarked that for some reason she was very pale.

In reply to this remark, Katerina Lvovna coughed deliberately and glanced expectantly at the door to the drawing room. A floorboard creaked softly there.

"I'm reading the life of my guardian angel, St. Feodor Stratilatos, auntie. There was a man pleasing to God."

Katerina Lvovna stood silently.

"Sit down if you like, auntie, and I'll read it over to you," her nephew tried to make up to her.

"Wait, I'll just go and tend to that icon lamp in the reception room," Katerina Lvovna replied and went out with hurried steps.

There was the softest whispering in the drawing room; but amidst the general silence it reached the child's keen ear.

"Auntie, what is it? Who are you whispering to there?" the boy cried with tears in his voice. "Come here, auntie, I'm afraid," he called a second later, still more tearfully, and he thought he heard Katerina Lvovna say "Well?" in the

drawing room, which the boy took as referring to him.

“What are you afraid of?” Katerina Lvovna asked him in a slightly hoarse voice, coming in with bold, resolute strides and standing by his bed in such a way that the door to the drawing room was screened from the sick boy by her body. “Lie down,” she said to him after that.

“I don’t want to, auntie.”

“No, Fedya, you listen to me: lie down, it’s time, lie down,” Katerina Lvovna repeated.

“What’s the matter, auntie? I don’t want to at all.”

“No, you lie down, lie down,” Katerina Lvovna said in a changed, unsteady voice and, picking the boy up under the arms, she laid him at the head of the bed.

Just then Fedya screamed hysterically: he had seen the pale, barefoot Sergei come in.

Katerina Lvovna put her hand over the frightened child’s mouth, gaping in terror, and shouted:

“Quick now, hold him straight so he doesn’t thrash!”

Sergei held Fedya by the arms and legs, and

Katerina Lvovna, in one movement, covered the sufferer's childish face with a big down pillow and pressed it to him with her firm, resilient breasts.

For about four minutes there was a sepulchral silence in the room.

"It's all over," Katerina Lvovna whispered and was just getting up to put everything in order when the walls of the quiet house that concealed so many crimes shook with deafening blows: the windows rattled, the floors swayed, the chains of the hanging icon lamps quivered and sent fantastic shadows wandering over the walls.

Sergei trembled and broke out running for all he was worth; Katerina Lvovna rushed after him, and the noise and din followed them. It seemed as though some unearthly powers were shaking the sinful house to its foundations.

Katerina Lvovna was afraid that, driven by terror, Sergei would run outside and give himself away by his fright; but he dashed straight upstairs.

Having run up the stairs, Sergei struck his head against the half-open door in the darkness and fell back down with a moan, totally crazed by

superstitious fear.

“Zinovy Borisych, Zinovy Borisych!” he muttered, flying headlong down and dragging Katerina Lvovna with him, having knocked her off her feet.

“Where?” she asked.

“He just went flying over us with a sheet of iron. There, there he is again! Aie, aie!” Sergei cried. “It’s thundering, it’s thundering again!”

By now it was quite clear that many hands were banging on the windows from outside and someone was breaking down the door.

“Fool! Stand up!” cried Katerina Lvovna, and with these words she herself went flitting back to Fedya, arranged his dead head on the pillow in a most natural sleeping position, and with a firm hand unlocked the door through which a crowd of people was about to crash.

The spectacle was frightening. Katerina Lvovna looked over the heads of the crowd besieging the porch, and there were whole ranks of unknown people climbing the high fence into the yard, and outside there was a hum of human voices.

Before Katerina Lvovna managed to figure

anything out, the people surrounding the porch overran her and flung her inside.

Chapter Twelve

This whole alarm came about in the following way: for the vigil before a major feast in all the churches of the town where Katerina Lvovna lived, which, though provincial, was rather large and a trading center, a numberless multitude of people always gathered, and in the church named for that feast, even the yard outside had no room for an apple to fall. Here a choir consisting of young merchants usually sang, led by a special director who also belonged to the lovers of vocal art.

Our people are pious, zealous for God's church, and, as a result of that, are to a certain extent artistic people: churchly splendor and harmonious "organ-drone" singing constitute one of their loftiest and purest delights. Wherever the choir sings, almost half of our town gathers, especially the young tradesmen: shopkeepers, errand boys, factory workers, and the owners themselves, with their better halves – everybody packs into one church; everybody wants to stand if only

outside on the porch or by the window, in scorching heat or freezing cold, to hear how the octave drones and the ecstatic tenor pulls off the most intricate grace notes.

The parish church of the Izmailovs had a chapel of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple, and therefore, on the eve of this feast, just at the time of the episode with Fedya described above, all the young folk of the town were in that church and, on leaving in a noisy crowd, were discussing the virtues of a well-known tenor and the accidental blunders of an equally well-known bass.

But not everyone was interested in these vocal questions: there were people in the crowd who were concerned with other things.

“You know, lads, strange things are told about the young Izmailov woman,” said a young mechanic, brought from Petersburg by a merchant for his steam mill, as they approached the Izmailovs’ house. “They say,” he went on, “that she and their clerk Seryozhka make love every other minute...”

“Everybody knows that,” replied a fleece-lined blue nankeen coat. “And, by the way, she wasn’t in church tonight.”

“Church, ha! The nasty wench has turned so vile, she has no fear of God, or conscience, or other people’s eyes.”

“Look, there’s light in their place,” the mechanic noticed, pointing to a bright strip between the shutters.

“Peek through the crack, see what they’re up to,” several voices called out.

The mechanic propped himself on the shoulders of two of his comrades and had just put his eye to the narrow gap when he screamed at the top of his voice:

“Brothers, friends, they’re smothering somebody, they’re smothering somebody in there!”

And the mechanic desperately banged on the shutters with his hands. Some dozen men followed his example and, running to the windows, began applying their fists to them.

The crowd grew every moment, and the result was the siege of the Izmailov house already known to us.

“I saw it, with my own eyes I saw it,” the mechanic testified over the dead Fedya. “The child was lying on the bed, and the two of them were smothering him.”

Sergei was taken to the police that same evening, and Katerina Lvovna was led to her upstairs room and two guards were placed over her.

It was freezing cold in the Izmailovs' house: the stoves were not lit; the door was never shut; one dense crowd of curious people replaced another. They all came to look at Fedya lying in his coffin and at the other big coffin, its lid tightly covered with a wide shroud. There was a white satin crown on Fedya's forehead, covering the red scar left by the opening of the skull. The forensic autopsy had discovered that Fedya died of suffocation, and Sergei, when brought to his corpse, at the priest's first words about the Last Judgment and the punishment of the unrepentant, burst into tears and not only confessed openly to the murder of Fedya, but also asked them to dig up Zinovy Borisych, whom he had buried without a funeral. The corpse of Katerina Lvovna's husband, buried in dry sand, was not yet completely decomposed: it was taken out and laid in a big coffin. As his accomplice in both these crimes, to the general horror, Sergei named his young mistress. Katerina Lvovna, to all questions, answered only: "I know nothing about it."

Sergei was forced to expose her at a confrontation. Having heard his confession, Katerina Lvovna looked at him in mute amazement, but without anger, and then said indifferently:

“If he’s willing to tell about it, there’s no point in my denying it: I killed them.”

“What for?” she was asked.

“For him,” she answered, pointing to Sergei, who hung his head.

The criminals were put in jail, and the terrible case, which attracted general attention and indignation, was decided very quickly. At the end of February, the court announced to Sergei and the widow of the merchant of the third guild, Katerina Lvovna, that it had been decided to punish them by flogging in the marketplace of their town and then to send them to hard labor. At the beginning of March, on a cold, frosty morning, the executioner counted off the appointed number of blue-purple weals on Katerina Lvovna’s white back, and then beat out his portion on Sergei’s shoulders and branded his handsome face with three convict’s marks.

During all this time, Sergei for some reason aroused much more general sympathy than Ka-

terina Lvovna. Smearred and bloody, he stumbled as he came down from the black scaffold, but Katerina Lvovna came down slowly, only trying to keep the thick shirt and coarse prisoner's coat from touching her torn back.

Even in the prison hospital, when they gave her her baby, all she said was: "Oh, away with him!" and turning to the wall, without a moan, without complaint, she laid her breast on the hard cot.

Chapter Thirteen

The party in which Sergei and Katerina Lvovna found themselves set out when spring had begun only by the calendar, while, as the popular proverb says, "There was lots of sun, but heat there was none."

Katerina Lvovna's child was given to Boris Timofeich's old sister to be brought up, because, being counted as the legitimate son of the criminal woman's husband, the infant was now left the sole heir to the entire Izmailov fortune. Katerina Lvovna was very pleased with that and surrendered the baby quite indifferently. Her love for the father, like the love of many all too pas-

sionate women, did not extend in the least to the child.

Anyhow, nothing in the world existed for her: neither light, nor darkness, nor good, nor bad, nor boredom, nor joy; she did not understand anything, did not love anyone, did not love herself. She waited impatiently for the party to set out on its way, when she hoped to be able to see her darling Sergei again, and she even forgot to think about the baby.

Katerina Lvovna's hopes were not deceived: heavily bound in chains, branded, Sergei came out of the prison gates in the same group with her.

Man accustoms himself as far as possible to any abominable situation, and in every situation preserves as far as possible his capacity to pursue his meager joys; but for Katerina Lvovna there is nothing to adjust to: she sees her Sergei again, and with him even the convict's path blossoms with happiness.

Katerina Lvovna took very few valuable things with her in her canvas sack and even less money. But long before they reached Nizhny she had given it all away to the convoy soldiers in

exchange for the possibility of walking beside Sergei or standing for a little hour embracing him on a dark night in a cold corner of the narrow transit prison corridor.

Only Katerina Lvovna's branded young friend somehow became very reserved towards her: he did not so much talk as snap at her; his secret meetings with her, for which, not thinking of food or drink, she gave the necessary twenty-five kopecks from her lean purse, he did not value very highly; and more than once he even said:

"You'd do better to give me the money you gave the soldier, instead of us rubbing against corners in the corridor."

"All I gave him was twenty-five kopecks, Seryozhechka," Katerina Lvovna tried to excuse herself.

"As if twenty-five kopecks isn't money? Did you pick up a lot of these twenty-five kopecks on the way, that you hand them out so freely?"

"That's how we could see each other, Seryozha."

"Well, where's the joy of seeing each other after such suffering! I could curse my whole life, not just these meetings."

“And for me it makes no difference, as long as I get to see you.”

“That’s all foolishness,” replied Sergei.

Katerina Lvovna sometimes bit her lips until they bled hearing such replies, and sometimes her eyes, not given to weeping, filled with tears of anger and vexation in the darkness of their night-time meetings; but she endured it all, kept silent, and wished to deceive herself.

Thus, in these new relations with each other, they reached Nizhny Novgorod. Here their party merged with another party that was going to Siberia from the Moscow highway.

In this big party, among a multitude of people of all sorts in the women’s section, there were two very interesting persons. One was Fiona, a soldier’s wife from Yaroslavl, a splendid, magnificent woman, tall, with a thick black braid and languorous brown eyes, curtained as with a mysterious veil by thick eyelashes; and the other was a sharp-faced seventeen-year-old blonde with tender pink skin, a tiny little mouth, dimples on her fresh cheeks, and golden blonde locks, which stubbornly strayed across her forehead from under her convict’s kerchief. In the party they called

this girl Sonetka.

The beautiful Fiona was of a soft and lazy disposition. Everyone in her party knew her, and no one among the men rejoiced especially at achieving success with her, and no one was upset at seeing her grant the same success to another suitor.

“Our Aunt Fiona is a kindly woman, she doesn’t offend anybody,” the convicts all joked unanimously.

But Sonetka was of a completely different sort. Of her they said:

“An eel: slips through your fingers, and never lingers.”

Sonetka had taste, chose her dishes, and maybe even chose very strictly; she wanted passion to be offered to her, not blandly, but with a piquant, spicy seasoning, with sufferings and sacrifices; while Fiona was Russian simplicity, who is even too lazy to say “Go away,” and who knows only one thing, that she is a woman. Such women are very highly valued in robber bands, convict parties, and the social-democratic communes of Petersburg.

The appearance of these two women in one combined party with Sergei and Katerina Lvovna

had tragic consequences for the latter.

Chapter Fourteen

From the first days of the combined party's movement from Nizhny Novgorod to Kazan, Sergei openly began to seek the favors of the soldier's wife Fiona and suffered no lack of success. The languid beauty Fiona did not make Sergei languish, as, in her kindness, she did not make anyone languish. At the third or fourth halting place, in the early dusk, Katerina Lvovna set up a meeting with Seryozhechka by means of bribery, and lay there without sleeping: she kept waiting for the guard on duty to come at any moment, nudge her slightly, and whisper "Run quickly." The door opened once, and a woman darted out to the corridor; the door opened again, and another woman prisoner quickly jumped up from another cot and also disappeared after the guard; finally there came a tug at the coat with which Katerina Lvovna covered herself. The young woman hurriedly got up from the cot, well-polished by the sides of convicts, threw the coat over her shoulders, and gave a push to the guard standing before her.

As Katerina Lvovna went down the corridor, in one place faintly lit by a dim lamp, she came across two or three couples who could not be made out from a distance. As Katerina Lvovna passed the male convicts' room, she seemed to hear restrained laughter through the little window cut out in the door.

"Having fun," Katerina Lvovna's guard growled, and, taking her by the shoulders, he pushed her into the corner and withdrew.

Katerina Lvovna felt a coat and a beard with her hand; her other hand touched the hot face of a woman.

"Who's that?" Sergei asked in a half whisper.

"And what are you doing here? Who is that with you?"

In the darkness, Katerina Lvovna pulled the head cloth from her rival. The woman slipped aside, rushed off, stumbled against someone in the corridor, and fell.

From the men's quarters came a burst of guffawing.

"Villain!" Katerina Lvovna whispered and hit Sergei across the face with the ends of the kerchief she had torn from the head of his new girl-

friend.

Sergei raised his hand; but Katerina Lvovna flitted lightly down the corridor and took hold of her door. The guffawing from the men's quarters that followed her was repeated so loudly that the guard, who had been standing apathetically next to the lantern and spitting at the toe of his boot, raised his head and barked:

“Quiet!”

Katerina Lvovna lay down silently and went on lying like that until morning. She wanted to say to herself: “I don't love him” and felt that she loved him still more ardently. And now before her eyes she keeps picturing again and again how his palm trembled under that woman's head, how his other arm embraced her hot shoulders.

The poor woman wept and unwillingly called upon the same palm to be under her head that minute and his other arm to embrace her hysterically trembling shoulders.

“Well, give me back my kerchief anyhow,” the soldier's wife Fiona woke her up in the morning.

“Ah, so that was you?...”

“Kindly give it back!”

“But why did you come between us?”

“How have I come between you? Is it some sort of love or real interest, that you should be angry?”

Katerina Lvovna thought for a second, then took the kerchief she had torn off at night from under her pillow and, throwing it at Fiona, turned to the wall.

She felt relieved.

“Pah,” she said to herself, “am I going to be jealous of that painted tub? She can drop dead! It’s nasty even comparing myself to her.”

“The thing is this, Katerina Lvovna,” said Sergei, as they walked down the road the next day. “Please understand that, first of all, I’m no Zinovy Borisych to you, and, second, that you’re no great merchant’s wife now: so kindly don’t get so puffed up. There’s no market for butting goats with us.”

Katerina Lvovna said nothing to that, and for a week she walked without exchanging a word or a glance with Sergei. As the offended party, she stood firm and did not want to make the first step towards reconciliation in this first quarrel with him.

In the meantime, while Katerina Lvovna was

angry, Sergei began making eyes at and flirting with the blonde Sonetka. Now he greets her “with our particular honor,” now he smiles, now, meeting her, he tries to embrace and squeeze her. Katerina Lvovna sees it all and her heart seethes all the more.

“Shouldn’t I maybe make peace with him?” Katerina Lvovna thinks, stumbling and not seeing the ground under her feet.

But her pride now forbids her more than ever to go to him first and make peace. And meanwhile Sergei attaches himself to Sonetka ever more persistently, and it seems to everyone that the inaccessible Sonetka, who slipped away like an eel, is now growing more tame.

“Here you wept over me,” Fiona once said to Katerina Lvovna, “but what did I do to you? With me it came and went, but you’d better watch out for Sonetka.”

“Perish my pride: I absolutely must make peace today,” Katerina Lvovna decided, now only pondering how to set about the reconciliation most adroitly.

Sergei himself helped her out of this difficulty. “Lvovna!” he called to her as they made a halt.

“Come and see me tonight for a moment: it’s business.”

Katerina Lvovna said nothing.

“What, maybe you’re still angry and won’t come?”

Katerina Lvovna again said nothing.

But Sergei and all who observed Katerina Lvovna saw that, as they approached the transit prison, she started moving closer to the chief guard and gave him seventeen kopecks she had saved up from alms.

“I’ll give you another ten once I save more,” Katerina Lvovna begged him.

The soldier put the money behind his cuff and said:

“All right.”

Once these negotiations were concluded, Sergei grunted and winked at Sonetka.

“Ah, Katerina Lvovna!” he said, embracing her as they went up the steps of the transit prison. “Compared to this woman, lads, there’s not another such in the whole world.”

Katerina Lvovna blushed and choked with happiness.

That night, as soon as the door quietly opened

a crack, she ran out at once: she was trembling and felt for Sergei with her hands in the dark corridor.

“My Katya!” said Sergei, embracing her.

“Ah, my dear villain!” Katerina Lvovna answered through her tears and clung to him with her lips.

The guard paced the corridor and, stopping, spat on his boots, and paced again, behind the door the tired inmates snored, a mouse gnawed at a feather, under the stove crickets chirped away one louder than the other, and Katerina Lvovna was still in bliss.

But the raptures wore off, and the inevitable prose began.

“I’m in mortal pain: my bones ache from the ankles right up to the knees,” Sergei complained, sitting with Katerina Lvovna on the floor in a corner of the corridor.

“What can we do, Seryozhechka?” she asked, huddling under the skirt of his coat.

“Maybe I can ask to be put in the infirmary in Kazan?”

“Oh, is it as bad as that, Seryozha?”

“Like I said, it’s the death of me, the way it

hurts.”

“So you’ll stay, and I’ll be driven on?”

“What can I do? It chafes, I’m telling you, it chafes, the chain’s cut almost to the bone. If only I had woolen stockings or something to put under,” Sergei said a moment later.

“Stockings? I still have a pair of new stockings, Seryozha.”

“Well, never mind!” Sergei replied.

Without another word, Katerina Lvovna darted to the cell, shook her sack out on the cot, and hastily ran to Sergei again with a pair of thick, dark blue woolen stockings with bright clocks on the sides.

“Now it should be all right,” said Sergei, parting from Katerina Lvovna and accepting her last stockings.

The happy Katerina Lvovna returned to her cot and fell fast asleep.

She did not hear how, after she came back, Sonetka went out to the corridor and quietly returned just before morning.

This happened only a two days’ march from Kazan.

Chapter Fifteen

A cold, gray day with gusty wind and rain mixed with snow drearily met the party as they stepped through the gates of the stuffy transit prison. Katerina Lvovna started out quite briskly, but she had only just taken her place in line when she turned green and began to shake. Everything became dark in her eyes; all her joints ached and went limp. Before Katerina Lvovna stood Sonetka in those all too familiar dark blue stockings with bright clocks.

Katerina Lvovna moved on more dead than alive; only her eyes looked terribly at Sergei and did not blink.

At the first halt, she calmly went up to Sergei, whispered "Scoundrel," and unexpectedly spat right in his eyes.

Sergei was about to fall upon her; but he restrained himself.

"Just you wait!" he said and wiped his face.

"Nice, though, how bravely she treats you," the prisoners mocked Sergei, and Sonetka dissolved in especially merry laughter.

This little intrigue Sonetka had yielded to was

perfectly suited to her taste.

“Well, you won’t get away with that,” Sergei threatened Katerina Lvovna.

Worn out by the bad weather and the march, her heart broken, Katerina Lvovna slept uneasily that night on her cot in the next transit prison and did not hear how two men entered the women’s barrack.

When they came in, Sonetka got up from her cot, silently pointed to Katerina Lvovna, lay down again, and wrapped herself in her coat.

At the same moment, Katerina Lvovna’s coat flew up over her head, and the thick end of a double-twisted rope let loose with all a man’s strength on her back, covered only by a coarse shirt.

Katerina Lvovna screamed, but her voice could not be heard under the coat that covered her head. She thrashed, but also without success: a stalwart convict sat on her shoulders and held her arms fast.

“Fifty,” a voice, which it was not hard for anyone to recognize as Sergei’s, finally counted off, and the night visitors disappeared through the door.

Katerina Lvovna uncovered her head and jumped up: there was no one there; only not far away someone giggled gleefully under a coat. Katerina Lvovna recognized Sonetka's laughter.

This offense was beyond all measure; also beyond all measure was the feeling of spite that boiled up at that moment in Katerina Lvovna's soul. Oblivious, she rushed forward and fell oblivious onto the breast of Fiona, who took her in her arms.

On that full breast, where so recently Katerina Lvovna's unfaithful lover had enjoyed the sweetness of debauchery, she was now weeping out her unbearable grief, and she clung to her soft and stupid rival like a child to its mother. They were equal now: both were equal in value and both were abandoned.

They were equal – Fiona, subject to the first opportunity, and Katerina Lvovna, acting out the drama of love!

Katerina Lvovna, however, was by now offended by nothing. Having wept out her tears, she turned to stone, and with a wooden calm prepared to go to the roll call.

The drum beats: ratta-tat-tat; chained and un-

chained prisoners pour out into the yard – Sergei, Fiona, Sonetka, Katerina Lvovna, an Old Believer fettered with a Jew, a Pole on the same chain with a Tartar.

They all bunched together, then pulled themselves into some sort of order and set off.

A most cheerless picture: a handful of people, torn away from the world and deprived of any shadow of hope for a better future, sinking into the cold black mud of the dirt road. Everything around them is terribly ugly: the endless mud, the gray sky, the leafless, wet broom, and in its splayed branches a ruffled crow. The wind now moans, now rages, now howls and roars.

In these hellish, soul-rending sounds, which complete the whole horror of the picture, one hears the advice of the biblical Job's wife: "Curse the day you were born and die."

Whoever does not want to listen to these words, whoever is not attracted but frightened by the thought of death even in this dismal situation, must try to stifle these howling voices with something still more hideous. The simple man understands this perfectly well: he then unleashes all his animal simplicity, begins to be stu-

pid, to jeer at himself, at people, at feeling. Not very tender to begin with, he becomes doubly malicious.

* * *

“What, then, merchant’s wife? Is your honor in good health?” Sergei impudently asked Katerina Lvovna, as soon as the party went over a wet hillock and lost sight of the village where they had spent the night.

With these words, he turned at once to Sonetka, covered her with the skirts of his coat, and sang in a high falsetto:

A blond head flashes in the dark outside the window.

So you’re not asleep, my tormentress, you’re not asleep, sweet cheat.

I’ll cover you with my coat skirts, so that none can see.

With these words, Sergei embraced Sonetka and kissed her loudly in front of the whole party...

Katerina Lvovna saw and did not see it all: she walked on like an utterly lifeless person. They started nudging her and pointing to Sergei’s outrageous behavior with Sonetka. She became an

object of mockery.

“Let her be,” Fiona defended her, when somebody in the party tried to laugh at the stumbling Katerina Lvovna. “Don’t you devils see that the woman’s quite ill?”

“Must have got her feet wet,” a young prisoner cracked.

“She’s of merchant stock, you know: a pampered upbringing,” Sergei responded.

“Of course, if she at least had warm stockings, it would be better,” he went on.

It was as if Katerina Lvovna woke up.

“Vile serpent!” she said, unable to restrain herself. “Keep jeering, scoundrel, keep jeering!”

“No, merchant’s wife, I’m not jeering at you at all, but Sonetka here has some very nice stockings for sale, so I thought our merchant’s wife might buy them.”

Many laughed. Katerina Lvovna strode on like a wound-up automaton.

The weather was turning stormy. From the gray clouds that covered the sky, snow began to fall in wet flakes, which melted after barely touching the ground and made the mud still deeper. Finally a dark, leaden strip appears; its

other side cannot be seen. This strip is the Volga. Over the Volga a rather stiff wind is blowing, driving the slowly rising, dark, gape-jawed waves back and forth.

The party of drenched and chilled prisoners slowly came to the crossing and stopped, waiting for the ferry.

The wet, dark ferry came; the crew began loading the prisoners.

“They say somebody has vodka on this ferry,” one prisoner observed, when the ferry, under the downpour of wet snowflakes, cast off and rocked on the big waves of the storm-tossed river.

“Yes, right now a little nip wouldn’t do any harm,” Sergei responded and, persecuting Katerina Lvovna for Sonetka’s amusement, he said: “Merchant’s wife, for old friendship’s sake, treat me to a little vodka. Don’t be stingy. Remember, my sweet, our former love, and what a good time you and I had, my joy, sitting together of a long autumn evening, sending your relations off to their eternal rest without priests or deacons.”

Katerina Lvovna was trembling all over with cold. But, besides the cold that pierced her to the bone under her soaked dress, something else was

going on in Katerina Lvovna's whole being. Her head burned as if on fire; the pupils of her eyes were dilated, alive with a sharp, roving glitter, and peered fixedly into the rolling waves.

"And I'd like a little vodka, too: the cold's unbearable," Sonetka's voice rang out.

"Come on, merchant's wife, treat us!" Sergei kept rubbing it in.

"Ah, you've got no conscience!" said Fiona, shaking her head reproachfully.

"That does you no credit at all," the prisoner Gordyushka seconded the soldier's wife.

"If you're not ashamed before her, you should be before others."

"You common snuffbox!" Sergei yelled at Fiona. "Ashamed, is it! What should I be ashamed of! Maybe I never loved her, and now... Sonetka's worn-out shoe is dearer to me than her mangy cat's mug; what do you say to that? Let her love skew-mouthed Gordyushka; or..." he glanced at a runty fellow on horseback in a felt cape and military cap with a cockade and added, "or, better still, let her cuddle up to this transport officer: at least his cape will keep her from the rain."

"And she'll be called an officer's wife," Son-

etka chimed in.

“Right you are!.. and she’ll easily get enough to buy stockings,” Sergei seconded.

Katerina Lvovna did not defend herself: she looked more and more intently into the waves and moved her lips. Through Sergei’s vile talk she heard the rumble and moan from the opening and slamming waves. And suddenly the blue head of Boris Timofeich appears to her out of one breaking wave; her husband, rocking, peers out of another, holding Fedya with a drooping head. Katerina Lvovna wants to remember a prayer, and she moves her lips, but her lips whisper: “What a good time you and I had, sitting together of a long autumn evening, sending people out of this world by a cruel death.”

Katerina Lvovna was trembling. Her roving gaze became fixed and wild. Her arms reached out somewhere into space once or twice and dropped again. Another moment – and she suddenly began to sway all over, not taking her eyes from the dark waves, bent down, seized Sonetka by the legs, and in one sweep threw the girl and herself overboard.

Everyone was petrified with amazement.

Katerina Lvovna appeared at the top of a wave and sank again; another wave tossed up Sonetka.

“A hook! Throw them a hook!” they shouted on the ferry.

A heavy hook on a long rope soared up and fell into the water. Sonetka could no longer be seen. Two seconds later, borne away from the ferry by the swift current, she again flailed her arms; but at the same moment, out of another wave, Katerina Lvovna rose up almost to the waist, threw herself on Sonetka like a strong pike on a soft-finned little roach, and neither of them appeared again.

The Toupee Artist

a story told on a grave in sacred memory of the blessed day, the 19th february, 1861

I

There are many people in our country, who think that only painters and sculptors are “artists,” and indeed only those who have been found worthy of that title by the Academies – no others will they admit to be artists at all. For many Sazikov and Ovchinnikov are nothing more than silver-smiths. Other peoples think differently: Heine mentions a tailor who “was an artist” and “had ideas,” and ladies’ dresses made by Worth are even now spoken of as “artistic creations.” It was recently written about one of these dresses, that it “concentrated a world of imagination in the point of the bodice.”

In America the domain of art is considered still wider. The celebrated American author, Bret Harte, tells of an artist, who was greatly renowned among them for “working on the dead.” He imparted to the faces of the deceased various consoling expressions testifying to the

more or less happy state of their departed souls.

There were several grades of this art. I remember three: (1), calmness; (2), exalted contemplation; and (3), the beatitude of the direct intercourse with God. The fame of the artist corresponded to the great perfection of his work, that is to say it was immense, but unfortunately the artist himself perished, falling a victim to the coarse mob, who set no value on the freedom of artistic creation. He was stoned to death because he had communicated the expression of the “beatific intercourse with God” to the face of a deceased defaulting banker who had swindled the whole town. The happy heirs of this scoundrel had hoped to show their gratitude to their late relative by giving this order, but the artistic executor there of paid for it with his life...

In Russia we too had a master of a similarly unusual artistic nature.

My younger brother had as nurse a tall, thin, but very fine old woman, who was called Lyubov Onisimovna. She had once been an actress of the former Orel Theatre belonging to Count Kamensky, and all I am about to relate happened in Orel during the days of my childhood.

My brother is seven years younger than I am, so that when he was two years old, and in Lyubov Onisimovna's arms, I had just completed my ninth year and was quite able to understand the stories that were told me.

Lyubov Onisimovna was at that time not very old, but she was as white as the moon. Her features were fine and delicate, her tall figure was erect and as wonderfully well-proportioned as a young girl's.

My mother and aunt looking at her often said she must have been a beauty in her day.

She was honesty and kindness itself, and very sentimental; she loved the tragic side of life but... sometimes drank.

She used to take us for walks in the Trinity Cemetery, where, sitting down on a common

grave with an old wooden cross, she would relate to me some story.

It was here that I heard the history of the Toupee Artist.

III

He was our nurse's colleague in the theatre; the difference was only that she "acted on the stage and danced dances," while he was the "Toupee Artist," that is, the hairdresser and maker-up, who painted and dressed the hair of all the Count's serf actresses. But he was no ordinary commonplace barber, with a hairdresser's comb behind his ear, and a tin pot of rouge and tallow; he was a man with ideas – in a word, an artist.

According to Lyubov Onisimovna's words no one could "make imagination in a face" better than he.

I am unable to say exactly at the time of which Count Kamensky these two artistic natures flourished. Three Counts Kamensky are known, and they were all called by the old inhabitants of Orel: "Unparalleled tyrants." Field-marshal Michail Fedotovich was killed by his serfs for his cruelty in the year 1809, and he had two sons,

Nickolai, who died in 1811, and Sergei, who died in 1835.

I was a child in the forties, but can still remember a huge wooden building with imitation windows painted with soot and ochre, surrounded by an extremely long half-ruined fence. This was the sinister residence of Count Kamensky; and here, too, was his theatre. The property was situated in such a position that it was very well seen from the Trinity Cemetery, and, therefore, whenever Lyubov Onisimovna wanted to relate something, she almost always began with these words:

“Look yonder, dear; do you see how terrible it is?”

“Yes, it is terrible, nurse.”

“Well, and what I am going to tell you is even more terrible!”

This is one of her stories about the hairdresser Arkadie, a tender and brave young man, who was very dear to her heart.

IV

“Arkadie dressed the hair and painted the faces of the actresses only. For the men there was another hairdresser, and if Arkadie went to the men’s side it was only on occasions, when the Count himself ordered him to paint someone in a very noble manner. The chief speciality of the touch of this artist consisted in ‘ideas,’ thanks to which he was able to give to faces the finest and most varied expressions.”

“He was sometimes sent for and told,” said Lyubov Onisimovna, “this face must have such or such an expression.” Arkadie would then step back, order the actor or actress to stand or sit before him, while he stood, with arms folded over his breast, looking at them and thinking. And all the time he himself was more beautiful than the handsomest among them, because though of middle height he was indescribably well-proportioned – his little nose was thin and proud; his eyes were kind like an angel’s – and a thick curl of his hair hung beautifully over his eyes, so that he appeared to be looking out of a misty cloud.”

In a word, the toupee artist was handsome

and "pleased everybody." "Even the Count was fond of him and distinguished him above all others. He clothed him very well, but kept him with the greatest strictness." He would not allow Arkadie to shave or cut and dress the hair of anyone but himself, and, for that reason, always kept him near his dressing-room, and Arkadie was not allowed to go anywhere, except to the theatre.

He was not even allowed to go to church, to confession or to the Holy Communion, because the Count himself did not believe in God, and could not bear the clergy. Once at Easter-time he had set the wolf hounds at the Borisoglebsk priests, who had come to him with the cross.

The Count, according to Lyubov Onisimovna, was so horribly ugly in consequence of his constant wickedness, that he was like all sorts of animals at the same time. But Arkadie was able to give, even to this bestial visage, though only for a time, such an expression that, when the Count sat of an evening in his box at the theatre, he appeared more imposing than many.

But in reality what the Count, to his great vexation, chiefly lacked, was an imposing and military expression.

In order that nobody else should have the advantage of the services of such an inimitable artist as Arkadie, "all his life he had to sit at home and never had any money given to him since he was born." Arkadie was at that time twenty-five years of age and Lyubov Onisimovna was nineteen. Of course they were acquainted, and it happened with them, as it often does at their age, that they fell in love with each other. But they were only able to speak of their love in vague hints, spoken too before all, while he was making her up.

Tête-à-tête meetings were quite impossible and could not even be thought of.

"We actresses," said Lyubov Onisimovna, "were taken care of in the same way as wet-nurses are looked after in the houses of illustrious personages: we were in charge of elderly women, who had children of their own, and if, God forbid! anything happened to one of us, those women's children were subjected to the most dreadful tyranny.

"The covenant of virginity could only be broken by 'the master' who had ordained it."

V

Lyubov Onisimovna was at that time not only in the full bloom of her maiden beauty, but also at the most interesting point of the development of her many-sided talents: she sang in "The Pot-Pourri Chorus," danced the chief dances in "The Chinese Kitchen Gardener," and feeling a vocation for tragedy, "knew all the parts at first sight."

I do not know for certain in which year it was that the Tzar (I cannot say if it was the Emperor Alexander I or Nikolai I) happened to pass through Orel and remained the night there, and in the evening was expected to come to Count Kamensky's theatre.

The Count invited all the notabilities of the place to come to his theatre (no tickets were sold), and the performance was to be of the best. Lyubov Onisimovna was to sing in "The Pot-Pourri Chorus" and dance in "The Chinese Kitchen-Gardener," when suddenly during the last rehearsal some scenery fell down and crushed the foot of the actress who was to act the part of "The Duchess de-Bourblanc."

I have never heard of nor even come across

such a part, but that is just how Lyubov Onisimovna pronounced the name.

The carpenter who had let the scenery fall was sent to the stables to be punished, and the injured actress was carried to her closet, but there was nobody to take the part of the Duchess de Bourblanc.”

“Then,” said Lyubov Onisimovna, “I offered myself, because the part pleased me very much, especially where the Duchess de Bourblanc begs for forgiveness at her father’s feet, and dies with dishevelled hair. I had wonderfully long fair hair, which Arkadie dressed enchantingly.”

The Count was delighted with the girl’s unexpected offer to take the part, and having received the assurance of the director that “Lyubov would not spoil the part,” he said:

“If she spoils it you will have to answer for it with your back. But now take her the ‘aquamarine ear-rings’ from me.”

The “aquamarine ear-rings” was both a flattering and loathsome present to receive. It was the first mark of having been chosen for the special honour of being elevated, for a short moment, to be the odalisque of the master. Soon

after that, or even sometimes at once, an order was given to Arkadie to make up the doomed girl, after the play, in the innocent guise of St. Cecilia; and dressed all in white, with a wreath on her head and a lily in her hand, to symbolize innocence, she was conducted to the Count's apartments.

“That,” said Nurse, “you cannot understand at your age – but it was the most terrible thing, especially for me, because I was thinking of Arkadie. I began to cry. I threw the ear-rings on the table and wept. I could not even imagine how I would be able to act in the evening.”

VI

In those same fatal hours Arkadie, too, was being beguiled into an equally fatal action.

The Count's brother arrived from his estate to present himself to the Emperor. He was even uglier than the Count. He had lived long in the country and had never put on a uniform or shaved, because "his whole face had grown covered with furrows and protuberances." Now on such a special occasion it was obligatory to appear in uniform, to put one's whole person in order, and produce the military expression that was required for full dress.

And much was required.

"People now do not understand how strict one was in those days," said Nurse. "Formality was observed in every thing then, and there was a form for the faces of important personages as well as for the way their hair was dressed, which was for some terribly unbecoming. If their hair was dressed in the formal way, with a high top-knot and roundlets of curls, the whole face would look like a peasant's balalaika without strings. Important personages were horribly afraid of

this appearance. To avoid it much depended on the masterly way in which the hair was cut, and in which they were shaved – how the space was left between the whiskers and the moustaches and how the curls were formed, and where they were combed out – and from this – from the slightest trifle the whole expression of the face could be changed.”

For civilians, according to Nurse, it was not so difficult, because they were not subjected to such close scrutiny. From them only meekness was required, but from the military more was demanded – before their superiors they had to appear meek – but before everybody else they had to look fierce and stern.

“This is just what Arkadie, with his wonderful art, knew how to impart to the Count’s ugly and insignificant face.”

VII

The brother from the country was much uglier than the town Count, and besides, in the country, he had become quite "shaggy" and had "let such coarseness find its way into his face," that he himself was conscious of it, but there was nobody who could trim him because being stingy in every way he had sent his own hairdresser to Moscow into service, and even if he had not done so the face of the younger Count was covered with pimples, so that it was impossible to shave him without cutting him all over.

When he arrived in Orel he sent for the town barbers and said to them:

"To the one who can make me look like my brother, the Count Kamensky, I will give two gold pieces, but for him who cuts me, I have placed two pistols here on the table. If it is well done he may take the gold and depart – but if even one little pimple is cut, or if the whiskers are trimmed a hair's-breadth wrong – I will kill him on the spot."

But this was only to frighten them, as the pistols were only charged with blank cartridges.

At that time there were but few barbers in Orel, and even they only went about the public baths with basins applying cups and leeches, and possessed neither taste nor imagination. They knew it and refused to “transform” Kamensky. “The devil take you,” they thought, “both you and your gold.”

“We can’t do what you require,” they said, “because we are unworthy to touch such a personage, nor have we the proper razors. We have only common Russian razors, and for your Excellency’s face English razors are wanted. It is only the Count’s Arkadie who could do it.”

The Count ordered the barbers to be kicked out, and they were pleased to have got away so easily. Then he drove to his elder brother’s and said:

“Now listen to me, brother! I have come to ask you a great favour. Lend me your Arkadie before evening, to trim me properly and get me into a presentable condition. It is a long time since I shaved, and your town barbers don’t know how to do it.”

The Count answered his brother:

“The town barbers are naturally not worth

anything. I did not know there were any, because even my dogs are shorn by my own hairdressers. As for your request, you are asking me for an impossibility, for I have sworn, that as long as I live, Arkadie shall not dress anybody but me. Do you think I can break my word before my own slaves?"

The other answered:

"Why not? You have laid down the law, you may change it."

The Count, our master, replied that for him such reasoning was strange.

"If I began to act in that way, I should never be able to demand anything more from my people. Arkadie has been told, that such is my decree, and all know it, and for that reason he is better kept than the others, but if he ever dare to apply his art to anybody but me – I will have him thrashed to death and send him as a soldier."

"One or the other," his brother said. "Either thrash him to death or send him as a soldier; you can't do both."

"Very well," answered the Count, let it be as you wish. He shall not be thrashed to death, but almost to death, and then he shall be sent as a sol-

dier.”

“Is that your last word, brother?”

“Yes, that is my last word.”

“Is this the only reason?”

“Yes, the only one.”

“Well, in that case it is all right. I was beginning to think that your brother was worth less to you than a village serf. You need not break your word, simply send Arkadie to me to shave my poodle. Once there it will be my affair to see what he does.”

It was awkward for the Count to refuse this.

“Very well,” he said, “I will send him to shave the poodle.”

“Well, that’s all I want.”

He pressed the Count’s hand and drove away.

VIII

It was at the hour of twilight before the winter evening had set in, when they were lighting up, that the Count summoned Arkadie and said:

“Go to my brother’s house and shave his poodle.”

“Is that all I shall have to do?” asked Arkadie.

“Nothing more,” said the Count, “but return quickly to dress the hair of the actresses. Lyubov must be made up for three different parts, and after the performance, present her to me as St. Cecilia.”

Arkadie staggered.

“What is the matter with you?” the Count asked.

“Pardon me,” Arkadie answered, “I slipped on the carpet.”

“Take care,” remarked the Count, “that bodes no good!”

But to Arkadie’s sinking heart it was all the same if the omen were good or bad.

After the order to adorn me as St. Cecilia was given, he could hear and see nothing; he took up his leather case of implements and went out.

IX

He came to the Count's brother, who had already had candles lighted at the mirror, and again two pistols were placed side by side, but this time there were not two, but ten gold pieces laid beside them, and the pistols were not charged with blank cartridges but with Circassian bullets.

The Count's brother said:

"I have no poodle, but this is what I require: make my toilet and give me the most audacious mien and you shall receive ten gold pieces, but if you cut me I will kill you."

Arkadie stared before him, and stared at the gold, and then God only knows, what happened to him – he began to shave the Count's brother and trim his hair. In a few moments he had transformed him in his best style, then he slipped the gold into his pocket and said:

"Good-bye!"

"Go," answered the Count's brother, "but first I would like to know why you are so desperate. Why did you decide to do it?"

Arkadie answered:

“Why I decided is the profoundest secret of my soul.”

“Or perhaps you are charmed against bullets, and therefore are not afraid of pistols.”

“Pistols are trifles,” answered Arkadie, “I did not even think of them.”

“How so? Is it possible that you dared to think your Count’s word is more sacred than mine, and that I would not have shot you if you had cut me? If you are not charmed, you would have lost your life.”

At the mention of the Count, Arkadie staggered again, and said as if half in a dream:

“I am not charmed against bullets, but God has given me sense. Before you had had time to take the pistol in your hand to shoot me, I would have cut your throat with the razor.”

With that he rushed out of the house and returned to the theatre, just in time to dress my hair. He was trembling all over. As he arranged each curl he bent over me to blow it into its place, and always whispered the same words in my ear:

“Don’t be afraid, I will carry you off.”

X

The performance went off well, because we were all as if made of stone; inured to fear and to suffering: whatever was in our hearts we had to act so that nothing should be noticed.

From the stage we could see the Count and his brother – they looked just alike. When they came behind the scenes it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Only our Count was quite quiet, as if he had become kind. He was always so before the greatest ferocity.

We all were stupified and crossed ourselves:

“Lord have mercy, and save us! Upon whom will his brutality fall this time?”

We did not know as yet of Arkadie’s mad act of desperation, nor what he had done, but Arkadie himself knew that he would not be pardoned, and he was pale when the Count’s brother glanced at him, and mumbled something in a low voice in our Count’s ear. But I had very sharp ears, and heard what he said.

“As a brother, I give you this advice: fear him when he is shaving you with a razor!”

Our Count only smiled slightly.

I think that Arkadie heard too, because when he was making me up for the part of the Duchess in the last play he put, as he had never done before, so much powder on me, that the costumier, who was a Frenchman, began to shake it off and said:

“Trop beaucoup, trop beaucoup,” and taking a brush he flicked it away.

XI

When the whole performance was over the robe of the Duchess de Bourblanc was taken off and the dress of St. Cecilia was put on me. This was a simple white gown without sleeves, fastened only with little bows on the shoulders; we could not bear this costume. Well, and then Arkadie came to dress my hair in an innocent fashion, with a thin chaplet surrounding the head, as St. Cecilia is portrayed in pictures, and he saw six men standing outside the door of my closet. This meant, that as soon as he had made me up and returned to the door, he would be seized and taken to be tortured. And the tortures in store for us were such, that it was a hundred times better to be condemned to death. There

was the strappado and the cord; the head-vices and the thumbscrews; all these and many more. The state punishments were as nothing compared to them. Under the whole of the house there were secret cellars in which living men were kept chained up like bears. When you had to pass near them it sometimes happened that you heard the sounds of chains and the groans of men in fetters. They probably desired that news of their condition should reach the world, or that the authorities should take their part – but the authorities did not even dare to think of intervening. People were made to suffer long in those cellars; some all their lives. One lay there very long and composed some lines:

“Serpents will crawl on you and suck out your eyes, Scorpions will shed poison over your face.”

This verse he would repeat to himself until he had made himself quite terrified.

Others were chained up together with bears in such a way that the man was only one inch out of reach of the bear’s claws.

But nothing of this happened to Arkadie Il’ich, because when he rushed back into my closet he seized a table and in a moment had shattered the

window – more than this I cannot remember...

When I began to regain my senses, my feet were icy cold. I moved my legs and found that I was wrapped up in a large bear or wolf skin, and around me was complete darkness. The fast horses of the troika whisked along I knew not whither. Two men were alongside of me, we were all three huddled together in the broad sledge in which we were sitting – one was holding me – that was Arkadie Il'ich, the other was the driver, who hurried the horses on with all his might. The snow flew in clouds from under the horses' hoofs, while the sledge bent over first on one side, and then on the other. If we had not been sitting in the bottom of the sledge holding on with our hands, it would have been impossible to survive.

I heard their anxious talk, as if they expected something. I could only understand:

“They're coming! they're coming! Hurry up! hurry up!” and nothing more.

As soon as Arkadie Il'ich noticed I was conscious he bent over me and said:

“Lyuboshka, my little dove, they are chasing us; are you willing to die, if we cannot get away?”

I answered that I would consent with joy.

He had hoped to reach the Turkish village, Khrushchuk, where many of our people had taken refuge from the Count.

Suddenly we sped across the ice of a river, and then something like a dwelling appeared dimly before us, and dogs began to bark. The driver whipped up his horses, and turned the sledge sharply to one side, so that it tilted over and Arkadie and I were thrown out into the snow, while the driver, the sledge and the horses disappeared from our sight.

“Don’t be afraid,” Arkadie said, “this might have been expected, because the Yamshchik who drove us does not know me, and I do not know him. He agreed to help me carry you off for three gold pieces, but on condition of saving his own skin. Now we are in the hands of God. This is the village of Sukhaya Orlitsa – a bold priest lives here, who marries desperate couples and has buried many of our people. We will make him a present and he will hide us until evening, and marry us too, and in the evening the yamshchik will come for us and we shall steal away.”

XII

We knocked at the door and went into the passage. The priest himself opened the door. He was old, of small stature, and had one front tooth missing. His wife, a little old woman, began to blow up the fire. We both fell at his feet.

“Save us, let us warm ourselves, and hide us until evening.”

The Reverend Father asked:

“Who are you, my dear children? Have you booty, or are you only fugitives?”

“We have taken nothing from anybody,” answered Arkadie, we are fleeing from the brutality of Count Kamensky, and want to go to the Turkish village, Khrushchuk, where many of our people are already living. They will not find us there. We have got our own money, and we will give you a piece of gold for one night’s lodging, and if you marry us three pieces of gold. Marry us if you can; if not we can be wedded in Khrushchuk.”

“No, no, why can’t I marry you?” said the priest? I can do so? What is the good of being married in Khrushchuk? Give me five pieces of

gold altogether – I will marry you here.”

Arkadie handed him five gold pieces, and I took the “aquamarine ear-rings” out of my ears and gave them to the priest’s wife.

The priest took the gold and said:

“Oh, my dear children, it would be easy. I have bound together all sorts of people, but it is not well that you are the Count’s. Though I am a priest, still I fear his brutality. Well, never mind him, what God ordains, will be! Add another piece, or half a one, and hide yourselves.”

Arkadie gave him a sixth gold piece, and then he said to his wife:

“Why are you standing there, old woman? Give the fugitive a petticoat and some sort of jacket; one is ashamed to look at her, she is almost naked.” Then he wanted to take us to the church and hide us in the trunk among the vestments. The priest’s wife took me behind the partition, and was just about to clothe me, when we heard a jingling outside the door and somebody knocked.

XIII

Our hearts sank within us, and the Reverend Father whispered to Arkadie:

“It is evident, my dear child, you are not to be hidden in the trunk with the vestments. Get quickly under the feather-bed.”

And he said to me:

“You, my dear child, get in here,” saying which he locked me up in the clock-case, put the key in his pocket and then went to open the door to the new arrivals. One could hear that there were many people outside. Some stood at the door, and two men were already looking in at the windows.

Seven men entered the room, all beaters from the Count's hunt, with their iron balls and straps, long whips in their hands and rope leashes in their girdles. The eighth who followed them was the Count's steward, in a long wolfskin coat and high fur cap.

The clock-case I was hidden in had a grating in front with a thin old muslin curtain behind it, through which I was able to see all that was going on in the room.

The old priest lost courage, perhaps, because

he thought it a bad case. He trembled at sight of the steward, crossed himself and cried hastily:

“Ah, my dear children. Oh, my dear children, I know; I know what you are looking for, but I am in no way in fault towards the most serene Count, indeed I’m not in fault, in truth I’m not in fault!”

And each time he crossed himself, he pointed with his finger over his left shoulder at the clock-case in which I was hidden.

“All is lost,” I thought, when I saw this extraordinary behaviour.

The steward noticed this too, and said:

“We know everything. Give me the key of this clock-case.”

But the priest only crossed himself all the more.

“Indeed, my children, truly, my dear children. Pardon me, do not punish me! I have forgotten where I put the key. Verily, I have forgotten; in truth I have forgotten!”

And all the time with the other hand he stroked his pocket.

The steward too saw his incredible action, and took the key from the pocket and opened the clock-case.

“Crawl out, my pretty falcon – now I have caught you, your mate will soon appear.”

Indeed, Arkadie had already shown himself; he had thrown off the priest’s feather-bed and stood before us.

“Yes, there is nothing more to be done,” said he. “You have won; you can take me to the torture, but she is in no way to blame. I carried her off by force.”

Then he turned to the priest, and all he did was to spit in his face.

“My dear children,” said the priest, “do you see how my sacred office and faithfulness are outraged? Report this to the most serene Count.”

The steward answered him:

“Never mind, you need not fear, he will have to answer for all this.” And then he ordered Arkadie and me to be led away.

We were all placed in three sledges: in the first Arkadie, with arms and legs bound fast, was seated with the huntsmen, and I with a similar guard was driven off in the last sledge while the rest of the party were in the middle one.

All the people we met made way for us; perhaps they thought it was a wedding.

XIV

We soon arrived, and when we entered the Count's yard I lost sight of the sledge in which Arkadie had been brought. I was taken to my former room, and questioned by one after another:

“How long had I been alone with Arkadie?”

I told every one:

“Oh, not at all!”

Then I did not escape the fate for which I had probably been destined from my birth; not with love, but with aversion, and when I came to afterwards, in my little room, and buried my head in the pillow, to weep over my misfortune, I suddenly heard terrible groans under the floor.

We girls lived in the second story of a wooden building, and below there was a large lofty room, where we learned to sing and dance. From thence every sound could be heard in our rooms. The hellish King Satan had suggested the cruel idea that they should torture Arkadie under my room.

When I realized they were torturing him, I rushed to the door to go to him, but the door was

locked... I don't know what I wanted to do... I fell down... on the floor the sounds were still more distinct... there was neither a knife nor a nail at hand... there was nothing with which to end it... I took my own plait, wound it round my neck – wound it round... tighter and tighter, till I only heard ringing in my ears and saw circles before my eyes, then everything ceased... When I came to myself again I felt I was in a strange place in a large light hut. There were many calves round me – more than ten – such caressing little calves; they came up and licked me with their cool tongues – they thought they were sucking their mother – I awoke because they tickled. I looked round and thought, “Where am I?” Then I saw a woman come into the room, a tall, elderly woman dressed in striped blue linen with a striped linen kerchief on her head. She had a kind face.

The woman noticed I had come to my senses and began caressing me and told me I was still on the Count's estate, but in the calves' house.

“It was there,” explained Lyubov Onisimovna, pointing with her hand to the very furthest corner of the grey half-ruined fence.

XV

Her appearance in the farmyard was due to the suspicion that, perhaps, she was out of her mind. Such people, who were regarded as cattle, were sent to the farmyard to be observed, because the cow-herds and dairy-maids, being elderly and sedate people, it was thought, could best watch over mental diseases.

The old woman in the striped linen dress whom Lyubov Onisimovna first saw on her awakening, was very kind, and was called Drosida.

“In the evening, when she had finished her work,” Nurse continued, “she made up a bed for me of fresh oaten straw. She spread it out so well, that it was as soft as a feather-bed, and then she said: ‘My girl, I will explain everything to you. Whatever may have happened you can tell me. I, too, am like you, and have not worn this striped dress all my days, but have also known another life, though, God forbid I should think of it now. All I say is, don’t break your heart because you have been banished to the cattle-yard; it is better in banishment – only avoid this terrible flagon...’”

And she took out of the kerchief she wore round her neck, and over her bosom, a small white glass phial and showed it me.

“What is it?” I asked.

“This is a terrible flagon,” she answered, “and the poison of forgetfulness is in it.”

“Give me the poison of forgetfulness,” I said, “I want to forget everything.”

“Don’t drink – it is vodka,” she said. “Once I lost command of myself and drank – good people gave it to me... Now I can’t help it – I must have it. Don’t drink as long as you can help it; and don’t judge me that I take a sip – I am in great pain. You have still a comfort in the world. The Lord has released him from tyranny!”

“He is dead!” I shrieked, clutching hold of my hair, and I saw it was not my hair – it was white.

“What does this mean?”

“Don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid,” she said, your head had become white already there; when they released your neck from the plait. He is alive and saved from all further tyranny. The Count showed him such mercy as nobody had known before. When night comes I shall tell you all; but now I must take a sip – I must take a sip to stop

this burning – this heartache.”

And she sipped and sipped and at last went to sleep.

At night, when all were sleeping, Aunt Drosida again got up, went to the window in the dark, and I saw her standing there, sipping at her flagon, and then she hid it once more and asked in a whisper:

“Does grief sleep or not?”

“Grief does not sleep,” I answered.

Then she came to my bed and told me that the Count had sent for Arkadie after his punishment and said:

“You ought to have suffered all that I had threatened, but as you were my favourite, I will now show you mercy. Tomorrow I shall send you to be a soldier, as supernumerary, but as you were not afraid of the noble count, my brother, with his pistols, I shall open the path of honour for you. I do not wish you to be lower than your noble spirit deserves. I will write a letter asking that you should be sent at once to the war. You will not have to serve as a private soldier, but as a regimental sergeant – so show your courage. From this time you are no longer subject to my

will, but to the Tzar's."

"He is better off now," said the old woman, "he need not fear anything; he has only one authority over him; he need only fear falling in battle, and not the master's tyranny."

I believed her, and for three years dreamed every night of Arkadie fighting.

In this way three years passed. God was merciful to me. I was not recalled to the theatre, but I remained all the time living in the calves' but as Aunt Drosida's assistant. I was very happy there, because I was sorry for this woman, and when, at night, she had not had too much to drink, I liked to listen to her. She could remember how the old Count had been slaughtered by our people – and his own valet was the chief instigator – as nobody could endure his hellish cruelty any more. All this time I didn't drink and did much work for Aunt Drosida, and with pleasure too; the young cattle were like my children. I became so attached to the calves that when they had been fattened up and were taken away to be slaughtered for the table, I would make the sign of the cross over them, and for three days after could not cease crying. I was no longer of any use for the theatre because

my legs refused to work properly; I began to be shaky on them. Formerly my gait was of the lightest, but now, ever since Arkadie Il'ich had carried me off senseless in the cold, where I must have frozen them, I had no longer any strength in the toes for dancing. I became the same sort of woman in striped linen that Drosida was. God only knows how long I would have lived on in this melancholy way if something had not happened. One evening, when I was sitting in my hut, just before sunset, looking out of the window at the calves, suddenly a small stone fell into the room through the window. The stone was wrapped up in paper.

XVI

I looked around, to one side and to the other, and out of the window – nobody was to be seen. “Some one has thrown it over the fence,” I thought, “and it did not go where he wanted, but has fallen into our room.” Then I thought: “Shall I undo this paper or not? Perhaps it is better to unwrap it, because something is sure to be written on it. And it is sure to be something that somebody requires. I may be able to find it out and keep the secret, but I will throw the note with the stone in the same way to the person it concerns.”

I unwrapped it and began to read – I could not believe my own eyes.

XVII

The letter ran thus:

“My Faithful Lyubu!

“I have fought for the Tzar. I have shed my blood more than once, and have therefore been made an officer and gained honourable rank. Now I have come on leave to recover from my wounds, and am staying in the inn of the Pushkarsky suburb, with the innkeeper. Tomorrow I shall put on my decorations and crosses and appear before the Count, with all the money I was given to continue my cure: five hundred roubles, and I shall ask to be allowed to ransom you for myself, in the hope of being married at the altar of the Most High Creator.”

“And then,” continued Lyubov Onisimovna, with suppressed emotion, “he wrote: ‘Whatever misery you have gone through, and whatever you may have had to submit to, I will look upon as your affliction, and not as sin, nor do I consider it as weakness, but leave it to God, and I have only feelings of respect for you.’ It was signed Arkadie Il’ich.”

Lyubov Onisimovna burnt the letter to ashes

at once, and told nobody about it, not even the old woman, but prayed to God the whole night, not saying many words about herself, but always about him, because she said, "although he had written, that he was now an officer with decorations and wounds, I was still unable to imagine that the Count would behave to him any differently from before. I might even say, I feared he would beat him again."

XVIII

Early next morning Lyubov Onisimovna took the calves out into the sun and began feeding them out of a trough with crusts and milk, when suddenly sounds reached her from outside, that people "in freedom" were hurrying somewhere; they were running and talking quickly to each other.

"I could not distinguish a word of what they were saying," she continued, "but their words seemed to pierce my heart like a knife. When our labourer, Filip, who was carting dung, came into the yard, I said to him:

"Filipushka batushka (little father), have you heard where all the people are going and what

they are about, talking so curiously to each other?”

“They are going,” he said, “to see the officer whose throat was cut while he slept by the innkeeper of the Pushkarsky Inn. They say that his throat was cut quite through,” he said, “and five hundred roubles were stolen from him. The innkeeper was caught all bloody,” they say, “and the money was on him.”

And as he told me this I felt my legs give way.

It was quite true: that innkeeper had cut Arkadie Il'ich's throat... and he was buried here... in this very grave on which we are sitting... And there he is now beneath us... he is lying under this mound... You may have wondered why I always come here in our walks... I don't want to look there (she pointed to the dark grey ruins), but to sit here near him and... and drink a drop for the good of his soul...

XIX

Here Lyubov Onisimovna paused and considering her story finished, took the little flagon out of her pocket and either “drank to his memory” or “took a sip,” but I asked her:

“Who buried the famous artist here?”

“The Governor, my little dove, the Governor himself came to the funeral. Yes, indeed. He was an officer! At the funeral the deacon and the reverend father called him the ‘boyard Arkadie,’ and when the coffin was lowered into the grave the soldiers fired blank shots into the air. A year later in the market-place of Il’inka the innkeeper was punished with the knout by the executioner. He received fortythree strokes of the knout for Arkadie Il’ich and bore it – he remained alive, was branded, and sent to penal servitude. All our people who were able went to see it, but the old men, who could remember how the man was punished for the cruel Count, said that these forty-three lashes were so little because Arkadie was of the common people, and that for the Count the other man received a hundred and one lashes. By law, you know, an even number of

blows cannot be given, but it must always be an uneven number. The executioner from Tula was fetched on purpose then, and before the work he was given three tumblers of rum. Then he beat him so that the hundred strokes were only for torture, and the man remained alive, but the hundredth and first lash shattered his back-bone. When he was lifted up from the boards he was already dying... They covered him with a mat, and took him to the prison, but he died on the way. And the Tula executioner, they say, still continued to shout: "Give me another... Let me kill all you Orel fellows!"

"Well, and you yourself?" I asked; "did you go to the funeral?"

"Yes, I went. I went with all the others. The Count ordered that all from the theatre should be taken there, to see how one of our people could be worthy of so much honour."

"Did you take leave of him?"

"Yes, certainly. All approached and took leave of him, and I... he was changed... so much changed... I would not have known him... thin and very pale... they said that all the blood had run out, because his throat had been cut at about

midnight... Ah, the blood that he shed!”

She sat silent and pensive.

“And you yourself,” I asked, “what happened to you?”

She seemed to recover her senses and passed her hand over her brow.

“I can’t remember what happened at first,” she answered, “or how I went home. With all the others, of course... somebody must have led me... and in the evening Drosida Petrovna said:

“Now this mustn’t be – you don’t sleep, and at the same time you lie there as if made of stone. That’s not right – cry – there must be relief – your heart must have relief.’

“I can’t, Auntie,’ I said, ‘my heart burns like a live coal, and there is no relief.’

“Well,’ she said, ‘then the flagon can’t be avoided.’

“She filled a glass out of her bottle for me.”

“Till now I did not allow you to have it, and dissuaded you, but now it can’t be avoided. Pour it on the coal – take a sip.”

“I don’t want to,’ I said.

“Little fool! Who wants it at first. It is bitter – bitter. But the poison of sorrow is more bitter.

The coal must be drenched with this poison – it will be slaked for a moment – sip, sip quickly.”

“I emptied the whole flagon. It was disgusting, but I could not sleep without it, and the next night again... I drank... and now I can't go to sleep without it... I got my own flagon and buy vodka... You are a good boy, you will never tell mother about it, you must never betray poor people, because one must take care of poor people; poor people are all sufferers. On the way home I shall go round the corner to the dram-shop, and knock at the window. We shall not go into it, but I shall give my empty flagon, and they will shove me out a new one.”

I was touched and promised that I would tell no one, on any account, of her flagon.

“Thank you, little dove, never tell anyone; it is necessary for me.”

I can see her, and hear her, as if she were before me even now. Every night, when all were asleep, she would rise from her bed, so quietly that not even a bone cracked; she would listen, then creep on her long frozen legs to the window. There she would stand for a minute looking round, listening to see if mother were not coming

from her bedroom, then she tapped the neck of the flagon gently on her teeth, put it to her mouth and sipped... one drop, another and another. Was it coal that was being drenched? or Arkadie's memory commemorated? Then she returned to her bed, slipped under the bed-clothes, and soon she began to wheeze – gently, very gently – fu-fu, fu-fu, fu-fu – and fell asleep.

A more terrible and soul-harrowing commemoration of the dead, I have never seen in all my life.

On The Edge Of The World

I

Early one evening, during the Christmas holidays, we were sitting at tea in the large blue drawing-room of the episcopal palace. There were seven guests; the eighth was our host, a very aged archbishop, who was both sickly and infirm. All were highly educated men, and the conversation turned on the subject of our faith and our scepticism, of the preaching in our churches, and of the enlightening labours of our missionaries in the East. One of the guests, a certain captain B., of the Navy, who was a very kind-hearted man, but a great antagonist of the Russian clergy, maintained that our missionaries were quite unfit for their work, and was delighted that the government had now permitted foreign evangelical pastors to labour in the propagation of the Gospel. B. asserted his firm conviction that these preachers would have great success, not only among the Jews, but everywhere, and would prove, as surely as two and two make four, the in-

capacity of the Russian clergy for missionary work.

Our respected host had remained profoundly silent during this conversation; he sat in his large arm-chair, with a plaid over his legs, and seemed to be thinking of quite other things, but when B. ceased speaking the old ecclesiastic sighed and said:

“It appears to me, gentlemen, that you are wrong in controverting the Captain’s opinion. I think he is right: the foreign missionaries will certainly have great success here in Russia.”

“I am very happy, Vladyko, that you share my opinion,” answered Captain B., and after paying several becoming and delicate compliments to the Archbishop on his well-known intelligence, culture, and nobility of character, he continued:

“Your Eminence knows better than I do the defects of the Russian Church; there are, of course, many wise and good men to be found among the clergy – I do not wish to contest this – but they scarcely understand Christ. Their position – and other reasons – obliges them to explain everything in too narrow a manner...”

The Archbishop looked at him, smiled and

answered:

“Yes, Captain, my modesty would not be offended if I admit that perhaps I know the sorrows of the Church no less than you do, but justice would be offended if I decided to agree with you that in Russia our Lord Christ is understood less well than in Tübingen, London, or Geneva.”

“About that, Vladyko, one can argue too.”

The Archbishop smiled again and said:

“I see you are fond of arguing. What are we to do with you? We can talk, but avoid argument.”

With these words he took from the table a large album, richly bound and ornamented with carved ivory, and opening it, said:

“Here is our Lord. Come and see. I have collected in this book many representations of His face. Here He is sitting at the well with the Woman of Samaria – the workmanship is wonderful; it is evident that the artist understood the face and the moment.”

“Yes, Vladyko, I also think it is executed with understanding,” answered B.

“But is there not here in this Godly face too much softness? Does it not appear to you, that He is too indifferent as to how many husbands this

woman has had, and does not mind that her present husband is not her husband?"

All remained silent; the Archbishop noticed this and continued:

"I think that here a little more seriousness in the expression would not have been amiss."

"You are perhaps right, Vladyko."

"It is a very popular picture. I have seen it often, especially amongst ladies. Let us go on. Another great master. Here Christ is portrayed kissing Judas. What do you say to our Lord's face in this picture? What restraint and goodness! Is it not so? A beautiful picture!"

"A beautiful face."

"Still, is there not here too much effort at restraint? Look, the left cheek appears to me to tremble, and on the lips there seems disgust!"

"Certainly there is, Vladyko."

"Oh, yes, but Judas did not deserve it; he was a slave, and a flatterer – he could easily have produced such a feeling in everybody else – but certainly not in Christ, who was never fastidious, and was sorry for all. Well, we will pass on; this one does not quite satisfy us I think, although I know a great dignitary, who told me that he

could not imagine a more successful representation of Christ than this picture. Here we have Christ again – and from the brush of a great master, too – Titian. The wily Pharisee with a denarius is standing before the Lord. Look what an artful old man, but Christ... Christ... Oh! I am afraid! Look, is there not disdain on His face?”

“There might have been at the moment, Vladko.”

“Yes – there might – I do not deny it; the old man is vile, but I, when I pray, do not imagine the Lord thus, and think it would be unseemly. Is it not so?”

We answered that it would and agreed that to imagine the face of Christ with such an expression would be unseemly, especially when addressing prayers to Him.

“I quite agree with you in this and it recalls to my memory a dispute I once had on this very subject with a certain diplomatist, who only liked this Christ; but of course the occasion was a diplomatic one. Let us go on. After this one you see, I have pictures of the Lord where He is alone without any neighbours. Here you have a reproduction of the beautiful head done by the

sculptor Cauer. Good, very good. That cannot be denied. What do you think? And yet this academic head reminds me much less of Christ than of Plato. Here He is again, the sufferer. What a terrible expression Metsu has given him; I cannot understand why he has portrayed him beaten, thrashed and bleeding. It is certainly terrible! Swollen eye-lids, blood stains, bruises... It appears as if the very soul had been beaten out of Him, and to gaze only on a suffering body is too terrible. Let us turn the page quickly. He inspires sympathy and nothing more. Here we have Lafond, perhaps an insignificant artist, but much appreciated at present; as you see, he has understood Christ differently from all the preceding artists, and has represented Him differently, for himself and for us. The figure is well proportioned and attractive. The face is serene and dovelike. He looks out from under pure brows, and how easily the hair seems to stir; here are curls; there the locks seem to have fluttered and rested on the forehead. Beautiful, is it not? And in His hand there is a flaming heart, surrounded by a thorny wreath. This is the 'Sacré Cœur,' that the Jesuit Fathers preach about. Somebody told me it

was they who had inspired M. Lafond to paint this image; however, it also pleases those who think they have nothing in common with the Jesuit Fathers. I remember once on a hard, frosty day, I happened to call on a Russian Prince in Petersburg, who showed me the wonders of his mansion, and it was there in his winter-garden – not quite in the right setting – that I saw this image of Christ for the first time. The picture in its frame stood on a table, before which the Princess was seated, lost in thought. The surroundings were beautiful: palms, arums, banana-plants, warbling and fluttering birds, and she was lost in thought. About what? She said to me she was seeking Christ. It was then that I was able to examine this portrait. Look how effectively He really stands out, or it would be better to say emerges from this darkness; there is nothing behind him: not even the conventional prophets who have wearied all by their importunity, and are running in their rags after the imperial chariot, and catching hold of it. There is nothing of this – only darkness... a world of imagination. This lady – may God accord her health – was the first to unfold to me the secret of how to find

Christ; after which I do not dispute with the Captain that the foreign preachers will not only show Him to the Jews, but to all who wish Him to come under the palms and banana plants to listen to the singing of canaries. But will He come there? May it not be some other who will come to them in His guise? I must own to you, I would willingly exchange this elegant Christ surrounded by canaries for this other Jewish head of Guercino's, although it too only has to me the appearance of a good and enthusiastic rabbi, according to the description of M. Renan, whom one could love and listen to with pleasure... You see how many different ways there are of understanding and portraying Him, Who is our only need. Let us now close the book and turn to the corner behind your backs: there again we have the image of Christ – but this time it is indeed not a face but a real image. Here we have the typical Russian representation of our Lord: the gaze is straight and simple, the forehead is high, which, as you know, even according to Lavater's system, denotes the capacity for elevated worship of God; the face has expression, but no passion. How did our old masters attain such charm of representation? That

has remained the secret, which died with them and their rejected art. Simplicity – nothing more simple could be wished for in art. The features are only slightly marked, but the effect is complete. He is somewhat rustic, certainly, but for all that inspires adoration. I do not know what others feel, but for me our simple old master understood better than all others, Whom he was painting. He is rustic, I repeat, and He will not be invited into the conservatory to listen to the singing of canaries, but what of that? In each land as He revealed Himself, so He will walk; to us He entered in the guise of a slave, and as such He walks among us, not finding where to lay His head, from Petersburg to Kamchatka. It is evident, in our country it pleases Him to accept disgrace from those who drink His blood, and at the same time shed it. And thus, in the same measure as our national art has understood how to portray the outward features of Christ more simply and successfully, so, to my mind, our national spirit has perhaps also attained nearer to the true understanding of His inner character. Would you like me to relate to you an experience which perhaps is not devoid of interest, bearing on this sub-

ject?"

"Ah, please relate it, Vladyko; we all beg you to do so."

"Ah, you beg me. Very well, then, I beg you to listen, and not to interrupt my story which I am going to tell somewhat in detail."

We cleared our throats, settled ourselves comfortably in our chairs, so as not to interrupt by moving, and the Archbishop began.

II

Gentlemen, we must transport ourselves in imagination many years back; it was at the time when I, still a comparatively young man, was appointed as bishop, to a very distant Siberian diocese. I was by nature of an ardent temperament, and loved to have much work to do; I was, therefore, not sorry but actually very pleased to receive this distant appointment. Thank God, I thought, that for the beginning I have not merely been nominated to cut the hair of the candidates for Holy Orders, or to settle the quarrels of drunken deacons, but have been given real live work to do, which can be accomplished with love. I meant by this our not very successful mission-

ary labours, to which the Captain alluded this evening, at the commencement of our conversation. I journeyed to my new diocese with zealous enthusiasm, and with the most extensive plans, but all my ardour was suddenly cooled, and what is more important, my whole mission would have been rendered unsuccessful, if a marvellous event had not given me a salutary lesson.

“A marvellous event!” exclaimed one of his hearers, forgetting the Archbishop’s request not to interrupt the narrative, but our indulgent host was not angered at this, but only answered:

“Yes, gentlemen, the word slipped from my lips, and I need not take it back; the thing that happened to me and which I am about to relate to you, was certainly marvellous, and the marvels began to show themselves to me almost from the first day of my sojourn in my half-savage diocese. The first thing a Russian bishop does on entering on the work of his new bishopric, wherever it may be, is, of course, to inspect the condition of the churches and to see how the services are conducted. I, too, did this. I gave orders that the extra books and crosses should be removed from the altars of all the churches – there are often so

many, that the altars in our churches look more like exhibitions of church furniture in shops than altars. I ordered as many round carpets as were needed, and had them laid down in the proper places, so that they should not be whisked about before my nose, and thrown down under my feet when required. With difficulty, and after threatening them with fines and punishments, I at last stopped the deacons from seizing hold of my elbows while I was officiating, and from ascending the altar steps and standing beside me, and above all I made them cease cuffing and pinching the necks of the poor ordinands, who often suffered much pain in those regions, for more than a fortnight after receiving these blessings of the Holy Ghost. None of you will believe how much trouble all this occasioned me, and what an amount of vexation was caused to an impatient man, such as I was then, and to my shame, I must confess, am still. Having accomplished this, I had to begin the second episcopal task, a work of the greatest importance, to assure myself that the clergy knew how to read, if not written characters, at least printed books. This examination took a long time, and often caused me great an-

noyance, but sometimes also amusement. A deacon or sacristan who is illiterate, or one who could read but not write, is, perhaps, even still to be found in villages or in small provincial towns in the interior of Russia, as was proved some few years ago, when for the first time they had to give a receipt when their salaries were paid out to them; but in those days, especially in Siberia, it was a most common occurrence. I ordered them to be taught. They, of course, complained bitterly and said I was tyrannical; the parishoners complained that there were no lectors, and said the bishop was ruining the Church. What was to be done? I began to send, in place of such deacons, those who were able at least to read 'by heart' – and, good Lord! – what people I saw! Lame men, stutterers, men with squints, men who spoke through their noses; some were crazy and some were even possessed. There was one who instead of saying, "Come, let us bow down before the Lord, our God," shut his eyes like a quail and mumbled, "Co-do-be-lo-go, Co-do-be-lo-go," and was so engrossed in it, that it was difficult to stop him. Another – and this one was really possessed – became so absorbed by the rapidity of

his own reading, that when he came to certain words, which brought to his mind an association of ideas, he seemed forced to succumb to it. Such words were among others, "in heaven." He would begin to read, "As it was in the beginning, in every hour, in heaven," and suddenly something would snap in his head and he continued, "hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come." No matter what trouble I gave myself with this block-head it was all in vain. I ordered him to read what was in the book – he would read, "As it was in the beginning, in every hour in heaven," and then, suddenly shutting the book, would continue, "hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come," and mumble on to the end, till he pronounced in a loud voice, "but deliver us from the evil one." Only here he was able to stop; it turned out that he could not read at all. After seeing that the deacons were able to read, I had to look into the morals of the seminarists; here again I made marvelous discoveries. The seminary was greatly demoralized; the pupils were addicted to drink, and were so indecorous that, for example: one of the students of the faculty of philosophy finished the evening prayer in the presence of the inspector

thus: “My hope is the Father, my refuge the Son, my protection the Holy Ghost: Holy Trinity – my compliments to you.” In the faculty of theology this is what occurred. After dinner the student, who had to say grace, said: “As Thou hast satisfied me with the blessings of this earth, do not deprive me of the Heavenly Kingdom,” and another called to him from among the crowd of students: “You pig, first you overeat yourself and then you ask to be taken into the Heavenly Kingdom.”

It was necessary as soon as possible to find a suitable principal, who would act according to my ideas, who was also a tyrant like myself; the time was short, and the choice limited, but I found one at last: he proved to be tyrannical enough, but beyond that you could ask for nothing of him.

“I will take the whole matter up in a military manner, most reverend Father,” said he, “so as at once...”

“Very well,” I answered, “take the matter up in a military way.”

And he did so. The first order he gave was: that the prayers were not to be read but sung in chorus, so as to avoid all mischievous tricks, and

that the singing should be led by him. When he entered, all were silent and remained without uttering a sound until he gave the order, "prayer!" and began to sing. But all this he did in a manner that was almost too military. He would give the order, "pray-er!" Then the seminarists began singing: "Our eyes, O Lord, are turned to Thee." In the middle of a word he would shout "Stop," and call one of them to him.

"Frolov, come here!"

He approached.

"You are Bagréev?"

"No, sir, I am Frolov."

"Ah, ah! so you are Frolov? Why did I think that you were Bagréev?"

Then there was again laughter, and again complaints were made to me. No, I saw – this military system did not answer, and at last after much difficulty I found a civilian who, though not so tyrannical, acted with more wisdom: before the scholars he pretended to be the weakest of good-natured fellows, but always calumniated me, and related everywhere the horrors of my tyranny. I knew this, but noticing that this measure proved efficacious, did not object to his sys-

tem.

I had hardly, by my tyranny, brought the seminary into subjection when miracles began to occur among the adults. One day I was informed that a load of hay had been driven into the inside of the Arch-presbyter of the Cathedral, and could not get out again. I sent to find out what had really happened. They said it was quite true. The Arch-priest was very corpulent; after the liturgy, he had gone to christen a child in a merchant's house, where he had filled himself plentifully with the good viands set before him, from which cause, or owing to another fruit – a wild one – he had found there, and partaken of not less plenteously; deep and stupid intoxication had resulted. This was not enough. He went home, lay down and slept for four hours, rose and drank a mug of kvass, and lay down again with his breast to the window, to talk to somebody standing below – when suddenly a cart-load of hay drove into him. All this was so stupid that one could not help being disgusted, but when I heard the end of the story, I was, perhaps, even more disgusted. The next morning the lay-brother brought me my boots and said, “Thank God, the cart of hay has

already been driven out of the Father Arch-priester.”

“I am very pleased,” I said, “to hear such good news, but tell me the story more fully.”

It appeared that the Arch-priester, who owned a two-storeyed house, had lain down, when he came home at a window under which there was a gate-way, and at that very moment a cartload of hay had driven into it, and he, in his fuddled sleepy state, imagined that it had driven into his inside. It is incredible, nevertheless it was so; “credo, quia absurdum.”

How was this miracle-worker saved?

Also by a miracle – he would not consent to rise on any account, because he had a cartload of hay in his inside. The physician could find no remedy for this malady. Then a sorceress was called in. She twisted and turned about, tapped him here and there, and ordered a cart to be loaded with hay and driven out of the yard; the sick man imagined it had emerged from his inside, and recovered.

Well, after this you could do what you liked for him; but he had done for himself: he had amused the good people, he had summoned a

sorceress and had profited by her idolatrous enchantments. Here such things could not be hidden under a bushel, but were proclaimed on the highways: "Those are fine priests – they are no good. They themselves send for our sorcerers to drive away shaytan." There was no end to the nonsensical talk. For a time long I trimmed these smoking icon lamps, as well as I could, and my parochial duties were rendered unbearably wearisome to me by them, but at last the long awaited and long desired moment arrived, when I could devote myself entirely to the work of enlightening the wild sheep of my flock, that were grazing without a shepherd.

I collected all the documents relating to this question, and began to study them so diligently that I scarcely ever left my writing-table.

III

When I became acquainted with all the accounts of the missionaries work, I was even more dissatisfied with their activity than I was with the work of my diocesan clergy; the converts to Christianity were extraordinarily few, and it was clear that the greater number of these were only paper converts. In reality most of those converted to Christianity had returned to their former faith – Lamaism or Shamanism, while others formed from all these faiths the strangest and most absurd mixture: they prayed to Christ and His Apostles; to Buddha and his Bodhisattvas; to warm boots, and felt bags containing Shamanistic charms. This double faith was not only practised by the nomad tribes, but was to be found almost everywhere in my flock, which was composed not of any single branch of one nationality but of scraps and fragments of different tribes. God only knows from whence and how they had been brought together. They were poor of speech and still poorer of understanding and imagination. Seeing that everything concerning the missionaries was in such a chaotic state, I conceived

the very lowest opinion of my fellow workers, and treated them with harshness and impatience. Altogether I had become very irritable, and the title of "tyrant" that had been given me began to be appropriate. The poor monastery, which I had chosen for my abode, and where I wished to found a school for the natives, suffered most from my anger and impatience. When I made enquiries of the monks, I learned, that in the town almost everyone spoke Yakutsk, but of the monks there was only one who could speak the native dialect; he was a very old monk and priest, Father Kiriak, but he too was of no use for the work of preaching, and even if he had been of any good, "you might kill him, but he would not go to preach to the savages."

"What is the meaning of this disobedience?" I asked. "How dare he? He must be told that I do not like this, and will not allow it."

The Ecclesiarch answered me that he would convey him my message, but it was useless to expect obedience from Kiriak, because this was not the first time; two of my predecessors, who had succeeded each other quickly, had tried severity with him, but he was obstinate and only

answered:

“I will willingly give my soul for my Saviour, but I will not go to baptize there (that is in the desert).” He even asked, they said, that he might be deprived of his office rather than be sent there. And for this disobedience for many years he had been forbidden to officiate in church, but even that did not trouble him; on the contrary he would do the most menial work with pleasure: sometimes he acted as watchman, at others as bell-ringer. He was beloved by all: by the brothers, by the laymen, and even by the heathen.

“What? I am astonished. Is it possible even by the heathen?”

“Yes, Vladyko, even some of the heathen come to see him.”

“What about?”

“They respect him from the old days when he used to go and preach to them.”

“What was he like then, in those old days?”

“He used to be the most successful missionary, and converted numbers of people.”

“What has happened to him then? Why has he given up the work?”

“It is impossible to understand, Vladyko. Sud-

denly something happened to him; he returned from the desert, brought the chrismatory and the pyx, placed them on the altar and said: ‘I place them here and will not take them again until the hour arrives.’”

“What hour is he awaiting? What does he mean by this?”

“I don’t know, Vladyko.”

“Is it possible that none of you have been able to find it out from him? O, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? How is it that this thing that concerns all does not interest you? Remember the Lord said He would spew out of His mouth those that were neither cold nor hot; then what do you deserve who are absolutely cold?”

But my Ecclesiarch tried to justify himself:

“We tried to find out in every way, Vladyko, but he always only answered: ‘No, my dear children, this work is no joke – it is terrible... I can’t look on it.’”

“But when I asked what was ‘terrible,’ the Ecclesiarch was unable to answer me; he could only say they thought Father Kiriak had had a revelation while he was preaching. That provoked me.

I must confess I am not fond of these ‘hearers of voices,’ who perform miracles while still alive and boast of having direct revelations, and I have my reasons for not liking them. I therefore ordered this refractory monk Kiriak to come to me at once, and not satisfied with being already considered stern and tyrannical, I frowned terribly and was prepared to wreak my anger upon him as soon as he appeared. But when I saw before my eyes a quiet little monk, there seemed nothing for my angry glances to crush. He was clad in a faded cotton cassock, with a coarse cloth cowl; he was dark and sharp featured, but he entered boldly, without any appearance of fear, and he was the first to greet me:

“Good morning, Vladyko!”

I did not reply to his greeting, but said sternly:

“What are these tricks you are playing here, friend?”

“What, Vladyko?” he answered. “Forgive me, be gracious. I am a little hard of hearing – I did not hear all.”

I repeated my words still louder:

“Now then you understand?”

“No,” he answered, “I can understand noth-

ing.”

“Why do you not want to go to preach, and refuse to baptize the natives?”

“I went and baptized, Vladyko, until I had experience.”

“Yes, but when you had experience you stopped.”

“I stopped.”

“What was the reason?”

He sighed and answered:

“The reason thereof is in my heart, Vladyko, and He to whom all hearts are opened sees that it is too hard and above my feeble strength... I can't.”

And with these words he fell at my feet.

I raised him and said:

“Do not bow down to me but explain. Have you received a revelation? Is that it? Or have you conversed with God Himself?”

He answered with meek reproach:

“Do not laugh at me, Vladyko, I am not Moses, the chosen servant of God, that I should converse with the Almighty. It is a sin for you to think that.”

I was ashamed of my anger, and relenting to-

wards him said:

“What is it then? What is the matter?”

“The matter is evidently that I am not Moses, Vladyko, that I am timid and know the measure of my strength. Out of heathen Egypt I can lead them – but I will not be able to cleave the Red Sea, or lead them out of the wilderness and will only cause simple hearts to murmur to the great offence of the Holy Ghost.”

Noticing the imagery of his animated speech, I began to think that he was himself one of the sectaries and asked him:

“What miracle has brought you into the bosom of the Church?”

“I have been in Her bosom from my infancy,” he answered, “and will remain there till I die.”

He then related to me the very simple and strange story of his life. His father had been a priest, who had early become a widower and was deprived of his post for having married a couple in an illegal manner, so that during the whole of his remaining life he was unable to find another, but became the chaplain of an old lady of high position, who passed her life in travelling from place to place and fearing to die without receiv-

ing the sacrament of penitence, kept this priest always with her. Whenever she drove out he sat on the back seat of her carriage; if she entered a house to pay a visit he had to wait for her in the antechamber with the lackeys. Can you imagine a man having to pass his whole life in that way? At the same time, as he had no church of his own, he was entirely dependent on the pyx, which he carried about with him in his breast pocket, and he was even able to beg some crumbs from this lady so as to send his boy to school. In this way they arrived in Siberia. The lady came to visit her daughter, who was the wife of the governor of some place in Siberia, and the priest with the pyx in his pocket travelled with her sitting on the front seat of her carriage. But as the way was long and the lady intended to remain some time with her daughter, the priest, who loved his little son, had refused to accompany her unless his boy could come too. The old lady reflected and hesitated long, but seeing that she could not overcome his affection for his son, at last consented to take the boy with her. So he had made the journey from Europe to Asia, having as his duty on the way to guard, by his presence, a portmanteau,

that was attached to the foot-board behind the carriage, to which he himself was tied to prevent him from falling off if he dozed. It was there in Siberia that his mistress and his father had both died, and he, left alone, and unable, owing to his poverty, to finish his schooling, became a soldier and had to escort prisoners from one halting place to another. Having a good eye, he was ordered one day to fire at an escaped convict, and though he did not even take proper aim, he sent a bullet into him, and without intending to do so, to his great grief killed him. From that day he never ceased suffering, and was so tormented that he was unfit for military service and became a monk. His excellent behaviour was noticed, and his knowledge of the native language and his religious fervour caused him to be persuaded to become a missionary.

I listened to the old man's simple but touching story, and I became dreadfully sorry for him, so in order to change my tone towards him I said:

“So what you are suspected of is not true, You have not seen any miracles?”

But he answered:

“Why should it not be true, Vladyko?”

“How so? Then you have seen miracles?”

“Who has not seen miracles, Vladyko?”

“Yet...”

“Why ‘yet’? Wherever you look there are miracles – there is water in the clouds, the earth is borne up by the air like a feather; here we are, you and I – dust and ashes – but we move about and think; that is also a miracle to me; we shall die and turn to dust, but our soul will go to Him who has placed it in us. It is a miracle to me that it will go naked, without anything? Who will give it wings to fly away like a dove and rest there?”

“Well, we will leave that for others to discuss; but answer me quite plainly. Have you ever in your life had any unusual manifestations or anything else of that nature?”

“In a measure, I have.”

“Well, what were they?”

“Vladyko,” he replied, “from my childhood I have been greatly favoured by the grace of God and though unworthy, I was twice the object of wonderful interventions.”

“H’m! Tell me about it.”

“The first time, Vladyko, was in my early childhood. I was still in the third class at school,

and I was longing to go for a walk in the fields. Three of us boys went to the games master to ask for permission but were unable to obtain it, and decided to tell a lie; I was the ringleader. 'Let us cheat them all,' I said. 'Come along and shout: They have let us off, they have let us off.' We did so, and at our word all the boys ran out of the class rooms, and rushed into the fields to bathe and fish. In the evening I became afraid and thought 'what will happen to me when we return home. The head master will flog us.' We got back and saw the rods were already prepared in a bowl. I ran away quickly and hid myself in the bath-house under a bench, and began to pray: 'Good Lord, though I know I must be flogged, please cause me not to be flogged.' In the ardour of my faith, I prayed so earnestly for it that I even perspired and grew weak; but suddenly a wonderful fresh coolness blew over me and something moved in my heart like a warm little dove, and I began to believe that the impossibility of being saved was possible, and felt calm and so daring that I was afraid of nothing; all seemed at an end. Then I fell asleep. When I awoke, I heard my school-fellows shouting gaily, Kiryusha, Kiry-

usha! Where are you? Come out quickly; they won't flog you. The inspector has come and we have been allowed to go out for a walk.”

“Your miracle,” I said, “is a very simple one.”

“It is simple, Vladyko, as simple as the Trinity in Unity – a simple entity,” he answered, and added with indiscribable joy in his eyes: “But, Vladyko, how I felt Him! How He came to me, O, my Father, the little Comforter! How He surprised and rejoiced me! You can judge for yourself. He who enfolds the whole universe, seeing the childish grief of a small boy, under the bench in the bath-house, crept up, bringing fresh coolness to his soul, and came to dwell in his little bosom.”

I must confess to you, that above all the representations of the Deity, I love most this Russian God of ours Who creates for Himself a dwelling “in the little bosom.” Yes – whatever those Greeks may say, and however much they may try to prove that it is to them we owe our knowledge of God, yet it was not they who revealed them to us, it was not in their magnificent Byzantinism or in the smoke of incense-burners that we discovered Him. But He is verily our own and He walks about everywhere quite simply in our own way,

even under the benches of the bath-house; without frankincense He comes, entering into the soul with cool simplicity, and like a little dove takes refuge in the warm bosom.”

“Continue, Father Kiriak,” I said, “I am waiting for the story of the other miracle.”

“I will tell you about the other at once, Vlad-
dyko. It happened when I was further from Him –
of little faith – when I was on the way here, sit-
ting at the back of the carriage. It had been neces-
sary to take me out of the Russian school and
bring me here just before the examinations. I did
not mind this as I was always first in my class,
and would have been accepted in the seminary
even without an examination; but the head-mas-
ter gave me a certificate in which he wrote: ‘in
every subject moderately good.’ ‘I give you this,’
he said, ‘on purpose; for our reputation, so that
you should have to pass an examination there,
and they might see what scholars we look upon
as moderately good.’ Both my father and I were
terribly unhappy about it; and to add to this,
though my father had ordered me to continue
learning all the way, one day while sitting on the
foot-board behind the carriage I had the misfor-

tune to fall asleep and in crossing a river, at the ford, lost all my books. I cried bitterly at the loss, and my father gave me a severe flogging for it at the wayside inn; nevertheless before we reached Siberia I had forgotten all this and began again to pray like a little child: 'Lord, help me! Let me be accepted without an examination.' It was no good, however much I prayed to Him; they looked at my certificate and ordered me to go up for examination. I came up sad of heart, all the other boys were jolly, playing leap-frog, and jumping over each other – I alone was sad – I and another thin and miserable-looking boy who was sitting but not learning and told me it was from weakness – a fever had attacked him. I sat there looking into a book, and began in my mind to bid defiance to the Lord: well, what now, I thought, have I not prayed to Thee with all my might, and Thou hast done nothing for me. Then I rose in order to get a drink of water, when suddenly, somewhere in the middle of the room, something hit me on the back of my head and threw me to the ground... I thought this is probably my punishment! God has not helped me in any way, and now He has given me a blow. Then I looked

round; no; it was only that sick boy, who had tried to jump over me, but had not the strength and had fallen, and knocked me down too. The other boys said to me: ‘Look, you new boy, your arm is hanging loose.’ I felt it; the arm was broken. I was taken to the hospital and put to bed. My father came to see me there, and said: ‘Don’t grieve, Kiryusha, because of this you have been accepted without an examination.’ Then I understood how God had settled all these things and began to cry. The examination was quite an easy one, so easy that it would have been child’s play for me. It meant that I, little fool, did not know what I asked for but it had been nevertheless accomplished to make me wiser.

“Ah, Father Kiriak, Father Kiriak,” said I, “you are an extraordinarily consoling man.” I embraced him several times, dismissed him without asking him anything further, and ordered him to come to me from the next day to instruct me in the Tanguis and Yakut languages.

IV

The sternness I had at first shown to Kiriak I now directed on the other monks of my little monastery, in whom, I confess, I did not find the simplicity of Kiriak, nor any good works useful to the faith; they lived, so to speak, as outposts of Christianity, in a heathen land, and yet the lazy beggars did nothing – there was not even one among them who had taken the trouble to learn the language of the natives.

I admonished them, I admonished them privately, and at last thundered at them from the pulpit the words Tzar Ivan addressed to the reverend Guri: “it is vain to call the monks angels – they cannot be compared with angels, nor have they any likeness to them, but they should resemble the Apostles, whom Christ sent to teach and baptize.”

Kiriak came the next day to give me a lesson and fell at my feet.

“What is it? What is it?” I asked lifting him up, “worthy teacher it is not seemly that you should bow to the ground before your pupil.”

“No, Vladyko, you have comforted me greatly,

you have comforted me as I never hoped to be comforted in this world.”

“In what way, man of God,” I said, “have I pleased you so greatly?”

“In that you have ordered the monks to learn, and when they go forth, first to teach and then to baptize. You are right, Vladyko, to make this rule; Christ Himself ordered it, and His disciples say: ‘Where the spirit has not been taught there can be no good.’ They can all baptize but to teach the Word they are not able.”

“Brother, you have understood me in a wider sense than I intended,” said I; “according to you, children need not be baptized either.”

“For Christian children it is different, Vladyko.”

“Well, yes, but Prince Vladimir would not have baptized our forefathers at all if he had waited long for them to learn.”

But he answered me:

“Ah, Vladyko, it might perhaps really have been better to have taught them first. You know well – you have read the chronicles – the brew was boiled too quickly – ‘inasmuch as His piety was joined with fear.’ The metropolitan Platon

said wisely: ‘Vladimir was too hasty, and the Greeks were cunning, they baptized the ignorant – and unlearned.’ Are we to imitate their haste and cunning? You know they are ‘even flatterers to this day.’ And thus we are baptized in the name of Christ, but we are not clothed in Christ. It is futile to baptize in this way, Vladyko.”

“How is it futile, Father Kiriak?” I asked. “What is this that you preach, my friend?”

“Why not, Vladyko?” he answered. “Is it not written in the Holy Books that baptism with water alone is not sufficient to ensure eternal life?”

I looked at him and answered seriously:

“Listen to me, Father Kiriak, you are talking heresy.”

“No, I am not heretical,” he replied. “I do but repeat the orthodox words of the holy Cyril of Jerusalem: Simon can wash the bodies of the magi with water in the font, but he cannot illuminate their hearts with the Spirit; the body can be anointed above and below, but the soul cannot be buried and rise again.’ Although he had been baptized, although he had washed his body, he was no Christian. The Lord liveth and the soul liveth, Vladyko – remember is it not written there

will be those that are baptized who will hear: Verily I say unto you, I know you not,' and the unbaptized, who for their deeds of righteousness will be saved and enter, because they observed righteousness and truth. Is it possible you deny this?"

Well, I thought, we could wait to talk about this, and said to him:

"Let us learn the heathen tongue, brother, and not the language of Jerusalem; begin to teach me, and be not angry if I am slow of comprehension."

"I am not angry, Vladyko," he answered – and in truth he was a wonderfully good-natured and open-hearted old man, and taught me admirably. He disclosed to me with quickness and intelligence all the secrets of acquiring this speech, which is so poor and possesses so few words that it can scarcely be called a language. It is certainly nothing more than the language of the animal life, and not of the intellectual life; nevertheless, it is difficult to master; the phraseology is laconic, and it has no periods; from this arises the difficulty of all attempts at translation into this speech of any text expressed according to the rules of a developed language, possessing com-

plicated periods and subjunctive propositions, while poetical and figurative expressions are impossible to render; besides the meaning they convey would be quite unintelligible to this poor people. How could you explain to them the meaning of the following words: “Be as crafty as the serpent and as gentle as the dove,” when they have never seen a serpent or a dove, and are even unable to form an idea of them. It is impossible to find words that they would understand to express martyr, baptist, forerunner, and if you translated the Holy Virgin into their language – “Shochmo Abya” – they would understand, not our Virgin Mary, but some sort of Shamonist female deity – in fact, a goddess. Of the merits of the Holy Blood, or of any other mysteries of our faith it is even more difficult to speak. You could not think of constructing for them any theological system, or of mentioning a child born of a Virgin – without a husband – they would either understand nothing, and that might be best, or else they would perhaps laugh in your face.

All this Kiriak communicated to me, and imparted it so admirably that when I had learned

the spirit of the language, I could understand the whole spirit of this poor people; and what amused me more than anything about myself was that Kiriak had succeeded in the most imperceptible manner in removing all my assumed sternness: the pleasantest relations developed between us; they were so easy and so playful, that when I had finished my lessons, still retaining this playful tone, I ordered a pot of gruel to be prepared, placed upon it a silver rouble and a piece of black cloth for a cassock and, like a scholar, who has finished his studies, took it myself to Kiriak's cell.

He lived under the belfry in such a small cell, that when I entered there was no room for the two of us to turn round and the vaults seemed to press on the crowns of our heads; but everything looked tidy, and in the dim grated window there was even an aster growing in a broken cooking pot.

I found Kiriak at work; he was threading fish scales, and sewing them on to linen.

“What are you doing there?” I asked.

“Little ornaments, Vladyko.”

“What sort of little ornaments?”

“Ornaments for the little savage girls. They come to the fair and I give them ornaments.”

“So that’s how you give pleasure to the unbelieving heathen.”

“Oh, Vladyko! Why do you always keep on saying the unbelieving, the unbelieving? All were created by one God, these poor blind people ought to be pitied.”

“They must be enlightened, Father Kiriak.”

“To enlighten?” he said. “It is a good thing Vladyko, to enlighten. Yes, enlighten, enlighten —” and he murmured, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.”

“I have come to you,” I said, “to thank you for teaching me, and have brought you a pot of gruel.”

“Excellent!” he said. “Sit down to the pot of gruel yourself, and be my guest.”

He asked me to be seated on a block of wood, and himself sat down on another, and placing my gruel on a bench between us said:

“Well, Vladyko, won’t you partake of it with me? It’s your gift and I bow to the ground and thank you for it.”

So we began to partake of the gruel, the old

monk and I, and conversed the while.

V

I must confess I was greatly interested to know what it was that had induced Kiriak to give up his successful missionary work, and caused him now to regard it so strangely, and to behave so reprehensibly and even so criminally, according to the views I held at that time.

“Of what shall we converse? After so warm a welcome we must have a good talk. Tell me, don’t you know how we are to teach the Faith to these natives, whom you always take under your protection?”

“We must teach them, Vladyko, we must teach them, and show them a good example by good living.”

“But how are we to teach them, you and I?”

“I do not know, Vladyko; one ought to go to them and teach them.”

“That’s just what is wanted.”

“Yes, they must be taught, Vladyko; in the morning the seed must be sown, and in the evening, likewise, you must not give your hand any rest – you must sow the whole time.”

“You talk very well – why don’t you do so?”

“Excuse me, Vladyko, do not ask me.”

“No, you must tell me.”

“If you require me to tell you, then explain to me why I should go there?”

“To teach and baptize.”

“To teach? I am incapable of teaching, Vladyko!”

“Why? Is it the devil who won’t allow you?”

“No, no! What is the devil? What danger is he to a Christian? You have but to make the sign of the cross with one finger, and he will disappear, but the little devils interfere; that’s the trouble.”

“What little devils?”

“The wearers of epaulets, the philanthropists, the pettifoggers, the officials with all their red tape.”

“These seem to be stronger than Satan himself.”

“Of course; you know, this is a race that nothing will exorcise, not even prayer and fasting.”

“Well, then, you must simply baptize, as all baptize.”

“Baptize?” Kiriak repeated after me – and suddenly was silent and smiled.

“What is it? Go on.”

The smile faded from Kiriak’s lips, and he continued, with a serious, almost stern look:

“No, I don’t want to do this in a hurry, Vladyko.”

“What?”

“I don’t want to do it in this way, Vladyko,” he said with firmness, and again smiled.

“What are you laughing at?” I said. “And if I order you to baptize.”

“I will not obey you,” he answered, smiling good-naturedly, and slapping me familiarly on the knee continued:

“Listen, Vladyko, I don’t know if you have read it. In the Lives of the Saints there is a fine story —”

But I interrupted him and said:

“Spare me the Lives, I beg you; here it is a question of the Word of God and not of the traditions of man. You, monks know, that you can find all sorts of things in the Lives and therefore love to quote them.”

“Vladyko, let me finish,” he answered. “I may find, even in the Lives, something appropriate.”

And he told me an old story, from the first

centuries of Christianity, about two friends – one a Christian, the other a heathen. The first often talked to the latter about Christianity and annoyed him with it so much, that though at first he had been indifferent, he suddenly began to abuse it, and at the moment he was showering the greatest blasphemy on Christ and Christianity, his horse kicked and killed him. His friend, the Christian, saw in this a miracle and was appalled that his friend, the heathen, had departed this life in such a spirit of enmity towards Christ. The Christian in his distress wept bitterly and said: ‘It had been better had I never spoken to him about Christ – he would then not have been provoked and would not have answered as he did.’ But to his consolation, he was informed spiritually that his friend had been accepted by Christ, because, though the heathen had been provoked, by such insistent talk, he had inwardly reflected about Christ and had called to Him with his last breath.

“And He was in his heart,” Kiriak added. “He embraced him and gave him a refuge.”

“So I suppose this brings us again to ‘in his little bosom.’”

“Yes, ‘in his little bosom.’”

“Well, Father Kiriak,” I said, “this is just your trouble, you rely too much on the ‘little bosom.’”

“Oh, Vladyko, how am I not to rely on it; great mysteries go on there – all blessings come from it: mother’s milk that nourishes the little children, and love and faith dwell therein. Believe it, Vladyko, it is so. It is there, it is all there, it is only from the heart it proceeds, and not from the reason. With reason you cannot construct it – but can only destroy: reason gives birth to doubt, Vladyko; faith gives peace, gives happiness. This, I tell you, consoles me greatly; you see how things are going and are angry, but I always rejoice.”

“Why do you rejoice?”

“Because all is very good.”

“What do you mean – ‘all is good’?”

“All, Vladyko, that is revealed to us, and all that is hidden from us. I think, Vladyko, that we are all going to a feast.”

“Please be clearer; do you simply set aside the baptism with water? It that so?”

“Well, I never. I set it aside. Oh, Vladyko, Vladyko! How many years I have been pining, always waiting for a man with whom I could converse freely about spiritual things – soul to soul –

and when I knew you, I thought, this is the man I am waiting for, and now you are splitting hairs like a lawyer! What do you want? All words are vain, and I too. There is nothing I set aside. Consider what various blessings come to me – and from love, but not from hate. Have patience listen to me!”

“Very well,” I answered, “I will listen; what do you want to preach?”

“Well, we are both baptized, so that is very good – that is like a ticket given us for a feast; we go to it, and know that we are invited, because we have a ticket.”

“Yes.”

“Well, and then we see that alongside of us another man is wandering thither, but without a ticket. We think, what a fool! It is useless for him to go – he will not be allowed to enter! When he arrives the door keeper will turn him out. We come there and see the door-keeper wants to turn him out, as he has no ticket, but if the master sees him, perhaps he will allow him to enter – he will say: It does not matter that he has no ticket – I know him even without a ticket; you may enter – and he leads him in and behold, he shows

him more honour than to many another who comes with a ticket.”

“Is that what you instil into them?”

“No, why should I instil this into them? It is only to myself I argue thus, of Christ’s goodness and wisdom.”

“Yes, but do you understand his wisdom?”

“Vladyko, how can we understand it? It can’t be understood, but... I only say what my heart feels. Whenever I have anything I ought to do, I ask myself: Can I do this to the glory of Christ? If I can, then I do it, if I cannot, – then I do not do it.”

“Then is this the chief principle of your teaching?”

“This, Vladyko, is my chief and only principle; all is in it; for simple hearts, Vladyko, this is so easy; it is so simple. You can’t drink vodka for the glory of Christ, you can’t fight or steal for the glory of Christ, you can’t abandon a man without help... The savages soon understand this, and approve of it. ‘He is good, your little Christ,’ they say. He is just – that is how they understand it.”

“After all, they may be right.”

“Yes, Vladyko, it is possible, but this is what I don’t find right, that the newly baptized come to

the town, and see what all the Christians do and ask: ‘Can this be done for the glory of Christ?’ What can we answer them, Vladyko? Are the people Christians or not Christians? One is ashamed to say they are not Christians, and to call them Christians would be a sin.”

“How do you answer them?”

Kiriak only made a movement with his hand and murmured:

“I say nothing... I only weep...”

I understood that his religious morality had come into collision with a species of politics. He had read Tertullian “On Public Spectacles,” and concluded that “for the glory of Christ” it was impossible to go to the theatre, or to dance, or to play at cards, or to do many other things which our contemporary, outwardly seeming Christians, could not do without. He was in some ways an innovator, and seeing this antiquated world, was ashamed of it, and hoped for a new one full of spirit and truth.

When I suggested this to him he at once agreed with me.

“Yes,” he said, “these people are of the flesh; why show the flesh? – it must be hidden so that

the name of Christ should not be brought to contempt by the hypocrites.”

“How is it that people say the natives still come to you?”

“They trust me, and they come.”

“So it appears, but why?”

“When they have a dispute or a quarrel they come to me. ‘Settle this matter,’ they say, ‘according to your little Christ.’”

“And you settle it?”

“Yes, I know their customs; I apply the wisdom of Christ, and settle the matter.”

“They accept it?”

“Yes, they accept it – they like His justice. At other times the sick come, and the possessed – they ask me to pray for them.”

“How do you cure the possessed? Do you heal them by saying prayers?”

“No, Vladyko; I pray for them, and then I comfort them.”

“Their sorcerers are said to be skilled in that.”

“It is so, Vladyko – the sorcerers are not all alike; some really know many of the secret powers of nature – some of the sorcerers are not so bad... They know me and even send some of

their people to me.”

“How is it you are on friendly terms with the Shamanists?”

“This is how it happened; The Buddhist lamas made a descent on them, and our officials took many of these Shamanists and put them to prison – the wild man is dull in prison – God only knows what happened to some of them! So I, poor sinner, used to go to the prison and took them buns, that I had begged from the merchants, and comforted them with words.”

“Well, and what then?”

“They were grateful, they took them in Christ’s name and praised Him; they said He was good – and kind. Yes, Vladyko, hold your peace, they themselves did not know that they were touching the hem of His garment.”

“Yes, but how do they touch it?” I said. “All this has no meaning.”

“Ah, Vladyko, why do you want to have everything at once. God’s work goes its own way, without bustle. Were there not six water pots at the wedding of Cana, and they were certainly not all filled at the same time, but one after the other. Why Father, even Christ, great wonderworker

that he was, first spat on the blind Jew's eyes, and then opened them; but these people are more blind than the Jews. How can we demand much from them all at once? Let them touch the hem of His garment – His goodness is felt, and He will entice them to Himself.”

“Come, now, entice?”

“And why not?”

“What improper words you use!”

“In what way are they improper, Vladyko? – the word is quite a simple one. He is our benefactor, and is also not of boyard stock. He is not judged for His simplicity. Who knows His descent? But He went about with shepherds, He consorted with sinners, He had no aversion for a scabby sheep, but when He found one He would take it on His holy back, just as it was, and bear it to the Father. Well, and He – what was He to do? Not wishing to grieve His much suffering Son, He admitted the defiled one into His sheep-fold.”

“Very good,” I said, “as a catechist, you won't do at all, brother Kiriak, but as a baptizer, though you talk somewhat heretically, you can be of use, and notwithstanding your wishes I will send you to baptize.”

Kiriak became frightfully agitated and perturbed.

“Good gracious, Vladyko, why do you wish to force me? Christ will forbid it. Nothing will come of it, nothing, nothing, nothing!”

“Why should it be so?”

“It is so, because the door is closed to us.”

“Who closed it?”

“He who has the Key of David: ‘he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.’ Or have you forgotten the Apocalypse?”

“Kiriak, too many books will make you foolish.”

“No, Vladyko, I am not foolish, but if you do not listen to me, you will wrong many people and give offence to the Holy Ghost, and the ecclesiastical office will rejoice that in their reports they will be able to boast and tell more lies.”

I ceased listening to him, but did not renounce the idea of being able to overcome his whim, and send him after all. But what do you think happened? It was not only the simple-hearted Amos of the Old Testament who suddenly began to prophesy, while picking berries – my friend

Kiriak had also prophesied and his words, "Christ will forbid it," began to be fulfilled. At that very time, as if on purpose, I received a notification from Petersburg that authority had graciously been given to increase greatly the number of Buddhist temples, and that the lists of lamas permitted in Siberia had been doubled. Although I was born in Russia, and had been taught not to be surprised at anything unexpected, still, I must confess, this condition *contra jus et fas* astonished me, and what was much worse, it quite confused the poor people, who had been recently baptized, and even to a greater degree the unfortunate missionaries. The news of these joyful events, to the detriment of Christianity, and to the advantage of Buddhism, spread over the whole district like a whirlwind. To carry the report horses galloped, reindeer bounded, and dogs raced on every side, and Siberia was informed that the all-overcoming and all-renouncing god Fo had also overcome and cast away the little Christ in Petersburg. The triumphant lamas asserted that our rulers and even our Dalai Lama, that is the Metropolitan, had accepted the Buddhistic faith. The missionaries were alarmed when they

heard this news; they did not know what to do. Some of them, I think, even began to doubt. Was it not perhaps possible that in Petersburg things had swung round to the lama's side in the same way as things had turned in those artful and intriguing times towards Roman Catholicism, and are now, in these foolish days that are so full of fancies, turning towards spiritualism? Only, of course, it is being accomplished more quietly, because now, although the chosen idol is but a puny one, nobody wants to overthrow it. But then such cold-blooded tolerance was wanting in many, and I, poor sinner, was among that number. I could not look with indifference on my poor baptizers, who came wandering on foot out of the deserts, back to me for protection. In the whole district there was not one old nag for them, not one reindeer, not a single dog, and God only knows how they had crawled back on foot through the snow drifts. They arrived dirty and in tatters – certainly not like the priests of God Almighty, but more like real wandering cripples. The officials and the whole of the ordinary administration protected the lamas without the slightest pricks of conscience. I had almost to fight the Governor

in order to persuade that Christian boyard to check his assistants from quite openly providing for Buddhism. The Governor, as usual, was offended, and we had a violent quarrel. I complained to him about his officials; he wrote to me, that nobody interfered with my missionaries, but that they were idle and unskilful. My deserter-missionaries in their turn whined that, although their mouths had not actually been gagged, they could not get a horse or a reindeer anywhere, because everywhere in the desert the people were afraid of the lamas.

The lamas, they said, were rich – they gave money to the officials, but we have nothing to give.

What could I say to comfort them? I might have promised to propose to the Synod, that the monasteries and convents which had “much money” should share it with us who were poor, and give us a certain sum to bribe the officials, but I was afraid that in the vast halls of the Synod this request might be found out of place, and, having prayed to God, they might refuse me assistance for the purpose of bribery. At the same time, even if such means were in our hands, this

might also be uncertain: my apostles had disclosed to me so much weakness in themselves, which in conjunction with the circumstances, had a very grave significance.

“We feel compassion for the savages,” they said, “They will lose the little sense they have from all this worry; to-day we baptize them, to-morrow the lamas convert them and order them to deny Christ, and as a penalty take anything they can find belonging to them. The poor people are beggared of their cattle and their scanty understanding – all the religions become muddled for them, they limp on both legs, and complain to us.”

This contest greatly interested Kiriak, and taking advantage of my favour he often stopped me with the question:

“Vladyko, what has the enemy written to you?” or:

“Vladyko, what have you written to the enemy?”

He once even came to me with a request.

“Vladyko, consult with me, when you write to the enemy.”

This was on the occasion when the governor

had informed me that in the neighbouring diocese where the conditions were exactly the same as where I was stationed, preaching and baptizing were progressing successfully, and at the same time pointed out to me a certain missionary named Peter, a Zyryan, who baptized great numbers of the natives.

These circumstances disturbed me, and I asked the neighbouring bishop if it was so.

He answered it was quite true he had a Zyryan priest Peter, who had twice gone out to preach and the first time had baptized so many, that he had “no crosses left,” and the second time had taken double the number of crosses, and had still not had enough, and had been obliged to take them from one neck to hang them on another.

When Kiriak heard this he began to weep.

“My God,” he said, “from whence has this crafty worker come to add to all our trouble. He will drown Christ in His Church in His own blood! Oh, what a misfortune! Have pity, Vladyko, – hasten to ask the bishop to restrain his too faithful servant – to leave something to the Church even if only power for sowing.”

“Father Kiriak,” I said, “you are talking non-

sense, How can I attempt to restrain a man from such praiseworthy zeal?"

"Oh, no, Vladyko," he implored me, "beg him; this is incomprehensible to you, but I understand what is now being done in the desert. All this is not for Christ's sake; but the work done there serves His enemies. He will be drowned. They will drown Him, the little Dove, with blood, and for a hundred years more the people will be frightened away from Him."

Of course, I did not listen to Kiriak, but on the contrary wrote to the neighbouring bishop, asking him to give me his Zyryan to help me, or as the Siberian aristocrats say in French: "au proka." At that time my neighbour had just been rescued from his Siberian penance, and as he was to be recalled to Russia he did not insist on retaining his adroit baptizer. The Zyryan was sent to me: he was large, bearded, and loquacious, an oily man. I sent him at once to the desert and already two weeks later received joyful news: he informed me that he had baptized the people everywhere. There was only one thing he feared: would he have sufficient crosses, though he had taken a very fair sized boxful with him. From this

I did not fail to conclude that the draught caught in the net of this successful fisherman was very considerable.

I thought: "Now at last I have found the right man for this work!" I was very glad of it. Very glad indeed. I will tell you frankly – from quite an official point of view – because, gentlemen, a bishop is also a man, and he becomes wearied, when one authority tells him, "Baptize," and another says "Let it alone." A plague on them all, I thought. It is best to settle it in one way or the other, and as I have come across a skilful baptizer, let him baptize the whole lot of them together; perhaps people will be quieter then.

But Kiriak did not share my opinion; and one evening when I was crossing the yard from the bath-house we met; he stopped and greeted me:

"Good evening, Vladyko,"

"Good evening, Father Kiriak," I answered.

"Have you had a good wash?"

"Yes, I've had a good wash."

"Have you washed away the Zyryan?"

I grew angry.

"What is this nonsense?" I said.

But he again began to talk about the Zyryan.

“He is pitiless,” he said. “He is now baptizing here as he baptized in the Transbaikal. Those he baptizes are only tormented by it and they complain of Christ. It is a sin for all, and for you more than for any, Vladyko.”

I considered Kiriak rude, but nevertheless his words entered my soul. What could it be? He was a sagacious old man – he would not chatter to the empty air. What was the secret of all this? How did this adroit Zyryan taken by me “au proka” really baptize. I knew something about the religiosity of the Zyryans. They are especially known as temple builders – their churches, wherever they are found, are fine and even rich, but of all the sects in this world that call themselves Christians, one must confess they are the most superficial. To none, so well as to them can the definition be applied: “God is only in their icons, but not in their souls.” But surely this Zyryan did not burn the savages to make them become Christians. That could not be. What was at the bottom of this business? Why did this Zyryan have success and the Russians have none? And why did I know nothing about it?

Then the thought came to me: “It is because

you, Vladyko, and those like you are egoistic and pretentious. You collect much money, and only go about, within the sound of the church bells. You think nothing about the distant parts of your diocese, and only judge of them by hearsay. You complain of your impotence in your own country, while all the time you are trying to snatch at the stars and are asking: 'What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?' Take care, brother, that you do not become like that too."

That evening I paced up and down my dull and empty room thinking, and I walked about until this thought came into my head: Why should I myself not travel through the desert?

In this manner I hoped to be able to elucidate myself, if not all, at any rate, very much; and I must confess to you, I also wanted freshening up a little.

To accomplish such a journey, owing to my own inexperience, I required a companion, who would know the native language well; and what better companion could I wish for than Kiriak? Being impatient, I did not delay long, but sent at once for Kiriak, informed him of my plan, and ordered him to get ready.

He did not gainsay me; on the contrary, he seemed to be very pleased and smiling, kept on repeating

“May God help! May God help!”

There was no reason to delay our departure, so already the next morning after having assisted at very early matins, we dressed ourselves like the natives, and set out, taking the road straight to the North, where my Zyryan was carrying on his apostolic mission.

VI

The first day we drove rapidly along in a good troika. I conversed all the time with Father Kiriak. The dear old man related to me interesting stories of the native religious traditions. The story that interested me most was about the five hundred travellers who, under the guidance of an “Obushy,” which means in their language a “book-man,” started to journey in the world at the time when the god Shigemuny having “conquered all the demoniac powers and repulsed all weakness,” feasted in Shirvas “on viands such as had never been touched before.” This legend is specially interesting because it

shows the whole form and spirit of the religious imagination of this people. Five hundred travellers conducted by the Obushy met a spirit, who, in order to frighten them, appeared in the most terrible and disgusting forms, and asked them. "Have you ever seen such monsters?" "We have more dreadful ones," answered the Obushy. "Who are they?" "All who are envious, greedy, lying, and revengful; after death they become monsters, much more terrible and disgusting than these." The spirit hid himself and changed into such a lean and gaunt man that the veins stuck to his bones, and then appeared again to the travellers and said: "Have you such people?" "Of course," answered the Obushy, "there are even much thinner people than you are – they are all those who aspire to honours."

"H'm!" I interrupted Kiriak, "take care; does the moral not refer to us bishops?"

"God knows, Vladyko," and he continued: "After some time the spirit appeared in the form of a handsome youth and said: "Have you such as these?" "Of course," answered the Obushy. "Among men there are some incomparably handsomer than you – they are those who possess

keen understanding and having purified their hearts, revere the three beatitudes: God, Faith and Holiness. These are so much more handsome than you are, that you would not even be found worthy to be compared with them.” The spirit was enraged at this and began to test the Obushy in another way. He scooped up a handful of water. “Where is there more water,” he asked, “in the sea or in my hand?” “There is more in your hand,” answered the Obushy. “Prove it.” “Well, I will prove it. If you judge by appearance, there certainly seems to be more water in the sea than in your hand, but when the time comes for the world to be destroyed, and out of the present sun another emerges discharging fire, then it will dry up all the waters in the world, both the large and the small ones, and the seas, and the rivers, and the streams, and even Atlas will crumble away, but whoever in his lifetime has given the thirsty to drink from his hand, or whoever has washed the wounds of the beggars with his hand, even seven suns will not dry up his handful of water, but on the contrary they will multiply and increase it.”

“Well, gentlemen, what do you truly think of

this? It is not so very stupid?” asked the narrator, pausing for a moment. “Eh? No, really, what do you think of it?”

“It is not at all stupid, Vladyko, not at all stupid.”

I must own, to me too, it seems more intelligent than many a lengthy sermon about justification. Well, it was not only of this we talked. After that we had long discussions about the best method to convert the heathen to Christianity. Kiriak was of the opinion that for them it was best to have the least possible amount of ceremony, because otherwise they would even surpass Kirika himself with questions like, “Can one administer the Communion to one who taps his teeth with an egg?” One must also not dogmatize too much, he said, because their weak understanding grows weary of following any abstraction or syllogism, but one must simply tell them about the life and miracles of Christ, so that it should appear to them in the most lifelike manner, and in a way that their poor imagination could grasp. But the most important, and on this he continued to insist, is that “he who is wise and skilful must show them goodness by his life; then they will under-

stand Christ”; otherwise, he said, our work would go badly, and our true faith, although we may proclaim it among them, will remain inferior to their own untrue faith. Ours will be nominal, the other active. What good is there in it, Vladyko? Judge for yourself: Will this be for the triumph of the Christian faith or for its degradation? It will be still more bitter if they take something from us, and who knows what they may make of it? There is no use hastening to proclaim it, we must sow; others will come and water it, and God Himself will make it grow... Is it not in this way, Vladyko, that the Apostle teaches? Eh? Remember Him; it must be thus. Otherwise, if we hasten, see that we do not make people laugh, and cause Satan to rejoice.”

I must confess in my soul I agreed with him, on many questions, and in these simple and peaceful conversations, I did not notice how the whole day passed away; the evening brought us to the end of our journey with horses.

We passed the night near the fire in a nomad tent, and the next morning started in reindeer sledges.

The weather was beautiful, and the drive with

reindeers interested me very much, though it did not come up to my expectations. In my childhood I often liked to look at a picture representing a Laplander in a reindeer sledge. But the reindeers in the picture were slight, light-limbed creatures that flew along like the wind of the desert, throwing back their heads and branching antlers, and I always thought: "Could I but drive like that, if only once. How delightfully rapid that pace must be." However, in reality it was quite different. I had before me not those flying antlered whirlwinds, but shaggy, heavy limbed animals that plodded on with hanging heads and fleshy straddling legs. They ran at an uneven, uncertain pace with bent heads and such heavy breathing that anyone not used to seeing them would have been sorry for them, especially when their nostrils became frozen and they opened their mouths wide. They breathed so heavily that their breath formed clouds and hung like a streak in the frozen air. This means of travel and the desolate monotonous country that revealed itself to us, made such a tedious wearisome impression that one did not even feel inclined to talk, and Kiriak and I hardly conversed at all, during the two days

we travelled in reindeer sledges.

On the evening of the third day this mode of travelling ceased; the snow became less compact, and we exchanged the unwieldy reindeer for dogs. They were gay, shaggy, and sharp-eared dogs, that looked like wolves, and even yelped almost like wolves. They are harnessed in great numbers, as many as fifteen to the sledge, and for an honoured traveller perhaps even more are attached, but the sledges are so narrow that two cannot sit abreast, so that Father Kiriak and I were obliged to separate. I and a driver had to go in one sledge, and Kiriak with another driver in another. The drivers seemed to be much the same in skill, and their countenances were so much alike, you could not distinguish one from the other, especially when they were wrapped up in their reindeer fur coats that looked like soap-suds: both were equally beautiful. But Kiriak discovered a difference in them and insisted upon seating me in the sledge of the one he considered most trustworthy, but wherein he discovered this trustworthiness he did not explain.

“It is so, Vladyko,” he said; “you are less experienced than I am in this country, so go with this

man.” But I would not listen to him, and sat down in the other sledge. Our baggage we divided. I took a bundle of linen and books at my feet, and Kiriak hung the chrismatory and the pyx round his neck and placed at his feet a wallet with oatmeal, dried fish and the remainder of our modest provisions for this campaign.

We settled ourselves in the sledges, well wrapped up in reindeer fur coats, with reindeer skin-covers fastened over our legs, and recommenced our journey.

We proceeded much faster than with the reindeer, but it was so uncomfortable to sit in the sledge, that before an hour had passed my back began to ache terribly. I looked at Kiriak – he sat as straight as a post that had been stuck into the sledge, while I swayed from side to side – I always wanted to keep the balance, and owing to these gymnastics, I was even unable to speak to my driver. I only found out that he had been baptized and baptized quite recently by my Zyryan, but I had not time to examine him. By evening I was so exhausted that I was unable to bear it any longer and complained to Kiriak:

“I’m feeling bad; from the very beginning

something seemed to shake me.”

“That’s because you did not listen to me – you would not go with the driver I wanted you to go with. This one drives better, much quieter. Please change sledges tomorrow.”

“Very well,” I said, “I’ll do as you wish,” and the next day I got into the other sledge and we set out again.

I do not know if, during the previous day, I had become accustomed to sitting on this sort of peasant’s sledge, or if it was really that this driver managed his long stick better, but it was much more comfortable, and I was even able to converse with him.

I asked him if he was baptized or not.

“No, Bachka, me no baptized, me happy!”

“In what way are you happy?”

“Happy, Bachka; Dzol-Dzayagachy have give me Bachka. She take care me.”

Dzol-Dzayagachy is a goddess of the Shamanists, who gives children, and who looks after the happiness and the health of those children who have been born, thanks to prayers addressed to her.

“That’s all very well,” I said, “but why don’t

you get baptized.”

“She would not allow me to be baptized, Bachka.”

“Who? Dzol-Dzayagachy?”

“Yes, Bachka, she won’t allow.”

“Ah! It is well that you told me this.”

“Of course, Bachka, it is well.”

“Yes, but just for that, in spite of your Dzol-Dzayagachy, I will order you to be baptized.”

“What do you mean, Bachka? Why anger Dzol-Dzayagachy? She will be enraged – she will beat me!”

“What do I care for her, your Dzol-Dzayagachy? You shall be baptized – that is enough.”

“No, Bachka, she won’t allow me to be wronged.”

“How can that wrong you, you stupid fellow?”

“Why, Bachka, you baptize me? It do me much wrong, Bachka. Zaysan comes; he beat me because baptized. Shaman comes, again beat. Lama comes – also beat and drive away reindeer. Bachka, great wrong to me.”

“They won’t dare to do it.”

“How, Bachka, they won’t dare? They dare Bachka, they take all, they ruined my uncle, Bach-

ka... Yes, Bachka, they ruined my brother Bachka, ruined...”

“Have you a brother, who has been baptized?”

“Of course, Bachka, I have a brother, Bachka. I have one.”

“And he has been baptized?”

“Yes, Bachka, twice baptized.”

“What do you mean? Twice baptized? As if one is baptized twice?”

“Indeed, Bachka, they baptized twice.”

“You lie.”

“No, Bachka, it’s true. He was baptized once for himself, and once for me.”

“How for you? What nonsense you are talking.”

“What nonsense, Bachka? No nonsense. I hid myself from priest, Bachka, and he baptized my brother instead of me.”

“Why did you cheat in that way?”

“Because, Bachka, he is kind.”

“Who is kind? Is your brother kind?”

“Yes, Bachka, my brother. He said: ‘It’s all the same, I am lost – baptized; hide – I will be baptized again’ – so I hid.”

“Where is your brother now?”

“He is gone to be baptized again.”

“Where is this idle fellow off to now?”

“There, Bachka, where one hears a hard priest is travelling.”

“Ho, ho! What has he got to do with this priest?”

“Our people are there, Bachka, our people live there, indeed good people, Bachka. He is sorry. Bachka... sorry for them, Bachka – he has hurried to be baptized for them.”

“What sort of a ‘Shaytan’ is this brother of yours? How dare he do such a thing?”

“Why not, Bachka, it’s nothing; for him it’s all the same, Bachka, but for them, Bachka, the Zaysan won’t beat them, and the lamas won’t drive their reindeer away.”

“H’m! Still, I must keep an eye on your idle brother. Tell me his name?”

“Kuz’ka-Demyak, Bachka.”

“Kuz’ma or Demyan?”

“No, Bachka, Kuz’ka-Demyak.”

“Yes, it’s easier for you – Kuz’ka-Demyak, or a copper pyatak – but they are two names.”

“No, Bachka, one.”

“I tell you they are two.”

“No, Bachka, one.”

“Get along, you evidently know this better than me, too.”

“Of course, Bachka, I know it better.”

“Did they give him the names of Kuz’ma and Demyan at the first or second baptism?”

He looked fixedly at me but did not understand; but when I repeated my question he thought and answered:

“That is so, Bachka; when he had been baptized for me, then they began to mock him as Kyz’ka-Demyak.”

“And after his first baptism, how did they mock him?”

“I don’t know, Bachka – I have forgot.”

“But possibly he knows it.”

“No, Bachka, he has also forgot it.”

“It is impossible,” I said.

“No, Bachka – it’s true he has forgot it.”

“Well, I will have him found and will ask him.”

“You may have him found, Bachka, you may have him found; but he will say he has forgot it.”

“Yes, but when I find him, brother, I will give him up to the Zaysan.”

“It doesn’t matter, Bachka, nothing matters to him now, Bachka – he is already lost.”

“In what way is he lost? Is it because he has been baptized? Is it that?”

“Yes, Bachka; the Shaman drives him away, the Lama has carried off his reindeer, none of his people trust him.”

“What do you mean, you foolish savage? You lie. Why can’t the baptized be trusted? Is the baptized man worse than you idolaters?”

“Why worse, Bachka? – he’s also a man.”

“Now you yourself agree he is not worse.”

“I don’t know, Bachka – you say he is not worse, and I say so; but he can’t be trusted.”

“Why can’t he be trusted?”

“Because the priest forgives him his sins, Bachka.”

“Well, and what is there wrong in that? What, is it better to remain without forgiveness?”

“How can one remain without forgiveness, Bachka? That’s impossible, Bachka, one must ask forgiveness.”

“Well, then, I don’t understand you; what are you talking about?”

“This is what I say, Bachka: a baptized man

will steal, and tell the priest, and the priest, Bachka, will forgive him; and therefore people won't trust him, Bachka."

"What nonsense you are talking! And this, of course, you think is not right."

"This, we think, doesn't do for us, Bachka."

"How ought it to be to your thinking?"

"In this way, Bachka, if you have stolen from anybody, take the thing back to him, and ask for forgiveness; if the man forgives, God forgives too."

"Yes, but the priest is a man also, why can't he forgive?"

"Why should he not forgive, Bachka? The priest can also forgive. If he had stolen from the priest, Bachka, the priest can forgive."

"But if he had stolen from another, then he can't forgive?"

"How can he, Bachka? He can't, Bachka: it will be untrue, Bachka, the faithless man, Bachka, will go everywhere."

So, so, you unwashed booby, I thought to myself, what fine arguments you have built up for yourself! and I continued to question him.

"And have you heard anything about our Lord

Jesus Christ?”

“Certainly, Bachka – I have heard.”

“What have you heard about Him?”

“He walked on the water, Bachka.”

“H’m. Very well, He walked on the water; and what else?”

“He drowned the swine in the sea, Bachka.”

“And more than that?”

“Nothing, Bachka. He was kind and compassionate, Bachka.”

“Well, how was He compassionate? What did He do?”

“He spat in the blind man’s eyes, Bachka – and the blind man saw; He fed the people with bread and fishes.”

“I see, brother, you know much.”

“Certainly, Bachka, I know much.”

“Who told you all this?”

“People, Bachka, the people told me.”

“Your people?”

“The people? Of course, Bachka – our people, our people.”

“And from whom have they heard it?”

“I don’t know, Bachka.”

“Well, and don’t you know why Christ came

here upon earth?”

He thought a long time, but did not answer.

“Don’t you know?” I asked.

“I don’t know.”

I told him all about the Orthodox faith, and I was not sure if he listened or not; all the time he was whooping at the dogs or brandishing his long stick.

“Well, have you understood what I have been telling you?” I asked.

“Of course, Bachka, I’ve understood: He drowned the swine in the sea, he spat in the blind man’s eyes – the blind man saw again; He gave bread and fishes to the people.”

They had stuck in his head these swine in the sea, the blind man, and the fishes, and nothing more could penetrate there... I remembered Kiriak’s words, about their poor understanding, and how they themselves did not notice how they touched the hem of His garment. What then? This one too had possibly touched the hem, but certainly only just touched it – hardly touched it – only felt it with the tip of his finger: how could he be taught to catch hold of it more firmly? So I tried to converse with him in the most simple

manner about the blessings of Christ's example and the object of His sufferings; but my listener continued imperturbably to brandish his long stick in the same way. It was difficult to deceive myself. I saw that he did not understand anything.

"You have understood nothing?" I asked.

"Nothing, Bachka – you making lies of truth; I am sorry for Him. He was good, the little Christ."

"Good?"

"He was good, Bachka, He must not be wronged."

"You ought to love Him?"

"How could one not love Him, Bachka?"

"What You could love Him?"

"How could I not, Bachka – I always loved Him, Bachka."

"That's right, my good lad."

"Thank you, Bachka."

"Now it only remains for you to be baptized. He will save you, too."

The savage was silent.

"What is it, friend?" I said. "Why are you silent?"

"No, Bachka."

“What do you mean by ‘No, Bachka.’”

“He won’t save me, Bachka; for Him the Zaysan beats, the Shaman beats, the Lama drives away reindeer.”

“So that’s the chief misfortune!”

“Yes, Bachka.”

“You must bear the misfortune for Christ’s sake.”

“Why, Bachka – He is compassionate, Bachka. When I die, He Himself will be sorry for me. Why should we wrong Him?”

I wanted to tell him, that if he believed Christ would have compassion on him, he ought also to believe that He could save him too – but refrained so as not to hear again about the Zaysan and the Lama. It was evident that for this man Christ was one of his kind deities, perhaps even his kindest, but not one of the strong ones; kind, but not strong – not protective. He would not defend him from the Zaysan, nor from the Lama. What was to be done in this case? How was I to persuade the savage of this when on Christ’s side there was no one to support Him, and on the other side there was much defence. A Roman Catholic priest, in the same circumstances, would have

used cunning, as they had used cunning in China; he would have placed a small cross at the feet of Buddha and he would have bowed down before it assimilating Christ and Buddha, and he would have been proud of his success; and another innovation would have explained such a Christ, that nothing would remain to believe in – only think of Him becomingly and – you will be good. But even that was difficult in this case: how was my fine fellow to commence thinking, when all his thinking powers were frozen into a lump, and he could not thaw them again.

I remembered how Karl von Eckartshausen with the simplest comparisons was able admirably to convey to simple people the greatness of Christ's sacrifice in coming to earth, by making the comparison of a free man who, through his love for criminal prisoners, went to dwell with them in prison so as to share their sinful nature. Very simple and good; but my hearer, thanks to circumstances, knew no greater villains than those from whom he was running away to prevent them from baptizing him; he knew no other place, that might have produced on him greater horror, to compare with the terrible place he al-

ways inhabited... Nothing could be done for him – either with Massillon or Bourdaloue, or Eckartshausen. There he was poking his stick into the snow or cracking it – his face like a lump of soapsuds – there was no expression in his peep-holes (it would be a shame to call them eyes); there was not a spark of the soul's fire; even the sound of the words that issued from his throat seemed somehow dead: in grief or in joy there was always the same intonation – slow and passionless – half the words were swallowed in his gullet, half were squeezed by his teeth. How was he with these means to seek for abstract truths, and what could he do with them? They would be a burden to him: he must only die out with his whole race as the Aztecs have died, or the Red Indians are dying. – A terrible law! What happiness that he does not know it. – He only knows how to thrust his stick into the snow – first he sticks it in on the right side then he sticks it in on the left side; he does not know where he is driving me, why he is driving me, or why, like a child with a simple heart, he is unfolding to me, for his own harm, his most sacred secrets... His whole talent is small, and it is a blessing for him that little will

be asked of him. He was being carried on into the boundless distance, flourishing his long stick, which waving before my eyes, began to have the effect of a pendulum on me. These regular flourishes, like the passes of a mesmerist, caught me in their somnolent meshes; drowsiness crept over my brain and I fell asleep quietly and sweetly – I fell asleep only to awaken in a position, in which, God forbid, any living soul should find himself.

VII

I slept soundly and probably long, but suddenly it seemed that something jostled me and I found myself sitting up bent on one side. Still half asleep, I wanted to right myself, but noticed that something shoved me back. There was howling all around – what had happened? I wanted to see, but I had nothing to see with, for my eyes would not open. I called to my savage.

“Hi, you, friend! Where are you?”

He shouted into my very ear:

“Wake up, Bachka, wake up quickly! You’ll freeze.”

“What has happened? I can’t open my eyes.”

“Directly, Bachka, you’ll open them.”

And with these words – what do you think he did? He spat in my eyes and then rubbed them with the sleeve of his reindeer coat.

“What are you about?”

“Rubbing your eyes, Bachka.”

“Get along, you fool...”

“No, wait a moment, Bachka – I’m not a fool. You’ll soon see again.”

It was quite true, when he rubbed my face with his fur coat sleeve, my frozen eyelashes thawed and my eyelids opened. But on what? What was to be seen? I do not know if it can be even more terrible in hell: all around there was profound impenetrable darkness – and it seemed alive, it trembled and cracked like a monster whose body was a compact mass of frozen dust and whose breath was life-destroying cold. Yes, it was death in one of its most awful shapes, and meeting it face to face, I was terrified.

The only thing I was able to say was to ask about Kiriak, Where was he? But it was so difficult to speak that the savage did not hear me. Then I noticed that when he spoke to me, he bent down and shouted under the lappets of my fur cap, straight into my ear, and I also shouted un-

der his fur cap:

“Where is the other sledge?”

“Don’t know, Bachka, we have been separated.”

“How separated?”

“Separated, Bachka.”

I did not want to believe this; I wanted to look round, but I could not see anything in any direction; all around us was hell, dark and terrible. Under my side and close to the sledge something moved like a ball, but it was impossible to see what it was. I asked the savage what it could be, and he answered:

“The dogs, Bachka, have lost their way and are trying to warm themselves.”

Shortly after he made a movement in the darkness and said:

“Fall down, Bachka.”

“Fall down where?”

“Here, Bachka – fall into the snow.”

“Wait,” I said.

I could not yet believe that I had lost my Kiriak, and wanted to stand up in the sledge and call to him, but at the same moment I felt smothered, as if I had been choked with all this

frozen dust, and I fell down into the snow, giving my head a somewhat severe blow on the edge of the sledge. I had no strength to rise again, and even if I had had the strength, my savage would not have allowed me to do so. He held me fast and said:

“Lie still, Bachka, lie quiet; you will not die. The snow will cover us up, it will be warm. Otherwise you will perish. Lie still.”

There was nothing else to be done. I had to obey him, and he pulled the reindeer skins off the sledge, threw them over me, and then crawled under them too.

“Now, Bachka, it’ll be nice.”

But this “nice” was so nasty, that I instantly had to turn away as far as possible from my neighbour, because his presence at a short distance was unbearable. The corpse of Lazarus, that had lain four days in the grave of Bethany, could not have stunk more than this live man did. It was worse than the stench of a corpse; it was a mixture of the fetid smell of the reindeer skins, the strong odour of human sweat, smoke, damp rotteness, dried fish, fish fat and dirt... “O, God,” I cried, “what a miserable man am I! How loath-

some this brother, created after Thine image, is to me.” Oh, how gladly would I have escaped from this stinking grave, in which he had placed me next to himself; if I had only had strength and power to stand in this hellish drifting chaos! But nothing resembling such a possibility could be expected – and I had to submit.

My savage noticed that I had turned away, and said:

“Stop, Bachka, you have turned your snout the wrong way – put your snout here – we will blow together – it will soon get warmer.”

Even to hear this seemed terrible.

I pretended not to hear him, but suddenly he hopped on to me, like a bug, rolled over me, lay down with his nose touching mine, and began to breathe into my face with terrible sniffs and stench. He blew extraordinarily loud, like a blacksmith’s bellows. I could not bear it, and tried to make him stop.

“Breathe in a quieter way,” I said.

“Why? It does not matter, Bachka, I’m not tired; I can warm your snout, Bachka.”

Of course his having said “snout” did not offend me, because I had no ambition at that mo-

ment, and I repeat that for the expression of useless niceties such as making a distinction between an animal's snout and a man's face, no separate words existed in their language. Everything was snout; he himself had a snout, his wife had a snout, his reindeer had a snout, his god Shigemony had a snout. Why should a bishop not have a snout too? My grace could put up with this easily, but the difficulty was to endure his breath, the stink of dried fish, and some other disgusting odour – probably the stench of his own stomach – I could not stand it.

“It's enough,” I said. “Stop, you have warmed me; now, don't blow any more.”

“No, Bachka, we must blow, it will be warmer.”

“No, please don't; you've bored me enough with it – I don't want it.”

“Well, Bachka, if you don't want it, we needn't. Now we can go to sleep.”

“Go to sleep.”

“And you, Bachka, go to sleep.”

A second after he had said this, like a well-trained horse, that at once starts at a gallop, he instantly fell asleep, and began to snore. Yes, how

the rascal snored! I must confess to you, that from my childhood I have been a great enemy of all who snore in their sleep, and if even one snoring man is in the room I am a martyr, and it is impossible for me to get to sleep. As we had many snorers in the seminary and the academy, I often could not help listening to them attentively, and I am not joking when I tell you that I worked out a theory about snoring. By his snores, I assure you, I can judge of a man's character and temperament as well as you can by his voice, or his walk. I assure you, it is so; a passionate man snores passionately just as if even in his sleep he was in a rage. I had a comrade in the academy who was gay and a dandy, so he snored in a dandified way, – so gaily, with a sort of whistle, just as if he were going to the cathedral of his own town for the first time in a new gown. It often happened that they came from the other dormitories to listen to him and admire his art. But now my savage neighbour started such music as I had never heard before, nor had I ever observed or heard such an extensive diapason, nor such rapid time; it was just as if a large swarm of bees was humming and knocking gently on the sides of a dry,

resonant, bee-hive. Beautifully, gravely, rhythmically, and in time thus: ou-ou-ou-ou – bum-bum-bum, ou-ou-ou-ou – bum, bum-bum. According to my observations, I could have concluded that this was produced by a punctual and reliable man, but unfortunately I could make no observations: that brigand quite overpowered me with his noise. I suffered, I suffered long, – at last could bear it no more, and poked him in the ribs.

“Don’t snore,” I said.

“Why, Bachka? Why shouldn’t I snore?”

“You snore horribly, you don’t let me sleep.”

“You ought to snore too.”

“I don’t know how to snore.”

“And I know how to, Bachka,” and he instantly started droning at full speed.

What could you do with such an artist? How could you argue with such a man, who in every way was your superior; he knew more about baptism than I did, and how many times one could be baptized, he was learned in names, and knew how to snore, and I did not know how to – in everything he had the advantage – he must be given all due honour and precedence.

I drew back from him as far as I could, and a

little to the side, and with difficulty getting my hand under my cassock, pressed my repeater; the watch struck only three and three-quarters. That meant it was still day; the blizzard, would, of course, last the whole night, perhaps even longer... Siberian blizzards are of long duration. You can imagine what it was to have all this before one. In the meantime my position became more and more terrible; we had certainly been well covered up with snow, and in our lair it was, not only warm, but stuffy; but, on the other hand, the horrible sickening exhalations became more dense – my breath was taken away by this suffocating stench, and it was a pity it had not finished me quite, because I would then not have experienced a hundredth part of those sufferings which I felt, when I remembered that with Father Kiriak not only my bottle with brandy and water, but all our provisions had been lost. I clearly saw that if I was not suffocated here as in the Black Hole, I was certainly threatened with the most terrible, the most painful of all deaths – the death from starvation and thirst, which had already begun its torments on me. Oh, how I regretted that I had not remained above to freeze, but had crawled

into this snowy coffin, where we two were lying so close together and under such a weight, that all my efforts to raise myself and get up were quite useless.

With the greatest trouble I was able to get from under my shoulder some small pieces of snow, and greedily swallowed them, one after the other, but – alas! this did not alleviate my sufferings at all – on the contrary, it only aroused in me nausea and an unbearable burning in the throat and stomach, and especially near the heart; my head was ready to split: I had ringing in the ears and my eyes burnt, and stood out of their sockets. While all the time the tiresome swarm of bees hummed louder and louder, and knocked more sonorously on the sides of the hive. This horrible condition lasted until my repeater struck seven – after which I don't remember anything more, as I lost consciousness.

This was the greatest good luck, that could have befallen me in this disastrous position. I do not know if I rested physically during that time, but in any case I did not suffer from the thoughts of what I had before me, the horrors of which must in reality greatly exceed all the representa-

tions that an alarmed fantasy could conjure up.

VIII

When I regained consciousness, the swarm of bees had flown away, and I found myself at the bottom of a deep hole under the snow; I was lying at the very bottom of it with outstretched arms and legs, and I felt nothing; neither cold, nor hunger, nor thirst. No, nothing at all. Only my head was so confused and dull that it caused me some trouble to recall to my memory all that had happened to me, and in what position I then was. But of course all this became clear at last, and the first thought that entered my mind at the time was that my savage had woken up before me, and had run off alone, leaving me to my fate.

Indeed, looking at it from an impartial point of view, he should have done so, especially after my threats of yesterday to have him baptized, and to have search made for his brother Kuz'ma-Demyan; but he in his heathen manner acted differently. I had scarcely moved my stiffened limbs and sat up on the bottom of my hollowed grave, when I saw him about thirty paces from me. He was standing under a large rime-covered tree,

and was making strange movements, and above him on a long branch a dog was hanging, from whose ripped up belly the still warm intestines were hanging out.

I understood that he was making a sacrifice, or, as they say, performing a mystery, and to speak the truth, I was not sorry that this sacrifice had detained him until I was awake, and could prevent him from abandoning me. For I was firmly persuaded that the heathen must certainly have the unchristian intention of doing so, and I envied Father Kiriak, who was now, though suffering the same misfortunes, at least in the company of a Christian, who would doubtless be more reliable than my heathen. It may have been caused by my own difficult position, that a suspicion was born in me that perhaps Father Kiriak, who was able to foresee, better than I could, all the accidents of Siberian travel, had, under the guise of benevolence, cunningly managed to pass on to me the heathen, while he took the Christian for himself. Of course this was not at all like Father Kiriak, and even now, when it recurs to my memory, I feel ashamed of these suspicions; but what was I to do when they crossed my mind?

I crawled out of the snow heap and began to approach my savage; he heard the snow creak under my feet, and turned round, but at once resumed the performance of his mysteries.

“Well, have you not bowed enough?” I said, after standing beside him for about a minute.

“Enough, Bachka” – and returning at once to the sledge, he began to reharness the remaining dogs. When they were harnessed we started.

“To whom were you making that sacrifice?” I asked him, pointing back.

“I don’t know, Bachka.”

“But you sacrificed the dog to some one? – to God or to the devil? – to Shaytan?”

“To Shaytan, Bachka, of course, to Shaytan.”

“Why did you make him this gift?”

“Because he did not freeze us, Bachka; it was for that I gave him the dog for him grub.”

“H’m! yes, for him grub – he won’t burst, but I’m sorry for the dog.”

“Why, Bachka, why are you sorry? The dog was a bad one, it would soon have died; it does not matter – let him have it – let him grub?”

“So that’s how you reckon? You gave him a dog that was half dead.”

“Of course, Bachka.”

“Please tell me, where are you driving now?”

“Don’t know, Bachka, we’re looking for the track.”

“But where is my priest – my companion?”

“Don’t know, Bachka.”

“How are we to find him?”

“Don’t know, Bachka.”

“Perhaps he has been frozen.”

“Why should he be frozen? There’s snow, he won’t freeze.”

I remembered that Kiriak had the bottle with warming drink, and the basket of provisions, and was reassured. I had nothing of the sort with me, and now I would gladly have eaten even the dogs’ dried fish; but I was afraid to ask for it, because I was not sure if we had any.

All day long we seemed to be going round and round at random; I saw it, if not by the passionless face of my driver, by the restless, irregular and troubled movements of his dogs, which seemed to be jumping about, fidgeting, and always throwing themselves from side to side. My savage had much trouble with them, but his unchanging passionless indifference did not desert

him for a moment; he only seemed to work with his long stick with greater attention, without which on this day we should have been thrown out at least a hundred times, and left either in the middle of the wilderness or else by the woods which we were constantly skirting.

Suddenly one of the dogs stuck its muzzle into the snow, twitched with its hind legs, and fell. My savage knew better than I did what this meant, and what new misfortune was threatening us, but he neither showed alarm nor agitation; now as always he planted his stick into the snow with a firm, steady hand, and gave me this anchor of safety to hold, while he quickly sprang out of the sledge, extracted the exhausted dog from its harness, and dragged it to the back of the sledge. I thought he was going to dispatch it and throw it away, but when I looked back I saw that this dog was also suspended from a tree with its body ripped open and its bloody intestines hanging out. It was a horrible sight.

“What’s this again?” I shouted to him.

“It’s for Shaytan, Bachka.”

“Come, brother, that’s enough for your Shaytan. It’s too much for him to eat two dogs a

day.”

“Never mind, Bachka, let him grub.”

“No, it’s not ‘never mind,’” I said. “But if you go on killing them at this rate, you will soon have killed them all for Shaytan.”

“Bachka, I only give him those that die.”

“You had better feed them.”

“There’s no food, Bachka.”

“So!” This only proved what I had feared.

The short day was already sinking into evening, and it was evident that the remaining dogs were quite exhausted; their strength was gone, and from time to time they began to gasp wildly and to sit down. Suddenly another fell, while all the rest, as if by agreement, sat down on their haunches and began to howl, as if they were celebrating a requiem for it.

My savage arose, and was about to hang up the third dog for Shaytan, but this time I strictly forbade it. I was so tired of seeing the ceremony, and this abomination seemed only to increase the horror of our situation.

“Stop!” I said, “don’t touch it; let it die a natural death.”

He did not dispute it, but with his usual imper-

turbable calmness, did the most unexpected thing. He silently stuck his long stick into the snow in front of our sledge, and began to unharness the dogs one after the other, and let them go free. The hungry animals seemed to forget their weariness; they whined, began to yelp and suddenly rushed off in a pack in the same direction, and in a moment they were lost to sight in the wood beyond the distant fallow land. All this happened so quickly that it reminded me of the story of "Il'ia Murometz": "All saw Il'ia mount his horse, but none saw him ride away." Our motive power had left us; we would have to walk. Of the ten dogs which so lately had been strong and healthy, only one remained with us, and it lay at our feet in its harness dying.

My savage stood by with the same apathy, resting on his stick, and looking at his feet.

"Why did you do that?" I cried.

"I've let them go, Bachka."

"I see you have; but will they come back?"

"No, Bachka, they won't; they'll become wild."

"Why did you let them loose?"

"They want to grub, Bachka, let them catch an animal – they'll grub."

“But what shall we grub?”

“Nothing, Bachka.”

“Ah! you monster!”

He evidently did not understand, and did not answer, but stuck his stick into the snow, and went away. Nobody would have guessed why he went away from me. I shouted after him, called him back, but he only gazed at me with his dull eyes and growled, “Hold your tongue, Bachka,” and went further. He also soon disappeared in the skirts of the forest, and I remained quite alone.

Is it necessary for me to dwell on the terrible position in which I found myself, or perhaps you will better understand all its horrors, when I tell you I could think of nothing but that I was hungry, that I wanted to eat not in the human sense of the wish for food, but to devour as a famished wolf would devour its prey. I took my watch out of my pocket, pressed the spring, and was staggered by a new surprise: my watch had stopped – a thing that had never happened before. With trembling hands I tried to wind it up, and convinced myself it had stopped only because it had run down; it could go for nearly two

days. This proved to me that when we passed the night under the snow, we had lain for more than twenty-four hours in our icy grave! How long had it been? Perhaps twenty-four hours, perhaps thrice that time. I no longer was surprised that I was suffering so acutely from hunger. This proved that at the very least I had not eaten for three days, and when I realized it I felt the torments of hunger all the sharper.

If I could only eat – eat anything! a dirty, a nasty thing – only eat something! That was all I could understand, as I cast my eyes in unbearable suffering despairingly around me.

IX

WE were on a flat elevation, behind us lay an enormous limitless waste, before us its endless continuation, to the right a hollow filled with snow-drifts bounded by rising ground, while beyond, at a great distance, the blue line of the forest, into which our dogs had disappeared, showed dimly on the horizon. To the left stretched the skirts of another wood, along which we had driven until our team had been dispersed, and we ourselves were standing at the foot of a huge snowdrift, that had been blown over a small hillock covered with tall pines and firs, that seemed to reach to the sky. Sitting on the edge of the sledge, exhausted by hunger and numb with cold, I could not pay any attention to what was around me, nor did I notice when my savage appeared beside me. I neither saw how he approached, nor how he silently seated himself near me, and now at last when I noticed him he was sitting, with his long stick across his knees, and his hands hidden in the breast of his fur coat. Not a feature of his face had changed, not a muscle had moved, and his eyes had no expression beyond a dull calm

submission.

I looked at him, but did not speak to him, and he as was his wont, never spoke first; this time he remained silent too. We understood each other, and we sat thus, side by side, through the endless dark night without exchanging a single word.

But as soon as the grey dawn began to show itself in the sky, the savage silently rose from the sledge, stuck his hands deeper into the bosom of his fur coat, and again began to wander about, and, constantly stopping, he would examine the trees long, very long, and then walk on. At last he disappeared from my sight, and then in the same quick passionless way returned, and at once dived under the sledge and began to arrange or to disarrange something.

“What are you doing there?” I asked – and in speaking made the unpleasant discovery that my voice had become weak and had even quite changed its tone, while my savage spoke now as before, biting off his words jerkily.

“Getting my snow-shoes, Bachka.”

“Snow-shoes!” I cried in horror, and it was now that I understood for the first time the meaning of “sharpening one’s snow-shoes.” “Why are

you getting your snow-shoes?"

"I shall run away at once."

"Ah, you villain!" I thought. "Where are you going?"

"I shall run to the right, Bachka."

"Why will you run that way?"

"To bring you grub."

"You lie!" I said. "You want to desert me."

But without the slightest confusion he answered:

"No, I shall bring you grub."

"Where will you find grub?"

"Don't know, Bachka."

"You don't know then where you are running?"

"To the right."

"Who is there to the right?"

"Don't know, Bachka."

"If you don't know, why are you running away?"

"Have found a sign – there's a tent."

"You lie, my dear fellow," I said. "You want to leave me here alone."

"No, I will bring grub."

"Well, go, only it's better not to lie, go where

you like.”

“Why lie, Bachka, not good lie.”

“It’s not at all good, brother, but you are lying.”

“No, Bachka, I don’t lie; come with me. I show you sign.”

He caught up the snow-shoes, and his stick, and dragging them after him, took me by the hand, led me up to a certain tree, and asked:

“Bachka, do you see?”

“What is there to see?” I answered. “I see a tree and nothing more.”

“But there on the large branch, twig on twig, do you see?”

“Well, and what of that? There is a twig, and probably the wind blew it there.”

“No wind, Bachka; it’s not wind, but kind man put it there – on that side there’s a tent.”

It was very evident he was either deceiving me, or was himself deceived, but what was I to do? I could not keep him by force from going and what would be the use of preventing him? Was it not all the same to die from starvation and cold – alone, or for two to die together? Let him run away and save himself if he could do so, and I

said to him as the monks do: "Save thyself, brother."

He answered quietly: "Thank you, Bachka," and with these words fixed his snow-shoes firmly on his feet took his stick over his shoulder, scraped first with one foot and then with the other, and ran away. In a minute he was lost to sight, and I remained quite alone in the midst of snow and frost, and now quite exhausted by the acute cravings of hunger.

X

I passed the short Siberian day strolling about, near the sledge, now sitting down on it, then again rising, when the cold overcame the unbearable tortures of hunger. Of course, I only walked slowly, as I had not much strength left, and also because one sooner gets tired from rapid motion, and then one feels the cold more.

Wandering about near the spot where my savage had deserted me, several times I approached the tree on which he had pointed out the broken twig. I examined it carefully and was the more convinced that it was only a twig that had been torn from another tree, and blown there by the

wind.

“He has cheated me,” I said to myself. “He has cheated me, and it can’t be counted as a sin. Why should he perish with me when it could do me no good.”

Need I tell you how hard and terribly long the short winter day appeared to me? I did not believe in any possibility of salvation, and awaited death, but where was it? Why did it delay? And when would it come? What tortures would I have to endure before it caressed me and soothed my sufferings?... Soon I began to observe that from time to time my sight failed me. Suddenly all the objects before me seemed to flow together and disappear into a kind of grey darkness, then suddenly and unexpectedly they would become clear again... I thought this was caused simply by fatigue, but I do not know what part the changes of the light played in it; whenever the light changed slightly, things became visible again, and even very distinctly visible, and I could see very far and then again they became misty. The sun that showed itself for an hour behind the distant hillocks shed a wonderful pink light on the snow, that covered these mounds; this occurs before

evening, then the sun suddenly disappears and the rose-coloured light changes to an exquisite blue. It was so now: everything near and around me turned blue, as if sprinkled with sapphire dust, wherever there was a rut, or the mark of a footstep, or even where a stick, had been stuck into the snow, a bluish mist curled in clouds, and after a short time this play of light was also extinguished: the wilderness, as if covered with an overturned bowl, became dark and then... grew grey. With this last change, when the wonderful blue colour disappeared, and momentary gloom spread over everything, the marvellous tricks of the wilderness began to show themselves, before my tired eyes, in the grey darkness. Every object assumed extraordinary and huge proportions and outlines; our little sledge looked like the hull of a ship, the frost-covered carcass of the dead dog looked like a sleeping white bear; while the trees appeared to have come to life and were moving about from place to place... All this was so life-like and interesting, that notwithstanding my sad position, I would have been ready to examine it with curiosity if a strange occurrence had not frightened me away from my observa-

tions and awakened in me a new fear, arousing at the same time the instinct of self-preservation. I saw, in the twilight, something flitting in the distance, like a dark arrow, then another, and a third, and immediately after the air was filled with a long doleful howl.

In an instant I understood that it must be either wolves or our liberated dogs, who had probably found nothing to eat, not being able to catch any animal, and, quite exhausted by hunger, had remembered their dead friend, and wanted to profit by his body. In any case, if they were either famished dogs or wolves, they were not likely to give any quarter to my worshipful self, and although reason told me it would be better to be torn to pieces in a moment, than to have to suffer the long agonies of hunger, the instinct of self-preservation took the upper hand and notwithstanding my heavy clothes, I was able to climb to the very top of the tree, with the agility and quickness of a squirrel, that, I must confess, I did not know I possessed, nor had ever dreamed of, and only stopped when I could go no higher. Below me an immensity of snow was spread out, and above me a dark sky like thin scum, on

which out of the distant impenetrable gloom, the rayless stars shone with a reddish light. While I was casting my eyes around, down below, almost at the roots of my tree, a fierce fight took place. There were groans and howls, tearing and struggling, once more groans, and then silent flittings through the darkness in different directions, and again all was quiet, as if nothing had occurred. Such undisturbed silence succeeded that I could hear the beatings of the pulses in my body and my breathing appeared to make a noise like the rustling of hay, and when I breathed heavily, it was like an electric spark, that quietly crackled in the unbearably rarefied frosty air; it was so dry and cold, that even the hairs of my beard were frozen, and pricked like wire and broke to the touch. I even now feel a chill go through me at the remembrance, which my frost-bitten legs help to keep alive ever since that time. It may have been a little warmer below, perhaps not, but in any case I was not sure, that the attack of the beasts of prey would not be repeated, and decided not to descend from the tree till morning. It was not more terrible than to be buried under the snow with my malodorous companion, and

on the whole what could be more terrible than my present position? I just chose a widely spreading bough and sank down on it as in a fairly comfortable arm chair, in such a way that even if I had dozed, I should not have fallen off; but for greater security I put my arms firmly round a branch, and then stuck them deeper into the pockets of my fur coat. The position was well chosen and well constructed. I sat there like a frozen old owl, which I probably resembled in reality. My watch had long since stopped, but from my position I had an admirable view of Orion and the Pleiades – those heavenly clocks, by which I could now calculate the hours of my torture. I occupied myself with this: at first I calculated the exact time, and then I looked long, very long at these strange stars shining on a black sky, until they grew fainter, changed from gold to copper, and at last became quite dim and were extinguished.

The morning approached, equally grey and joyless. My watch, that I had set by the position of the Pleiades, showed it was nine o'clock. My hunger increased and tormented me past all belief. I no longer felt the oppressive scent of viands, nor

the recollection of the taste of food. I only had a hungry pain. My empty stomach was dried up, twisted like a cord, and caused me the most unbearable sufferings.

Without any hope of finding something eatable, I climbed down the tree and began to wander about. At one place I picked up from the snow a fir cone. I thought at first it might be a cedar cone, and would contain nuts, but it proved to be a simple fir cone. I broke it, found a seed, which I swallowed, but the resinous smell was so unpleasant that my empty stomach refused to receive it, and my pains were only increased. At this time I noticed that all round our abandoned sledge there were numberless fresh tracks going in all directions, and that our dead dog had disappeared.

My corpse would evidently be the next to go, and the same wolves would prey on it and divide it among themselves in the same way. But when would it be? Was it possible in another day? It might even be more. No! I remembered one fanatical faster, who starved himself for the honour of Christ. He had the courage to note the days of his anguish and counted nine... How terrible! But

he fasted in the warmth, while I was exposed to the bitterest cold – of course that must make a difference. My strength had quite deserted me – I could no longer warm myself by motion, and sat down on the edge of the sledge. Even the consciousness of my fate seemed to abandon me. On my eyelids I felt the shadow of death, and was only troubled it was so long in leading me away to the path from which there was no returning. You must understand how earnestly I wished to depart from this frozen wilderness to the house of reunion of all mortals, and in no way regretted, that I would have to make my bed here in this frozen darkness. The chain of my thoughts was severed, the pitcher was broken, and the wheel had fallen into the well. Neither in my thoughts nor in the most ordinary form of words could I turn towards heaven. I was unable to draw comfort in any way, in any form. I realized this and sighed.

Our Father! I cannot offer Thee, even penance for my sins, but Thou Thyself hast removed my light from its place. Thou wilt answer for me before Thyself.

This was the only prayer I was able to sum-

mon to my mind, after that I can remember nothing, nor how that day passed away. I can but affirm with certainty, it was the same as the previous one. It only appeared to me, I saw during that day, somewhere far away from me, two living creatures, and they looked like some sort of birds; they seemed to be of the size of magpies and in appearance they resembled magpies, but with dirty rough feathers like owls. Just before sunset they flew down from the trees, walked about on the snow, and flew away again. But perhaps I only imagined this in my hallucinations before death; in any case it appeared to me so vividly, that I followed their flight with my eyes, and saw them disappear in the distance as if they had melted away. My tired eyes having reached this point, rested there and became fixed. But what do you think? Suddenly I began to notice in this direction a strange spot, that I think had not been there before. Then it seemed to move—though the movement was so imperceptible that it could only be distinguished by the inner sense rather than by the eyes, yet I was certain that it moved.

The hope of being saved stirred within me,

and all my sufferings were not able to silence or stifle it. The spot continued to grow, and became more distinct, and was more clearly visible on that wonderful faintly pink background. Was it a mirage? – which was so likely in this desolate place, in such capricious light – or was it really something alive that was hurrying towards me? In any case it was flying straight towards me, and it was really not walking but flying. At last I saw its outlines; I could distinguish its figure; I could see its legs – I saw how they stretched out one after the other... and immediately after I fell rapidly from joy into despair. Yes: this was no mirage – I saw it too clearly – but it was also no man, nor was it a wild beast. On the whole earth there was no creature made of flesh and blood, that resembled this enchanted, fantastic apparition, approaching towards me as if it were condensing, forming, or, as our modern spiritualists say – materializing out of the playful tints of the frozen air. Either my sight and my imagination were deceiving me, or could it be a spirit? What spirit? Who are you?

Can it be Father Kiriak, hastening to meet me from the Kingdom of the dead?... But perhaps we

were both already there... is it possible I have already finished crossing the bar... How wonderful! How curious this spirit is, it is my co-inhabitant in this new life. I will describe him to you as well as I can: a gigantic winged figure floated towards me, clad from head to heels in a chiton of silver brocade, which sparkled all over; on its head it had a head-dress that seemed to be seven feet high and glittered as if it were covered all over with diamonds, or, more precisely, as if it were a whole diamond mitre... It was like a richly ornamented Indian idol, and to complete this resemblance with an idol and its fantastic appearance, from under the feet of my wonderful visitor sparks of silver dust spurted out on all sides, and he seemed to float upon them as on a light cloud, looking at the very least like the legendary Hermes.

While I was examining him he – this wonderful spirit – came nearer and nearer and at last was quite close to me, a moment more and he had covered me with snow dust, stuck his fairy wand into the snow and exclaimed:

“How do you do, Bachka?”

I could not believe either my eyes or my ears;

this wonderful spirit was, of course, my savage. Now it was no longer possible to make a mistake: the same snow-shoes were under his feet, on which he had run away – on his back he had others; before me, stuck in the snow, was his long staff, and in his arms there was a whole bear's ham, fur and all, with its paw and claws. But in what was he clad – how was he transfigured?

Without waiting for any reply to his greeting, he thrust this bear's meat into my face and roared:

“Grub, Bachka,” and he himself sat down on the snow and began to take off his snow-shoes.

XI

I fell upon the bear's ham and began gnawing and sucking the raw flesh, trying to appease my torturing hunger, and at the same time looked at my deliverer.

What had he on his head that looked the whole time like a wonderful sparkling ornament – I was unable to make out what it was and asked him.

“What have you on your head?”

“That is because you did not give me any money,” he answered.

I must admit I did not quite understand what he wanted to say, but continuing to look at him more attentively I discovered that his high diamond head gear was nothing more nor less than his own long hair. His hair was filled through and through with snowflakes, and had been blown about while he ran so that it had streamed out on all sides like wisps and become frozen.

“Where is your fur cap?”

“Thrown it away.”

“Why?”

“Because you gave me no money.”

“Well,” I said, “I forgot to give you money; that was wrong of me, but what a cruel man that master must be, who would not trust you, and took away your cap in this frost.”

“Nobody took away my cap.”

“What happened then.”

“I myself threw it down.”

He told me that he had walked all day following the signs and had at last come to a hut; in the hut was the carcass of a bear was lying, but the master was not there.

“Well?”

“I thought it would be long for you to wait, Bachka; you’d die.”

“Well?”

“I cut off the bear’s leg and ran back again, but I left him my cap.”

“Why?”

“That he should not think badly, Bachka.”

“But this master does not know you.”

“This one does not know me, Bachka, but the Other knows me.”

“What other?”

“That Master, Who looks from above.”

“Hm! Who looks from above?”

“Yes, Bachka, of course, He sees everything, Bachka.”

“He sees all, brother, He sees all.”

“Of course, Bachka, He does not like those who do wrong, Bachka.”

The reasoning was very much the same as that used by Saint Sirin, when seduced by a temptress, who tried to entice him into her house, but he invited her to sin with him before all the people in the market place, and she said: “We can’t there, the people will see us,” but he answered: “I don’t pay much attention to the people, but what if God should see us? It is better we separate!”

“Well, brother,” I thought, “you, too, are not walking far from the heavenly kingdom.” During my short reflections he had fallen down in the snow.

“Good night, Bachka; you grub. I want to sleep.”

And he began to snore in his own mighty fashion.

It was already dark: again the black sky was stretched over us, and on it again like sparks on pitch the rayless stars appeared.

By that time I began to revive, having swallowed a few small pieces of raw meat, and I stood with the bear's ham in my hands, looking at the sleeping savage, and thinking:

“What an enigma is the journey of this pure, exalted soul in such a clumsy body, and in this terrible wilderness? Why is he incarnated here and not in lands more blessed by nature? Why is his understanding so limited that he is unable to have a broader and clearer conception of his Creator? Why, O God, is he deprived of the possibility of thanking Thee for enlightening him with Thy Holy Gospel? Why have not I the means in my hands to regenerate him with a new and solemn birth in Thy Son Christ? All this must be in accordance with Thy Will; if in his miserable condition Thou wishest to enlighten him with some divine light from above, then, I believe, that this enlightenment of his mind will be Thy gift. O Lord, how am I to understand it: let me not displease Thee by what I do; nor injure this Thy simple-hearted servant?”

Lost in these reflections, I did not notice the brightness that suddenly flamed up in the sky and bathed us in an enchanted light; again

everything took on huge fantastic dimensions, and my sleeping savage appeared to me like a powerful enchanted fairy knight. I bent over him and began to examine him as if I had never seen him before, and what do you think? – he appeared to be beautiful. I imagined that this was he “in whose neck remained strength, he whose mortal foot never trod the path which no fowl knoweth, he before whom the horror fleeth,” which had reduced me to impotence, and had caught me as in a noose, in my own projects. His speech is poor – therefore he cannot console a sorrowful heart with his lips, but his words are as sparks from the beatings of his heart. How eloquent is his virtue, and who would consent to grieve him? Certainly not I. No, as the Lord liveth, Who has grieved my soul for His sake, I will not do it. May my shoulder fall off from my back, and my arm break off from the elbow, if I lift it against this poor man, and against his poor race. Pardon me, holy Augustin, even before I differed from thee, and now also I do not agree with thee that “even the virtues of the heathen are only hidden vices.” No, this saviour of my life acted from no other impulse than virtue, the most self-

denying compassion, and magnanimity: he, not knowing the Apostle Peter's words, "took courage for me, his enemy, and committed his soul to works of charity." He threw away his fur cap and ran a day and a night in that frozen head-gear, being moved, of course, not only by the natural feeling of sympathy for me, but having also "religio," prizing the reunion with that master "Who looks from above." What can I do for him now? Am I to take from him this religion and destroy it, when I lack the means of giving him another and a sweeter one, "as long as words confuse the reason of mortals," and it is impossible to show him works that could captivate him. Is it possible that I will force him by fear, or seduce him with the benefits of security. He will never be like Hamor and Shechem, who let themselves be circumcized for the sake of Jacob's daughters and herds. Those who acquire faith for daughters and herds, acquire not faith, but only daughters and herds, and the offering from their hands will be for Thee like the blood of swine. But where are my means of educating, of enlightening him, when these means do not exist, and when it seems as if it had been decreed that they should not be in my

hands? No, my Kiriak, is right: a seal is here and the hand that is not liberated will not be able to break it, and I remembered the words of the prophet Habakkuk: "Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Come, Christ, come Thyself into this pure heart; come to this simple soul for as long as Thou tarriest none can force it... Let these snow-covered clods of His valleys be dear to him, and when his day comes let him cease to exist, let him cast off his life as a vine sheds its ripe fruit, as a wild olive tree sheds its blossoms... It is not for me to put his feet in the stocks nor to track his footsteps, when He Who Is has written with His finger the law of love in his heart and has led him aside from evil paths. Our Father, show Thyself to him who loves Thee and does not tempt Thee, and Thou shalt be praised for evermore as Thou hast always been praised, and through Thy mercy permit me and him and every one to fulfil Thy will, each as he can. There is no more confusion in my heart: I believe that Thou hast revealed Thyself to him as much as he requires it, and he knows Thee as all know Thee.

"Largior hic campos aether et lumene vestit

Purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt!"

My memory recalled these words of Virgil – and bowing my head low beside my sleeping savage, I fell on my knees and blessed him, and covering his frozen head with the skirts of my cassock, I slept next to him, as I would have slept embracing the angel of the desert.

XII

Shall I relate to you the end? It was not less wonderful than the beginning.

When we awoke the savage arranged the snow shoes he had brought under my feet, cut me a staff, placed it in my hands and taught me how to use it, then he bound a rope round me and taking the end in his hand drew me after him.

You ask whither? First of all, to pay our debt for the bear's meat. We hoped to find dogs there and to proceed further. But we did not go where my inexperienced plans had at first attracted me. In the smoky hut of our creditor another lesson awaited me, which had a most important influence on all my subsequent activity. The fact is, that the master for whom my savage had left his fur cap, had not been out shooting at the time

that my deliverer had got there, but had been rescuing my friend Kiriak, whom he had found in the midst of the desert, abandoned by his Christian driver. Yes, gentlemen, here in this hut, lying near a dim stinking fire, I found my honest old monk, and in what a terrible heartrending condition! He had been quite frozen; he had been smeared with something and he was still alive, but the terrible stench that reached me when I approached him, told me that the soul that guarded this abode was leaving it. I raised the reindeer skin with which he was covered, and was horrified: gangrene had removed all the flesh from the bones of his legs, but he could still see and speak. Recognizing me, he whispered:

“Good day, Vladyko!”

With indescribable horror I looked at him, and could find no words.

“I was waiting for you, and now you have come. Thank God! You have seen the desert! What do you think of it? Never mind, you are alive, you have gained experience.”

“Forgive me, Father Kiriak, for having brought you here.”

“Enough, Vladyko! Your coming here will be

blessed. You have gained experience, and can live. Shrive me quickly!”

“Very well,” I said, “directly. Where have you placed the Holy Elements? Were they not with you?”

“They were with me,” he announced, “but I have them no more.”

“Where are they?”

“The savage ate them.”

“What do you mean?”

“Yes, he ate them... Well, what of it?” he said. “He is an ignorant man... His His mind is confused... I could not prevent him... He said: ‘I shall meet a priest – he will forgive me.’ What is the use of speaking – his mind was quite confused.”

“Surely he did not eat the Chrism?”

“He ate everything, even the sponge, and carried off the pyx and deserted me... He believes that the priest will forgive him – what does it matter. His mind is confused. Let us forgive him, Vladyko – may Christ only forgive us. Promise me not to look for him – poor fellow – or, if you find him...”

“To forgive him?”

“Yes, I ask it for Christ’s sake... and when you

come home, see that you say nothing about it to the little enemies, or perhaps the cunning people will wreak their zeal on the poor fellow. Please do not tell them.”

I gave him my word, and kneeling down near the dying man confessed him. At the same moment a gaily dressed sorceress rushed into the tent, which was now crowded with people, and began beating her tambourine; others followed her example, playing on wooden pitch-pipes and on another incomprehensible instrument of the type used in ancient times when the various tribes and races fell prone on their faces to the sound of pipes and other sorts of music before the idol of the Valley of Death – and a barbarous ceremony began.

These prayers were for us, and for our deliverance, though it might perhaps have been better if they had prayed for their own deliverance from us; and I, a bishop, had to be present at these supplications, while Father Kiriak was giving up his spirit to God, and was not exactly praying, nor exactly expostulating with Him like the prophet Jeremiah, or communing with Him like a true evangelical swine-herd, not in words but in

inarticulate sighs:

“Have pity,” he whispered. “Take me now as one of your hired labourers. The hour has arrived... restore me to my former likeness and inheritance... do not let me be a wicked devil in hell – drown my sins in Christ’s blood, send me to Him... I want to lie at His feet. Say ‘So be it.’”

He breathed heavily and continued:

“O goodness – O simplicity – O love – O my joy! Jesus... I am running to Thee like Nicodemus through the night... Turn towards me – open the door... let me hear God moving and speaking... Now Thy garment is already in my hands... Thou mayest shatter my thigh... but I will not release Thee... before Thou dost bless everybody with me.”

I love this Russian prayer, as in the twelfth century it poured from the lips of our Cyril Zlatoust in Turov, and he bequeathed it to us. We must not only pray for ourselves, but for others, and not only for Christians but for the heathen, so that they too may be turned to God. My dear old Kiriak prayed in this way, he pleaded for all, and said: “Bless all or I will not release Thee.” What can you do with such an old original?

With these words he stretched himself – as if he were clinging to Christ’s garments – and flew away. It appears to me that he is still grasping and clinging to Him as He ascends, and still begging: “Bless all, or else I will not desist.” The insolent old man will, perhaps, get his way; and He, from goodness, will at the last not refuse him. All this we do, treating Christ in a homely way, in *sancta simplicitate*. Whether we understand Him, or not, of that you may argue as you like, but that we live with Him quite simply I think cannot be denied. And he loves simplicity greatly.

XIII

I buried Kiriak under the clods of earth on the banks of a frozen river, and here it was that I learned from the savages the abominable news that my successful Zyryan baptized – I am ashamed to say it – simply by treating them to vodka. To my mind this whole business was a shameful one. I did not want to see this baptizer or hear anything more about him, but returned to the town firmly resolved to sit down in my monastery to my books, without which a monk, having idle thoughts, is utterly lost, and in the

meantime I would quietly cut the hair of the ordinants, or settle the quarrels between the deacons and their wives. As for Holy Work, which, to be done in holiness cannot be done carelessly, it were better to leave it undone – so as not to offer foolishness to God.

I acted thus, and returned to the monastery, wiser for the experience, and knowing that my much suffering missionaries were good men, and I thanked God that they were so, and not different.

Now I saw clearly that good weakness is more pardonable than foolish zeal in a work where there are no means of applying intelligent zeal. That this is impossible was proved to me by a paper, I found waiting for me at the monastery, in which I was requested “to take note” that in Siberia besides the 580 Buddhist lamas, who were on the staffs of thirty four temples, a number of supernumerary lamas were permitted. What of that? I was not a Kanyushkevich or an Arseni Matsievich – I was a bishop of the new school and did not want to sit in Reval with a gag in my mouth, as Arseni sat; there was no profit in that. I “took note” of the information concerning the in-

crease of the lamas, ordered my Zyryan to return from the desert as soon as possible, and conferring on him an epignation – the spiritual sword – kept him in the town attached to the cathedral in the capacity of sacristan and supervisor of the re-gilding of the iconostasis, but I called my own lazy missionaries together and bowing down to their girdles said:

“Pardon me, fathers and brothers, that I did not understand your goodness.”

They answered, “God will forgive.”

“I thank, you for your graciousness; be gracious from now always and everywhere, and the God of Mercy will prosper your works.”

From that time, during the remainder of my prolonged stay in Siberia, I never troubled if the quiet labours of my missionaries did not produce the spectacular results so well loved by the impatient members of fashionable religious society. While there were no such sudden effects I felt assured that the water jars were being filled one after another, but when it chanced that one or other of my missionaries produced a large number of proselytes... I must confess, I was troubled... I remembered my Zyryan, or the bap-

tizer of the Guards Ushakov; or the Councillor Yartzev, who were still more successful because in their case as in the days of Vladimir, “piety was allied to fear,” and even before the arrival of these missionaries the natives begged to be baptized. Yes, but what was the result of all their nimbleness and piety allied with fear? The abomination of desolation was produced in the holy places, where these fleet baptizers had their fonts and... all was confusion – in the mind, in the heart, in the understanding of the people, and I, a bad bishop, could do nothing for it, and a good bishop could not have done more before – before, so to speak, we begin seriously to occupy ourselves with faith, and not merely take pride in it for pleasure’s sake like Pharisees. That, gentlemen, is the position in which we Russian baptizers find ourselves; not, as it may appear, because we do not understand Christ, but because we really understand Him and do not want His name to be blasphemed by the heathen. So I lived on, not showing tyranny with the same readiness as before, but patiently, one may almost say, lazily, stumbling under the crosses sent down to me both by Christ and not by Christ, of which the

most remarkable one was that I, who began to study Buddhism with zeal, was sedulously reported by my Zyryan to be myself secretly a Buddhist. And this reputation clung to me, although I did not restrain the zeal of my Zyryan and allowed him to act according to the well tested and successful methods of Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky, which were thus proclaimed over his grave by his follower Kus'ma: "If a heathen comes, order him to be taken to the sacristy – let him look upon our true Christianity. And I allowed the Zyryan to take anybody he chose to the sacristy and display to them with care all that our people and he had collected there of "true Christianity." All this was good and fairly efficacious: they praised our "true Christianity," but no doubt my Zyryan found it was dull to baptize only two or three at a time – and it certainly was "dull." Here we have a real Russian expression. Yes, gentlemen, it was dull then to struggle against the self-satisfied ignorance that tolerated the Faith only as a political means. But now, perhaps, it is even duller to struggle against the indifference of those who instead of enlightening others have as that same Matsievich very happily expressed it,

“themselves hardly any faith.” Well, I suppose, you clever modern men think: “Oh! our diocesan bishops are bad! What do they do? Our bishops do nothing! Now, I do not want to defend them all; many of us have certainly become very feeble; they stumble under the crosses and fall; and not only do influential personages, but even some “popa mitratus” become authorities for them, and all this is of course, because of “What will ye give me?” Well, supposing I were to ask you: What has brought them to this? Is it not really because they, your diocesan bishops, have been converted into administrators and are unable to do anything vital now? And mark: Perhaps you owe them much gratitude for doing nothing in these times. Otherwise they might have strapped with the official thong such an unbearable load on your back, that God knows, if your back bone would not have been shattered to splinters, or the thong have been torn in two; but we are conservatives, and defend liberty as well as we can; liberty, may Christ free us thereby from such co-operation. Gentlemen, that is why we act and co-operate weakly. Do not throw up at us the former hierarchies, such as those of St.

Guri and others. It is true St. Guri knew how to enlighten, but for that purpose he went into savage lands well armed with orders and powers to “attract the people with caresses, with food, with defences from the authorities, with support against the Voevods and the judges;” he was obliged to take part in the councils of the government, but your bishop of today is not even allowed to take counsel with a neighbouring bishop about the business of his diocese; in a word, he must think of nothing. There is somebody who thinks for him. All he has to do is to “take note of” what is ordered. What do you require of him, when now he can never act for himself? Lord, Thy will be done... What can be done is somehow done by itself. This I saw towards the end of my stay in Siberia. One day a missionary came to me and said that he had come upon a camp of a nomad tribe at the spot where I had buried my old Kiriak, and there on the banks of the stream, he had baptized whole crowds in the name of Kiriak’s God, as formerly a man had been baptized in the name of Justinian’s God. Near the bones of the good old Monk the good people learned to love and understand God, who had

created this pious soul, and they themselves wished to serve the God who had brought into existence such spiritual beauty.

In consequence of this I ordered such a large solid oaken cross to be placed over Kiriak's grave that even the Galician prince Vladimirko, who thought it unworthy to kiss small crosses, would not have been able to resist it; so we erected to Kiriak a cross that was twice the size of the Zyryan – and this was the last order I gave in my Siberian pastorate.

I do not know who will cut down this cross or who has already cut it down – whether it was the Buddhist lamas or the Russian officials – besides, what does it matter?

Now my tale is finished. Judge us all from what you see – I will not try to justify myself, but I will only say this: My simple Kiriak certainly understood Christ not less well than your foreign preachers, who jingle like a tinkling cymbal in your drawing-rooms and winter-gardens. Let them preach there surrounded by the wives of Lot, who, whatever words they may hear, will none of them go to Zoar, but, after shuffling about before God, while existence is dull for

them, at the least change in their lives will look back at their Sodom and become columns of salt. This will be the only result of this drawing-room Christianity. What have we to do with these miracle workers? They do not want to walk on the earth, but desire to fly in the sky, and having but small wings and a large body like grasshoppers, they cannot fly far, nor can they pour the light of faith or the sweets of consolation into the fogs of our native land, where, from wooded dale to wooded dale, our Christ wanders, so blessed, so kind, and above all so patient, that He has taught even the worst of His servants to look submissively on the destruction of His work by those who ought to fear it most. We have become used to submit to everything, because this is not the first snow to fall on our heads. There was a time when "Our Book of Faith" was hidden, and a hammer of German workmanship was placed in our hands; they wanted to cut our hair, shave us and transform us into little abbés. One benefactor, Golitzin, ordered us to preach his crazy divinity; another, Protasov, shook his finger under our very noses; while a third, Chebyshev, excelled all the others and openly uttered "corrupt words" in

the market place as well as in the Synod, affirming that there is no God, and to talk of Him is stupid. It is impossible to guess whom we shall meet next, and how some new cock or other may yet crow to us. The one consolation is that all these zealots of the Russian Church will not injure her, because theirs is an unequal struggle: the Church is indestructible like the apostolic edifice; the spirit will pass from these singers, and their place shall know them no more. But, gentlemen, what I think, especially tactless – is that some of these highly placed or broad-minded personages, as it is now the fashion to call them, do not notice our modesty, nor do they value it. Verily, this is ingratitude; they have no right to reproach us with being patient and quiet... If we were more impatient, God knows, many would not be sorry for it, more especially those who do not consider work, nor admit of man's wounds, but having waxed fat, reason idly as to what they ought to begin to believe, in order to have something to reason about. Gentlemen, reverence at least the holy modesty of the Orthodox Church, and understand that she has truly maintained the spirit of Christ, if she suffers all that God wills her to suffer. Truly

her humility is worthy of praise; and we must wonder at her vitality and bless God for it.

We all involuntarily answered:

“Amen.”

Man On The Clock

I

The events of the story which is now presented to the reader are so touching and terrible in their importance for the chief and heroic actor who took part in them, and the issue of the affair was so unique, that anything similar could scarcely have occurred in another country than Russia.

It forms in part a court anecdote, in part a historic event that characterizes fairly well the manners and the very strange tendencies of the uneventful period comprised in the third decade this nineteenth century.

There is no invention in the following story.

During the winter of 1839, just before the Festival of the Epiphany, there was a great thaw in Petersburg. The weather was so warm, that it was almost like spring: the snow melted during the day, water dripped from the roofs, the ice on the rivers became blue, and open water appeared in many places. On the Neva, just in front of the Winter Palace, there was a large open space. A warm but very high wind blew from the west, the water was driven in from the gulf, and the signal guns were fired.

The guard at the Palace at that time was a company of the Ismailovsky regiment, commanded by a very brilliant well educated officer named Nikolai Ivanovich Miller, a young man of the very best society (who subsequently rose to the rank of general and became the director of the Lycium). He was a man of the so-called "humane tendencies," which had long since been noticed in him, and somewhat impaired his chances in the service, in the eyes of his superiors.

Miller was really an exact and trustworthy officer; the duty of the guard at the Palace was

without any danger; the time was most uneventful and tranquil; the Palace sentries were only required to stand accurately at their posts. Nevertheless, just when Captain Miller was in command, a most extraordinary and very alarming event took place, which is probably scarcely remembered even by the few of his contemporaries who are now ending their days upon earth.

III

At first everything went well with the guard. The sentries were placed, the men were all at their posts and all was in the most perfect order. The Emperor Nikolai Pavlovich was well, he had been for a drive in the evening returned home, and had gone to bed. The Palace slept, too. The night was most quiet. There was tranquillity in the guard-room. Captain Miller had pinned his white pocket handkerchief to the back of the officer's chair, with its traditionally greasy morocco high back and had settled down to while away the time by reading.

Captain Miller had always been a passionate reader, and therefore was never dull; he read and did not notice how the night passed away.

When suddenly at about three o'clock he was alarmed by a terrible anxiety. The sergeant on duty, pale and trembling with fear, stood before him, and stammered hurriedly:

“A calamity, your honour, a calamity!”

“What has happened?”

“A terrible misfortune has occurred.”

Captain Miller jumped up in indescribable agitation and with difficulty was able to ascertain what really was the nature of the “calamity” and the “terrible misfortune.”

IV

The case was as follows: the sentry, a private of the Ismailovsky regiment named Postnikov, who was standing on guard at the outer door of the Palace, now called the “Jordan” entrance heard that a man was drowning in the open spaces which had appeared in the ice just opposite the Palace, and was calling for help in his despair.

Private Postnikov, a domestic serf of some great family, was a very nervous and sensitive man. For a long time he listened to the distant cries and groans of the drowning man, and they

seemed to benumb him with horror. He looked on all sides, but on the whole visible expanse of the quays and the Neva, as if on purpose, not a living soul could he see.

There was nobody who could give help to the drowning man, and he was sure to sink...

All this time the man struggled long and terribly.

It seemed as if there was but one thing left for him – to sink to the bottom without further struggle, but no! His cries of exhaustion were now broken and ceased, then were heard again, always nearer and nearer to the Palace quay. It was evident that the man had not lost his direction, but was making straight for the lights of the street lamps, but doubtless he would perish because just in his path, he would fall into the “Jordan” (a hole made in the ice of the river for the consecration of the water on the 6th of January.) There he would be drawn under the ice and it would be the end. Again he was quiet, but a minute later he began to splash through the water, and moan: “Save me, save me!” He was now so near that the splashing of the water could actually be heard as he waded along.

Private Postnikov began to realize that it would be quite easy to save this man. It was only necessary to run on to the ice, as the drowning man was sure to be there, throw him a rope, or stretch a pole or a gun towards him, and he would be saved. He was so near that he could take hold of it with his hand and save himself. But Postnikov remembered his service and his oath; he knew he was the sentry, and that the sentry dare not leave his sentry-box on any pretext or for any reason whatever.

On the other hand, Postnikov's heart was not at all submissive; it gnawed, it throbbed, it sank. He would have been glad to tear it out and throw it at his feet – he had become so uneasy at the sound of these groans and sobs. It was terrible to hear another man perishing and not to stretch out a hand to save him, when really it was quite possible to do so, because the sentry-box would not run away, and no other harm could happen. “Shall I run down? Will anybody see it? Oh, Lord, if it could only end! He's groaning again!”

For a whole half hour, while this was going on, Private Postnikov's heart tormented him so much that he began to feel doubts of his own

reason. He was a clever and conscientious soldier with a clear judgment, and he knew perfectly well, that for a sentry to leave his post was a crime that would have to be tried by court-martial, and he would afterwards have to run the gauntlet between two lines of cat-o'-nine-tails and then have penal servitude, or perhaps even be shot – but from the direction of the swollen river again there rose, always nearer and nearer, groans, mumblings and desperate struggles.

“I am drowning! Save me, I am drowning!”

Soon he would come to the Jordan cutting and then – the end.

Postnikov looked round once or twice on all sides. Not a soul was to be seen, only the lamps rattled, shook and flickered in the wind, and on the wind were borne broken cries, perhaps the last cries...

There was another splash, a single sob and a gurgling in the water.

The sentry could bear it no longer, and left his post.

V

Postnikov rushed to the steps, with his heart beating violently, ran on to the ice, then into the water that had risen above it. He soon saw where the drowning man was struggling for life and held out the stock of his gun to him. The drowning man caught hold of the butt-end and Postnikov holding on to the bayonet drew him to the bank.

Both the man who had been saved, and his rescuer were completely wet; the man who had been saved was in a state of great exhaustion, shivered and fell; his rescuer Private Postnikov could not make up his mind to abandon him on the ice, but led him to the quay, and began looking about for somebody to whom he could confide him. While all this was happening, a sledge in which an officer was sitting had appeared on the quay. He was an officer of the Palace Invalid corps, a company which existed then, but has since been abolished.

This gentleman who arrived at such an inopportune moment for Postnikov was evidently a man of a very heedless character, and besides a

very muddled-headed and impudent person. He jumped out of his sledge and inquired:

“What man is this? Who are these people?”

“He was nearly drowned – he was sinking,” began Postnikov.

“How was he drowning? Who was drowning? Was it you? Why is he here?”

But he only spluttered and panted, and Postnikov was no longer there; he had shouldered his gun and had gone back to his sentry-box. Possibly the officer understood what had happened, for he made no further inquiries, but at once took the man who had been rescued into his sledge and drove with him to the Admiralty Police station in the Morskaia Street.

Here the officer made a statement to the inspector, that the dripping man he had brought had nearly been drowned in one of the holes in the ice in front of the Palace, and that he, the officer, had saved him at the risk of his own life.

The man who had been saved was still quite wet, shivering and exhausted. From fright and owing to his terrible efforts he fell into a sort of unconsciousness, and it was quite indifferent to him who had saved him.

The sleepy police orderly bustled around him, while in the office a statement was drawn up from the officer's verbal deposition and, with the suspicion natural to members of the police, they were perplexed to understand how he had managed to come out of the water quite dry. The officer who was anxious to receive the life saving medal tried to explain this happy concurrence of circumstances, but his explanation was incoherent and improbable. They went to wake the police inspector, and sent to make inquiries.

Meantime in the Palace this occurrence was the cause of another rapid series of events.

VI

In the Palace guard-room all that had occurred since the officer took the half drowned man into his sledge was unknown. There the Ismailovsky officer and the soldiers only knew that Postnikov, a private of their regiment, had left his sentry-box, and had hurried to save a man and, this being a great breach of military duty, Private Postnikov would certainly be tried by court-martial and have to undergo a thrashing, and all his superior officers, beginning from the commander of the company, would have to face terrible unpleasantness, to avert which they would have nothing to say, nor would they be able to defend themselves.

The wet and shivering soldier Postnikov, was of course at once relieved from his post, and when he was brought to the guard-room frankly related to Captain Miller all that we already know, with all the details to the moment when the officer of the Invalid Corps put the half drowned man into his sledge, and ordered the coachman to drive to the Admiralty police station.

The danger grew greater and more unavoidable. It was certain the officer of the Invalid Corps would relate everything to the police inspector and the inspector would at once state all the facts to the chief of police, Kokoshkin, who in the morning would make his report to the Emperor, and then the trouble would begin.

There was no time for reflection; the advice of the superior officer must be obtained.

Nikolai Ivanovich Miller forthwith sent an alarming note to his immediate superior, the commander of his battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin, in which he begged him to come to the guard room as soon as he could to take every possible measure to help him out of the terrible misfortune that had occurred.

It was already about three o'clock, and Kokoshkin had to present his report to the Emperor fairly early in the morning, so that but little time remained for reflection and action.

VII

Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin did not possess that compassion and tenderness of heart for which Nikolai Ivanovich Miller had always been distinguished. Svinin was not a heartless man, but first and foremost a martinet (a type that is now remembered with regret) Svinin was known for his severity and he even liked to boast of his exacting discipline. He had no taste for evil, and never tried to cause anybody useless suffering, but when a man had violated any of the duties of the service, Svinin was inexorable. In the present case he considered it out of place to enter into the consideration of the causes, that had guided the actions of the culprit, and held to the rule that every deviation from discipline was guilt. Therefore, in the company on guard all knew that Private Postnikov would have to suffer, what he deserved, for having left his post, and that Svinin would remain absolutely indifferent.

Such was the character by which the staff officer was known to his superiors, and also to his comrades, amongst whom there were men who did not sympathize with Svinin, because at that

time "humaneness," and other similar delusions, had not entirely died out. Svinin was indifferent to whether he would be blamed or praised by the "humanitarians." To beg or entreat Svinin, or even to try to move him to pity was quite useless. To all this he was hardened with the well-tempered armour of the people of those times, who wanted to make their way in the world but even he, like Achilles, had a weak spot.

Svinin's career in the service had commenced well, and he of course greatly valued it and was very careful that on it, as on a full dress uniform, not a grain of dust should settle, and now this unfortunate action of one of the men of the battalion entrusted to him would certainly throw a shadow on the discipline of the whole company. Those on whom Svinin's well started and carefully maintained military career depended would not stop to inquire if the commander of the battalion was guilty or not guilty of what one of his men had done, while moved by the most honourable feelings of sympathy, and many would gladly have put a spoke in his wheel, so as to make way for their relations or to push forward some fine young fellow with high patronage. If

the Emperor, who would certainly be angry, said to the commander of the regiment that he had feeble officers, that their men were undisciplined: who was the cause of it? Svinin. So it would be repeated that Svinin was feeble, and the reproach of feebleness would remain a stain on his reputation that could not be washed out. Then he would never be in any way remarkable among his contemporaries, and he would not leave his portrait in the gallery of historical personages, of the Russian Empire.

Although at that time but few cultivated the study of history, nevertheless they believed in it, and aspired, with special pleasure, to take part in its making.

VIII

At about three o'clock in the morning, as soon as Svinin received Captain Miller's disquieting letter, he at once jumped out of bed, put on his uniform, and swayed by fear and anger arrived at the guard-room of the Winter Palace. Here he forthwith examined Private Postnikov, and assured himself that the extraordinary event had really taken place. Private Postnikov again frankly confirmed to the commander of his battalion all that had occurred while he was on guard duty, and what he (Postnikov) had already related to the commander of his company, Captain Miller. The soldier said, that he was guilty before God and the Emperor, and could not expect mercy; that he, standing on guard, hearing the groans of a man, who was drowning in the open places of the ice, had suffered long, had struggled long between his sense of military duty and his feelings of compassion, and at last he had yielded to temptation and not being able to stand the struggle, had left his sentry-box, jumped on the ice and had drawn the drowning man to the bank, and there to his misfortune he met an of-

ficer of the Palace Invalid Corps.

Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin was in despair; he gave himself the only possible satisfaction by wreaking his anger on Postnikov, whom he at once sent under arrest to the regimental prison, and then said some biting words to Miller, reproaching him with "humanitarianism," which was of no use at all in military service; but all this was of no avail, nor would it improve the matter. It was impossible to find any excuse, still less justification, for a sentry who had left his post, and there remained only one way of getting out of the difficulty – to conceal the whole affair from the Emperor...

But was it possible to conceal such an occurrence?

It was evident that this appeared to be impossible, as the rescue of the drowning man was known, not only to the whole of the guard, but also to that hateful officer of the Invalid Corps, who by now had certainly had time to report the whole matter to General Kokoshkin.

Which way was he to turn? To whom could he address himself? From whom could he obtain help and protection?

Svinin wanted to gallop off to the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich and relate to him, quite frankly, all that had happened. Manœuvres of this nature were then customary. The Grand Duke, who had a hot temper, would be angry and storm, but his humour and habits were such, that the greater the harshness he showed at first, even when he grievously insulted the offender, the sooner he would forgive him and himself take up his defence. Similar cases were not infrequent, and they were even sometimes sought after. Words do not hurt; and Svinin was very anxious to bring the matter to a favourable conclusion; but was it possible at night to obtain entrance to the palace and disturb the Grand Duke? To wait for morning and appear before Michael Pavlovich, after Kokoshkin had made his report to the Emperor, would be too late.

While Svinin was agitated by these difficulties he became more subtle, and his mind began to see another issue, which till then had been hidden as in a mist.

IX

Among other well-known military tactics there is the following: at the moment when the greatest danger is threatened from the walls of a beleaguered fortress, not to retire, but to advance straight under its walls. Svinin decided not to do any of the things that had at first occurred to him, but to go straight to Kokoshkin.

Many terrible things were related at that time in Petersburg about the chief of police Kokoshkin, and many absurd things too, but among others it was affirmed that he possessed such wonderful resource and tact, that with the assistance of this tact he was not only able to make a mountain out of a molehill but that he was able as easily to make a molehill out of a mountain.

Kokoshkin was really very stern and very terrible, and inspired great fear in all who came in contact with him, but he sometimes showed mercy to the gay young scamps among the officers, and such young scamps were not few in those days, and they had often found in him a merciful and zealous protector. In a word, he was able to do much, and knew how to do it, if he only

chose. Both Svinin and Captain Miller knew this side of his character. Miller therefore encouraged his superior officer to risk going to Kokoshkin, and trust to the general's magnanimity and resource and tact, which would probably suggest to him the means of getting out of this unpleasant situation, without incurring the anger of the Emperor, which Kokoshkin, to his honour be it said, always made great efforts to avoid.

Svinin put on his overcoat, looked up to heaven, murmured several times, "Good Lord! Good Lord!" and drove off to Kokoshkin.

It was already past four o'clock in the morning.

X

The chief of police Kokoshkin was aroused, and the arrival of Svinin, who had come on important business, that could not be postponed, was reported to him.

The general got up at once and, with an overcoat wrapped round him, wiping his forehead, yawning and stretching himself, came out to receive Svinin. Kokoshkin listened with great attention, but quite calmly, to all Svinin had to relate. During all these explanations and requests for indulgence he only said:

“The soldier left his sentry-box, and saved a man?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Svinin.

“And the sentry-box?”

“Remained empty during that time.”

“H'm! I knew that it remained empty. I'm very pleased that nobody stole it.”

Hearing this Svinin felt certain that the general knew all about the case, and that he had already decided in what manner he would place the facts before the Emperor in his morning's report, and also that he would not alter this de-

cision. Otherwise such an event as a soldier of the Palace Guard having left his post would without doubt have caused greater alarm to the energetic chief of police.

But Kokoshkin did not know anything about it. The police inspector to whom the officer of the Invalid Corps had conveyed the man saved from drowning did not consider it a matter of great importance. In his sight it was not at all a subject that required him to awaken the weary chief of police in the middle of the night, and besides the whole event appeared to the inspector somewhat suspicious, because the officer of the Invalids' was quite dry, which certainly could not have been the case if he had saved a man from drowning at the risk of his own life. The inspector looked upon the officer as an ambitious liar, who wanted to obtain another medal for his breast, and therefore detained him while the clerk on duty was taking down his statement, and tried to arrive at the truth by asking about all sorts of minute details.

It was disagreeable for the inspector that such an event should have occurred in his district, and that the man had been saved, not by a policeman

but by an officer of the Palace Guard.

Kokoshkin's calmness could be explained very simply: first, by his terrible fatigue, after a day of anxiety and hard work, and by his having assisted in the night at the extinguishing of two fires, and secondly because the act of the sentry Postnikov did not concern him, as Chief of Police, at all.

Nevertheless, Kokoshkin at once gave the necessary instructions.

He sent to the Inspector of the Admiralty Quarter and ordered him to come at once and bring the officer of the Invalid Corps and the man who had been saved with him, and asked Svinin to remain in the small waiting room adjoining his office. Then Kokoshkin went into his study, without closing the door, sat down at the table, and began to sign various papers, but he soon rested his head on his hand and fell asleep in his arm-chair at the table.

XI

In those days there were neither municipal telegraphs nor telephones, and in order to transmit the commands of the chiefs the "forty thousand couriers" of whom Gogol has left a lasting memory in his comedy had to ride post haste in all directions.

This of course was not so quickly done as by telegraph or telephone, but lent considerable animation to the town and proved that the authorities were indefatigably vigilant.

Before the breathless inspector, the life-saving officer, and the man rescued from drowning had time to come from the Admiralty police station the nervous and energetic General Kokoshkin had had time to have a snooze and refresh himself. This was seen in the expression of his face, and by the revival of his mental faculties.

Kokoshkin ordered all who had arrived to come to his study and with them Svinin too.

"The official report?" the General demanded of the Inspector.

The latter silently handed a folded paper to the General and then whispered in a low voice:

“I must beg permission to communicate a few words to your Excellency in private.”

“Very well.”

Kokoshkin went towards the bay-window followed by the Inspector.

“What is it?”

The Inspector’s indistinct whispers could be heard, and the General’s loud interjections.

“H’m, yes! Well, what then?... It is possible.... They take care to come out dry... Anything more?”

“Nothing, sir.”

The General came out of the bay-window, sat down at his desk, and began to read. He read the report in silence without showing any signs of uneasiness or suspicion, and then turning to the man who had been saved, asked in a loud voice:

“How comes it, my friend, that you got into the open places before the Palace?”

“Forgive me!”

“So! You were drunk?”

“Excuse me, I was not drunk, but only tipsy.”

“Why did you get into the water?”

“I wanted to cut across the ice, lost my way, and got into the water.”

“That means it was dark before your eyes.”

“It was dark; it was dark all round, your Excellency.”

“And you were not able to notice who pulled you out?”

“Pardon me, I could not notice anything. I think it was he” – he pointed to the officer and added: “I could not distinguish anything. I was so scared.”

“That’s what it comes to. You were loafing about when you ought to have been asleep. Now look at him well and remember who was your benefactor. An honourable man risked his life to save you.”

“I shall never forget it.”

“Your name, sir?”

The officer mentioned his name.

“Do you hear?”

“I hear, your Excellency.”

“You are Orthodox?”

“I am Orthodox, your Excellency.”

“In your prayers for health, remember this man’s name.”

“I will write it down, your Excellency.”

“Pray to God for him, and go away. You are no

longer wanted.”

He bowed to the ground and cleared off immeasurably pleased that he was released.

Svinin stood there, and could not understand how by God's grace things were taking such a turn.

XII

Kokoshkin turned to the officer of the Invalid Corps.

“You saved this man, at the risk of your own life?”

“Yes, your Excellency.”

“There were no witnesses to this occurrence, and owing to the late hour there could not have been any?”

“Yes, your Excellency, it was dark, and on the quay there was nobody except the sentry.”

“There is no need to mention the sentry; the sentry has to stand at his post and has no right to occupy himself with anything else. I believe what is written in this report. Was it not taken down from your words?”

These words Kokoshkin pronounced with special emphasis, as if he were threatening or shout-

ing.

The officer did not falter, but with staring eyes and expanded chest, standing at attention, answered:

“From my words and quite correctly, your Excellency.”

“Your action deserves a reward.”

The officer bowed gratefully.

“There is nothing to thank for,” continued Kokoshkin. “I shall report your self-sacrificing act to His Majesty the Emperor, and your breast may be decorated with a medal even to-day. Now you may go home, have a warm drink, and don’t leave the house, as perhaps you may be wanted.”

The officer of the Invalid Corps beamed all over, bowed and retired.

Kokoshkin looking after him said:

“It is possible that the Emperor may wish to see him.”

“I understand,” answered the Inspector, with apprehension.

“I do not require you any more.”

The Inspector left the room, closed the door, and in accordance with his religious habit crossed himself.

The officer of the Invalids' was waiting for the Inspector below, and they went away together much better friends than when they had come.

Only Svinin remained in the study of the Chief of Police. Kokoshkin looked at him long and attentively, and then asked:

"You have not been to the Grand Duke?"

At that time when the Grand Duke was mentioned everybody knew that it referred to the Grand Duke Michael.

"I came straight to you," answered Svinin.

"Who was the officer on guard?"

"Captain Miller."

Kokoshkin again looked at Svinin and said:

"I think you told me something different before."

Svinin did not understand to what this could refer, and remained silent, and Kokoshkin added:

"Well, it's all the same; good night."

The audience was over.

XIII

ABOUT one o'clock the officer of the Invalids, was really sent for by Kokoshkin, who informed him most amiably the Emperor was very much pleased that among the officers of the Invalids' Corps of his palace there were to be found such vigilant and self-sacrificing men, and had honoured him with the medal for saving life. Then Kokoshkin decorated the hero with his own hands, and the officer went away to swagger about town with the medal on his breast.

This affair could therefore be considered as quite finished, but Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin felt it was not concluded and regarded himself as called upon to put the dots on the "i's."

He had been so much alarmed that he was ill for three days, and on the fourth drove to the Peter House, had a service of thanksgiving said for him before the icon of the Saviour, and returning home reassured in his soul, sent to ask Captain Miller to come to him.

"Well, thank God, Nikolai Ivanovich," he said to Miller," the storm that was hanging over us has entirely passed away, and our unfortunate affair

with the sentry has been quite settled. I think we can now breathe freely. All this we owe without doubt first to the mercy of God, and secondly to General Kokoshkin. Let people say he is not kind and heartless, but I am full of gratitude for his magnanimity and respect for his resourcefulness and tact. In what a masterly way he took advantage of that vainglorious Invalid swindler, who, in truth, for his impudence ought to have received not a medal but a good thrashing in the stable. There was nothing else for him to do; he had to take advantage of this to save many, and Kokoshkin manœuvred the whole affair so cleverly that nobody had the slightest unpleasantness; on the contrary, all are very happy and contented. Between ourselves, I can tell you, I have been informed by a reliable person that Kokoshkin is very satisfied with me. He was pleased I had not gone anywhere else, but came straight to him, and that I did not argue with this swindler, who received a medal. In a word, nobody has suffered, and all has been done with so much tact that there can be no fear for the future; but there is one thing wanting on our side. We must follow Kokoshkin's example and finish

the affair with tact on our side, so as to guarantee ourselves from any future occurrences. There is still one person whose position is not regulated. I speak of Private Postnikov. He is still lying in prison under arrest, no doubt troubled with the thoughts of what will be done to him. We must put an end to his torments.”

“Yes, it is time,” said Miller, delighted.

“Well, certainly, and you are the best man to do it. Please go at once to the barracks call your company together, lead Private Postnikov out of prison, and let him be punished with two hundred lashes before the whole company.”

XIV

Miller was astonished, and made an attempt to persuade Svinin to complete the general happiness by showing mercy to Private Postnikov, and to pardon him as he had already suffered so much while lying in prison awaiting his fate, but Svinin only got angry and did not allow Miller to continue.

“No,” he broke in, “none of that! I have only just talked to you about tact and you at once are tactless! None of that!”

Svinin changed his tone to a dryer, more official one, and added sternly:

“And as in this affair you too are not quite in the right, but really much to blame because your softness of heart is quite unsuitable for a military man, and this deficiency of your character is reflected in your subordinates, therefore you are to be present personally at the execution of my orders and to see that the flogging is done seriously – as severely as possible. For this purpose have the goodness to give orders that the young soldiers who have just arrived from the army shall do the whipping, because our old soldiers

are all infected with the liberalism of the guards. They won't whip a comrade properly, but would only frighten the fleas away from his back. I myself will look in to see that they have done the guilty man properly."

To evade in any way instructions given by a superior officer was of course impossible, and kind-hearted Captain Miller was obliged to execute with exactitude the orders received from the commander of his battalion.

The company was drawn up in the court-yard of the Ismailovsky barracks; the rods were fetched in sufficient quantities from the stores, and Private Postnikov was brought out of his prison and "done properly" at the hands of the zealous comrades, who had just arrived from the army. These men, who had not as yet been tainted by the liberalism of the guards, put all the dots on the i's to the full, as ordered by the commander of the battalion. Then Postnikov, having received his punishment, was lifted up on the overcoat on which he had been whipped and carried to the hospital of the regiment.

XV

The commander of the battalion, Svinin, as soon as he heard that the punishment had been inflicted, went at once to visit Postnikov in the hospital in a most fatherly way, and to satisfy himself by a personal examination that his orders had been properly executed. Heartsore and nervous, Postnikov had been "done properly." Svinin was satisfied and ordered that Postnikov should receive, on his behalf, a pound of sugar and a quarter of a pound of tea with which to regale himself while he was recovering. Postnikov from his bed heard this order about tea and said:

"I am very contented your honour. Thank you for your fatherly kindness."

And he really was contented, because while lying three days in prison he had expected something much worse. Two hundred lashes, according to the strict ideas of those days, was of very little consequence in comparison with the punishments that people suffered by order of the military courts; and that is the sort of punishment he would have had awarded him if, by good luck, all the bold and tactful evolutions, which

are related above, had not taken place.

But the number of persons who were pleased at the events just described was not limited to these.

XVI

The story of the exploit of Private Postnikov was secretly whispered in various circles of society in the capital, which in those days, when the public Press had no voice, lived in a world of endless gossip. In these verbal transmissions the name of the real hero, Private Postnikov, was lost, but instead of that the episode became embellished and received a very interesting and romantic character.

It was related that an extraordinary swimmer had swum from the side of the Peter and Paul Fortress, and had been fired at and wounded by one of the sentries stationed before the Winter Palace and an officer of the Invalid Guard, who was passing at the time, threw himself into the water and saved him from drowning, for which the one had received the merited reward, and the other the punishment he deserved. These absurd reports even reached the Conventual House, in-

habited at that time by His Eminence, a high ecclesiastic, who was cautious but not indifferent to worldly matters, and who was benevolently disposed towards and a well-wisher of the pious Moscow family Svinin.

The story of the shot seemed improbable to the astute ecclesiastic. What nocturnal swimmer could it be? If he was an escaped prisoner, why was the sentry punished, for he had only done his duty in shooting at him, when he saw him swimming across the Neva from the fortress. If he was not a prisoner, but another mysterious man, who had to be saved from the waves of the Neva, how could the sentry know anything about him? And then again, it could not have happened as it was whispered in frivolous society. In society much is accepted in a light-hearted and frivolous manner, but those who live in monasteries and conventual houses look upon all this much more seriously and are quite conversant with the real things of this world.

XVII

Once when Svinin happened to be at His Eminence's to receive his blessing the distinguished dignitary began: "By the by, about that shot?" Svinin related the whole truth, in which there was nothing whatever "about that shot."

The high ecclesiastic listened to the real story in silence, gently touching his white rosary and never taking his eyes off the narrator. When Svinin had finished His Eminence quietly murmured in rippling speech:

"From all this one is obliged to conclude that in this matter the statements made were neither wholly nor on every occasion strictly true."

Svinin stammered and then answered with the excuse that it was not he but General Kokoshkin who had made the report.

His Eminence passed his rosary through his waxen fingers in silence, and then murmured:

"One must make a distinction between a lie and what is not wholly true."

Again the rosary, again silence, and at last a soft ripple of speech:

"A half truth is not a lie, but the less said about

it the better.”

Svinin was encouraged and said:

“That is certainly true. What troubles me most is that I had to inflict a punishment upon the soldier, who, although he had neglected his duty...”

The rosary and a soft rippling interruption:

“The duties of service must never be neglected.”

“Yes, but it was done by him through magnanimity, through sympathy after such a struggle, and with danger. He understood that in saving the life of another man he was destroying himself. This is a high, a holy feeling...”

“Holiness is known to God; corporal punishment is not destruction for a common man, nor is it contrary to the customs of the nations, nor to the spirit of the Scriptures. The rod is easier borne by the coarse body than delicate suffering by the soul. In this case your justice has not suffered in the slightest degree.”

“But he was deprived of the reward for saving one who was perishing.”

“To save those who are perishing is not a merit, but rather a duty. He who could save but did not save is liable to the punishment of the laws;

but he who saves does his duty.”

A pause, the rosary, and soft rippling speech:

“For a warrior to suffer degradation and wounds for his action is perhaps much more profitable than marks of distinction. But what is most important is to be careful in this case, and never to mention anywhere or on any occasion what anybody said about it.”

It was evident His Eminence was also satisfied.

XVIII

If I had the temerity of the happy chosen of Heaven, who through their great faith are enabled to penetrate into the secrets of the Will of God, then I would perhaps dare to permit myself the supposition that probably God Himself was satisfied with the conduct of Postnikov's humble soul, which He had created. But my faith is small; it does not permit my mind to penetrate so high. I am of the earth, earthy. I think of those mortals who love goodness, simply because it is goodness and do not expect any reward for it, wherever it may be. I think these true and faithful people will also be entirely satisfied with this holy impulse of

love, and not less holy endurance of the humble
hero of my true and artless story.