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THE WHITE TERROR AND THE RED

THE WHITE TERROR
AND
THE RED

A Novel of Revolutionary Russia

BY

A. CAHAN

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THE WHITE TERROR AND THE RED.

CHAPTER I.

AN AFFRONT TO HIS CZAR.

ALEXANDER II. passed part of the summer of 1874 in a German health-resort taking the mineral waters. When not in the castle in which he was staying with his train he affected the life of an ordinary citizen. He did so as much from necessity as from choice. Czar or subject, the same water must be drunk at the same spot and hour by all who seek its cure. Nor can any distinction be made in the matter of the walk which the patient is to take after draining his two or three gobletsful.

The promenade at a watering place is a great parade-ground for the display of plumage, the gayest and costliest gowns being reserved for the procession that follows the taking of the remedy; but while the race is under way and everybody is striving to throw everybody else into the shade, the fact of their being there pierces each dress as with "X" rays, showing their flesh to be of the same fragile clay.

So the Czar accepted the levelling effect of the place good-naturedly and sought diversion in the unsustained rôle of a common mortal. Unsustained, because he carried his gigantic, beautiful form with a graceful self-importance and a martial erectness that betrayed his incognito even in the open country stretches to which he would stroll off in search [2] of mild adventure and flirtation.

It was a late afternoon in the valley. The river glittered crimson. The hills on the other side of the summer town were capped by a sultry haze. Donkeys used in ascending these hills were trotting about impishly or standing in stupid row awaiting custom. The sun blazed down upon a parade of a hundred countries, including a jet black prince from Africa, a rajah, a Chinaman in dazzling silks, a wealthy Galician Jew in atlas, and a pasha with German features.

The Czar, his immense figure encased in a light frock coat of excellent fit, was sauntering along apparently unaccompanied except by his terrier and cane. When saluted he would raise his straw hat and nod his enormous well-shaped head with a cordiality that bordered on good-fellowship. He seemed to relish this exchange of courtesies with people who were not his subjects in this little republic of physical malady. It was as though he felt apart from his autocratic self without feeling out of that pampering atmosphere of deference and attention which was his second nature; and he gave an effect of inhaling his freedom as one does the first whiffs of spring air.

As to his fellow patients, they either discovered something majestic in the very dog that followed him, or were struck by the knuckles of his ungloved hands, for example, as if it were remarkable that they should be the same sort of knuckles as their own. He was strikingly well-built and strikingly handsome. He wore thick close-cropped side whiskers of the kind that is rarely becoming, but his face they became very well indeed, adding majesty to a cast of large, clear-cut features. It was the most monarchical face of its time, and yet it was anything but a strong face. His imposing side [3] whiskers and moustache left bare a full sensuous mouth and a plump weak chin; his blueish eyes gave forth suggestions of melancholy and anguish. Interest in him was whetted by stories of his passion for Princess Dolgoruki, lady in waiting to the Czarina; so the women at the watering place tried to decipher the tale of his liaison in those sad amative eyes of his.

Two refined looking, middle-aged women attracted attention by the bizarre simplicity with which one of them was attired and coiffured. She was extremely pale and made one think of an insane asylum or a convent. She was grey, while her companion had auburn hair and was shorter and flabbier of figure. They were conversing in French, but it was not their native tongue. The one with the grey hair was Pani Oginska, a Polish woman; the other a Russian countess named Anna Nicolayevna Varova (Varoff). They had first met, in this watering place, less than a fortnight ago, when a chat, in the course of which they warmed to each other, led to the discovery that their estates lay in neighbouring provinces in Little Russia. They were preceded by a slender youth of eighteen in a broad-brimmed straw hat and a clean-shaven elderly little man in one of soft grey felt. These were Prince Pavel Alexeyevich Boulatoff, a son of the countess by a former marriage, and Alexandre Alexandrovich Pievakin, his private tutor, as well as one of his instructors at the gymnasium[A] of his native town. Pavel's straw hat was too sedate for his childish face and was pushed down so low that a delicately sculptured chin and mouth and the turned up tip of a rudely hewn Russian nose was all one could see under its vast expanse of yellow brim. The old man knew no German and this was his first trip abroad, [4] so his high-born pupil, who had an advantage over him in both these respects, was explaining things to him, with an air at once patronising and respectful. Presently Pavel interrupted himself.

"The Czar!" he whispered, in a flutter. "The Czar!" he repeated over his shoulder, addressing himself to his mother.

Pievakin raised his glance, paling as he did so, but was so overawed by the sight that he forthwith dropped his eyes, a sickly expression on his lips.

When the men came face to face with their monarch they made way and snatched off their hats as if they were on fire. Countess Varoff, Pavel's mother, curtseyed deeply, her flaccid insignificant little body retreating toward the side of the promenade and then sinking to the ground; while the Polish woman proceeded on her way stiffly without so much as a nod of her head. The Czar returned the greeting of the Russian woman gallantly and disappeared in the rear of them.

The group walked on in nervous silence, the two women now in the lead. When they reached a deserted spot the youth suddenly flushed a violent red, and, thrusting out his finely chiselled chin at his mother, he said, in quick pugnacious full-toned accents as out of keeping with his boyish figure as his hat:

"Mother, you are not going to keep up acquaintance with a person who has offered an insult to our Czar."

"Paul! What has come over you?" the countess stammered out, colouring abjectly as she paused.

"I mean just what I say, mother."

The elderly little man by his side looked on sheepishly, the cold sweat standing in beads on his forehead.

"Don't mind this wild boy, I beg of you," Anna Nicolayevna said to the Polish woman. "Don't pay the least attention [5] to him. He imagines himself a full grown man, but he is merely a silly boy and he gives me no end of trouble. Don't take it ill, *ma chère*." She rattled it off in a great flurry of embarrassment, straining the boy back tenderly, while she was condemning him.

"I don't take it ill at all," Pani Oginska answered tremulously. "He's perfectly right. Your acquaintance has been a great pleasure to me, countess, but I can see that my company at this place would be very inconvenient to you. Adieu!"

She walked off toward a row of new cottages, and Anna Nicolayevna, the countess, stood gazing after her like one petrified.

"You are a savage, Pasha," she whispered, in Russian.

"Why am I? I have done what is right, and you feel it as well as I do," he returned hotly, in his sedate, compact,

combative voice, looking from her to his teacher. When he was excited he sputtered out his sentences in volleys, growling at his listener and seemingly about to flounce off. This was the way he spoke now. “Why am I a savage? Can you afford to associate with a woman who will behave in this impudent, in this rebellious manner toward the Czar? Can you, now?”

“That’s neither here nor there,” she said, with irritation, as they resumed their walk. “She is a very unhappy creature. All that she holds dear has been taken from her. Her husband was hanged during the Polish rebellion and now her son, a college student, has been torn from her and is dying in prison of consumption. If you were not so heartless you would have some pity on her.”

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“Her husband was hanged and her son is in prison and you wish to associate with her! Do you really? What do you think of it, Alexandre Alexandrovich?”

“A very painful incident,” Pievakin murmured, wretchedly.

“As if I were eager for her company,” she returned, timidly. “As if one could help the chance acquaintances that fall into one’s way while travelling. Besides, *she* is no rebel. Indeed, she is one of the most charming women I ever met, and to hear her story is enough to break a heart of stone. You have no sympathy, Pasha.”

“She is no rebel! Why, if she did in Russia what she did here a minute ago she would be hustled off to Siberia in short order, and it would serve her right, too. And because I don’t want my mother to go with such a person I have no sympathy.”

“Pardon me, Anna Nicolayevna,” Pievakin interposed, with embarrassed ardour, “but if I were you I should keep out of her way. She is an unfortunate woman, but, God bless her,—Pasha is right, I think.”

“I should say I was,” the boy said, triumphantly. “She wouldn’t dare do such a thing in Russia, would she? But then in Russia a woman of that sort would have no chance to do anything of the kind. Oh, I do hate the Germans for exposing the Czar to these insults. It is simply terrible, terrible. Couldn’t they arrange it so that he should not have to rub shoulders with every Tom, Dick and Harry and be exposed to every sort of affront? And yet when I say so I am a savage and have no heart.” He gnashed his teeth and burst into tears.

“Hush, dear, I didn’t mean it. Don’t be excited, now.”

“But you did mean it; you know you did.”

“Sh, calm down, Pasha,” the old man besought him, and Pavel’s features softened.

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Alexandre Alexandrovich was the only teacher at the high school of whom Pavel was fond. He was an old-fashioned little man, with cravats of a former generation and with features and movements which conveyed the impression that he was forever making ready to bow. His cackling good humour when the recitations were correct and fluent, his distressed air when they were not; his mixed timidity and quick temper—these things are recalled with fond smiles in Miroslav. He was attached to both his subjects and when put on his mettle by the attention of his class he really knew how to put life into the dullest lesson. On such occasions his timid manner would disappear, and he would draw himself up, and go strutting back and forth with long, defiant steps and hurling out his sentences like a domineering rooster. It was only when a lesson of this sort was suddenly disturbed by some sally from a scapegrace of a pupil that Pievakin would fly into a passion and then he would take to jumping about, tearing at his own hair, and groaning as though with physical pain.

Pavel was perhaps the most ardent friend Alexandre Alexandrovich had in all Miroslav. The young prince was in a singular position at the gymnasium. Somehow things were always done in a way to make one remember that he was Prince Boulatoff and a nephew of the governor of the province of which Miroslav was the capital. He was the only boy who usually came to school in a carriage and it seemed as though the imposing vehicle had the effect of isolating him from the other boys. As to his teachers, they took a peculiar tone with him—one of ill-concealed reverence which would betray itself with all the more emphasis when they tried to take him to task. The upshot was that most of the other pupils, including the only other prince in the class (who was also the wildest boy in it) kept out of Pavel’s way, while those who did not treated him with a servility that was even more offensive to him than the aloofness of the rest. He had made several attempts to get on terms of good fellowship with two or three of the boys he liked, but his own effort to laugh and frolic with them had jarred on him like a false note. He had finally settled down to a manner of haughty reticence, keeping an observant eye on his classmates and finding a peculiar pleasure in these silent observations.

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The only two teachers who did not indulge him were Pievakin and the teacher of mathematics, a cheerful hunchback with a pale distended face lit by a pair of comical blue eyes, whom the boys had dubbed “truncated cone.” The teacher of mathematics made Pavel feel his exceptional position by treating him with special harshness. As to Pievakin, who had begun by addressing the aristocratic youth with an embarrassed air, he had gradually adopted toward him a manner of fatherly superiority that developed in the boy’s heart a filial attachment for the old pedagogue. In order to increase his income Pavel had made him his private tutor, although he stood high in his class and needed no such assistance, and this summer, when the old man complained of rheumatism, he had caused his mother to invite him to the German resort.

When they reached their hotel the countess unburdened herself to her son’s tutor of certain memories which interested her now far more than did her unexpected rupture with the Polish woman. She described a court ball at St. Petersburg at which the present Czar, then still Czarowitz, conversed for five minutes with her. She treated the gymnasium teacher partly as she would her priest, partly as if he were her butler, and now, in her burst [9] of reminiscence, she overhauled her past to him with the whole-hearted, childlike abandon which is characteristic of her race and which put the humble old teacher ill at ease. “He told me to take good care of my ‘pretty eyes and golden eyebrows,’” she said. “And yet it was for these very eyebrows that Pavel’s father disliked me.”

She had been the pet daughter of a wealthy nobleman, high in the service of the ministry for foreign affairs, but Pavel’s father, and her living husband, from whom she was now practically separated, had almost convinced her that to be disliked was her just share in life. Her parents and sisters were dead. She had a little boy by her second marriage, but she was still in love with the shadow of her first husband, and the son he had left her was the one passion of her life. Having spent her youth in the two foreign countries to which her father’s diplomatic career took the family, she deprecated, in a dim unformulated way, many of the things that surrounded her in her native land. She was unable to reconcile her luminous image of the Emperor with the mediæval cruelties that were being perpetrated by his order. She was at a loss to understand how such a gentle-hearted man could send to the gallows or to the living graves of Siberia

people like the Polish patriots. The compulsory religion of the Orthodox Russian Church, too, with its iron-clad organisation and grotesque uniforms, impressed her as a kind of spiritual gendarmerie. Yet she accepted it all as part of that panorama of things which whispered the magic word, “Russia.” And now the sight of the Czar had rekindled memories of her better days and stirred in her a submissive sense of her cheerless fate.

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Pavel was meanwhile putting the case of the Polish woman to Onufri, one of the two servants who accompanied them in their present travels—a retired hussar with a formidable moustache in front of a pinched hollow-cheeked face.

“Her highness, your mother, is good as an angel, sir,” was Onufri’s verdict.

“And you are stupid as a cork,” Pavel snarled. His sense of the desecration to which the person of his Czar was being subjected by mingling with people like the widow of a hanged rebel rankled in his heart. He worked himself up to a state of mind in which the very similarity in physical appearance between the untitled people with whom the Czar and born aristocrats like himself and his mother were compelled to mingle at a place like this resort struck him as an impertinence on the part of the untitled people.

Later when he lay between two German featherbeds and Onufri brought him his book and a candle he asked him to take a seat by his bedside.

“Why are you such a deuced fool, Onufri?”

“If I am it is God’s business, not mine, nor your highness’.”

“Look here, Onufri. How would you like to have all common people black like those darkies?”

The servant spat out in horror and made the sign of the cross.

“For shame, sir. What harm have the common people done you that you should wish them a horrid thing like that? And where does your highness get these cruel thoughts? Surely not from your mother. For shame, sir.”

“Idiot that you are, it’s mere fancy, just for fun. There ought to be some difference between noble people and common. There is in some countries, you know.” He told him about castes, the slave trade in America and passed to the

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days of chivalry, his favourite topic, until the retired hussar’s head sank and a mighty snore rang out of his bushy moustache. Pavel flew into a passion.

“Ass!” he shouted, getting half out of bed and shaking him fiercely. “Why don’t I fall asleep when you tell me stories?”

Onufri started and fell to rubbing one eye, while with his other eye he looked about him, as though he had slept a week. The stories he often told young Boulatoff mostly related to the days of serfdom, which had been abolished when Pavel was a boy of five. Onufri’s mother had been flogged to death in the presence of her master, Pavel’s grandfather, and the former hussar would tell the story with a solemnity that reflected his veneration for the “good old times” rather than grief over the fate of his mother.

That night Pavel dreamed of a pond full of calves that were splashing about and laughing in the water. He carried them all home and on his way there they were transformed into one pair, and the two calves walked about and talked just like Onufri and the transformation was no transformation at all, the calves being real calves and negroes at the same time. When he awoke, in the morning, and it came over him that the dream had had something to do with Onufri, he was seized with a feeling of self-disgust. He thought of the Polish woman and his treatment of her, and this, too, appeared in a new light to him.

Two or three hours later, when the countess returned from her morning walk Pavel, dressed to go out, grave and mysterious, solemnly handed her a sealed note from himself.

“Don’t open it until I have left,” he said. “I am going out for a stroll.”

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“What you said yesterday about my being hard-hearted and incapable of sympathy,” the letter read, “left a deep impression on me. I thought of it almost the first thing this morning as I opened my eyes, and it kept me thinking all the morning. I looked deep into my soul, I overhauled my whole ego. I turned it inside out, and—well, I must say I have come to the conclusion that what you said was not devoid of foundation. Not that I am prepared to imagine ourselves as having anything to do with a woman whose family is a family of rebels and who has the audacity to pass our emperor without bowing; but she is a human being, too, and her sufferings should have aroused some commiseration in me. I envy you, mother. Compared to you I really am a hard-hearted, unfeeling brute, and it makes me very, very unhappy to think of it. My heart is so full at this moment that I am at a loss to give expression to what I feel, but you will understand me, darling little mother mine. I do *not* want to be hard and cruel, and I want you to help me.

“Your struggling son,

“Pavel.”

When Anna Nicolayevna laid down the letter her large meek grey eyes first grew red and then filled with tears. She sat with her long slim arms loosely folded on a davenport, weeping and smiling at once. There was much charm in her smile, but, barring it and her mass of fine auburn hair, she was certainly not good looking. She was small, ungainly, flat-chested, with a large thin-lipped mouth and, in spite of her beautiful gowns, with a general effect of rustiness.

When Pavel and his mother met at dinner he felt so embarrassed he could not bring himself to look her in the face.

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CHAPTER II.

THE WHITE TERROR.

MIROSLAV was trisected longitudinally by a clear, cheerful river and by Kasimir Street, its principal thoroughfare, which contained most of its public buildings and best shops. The middle one of the three sections thus formed was the home of the higher nobility and the official class; the district across the bridge from here was inhabited by Christian burghers and workmen, with here and there a clay hovel, the home of a peasant family, gleaming white in the distant outskirts; while the hilly quarter beyond Kasimir Street was the seat of Jewish industry and Jewish poverty, part of this neighbourhood being occupied by the market places and "the Paradise," as the slums of the town were called ironically. The governor's house, which faced Governor's Prospect—a small square with a fountain in the centre—and Anna Nicolayevna's were the two most imposing buildings in Miroslav.

The countess' residence was the only structure in town that had a colonnaded front. The common people called it the Palace and the section of Kasimir Street it faced the Pillars. The sidewalk opposite was the favourite promenade of the younger generation, and every afternoon, in auspicious weather, it glittered with the uniforms of army officers and gymnasium boys. The Palace was built by her grandfather in the closing days of the previous century. It abutted on a [15] long narrow lane formed on one side by Anna Nicolayevna's garden and leading to Theatre Square, where stood the playhouse and the Nobles' Club. When the white rigidity of these buildings was relieved by the grass of its lawns and the foliage of its trees the spot was the joy of the town.

During the winter of the year following the countess' sojourn at the German watering place, Miroslav was stirred by a sensation, the central figure of which was Pavel's tutor, the instructor of geography and history in the local gymnasium, Alexandre Alexandrovich Pievakin. Pavel was then in the graduating class.

Besides being connected with the male gymnasium Pievakin taught at the female high school of Miroslav. The town was fond of him and he was fond of the town and upon the whole he was contented. One of the things that galled him was the fact that his superior, the newly appointed director of the school, was his inferior both in years and in civil rank. Pievakin was a "councillor of state," while Novikoff, the head of the male gymnasium, was only a "collegiate assessor." Novikoff was a painstaking, narrow-minded functionary, superciliously proud of his office and slavishly loyal to the letter of the law. He was a slender, dark-complexioned man of forty, but he tried to look much older and heavier. He copied the Czar's side-whiskers, walked like a corpulent grandee, perpetually pulling at his waistcoat as though he were burdened by a voluminous paunch, and interlarded his speech with aphorisms from the Latin Grammar.

One day as the director strutted ponderously along one of the two corridors, the word "parliament" fell on his ear. It was Pievakin's voice. The old man was explaining something to his class with great ardour. Novikoff paused, his lordly [16] walk congealing into the picture of dignified attention. The next minute, however, his grandeur melted away. His face expressed unfeigned horror. Pievakin was drawing an effusive parallel between absolute monarchies and limited. This was distinctly in violation of the Circular of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment enjoining teachers of geography, in cases of this kind, to adhere strictly to the bare terminology of the approved text-book without venturing into anything like an elucidation. Not that Pievakin was betraying any partiality for limited monarchies. Indeed, to him the distinction between the two forms of government was neither of more nor of less interest than the difference between a steppe and a prairie or a simoon and a hurricane. It appealed to him because it was geography, and in his ecstasy over the lesson all thought of the Ministry and its Circulars had escaped his mind.

That afternoon he was summoned to the director's office on the floor below.

Novikoff was at his large, flat-topped desk, studiously absorbed in some papers. He silently motioned the teacher of geography to a seat, and went on with his feigned work. After a lapse of some minutes he straightened up, played a few scales upon the brass buttons of his uniform, and said:

"It pains me to have to say it, Alexandre Alexandrovich, but these are queer times and the passions of youth should be moderated, held in check, suppressed, not aroused. The imagination of one's pupils is not to be trifled with, Alexandre Alexandrovich."

He paused mournfully. The little old man, who had not the least idea what he was driving at, waited in consternation. The room was overheated, and the pause had an overpowering effect on him. He felt on the verge [17] of fainting.

"The point is," Novikoff resumed, with a sudden spurt in his voice, "that in your class work you sometimes suffer yourself to say things that cannot but be regarded as dangerous. Dangerous particularly in view of the evil influences at work among the young of our generation; in view of the very sad fact that college students will disguise themselves as peasants——"

"What do you mean, sir?" Pievakin burst out, reddening violently. "How dare you liken me to those fellows? I was serving the Czar while you were still a whippersnapper. I'm a councillor of state, sir. How dare you make these insinuations?"

"I expected as much," Novikoff answered, nervously polishing his buttons. "Defying one's superior is of a piece with the views you're trying to instill into the minds of your scholars."

"What is of a piece with what? Speak out, sir," Pievakin shrieked.

"Bridle your temper, sir. I can't allow that."

"Then tell me what it's all about," the teacher of history and geography said in a queer, half-beseeching, half-threatening voice.

"Well, this morning you were expatiating upon the blessings of a constitutional government. Yes, sir. There are no spies to eavesdrop on one in this building, but it seems you never speak so loud nor with so much gusto as when you get to the subject of constitutions and parliaments and things of that kind."

"It isn't true. I merely said a word or two on the various forms of government. It's practically all in Smirnoff's Geography."

"'Practically'! It's against the law. I am very sorry, but it becomes my duty to report it to the curator." [18]

Here Pievakin, losing control of himself, shouted "Spy!" and "Scoundrel!" and darted out of the room.

This happened at a time when the "peasantist" movement, the peaceful, unresisting stage in the history of what is commonly known as Nihilism, was at its height. The educated young generation was in an ecstasy of altruism. It was the period of "going to the people," when hundreds of well-bred men and women, children of the nobility, would don peasant garb and go to share the life of the tillers of the soil, teaching them to read, talking to them of universal love,

liberty and equality. The government punished this “going to the people” with Asiatic severity. Russia has no capital punishment for the slaying of common mortals, the average penalty for murder being about ten years of penal servitude in Siberia; and this penalty the courts were often ordered to impose on absolutely peaceable missionaries, on university students who practically did the same kind of work as that pursued by the “university settlements” in English-speaking countries. There were about one thousand of these propagandists in the political prisons of the empire, and their number was growing. They were kept in solitary confinement in cold, damp cells. Scores of them went insane or died of consumption, scurvy or suicide before their cases came up for trial.

Pievakin’s house was searched by gendarmes, but no “underground” literature was discovered there. He was not arrested, but spies shadowed his movements and about a month after the domiciliary visit he was officially notified by the curator’s office that he was to be transferred to the four-year “progymnasium” of a small town a considerable distance off. This implied that his work was to be restricted to boys of fourteen and less in a town out of the way of “dangerous tendencies.” He grew thin and haggard and a certain look of fright never left his eye. The other instructors at the gymnasium, all except one, and many of his private acquaintance plainly shunned him. He had become one of those people with whom one could not come in contact without attracting the undesirable attention of the police. One of those who were not afraid to be seen in his company was the “truncated cone.” “My crooked back is the only one that does not bend,” the deformed man would joke. The tacit philosophy of his attitude toward the world seemed to be something like this: “You people won’t consider me one of you. I am only a hunchback, something like an elf, and you will take many an unwelcome truth from me which you would resent in one like yourselves. So let us proceed on this understanding.”

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When Boulatoff heard that his favourite teacher was to be exiled to a small town “to render him harmless,” he was shocked. Alexandre Alexandrovich Pievakin was the last man in the world he would have suspected to be guilty of seditious agitation. His only idol at school was thus shattered. Pievakin had not the courage to visit the countess’ house now, and Pavel, on his part, held aloof from him. The old man was hateful to him, not only as a rebel, but also as an impostor and a hypocrite. He felt duped. His blood rankled with disgust and resentment. At the same time the situation did not seem quite clear to him. Something puzzled him, although he could not have put his finger on it.

CHAPTER III.

PIEVAKIN PLEADS GUILTY.

A LESSON in Latin was in progress. The teacher was a blond Czech. Pavel looked at him intently, trying to follow the exercises, but he only became the more aware of the foreigner's struggles with Russian and made the discovery that his clumsy carriage, as he walked up and down the room, was suggestive of a peasant woman trying to catch a chicken. His thoughts passed to Pievakin and almost at the same instant a question flashed into his brain: If Pievakin was unreliable politically, why, then, was he getting off so easily? How was it that instead of being cut off from the living world, instead of being thrown into a dungeon to waste and perish, as was done with all fellows of that sort, he was merely transferred to another school?

The bell sounded. The Czech put his big flat record-book under his arm and left the room. Most of the pupils went out soon after. The two long corridors were bubbling with boys in blue, a-glitter with nickel-plated buttons and silver galloon, some laughing over their experience with the lesson just disposed of, others eagerly reviewing the one soon to be recited. Pievakin passed along. The pupils bowed to him with curious sympathetic looks, and he returned their salutes with an air of mixed timidity and gratitude. Presently the teacher of mathematics emerged from one of the glass doors, his deformity bulging through the blue broadcloth of his uniform. [21]

"Alexandre Alexandrovich!" he shouted demonstratively, and catching up with him he threw his arm around his waist.

Pavel, who had been watching the scene, was about to return to his class-room so as to avoid bowing to Pievakin, when, by a sudden impulse, he saluted the two teachers, and advancing to meet them, with that peculiar air of politeness which reminded his classmates of his equipage and the colonnade in front of his mother's mansion, he accosted the instructor of history and geography, turning pale as he did so:

"May I speak to you, Alexandre Alexandrovich?" When the mathematician had withdrawn, he inquired in a tone of pain and concern: "What has happened, Alexandre Alexandrovich?"

"Oh, I'm in trouble, prince," the old man faltered. He had never addressed the youth by his title before, and there was a note of abject supplication in his voice, as if the boy could help him. His face had a pinched, cowed look.

"But, Alexandre Alexandrovich, it's a terrible thing they are accusing you of. You've been so dear to me, Alexandre Alexandrovich. I want to know all. I cannot rest, Alexandre Alexandrovich."

"The story is easily told. A misfortune has befallen me. While touching upon the constitutional form of government, I was somewhat carried away. That I don't deny. I know it was wrong of me, but I assure you, prince, I meant no harm."

It sounded as though he were a pleading pupil and the boy before him his teacher.

Pavel was touched and perplexed.

"But that's in the text-book, Alexandre Alexandrovich." [22]

"To be sure it is. Only the text-book merely uses the term without explaining it, while I, absent-mindedly, proceeded to do so, which is against the rules, and, as ill luck would have it, I warmed up a bit. When I was first asked about it I was not aware of having done any wrong. I was so shocked, in fact, I lost my temper. That was the worst of it. I am a ruined man, prince. Thirty-six years have I served the Czar and there is not a blemish on my record."

"But why should you call yourself a ruined man, Alexandre Alexandrovich," Pavel said impetuously. "I don't see why it should be too late to straighten it all out. I'm going to see my uncle. Or, better still, my mother will see him. We can't let it go that way. We should all be a lot of scoundrels if we did. I'm going to tell him so."

"Do it, prince, if you can," the old man said with shamefaced eagerness. "I shall never forget it."

When Pavel came home he found his mother's sleigh in front of the main entrance, her coachman in dazzling attire, waiting with pompous stolidity. When the liveried porter threw the door open to him and he entered the vestibule he saw coming down the immense staircase his mother and his five-year-old half-brother, Kostia, dressed for their afternoon drive, Anna Nicolayevna in her furs and the little fellow in the costume of a Caucasian horseman, which became his grave little face charmingly. Following at some distance, with a smile of admiration, half servile, half sincere, on her fresh German face, was Kostia's governess. She was not dressed for a drive. She was merely going to see her charge off.

"Mother, I am afraid I shall have to detain you," Pavel said, solemnly. "I wish to speak to you about Alexandre Alexandrovich." [23]

"Won't it keep?" she asked, with a facetious gesture.

"Don't make fun of it, mother," he reproached her. "It's a serious matter. My head is in a whirl."

Kostia was burning to show himself in public in his new Circassian cap and when he saw his mother yield he screwed up his face for a cry, but he forthwith straightened it out again. He scarcely ever cried in Pavel's presence for fear of being called "damsel" by him—an appellation he dreaded more than being locked up alone in the schoolroom.

They went into Anna Nicolayevna's favorite sitting-room, a square chamber furnished and decorated in tan, in no particular style, but with an eye to the combined suggestions of old-time solidity and latter-day elegance. It was the embodiment of rest and silence, an effect to which two life-sized bronze statues—a Diana and a Venus de Medici—and the drowsy ticking of an ancient clock contributed not a little. It was known as the English room because its former furnishings had been modelled after London standards.

Pavel painted Pievakin as a penitent, broken spirit till Anna Nicolayevna's eyes grew red.

"Still, maybe he does hold dangerous views?" she asked.

"Dangerous nothing! It's all nonsense. He's more loyal than Novikoff anyhow, for Novikoff is a soulless, attitudinising nincompoop, while he is the kindliest, most conscientious, most soulful man in the world."

"Unfortunately all this has nothing to do with loyalty," she said, sadly. "This is a very queer world, Pasha. It's just like those wretches who would do away with czars to be warm-hearted and good to everybody. They don't believe there ought to be rich and poor, either. When you come across a man of this sort keep away from him, Pasha." [24]

"But what has that got to do with Pievakin?" he shouted. "The very sight of a Nihilist would be enough to frighten him out of his wits. I want you to tell it all to uncle, *mamman*. Give him no peace until he promises you to write to the

curator about the poor old man."

The governor of Miroslav was a Boulatoff, being a cousin of Pavel's deceased father; but he was also related to the young man by marriage to his mother's sister, who had died less than a year ago. Anna Nicolayevna promised to see her brother-in-law the next morning, but Pavel would not wait. He pleaded, he charged her with heartlessness, tapping the thick rug with his foot and shaking all over as he spoke, until she agreed to go at once.

While she was gone Pavel and Kostia went into the ball room and played "hunter and partridge," a game of the gymnasium boys' inventing. They had not been many minutes at it before Pavel had forgotten all about the errand on which he had despatched his mother and the vast ball room echoed with his voluminous laughter. His great pleasure was to tease Kostia until the little boy's mouth would begin to twitch, and then to shake his finger at him and say: "Better not cry, Kostia, or you know what I am going to call you." Whereupon Kostia would make a desperate effort to look nonchalantly grave and Pavel would burst into a new roar of merriment.

Anna Nicolayevna came back converted to a rigorous point of view, and although her son had no difficulty in convincing her once again that Pievakin deserved mercy, he made up his mind to see his uncle himself, and he did so the very next morning. [125]

Governor Boulatoff was a massive, worn, blinking old satrap, shrewd, tight-fisted, and, what was quite unusual for a man of his class, with an eye to business. His nose was extremely broad and fleshy, his hair was elaborately dressed, and altogether he looked like a successful old comedian. Bribe-giving was as universal in Miroslav as tipping was in its leading café. One could not turn round without showing "gratitude." The wheels of government would not move in the desired direction unless they were greased, the price of this "grease" or "gratitude" varying all the way from a ten-copeck piece to ten or fifteen thousand rubles. Governor Boulatoff, who had come to Miroslav a ruined man, was now the largest land-owner in the province. Whenever he was in need of ready cash he would galvanize into a new lease of life some defunct piece of anti-Jewish legislation. This was known among the other officials as "pressing the spring"—the spring of the Jewish pocketbook, that is, the invariable effect of the proceeding being the appearance of a delegation with a snug piece of Jewish "gratitude." He was continually sneering at the powers behind the throne, and mildly striving for recognition; yet so comfortable did he feel in this city of gardens, card-playing and "gratitude," from which "the Czar was too far off and God too high up," that he was in mortal fear lest the promotion which he coveted should come in the form of a transfer to a more important province.

Pavel found him in his imposing "den." The old potentate was in his morning gown, freshly bathed, shaved and coiffured and smelling of pomade and cigarette smoke.

"Well, my little statesman," he greeted him in French. "What brings you so early this morning? Aren't you going to school at all?" He called him statesman because of his ambition to follow in the footsteps of his diplomatic grandfather. [126]

"I shall stay away from the first three lessons," Pavel answered. "I cannot rest, uncle. I want to speak to you about that unfortunate man."

The governor was very fond of Pavel, but he persisted in treating him as a boy, and the only serious talk young Boulatoff got out of him regarding Pievakin was an exhortation to give "men of that sort a wide berth."

"But, uncle——"

"Don't argue," the governor interrupted him, blinking as he spoke. "This is not the kind of thing for a boy of your station to get mixed up in."

"Oh, it's enough to drive one crazy. The poor man is sincerely repentant, uncle. He'll never do it again, uncle."

"I see you're quite excited over it. Just the kind of effect fellows of that stamp will have on the mind of a boy. This is just where the danger comes in. Don't forget your name, Pasha. Come, throw it all out of your clever little head. There's a good boy."

"Uncle darling, he'll never do it again. Let him stay where he is."

"You're a foolish boy. Whether he'll do it again or no, his very presence in this town would be a source of danger. Whoever sets his eyes on him will say to himself: 'Here is the man who once talked of the way people live under a constitution.' So you see he'll be a reminder of unlawful ideas. We have no use for fellows of this sort. They are like living poison. Do you see the point? Let your teacher thank his stars the case was not put in the hands of the gendarmes entirely, or he would be sent to a colder place." [127]

All this the governor said in the playful manner of one conversing with a child and, by way of clinching the matter, he explained that he had nothing to do with the case and that it was under the jurisdiction of the "curator of educational district."

Pavel was in despair and his being treated as a boy threw him into a rage, but he held himself in check for Pievakin's sake.

"Oh, the curator will do anything you ask of him, uncle," he said in a tone of entreaty and resentment at once.

"You don't want your uncle to write letters begging for a fellow who was foolish enough to get mixed up in such an affair as that, do you? I used to think you really cared for your uncle."

Pavel contracted his forehead and put out his chin sullenly.

CHAPTER IV.

THE “DEMONSTRATION.”

AT the hour of Pievakin’s departure the Miroslav railway station was crowded with gymnasium pupils of both sexes, but Pavel was not among them. He had not been informed that such a gathering was in contemplation at all.

Alexandre Alexandrovich, a satchel slung across his breast, wan and haggard, but flushed with excitement, was bustling about in a listless, mechanical way. He was accompanied by his large family and the teacher of mathematics. A number of gendarmes, stalwart, bewhiskered, elaborately formidable, were pacing up and down the large waiting room. The gendarmerie is the political police of the Czar. It forms a special military organisation quite distinct from the police proper. A detail of such gendarmes, proportionate to the importance of the place, is to be found in every railroad station of the country. On this occasion, however, the presence of the gendarmes seemed to have some special bearing upon the nature of the scene. They were all big strapping fellows. Their jingling spurs, red epaulets and icy silence belonged to the same category of things as the terrible political prisons of Kharkoff and St. Petersburg; as the clinking of convict-chains, as the frozen wastes of Siberia.

All at once most of the bespurred men disappeared. After an absence of two or three minutes they came back, considerably re-enforced. [19]

“All gymnasium pupils, ladies and gentlemen, will please leave the station,” they called out.

About one-half of the throng struck out for the doors as if the place were on fire. Some fifteen or twenty pupils stood still, frowning upon the guardians of the Czar’s safety, in timid defiance. The rest, a crowd of about two hundred, made a lunge in the direction of the corner where Alexandre Alexandrovich and his family were pottering about some light baggage, when three lusty gendarmes planted themselves in front of the little old man.

“Go home, ladies and gentlemen, go home!” Pievakin besought his friends, waving his hands and stamping his feet desperately.

“Have we no right to say good-bye to our own teacher?” one boy ventured.

“Not allowed!” a gendarme answered, sternly. “Get out, get out!”

The crowd surged back; but at this point a young feminine voice, sonorous with indignation and distress, rose above the din of the scramble:

“Good heavens! Can it be that we shall leave without saying good-bye to our dear teacher? All they say of him is a lie, a malicious lie. They’re a lot of knaves, and he is the best man in the world. Let them arrest us if they will, let them kill us. It would be a shame if we went away like traitors to our dear teacher.”

The rest was lost in a hubbub of shouts and shrieks. In their effort to get at the speaker, who was shielded by the other pupils, the gendarmes were beating young women with their sheathed swords or pulling them by the hair. With the exception of a few who had skulked out through back doors, the young people now all stood their ground, ready to fight. [20]

“Arrest us all!” they yelled. “We all say the same thing.”

“Yes, Alexandre Alexandrovich is the best man in the world. There!”

“A better man than Novikoff!”

“Novikoff is a hypocrite and a rogue!”

In the commotion the gendarmes lost sight of the girl they were about to arrest. She could not have left the room, but then it was not easy to tell her from any of the other girls. The gendarmes had seen her at a distance, and all they could say was that she was blonde. In their eagerness to pick her out, they were rudely scanning every young woman in the waiting-room. Had she been arrested it would have gone hard with her. As good luck would have it, however, Major Safonoff, the officer in command of the railroad gendarmes, was the brother of one of the girls present. He was a plump, good-natured bachelor, and his devotion to his sister, who had been under his care since she was a year old, was a source of jests and anecdotes. When it occurred to him that the conflict, which was beginning to look like a serious affair, was likely to cause trouble to his sister, he hastened to make light of it.

“Go home, ladies and gentlemen,” he said, in a remonstrative amicable voice, taking the matter in his own hands.

His friendly tone and his smiling fat face, added to the tacit understanding that the girl who had made the speech was not to be persecuted, acted as a balm; but the flattering notion that the gendarmes had surrendered kindled new fighting blood.

“Your men have hit ladies. They’ve no right to hit anybody. They’re a lot of brutes. All we wanted was to say good-bye to Alexandre Alexandrovich.” [21]

“But that’s impossible, so what’s the use getting excited, gentlemen? Better go home.”

The pupils obeyed, in a leisurely way, as though leaving of their own accord.

During the following few weeks this “victory” over the gendarmes was the great topic of discussion. The personality of the girl who “started the demonstration” was emblazoned with the halo of heroism. The curious part of it was that only a minority of those who had participated in the scene had any idea who she was. When the crowd at the railroad station had dispersed, the handful that knew her whispered her name to some of those who did not, so that the number of pupils in the secret was by now comparatively large, but it was a “revolutionary” secret, so it was guarded most zealously against unreliable pupils as well as against the authorities.

One of the page-proofs of the *Miroslav Messenger* that were sent to the censor at midnight contained the following paragraph:

“Alexandre Alexandrovich Pievakin, for many years instructor of History and Geography at our male gymnasium, left for his new place of service yesterday afternoon. A large number of gymnasium pupils were at the railway station.”

The entire paragraph was stricken out, so that the *Messenger* next morning contained not the remotest reference to the departure of the old teacher.

When Pasha heard what had happened at the railway station his heart sank.

“I must speak to you, mother,” he gasped out, bursting into her room, after school time. When her companion, a [22]

dried-up little Frenchwoman with a thriving streak of black moustache, had withdrawn, he said: “Mother, I am a miserable egoist and a scoundrel.” He told her the story of Pievakin’s departure. His dear old teacher was in trouble, the victim of a cruel injustice, yet he, Pasha, had not even thought of going to see him off. Everybody had been there except him. But what tantalised him more than anything else was the fact that a girl was the only person who had taken a brave noble stand in the old man’s behalf. This hurt his knightly sense of honour cruelly. He should have been on the scene and done exactly what that girl had done.

“I’m an egoist and a coward, *mamman*. I hate myself. Oh, I do hate myself!”

Anna Nicolayevna’s eyes grew red. She had an impulse to fold him in her arms and to offer to take him to Pievakin’s new place so that he might protest his sympathy and affection for the old man, but her instinct told her that this would be improper. Oh, there were so many things that made a strong appeal to one’s better feelings which were considered improper. So she emitted a sigh of resignation and said nothing.

Pavel was pacing the floor so vehemently that he came near running into and knocking down the life-sized Diana. He walked with rapid heavy steps until his brain grew dizzy and his despair was dulled as from the effect of drink. Suddenly the situation rushed back upon him.

“I tell you what, mother, he’s too good for them,” he said, stopping in front of her. “He is better than uncle, anyhow.”

“Hush, you mustn’t say that.”

“The devil I mustn’t. It’s true.” [33]

“You are impossible, Pasha. Can’t you calm down?”

“I’ll tell you calmly, then: uncle is a bribe-taker and a heartless egoist. There.”

“Dear me,” she said, in consternation.

“But you know he is, mother. And do you call that loyalty to the Czar? Pievakin is pure as an infant. If the Czar knew the real character of both, he would know that the poor man could give uncle points in loyalty.”

A few days after this conversation the governor dined at “The Palace,” as Countess Varoff’s residence was known among the common people of Miroslav. Pavel refused to leave his room. When Anna Nicolayevna pleaded his uncle’s affection for him, he said:

“His affection be hanged. Who wants the affection of a bribe-taker who will let an honest man perish? Look here, mother, you have no business to tell him I have a headache. I want him to know the truth. Tell him it’s men like himself, bribe-takers, cowards, who spread sedition, not men like Pievakin. ‘Living poison,’d! Tell him he is a lump of living poison himself. Oh, I hate him, I do hate him.”

His brain was working feverishly. The image of Pievakin with three gendarmes between him and a crowd of pupils haunted him. Why could he not be pardoned? Was there no mercy in this world? His sense of the cruelty of the thing and of his own helplessness seized him as with a violent clutch again and again.

Once, as he was reviewing the situation for the thousandth time, a voice in him exclaimed: “Pardoned? What was Pievakin to be pardoned for? What had he done? Why should it be wrong to dwell on the vital features of parliamentary government? Such governments existed, didn’t they? And if they did, then why should one be forbidden to explain their [34] essence?” For the first time did his attention fix itself on this point, and questions came crowding upon him. Where was the sense of having such terms as “limited monarchy” in the text-book at all, if the pupils were not to be told what this meant? Above all, why should the government be afraid of such explanations? There seemed to be something cowardly, sneaking, about all this which jarred on Pavel’s sense of the knightly magnificence of the Czar and left him with a bad taste in the mouth, as the phrase is.

Alexandre Alexandrovich, then, had done no wrong, and yet he had been banished as “living poison,” treated by everybody as a criminal, until he came to believe himself one. Why, of course he was better than Novikoff. Novikoff was a self-seeking, posing wretch, and all the other teachers were cringing and crouching before him; and these insects turned their backs upon Alexandre Alexandrovich! Corruption passed for loyalty, and a really good man was persecuted, hunted down like a wild beast, trampled upon. “Trampled upon, trampled upon, trampled upon!” Pavel whispered audibly, stamping his foot and gnashing his teeth as he did so.

The only gleam of light was the veiled figure of that gymnasium girl. She alone had had sympathy and courage enough to raise her voice for the poor man. “Why, she is a perfect heroine,” he said in his aching heart.

At the gymnasium he felt his loneliness more keenly than ever. Wherever he saw a cluster of boys, he felt sure they were whispering about the gendarmes and the girl who had made the “speech” at the railroad station. His pride was gone. He now saw himself an outcast, shut out of the most important things life contained.

The leader of the “serious-minded” boys in Pavel’s class was an underfed Jewish youth, with an anæmic chalky face [35] and a cold intelligent look, named Elkin. To Pavel he had always been repugnant. Since Pievakin’s departure, however, the aristocratic boy had looked at his classmates in a new light, and Elkin now even inspired him with respect.

“Who is the girl that made that speech at the station?” he asked simply. The two had scarcely ever spoken before.

Elkin gave Boulatoff a stare of freezing irony, as who should say: “What do you think of the assurance of this man?” and then, dropping his eyes, he asked:

“What girl?” When he spoke his lips assumed the form of two obtuse angles, exposing to view a glistening lozenge of white teeth.

“Look here, Elkin, I want to know who that girl is and all about the whole affair, and if you think I ought not to know it because—well, because I am a Boulatoff and my uncle is the governor, I can assure you that if I had been there I should have acted as she did. What’s more, I hate myself for not having been there.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” replied Elkin. “As to your hating yourself, that’s your own affair.”

“Well, however I may feel toward myself, I certainly have nothing but contempt for a man like you,” Pasha snapped back, paling. “But if you think you can keep it from me, you’re mistaken.”

Elkin sized him up with a look full of venom, as he said:

“Pitiful wretch! How are you going to find it out? Through the political spies?”

Pavel turned red. It was with a great effort that he kept himself from striking Elkin. After a pause he said: [36]

“Now, I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that you are a knave.”

“Besides,” said Elkin, as though finishing an interrupted remark, “most of the gymnasium girls who saw Alexandre Alexandrovich off are daughters of poor, humble people, so of what interest would it have been to a man in your position?”

Boulatoff stood still for a few moments, and then said under his breath:

“Well, you’re a fool as well as a knave,” and turned away.

The heroine of the demonstration was hateful to him now. She and Elkin seemed to stand at the head of the untitled classes all arrayed against him. He retired into himself deeper than ever. He abhorred her because she had done the right thing, and each time his sympathy for Pievakin welled up he hated himself for not having been at the station, and her for having been there. He sought relief in charging Elkin with cowardice. “What did *he* do there?” he would say to himself. “To think of a lot of fellows running away when they are told they can’t say good-bye to their martyred teacher, and a girl being the only one who has courage enough to act properly. And now that she has done it this coward has the face to give himself airs, as if he were entitled to credit for her courage. If I had been there I should not have run away as Elkin and his crew did.”

This placed Elkin and his followers on one side of the line and Pavel and the girl on the other. So what right had that coward of a Jew to place himself between her and him?

[37]

Toward spring, some two months after the old teacher’s departure, and when the incident was beginning to grow dim in the public mind, the sensation was suddenly revived and greatly intensified by an extraordinary piece of news that came from the town to which Pievakin had been transferred: The Third Section of His Majesty’s Own Office—the central political detective bureau of the empire—had taken up the case, with the result that the action of the Department of Public Instruction had been repudiated as dangerously inadequate. The idea of a man like Pievakin participating in the education of children! Accordingly, the poor old man was now under arrest, condemned to be transported to Viatka, a thinly populated province in the remote north, where he was to live under police surveillance, as a political exile strictly debarred from teaching, even in private families.

Pavel was stunned. He received the news as something elemental. He could find fault with his uncle, but the government at St. Petersburg was a sublime abstract force, bathed in the effulgence of the Czar’s personality. It was no more open to condemnation than a thunderstorm or a turbulent sea. But the incident made an ineffaceable impression upon him. It left him with the general feeling that there was something inherently cruel in the world. And the picture of a pretty girl boldly raising her voice for poor Pievakin in the teeth of formidable-looking gendarmes and in the midst of a crowd of panic-stricken men remained imbedded in his fancy as the emblem of brave pity. An importunate sense of jealousy nagged him. He often caught himself dreaming of situations in which he appeared in a rôle similar to the one she had played at the railroad station.

His perceptions and sensibilities took a novel trend.

One day, for example, as he walked through Theatre Square, he paused to watch an apple-faced ensign, evidently [38] fresh from the military school, lecture a middle-aged sergeant. The youthful officer sat on a bench, swaggeringly leaning back, his new sword gleaming by his side, as he questioned the soldier who stood at attention, the picture of embarrassment and impotent rage. A young woman, probably the sergeant’s wife, sweetheart, or daughter, stood aside, looking on wretchedly. Seated on a bench directly across the walk were two pretty gymnasium girls. It was clear that the whole scene had been gotten up for their sake, that the ensign had stopped the poor fellow, who was old enough to be his father, and was now putting him through this ordeal for the sole purpose of flaunting his authority before them. When the sergeant had been allowed to go his way, but before he was out of hearing, Pavel walked up to the ensign and said aloud:

“I wish to tell you, sir, that you tormented that poor man merely to show off.”

“Bravo!” said the two gymnasium girls, clapping their hands with all their might; “bravo!”

The ensign sprang to his feet, his apple-cheeks red as fire. “What do you mean by interfering with an officer—in the performance of his duty?” he faltered. He apparently knew that the young man before him was a nephew of the governor.

“Nonsense! You were not performing any duties. You were parading. That’s what you were doing.”

The two girls burst into a ringing laugh, whereupon the ensign stalked off, mumbling something about having the gymnasium boy arrested.

“Mother,” he said, when he came home. “The world is divided into tormentors and victims.”

Anna Nicolayevna gave a laugh that made her rusty face interesting. “And what are you—a tormentor or a victim?” [39] she asked. “At any rate you had better throw these thoughts out of your mind. They lead to no good, Pasha.”

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[40]

CHAPTER V.

PAVEL'S FIRST STEP.

WHEN Pavel arrived in St. Petersburg, in the last days of July, his recent tribulations seemed a thing of the faded past. The capital was a fascinating setting for the great university which he was soon to enter and in which he was bent upon drinking deep of the deepest mysteries of wisdom. His "certificate of maturity"—his gymnasium diploma—was a solemn proclamation of his passage from boyhood to manhood—a change which seemed to assert itself in everything he did. He ate maturely, talked maturely, walked maturely. He felt like a girl on the eve of her wedding day.

He had not been in the big city for six years, and so marked was the distinction between it and the southern town from which he hailed, that to his "mature" eyes it seemed as if they were seeing it for the first time. The multitude of large lusty men, heavily bearded and wearing blouses of flaming red; the pink buildings; the melodious hucksters; the cherry-peddlars, with their boards piled with the succulent fruit on their shoulders; the pitchy odor of the overheated streets; the soft, sibilant affectations in the speech of the lower classes; the bustling little ferry-boats on the Neva—all this, sanctified by the presence of the university buildings across the gay river, made his heart throb with a feeling as though Miroslav were a foreign town and he were treading the soil of real Russia at last. [41]

He matriculated at the Section of Philology and History, St. Petersburg. Before starting on his studies, however, he went off on a savage debauch with some aristocratic young relatives. The debauch lasted a fortnight, and cost his mother a small fortune. When he came to the university at last, weary of himself and his relatives, he settled down to a winter of hard work. But the life at the university disturbed his peace of mind. He found the students divided into "crammers," "parquette-scrapers" and "radicals." The last named seemed to be in the majority—a bustling, whispering, preoccupied crowd with an effect of being the masters of the situation. There was a vast difference between Elkin and his followers and these people. Pavel knew that the university was the hotbed of the secret movement, of which he was now tempted to know something. There was no telling who of his present classmates might prove a candidate for the gallows. The wide-awake, whispering, mysterious world about him reminded him of the Miroslav girl and of his rebuff upon trying to discover who she was. When he made an attempt to break through the magic circle in which that world was enclosed his well-cared-for appearance and high-born manner went against him. A feeling of isolation weighed on his soul that was much harder to bear than his ostracism at the gymnasium had been. Harder to bear, because the students who kept away from him here struck him as his superiors, and because he had a humble feeling as though it were natural that they should hold aloof from him. And the image of that Miroslav girl seemed to float over these whispering young men, at once luring and repulsing him. He often went about with a lump in his throat.

One day he met a girl named Sophia Perovskaya, the daughter of a former governor of the Province of St. Petersburg and the granddaughter of a celebrated cabinet minister. She was a strong-featured, boyish-looking little creature, with grave blue eyes beneath a very high forehead. He had known her when he was a child. There was something in her general appearance now and in the few words she said to him which left a peculiar impression on Pavel. As he thought of her later it dawned upon him that she might belong to the same world as those preoccupied, whispering fellow-students of his. He looked her up the same day. [42]

"I should like to get something to read, Sophia Lvovna," he said, colouring. "Some of the proscribed things, I mean." Then he added, with an embarrassed frown, "Something tells me you could get it for me. If I am mistaken, you will have to excuse me."

The governor's daughter fixed her blue eyes on him as she said, simply:

"All right. I'll get you something."

She lent him a volume of the "underground" magazine *Forward!* and some other prints. The tales of valour and martyrdom which he found in these publications, added to the editorials they contained calling upon the nobility to pay the debt they owed to the peasantry by sacrificing themselves for their welfare, literally intoxicated him.

"Dear Mother and Comrade," he wrote in a letter home, "I have come to the conclusion that the so-called nobility to which I belong has never done anything useful. For centuries and centuries and centuries we have been living at the expense of those good, honest, overworked people, the peasantry. It is enough to drive one to suicide. Yes, mamma darling, we are a race of drones and robbers. The ignorant, unkempt moujiks that we treat like beasts are in reality angels compared to us. There is something in them—in their traditions and in the inherent purity of their souls—which should inspire us with reverence. Yet they are literally starved and three-fourths of their toil goes to maintain the army and the titled classes." [43]

Further down in the same letter he said: "Every great writer in the history of our literature has been in prison or exiled. Our noblest thinker and critic, Chernyshevsky, is languishing in Siberia. Why? Why? My hair stands erect when I think of these things."

When it came to posting the letter, it dawned upon him that such sentiments were not to be trusted to the mails, and, feeling himself a conspirator, he committed the epistle to the flames.

He was touched by the spirit of that peasant worship—the religion of the "penitent nobility"—which was the spirit of the best unproscribed literature of the day as well as of the "underground" movement. Turgeneff owed the origin of his fame to the peasant portraits of his *Notes of a Huntsman*. Nekrasoff, the leading poet of the period, and a score of other writers were perpetually glorifying the peasant, going into ecstasies over him, bewailing him. The peasant they drew was a creature of flesh-and-blood reality, but shed over him was the golden halo of idealism. The central doctrine of the movement was a theory that the survival of the communistic element in the Russian village, was destined to become the basis of the country's economic and political salvation; that Russia would leap into an ideal social arrangement without having to pass through capitalism; that her semi-barbaric peasant, kindly and innocent as a dove and the martyr of centuries, carried in his person the future glory, moral as well as material, of his unhappy country. As to the living peasant, he had no more knowledge of this adoration of himself (nor capacity to grasp the meaning of the movement, if an attempt had been made to explain it to him) than a squirrel has of the presence of a "q" in the spelling of its name. [44]

Sophia disappeared from St. Petersburg, and Pavel found himself cut off from the "underground" world once more.

The prints she had left him only served to excite his craving for others of the same character. The preoccupied, mysterious air of the "radicals" at the university tantalised him. He was in a veritable fever of envy, resentment, intellectual and spiritual thirst. He subscribed liberally to the various revolutionary funds that were continually being raised under the guise of charity, and otherwise tried to manifest his sympathy with the movement, all to no purpose. His contributions were accepted, but his advances were repulsed. One day he approached a student whom he had once given ten rubles "for a needy family"—a thin fellow with a very long neck and the face of a chicken.

"I should like to get something to read," he said, trying to copy the tone of familiar simplicity which he had used with Sophia. "I have read one number of *Forward!* and another thing or two, but that's all I have been able to get."

"Pardon me," the chicken-face answered, colouring, "I really don't know what you mean. Can't you get those books in the book-stores or in the public library?"

Pavel was left with an acute pang of self-pity. He felt like a pampered child undergoing ill-treatment at the hands of strangers. His mother and all his relatives thought so much of him, while these fellows, who would deem it a privilege [45] to talk to any of them, were treating him as a nobody and a spy. The tears came to his eyes. But presently he clenched his fists and said to himself, "I *will* be admitted to their set."

In his fidget he happened to think of Pani Oginska. As the scene at the German watering-place came back to him, he was seized with a desire to efface the affront he had offered her. "How can I rest until I have seen her and asked her pardon?" he said to himself. "If I were a real man and not a mere phrase-monger I should start out on the journey at once. But, of course, I won't do anything of the kind, and writing of such things is impossible. I *am* a phrase-maker. That's all I am."

But he soliloquized himself into the reflection that Pani Oginska was likely to know some of her imprisoned son's friends, if, indeed, she was not in the "underground" world herself, and the very next morning found him in a railway car, bound for the south.

Pani Oginska's estate was near the boundary line between the province to which it belonged and the one whose capital was Miroslav, a considerable distance from a railway station. Pavel covered that distance in a post-sleigh drawn by a troika. His way lay in the steppe region. It was a very cold forenoon in mid-winter. The horses' manes were covered with frost; the postilion was bundled up so heavily that he looked like an old woman. The sun shone out of a blue, unconcerned sky upon a waste of eery whiteness. There were ridges of drifts and there were black patches of bare ground, but the general perspective unfolded an unbroken plane of snow, a level expanse stretching on either side of the smooth road, seemingly endless and bottomless, destitute of any trace of life save for an occasional inn by the [46] roadside or the snow-bound hovel and outhouses of a shepherd in the distance—a domain of silence and numb monotony. That this desert of frozen sterility would four or five months later, be transformed into a world of grass and birds seemed as inconceivable as the sudden disappearance of the ocean.

The last few versts were an eternity. Pavel's heart leaped with a foretaste of the exciting interview.

"Lively, my man," he pressed the postilion. "Can't your horses get a move on them?"

The postilion nodded his muffled head and set up a fierce yelp, for all the world like a wolf giving chase; whereupon the animals, apparently scared to death, broke into a desperate gallop, the scud flying, the sleigh dashing along like an electric car in open country, its bell ringing frostily.

"That's better," Pavel shouted with a thrill of physical pleasure and speaking with difficulty for the breakneck speed that seemed to fling the breath out of his lungs. "That's better, my man. You shall get a good tip. But where have you learned the trick?"

The postilion gave a muffled grunt of appreciation and went on howling with all his might.

They passed through a small village. The chimneys of some of the white clay hovels on either side of the road poured out clouds of sweetish, nauseating smoke. Wood being scarce in these parts, the peasantry made fuel of manure.

At last the sleigh swung into the great front yard of Pani Oginska's manor house. It was greeted by the curious eyes of half a dozen servants. Pavel entered a warm vestibule with a painted floor, where he found waiting to meet him Pani Oginska and an aged man with hair as white as the snow without. He bowed politely and asked, in French, with nervous [47] timidity:

"Do you remember me, Madame Oginska?"

She screwed up her eyes as she scanned his flushed, frozen face.

"Prince Boulatoff!" she said in a perplexed whisper.

"I have come all the way from St. Petersburg to beg your pardon, Madame Oginska," he fired out. "I acted like a brute on that occasion. I was an idiotic boy. Forgive me."

"Have you actually come all the way from St. Petersburg, to tell me that?" she asked with a hearty peal of laughter. She introduced him to the white-haired man, her father, who first made a bow full of old-fashioned dignity and then gave Pavel's cold hand a doddering grasp.

"So you have really come for that express purpose?" Pani Oginska resumed, while a servant was relieving the newcomer of his fur-lined coat, fur cap, heavy gloves, muffler and storm shoes. "A case of compunction, I suppose?"

Her father followed them as far as the open door of a vast, plainly furnished parlour, and after looming on the threshold for a minute or two, in an attitude of pained dignity, he bowed himself away. Pani Oginska gently pressed the young man into a huge, rusty easy-chair, she herself remaining in a standing posture, her mind apparently divided between hospitality and an important errand upon which she seemed to have been bent when he arrived. She wore a furred jacket, her head in a grey shawl and her feet in heavy top-boots—a costume jarringly out of accord with her pale, delicate, nunnish face. She made quite a new impression on the young prince.

"I was blind then," he began, when they were left alone. "My eyes were closed." [48]

"Oh, you needn't go into detail," she rejoined with an amused look. "I think I can guess how it has come about. You have caught the contagion, haven't you?"

"Why call it 'contagion?' It's the truth; it's justice. If I hadn't been such a silly boy when I first had the pleasure of meeting you, I should certainly not have acted the way I did."

"A boy? And what are you now, pray? An old man with the weight of experience on your shoulders?" she asked with motherly gaiety. "Well, we'll talk it over later on, or, indeed, we'll find better things to talk about; and meanwhile I want you to excuse me, prince, and make yourself comfortable without me. You are hungry, of course?"

“Not at all. I had luncheon at the station.”

“Well, you shall have some refreshments at any rate, and by and by I shall be back. I am a rather busy woman, you see. I have to be my own manager, and there are a thousand and one things to look after, and the snow is rather deep”—pointing at her heavy boots. “Well, here are some books and magazines. *Au revoir.*” She made for the door, but faced about again. “By the way, prince, does your mother know of this crazy trip of yours?”

“I confess she does not,” he answered, feeling helplessly like a boy. “Why?”

“Why! Because she is the best woman in the world, and because it’s too bad you did anything so foolish without letting her know at least. By the way, this is anything but a desirable place for a young man to visit. Since my son got into trouble the police have tried to keep an eye on us; but then the police are so stupid. Still, I am sorry you didn’t first consult your mother. If you boys would only let yourselves be guided by your mothers you would be spared many a trouble.” [49]

“Is that the prime object of life—to guard against harm to oneself?” Pavel protested.

She fixed him with a look of amusement, and then remarked sadly: “You *have* caught the contagion, poor thing. I’ll write your mother about it. Let her put a stop to it if it isn’t too late.”

He took fire. “I don’t know what you are hinting at, Madame Oginska,” he said. Asking her to introduce him to Nihilists seemed out of the question.

“I am hinting at those ‘circles,’ prince. You probably belong to one of them; that’s what I am hinting at. Don’t you, now?”

“I don’t belong to any circles. Nor do I know what you mean, madame.”

“Well, well. You have come to ask me not to be offended with you, and now it seems to be my turn to ask you not to be angry with me. Don’t be uneasy, prince. I shan’t write to your mother. Indeed, she couldn’t afford to be in correspondence with me at all. However, if you really aren’t yet mixed up in those dreadful things”—there was a dubious twinkle in her eye—“you had better keep out of them in the future, too. Think of your charming mother and take care of yourself, prince. Well, I have got to go. It’s barbaric of me to leave you, but I’ll soon be back. Here are some books and magazines. Or wait, I have another occupation for you. I want you to meet the best Jew in the world. I want you to examine him in ‘Gentile lore,’ as his people would put it. They would kill me, his people, if they knew he came to read my ‘Gentile books.’”

“He is a brainy fellow,” she went on, leading the way through a labyrinth of rooms and corridors, “chockful of that Talmud of theirs, don’t you know. Now that he is married they are trying to make a business man of him, but he prefers worldly wisdom and that sort of thing. I let him use my library, the only place he has for his ‘unholy’ studies, in fact. He is supposed to come on business here. He lives in a small town a mile from here.” [50]

She was speaking in Russian now, a language she had perfect command of, but which she spoke with a strong Polish accent, making it sound to Pavel as though she was declaiming poetry. Twelve years ago, before she inherited this estate, and when she still lived in Poland, her birthplace, she could scarcely speak it at all.

She took him into a room whose walls were lined with books, mostly old and worn, and whose two windows looked out upon a frozen pond in front of a snow-covered clump of trees.

“Monsieur Parmet, Prince Boulatoff,” she said, as a man sprang to his feet with the air of one startled from mental absorption. He was of strong, ungainly build, with the peculiar stamp of rabbinical scholarship on a plump, dark-bearded face. “See how much he knows, prince. He thinks he can take the examination for a certificate of maturity and enter the university. But then he thinks he knows everything.” With this she left them to themselves.

Pavel was in a whirl of embarrassment and annoyance, but the abashed smile of the other mollified him. “What I need more than anything else is to be examined in Latin and Greek,” Parmet said. “I haven’t had my exercises looked over for a long time, and it may be all wrong for all I know.” His Russian had a Yiddish accent. He spoke in low, purring tones that seemed to soften the heavy outline of his figure. He was a lumbering mass of physical strength, one of those bearlike giants whom village people will describe as bending horseshoes like so many blades of grass or driving nails into a wall with their bare knuckles for a hammer. His dark-brown eyes shone meekly. [51]

“Have you learned it all by yourself?” Pavel asked.

“Not altogether.”

Pavel began with an air of lofty reluctance, but he was soon carried away by the niceties of the ancient syntax, and his stiffness melted into didactic animation. As to Parmet, his plump, dark face was an image of religious ecstasy. Pavel warmed to him. His Talmudic gestures and intonation amused him.

“There’s no trouble about your Latin,” he said, familiarly; “no trouble whatever.”

“Isn’t there? It was Pani Oginska’s son who gave me the first start,” the other said, blissfully, uttering the name in a lowered voice. “If it had not been for him I should still be immersed in the depths of darkness.”

“‘Immersed in the depths of darkness!’ There is a phrase for you! Why should you use high-flown language like that?”

Parmet smiled, shrugging his shoulders bashfully. “Will you kindly try me on Greek now?” he said.

“One second. That must have been quite a little while ago when Pani Oginska’s son taught you, wasn’t it?”

Parmet tiptoed over to the open door, closed it, tiptoed back and said: “Not quite two years. If you knew what a man of gold he was! They are slowly killing him, the murderers. And why? What had he done? He could not harm a fly. He is all goodness, an angel like his mother. He was of delicate health when they took him, and now he is melting like a candle. Why, oh why, should men like him have to perish that way?” [52]

“Isn’t it rather risky for you to be coming here?” Pavel demanded, looking him over curiously.

Parmet smiled, a queer, outlandish smile, at once naïve and knowing, as he replied:

“Risky? No. What does an old-fashioned Jew like myself care about politics? I am supposed to come here on business. Did you know Eugene?”

“Who is Eugene? Pani Oginska’s son?”

“Yes. I thought you knew him.”

“I wish I had. People like him are the only ones worth knowing. Most of the others are scoundrels, humbugs, cold-blooded egoists; that’s what they are.”

So talking, they gradually confided to each other the story of their respective conversions and tribulations. Parmet followed the prince’s tale first with a look of childlike curiosity and then with an air that betrayed emotion. As he listened he kept rubbing his hand nervously. When Pavel had concluded, the Jew took to tiptoeing up and down the room, stopped in front of him and said, with great ardour:

“Don’t grieve, my dear man. I may be able to help you. I know a friend of Eugene’s who could put you in touch with

the proper persons."

"Is he in St. Petersburg?"

"No, but that's no matter. He can arrange it. He knows somebody there. I'll see him as soon as I can, even if I have to travel many miles for it."

Pavel grasped his hand silently.

"Well," the other said. "There was a time when I thought every Christian hard-hearted and cruel. Now I am ashamed of myself for having harboured such ideas in my mind. Every Christian whose acquaintance I happen to make [53] turns out to be an angel rather than a human being."

"Why these compliments?" Pavel snarled. "Most of the Christians I know are knaves. The whole world is made up of knaves for that matter."

When Pani Oginska came home and saw them together, she said:

"I knew I should find you two making love to each other."

A month or two after Pavel's return to St. Petersburg a tall blond young man with typical Great-Russian features looked him up at the university.

"I have received word from the south about you," he said, without introducing himself.

"I am pleased to meet you," Pavel returned gruffly, "but I hope I won't be kept on probation and be subjected to all sorts of humiliations."

"Why, why," the other said, in confusion. "I'll be glad to let you have any kind of literature there is and to introduce you to other comrades. That's why I have been looking for you. Why should you take it that way?"

Pavel's face broke into a smile. "Dashed if I know why I should. Something possessed me to put on a harsh front. It was mere parading, I suppose. Don't mind it. What shall I call you?"

"Why—er—oh, call me anything," the other answered, colouring.

"Very well, then. I'll call you Peter; or no, will 'godfather' do? That is, provided you are really going to be one to me," Pavel said, in a vain struggle to suppress his exultation.

"It'll be all right," his new acquaintance replied with bashful ardour. [54]

"Godfather, then?"

Godfather introduced him to several other "radicals," who gave him underground prints and a list of legitimate books for a course of "serious" reading. He would stay at home a whole week at a time without dressing or going down for his meals, perusing volume after volume, paper after paper. When he did dress and go out it was to get more books or to seek answers to the questions which disturbed his peace. He was in a state of vernal agitation, in a fever of lofty impulses. And so much like a conspirator did he feel by now, that he no longer even thought of opening his mind to his mother. Indeed, the change that had come over him was so complete that she was not likely to understand him if he had. To drive her to despair seemed to be the only result he could expect of such a confession. The secret movement appealed to him as a host of saints. He longed to be one of them, to be martyred with them. It was clear to him that some day he would die for the Russian people; die a slow, a terrible death; and this slow, terrible death impressed him as the highest pinnacle of happiness.

When his mother came to see him, a year later, she thought he was in love.

He was in the thick of the movement by that time. He was learning shoemaking with a view to settling in a village. He would earn his livelihood in the sweat of his brow, and he would carry the light of his lofty ideas into the hovels of the suffering peasantry. But his plans in this direction were never realized. The period of "going to the people" soon came to an end.

The mothlike self-immolation of university students continued, but the spirit of unresisting martyrdom could not [55] last. Violence was bound to result from it.

The next year saw the celebrated "trial of 193," mostly college men and college women. They were charged with political propaganda, and the bold stand they took thrilled the country. The actual number tried was, indeed, much less than 193, for of those who had been kept in prison in connection with that case as many as seventy had perished in their cold, damp cells while waiting to be arraigned. Of those who were tried many were acquitted, but instead of regaining their liberty a large number of these were transported to Siberia "by administrative order." Moreover, hundreds of people were slowly killed in the dungeons or exiled to Siberia without any process of law whatsoever. School children were buried in these consumption breeding cells; whole families were ruined because one of their members was accused of reading a socialist pamphlet. Student girls were subjected to indignities by dissolute officials —all "by administrative order."

The Russian penal code imposes the same penalty for disfiguring the eyes of an imperial portrait as it does for blinding a live subject of the Czar. But political suspects were tortured without regard even to this code.

It gradually dawned upon the propagandists that instead of being decimated in a fruitless attempt to get at the common people they should first devote themselves to an effort in the direction of free speech. By a series of bold attacks it was expected to extort the desired reforms from the government. Nothing was lawless, so it was argued, when directed, in self-defence, against the representatives of a system that was the embodiment of bloodthirsty lawlessness.

Thus peaceful missionaries became Terrorists. The government inaugurated a system of promiscuous executions; [56] the once unresisting propagandists retaliated by assassination after assassination. Socialists were hanged for disseminating their ideas or for resisting arrest; high officials were stabbed or shot down for the bloodthirsty cruelty with which they fought the movement; and finally a series of plots was inaugurated aiming at the life of the emperor himself.

The White Terror of the throne was met by the Red Terror of the Revolution.

CHAPTER VI.

A MEETING ON NEW TERMS.

IT was an evening in the spring, 1879. The parlour of a wealthy young engineer in Kharkoff—a slender little man with eyelids that looked swollen and a mouth that was usually half-open, giving him a drowsy appearance—was filled with Nihilists come to hear "an important man from St. Petersburg." The governor of the province had recently been killed for the maltreatment of political prisoners and students of the local university, while a month later a bold attempt had been made on the life of the Czar at the capital. The new phase of the movement was asserting itself with greater and greater emphasis, and the address by the stranger, who was no other than Pavel Boulatoff, though he was known here as Nikolai, was awaited with thrills of impatience.

The room was fairly crowded and the speaker of the evening was on hand, but the managers of the gathering were waiting for several more listeners. When two of these arrived, one of them proved to be Elkin. He and Pavel had not met since their graduation from the Miroslav gymnasium. Both wore scant growths of beard and both looked considerably changed, though Pavel was still slim and boyish of figure and Elkin's face as anæmic and chalk-coloured as it had been four years ago. Elkin had been expelled from the University for signing some sort of petition. Since then he had [558] nominally been engaged in revolutionary business. In reality he spent his nights in gossip and tea-drinking, and his days in sleep. Too proud to sponge on his Nihilist friends for more than tea and bread and an occasional cutlet, and too lazy to give lessons, he was growing ever thinner and lazier. He was a man of spotless honesty, overflowing with venom, yet endowed with a certain kind of magnetism.

When Elkin discovered who the important revolutionist from St. Petersburg was the blood rushed to his face. It was a most disagreeable surprise. But Pavel greeted him with a cordiality so free from consciousness, and his roaring laughter, as he compared the circumstances of their last quarrel and those that surrounded their present meeting, was so hearty that Elkin's hostility gave way to a feeling of elation at being so well received by the lion of the evening. He was one of the rank and file of the local "Circles," and the prominence into which Pavel's attention brought him at this meeting, in the presence of several of his chums, gave him a sense of promotion and triumph. He wished he could whisper into the ear of everybody present that this important revolutionist who was known to the gathering as Nikolai was Prince Boulatoff.

"I am still in the dark as to the identity of that girl," said Pavel.

"I shouldn't keep it from you now," the other returned, exposing an exultant lozenge of white teeth. "Next time we meet in Miroslav I shall look her up and introduce you to her. I have not seen her for a long time. She is quite an interesting specimen."

"I should like to meet her very much," Pavel said earnestly. "I have been wanting to know something about her all along. You see, if there were a circle in that blessed out-of-the-way town of ours one might be able to find out things, [559] but if there is I have not seen anybody who knows of its existence. I myself have not been there for two years."

"I was there last summer. There is a small circle there. At least there are several people who get things through me, but that girl I have not seen for a long time."

"Is it possible? Can it be that you have not tried to get her in? Really, a Miroslav circle without her seems like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark."

"Yes, she is a lass with some grit to her, and with brains too."

"If she is, we ought to get her in. We ought to get her in."

"She was only sixteen when that affair happened."

"Was she? Well, you wouldn't believe it, but my curiosity about that girl has been smouldering ever since. If it were not for her and for poor Pievakin I might not be in the movement now."

"I see. It needed a little girl to make a convert of a great man like you. Well, well. That's interesting," Elkin remarked, with a lozenge-shaped sneer; but he hastened to atone for it by adding, ardently: "You're right. She should be in the circle. I'll make it my business to see her next time I am there. I'll go there on purpose, in fact."

He was always trying to be clever, for the most part with venom in his attempts. Friend or foe, whatever humour was his was habitually coloured by an impulse to sting. "For the sake of a pretty word he would not spare his own father," as a Russian proverb phrases it, and his pretty words or puns were usually tinctured with malice.

He painted the Miroslav girl in the most attractive colours. It gave him a peculiar satisfaction to whet Pavel's [560] curiosity and to be able to say mutely: "Indeed, she is even more interesting than you suppose, yet while you are so crazy to know her, I, who do know her, have not even thought of getting her into my Circle."

When Pavel was making his speech Elkin, whose natural inclination was to disapprove, listened with an air of patronising concurrence. Pavel's oratory was of the unsophisticated, "hammer-and-tongs," fiery type, yet its general effect, especially when he assailed existing conditions, was one of complaint. In spite of the full-throated buzz of his voice and the ferocious rush of his words, he conveyed the impression of a schoolboy laying his grievance before his mother.

Before he took leave from his former classmate the two had another talk of the "heroine of the Pievakin demonstration." It was Elkin who brought up the subject, which took them back to the time when, from a Nihilist point of view, he was Pavel's superior. He found him a ready listener. The student girls of the secret movement, their devotion to the cause, their pluck, the inhuman sufferings which the government inflicted on those of them who fell into its hands,—all this was the aureole of Pavel's ecstasy. His heart had remained spotless, the wild oats he had sown during the first weeks of his stay in the capital notwithstanding. The word Woman would fill him with tender whisperings of a felicity hallowed by joint sacrifices, of love crowned with martyrdom, and it was part of the soliloquies which the sex would breathe into his soul to tell himself that he owned his conversion to a girl. But these were sentimentalities of which the Spartan traditions of the underground movement had taught him to be ashamed. Moreover, there was really no time for such things.

During the following summer and fall mines were laid in several places under railway tracks over which the [561] Emperor was expected to pass. The revolutionists missed their aim, but the Czar's narrow escape, coupled with the gigantic scope of the manifold plot, with the skill and the boldness it implied, and with the fact that the digging of these subterranean passages had gone on for months without attracting notice, made a profound impression. Such a display of energy and dexterity on the part of natives in a country where one was accustomed to trace every bit of enterprise to some foreign agency, could not but produce a fascinating effect. The gendarmes were apparently no match for the

Nihilists.

CHAPTER VII.

“TERRORISM WITHOUT VIOLENCE.”

ONE afternoon, in December of the same year, Pavel sat in a student restaurant, in the capital, eating fried steak and watching the door for a man with whom he had an appointment. He ate without appetite and looked fatigued and overworked. He had been out from an early hour, bustling about on perilous business and dodging spies. It was extremely exhausting and enervating, this prowling about under the perpetual strain of danger. He was liable to be arrested at any moment. It was like living continually under fire.

The restaurant was full of cigarette smoke and noise. Somebody in the rear of Pavel, who evidently had nothing to say, was addressing somebody else in high-flown Russian and with great gusto. His fine resonant voice, of which he was apparently conscious, jarred on Pavel’s nerves, interfering with what little relish he had for his meal. He was eyeing the design on the frost-covered door-glass and lashing himself into a fury over the invisible man’s phrase-mongery, when he was accosted by a fair-complexioned young woman:

“Pardon me, but if I am not mistaken you are Prince Boulatoff?”

“That’s my name. And with whom have I the pleasure——?”

“Oh, that would really be uninteresting to know. I’ll tell you, though, that I belong to Miroslav.” [63]

He reluctantly invited her to a glass of tea, which she accepted, saying: “It may look as if I were forcing myself upon your acquaintance, prince, but I really could not help it. Whatever comes from Miroslav is irresistible to me.” And talking rapidly in effervescent, choking sentences, she told him that her name was Maria Andreevna Safonova (Safonoff), that she was a student at the Bestusheff Women’s College and that her brother was a major of gendarmes.

Pavel had heard of there being a daughter or a sister of a Miroslav gendarme officer at the Bestusheff College; also that she made a favourable impression on her classmates; but he had been too busy to give the information more than passing notice.

“Is your brother in Miroslav?” he asked.

“Yes, and I can assure you he is a gentleman, even if he is in the gendarme service. Some day, I hope, he’ll give it up. He is really too good to be in the business.”

Pavel ascribed her ebullition to the nature of the subject, but he soon found that she was in the same state of excitement when a railroad ticket was the topic. She looked twenty-three but she had the cheeks and eyes of a chubby infant, while her arms and figure had the lank, immature effect of a girl of thirteen.

While they sat talking, a dark man in the military uniform of the Medico-Surgical Academy entered the café. It was Parmet, the man Pavel was waiting for. Finding him engaged, the newcomer passed his table without greeting him, took a seat in a remote corner and buried himself in a book.

Mlle. Safonoff did all the talking. She had not sat at Boulatoff’s table half an hour nor said much about Miroslav [64] before she had poured out some of her most intimate thoughts to him.

“If you think it a pleasure to be the sister of a gendarme officer you are mistaken,” she said. “It is not agreeable to be treated by everybody as though you had been put at the college to spy upon the girls, is it? My brother is a better man than the brothers and fathers and grandfathers of all the other student-girls put together, I assure you, prince. But then, of course, you may think I’m trying to spy on you, too.”

“No, I don’t,” said Boulatoff with a laugh, pricking up his ears.

“Don’t you, really?” And her eyes bubbled.

“Of course, I don’t.”

“Oh, if you knew how good he is, my brother. Do you remember the time when poor Pievakin left Miroslav? I know you do. You were in the eighth class then. Well, I may as well tell you, prince”—she lowered her voice—“had it not been for my brother there would have been no end of arrests at the railroad station. He simply told his men not to make a fuss. You see, I can confide in you without hesitation, for who would suspect a Boulatoff of—pardon the word—spying? But I, why, I am the sister of a gendarme officer, so it is quite natural to suppose, and so forth and so on, don’t you know.”

“Do you know the girl who made that speech?”

“There you are,” she said dolefully. “I happened to be at the other end of the room just then. When I tried to find out who she was everybody was mum. Fancy, my best girl-friend said to me: 'If I were you, Masha, I shouldn’t want to know her name if I could. Suppose you utter it in sleep and your brother overhears you.’ The idiots! They didn’t know it was [65] my brother who saved that girl from being arrested. And, by the way, if she had been arrested by some of his men, it would not have been hard for her to escape. I know I am saying more than I should, but I really can’t help it. You have no idea how I feel about these things. And now, at the sight of you, prince—a man from Miroslav—I seem to be going to pieces altogether. Well, I don’t mean, though, that my brother would have let her escape. But then I have an aunt, who is related to the warden of the Miroslav prison by marriage, so she can arrange things there. Oh, she’s the greatest revolutionist you ever saw. Of course, I don’t know whether you sympathise with these things, prince, but I’ll tell you frankly, *I* do. It was that aunt of mine who talked it into me. She is simply crazy to do something. She is sorry there are no political prisoners in Miroslav. If there were she would get them out. She’s just itching for a chance to do something of that sort. And yet she never met a revolutionist in her life, nor saw a scrap of underground paper.”

To question the ingenuousness of this gush seemed to be the rankest absurdity. The Russian spies of the period were poor actors. Pavel was seized by a desire to show her that he, at least, did not suspect her of spying, and quite forgetting to restrain the “idiotic breadth” of his Russian nature for which he was often rebuked by a certain member of the revolutionary Executive Committee who was forever berating his comrades for their insufficient caution, he slipped a crisp copy of the *Will of the People* into her hand.

“Put it into your muff,” he said.

The colour surged into her chubby face. Her whole figure seemed tense with sudden excitement, as though the fine [66] glossy paper in her hand were charged with electricity.

“How shall I thank you?” she gasped.

Pavel saw a moist glitter in her eyes, and as he got up, his slender erect little frame, too, seemed charged with electricity. When she had gone he asked himself whether it had not all been acting, after all. He cursed himself for his imprudence, but he said: “Oh, well, what must be will be,” and as usual the phrase acted like an effectual incantation on his frame of mind.

Parmet had been dubbed Bismarck, because he bore considerable resemblance to Gambetta. Another nickname, one which he had invented himself, on a similar theory of contrasts, was Makar. Makar was as typically Slavic as his face was Semitic. His military uniform, which he had to wear because his Academy was under the auspices of the War Department, ill became him. Instead of concealing the rabbinical expression of his face, it emphasised it. When they came out of the restaurant, a man, shouldering a stick, was running along the snow-covered pavement, lighting the street-lamps, as though in dread of being forestalled by somebody.

"Guess who that girl is," Pavel said.

"Have I heard of her?"

"No. Quite an amusing sort of a damsel. Seething and steaming for all the world like a samovar. You should have seen her calflike ecstasy when I handed her something to read. I was afraid she was going to have a fit."

Makar trotted silently on, continually curling himself in his wretched grey cloak and striking one foot against the other, to knock the caked drab-coloured snow off his boots. Pavel wore a new furred coat.

"She may be useful though," Pavel resumed, after a pause. "That is, provided she is all she seems to be. Her brother [67] is a gendarme major. What do you think of that?"

"Is he?" Makar asked, looking up at his companion in beatific surprise.

"Yes, and she says he's a good fellow, too. Of course, she's quite a full-fledged ninny herself, and ought to be taken with a carload of salt, but she referred to some facts with which I happen to be familiar." While he was describing the girl's aunt, a passing soldier saluted Makar, mistaking him for an army officer. Makar, however, was too absorbed in his companion's talk to be aware of what was going on about him. Pavel shrieked with laughter. "He must be a pretty raw sort of recruit to take *you* for a warrior," he said. When he had finished his sketch of the woman who was longing to set somebody free, the medical student paused in the middle of the sidewalk.

"Why, she's a godsend, then," he said.

"Moderate your passions, Mr. Army Officer," Pavel said languidly, mocking his old gymnasium director. "If she does not turn out to be a spy we'll see what we can do with her. She strikes me rather favourably, though."

"Why, you oughtn't to neglect her, Pasha. If I were you I would lose no time in making her brother's acquaintance. Think of the possibilities of it!"

"Bridle your exuberance, young man. Her brother lives many miles from here. He is on the hunt for sedition in the most provincial of provinces. Want to make a Terrorist of him? Go ahead. He lives in Miroslav. There."

"In Miroslav!" Makar echoed, with pride in the capital of his native province.

Presently they entered a courtyard and took to climbing a steep stony staircase. Strong, inviting odours of cabbage [68] soup and cooked meat greeted them at several of the landings. Makar's lodging was on the sixth floor. He had moved in only a few days ago and the chief object of Pavel's visit was to make a mental note of its location.

The first thing Makar did as he got into the room was to put a pitcher on one of his two windows. The windows commanded a little side street, and the pitcher was Makar's safety signal. When he had lit his lamp a sofa, freshly covered with green oil-cloth, proved to be the best piece of furniture in the room, the smell of the oil-cloth mingling with the stale odours of tobacco smoke with which the very walls seemed to be saturated.

"Ugh, what a room!" Pavel said, sniffing. They talked of a revolutionist who had recently been arrested and to whom they referred as "Alexandre." Special importance was attached by the authorities to the capture of this man, because among the things found at his lodgings was a diagram of the Winter Palace with a pencil mark on the imperial dining hall. As the prisoner was a conspicuous member of the Terrorists' Executive Committee, the natural inference was that another bold plot was under way, one which had something to do with the Czar's dining room, but which had apparently been frustrated by the discovery of the diagram. The palace guard was strongly re-enforced and every precaution was taken to insure the monarch's safety. Now, the Terrorists had their man in the very heart of the enemy's camp, and the result of the search of Alexandre's lodgings was no secret to them. This revolutionist, whose gloomy face was out of keeping with his carefully pomaded hair, kid gloves, silk hat, showy clothes and carefully trimmed whiskers à la Alexander II., was known to Makar as "the Dandy." Less than a year before he had obtained a position in the double capacity of spy and clerk, at the Third Section of his Majesty's Own Office, and so liked was he by his superiors that [69] he had soon been made private secretary to the head of the secret service, every document of importance passing through his hands. Since then he had been communicating to the Executive Committee, now a list of new suspects, now the details of a contemplated arrest, now a copy of some secret circular to the gendarme offices of the empire.

While they were thus conversing of Alexandre and the Dandy, Pavel stretched himself full length on the sofa and dozed off. When he opened his eyes, about two hours later, he found Parmet tiptoeing awkwardly up and down the room, his shadow a gigantic crab on the wall. Pavel broke into a boisterous peal of laughter.

"Here is a figure for you! All that is needed is an artist to set to work and paint it."

"Are you awake? Look here, Pasha. Your gendarme's sister and her aunt are haunting my mind."

"Why, why, have you fallen in love with both of them at once?" Pavel asked as he jumped to his feet and shot his arms toward the ceiling. He looked refreshed and full of animal spirits.

"Stop joking, Pasha, pray," Makar said in his purring, mellifluous voice. "It irritates me. It's a serious matter I want to speak to you about, and here you are bent upon fun." Pavel's story of the gendarme officer's sister had stirred in him visions of a mighty system of counter-espionage. He had a definite scheme to propose.

Pavel found it difficult to work himself out of his playful mood until Makar fell silent and took to pacing the floor resentfully. When he had desisted, with a final guffaw over Makar's forlorn air, the medical student, warming up to fresh enthusiasm, said:

"Well, to let that prison stand idle would be criminal negligence. That girl's aunt must be given a chance." [70]

"What's that?" Pavel said, relapsing into horseplay. "Do you want somebody nabbed on purpose to give a bored lady something to excite her nerves?" He finished the interrogation rather limply. It flashed upon him that what Makar was really aiming at was that some revolutionist should volunteer to be arrested on a denunciation from the Dandy or some other member of the party with a view to strengthening its position in the Third Section.

Makar went on to plead for an organised effort to get into the various gendarme offices.

"It is a terrible struggle we are in, Pasha. Our best men fall before they have time to turn round. If we had more revolutionists on the other side, Alexandre might be a free man now."

"Well, and sooner or later you and I will be where he is now and be plunged into the sleep of the righteous, and there won't even be a goat to graze at our graves. Let the dead bury the dead, Makashka. We want the living for the

firing line. We can't afford to let fresh blood turn sour in a damp cell, if we can help it."

"But this *is* 'the firing line'," Makar returned with beseeching, almost with tearful emphasis. "If you only gave me a chance to explain myself. What I want is to have confusion carried into every branch of the government; I want the Czar to be surrounded by a masquerade of enemies, so that his henchmen will suspect each other of being either agents of the Third Section or revolutionists. Do you see the point? I want the Czar to be surrounded by a babel of mistrust and espionage. I want him to be dazed, staggered until he succumbs to this nightmare of suspicion and hastens to convoke a popular assembly, as Louis XVI. was forced to do; I want the inhabitants of our tear-drenched country to be treated like [171] human beings without delay. My scheme practically amounts to a system or terrorism without violence, and I insist that one good man in the enemy's camp is of more value than the death of ten spies." His low, velvety voice rang clear, tremulous with pleading fervour; his face gleamed with an intellectual relish in his formula of the plan. As he spoke, he was twisting his mighty fist, opening and closing it again, Talmud-fashion, in unison with the rhythm of his sentences.

Ejaculations like "visionary!" "phrase-maker!" were on the tip of Pavel's tongue, but he had not the heart to utter them. Aerial as the scheme was, Makar's plea had cast a certain spell over him. It was like listening to a beautiful piece of mythology.

"Let us form a special force of men ready to go to prison, to be destroyed, if need be," Makar went on. "The loss of one man would mean, in each case, the saving of twenty. Think how many important comrades a single leak in the Third Section has saved us. It's a matter of plain arithmetic."

"Of plain insanity," Pavel finally broke in.

"Don't get excited, Pasha, pray. Can't you let me finish? If I am wrong you'll have plenty of time to prove it."

His purring Talmudic voice and the smell of the fresh oil-cloth were unbearable to Pavel now.

"It's like this," Makar resumed. "In the first place [he bent down his little finger] every honest man is sure to be arrested some day, and what difference does it make whether the end comes a few months sooner or a few months later? In the second place [he bent down the next finger] there must be some more people like that girl's aunt. [172] It is quite possible that most of those who would be arrested on this plan would get out, and that itself would be a good thing, for it would add to the prestige of the party. Everything that reveals the weakness of the government on the one hand, and the cleverness and daring of our people on the other, is good for the cause. Every success scored by the 'Will of the People' is a step in the direction of that for which men like yourself are staking their lives, Pasha. Don't interrupt me, pray. I'll go a step further. I am of the opinion that under certain conditions, where an escape is assured, it wouldn't be a bad idea to let one's self be arrested just in order to add another name to the list of political gaol-breakers, that is to say, to the list of the government's fiascos. Every little counts. Every straw increases that weight which will finally break the back of Russia's despot."

"Do you really mean what you say, Makar? Do you actually want to be arrested?" Pavel asked.

"Not at all. All I want is that another good man should gain the confidence of the Third Section and that another political prisoner should escape."

"And what if all Mlle. Safonoff says turns out to be as idiotic a dream as all this tommyrot of yours?"

"'If one is afraid of wolves one had better keep out of the woods.' You, yourself, have taken much greater chances than that, Pasha. If I am arrested with papers and the worst comes to the worst they won't hang me."

"I see you take it seriously after all. Well, if you think I'll let you do anything of the kind you are a fool."

"You can't prevent me from doing what I consider to be right. Nor do I want anybody else to send the denunciation which is to result in my arrest. I'll send it myself. All I want is that somebody should claim credit for it afterward, when I [173] am in prison—on that very day, if possible. The search and arrest will be ordered from St. Petersburg, and then some of our men will say at the Third Section that the anonymous letter was his, adding some details about me. Details can be worked out later. Where there is a will there is a way. At any rate, I don't expect anybody but myself to bear the moral responsibility for my arrest."

He talked on in the same strain until Pavel sprang to his feet, flushed with rage. "It's all posing—that's all there's to it!" he shouted. "On the surface it means that you are willing to sacrifice yourself without even attracting attention, but in reality this subtle modesty of yours is only the most elaborate piece of parading that was ever conceived. It's love of applause all the way through, and you are willing to stake your life on it. That's all there is about it."

Makar grew yellow in the face and sweat broke out on his forehead. "In that case, there's no use talking, of course," he said in a very low voice. "If I am a humbug I am a humbug."

"And if you are a fool, you are a fool," Pavel rejoined, with a conciliatory growl.

"You need not back out, Pasha. Maybe you are right," Makar rejoined. "Who is absolutely free from vanity? Human nature is such a complex mechanism. One may be governed by love of approbation and, perhaps, also, by a certain adventuresome passion for the danger of the thing. The great question is whether there is something besides this. No, it is not all posing, Pasha. There are moments when I ask myself why I should not live as most people do, but I only have to realise all that is going on around us; the savage tyranny, the writhing millions, the hunger, the bottomless darkness, [174] the unuttered groans,—I only have to think of this and of the dear comrades I have known who have been strangled on the gallows or are wasting away in the casemates; I need only picture all this, I say, to feel that even if there be an alloy of selfishness in my revolutionary interests, yet, in the main, it is this sense of the Great Wrong which keeps me from nursing my own safety. Do you know that the dangling corpses of our comrades are never absent from my mind? I am not without a heart, Pasha."

"Nobody says you are, only you are a confounded dreamer, Makashka," Pavel answered. "We have no time for dreams and poetry. Our struggle is one of hard, terrible prose."

"You are even more of a dreamer than I, Pasha," Makar retorted, blissfully.

When Makar resumed speaking the last echo of resentment was gone from his voice. "After all, one gets more than one gives. When I think of the moments of joy the movement affords me, of the ties of friendship with so many good people—the cream of the generation, the salt of the earth, the best children Russia ever gave birth to—when I think of the glorious atmosphere that surrounds me, of the divine ecstasy with which I view the future; when I recall all this I feel that I get a sort of happiness which no Rothschild could buy. To be kept in solitary confinement is anything but a pleasure, to be sure, but is there nothing to sweeten one's life there? And how about the thought that over yonder, outside, there are people who are going on with the struggle and who think of you sometimes? Sooner or later the government will yield. And then, oh then somebody—some comrade of ours—will throw the cell-door open, and I'll join [175] in the celebration of our triumph. Really, Pasha, I am strong as a bull, and a few years of confinement would not kill me. While some of our people may die by the hand of the hangman, my life would be spared. Did you ever stop to think of the time when the cells of Siberia and of Peter and Paul are thrown open and one says to the immured comrades, 'Out

with you, brothers! You're free! The nation is free!' Come, another year or two and this will be realised."

"You had better save your sentimentalities for novices," Pavel said. "And, by the way, your eloquence is certainly of more use than your dreaming in a dungeon would be."

He was arguing with a rock of stiff-necked will-power.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAKAR'S CANVASS.

PARMET now gave most of his time to the secret movement, making himself useful in a variety of ways. His great unrealised ambition, however, was to work in an underground printing office—an offence which at the period was punished by a long term of penal servitude in Siberia. He had a feeling as though nothing one did for the movement could be regarded as a vital service to the cause of free speech as long as it fell short of typesetting in a secret printing establishment. He had applied for work of this kind several times, but his proverbial absent-mindedness stood in his way. Being in the habit of reading some book or newspaper as he walked through the streets, he would sometimes catch himself drinking in the contents of some "underground" publication in this manner. Once as he stood on a street corner intent upon a revolutionary leaflet, he heard an infuriated whisper:

"Imbecile! Scoundrel!"

When he raised his eyes he saw the ample back of a compactly built man dressed in citizen's clothes except for a broad military cap with a red band. This was "the Janitor," so nicknamed because he made it his business to go the rounds of "conspiracy houses" every morning and to pick a quarrel with those of their occupants who had neglected to furnish their windows with safety signals or were guilty of some other manifestation of "Russian breadth." The episode [75] antedated the above conversation between Makar and Pavel by two months, and the medical student had not seen the Janitor since. He dreaded to meet him. At this minute, however, he was just the man he wanted to see, for it was he who had taken the initiative in getting the Dandy into the Third Section. Accordingly, Pavel had no sooner left him than he betook himself to a place at which he expected to find that revolutionist. The place was the lodging of a man who was known in the organisation as Purring Cat—a nickname based on his shaggy eyebrows and moustache. His face was almost entirely overgrown with hair. Short of stature, with a thick dark beard that reached down to his knees and with blue eyes that peered up from under his stern eyebrows, this formidable looking little man, the nearest approach to the wax-works version of a Russian Nihilist, was the gentlest soul on the Executive Committee. Besides Purring Cat and the Janitor, Makar found in the room Andrey, an extremely tall man with Tartarian features.

The Janitor greeted Makar with a volley of oaths, stuttering as he spoke, as was usually the case when he was angry.

"You have no business to be here," he fulminated. "You are just the man to bring a spy in tow. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you had one at your heels now."

"Come, don't fume," Makar pleaded, confusedly. "I won't be absent-minded any more. I have taken myself in hand. Besides, my absent-mindedness is not without its redeeming feature. You see, I am the last man to be suspected of being on my guard; so the spies would never bother me."

Andrey and Purring Cat smiled. The Janitor started to do the same, but changed his mind. Instead, he broke into [76] a more violent fit of temper and a more painful stutter than before. His compact figure was of medium height, his face very blond, with prominent eyes and well-trimmed red beard. His military cap matched the passport of a retired army officer under which he was registered at the police station. He was supposed to be employed at some civil tribunal, and every morning, on the stroke of eleven he would leave his lodgings, a portfolio under his arm, his military cap slightly cocked—the very personification of the part he acted. The name in his passport was Polivanoff. His real name was Michailoff, and under that name he was wanted by the gendarmes in prominent connection with several attempts on the life of the Czar. He had once escaped from under arrest and on another occasion he had managed to disappear from a railroad train while it was being searched for him. He was one of the ablest and bravest men in the party. His un-Russian punctuality and indefatigable attention to detail; his practical turn of mind and the way he had of nagging his friends for their lack of these qualities, were common topics of banter among the Terrorists. He had made a special study of every lane and court in the capital by which one might "trash" one's trail. He not only shadowed his fellow revolutionists to see if they were aware of being shadowed or whether they dressed in accordance with the type implied by their false passports, but he also made a practice of spying over the spies of the Third Section. With this end in view, he had once rented a room across the street from that office—an institution that would have given millions for his head. Here he would sit for hours at his window, scrutinising every new person who entered the building so as to be able [77] to keep track of their movements afterward. Having thus discovered a boarding house in which lived an important officer of the secret service he had sent the Dandy to hire a room there. The desired appointment had then been obtained without difficulty.

When Makar had laid the practical part of his scheme before the three men, the Janitor fixed his prominent eyes on him and said, without stammering:

"And you are just the chap to do it, aren't you?"

"And why not? It certainly doesn't need much adroitness and vigilance to get arrested."

"The devil it does not. A fellow like you would get ten men arrested before he fooled the measliest cub spy in the Third Section. Better keep your hands off."

"Oh, well, if the escape was really a sure thing, the matter might be arranged," Purring Cat interposed, charitably, in a low, gentle voice. "Only this is scarcely the time for it." Whereupon Makar, feeling encouraged, launched out to describe his far-reaching scheme in detail. The look of the Janitor's prominent eyes, however, disturbed him, so that he expounded the plan in a rather nerveless way; when he had finished, the Janitor declared:

"He's certainly crazy."

Purring Cat's blue eyes looked up under their bushy brows, as he said, gravely:

"There may be something in it, though, theoretically at least. In reality, however, I am afraid that general state of chaos would rebound upon ourselves. The government may get its spies into our circles until one does not know who is who. It may become a double-edged weapon, this 'babel of distrust.' As to that prison scheme it might be tried some day. Only don't be in a hurry, Makar."

"And what is your opinion?" Makar addressed himself to Andrey solicitously. [80]

Andrey who was a man of few words, and spoke with a slight lisp, said he had no definite opinion to offer, but, when Makar pressed him hard, he said:

"Well, we have one man there" (meaning the Third Section), "so let us not make the mistake of the woman who cut her hen open in order to get at all her eggs at once. Still, if the scheme could be worked in some of the provinces, it might be worth while. It all depends on circumstances, of course."

Makar longed to see Sophia, the daughter of the former governor of St. Petersburg. She had taken an active part in one of the most daring rescues and was celebrated for the ingenuity and motherly devotion with which she gave herself to the “Red Cross” work of the party, supplying political prisoners with provisions and keeping them in secret communication with their relatives. It was the story of this young noblewoman’s life which afterwards inspired Turgeneff’s prose poem, *The Threshold*. Makar thought she might take an active interest in his scheme, but she was overwhelmed with other work and inaccessible.

CHAPTER IX.

A DAY UNDERGROUND.

ABOUT a week had elapsed, when Pavel read in his morning paper of the hanging of three revolutionists in Odessa: two Gentiles and a Jew. He had never met these men, but he knew that two of them had not been implicated in anything more violent than the diffusion of socialist ideas. Also that the parents of the one who belonged to the Jewish race were under arrest, condemned to be exiled to Siberia for no other crime than their having given birth to an enemy of the existing régime.

Pavel moved about his room with a sob of helpless fury in his throat. He found feverish satisfaction in the thought that he had some chemicals in his overcoat which he was to carry to the dynamite shop of the Terrorists. The explosives to be made from it were intended for a new attempt upon the life of the Emperor. Not being directly connected with the contemplated attack, neither he nor the dynamite makers of the organisation had any clear idea about the plot, which was in the hands of a special sub-committee, Alexandre's place having been taken by another man; but he did know that preparations were under way in the Winter Palace.

The dynamite shop was kept by a woman with a deep-chested, almost masculine voice, and a man with a squeaky feminine one. They were registered as man and wife. She was the daughter of a priest, but she looked like a woman [091] of the people and dressed like one—a thick-set extremely blonde young woman with coarse yet pleasing features. Her revolutionary name was Baska. Her fictitious husband, who was one of the chemists of the party, was addressed by the revolutionists as Grisha. He had a scholarly face, yet the two had no difficulty in passing among the neighbours for a tradesman or shop clerk and his wife. For the greater reality of the impersonation and as a special precaution against curiosity they made friends with the porter of the house and his wife and with the police roundsman of the neighbourhood, often inviting them to a glass of vodka. The porter of St. Petersburg, like his brother of Paris under the empire, is a political detective "ex-officio." The two spies and the police officer were thus turned into unconscious witnesses of the young couple's political innocence, for in the first place they had many an opportunity to convince themselves that their dwelling was free from anything suspicious and, in the second, people who drank vodka and went, moreover, on sprees with the house porter, certainly did not look like Nihilists.

"Good morning, Pavel," Baska greeted him vivaciously, as she gave his hand a hearty squeeze, while her other hand held a smoking cigarette. "Just in time! I hate to eat my breakfast all alone. Grisha has another bad headache, poor fellow. But I see you, too, have a long face. Where did you get it?"

Pavel smiled lugubriously as he handed her the package. He had not the heart to disturb her good spirits, and she went on chirping and laughing.

Grisha came in, haggard, sickly and trying to smile. The skin of both his hands was off. This, like his frequent [092] headaches, was the effect of the work he did in these rooms—of inhaling nitroglycerine and kneading dynamite with his bare fists.

Baska gayly told how the porter's wife had offered her a salve for her "husband," and how the night before, as Grisha was pouring nitroglycerine into some dynamite "dough," there was an explosion and the house filled with smoke.

"Our next door neighbour knew at once that our kerosene stove exploded and set fire to a rag," Baska said with a deep-voiced titter. "She gave me quite a lecture on negligence."

"She only wondered why there should be such a strange smell to the smoke," Grisha added, his hand to his head.

As Pavel looked at Baska relishing her tea and her muffin and talking merrily between gulps, a desire took hold of him to spoil her vivacity. It jarred on him to see her enjoy herself while the image of the three new gallows was so vivid in his mind.

"You people don't seem to know what's going on in the world," he said testily. "They have hanged Malinka, Maidanski and Drobiazgin."

"Have they?" Baska asked paling. She had known two of them personally.

While Pavel took out his newspaper and read the brief despatch, her head sank on the table. Her solid frame was convulsed with sobbing.

"Be calm, be calm," Grisha entreated, offering her a glass of water. In spite of her excellent physique she was subject to violent hysterical fits which were apt to occur at a time when the proffer of neighbourly sympathy was least desirable.

She told all she remembered of the executed men, whom she had met in the south. But that was not much; so Pavel [093] went to see Purring Cat who, being a southerner, had detailed information to give him about the three Nihilists. Boulatoff could talk of nothing else that day. When he met Makar, in the afternoon, he said:

"People are being strangled right and left and here you are bent on that *idée fixe* of yours."

"Fine logic, that," Makar replied. "If my *idée fixe* had been realised a year ago these men would now be free. But this is not the time to talk about things of that kind." Instead of mourning the loss of the three revolutionists he was in a solemn, religious sort of mood at the thought of the new human sacrifices offered on the altar of liberty. He was panting to speak about the Jew who had been executed. He was proud of the fact that two men of his race had given their lives for the cause within five months. The other Jewish revolutionist had been executed in Nicolayeff. A letter which he had addressed to the revolutionists a few days before his execution, exhorting them not to waste any of the forces of the movement on attempts to avenge his death, was enshrined in Makar's heart as the most sacred document in the entire literature of the struggle. But race pride was contrary to the teachings of the movement; so he not only kept these sentiments to himself, but tried to suppress them in his own bosom.

In the evening Pavel took two young cavalry officers of his acquaintance to the house of a retired major where a revolutionary meeting was to be held. They found the major's drawing room sparkling with military uniforms. The gathering was made up of eight officers, two men in citizen's clothes, and one woman, the dark long-necked hostess.

Two cheap lithographs, one of General Suvoroff and the other of the reigning monarch, occupied the centre of [094] the best wall, in jarring disharmony with the refined and somewhat Bohemian character of the rest of the room. The two portraits had been put there recently, to bear witness to the political "reliability" of the house. The hostess presided

over a pile of yellow aromatic tobacco, rolling cigarettes for her guests and smoking incessantly herself. An idiotic-looking man-servant and a peasant girl fresh from the country kept up a supply of tea, zwiebacks and preserves. Every time they appeared the hostess, whose seat commanded the door, would signal to the company. She did it rather perfunctorily, however, the revolutionary discussion proceeding undisturbed. The cultured, bookish Russian of the assemblage was Greek to the two servants. They talked of the three executions.

Presently two other civilians were announced.

"At last!" the hostess said, getting up from her pile of tobacco in a flutter.

The two newcomers were both above medium height, of solid build and ruddy-faced; but here their similarity of appearance ceased. One of them looked the image of social refinement and elegance, while the clothes and general aspect of the other bespoke a citified, prosperous peasant. His rough top-boots, the red woolen belt round his coat and the rather coarse tint of his florid complexion, like his full Russian beard, proclaimed the son of the unenlightened classes. He was taller than his companion and remarkably well-built, with a shock of dark brown hair thrown back from a high prominent forehead and regular features. He was introduced to the gathering as Zachar. He and the stylish-looking man by his side whose revolutionary nickname was "My Lord," conveyed the effect of a bright, shrewd [1870] tradesman and a high-class lawyer bent on some legal business.

"If we are late, blame this guide of mine, not me," Zachar said to the hostess, in a deep, rather harsh baritone, pointing at his companion. "It turned out that he did not know the place very well himself. There is a pilot for you." He accepted a glass of tea in a silver holder and during the ensuing small talk the room rang with his merriment. His jests were commonplace, but his Russian and all he said betrayed the man of education. The tradesman's costume was his disguise, and if it became him so well it was because his parents were moujiks. Born in serfdom but brought up as a nobleman at the expense of his former master, this university-bred peasant—a case of extreme rarity—for whom the gendarmes were searching in connection with a bold attempt to blow up an imperial train, loomed in the minds of the revolutionists as the most conspicuous figure of their movement.

"And how is my young philosopher?" he said to Pavel. "I was at your place this morning, but found you out, Pasha."

"I'll see you later on," Pavel said dryly. "Philosopher" referred to the nature of the studies which Pavel's mother thought him to be pursuing. There was a touch of patronage in the way Zachar used the word, and Pavel resented it.

As the gathering began to lapse into a graver mood the conversation was expectantly left to Zachar, who by degrees accepted the rôle of the principal speaker of the evening. That he relished this rôle and was fond of a well turned phrase became apparent at once, but the impression soon wore off. He compelled attention.

"The practice of nations being inherited like furniture or chickens has been out of date for centuries," he said in the [1871] course of a ferocious attack on the existing adjustment of things. "But our party does not demand full justice at once. The Will of the People is not inconsiderate. We are willing to project ourselves into the position of an old chap with whom the love of power has been bred in the bone. All our party does demand, as a first step, is some regard for the rights of the individual; of those rights without which the word civilisation is of a piece with that puerile sort of hypocrisy as our late war with Turkey, when the ambitious old fellow in his unquenchable thirst for territory sent his subjects to die for the liberty of Bulgarians so that their own children at home might be plunged into more abject slavery than ever.

"The government knows, of course, that its days are numbered and that it is only cowardice and incapacity for concerted action which make its brief respite possible. To retreat honourably, before it is too late, to yield to the stern voice of the revolution under some specious pretext—this is the step indicated by the political situation, but then this is not what the ambitious oldster is after. Is there any wonder he has lost his head? So much the better for the revolution. One or two decisive blows and the government will topple over. Thanks to the splendid army section of the Will of the People, on the one hand, and to our powerful Workingmen's Section, on the other, one hundred resolute men will be enough to seize the Winter Palace, to cut off all egress, arrest the new Czar and, amid the general confusion following the death of the old tyrant, proclaim a provisional government. What a glorious opportunity to serve one's country!"

His speech lasted an hour and a half. Most of his hearers were recent converts, and these the matter-of-fact tone [1868] of his utterances took by storm. The Third Section had heard of him as an irresistible agitator. So he was, and the chief secret of his success lay—despite an effect of conscious floridity and bravado—in a sincere depth of conviction manifested by a volcanic vehemence of delivery. His speeches took it for granted that Russia was at the threshold of a great historical change and that his organisation was going to play a leading part in that change. He gathered particular assurance from the fact that the "army section" that had been formed by his efforts included several officers of the court guard whose number he hoped to increase. These court officers it was whom his imagination pictured as "cutting off all egress" at the Winter Palace. The funds of his party included contributions from some high sources. Things seemed to be coming the "Will of the People's" way. As he spoke his strong physique seemed to be aflame with contagious passion, sweeping along audience and speaker. The harshness of his mighty baritone was gone; his peasant face was beautiful. Words like "party," "citizen," "National Assembly," are winged with the glamour of forbidden fruit in Russia, and when Zachar uttered these words, in accents implying that these things were as good as realised, his audience was enravished. To all of which, in the present instance, should be added the psychological effect of a group of dashing army officers, all members of the nobility, reverently listening to an address by a peasant. He struck one as a giant of energy and courage, of nervous vitality as well as of bodily strength. He had the stuff of a political leader in him. Under favourable conditions he would have left his mark as one of the strong men of the nineteenth century. He carried people along current-fashion rather than magnetised them.

Pavel was the next speaker, but the outraged sense of justice which was the keynote of his impassioned plea, [1869] coming as it did upon the heels of Zachar's peremptory and matter-of-course declarations, sounded out of date.

"Oh, it takes an idiot to talk after you, Zachar," he said, breaking off in the middle of a sentence. "One feels like being up and doing things, not talking. I wonder why we don't start for the Winter Palace, at once."

"That's the way I feel, too," chimed in a very young cavalry officer, while two older men in brilliant uniforms, were grasping Zachar each by one hand. The long-necked hostess was brushing the tears from her eyes and calling herself "fool," for joy.

An artillery officer with bad teeth of whom Pavel could not think without thinking of the rheumatism of which that revolutionist had once complained to him, drew his sword fiercely, the polished steel flaming in the bright light of the room, as he said:

"By Jove!"

"Look at him! Look at him!" Zachar shouted.

"Bridle your passions, old boy," Pavel put in.

A minute or two later he called the orator into the next room and handed him what looked like a package of tobacco.

Zachar was in high feather over the success of his speech and loath to leave the atmosphere of adoration that surrounded him here; but an important engagement forced him to take his departure.

A quarter of an hour's ride in a tramcar and a short walk through the moonlit streets brought him to a deserted corner in the vicinity of the Winter Palace, where he was met by a man dressed like an artisan, as tall as himself, but slimmer of girth, and the two went on trudging along the snow-encrusted sidewalk together. The other man had an expressive sickly face which the pallid glare of the moonlight gave a ghastly look. [90]

"How is your health?" Zachar asked.

"Bad," the sickly looking man answered, holding out his hand into which Zachar put the package of tobacco, saying:

"See if it isn't too heavy for a quarter of a pound."

"It is, rather, but it'll pass," the other replied, weighing the package in his hand and then putting it into his pocket. Buried in the tobacco was a small quantity of dynamite.

"It's too bad you are not feeling well."

"Yes, my nerves are playing the devil with me. The worst of it is that I have got to keep the stuff under my pillow when I sleep. That gives me headaches."

"I shouldn't wonder. The evaporations of that stuff do that as a rule. But can't you find another place for it?"

"Not for the night. They might go through my trunk then. They are apt to come in at any time. Oh, those surprise visits of theirs keep my wretched nerves on edge all the time."

While the gendarmerie and the police knew him to be a leader among the revolutionary workmen of the capital and were hunting for him all over the city, this man, whose name was Stepan Khaltourin, had for the past few months been making his home, under the name of Batushkoff, in the same building as the Czar, in the Winter Palace, where his work as a varnisher was highly valued. He was a self-taught mechanic, unusually well-read and clear-headed. Of retiring disposition and a man of few words, with an iron will under a bashful and extremely gentle manner, he was one of the prominent figures of the Will of the People, having been driven to terrorism by the senseless persecutions which he had met at the hands of the authorities in his attempts to educate some of his fellow-workmen. He now lodged, together with other mechanics, in the basement of the Winter Palace, with only one room—the guard-room—between the ceiling over his head and the floor of the Imperial dining hall. Indeed, the frequent raids which a colonel at the head of a group of gendarmes had been making upon that basement since the seizure of "Alexandre's" diagram were largely a matter of display and red tape. There was more jingling of spurs and flaunting of formidable looking moustaches than actual searching or watching. Nowhere was the incapacity of Russian officialdom illustrated more glaringly than it was in the very home of the Czar. The bold Terrorist for whom the police were looking high and low had found little difficulty in securing employment here, and one of the first things that had attracted his attention in the place was the prevailing state of anarchy and demoralisation he found in it. Priceless gems and relics were scattered about utterly unguarded; stealing was the common practice of the court servants, and orgies at which these regaled their friends from the outside world upon wines from the imperial cellars were a nightly occurrence. Since Alexandre's arrest the vigilance of the court gendarmes had been greatly increased, so that no servant could enter the palace without being searched; yet Khaltourin contrived to smuggle in a small piece of dynamite every evening, thus gradually accumulating the supply that was needed for the terrible work of destruction he was preparing. [91]

As to his position within the palace, he played his rôle so well that he was the favourite of gendarmes and servants alike, often hearing from them stories of the Nihilists and of the great plot to blow up the dining hall that was supposed to have been nipped in the bud. [92]

"Well, how is that old gendarme of yours?" Zachar inquired. "Still teaching you manners?"

"Yes," Khaltourin answered with a smile. "I am getting sick of his attentions, though. But there is something back of them, it appears. What do you think he's after? Why, he has a marriageable daughter, so he has taken it into his head to make a son-in-law of me."

"Ho-ho-ho-ho!" Zachar exploded, restraining a guffaw.

CHAPTER X.

THE CZAR'S ESCAPE.

ON Tuesday, February 17th, at about six o'clock in the evening, Pavel and Makar were sauntering through the streets of the Vassili Island. Their conversation languished. While indoors they had had another discussion of Makar's scheme, a heart-to-heart talk in which Pavel showed signs of yielding; and now that they were out in the snow-dappled night they were experiencing that feeling of embarrassment which is the aftermath of sentimental communion between two men. When they reached the Neva, Pavel cast a glance across, in the direction of the Winter Palace. The frozen river looked infinitely wider than it was. Dotted with lamps and crossed by streams of home-bound humanity, it lay vast, gorgeous, uncanny—a white plain animated with mysterious brightness and mysterious motion. The main part of the capital, on the Palace side of the Neva, was a world of gloom starred with myriads and myriads of lights, each so distinct that one almost felt tempted to count them; all this seemingly as far away as the gold-dotted sky overhead. Makar was huddling himself in his grey military cloak, his bare hands loosely thrust into its sleeves, looking at nothing. Pavel, his furred coat unbuttoned, gazed across the Neva.

"Come on," the medical student urged, knocking one foot against the other. "It's too cold to be tramping around like this." [94]

"One moment," Pavel responded, impatiently. He had been visiting this point at the same hour every day for the past week or two. Makar, who did not know of it, relapsed into his revery.

Suddenly there came a dull rolling crash. It burst from the other side, and as Pavel and Makar looked across the river they saw that the lights of the Winter Palace which had been burning a minute ago, were out, leaving a great patch of darkness. The human stream paused. Then came a rush of feet on all sides.

"It's in the Palace," Boulatoff whispered; and seizing his companion's hand at his side he pressed it with furious strength.

The next day the newspapers were allowed to state that the previous evening, as the Czar and a royal guest were about to enter the dining hall through one door and the other members of the imperial family through another, a terrific explosion had occurred, making a hole in the floor ten feet long and six wide; that eleven inmates of the guard room, which was directly under the dining hall, were killed and fifty-seven injured, the Czar's narrow escape having been due to an accidental delay of the dinner. The explosion had shattered a number of windows and blown out the gas, leaving the palace in complete darkness. Traces of an improvised dynamite mine had been discovered in the basement. Three artisans employed in the palace were arrested, but their innocence was established, while a fourth man, a varnisher named Batushkoff, had disappeared. Now that Batushkoff was gone the Third Section learned that he was no other than Stepan Khaltourin, one of the active revolutionists its agents were looking for. [95]

One week after the explosion the Czar signed a decree which practically placed the government in the hands of a Supreme Executive Commission—a body especially created to cope with the situation and whose head, Count Loris-Melikoff, was invested with all but the powers of a regent. Count Melikoff was neither a Slav nor of noble birth. He was the son of an Armenian merchant. He was a new figure in St. Petersburg, and when his carriage passed along the Neva Prospect his swarthy face with its striking Oriental features were pointed out with expressions of perplexity. Although one of the two principal heroes of the late war with Turkey and recently a governor-general of Kharkoff, he was looked upon as an upstart. The extraordinary powers so suddenly vested in him took the country by surprise.

He was known for the conciliatory policy toward the Nihilists at which he had aimed while he was governor-general of Kharkoff. Accordingly, his promotion to what virtually amounted to dictatorship was universally interpreted as a sign of weakening on the part of Alexander II. Indeed, Melikoff's first pronunciamento from the lofty altitude of his new office struck a note of startling novelty. He spoke of the Czar as showing "increased confidence in his people" and of "public coöperation" as "the main force capable of assisting the government in its effort to restore a normal flow of official life"—utterances that were construed into a pledge of public participation in affairs of state, into an unequivocal hint at representative legislation.

Loris-Melikoff was one of the ablest statesmen Russia had ever produced. He was certainly the only high official of his time who did not try to prove his devotion to the throne by following in the trodden path of repression. He knew that Russia could not be kept from joining in the march of Western civilisation and he was not going to serve his personal interests by pretending that it could. Instead, he hoped to strengthen his position by winning the Czar over to his own moderate liberalism, by reconciling him to the logic of history. But the logic of history could best have been served by prompt and vigorous action, while the chief of the Supreme Executive Commission was rather slow to move. Nor, indeed, was he free from interference. The Czar was still susceptible to the influence of his unthinking relatives and of his own vindictive nature. [96]

Chaos marked the situation. Loris-Melikoff's first week in office was signalised by the most cruel act in the entire history of the government's struggle against Nihilism. A gymnasium boy, seventeen years old (a Jew), was hanged in Kieff for carrying a revolutionary proclamation. The dictator's professions of liberalism were branded as hypocrisy.

CHAPTER XI.

A MYSTERIOUS ARREST.

A YOUNG man had been seized with seditious publications. It was the first political arrest in Miroslav, and the report was spreading in a maze of shifting versions. This much seemed certain: the prisoner pretended to be a deaf-mute and so far the gendarmes and the procureur had failed to disclose his identity. The local newspaper dared not publish the remotest allusion to the matter.

Countess Anna Nicolayevna Varova (Varoff) first heard the news from her brother-in-law, the governor, and although the two belonged to that exceptional minority which usually discussed topics of this character in their normal voices, yet it was in subdued tones that the satrap broached the subject. Anna Nicolayevna offered to send for Pavel, who had recently arrived from St. Petersburg, after an absence of three years, but the governor checked her.

"Never mind, Annette," he said, impatiently, "I've dropped in for a minute or two, in passing, don't you know. He called on me yesterday, Pasha. Quite a man. Tell him he must look in again and let me see how clever he is. Quite a man. How time does fly!" Then sinking his voice, he asked: "Have you heard of the fellow they've bagged? One of those youngsters who are scaring St. Petersburg out of its wits, you know." [189]

He gave a laugh and fell to blinking gravely.

"What do you mean, George? Did the gendarmes catch a Nihilist?" she asked, in dismay. "Did they? Bless me! That's all that's wanted. If there is one there must be a whole nest of them." She made a gesture of horror—"But who is he, what is he?"

"That I know no more than you do."

"Well, it's too bad, it's really too bad. I thought Miroslav was immune from that plague at least." And seeing his worried look she added: "I hope it's nothing serious, George."

Governor Boulatoff shook his head. "I don't think it is. Although you never can tell nowadays. You never can tell," he repeated, blinking absently. "The Armenian doesn't seem to be cleaning those fellows out quite so rapidly as one thought he would, does he? They are playing the devil with things, that's what they are doing." "One" and "they" referred to the Emperor and his advisers.

"Pooh, they'll weary of that parvenu, it's only a matter of time," she consoled him.

The old man proceeded to quote from Loris-Melikoff's recent declarations, which the countess had heard him satirise several times before. "'In the coöperation of the public,'" he declaimed theatrically, "'lies the main force capable of assisting the government in its effort to restore a normal flow of official life.' Do you understand what all this jugglery means? That we are knuckling down to a lot of ragamuffins. It means an official confession that the 'flow of official life' has been checked by a gang of rascally college boys. 'The public is the main force capable of assisting the government!' Charming, isn't it? Might as well invite 'the public' to be so kind and elect representatives, deputies, or what you may call 'em, start a parliament and have it over with." [190]

Anna Nicolayevna made another attempt to bring the conversation back to the political prisoner, but her visitor was evidently fighting shy of the topic.

"Birch-rods, a good, smart flogging, that's what the public needs," he resumed, passionately gnashing his teeth, in response to his own thoughts.

"Oh, don't say that, George. After all, one lives in the nineteenth century."

But this only spurred him on.

The arrest having been ordered from St. Petersburg, the implication was that the presence of the revolutionist in town had escaped the attention of the local authorities. So Governor Boulatoff, who had had no experience in cases of this kind, wondered whether the affair was not likely to affect his own standing. Besides, the governor of Kharkoff had recently been killed, and Boulatoff was asking himself whether the arrest of the unknown man augured the end of his own peace of mind. This he kept to himself, however, and having found some relief in animadverting upon the policy of Loris-Melikoff he took leave.

The countess was left with a pang of sympathy for her brother-in-law. Not that she had any clear idea of the political situation at which he was forever scoffing and carping. She felt sure that his low spirits were traceable to loneliness, and her compassion for him revived heart-wringing memories of his dead wife, her sister.

The young prince was out in the garden romping about with Kostia, his half-brother, now a ten-year-old cadet on sick leave. Anna Nicolayevna went to take a look at them through the open window of a rear room. The garden was so jammed with fresh-tinted lilacs, so flooded with their scent, that it seemed like an explosion of color and fragrance. Two Germans were at work with picks and spades. From an invisible spot where a new summer house was being constructed came sounds of sawing and hammering, while the air near the window rang with a multitudinous twitter of sparrows. Pavel was trying to force Kostia into a wheelbarrow, the boy kicking and struggling silently, and a huge shaggy dog barking at Pavel ferociously. [191]

"Come in, Pasha. I want to speak to you," said Anna Nicolayevna.

The return indoors was a race, in which the gigantic dog took part. The convalescent little cadet was beaten.

"Wait till I get well," he said.

"Wait nothing. Your excellency will be rolling along like a water-melon all the same. Good-bye, Monsieur le Water-melon!"

Presently Pavel stood before his mother, mopping his flushed, laughing face.

"Do you remember his 'express trains' in the garden?" he said. "Now it is beneath his dignity, to be sure." He was always trying to prove to himself that the present Kostia and the five-year-old boy he used to fondle five years ago were one and the same person.

"He's right," said the countess. "He's a baby no longer. It's you who are acting like one. Uncle has been here. He was in a hurry, so I didn't send for you." Her serious-minded, intellectual son inspired her with a certain feeling of timidity. She had not the courage to bring up the subject of the political arrest. Her mind was so vague on matters of this kind, while Pavel was apparently so well informed and so profound, she was sure of making a poor showing. So she [192]

told herself that it was not a proper topic to discuss in a well-ordered family and kept her own counsel.

"I didn't know he was here," he said.

"Poor man! he seems to be feeling lonely."

Pavel made no reply.

"Why, don't you think he does?"

"What matters it whether I do or not," he said, lightly.

"You haven't a bit of heart, Pasha."

He would not be drawn into conversation, treating everything she said with an inscrutable, somewhat patronising flippancy that nettled her. At last he said he was going out.

"'Looking up old chums' again?" she asked. "And does it mean that you are going to dine out once more?"

"I'll try not to, mother," he answered, with a fond smile in his bright, aggressive eyes.

His small slender figure, beautifully erect, and his upward-tending, frank features haunted her long after he left. She felt like a jealous bride. Otherwise he kept her thoughts tinged with sunshine. A great attachment on quite new terms had sprung up between mother and son since his arrival. At the same time he seemed to belong to a world which she was at a loss to make out. Nor did he appear disinclined to talk of his life in St. Petersburg—a subject upon which she was continually plying him with questions. The trouble was that the questions that beset her mind could no more be formulated than a blind man can formulate his curiosity as to colour. Moreover, all these questions seemed to come crowding upon her when Pavel was away and to vanish the moment she set eyes on him. She told herself that he belonged to a different generation from hers, that it was the everlasting case of "fathers and sons." But this only quickened her jealousy of the "sons" and her despair at being classed with the discarded generation. And the keener her jealousy, the deeper was her interest in Pasha.

CHAPTER XII.

A BEWILDERING ENCOUNTER.

WHEN Pavel was in St. Petersburg Anna Nicolayevna had missed him only occasionally. Now that he was with her his absences were a continuous torture to her. On the present occasion she sought diversion in a visit to Princess Chertogoff where she expected to hear something about the mysterious prisoner. Princess Chertogoff was a lame, impoverished noblewoman whose daughter was married to the assistant-procureur. In higher circles she was looked down upon as a social outcast, so that Anna Nicolayevna's visits to her had a surreptitious character and something of the charm of forbidden fruit. Pavel's mother was fond of the stir her appearance produced in houses of this kind. The curious part of it was that the impecunious princess was one of the very few persons in the world whose presence irritated her. It seemed as though this irritation had a peculiar attraction for her.

It was an early hour in the afternoon. She was received in the vestibule by Hélène, the assistant-procureur's wife, with an outburst of kisses and caresses which had something to do with the young woman's expecting to become a mother. Rising in the background was the hostess, Lydia Grigorievna Chertogova (Chertogoff) and her gorgeous crutches. She was large, dark, and in spite of her made-over gowns, imposingly handsome. Aware of the fantastic [104] majesty which these crutches gave her stalwart form, she paraded her defect as she did her beautiful dark eyes. At this moment it seemed as though the high-polished ebony crutches joined her in beaming at the sight of the distinguished visitor. Hélène, a small woman of twenty-four, usually compact as a billiard ball, was beginning to resemble an over-ripe apple.

When the three women found themselves in the drawing room Lydia Grigorievna lost no time in turning the conversation on the arrested Nihilist. Her son-in-law had carefully abstained from opening his mouth on the subject, yet she talked about it authoritatively, with an implication of reserved knowledge of still graver import, but Hélène gave her away.

"Woldemar would not speak about it," she complained, reverently. "'An affair of state,' he said. You can't get a single word out of him." She exulted in the part he was playing as an exterminator of the enemies of the Czar, and in the air-castles she was building as to the promotion to which the present case was to pave his way.

"But what do they want, those scamps?" Lydia Grigorievna resumed, in soft, pampered accents. "Would they have us live without a Czar? I should have them cut to pieces, the rogues. Is it possible that the government should be powerless to get rid of them? To think of a handful of striplings keeping cabinet ministers in a perpetual state of terror."

"Oh, nobody is really afraid of them," Hélène retorted, holding her face to the breeze which came in through an open window.

"But your husband is not yet a cabinet minister, dear," her mother said with a smile toward the countess.

"Oh, you're always suspecting me of something or other, *mamman*. I was not thinking of Woldemar at all." [105]

The charm of her presence, the appealing charm of a pretty young woman about to become a mother, added itself to the tenderness and mystery of spring. Lydia Grigorievna addressed another smile to the countess, but Anna Nicolayevna dropped her glance. The princess went on raging at the revolutionists. In reality, however, that handful of striplings who "kept cabinet ministers in a perpetual state of terror" had stirred up a curiosity in her that sprang from anything but indignation or contempt. She was hankering for a specimen of their literature, of those publications the very handling of which was apt to bring death. Her thirst in this direction was all the keener because she felt sure that some of the Nihilist papers that had been confiscated at the arrest of the unknown man were upstairs in her son-in-law's desk.

"A constitution may be all very well in Germany or France," she said. "This is Russia, not Germany or France or England, thank God. Yet those wretches will go around stirring up discontent. On my way home from Moscow last winter I heard a passenger say that if we had less bribery and more liberty and popular education we would be as good as any nation in Western Europe. I knew at once he was a Nihilist. You can tell one by the first word he utters. I confess I was afraid to sit near him. He had grey side-whiskers, but maybe they were just stuck on. Oh, I should show them no mercy."

She was all flushed and ill at ease. She received no encouragement. Her sugared enunciation and the false ring of what she said grated on her hearer's nerves. Anna Nicolayevna listened in silence. The lame princess was a sincere woman coated with a layer of insincerity. But the countess thought her the embodiment of affectation and hated her, [106] bizarre beauty, enunciation, altered gowns, crutches and all.

Lydia Grigorievna was interrupted by the appearance of the assistant-procureur himself. He was tall and frail with a long straight straw-coloured mane and pontifical gestures. His figure made one think of length in the abstract. As you looked at him he seemed to be continually growing in height. Hélène had fallen in love with him because he resembled the baron in a play she had seen in Moscow.

"I've just looked in to bid you good afternoon, countess," he said. "I saw your carriage through the window. But unfortunately—*business before pleasure*." It was one of two or three English phrases which he kept for occasions of this character and which he mispronounced with great self-confidence.

When Anna Nicolayevna got into the street she felt as though she had emerged from the suffocating atmosphere of some criminal den. In the May breeze, however, and at sight of the river her spirits rose. She dismissed her carriage. When she reached the macadamised bank and caught the smell of the water it was borne in upon her afresh that it was spring. She had passed this very spot, in a sleigh only a short while ago, it seemed. Lawns and trees had been covered with snow then; all had been stiff with the stiffness of death; whereas now all was tenderly alive with verdure and bloom, and wild-flowers smiled upon her at every turn. Here it struck her as though spring had just been born; born in full attire overnight. Flushed and radiant, with her rusty chin in the air and her flat chest slightly thrown out, spinning her parasol, she was briskly marching along, a broad streak of water to the right of her, a row of orchards to the left. The river beamed. From somewhere underneath she heard the clanking of chains of lumber-horses, accompanied by the [107] yell of boys. The greased wooden screws of a receding cable-ferry were squirming in the air like two erect snakes of silver; the brass buttons of a soldier-passenger burned like a column of flames. All this and the lilac-laden breeze and Anna Nicolayevna's soul were part of something vast, swelling with light and joy. But the breath of spring is not all joy. Nature's season of love is a season of yearning. One feels like frisking and weeping at once. Spring was with us a year ago, but the interval seems many years. It is like revisiting one's home after a long absence: the scenes of childhood are a source of delight and depression at once. It is like hearing a long forgotten song: the melody, however gay, has a

dismal note in it. Anna Nicolayevna had not been out many minutes when she began to feel encompassed by an immense melancholy to which her heart readily responded. There was a vague longing in the clear blue sky, in the gleaming water, in the patches of grass on either side of the public promenade, in the distant outlines across the river, but above all in the overpowering freshness of the afternoon air. The travail of an unhappy soul seemed to be somewhere nearby. A look of loneliness came into her eyes. She was burning to see Pavel, to lay bare her soul to him.

When a passing artisan in top-boots and with glass buttons in his waistcoat reverently took off his flat cap she returned the salute with motherly fervour and slackened her pace to a more dignified gait. “I’m respected and loved by the people,” she mentally boasted to Pavel.

Arrived at the bridge, she paused to hand a twenty-copeck piece to a blind beggar who sat on the ground by the tollman’s booth. He apparently recognised her by the way her gloved hand put the coin in his hand. She had given him [1089] alms as long as she could remember, and usually he made no more impression on her than the lamp-posts she passed. This time, however, it came back to her how her mother used to send her out of their carriage with some money for him. She paused to look at him and to listen to his song. She recalled him as a man of thirty or forty with thick flaxen hair. Now he was gray and bald. “Great heavens! how time does fly!” she exclaimed in her heart, feeling herself an old woman. The blind man seemed to be absorbed in his song. All blind beggars look alike and they all seem to be singing the same doleful religious tune, yet this man, as he sat with his eyes sealed and his head leaned against the parapet, gave her a novel sensation. He was listening to his own tones, as if they came from an invisible world, like his own, but one located somewhere far away.

Anna Nicolayevna gave him a ruble and passed on. Followed by the beggar’s benedictions, she made to turn into the street which formed the continuation of the bridge, when an approaching flour truck brought her to a halt. Besides several sacks of meal the waggon carried a cheap old trunk, and seated between the trunk and the driver was—Pavel; Pavel uncouthly dressed in the garb of an artisan. His rudimentary beard was covered with dust; his legs, encased in coarse grimy topboots, were dangling in the air. The visor of his flat cap was pushed down over his eyes, screening them from the red afternoon sun which sparkled and glowed in the glass buttons of his vest. It certainly was Pavel. Anna Nicolayevna was panic-stricken. She dared not utter his name.

The toll paid, the truck moved on. The countess followed her son with her eyes, until a cab shut him out of view, and [1090] then she remained standing for some time, staring at the cab. “What does it all mean?” she asked herself with sickening curiosity. Finally her eye went to the water below. She gazed at its rippling stretches of black and masses of shattered silver; at a woman slapping a heap of wash with a wash-beater, at a long raft slowly gliding toward the bridge. “Is he disguised? What does it all mean? Was it really Pasha?”

Doubt dawned in her mind. In her eagerness to take another look at the man on the truck she raised her eyes. After waiting for some moments she saw the waggon with the two men as it appeared and forthwith disappeared at the other end of the bridge. The thought of the arrested man stunned her. Was Pavel a Nihilist? The image of her son had assumed a new, a forbidding expression.

The revolutionists moved about on the verge of martyrdom, and as the mere acquaintance with one of their number meant destruction, the imagination painted them as something akin to living shadows, as beings whose very touch brought silence and darkness. People dared not utter the word “Nihilist” or “revolutionist” aloud. Anna Nicolayevna belonged to the privileged few, but at this moment she dreaded so much as to think of her son by these ghastly names. It now appeared to Anna Nicolayevna that all through her call at Lydia Grigorievna’s she had had a presentiment of an approaching calamity. She took the first cab that came along.

“As fast as you can drive,” she said.

The moment Anna Nicolayevna got home she inquired whether Pavel was in his room, and when the porter said that his Highness had not been back since he had left, in the morning, a fresh gust of terror smote her heart and brain. She stole into his room. On the table lay a German pamphlet on Kant and a fresh number of the *Russian Messenger*, [1091] the ultra-conservative magazine published in Moscow. In several places the leaves were cut. A Nihilist was the last person in the world one would expect to read this organ of Panslavists. What Anna Nicolayevna did not know was that the cut pages of the conservative magazine, which Pavel had received from St. Petersburg the day before, contained a hidden revolutionary message. Here and there a phrase, word, or a single letter, was marked, by means of an inkstain, abrasion or what looked like the idle penciling of a reader, these forming half a dozen consecutive sentences.

Anna Nicolayevna was perplexed and her perplexity gave her a new thrill of hope. She was in a quiver of impatience to see her son and have it all out.

The dinner hour came round and Pavel was not there. She could not eat. Every little while she paused to listen for a ring of the door bell. She sent a servant to his room to see if he had not arrived unheard. He had not.

The other people at table were Kostia, in huge red shoulder-straps which made his well-fitting uniform look too large for him; Kostia’s old tutor, a powerful looking German with a bashful florid face, and the countess’ own old governess, an aged Frenchwoman with a congealed smile on her bloodless lips. This restlessness of the countess when Pavel was slow in coming was no news to them, but this time she seemed to feel particularly uneasy. Silence hung over them. The Frenchwoman’s dried-up smile turned to a gleam of compassion. The German ate timidly. This man’s services had practically ceased when Kostia entered the cadet corps, but Anna Nicolayevna retained him in the house for his quiet piety. She had a feeling that so far as the intelligent classes were concerned the simple forms of Protestantism [1092] were more compatible with religious sincerity than were the iron-bound formalities of her native church. So, with her heart thirsting for spiritual interest, she found intense pleasure in her theological conversations with this well-read, narrow-minded, honest Lutheran, whose religious convictions she envied.

CHAPTER XIII.

A GENDARME'S SISTER.

WHEN Pavel told his mother that he was going out he expected to meet Makar, who had been in Miroslav for the past four days. Once again he was going to plead with him to give up his scheme. The affair kept Pavel in bad humour, but that morning his mind was occupied by the thought that there was an interesting meeting in store for him. In the evening he was to make the acquaintance of Clara Yavner, the heroine of the Pievakin "demonstration."

On his way down the spacious corridor he was stopped by Onufri, his cheeks still hollower and his drooping moustache still longer and considerably greyer than of yore. Pavel had once tried to make a convert of him, but found him "too stupid for abstract reasoning." Onufri was polishing the floor. As Pavel came past he faced half way about and gave him a stern look from under his bushy eyebrows.

"They've pinched a gentleman, the blood-guzzlers." Saying which he fell to dancing on his foot-cushions again.

"What do you mean?" Pavel asked, turning white as he paused.

"You know what I mean, sir. You know you do," answered Onufri, going on with his work.

"Is it true? Who made the arrest? Gendarmes?"

"That's it. I wouldn't bother your Highness if the police'd nabbed a common crook, would I?" [113]

The servant bent on his young master a long look of sympathetic reproach, adding under his breath:

"You had better give it all up, sir. Better let it go to the devil."

"Give up what? What on earth are you prating about, Onufri?"

A few minutes later, while Pavel was destroying some papers in his room, the door swung open and in came Onufri. The old man burst into tears and dropped to his knees.

"Take pity, sir," he wailed, kissing Pavel's fingers. "You've played with fire long enough, sir. If they put you in prison, the murderers, and sent you away it would kill her Highness, your mother."

"Get up, Onufri. I have no patience with you just now, really I haven't."

"It's bad enough when your Highness takes chances in another town, but if you're mixed up in this here thing, sir ——"

"I'm not mixed up 'in this here thing.' Don't bother me. Come, get up. Up with you, now. There is a good fellow!"

The old hussar obeyed distressedly.

Instead of going to the place where he expected to see Makar, Pavel went to the house of Major Safonoff, the gendarme officer, an uncomfortable-looking frame building across the river. As he approached it, Masha, the major's sister, who stood at a second story window at that moment, apparently waiting for somebody, burst out beckoning to him and stamping her feet. Her excited gesticulations drew the attention of a knife-grinder and two little girls. Pavel [114] dropped his eyes. "She is a perfect idiot," he said to himself in a rage, "and I am another one. The idea of taking up with such a creature!"

"Didn't you torture me!" she greeted him on the staircase. "I thought my heart was going to snap. Don't be uneasy. I have dismissed our servant. There is nobody around." When they reached the low-ceiled parlor, she sank her voice and said solemnly, yet with a certain note of triumph: "He was arrested at four o'clock yesterday on the railway tracks. The gendarme office had information that he was in the habit of taking walks there. I happened to be away—think of it! At a time like that I was away. Else I should have let you know at once, of course. Anyhow, he's there."

"You say it as if it was something to rejoice in," Pavel remarked, disguising his rage. "It's quite a serious matter, Maria Gavrilovna."

Mlle. Safonoff stared. "But we'll get him out. Why, are you afraid we mayn't? I see you're depressed and that makes me miserable, too. Really it does."

"Do I look depressed? Well, I must confess I rather am. It's no laughing matter, Maria Gavrilovna," he said, flushing.

"Oh, well, if you are going to talk like that. That is I myself haven't the slightest doubt about it. Only you frighten me so. If this thing is going to last another week it will drive me mad." Her childish eyes shone with tears. "Why should you take such a gloomy view of it? I must say it's cruel of you, Pavel Vassilyevich. Everything is just as I expected. He is as good as free, I assure you."

Pavel answered, by way of consoling himself as well as her: "Well, maybe I do take it too hard. Our chances seem [115] to be good, and—well, we must get him out. That's all there is to it."

"Of course we must. Now I like you, Boulatoff. We must and we will, and when the story is published—oh, I do wish we could get out special proclamations!—anyhow, won't it make a stir!" She paused and then resumed, in a new burst of frankness, "I know what makes you uneasy about me. The great trouble with me is my lack of tact, isn't it? If I had that I would be all right. That's what worries you about me in this affair, isn't it, now? You're afraid I may make a mess of the whole business. I know you are. Well, and I don't blame you, either. The Safonoffs have never been distinguished for their heads. When it happens to be a matter of hearts, we hold our own, but brains, well—." She gave a laugh. "I tell you what, Boulatoff, I'm afraid of you, and I don't care to bear the brunt of this important affair. Anyhow, I want you to keep an eye on me. I'll do all you want me to, but you must take the responsibility off my shoulders, else I'll go crazy. What makes you smile? You think I'm crazy already, don't you?"

"I wasn't smiling at all. So far you have managed things beautifully. I confess I'm getting impatient. Well, I do feel wretched, Maria Gavrilovna."

She grasped his hand, shook it silently and whispered: "Don't be uneasy. We shall win."

When Safonoff came home at the lunch hour he told of the excitement at the gendarme office. His manner toward Boulatoff was a non-committal mixture which seemed to say: "You and I understand each other perfectly, don't we? Still, if you think you can get me to call a spade a spade or to help you you are mistaken."

His compact, well-fed figure had the shape of a plum. He was perpetually mimicking somebody or chuckling and his [116] speech was full of gaps, many of his sentences being rendered in dumb show.

"My chief may get in trouble for having ordered the arrest too soon," he said. "We were to let the prisoner—" (he brandished his hand to represent a man going around at large) "for some time, so as to let him show us with whom he is acquainted. But my chief—" (he struck an attitude meant to caricature a decrepit, coughing, old fellow) "was all of a tremble for fear the canary-bird might take wing. You see he had never arrested a political before. You should have seen our men when we took that chap on the railroad track. They were more frightened than he, I assure you, prince. They thought he was going to—" (he aimed an imaginary dagger at Pavel and burst into laughter). "Monsieur Unknown

is certainly no coward whatever else he may be. You should have seen the look of surprise and contempt he gave me!”

Pavel beamed while Masha’s face wore a pained expression. “It’s time you had left this nasty business of yours, Andrusha,” she said.

When Andrusha reached the assistant procureur’s part in the case he sketched off a pompous imbecile. There was no love lost between the public attorney and the gendarme officers, so Safonoff described, with many a gurgle of merriment, how, during the attempted examination of the prisoner, Zendorf, the assistant procureur (he burlesqued an obeisance as the epitome of snobbishness) had tried to impress his uniformed rivals with his intellectual and social superiority.

“You see, my chief is a rough and ready sort of customer. Whatever else he may be, frills and fakes are not in his line. So he went right at it. ‘Speak up,’ he squeaked at the prisoner, ‘speak up, or I’ll have your mouth opened for you.’ So Zendorf called him gently to order and fixed his dignified peepers at the prisoner. He expected to cast some sort of spell over him, I suppose, but it was no go. As to me, I was just choking. As bad luck would have it I took it into my head at that moment that the best way to make that fellow talk would be to have his armpits tickled till he roared. Well, I had to leave the room to have my giggle out.” [148]

Safonoff was indifferent to his sister’s revolutionary ventures because he never vividly realised the danger she incurred. His mind retained the most lifelike impressions, but its sensitiveness was of the photographic kind; it was confined to actual experiences. He had no imagination for the future. He was an easy-going man, incapable of fear. People often arrived at the conclusion that he was “a fool after all.” But then there are fools who are endowed with a keen perception and a lively sense of character.

Speaking of the warden of the jail, Safonoff impersonated a cringing, hand-kissing, crafty time-server. He had never met a convert Jew or convert Pole who was not an adventurer and an all-round knave, he said, and Rodkevitch was the most typical convert Pole he had ever come across. The sight of money took his breath away, gave him the vertigo, made his eyes start from their sockets. Rustle a crisp paper ruble in his ear and he will faint away.

“He’s a candidate for Siberia anyhow and he needs money to pull him out of some of the roguish schemes he is tangled up in. The contractors who furnish his prisoners sand for flour and garbage for potatoes are his partners in some of his outside swindles also. Do you understand, prince?” The question was put with special emphasis, which Pavel interpreted as a direct hint at the possibility of bribing the warden. [149]

It occurred to Boulatoff that Makar’s luggage was quite likely to contain some incriminating papers or other things that might aggravate the case. To fear this in view of Makar’s notorious absent-mindedness was quite reasonable. But this was not all. He had been bent upon making his arrest as important in the eyes of the Third Section as possible, and Pavel was almost certain he had left something in his lodgings on purpose. “You never know what you are at with a crazy, obstinate bull-dog like that,” he thought in a qualm of anxiety.

When Safonoff had gone Pavel wrote a note to his imprisoned friend asking for the address of his lodgings.

“Can you get this to him, and an answer brought back?” he demanded of Mlle. Safonoff in a peremptory tone.

“I think so. My aunt will probably get it through. I am almost sure of it, in fact.”

“There you are. You’re *almost* sure. Was this enough to let a man put himself in the hands of the Third Section?”

Mlle. Safonoff hurried out of the house in dumb dismay. After an interval of less than an hour, which to Pavel seemed a year, she burst into the parlour, accompanied by an older woman, whom she introduced as her aunt, Daria Stepanovna Shubeyko. Both were breathless with excitement. They had the desired address, the sum Makar owed his landlady and another note to the landlady. Pavel’s heart swelled with joy and gratitude, but he did not show it.

“Very well,” he said, with a preoccupied scowl. “And now for that trunk of his.”

The two women went on to describe, continually interrupting each other, their plans for setting Makar free, but Pavel checked them. [150]

“We’ll discuss it all afterwards,” he said. “What we need at this minute is a coarse suit of clothes, something to make a fellow look like a workman or porter. We must clear his room before his landlady has notified the police of his disappearance.” The costume was brought by Masha. When Pavel emerged from the major’s bedroom transformed into a laborer, Masha’s aunt applauded so violently that he could not resist gnashing his teeth at her.

“Excuse me, but I’ve never seen a real man of action before,” she pleaded. “Now I feel newly born, really I do. I tell you what, Boulatoff, I’ll go with you. In case of trouble I may be of some use, you know. We can’t afford to let an active man like you perish.”

“But then if you perish,” Pavel answered gayly, “there won’t be anybody to arrange that escape.”

“That’s true,” she replied forlornly. She was a healthy, good-looking woman with a smile so exultantly silly that Pavel could not bear to look at it. Every time that smile of hers brightened her full-blooded face, he dropped his eyes.

There was the risk of his being recognised by somebody in the street. Then, too, Makar’s lodgings might have been discovered by the police and made a trap of. The errand was full of risks, but this only stimulated a feeling in which Pavel’s passion for this sort of adventure was coupled with a desire to vindicate himself before his own conscience by sharing in Makar’s dangers.

The trip was devoid of all adventure, however. Even his meeting with his mother was lost on him. He was sincerely contemplating the blind beggar at that moment. [151]

Makar’s landlady was a garrulous Jewess. When she learned that her lodger had been taken ill at the house of a friend and that the workingman had been sent for his things and to pay the bill, she launched out into an effusion of bad Russian that taxed Pavel’s patience sorely. She exacted the address of Makar’s friend, so as to send the patient some of her marvellous preserves. The prince left with the trunk on his shoulder—an excellent contrivance for screening his face from view—but it proved too heavy, and when he came across a truckman who agreed to take him and his load part of the way to his destination he was glad to be relieved of the burden.

While he was in the next room, shedding his disguise, Masha’s aunt bombarded him with impatient shouts and giggles. When he had opened the trunk at last she insisted upon helping him examine its contents, whereupon she handled each article she lifted out as she might a holy relic; and when the trunk proved to contain nothing of a compromising quality even Pavel felt disappointed. Mme. Shubeyko overwhelmed him with questions, one of which was:

“Look here, Boulatoff, why shouldn’t the people rise and put an end to the rule of despotism at once? What on earth are we waiting for?”

“If the people were all like you they would have done so long ago,” he answered, with a hearty laugh. He warmed to her in an amused way and felt like calling her auntie; only that smile of hers continued to annoy him.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNDERGROUND MIROSLAV.

PAVEL dined at the major's house. He was in high spirits, but the hour of his expected meeting with the girl of the Pievakin demonstration was drawing near, and his impatience was getting keener every minute. He reached the place, a little house occupied by a government clerk named Orlovsky and his mother, ahead of time.

"Your name is Boulatoff, is it not?" asked the host, his square Slavic nose curling up with the joy of his welcome. Then, crouching before the absurdest looking samovar Pavel had ever seen, he explained that his mother had gone to his sister's for the night, as she did very often to avoid the noise of his gatherings. In the centre of a bare round table lay an enormous loaf of rye bread and a great wedge of sugar, near which stood an empty candy box, apparently used as a sugar bowl. Pavel divined that at least one-half of Orlovsky's salary was spent on the tea, bread and butter on which his guests regaled themselves while they talked liberty.

"I'm only a private of the revolution," Orlovsky said, trying to blow two charcoals into flame until his face glowed like the coals and his eyes looked bleared. "But if there is anything I can do command me." At his instance the two addressed each other in the familiar diminutives of their Christian names—"Pasha" and "Aliosha." While Aliosha was [123] struggling with his smoking samovar, Pasha set to work cutting up the sugar.

"Wait till you have seen our crowd," said Aliosha, flicking the open side of an old top-boot at the samovar by way of bellows. "I tell you Miroslav is destined to play a prominent part in the liberation of Russia. We have some tip-top fellows and girls. Of course, we're mere privates in the ranks of the revolution."

But Pavel's mind was on the speaker's sackcoat of checkered grey, which was so tight on him that his prominent thighs were bulging out and the garment seemed on the point of bursting. The sight of it annoyed Pavel in the same way as Mme. Shubeyko's smile had done, and he asked Orlovsky why he should not unbutton himself, to which the other answered, half in jest, half in earnest, that he was getting so fat that he was beginning to look "like a veritable bourgeois, deuce take it."

"But it makes a fellow uncomfortable to look at you," Pavel shouted, irascibly.

"Ah, but that's a question of personal liberty, old man," Orlovsky returned in all seriousness. "What right have you, for instance, to impose upon me rules as to how I am to wear my coat?"

"That right which limits the liberty of one man by the liberty of other men. But this is all foolishness, Aliosha. Upon my word it is. The days of hair-splitting are dead and buried. There is plenty of work to do—living, practical work."

Orlovsky leaped up from his samovar, a fishy look in his eye, and grasping Pavel's hand he pressed it hard and long. Pavel felt in the presence of the most provincial Nihilism he had ever come across.

Other members of the Circle came. They all knew the governor's nephew by sight. Also that he was [123] "a sympathiser," yet his presence here was a stirring surprise to most of them, although they strove to conceal it. One man, Orlovsky's immediate superior in office, shook Pavel's hand with a grimace which seemed to say: "You're Prince Boulatoff and I am only an ordinary government official, but then all titles and ranks will soon go to smash." A Jewish gymnasium boy with two bubbling beads for eyes made Pavel's acquaintance with a preoccupied air, as if in a hurry to get down to more important business. His small, deep-seated eyes spurted either merriment or gloom. Elkin had said there was not enough of them to make one decent-sized eye, and dubbed him "Cyclops," which had since been the boy's revolutionary nickname.

Orlovsky's superior had a vast snow-white forehead that gave his face a luminous, aureole-lit effect, but he was an incurable liar. He was one of the most devoted members of the Circle, however, and recently he had sold all his real estate, turning over the proceeds to the party. As he seated himself a telegraph operator in a dazzling uniform sat down by his side, saying, in a whisper:

"That was an affected look of yours a moment ago."

"When? What are you talking about?" the man with the sainted forehead asked, colouring.

"You know what. You made a face as if you were not glad to see Boulatoff. You know you were, weren't you, now?"

"I confess I was."

"Now I like you, old boy. All that is necessary is to take one's self in hand. Nothing like self-chastisement."

"Cyclops" bent over to an army captain with a pair of grandiose side-whiskers and said something in order to hear [124] himself address a Gentile and an army officer in the familiar "thou." Another young Jew, a red-headed gymnasium boy named Ginsburg, sat close to the lamp, reading a book with near-sighted eyes, the yellow light playing on his short-clipped red hair. His father was a notorious usurer and the chief go-between in the governor's bribe-taking and money-lending transactions. Young Ginsburg robbed his father industriously, dedicating the spoils to the socialist movement.

The expectation that that hazy, featureless image which had resided in his mind for the past five years would soon stand forth in the flesh and with the mist lifted made Pavel restless. When a girl with short hair and very sparse teeth told him that Clara Yavner was sure to be around in less than fifteen minutes, his heart began to throb. The girl's name was Olga Alexandrovna Andronova (Andronoff). She was accompanied by her fiancé, a local judge—a middle-aged man with a mass of fluffy hair. The judge was perceptibly near-sighted, like Ginsburg, only when he screwed up his eyes he looked angry, whereas the short-sightedness of the red-headed young man had a beseeching effect. The two girls were great friends, and Olga spoke of her chum in terms of persuasive enthusiasm. That Boulatoff had special reasons to be interested in Clara Yavner she was not aware.

"What has become of her?" she said, looking at the door impatiently.

"You are adding fuel to my curiosity, Olga Alexandrovna," Pavel said. "I am beginning to feel somewhat as I once did in the opera, when I was waiting to see Patti for the first time."

"And when she came out you were not disappointed, were you?" Olga asked, exposing her sparse teeth in a broad, [125] honest smile.

"No," he laughed.

"Well, neither will you be this time."

Pavel said to himself humorously: "I am so excited I am afraid I shall fall in love with that girl. But then predictions

seldom come true.” Then he added: “And now that I predict it won’t, it will.”

When she came at last he said inwardly: “That’s what she looks like, then! She certainly does not seem to be a fool whatever else she may be.” That was what people usually said upon their first meeting with her: “She seems to be no fool.” She was a fair-complexioned Jewish girl of good height. To those unfamiliar with the many types of her race she might have looked Teutonic. To her own people her face was characteristically Jewish, of the blond, hazel-eyed variety. It was a rather small face, round and with a slightly flattened effect between eyes and mouth that aroused interest. Her good looks were due to a peculiar impression of intelligence and character to which this effect contributed and to the picturesqueness of her colouring—healthy white flesh, clear and firm, set off by an ample crown of fair hair and illuminated by the brown light of intense hazel eyes. She had with her a two-year-old little girl, her sister’s, and accompanying the two was Elkin, from whose manner as he entered the crowded room it was easy to see, first, that he had told Mlle. Yavner of the revolutionary “general” he was going to introduce her to; second, that he was the leader of the Circle and the connecting link between it and revolutionary generals.

“I tried to steal away from her,” she said to Olga, meaning the little girl, “but she ran after us and filled the streets [1126] with her cries.” She smiled—an embarrassed smile which made her intelligent face look still more intelligent.

When Boulatoff was introduced to her, by Elkin, she blushed slightly. He watched her with keen curiosity. At the same time the judge’s fiancée was watching him, in the fond hope that he would indorse her opinion of her friend. When Clara averted her face, while speaking to somebody, her features became blurred in Pavel’s mind, and he sought another look at her. Whether Elkin had told her of the effect her “speech” during the Pievakin scene had had on him he had no knowledge.

Some of the men in the gathering made a point of ignoring the little privileges of the sex, treating the girls “as human beings, not as dolls,” but Clara and Olga made a joke of it. When Orlovsky offered the judge’s fiancée a chair next to Clara’s she thanked him much as an “unemancipated” girl would have done; whereupon Mlle. Yavner shook her finger at her, saying merrily:

“You’re getting conservative, Olga. You had better look out.”

The Circle was a loose, informal organisation. There were no fixed rules or ceremonies for the admission of members nor anything like regularly elected officers. Nor, indeed, did the members practise formal communism among themselves, although the property of one was to a considerable extent the property of all.

The gathering to-night was naturally larger than usual, owing to the great news of the day. No one except Pavel knew anything about the arrested man, each wondering whether the others did. To betray inquisitiveness, however, would have been unconspiratorlike, so as they sat about, whispering, in twos or threes, they were at once trying [1127] to suppress their curiosity and to draw each other out.

The telegraph operator and Orlovsky’s superior left early in the evening, but there soon came two other members, a sergeant of the captain’s command and a gawky seminarist with a trick of drawing in his neck and throwing out his Adam’s apple when he laughed.

The sergeant took a seat beside his officer and the two fell into conversation about their regiment, while the theological student at once set to plying Pavel with questions. Elkin, in an embroidered Little-Russian shirt, sat smoking a pipe and smiling non-committally. Every little while he would remove the pipe from his mouth, take a grave look at the theologian and resume his pipe and his smile.

The little girl sat on the captain’s lap, quietly playing with his sword until she fell asleep. When Clara beheld the officer struggling to keep his luxurious side-whiskers from waking the child, she took her niece in her arms and carried her, with noiseless kisses, toward the door.

“I’ll soon be back. It isn’t far,” she whispered to Orlovsky, declining his assistance.

The men followed her out of the room with fond glances. More than half of them were in love with her.

When she got back, somewhat short of breath, Boulatoff was describing the general feeling in the universities and among working people. His talk was vague. His rolling baritone rang dry. And now his grip on the subject was weakened still further by the reappearance of the girl in whom, during the first few minutes, he instinctively felt a rival centre of interest. No sooner, however, had the seminarist attacked the party press than the prince became furious [1128] and made a favourable impression. Once or twice he fell into Zachar’s manner and even used several of his arguments. The seminarist urged his objections chiefly because he wanted to prove to himself and to the others that he was a man of convictions and not one to quail before a revolutionary “general.” But Pavel took him seriously. Once when the seminarist attempted to interrupt him, Clara said, forlornly:

“He’s bound to be right. He’s just bound to be right.”

“Don’t cry,” said Cyclops. Several of the men laughed, and when Clara joined them their eyes betrayed her power over them. Nothing betrays your feelings toward another person more surely than the way you take his merriment.

The most important topic of the evening was a circular letter from the Executive Committee of the Will of the People, as Pavel’s party was called, as to the “preparatory work” that was to pave the way to a final uprising. The discussion was left to the judge, Elkin and Pavel. The gawky seminarist was silent, with an angry air which implied that the arguments one was compelled to follow here were exasperatingly beneath one’s criticism. The others listened spellbound, though some of them scarcely felt convinced. Ingrained in the consciousness of these was the idea of an abstract elemental giant, tremendous and immutable as the northern winter, of which the blind forces of the army were only a personified detail. That this giant should some day, in the near future, cease to be did not clearly appeal to their imagination. The boldness, therefore, with which the judge and Pavel spoke of these things greatly enhanced the fascination of their speeches.

Cyclops, a huge slice of rye bread in his hand, evidently had something to say, but did not know how. He was quoting history, blushing, sputtering, swallowing his own tongue, and finally he lost himself in a jumble of words. Elkin [1129] was just the reverse. He was so calm, so glib and so lucid of phrase that as long as his speech lasted one was involuntarily nodding assent; yet when it was over one did not seem to know exactly what he had said or whether he had had anything to say at all. At one point he and the judge locked horns and fought long and hard without clearly understanding each other, until they proved to be arguing on the same side of the issue. Orlovsky, who took it for granted that the theoretical discussion was beyond his mental powers, looked on with stupid admiration. “Here is a bunch of cracks for you!” his beaming face seemed to say.

In the course of a pause Clara whispered something to Olga.

“Why don’t you ask it then?” the short-haired girl answered, aloud.

Clara turned pale, as she began to speak. She went straight to the point, however, and presently cast off all restraint.

“All this is very well,” she said, referring to a certain passage in the circular letter, “provided the local authorities really desert the throne. But suppose they don’t, suppose they prove to be hardened conservatives, devoted slaves of the crown? It seems to me as if we were inclined to take things for granted—counting without the host, as it were.”

“Devoted to the crown!” said the gawky theologian. “The fact is that the high officials are a mere lot of self-seeking curs.”

“Exactly,” Pavel thundered, bringing his hands together enthusiastically.

Elkin removed the pipe from his mouth and bawled out: “Rats rather than curs, I should say; rats that are sure [1230] to forsake the ship of state the moment it shows signs of danger.”

The seminarist was annoyed at this attempt to steal the applause from him, but Boulatoff did not like Elkin’s manner and offered him no encouragement. This disarmed the seminarist’s opposition. From this moment on he listened to Pavel with friendly nods, as who should say: “Now you are hitting it; now you are talking sense!”

“Of course,” Pavel resumed, “the pamphlet means we should keep agitating until we are sure of our ground. There is a large liberal-minded class that does not stir merely because it is made up of a lot of cowards. These fellows will rally around our banner the moment the government begins to totter. As to the bureaucracy, it is so decayed, so worm-eaten, that all it knows at present is how to bend double for an increase of salary or promotion in rank. A lot of back-boneless flunkeys, that’s what they are. You don’t actually think they serve the Czar from principle?” he asked, addressing himself to Mlle. Yavner.

“The only principle they care for,” Elkin interposed, “is, ‘To the devil with all principles!’”

“Exactly,” Pavel assented, with some irritation.

“Yes,” the seminarist chimed in, “and when they hear the tocsin of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—”

“Liberty, Equality and Fiddlesticks!” Clara mimicked him, mildly, signing to him not to interrupt the speaker.

Pavel went on. He spoke at length, looking mostly at her. He was making an effort to convince her that in the event of a revolution the high officials would turn cowards, and her face seemed to be saying: “He’s the nephew of a governor, so he ought to know.”

When the yard windows were thrown open the bewhiskered captain sat down to the piano and struck up an old [1231] national tune, to the accompaniment of two male voices. The others continued their talk under cover of the music. Pavel made up his mind that the judge and Clara were the most level-headed members of the Circle, and decided to seek their coöperation in the business which had brought him to Miroslav. Only the judge was the more reposeful of the two, as well as incomparably the better informed. As a rule he was absorbed in his own logic, while Mlle. Yavner was jarred by every false note in others, nervously sensitive to all that went on about her, so that when Cyclops, for example, got tangled in his own verbosity her eyes would cloud up with vexation and she would come to his rescue, summing up his argument in a few clear, unobtrusive sentences. There was a glow of enthusiasm in her look which she was apparently struggling to suppress. Indeed, she was struggling to suppress some feeling or other most of the time. Her outward calm seemed to cover an interior of restlessness.

Pavel’s unbounded faith in the party instilled new faith into her. The great point was that he was a member of the aristocracy. If a man like him had his whole heart in the struggle, the movement was certainly not without foundation. Moreover, Boulatoff was close to the revolutionary centre, and he obviously spoke from personal knowledge. All sorts of questions worried her, many of which were answered at the present gathering, partly by herself, partly by others. The new era, when there would be neither poverty nor oppression, the enchanted era which had won her heart, loomed clearer than ever. At one moment as she sat listening, her blond hair gleaming golden in the lamplight, her face lit up by a look of keen intelligence, Pavel said to himself: “And this Jewish girl is the one who had the feeling and the courage [1232] to make that rumpus over Pievakin! If I became a revolutionist it was the result of gradual development, through the help of conditions, books, people; whereas this girl acted like one, and in the teeth of grave danger, too, purely on the spur of the moment and long before she knew there was any such thing as a revolutionary movement; acted like one while I was still a blind, hard-hearted milksop of a drone.” In the capital he knew a number of girls who were continually taking their lives in their hands and several of whom were like so many saints to him, but then Mlle. Yavner belonged to the realm of his home and his boyhood. What he regarded as an act of heroism on her part was hallowed by that sense of special familiarity and comprehensibility which clings to things like the old well that witnessed our childish games.

She made a very favourable impression on him. If he had been a formal candidate for her hand, come “bride-seeing,” he could not have studied her more closely than he did now. Indeed, so absorbed was he in her that once while she was speaking to him laughingly her words fell on a deaf ear because at that moment he was remarking to himself: “She laughs in a little rising scale, breaking off in a rocket.”

“There must be something in her, then,” he thought “which was the source of that noble feeling and of that courage.” He took to scanning her afresh, as though looking for a reflection of that something in her face, and as he looked at her and thought of the Pievakin “demonstration” it gave him pleasure to exaggerate her instrumentality in his own political regeneration.

Olga had relieved her fiancé at the piano, and later on when she, too, rose from the keyboard, Clara eagerly took [1233] her place. There was no life in Mlle. Yavner’s tones, but the impassioned sway of her head and form as she played told of a soul touched with ecstasy; told of the music which her fingers failed to evoke from the instrument. And the eyes of half a dozen love-stricken men added their rapture to the sounds.

Pavel listened to her melody and breathed the scented night air that came in from the little garden in the yard. He reflected that Clara might visit the warden’s house as a piano teacher. At this it came home to him that Makar was in prison, and that unless he escaped he was a lost man. He was seized with terror. The piano sang of a lonely ship, blue waves, and a starlit night, but to Pavel it spoke of his imprisoned friend and his own anguish. He joined in the chorus with ferocious ardour. His heart was crying for Makar’s liberation and for a thousand other things. When she left the piano stool he leaped up to her.

“Allow me to grasp your hand, Clara Rodionovna,” he said, as though thanking her for the merit of her playing. And then, all unmindful of comment, he drew her into a secluded corner and said vehemently:

“I wish also to tell you, Clara Rodionovna, that I have a special reason to be glad of knowing you; for if I have a right to be among good people it is you whom I have to thank for it.” A thick splash of crimson came into her face; but before

she had time to put her surprise into words, he poured forth the story of his awakening and how he had all these five years been looking forward to a meeting with her. As he spoke his face bore an expression of ecstatic, almost amorous grimness. The girl was taken by storm. She was literally dazed. An overwhelming, unspoken intimacy established itself between them on the spot.

Olga’s face was a blend of beaming triumph and tense perplexity. The men were making an effort to treat Boulatoff’s sally with discretion, as if it were a bit of revolutionary conspiracy and they knew enough to mind their own business.

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CHAPTER XV.

A WARNING.

IT was one o'clock when the assemblage broke up. They scattered over various sections of the town, Pavel going to his home in the Palace, while Clara, accompanied by Elkin and Orlovsky, set off in the direction of Paradise Town. But whatever the character of the district one was bound for, in their hearts there was the same feeling that they belonged to a higher life than did those who slept behind the closed shutters they were passing. This feeling made them think of their group as a world within a world. Their Circle was a magic one. Somewhere in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kieff, Odessa, Siberia, men and women were being slowly tortured, dying on the gallows; a group of brave people still at large—the mysterious Executive Committee—was doing things that thrilled the empire; and they, members of the Miroslav Circle, were the kin of those heroes. As they dispersed through the sleeping town each unconsciously remembered the organisation as so many superior beings dotting a population of human prose.

"He must be quite close to the Centre," Orlovsky said.

The other two made no answer. It struck Clara as sacrilege to talk of Boulatoff, whose fervent face was vivid before her at this minute. Particularly unbearable was the allusion to the prince to her because it was Orlovsky who made it. The stout government clerk was one of the men in love with her, while she often disliked him to abhorrence. She felt a sincere friendship for him, yet sometimes when he spoke she would be tempted to shut her ears and to gnash her teeth as people do when they hear a window pane scratched. This was one of her causeless hatreds with which she was perpetually struggling.

Orlovsky construed their irresponsiveness as a rebuke for his speaking of the revolutionary "centre" in the street; so he started to tell them about his mother. With Clara by his side his tongue would not rest. Not so Elkin, who nursed his love in morose silence. When they heard the whistle of a distant policeman and the answer of a watchman's rattle by way of showing that he had not fallen asleep on his post, Orlovsky raised his voice.

"She is getting more pious every day," he said, as though defying the invisible policeman to find anything seditious in his words.

Clara's mind was on Boulatoff. The strange avowal of the man whom she had never seen before save through the window of a princely carriage tingled through her veins in a medley of new-born exaltations. Boulatoff did seem to be close to the Executive Committee, and the sentiments of that wonderful body, voiced by this high-born young man, the nephew of the governor of Miroslav, had lit stirring images in her consciousness. Pavel stood out amid the other revolutionists of her acquaintance even as the whole Miroslav Circle did in the midst of the rest of her native town.

The interchange of signals between policeman and watchman which now and then sounded through the stillness of the night reminded her of the unknown man the gendarmes had arrested, of the hard glint of chains, of gallows. She wondered whether Elkin or Boulatoff knew anything about that man. She saw herself rapidly marching toward something at once terrible and divine. She was not the only one who followed this course—that was the great point. The kindest and best people in Miroslav, the best and the wisest in the land, and among them children of governors, of noblemen, were consecrated to that same something which was both terrible and luring. Her heart went out to her comrades known and unknown, and as she beheld a sleepy watchman curled up in the recess of his gateway, she exclaimed without words: "I'm going to die for you—for you and all the other poor and oppressed people in the world."

Here and there they passed an illuminated window or an open street door, through which they saw Jewish artisans at work. They saw the bent forms of Jewish tailors, they heard the hammer sounds of Jewish carpenters, tinsmiths, blacksmiths, silversmiths; yet all these made no impression upon her. There were about 50,000 Jews in Miroslav and as many as three-fourths of them were pinched, half-starved mechanics, working fourteen hours a day, and once or twice a week all night, to live on rye bread and oatmeal soup; yet they made no appeal to her sympathies, while the Gentiles who were huddled up in front of the gates she was passing did. The great Russian writers whose stories and songs had laid the foundation to her love of the masses dealt in Gentiles, not in Jews. Nekrasoff bewailed the misery of the Russian moujik, not of the common people of her own race. Turgeneff's sketches breathe forth the poetry of suffering in a Great-Russian village, not the tragedy and spiritual beauty of life among the toiling men and women of her own blood. She had never been in Great Russia, in fact; she had never seen those moujiks in the flesh. Those she had seen were the Little-Russian peasants, who came to Miroslav from the neighbouring villages. Her peasants, therefore, were so many literary images, each with the glamour which radiates from the pages of an adored author. This was the kind of "people" she had in mind when she thought of the *Will of the People*. The Jewish realities of which her own home was a part had nothing to do with this imaginary world of hers.

Clara's home was on a small square which was partly used as a cart-stand and in one corner of which, a short distance from Cucumber Market, squatted a policeman's hut. This was the district of a certain class of artisans and small tradesmen; of harness-makers, trunk-makers, wheelwrights; of dealers in tar, salt, herring, leaf tobacco, pipes, accordions, cheap finery. The air was pungent with a thousand strong odours. The peasants who brought their produce to market were here supplied with necessaries and trinkets. The name of the big market-place extended to the entire locality, and Paradise Town was just beyond the confines of that locality.

The square for which Clara was bound was called Little Market. A gate in the centre of one of its four sides, flanked by goose-yards on one side and by a row of feed-shops and harness-shops on the other, led into a deep and narrow court, known as Boyko's. At this moment the gate was closed, its wicket, held ajar by a chain, showing black amid the grey gloom of the square.

As Clara and her two escorts came in sight of the spot they saw a man sitting on a low wooden bench near the gate.

"Somebody is waiting for me," she said gravely. She thanked them and bade them good-bye and they went their several ways.

The man on the bench rose and went to meet her. As he walked toward her he leaned heavily on his stout, knotty cane—a pose which she knew to be the result of embarrassment. He was a tall, athletic fellow in a long spring overcoat, a broad-brimmed felt hat sloping backward on his head. He bore striking resemblance to Clara; the same picturesque flatness in the middle part of the face, the same expression. Only his hair was dark, and his eyes and mouth were milder

than hers. They looked like brother and sister and, indeed, had been brought up almost as such, but they were only cousins. His name was Vladimir Vigdoroff. His family was the better-to-do and the worldlier of the two. When he was a boy of four and he envied certain other two boys because each of them had a little sister, and he had not, he had made one of his cousin. It was his father who subsequently paid for Clara's education.

"You here?" Clara said quietly.

He nodded, to say yes, with playful chivalry. They reached the bench in silence, and then he said in a decisive, business-like voice which she knew to be studied:

"I expected to have a talk with you, Clara. That's why I waited so long. But it's too late. Can I see you to-morrow?"

"Certainly. Will you drop in in the afternoon?"

He had evidently expected to be detained. He lingered in silence, and she had not the heart to say good-bye. From a neighbouring lane came the buzz-buzz of a candlestick-maker's lathe. They were both agitated. She had been looking forward to this explanation for some time. They divined each other perfectly. As they now stood awkwardly without being able either to speak or to part, their minds were in reality saying a good deal to each other.

Until recently she had made her home in her uncle's house more than she had in her father's. Her piano stood there, her uncle's gift, for which there was no room in the basement occupied by her parents. She had kept her books there, received her girl friends and often slept there. But since her initiation into the secret society she had gradually removed her headquarters to her parents' house, and her visits at Vladimir's home had become few and far between. Clara had once offered him an underground leaflet, whereupon he had nearly fainted with fright at sight of it. He had burned the paper in terror and indignation, and then, speaking partly like an older brother and partly like the master of the house which she was compromising, he had commanded her never again to go near people who handled literature of that sort. Accustomed to look up to him as her intellectual guide and authority, as the most brilliant man within her horizon, she had listened to his attack upon Nihilism and Nihilists with meek reserve, but the new influences she had fallen under had proven far stronger than his power over her. To relieve him from the hazards of her presence in the house she had little by little removed her books and practically discontinued her visits. In the event of her getting into trouble with the gendarmes her own family was too old-fashioned and uneducated, in a modern sense, to be suspected of complicity. As to Vladimir, he missed her keenly, as did everybody else in the house, but her estrangement had a special sting to it, too, one unconnected with their mutual attachment as cousins who had grown up together. Clara's consideration for his safety, implying as it did that he was too timid and too jealous for his personal security to work for the revolution, an inferior being uninitiated into the world of pluck and self-sacrifice to which she, until recently his pupil, belonged, galled him inordinately.

At last he lost control over himself.

"You are playing with fire, Clara," he said, lingering by the bench.

"I suppose that's what you want to speak to me about," she answered with calm earnestness, "but this is hardly the place for a discussion of this sort, Volodia."[B]

"If you want me to go home you had better say so in so many words. The high-minded interests you are cultivating are scarcely compatible with shyness or lack of frankness, Clara."

"Don't be foolish, Volodia. You know you will make fun of yourself for having spoken like that."

"I didn't mean to say anything harsh, Clara. But this thing is scarcely ever out of my mind. It's a terrible fate you have chosen."

"How do you know I have?" she asked in a meditative tone that implied assent.

"How do I know? Can't we have a frank, honest talk for once, Clara? Let us go somewhere."

"We can talk here. To be on the safe side of it, let us talk in Yiddish."

He made a grimace of repugnance, and seating himself on the bench he went on in nervous Russian.

"You have fallen into company that will do you no good, Clara. If you are arrested it will break the heart of two families. Is there no soul left in you?"

"What put it into your mind that I should be arrested?" she returned, lugubriously. "And is that all one ought to be concerned about? All Russia is in prison."

"I expected something of that sort. Alluring phrases have made you deaf and blind. It is my duty to try to save you before it is too late."

He had come for friendly remonstrance, for an open-hearted explanation, but that mood had been shattered the moment he saw her approaching with two of her new friends. He persisted in using the didactic tone he had been in the habit of taking with her, and he could not help feeling how ridiculously out of place it had become. He chafed under a sense of his lost authority, and the impotent superiority of his own manner impelled him to bitterness.

"Is that what you have come for—to rescue me from empty phrases and bad company?"

"Yes, to rescue you from the intoxication of bombast and dangerous company, whether you are in a sarcastic mood or not."

"And how are you going to do it, pray?" she asked with rather good-natured gaiety.

"Laugh away. Laugh away. Since you took up with those scamps——"

"Scamps! I can't let you speak like that, Volodia. I don't know what you mean by 'taking' up with them, but if by 'scamps' you mean people who are sacrificing themselves——"

"You misunderstand me——"

"If by scamps you mean people who will be tortured or hanged for opposing the tyranny that is crushing us all rather than feather their own nests, then it is useless for us to continue this talk."

"Be calm, Clara. You don't wish to misjudge me, do you? Of course, I needn't tell you that what you say about sacrificing oneself and all that sort of business is no news to me. Some other time, when you are not excited, I may have something to say about these things——"

"That everlasting 'something to say!' People are being throttled, butchered and you—you have 'something to say.' We are speaking in two different languages, Volodia."

"Maybe we are. And I must say you have picked up that new language of yours rather quickly. I am not going to enter into a lengthy discussion with you to-night. All I will say now is this: You know that four Jewish revolutionists have been hanged within the last few months—in Odessa, Nicolayeff, Kieff and St. Petersburg. If you think that does the Jewish people any good I am very sorry."

"What else would you have Jews do? Roll on feather-beds and collect usury? Would that do 'the Jewish people' good?"

"You talk like an anti-Semite, Clara."

“There is no accounting for tastes. You may call it anti-Semitism. You may be ashamed of four men who die bravely in a terrible struggle against despotism.”

He cast an uneasy look in the direction of the police booth, but his courage failed him to urge her to lower her voice.

“As for me,” she went on, “I certainly am proud of them. I hold their names sacred, yes, sacred, sacred, sacred, do you understand? And if you intend to continue calling such people scamps then there is nothing left for us to say to each other. And, by the way, since when have *you* been a champion of ‘the Jewish people’—you who have taught me to keep away from everything Jewish; you who are shocked by the very sound of Yiddish, by the very sight of a wig or a pair of side-locks; you who are continually boasting of the Gentiles you are chumming with; you who would give all the Jews in the world for one handshake of a Christian?” [144]

“Well, I am prepared to take abuse, too, to-night. As to my hatred of Yiddish and side-locks, that does no harm to anybody. If all Jews dropped their antediluvian ways and became assimilated with the Russian population half of the unfortunate Jewish question would be solved.”

“Oh, this kind of talk is really enough to drive one mad. The whole country is choking for breath, and here you are worrying over the Jewish question. But then—since when have *you* been interested in the Jews and their ‘question?’”

“Whether I have or not, I never helped to aggravate it as those ‘heroes’ of yours do. If there are some few rights which the Jew still enjoys, they, too, will be taken away from him on account of that new-fangled heroism which has turned your head.”

“Nobody has any ‘rights.’ Everybody is trampled upon, everybody. That’s what those ‘scamps’ are struggling to do away with.”

“Everybody has to die for that matter, yet who cares to die an unnatural death? If the Jews were oppressed like all others and no more, it would be another matter, but they are not. Theirs is an unnatural oppression.”

“Well, that’s what those ‘scamps’ are struggling for: to do away with every sort of oppression. Would you have the Jews keep out of that struggle? Would you have them take care of their own precious skins, and later on, when life becomes possible in Russia, to come in for a share of the fruit of a terrible fight that they carefully stayed away from?” [145]

“Those are dreams, Clara. Dreams and phrases, phrases and dreams. That’s all you have learned of your new friends. Do you deny the existence of a Jewish question?”

She scrutinised his face in the grey half-tones of the gathering dawn and said calmly:

“Look here, Volodia, you know you are seizing at this ‘Jewish question’ as a drowning man does at a straw. You know you have no more interest in it than I have.”

“I am certainly not delighted to see it exist, if that’s what you mean.”

“May I be frank with you, Volodia? All the Jews of the world might cease to exist, for all you care.”

“It isn’t true. All I want is that they should become Russians, cultured Russians.”

“Well, as for me there is only one question—the question of plain common justice and plain elementary liberty. When this has been achieved there won’t be any such thing as a Jewish, Polish or Hottentot question. Yes, those ‘scamps’ are the only real friends the Jews have.”

“But one cannot live on the golden mist of that glorious future of yours, Clara. It takes a saint to do that. Every-day mortals cannot help thinking of equal rights before the law in the sordid present.”

“Think away! Much good will it do the Jews. The only kind of equal rights possible to-day is for Jew and Gentile to die on the same gallows for liberty. That’s the ‘scamps’’ view of it.” At this the word struck her in conjunction with the images of Boulatoff, Olga, the judge, and the other members of the Circle, whereupon she burst out, with a stifled sob in her voice: “How dare you abuse those people?” [146]

Not only had she broken loose from his tutelage, but he had found himself on the defensive. They had changed rôles. The pugnacious tone of conviction, almost of inspiration, with which she parried his jibes nonplussed him. Usually a bright talker, he was now colourless and floundering. And the more he tried to work himself back to his old-time mastery the more helplessly at a disadvantage he appeared.

“I don’t recognise you, Clara,” he said. “They have mesmerised you, those phrase-makers.”

She leaped to her feet. “I don’t intend to hear any more of this abuse,” she said. “And the idea of you finding fault with phrase-makers! you of all men, you to whom a well-turned phrase is dearer than all else in the world! If they make phrases they are willing to suffer for them at least.”

“Oh well, they have made a perfect savage of you,” he retorted under his breath. “Good night.”

She was left with a sharp twinge of compunction, but she had barely dived under the wicket chain when her thoughts reverted to Boulatoff and what he had said to her.

CHAPTER XVI.

CLARA AT HOME.

AT Boyko's Court the chilly dawn lit up a barricade of wheels, axles, and bodies of peasant waggons. Through wide cracks of a fence came the shifting light of a lantern and the sleepy cackling of geese. At the far end of the deep narrow court hung the pulley chains and bucket of a roofed well. Clara went through a spacious subterranean passage, dark as a pocket and filled with the odour of paint. It was crowded with stacks of trunks, finished and unfinished, but she steered clear of them without having to feel her way.

A door swung open, revealing a dimly lighted low-ceiled interior. The odour of sleep mingled with the odours of paint and putty.

"Is that you, Tamara?" asked a tall, erect, half-naked old woman in Yiddish, Tamara being the Jewish name which had been arbitrarily transformed, at Vladimir's instance, into Clara.

"Yes, mamma darling," Clara replied.

"Master of the universe! You get no sleep at all."

The girl kissed her mother gayly. "You know what papa says," she rejoined, "'sleep is one sixtieth of death.' Life is better, mamma dear."

"I have not studied any of your Gentile books, yet I know enough to understand that to be alive is better than to be dead," the tall, erect old woman said without smiling. "But if you want to be alive you must sleep. Go to bed, go to bed." [148]

There were between them relations of quizzical comradeship, implying that each treated the interests of the other with patronising levity, with the reservation of a common ground upon which they met on terms of equality and ardent friendship.

"By the way," the old woman added, yawning, "Volodia was here. He wants to see you."

"I know. I found him at the gate."

"Very well, then, go to bed, go to bed."

"Is father asleep?"

At this a red-bearded little man in yellow drawers and a white shirt open at the neck and exposing a hairy breast, burst from an open side door.

"How can one sleep when one is not allowed to?" he fired out. "May she sink into the earth, her ungodly books and all. I'll break every unclean bone in you. Who ever heard of a girl roaming around as late as that?"

"Hush," his wife said with a faint smile, as she urged him back to their bed-room, much as she would a child.

The family occupied one large basement room, the better part of which was used as a trunk-maker's shop and a kitchen, two narrow strips of its space having been partitioned off for bed-rooms. It was Hannah, Clara's mother, who conducted the trunk business. The bare wooden boxes came from a carpenter's shop and she had them transformed into trunks at her house. Clara's father spent his days and evenings in a synagogue, studying the Talmud "for its own sake." There were other such scholars in Miroslav, the wife in each case supporting the family by engaging in earthly business, while her husband was looking after their common spiritual welfare in the house of God. Clara's mother was generally known as "Hannah the trunk-maker," or "Hannah the Devil." In her very humble way she was a shrewd business woman, tireless, scheming, and not over-scrupulous, but her nickname had originated long before she was old enough to be a devil on Cucumber Market. She was a little girl when there appeared in the neighbourhood what Anglo-Saxons would call "Jack the Window-Smasher." Window-pane after window-pane was cracked without there being the remotest clue to the source of the mischief. The bewigged old women said it was an evil spirit, and engaged a "master of the name" to exorcise it from the community; but the number of broken windows continued to grow. The devil proved to be Hannah, and the most startling thing about the matter, according to the bewigged women of the neighbourhood, was this, that when caught in the act, she did not even cry, but just lowered her eyes and frowned saucily. [149]

Rabbi Rachmiel, as Clara's father was addressed by strangers, was innocent of "things of the world" as an infant—a hot-tempered, simple-minded scholar, with the eyes and manner of a tiger and the heart of a dove. His wife tied his shirt-strings, helped him on with his socks and boots, and generally took care of him as she might of a baby. When he spoke of worldly things to her, she paid no heed to his talk. When he happened to drop a saying from the Talmud she would listen reverently for more, without understanding a word of what he said.

Had Clara been a boy her father would have sooner allowed her to be burned alive than to be taught "Gentile wisdom." But woman is out of the count in the Jewish church, so he neither interfered nor tried to understand the effect that Gentile education was having on her. [150]

Father, mother and daughter represented three distinct worlds, Clara being as deeply engrossed in her "Gentile wisdom" as Rabbi Rachmiel was in his Talmud, or as her mother in her trunks. That the girl belonged to a society that was plotting against the Czar the old people had not the remotest idea, of course.

Besides Clara and her married sister the old couple had two sons, one of them a rabbi in a small town and the other a merchant in the same place.

Clara put out the smoky light of a crude chimneyless little lamp (with a piece of wire to work the wick up and down), which had been left burning for her. A few streaks of raw daylight crept in through the shutters, falling on a pair of big rusty shears fastened to the top of a wooden block, on a heap of sheet-iron, and on several rows of old Talmudic folios which lined the stretch of wall between Clara's partition and one of the two windows.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COUNTESS' DISCOVERY.

AS Pavel mounted the majestic staircase of his mother's residence he became aware that an abstract facial expression was all his memory retained of Mlle. Yavner's likeness. He coveted another glance at her much as a man covets to hear again a new song that seems to be singing itself in his mind without his being able to reproduce it.

He found his mother sitting up for him, on the verge of a nervous collapse. She took him to a large, secluded room, the best in the vast house for *tête-à-tête* purposes. It was filled with mementoes, the trophies of her father's diplomatic career, with his proud collection of rare and costly inkstands, and with odds and ends of ancient furniture, each with a proud history as clear-cut as the pedigree of a high-born race-horse.

Anna Nicolayevna had planned to lead up to the main question diplomatically, but she was scarcely seated on a huge, venerable couch (which made her look smaller than ever) than she turned pale and blurted out in a whisper:

"Did you cross the bridge this afternoon?"

"No. Why?" He said this with fatigued curiosity and looking her full in the face.

She dropped her glance. "I thought I saw you there."

"You were mistaken, then, but what makes you look so uneasy? I did not go in that direction at all, but suppose I did. Why, what has happened?" [152]

She cowed before the insistence of his interrogations and beat a retreat.

"I am not uneasy at all. I must have been mistaken, then. It is about Kostia I have been wanting to speak to you. It is quite a serious matter. You see he is too delicate for the military schools. So I was thinking of putting him in the gymnasium, but then many of the boys there are children of undesirable people. One can't be too careful these days." She was now speaking according to her carefully considered program, and growing pale once more, she fixed him with a searching glance, as she asked: "You must have heard of the man the gendarmes caught, haven't you?"

"Oh, you mean the fellow who would not open his mouth," he said with a smile. "Quite a sensation for a town like this. In St. Petersburg or Moscow they catch them so often it has ceased to be news."

She went on to speak of the evil of Nihilism, Pavel listening with growing interest, like a man who had given the matter some consideration. Poor Anna Nicolayevna! She was no match for him.

Finally he got up. "Well, I don't really know," he said. "It seems to me the trouble lies much deeper than that, *mamman*. Those fellows, the Nihilists, don't amount to anything in themselves. If it were not for that everlasting Russian helplessness of ours they could do no more harm than a group of flies. Our factories and successful farms are all run by Germans; we simply can't take care of the least thing."

"But what have factories and farms to do with the pranks of demoralised boys?"

He smiled. "But if we were not a helpless, shiftless nation a handful of boys couldn't frighten us, could they?" [153]

"Very well. Let us suppose you are a minister. What would you do?"

"What would I do? I shouldn't let things come to such a pass, to begin with."

He was tempted to cast circumspection to the winds and to thunder out his real impeachment of existing conditions. This, however, he could not afford; so he felt like a boat that is being rowed across stream with a strong current to tempt her downward. He was sailing in a diagonal direction. Every now and then he would let himself drift along, only presently to take up his oars and strike out for the bank again. He spoke in his loud rapid way. Every now and again he would break off, fall to pacing the floor silently and listening to the sound of his own voice which continued to ring in his ears, as though his words remained suspended in the air.

Anna Nicolayevna—a curled-up little heap capped by an enormous pile of glossy auburn hair, in the corner of a huge couch—followed him intently. Once or twice she nodded approval to a severe attack upon the government, without realising that he was speaking against the Czar. She was at a loss to infer whether he was opposed to the new advisers of the Emperor in the same way in which her brother-in-law and the ultra-conservative Slavophiles were opposed to them or whether he was some kind of liberal. He certainly seemed to tend toward the Slavophiles in his apparent hatred of foreigners.

"They'll kill him, those murderous youngsters, they are sure to kill him," he shouted at one point, speaking of the Czar. "And who is to blame? Is such a state of things possible anywhere in Western Europe?"

Anna Nicolayevna's eyes grew red and then filled with tears, as she shrank deeper into the corner of the couch. [154]

She was left in a frame of mind that was a novel experience to her. Her pity was lingering about a stalwart military figure with the gloom and glint of martyrdom on his face—the face of Alexander II. Quite apart from this was the sense of having been initiated into a strange ecstasy of thought and feeling—of bold ideas and broad human sympathies. She was in an unwonted state of mental excitement. Pavel seemed to be a weightier personage than ever. The haze that enveloped him was thickening. Nevertheless his strictures upon Russia's incapacity left her rankling with a desire to refute them. That national self-conceit which breeds in every child the conviction that his is the greatest country in the world and that its superiority is cheerfully conceded by all other nations, reasserted itself in the countess with resentful emphasis. To be sure, all the skill, ingenuity and taste of the refined world came from abroad, but this did not lessen her contempt for foreigners any more than did the fact that all acrobats and hair-dressers were Germans or Frenchmen. Her childhood had been spent in foreign countries and she knew their languages as well as she did her own; nevertheless her abstraction of a foreigner was a man who spoke broken Russian—a lisping, stammering, cringing imbecile. She revolted to think of Russia as being inferior to wretches of this sort, and when the bridge incident swept back upon her in all the clearness of fact, her blood ran chill again. "He is the man I saw in the waggon after all," she said to herself, in dismay.

She went to bed, but tossed about in an agony of restlessness. When the darkness of her room began to thin and the brighter objects loomed into view, she slipped on a wrapper and seated herself at a window, courting composure in the blossom-scented air that came up from the garden; but all to no purpose. Ever and anon, after a respite of tranquillity she would be seized with a new rush of consternation. Pasha was the man she had seen on the bridge, disguised as an [155]

artisan; he was a Nihilist.

While Anna Nicolayevna was thus harrowed with doubt, Pavel was pacing his room, his heart on the point of bursting with a desire to see his mother again and to make a clean breast of it. The notion of her being outwitted and made sport of touched him with pity. Come what might, his poor noble-hearted mother must be kept in the dark no longer. She would appreciate his feelings. He would plead with her, with tears in his eyes he would implore her to open her eyes to the appalling inhumanity of the prevailing adjustment of things. And as he visioned himself making this plea to her, his own sense of the barbarity of the existing regime set his blood simmering in him, and quickened his desire to lay it all before his mother.

Presently somebody rapped on his door. It was Anna Nicolayevna.

"I must speak to you, Pasha; I can't get any sleep," she said.

They went into a newly-built summer house. The jumble of colour and redolence was invaded with light that asserted its presence like a great living spirit. The orchard seemed to be worlds away from itself.

As a precaution, they spoke in French.

"Pasha, you are the man I saw on the bridge," she said. "You are a Nihilist."

"Sh-h, don't be agitated, mother dear, I beg of you," he replied with tender emphasis. "I am going to tell you all. [156] Only first compose yourself, mamma darling, and hear me out. Yes, I'm what you call a Nihilist, but I am not the man you saw."

"You a Nihilist, Pasha!" she whispered, staring at him, as though a great physical change had suddenly come over him. "Anyhow, you have nothing to do with the man they have arrested?"

He shook his head and she felt relieved. His avowal of being a Nihilist was so startling a confession to make, that she believed all he said. He was a Nihilist, then—a Nihilist in the abstract; something shocking, no doubt, but remote, indefinite, vague. The concrete Nihilism contained in the picture of a man disguised as a laborer and having some thing to do with the fellow under arrest—that would have been quite another matter. He told her the story of his conversion in simple, heart-felt eloquence; he pictured the reign of police terror, the slow massacre of school-children in the political dungeons, the brutal fleecing and maltreatment of a starving peasantry.

"I found myself in a new world, mother," he said. "It was a world in which the children of refined, well-bred families fervently believed that he who did not work for the good of the common people was not a man of real honour. Indeed, of what use has the nobility been to the world? They are a lot of idlers, *mamman*, a lot of good-for-nothings. For centuries we have been living on the fat of the earth, luxuriating in the toil, misery and ignorance of the peasants. It is to their drudgery and squalor that we owe our material and mental well-being. We ought to feel ashamed for living at the expense of these degraded, literally starving creatures; yet we go on living off their wretchedness and even pride ourselves upon doing so. Let us repay our debt to them by working for their real emancipation. We have grown fat on [157] serfdom, so we must give our blood to undo it, to bring about the reign of liberty. This is the sum and substance of our creed, mother. This is the faith that has taken hold of me. It is my religion and will be as long as I live."

In his entire experience as a revolutionary speaker he had never felt as he did at the present moment.

A host of sparrows burst into song and activity, all together, as though at the stroke of a conductor's baton; and at this it seemed as if the flood of perfume had taken a spurt and the sunlight had begun to smile and speak. He went on in the same strain, and she listened as she would to a magic tale that had no bearing upon the personality of her son. His voice, sharp and irascible as it often sounded, was yet melodious in its undercurrent tone of filial devotion. The vital point, indeed, was that at last he was uncovering his soul to her. She was not shocked by what she heard. Rather, she was proud of his readiness to sacrifice himself for an ideal, and what is more, she felt that his world lured her heart also.

"But the Emperor is a noble soul, Pasha," she said. "He has emancipated the serfs. If there ever was a friend of the common people the present Czar is one."

Her objections found him ready. He had gone over these questions hundreds of times before, and he gave her the benefit of all his former discussions and reading. At times he would borrow a point or two from Zachar's speeches. Touching upon the emancipation of the serfs, he contended that Alexander II. had been forced to the measure by the disastrous results of the Crimean War; and that the peasants, having been defrauded of their land, were now worse off than ever.

"Oh, mother," he suddenly exclaimed, "whenever you think of the abolition of serfdom think also of the row [158] of gallows he had erected about that very time for noble-minded Polish patriots. Do you remember Mme. Oginska, that unfortunate Polish woman we met at the health-resort? Gallows, gallows, nothing but gallows in his reign."

When she referred to the late war "in behalf of the oppressed Slavonic races of the Balkans," Pavel asked her why the Czar had not first thought of his own oppressed Russians, and whether it was not hypocrisy to send one's slaves to die for somebody else's freedom. The Emperor had secured a constitution for Bulgaria, had he? Why, then, was he hanging those who were striving for one in his own land? A war of emancipation indeed! It was the old Romanoff greed for territory, for conquest, for bloodshed.

He literally bore her down by a gush of arguments, facts, images. Now and again he would pause, sit looking at the grass in grim silence, and then, burst into another torrent of oratory. It was said of Zachar that a single speech of his was enough to make a convert of the most hopeless conservative. Pavel was far from possessing any such powers of pleading eloquence, when his audience was made up of strangers, but he certainly scored a similar victory by the appeal which he was now addressing to his mother.

He went to order coffee. When he returned, reveille was sounding in the barracks.

"There you have it!" he said. "Do you know what that sound means? It means that the youngest, the best forces of the country are turned into weapons of human butchery."

The brass notes continued, somewhat cracked at times, but loud and vibrant with imperious solemnity. [159]

"It means, too, that people are forced to keep themselves in chains at the point of their own bayonets," he added.

The next few days were spent by the countess in reading "underground" literature. She was devouring paper after

paper and pamphlet after pamphlet with tremulous absorption. The little pile before her included scientific treatises, poetry and articles of a polemical nature, and she read it all; but she was chiefly interested in the hair-breadth escapes, pluck and martyrdom of the revolutionists. The effect this reading had on her was something like the thrilling experience she had gone through many years ago when she was engrossed in the Lives of Saints.

“It makes one feel twenty years younger,” she said to Pavel, bashfully, as she laid down a revolutionary print and took the glasses off her tired eyes one forenoon.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAVEL AT BOYKO'S COURT.

CLARA was introduced to Mme. Shubeyko, the warden's sister-in-law, and to her niece, the gendarme officer's sister. At first communication with Makar was held by means of notes concealed in cigarettes and carried to and fro by one of the warders, who received half a ruble per errand; but Clara was soon installed in the warden's house. Once or twice Pavel spoke with Makar directly, by means of handkerchief signals based on the same code as the telegraph language which political prisoners rap out to each other through their cell walls. These signals Pavel sent from the top of a hill across the river from Makar's cell window. To allay suspicion he would wave his handkerchief toward Masha or Clara, who stood for the purpose on a neighbouring hill, giving the whole proceeding the appearance of a flirtation. As to Makar, his cell was in an isolated part of the prison, facing the outer wall. Still, this mode of communication was exasperatingly slow and attended by some risks after all, and Pavel had recourse to it only in case of extreme necessity, although to the prisoner it was a welcome diversion.

One day, when Clara, Masha and Pavel were together, he said to the gendarme officer's sister, with mystifying gaiety:

"Well, have you discovered the heroine of the Pievakin demonstration?" He regretted the question before it had left his lips. Clara was annoyed. [1611]

"No, why?" Masha asked, looking from him to her.

"I have the honour to introduce—" he said, colouring. For some reason Masha did not seem to be agreeably impressed by the announcement, and Clara did not fail to notice it.

As it was rather inconvenient for the son of Countess Varoff to be seen at the house of a major of gendarmes, Clara was to report to him at the residence of her parents. In the depth of the markets and the Jewish quarter his identity was unlikely to be known. Clara had lived at the warden's house about a fortnight when Pavel's first visit at the trunk shop took place. She offered him a rude chair in the small space between the partition of her bed-room and the window by the wall that was lined with the worn folios of her father's meagre library. The room was pervaded by odours of freshly planed wood, putty and rusty tin which the breath of spring seemed to intensify rather than to abate.

Motl, Hannah's sole employe, was hammering away at his bindings and courting attention by all sorts of vocal quirks and trills. During the Days of Awe, the solemn festivals of autumn, he sang in a synagogue choir; so he never ceased asserting his musical talents. As Clara's visitor took no heed of his flourishes he proceeded to imitate domestic animals, church bells, a street organ playing a selection from Il Trovatore, and a portly captain drilling his men, but all to no purpose. As the noise he was making was a good cover for their talk, she did not stop him. At any rate, Motl scarcely understood any Russian.

"I have only seen him at a distance," Clara said, meaning the prisoner. "But I know that he eats and sleeps well, and looks comfortable." [1621]

"He would look comfortable if you tied him up in a sack. Is he still 'dumb'?"

She portrayed the warden's bed-ridden and voiceless wife who suffered from a disease of the spinal and vocal chords, and the disorder at his house and in the prison. She had always wondered at the frequent cases of political gaol-breaking, but if every gaol were conducted as this one was the number would be much larger, she thought. That vodka was quite openly sold and bought in every common gaol in the empire was no news to her, but this was a trifle compared to what she had heard of Rodkevich's administration. One of his gaolers had told her of imprisoned thieves whom he would give leave of absence in order that he might confiscate part of their booty when they came back.

"Yes, I think he is a man who would go into any kind of scheme that offered money, or—excitement," she said, gravely; and she added with a smile: "He might even become a man of principle if there were money in it."

"He won't give 'a political' 'leave of absence,' though, will he?" Pavel joked. "Still, upon the whole, it looks rather encouraging."

"I think it does."

"Do you?" And his eyes implored her for a more enthusiastic prediction of success.

"Indeed I do," she answered soberly. "But whether I do or not, we must go to work and get him out."

"This damsel is certainly not without backbone," he said to himself.

He had familiarised himself with the details in the case of almost every revolutionist who had escaped or attempted to escape from prison. Some of these had made their way through an underground passage; others had passed the gateman in the disguise of a soldier or policeman; still others had been wrenched from their convoy, while being taken to the gendarme office or a photograph gallery. Prince Kropotkin had simply made a desperate break for liberty while the gates of the prison hospital in which he was confined stood open, a cab outside bearing him off to a place of safety. Another political prisoner regained his freedom by knocking down a sentinel with brass knuckles, while still another, who was awaiting death in Odessa, would have made his escape by means of planks laid from his cell window to the top of the prison fence, had not these planks proved to be too flimsy. In one place an imprisoned army officer slipped away under cover of a flirtation in which a girl prisoner had engaged the warden. A revolutionist named Myshkin had tried to liberate Chernishevsky, the celebrated critic, by appearing at the place of his banishment, in far-away Siberia, in the guise of a gendarme officer with an order for the distinguished exile, and a similar scheme had been tried on the warden of a prison in European Russia. Both these attempts had failed, but then in the case in hand there was the hope of Rodkevich, the warden, acting as a willing victim. Pavel said he would impersonate one of the gendarmes. [1631]

"Some of the gaolers may know you," Mlle. Yavner objected.

"That's quite unlikely, I was away so long. Besides, the thing would have to be done in the evening anyhow. I must be on hand. It will be necessary."

"You might be recognised after all," she insisted, shyly.

Another project was to have a rope thrown over the prison fence, in a secluded corner of the yard. This was to be done at a signal from within, while Makar was out for exercise, in the charge of a bribed guard. The guard was to raise an alarm when it was too late, telling how his prisoner knocked him down and was hoisted out of sight. Or Makar might be smuggled out in a barrel on some provision waggon, the prescribed examination of the vehicle being performed by a friendly gaoler. Whatever plan they took up, Pavel insisted on playing the leading part in it. He was for taking Makar away in a closed carriage, if need be under cover of pistol shots. Clara urged that in the event the equipage had to wait for some time, its presence about the prison was sure to arouse dangerous curiosity. Altogether she was in favour of a [1641]

quiet and simple proceeding. Safonoff's house was within easy distance from the prison, so if Masha could undertake to keep her brother away from home, Clara would prefer to have Makar walk quietly to that place, as a first resort, thence to be taken, thoroughly disguised, to the "conspiracy house" of the Circle. But Pavel picked the proposition to pieces.

Since her initiation into the warden's house Clara had been in a peculiarly elevated state of mind, her whole attention being absorbed in her mission in which she took great pride. This uplifted mood of hers she strove to suppress, and the clear-headed, matter-of-fact way in which she faced the grave dangers of her task animated Pavel with a feeling of intimate comradeship as well as admiration.

As they now sat in the cleanest and brightest corner of the trunk shop he was vaguely sensible of a change in her appearance. Then he noticed that instead of the dark woolen dress she had worn at the time of their previous meetings she had on a fresh blouse of a light-coloured fabric. To be seen in a new colour is in itself becoming to a woman, but this blouse of Clara's was evidently a tribute to spring. Her face seemed to be suffused with the freshness of the month. [166]

While they sat talking, her mother came in, an elderly Jewess, tall and stately, with a shrewd, careworn look, her hair carefully hidden beneath a strip of black satin.

"Is that you, Tamara?" she asked without taking notice of the stranger. She said something to Motl, made for the door, but suddenly returned, addressing herself to her daughter again. She wanted to know something about the law of chattel-mortgages, but neither Clara nor her visitor could furnish her the desired information.

"Always at those books of theirs, yet when it comes to the point they don't know anything," she said, with a smile, as she bustled out of the room.

"Are these Talmud books?" Pavel asked, pointing at Rabbi Rachmiel's library.

"Yes," Clara nodded with an implied smile in her voice.

"Can you read them?"

"Oh, no," she answered, smiling.

He told her that Makar was a deep Talmudic scholar and talked of the Jewish religion, but she offered him no encouragement. She was brimful of questions herself. Her inquiries were concerned with the future destinies of the human race. With all her practical common sense, she had a notion that the era of undimmed equality and universal love would dawn almost immediately after the overthrow of Russian tyranny. This, as she had been taught by revolutionary publications, was to come as the logical continuation of Russia's village communes, once the development of this survival of prehistoric communism received free scope. What she wanted was a clear and detailed account of life in Future Society.

Her questions and his answers had the character of a theoretical discussion. Gradually, however, he mounted to a more animated tone, portraying the future with quiet fervour. She listened gravely, her eyes full upon his, and this absorbed look spurred him on. But presently her mother came in again, this time with a peasant customer, and they went out to continue their talk in the open air. There were plenty of deserted lanes and bits of open country a short distance off. There was a vague gentle understanding between them that it was the golden idealism of their talk which had set them yearning for the unhidden sky and the aromatic breezes of spring. This upheld their lofty mood while they silently trudged through the outskirts of the market place. They could not as yet continue their interrupted conversation, and to speak of something else would have seemed profanation. At last they emerged on a lonely square, formed by an orchard, some houses and barns and the ruin of an old barrack. The air was excellent and there was nobody to overhear them. Nevertheless when Pavel was about to resume he felt that he was not in the mood for it. Nor did she urge him on with any further questions. [167]

From the old barracks they passed into a dusty side lane and thence into a country road which led to a suburb and ran parallel to the railway tracks.

The sun was burning by fits and starts, as it were. In those spots where masses of lilacs and fruit blossoms gave way to a broader outlook, the road was so flooded with light that Clara had to shield her eyes with her hand. Now and again a clump of trees in the distance would fall apart to show the snow-crested top of a distant hill and the blueish haze of the horizon-line.

Their immediate surroundings were a scrawny, frowzy landscape. The lawns in front of the huts they passed, the homes of washerwomen, were overspread with drying linen. [167]

"Delightful, isn't it?" Pavel said, inhaling a long draught of the rich, animating air and glancing down a ravine choked with nettle. The remark was merely a spoken sigh of joy. She made no reply.

They were both hungry, and presently they began to feel tired as well. Yet neither of them was disposed to halt or to break silence except by an occasional word or two that meant nothing.

At last he said:

"You must be quite fatigued. It's cruel of me."

"I am, but it isn't cruel of you," she answered, stopping short, and drawing a deep, smiling breath.

He ran into a washerwoman's hovel, startling a brood of ducklings on his way, and soon came back with the information that milk was to be had in a trackman's hut beyond a sparse grove to the right.

A few minutes later they sat at a rude table in a miniature garden between the shining steel rails of the track and a red-painted cabin. It was the fourth track-house from the Miroslav railroad station and was generally known as the Fourth Hut. Besides milk and eggs and coarse rye bread they found sour soup. They ate heartily, but an echo of their exalted dream was still on them. To Pavel this feeling was embodied in an atmosphere of femininity that pervaded his consciousness at this moment. He was sensible of sitting in front of a pretty, healthy girl full of modest courage and undemonstrative inspiration. The lingering solemnity of his mood seemed to have something to do with the shimmering little hairs which the breeze was stirring on Clara's neck, as she bent over her earthen bowl, with the warm colouring of her ear, with the elastic firmness of her cheek, with the airiness of her blouse. [168]

A desire stirred in him to speak once more of the part she had unconsciously played in his conversion, and at this he felt that if he told her the story he would find a peculiar pleasure in exaggerating the importance of the effect which her "speech" had produced on his mind. But it came over him that Makar was still behind the prison gate and that this was not the time to enjoy oneself.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRAWBERRIES.

THAT walk to the trackman's hut had kindled a new light in Pavel's soul. He often found himself craving for a repetition of the experience—not merely for Clara's companionship, but for another occasion to walk through the fields with her, to sit by her side in the breeze, and, above all, for the intimacy of seeing her fatigued and eating heartily. She dwelt in his mind as a girl comrade, self-possessed and plucky, gifted with grit, tact and spirit; at the same time she lingered in his consciousness as a responsive pupil, glowing with restrained enthusiasm over his talk, eagerly following him through an ecstasy of lofty dreams. These two aspects of her were merged in the sight and odour of healthy, magnificently complexioned girlhood between the glint of steel rails and the dusty geranium in a trackman's window.

They had another appointment. When he called at the trunkmaker's shop Clara greeted him with a hearty handshake. He blushed. His love seemed to be gaining on him by leaps and bounds.

"How are things?" he asked.

"First rate, Pavel Vassilyevich. The vegetable man will do it. He's a trump, I tell you." She went into details. She was in unusually good spirits. They talked business and of the adjustment of things under socialism. Pavel, too, was in good [170] humour, yet floating in his mind was the same old question: And what if all fails and Makar is removed to St. Petersburg?

They met again and again. One day, after they had arrived at certain conclusions regarding Makar, Pavel said:

"Shall we take a walk?"

She nodded assent.

"I am again full of questions."

"Again worrying about the future fate of humanity?"

"Yes, I seem to have no end of questions about it. I wonder whether I shall remember all those that have occurred to me since I last saw you. I ought to have jotted them down."

"You don't want to pump me dry in one day, do you?"

"Well, if the truth must be told, I rather do. You will soon be leaving us, I suppose, so I am anxious to strike the iron while it is hot."

The personal question as to the length of his stay sent a little wave of warmth through his blood. They set out in the direction of the trackman's hut as a matter of course. Instead of following their former route, however, they chose, upon a motion from Clara, who was more familiar with these suburbs than Pavel, a meandering, hilly course that offered them a far better view as well as greater privacy. A stretch of rising ground took them to the Beak, a promontory so called for the shape of a cliff growing out of its breast. The common people had some pretty stories to tell of a gigantic bird of which the rocky beak was a part and whose petrified body was now asleep in the bosom of the hill that had once been its nest.

Pavel and Clara sat down to rest on the freshly carpeted slope. The town clustered before them in a huddle of red, [171] white, green and grey, shot with the glitter of a golden-domed cathedral, the river flashing at one end like the fragment of an immense sabre. It was warm and quiet. There was not a human soul for a considerable distance around. Now and again the breeze would gently stir the weeds and the wild-flowers, lingering just long enough to scent the hillside with pine odours and then withdrawing, on tiptoe, as it were, like a thoughtful friend taking care that the two young people were kept supplied with the bracing aroma without being disturbed more than was necessary. Once or twice Clara held out her chin, sniffing the enchanted air.

"Isn't it delightful!" she said.

"It's a specimen of what life under Society of the Future will feel like," Pavel jested, with a wistful smile.

At one point when she addressed him as Pavel Vassilyevich, as she usually did, he was tempted to ask her to dispense with his patronymic. In the light of the hearty simplicity of manners which prevailed in the revolutionary movement they were well enough acquainted to address each other by their first names only. Yet when he was about to propose the change the courage failed him to do so. Whereupon he said to himself, with a deep inward blushing, that the cause of this hesitancy and confusion of his was no secret to him.

"Hello there! A strawberry!" she called out, with a childish glee which he had not yet seen in her. And flinging herself forward she reached out her white girlish hand toward a spot of vivid red. The berry, of that tiny oblong delicious variety one saucerful of which would be enough to fill a fair-sized room with fragrance, lay ensconced in a bed of sun-lit leaves—a pearl of succulent, flaming colour in a setting of green gold.

"Oh, I haven't the heart to pick it," she said, staying her hand and cooing to the strawberry as she would to a baby: [172] "Won't touch you, berry darling. Won't touch you, sweetie."

"Spare its life then," he answered, "I'll see if I can't find others."

And sure enough, after some seeking and peeping and climbing, Pavel came upon a spot that was fairly jewelled with strawberries.

"Quite a haul," he shouted down.

She joined him and they went on picking together, each with a thistle leaf for a saucer.

"Why, it's literally teeming with them," she said, in a preoccupied voice, deeply absorbed in her work. "One, two, three, and four, and—seven; why, bless me,—and eight and nine. What a pity we have nothing with us. We could get enough to treat the crowd at Orlovsky's."

Pavel made no reply. Whenever he came across a berry that looked particularly tempting he would offer it to her silently and resume his work. He was oppressively aware of his embarrassment in her presence and the consciousness of it made him feel all the more so. He was distinctly conscious of a sensation of unrest, both stimulating and numbing, which had settled in him since he made her acquaintance. It was at once torture and joy, yet when he asked himself which of the two it was, it seemed to be neither the one nor the other. Her absence was darkness; her presence was light, but pain and pleasure mingled in both. It made him feel like a wounded bird, like a mutely suffering child. At this moment it blent with the flavour and ruddiness of the berries they were both picking, with the pine-breeze that was waiting on them, with the subdued lyrics of spring.

And he knew that he was in love. [173]

He had never been touched by more than a first timid whisper of that feeling before. It was Sophia, the daughter of

the former governor of St. Petersburg, whose image had formerly—quite recently, in fact—invaded his soul. He had learned immediately that she belonged to Zachar and his dawning love had been frightened away. Otherwise his life during these five years had been one continuous infatuation of quite another kind—the infatuation of moral awakening, of a political religion, of the battlefield.

From the Beak they proceeded by the railroad track, now walking over the cross-ties, now balancing along the polished top of one rail. She was mostly ahead of him, he following her with melting heart. By the time they reached the trackman's place, the shadows had grown long and solemn. Pavel had no appetite. He ate because Clara did. "Here I am watching her eat again," he thought. But the spectacle was devoid of the interest he had expected to find in it.

Nevertheless the next morning, upon waking, it burst upon him once more that seated within him was something which had not been there about a month ago. When he reflected that he had no appointment with Clara for these two days, that disquieting force which was both delicious and tantalising, the force which enlivened and palsied at once, swelled in his throat like a malady. But no, far from having such a bodily quality, it had spiritualised his whole being. He seemed unreal to himself, while the outside world appeared to him strangely remote, agonisingly beautiful, and agonisingly sad—a heart-rending elegy on an unknown theme. The disquieting feeling clamoured for the girl's presence —for a visit to the scene of their yesterday's berry-picking, at least. He struggled, but he had to submit. [174]

To the Beak, then, he betook himself, and for an hour he lay on the grass, brooding. Everything around him was in a subdued agitation of longing. The welter of gold-cups and clover; the breeze, the fragrance and the droning of a nearby grasshopper; the sky overhead and the town at his feet—all was dreaming of Clara, yearning for Clara, sighing for Clara. Seen in profile the grass and the wild-flowers acquired a new charm. When he lay at full length gazing up, the sky seemed perfectly flat, like a vast blue ceiling, and the light thin wisps of pearl looked like painted cloudlets upon that ceiling. There were moments in this reverie of his when the Will of the People was an echo from a dim past, when the world's whole struggle, whether for good or for evil, was an odd, incomprehensible performance. But then there were others when everything was listening for the sound of a heavenly bugle-call; when all nature was thirsting for noble deeds and the very stridulation of the grasshopper was part of a vast ecstasy.

"That won't do," he said in his heart. "I am making a perfect fool of myself, and it may cost us Makar's freedom." As he pictured the Janitor, Zachar and his other comrades, and what they would say, if they knew of his present frame of mind, he sprang to his feet in a fury of determination. "I must get that idiot out of the confounded hole he put himself into and get back to work in St. Petersburg. This girl is not going to stand in my way any longer." He felt like smashing palaces and fortresses. But whatever he was going to do in his freedom from Clara, Clara was invariably a looker-on. When he staked his life to liberate Makar she was going to be present; after the final blow had been struck at despotism, she would read in the newspapers of his prominent part in the fight. [175]

The next time he saw her he felt completely in her power.

Clara was in a hurry, but an hour after they had parted he found an honest excuse for seeing her again that very day. The appointment was made through Mme. Shubeyko, and in the afternoon he called at the trunk shop once more.

"We have been ignoring a very important point, Clara Rodionovna," he said solicitously. "Since the explosion at the Winter Palace the spies have been turning St. Petersburg upside down. They literally don't leave a stone unturned. Now, Makar went away before the examinations at the Medical Academy and he disappeared from his lodgings without filing notice of removal at the police station."

"And if they become curious about his whereabouts the name of the Miroslav Province in his papers may put the authorities in mind of their Miroslav prisoner," Clara put in, with quick intelligence.

He nodded gloomily and both grew thoughtful.

"They would first send word to Zorki, his native town, though," Pavel then said, "to have his people questioned, and I shouldn't be surprised if they brought his father over here to be confronted with him."

"That would be the end of it," Clara remarked, in dismay.

The next day Pavel telegraphed it all over to Makar, by means of his handkerchief, from the hill which commanded the prisoner's window.

"I have a scheme," Makar's handkerchief flashed back.

"For God's sake don't run away with yourself," Pavel returned. "It's a serious matter. Consider it maturely." [176]

"Do you know anybody in Paris or any other foreign city you could write to at once?"

"I do. Why?" Pavel replied.

"Get me some foreign paper. I shall write two letters, one to my father and one to my wife, both dated at that place. If these letters were sent there and that man then sent them to my people at Zorki, it would mean I am in Paris. Understand?"

"I do. You are crazy."

"Why? Father will let bygones be bygones. I should tell him the whole truth. He is all right."

"He won't fool the gendarmes."

"He will!" the white speck behind the iron bars flicked out vehemently. "He'll do it. Provided he is prepared for it."

"You are impossible. If an order came from St. Petersburg your Zorki gendarmes would not dare think for themselves. They would just hustle him off to Miroslav."

"Then get father away from there."

"They would take your wife, anybody who could identify you."

"Father is better after all. He would look me in the face and say he does not know me. He could do it."

"And later go to Siberia for it?"

"You are right. But I don't think the order will be to take him here at once. They'll first examine him there. He'll have a chance to fool them."

Clara offered to go to Zorki at once, but Makar was for a postponement of her "conspiracy trip." Saturday of Comfort was near at hand, and then the little Jewish town would be crowded with strangers, so that Mlle. Yavner might come and go without attracting attention even in the event the local gendarmes had already been put on the case. [177]

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CHAPTER XX.

A “CONSPIRACY TRIP.”

ZORKI was in a state of joyous excitement. The “Good Jew” of Gornovo, accompanied by a retinue of beadles, secretaries, “reciters,” attendants, scribes and hangers on, was pleased to grace the little community with his annual visit; so the Pietists had left their workshops and places of business to drink in religious ecstasy and to scramble for advice, miracles and the blessed leavings from the holy man’s table. The population of the little town was rapidly increasing by an influx of Pietists from neighbouring hamlets.

Clara, with a kerchief round her head, which gave her the appearance of an uneducated “daughter of Israel,” was watching a group of men and boys who stood chattering and joking in front of one of the best houses in town, at the edge of the market place. It was in this house where the Good Jew made his headquarters every time he came to Zorki and where he was now resting from his journey. The sun stood high. A peasant woman was nursing her baby in a waggon, patiently waiting for her husband. Two elderly peasants in coarse, broad-brimmed straw-hats, one of them with an interminable drooping moustache, were leaning against the weight-house, smoking silently. For the rest, the market place, enclosed by four broken rows of shops, dwellings and two or three government offices—squatting one-story frame structures—was almost deserted; but one of the two streets bounding it, the one on which we find Clara at this minute, was quite alive with people. An opening at one side of the square showed a sloping stretch of road and a rectangular section of the river, the same as that which gleamed in Miroslav. The knot of men which Clara was watching all wore broad flat-topped caps, and, most of them, long-skirted coats. A man of fifty-five, short and stocky, with massive head and swarthy face, the image of Makar, was the centre of the crowd. [1781]

“If you were a Pietist and a decent man,” he said, in subdued accents, to a red-bearded “oppositionist” with gloomy features, “you would not wear that long face of yours. Come, cheer up and don’t be a kill-joy!” And he slapped him on the back with all his might.

“Stop!” the Oppositionist said, reddening from the blow. “What’s got into you? What reason have you to be so jolly anyhow?” And addressing himself to the bystanders: “He has not had a drop of vodka, yet he will make believe he’s in his cups.”

“What’s that?” the swarthy man protested in a soft, mellow basso, “Can’t a fellow be jolly without filling himself full of vodka? If you were a respectable man and a Pietist and not a confounded seek-sorrow of an Oppositionist you would not think so. Drink! Why, open the Pentateuch, and wherever your eye falls there is drink to make you happy. ‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth!’ Isn’t that reason enough for a fellow to be jolly?”

The bystanders smiled, some in partisan approbation, others with amused superiority, still others with diplomatic ambiguity.

The heavy-set, swarthy man was Makar’s father, Yossl Parmet. He bore striking resemblance to his son. Clara stood aghast. If he were confronted with the Miroslav prisoner, the identity of the Nihilist would be betrayed, whether the old man admitted the relationship or not. The only way out of it was to avoid such a confrontation by getting Yossl away for a few months. But then, once the Miroslav gendarmerie learned that a man named Parmet whose home was at Zorki was missing, the secret could not last for any length of time. In compliance with Makar’s wish, Clara decided to take him into her secret. Accordingly, she mingled with the men, took part in the joking, and by the time the crowd dispersed she and Yossl were talking on terms of partial familiarity. Finding an opportune moment, she said to him, with intentional mysteriousness: [1782]

“There is something I want to speak to you about, Reb Yossl. I have seen your son.”

The old man gave her a startled, scrutinising glance. Then, his face hardening into a preoccupied business-like expression, he said aloud:

“Where are you stopping?”

She named her inn, and the two started thither together. There were so many strangers in town, each in quest of an audience with the “Good Jew,” and Yossl was so close to the holy man, or to those near him, that their conversation attracted scarcely any notice.

“It’s a very serious matter, Reb Yossl,” she said, as they crossed the market place. “Nobody is to know anything about it, or it may be bad for your son.”

“Go ahead,” he snarled, turning pale. “Never mind spending time on a woman’s prefaces. What is up?”

“You know how the educated young people of these days are. There is nothing, in fact, the matter. It’ll soon be over. But for the present it would do him good if the gendarmes knew he was in Paris.” [1783]

“Why, isn’t he in Paris?” Yossl asked morosely. “I received a letter from him from there.”

“Of course he is. Only, the gendarmes, in case they look for him, and they may do so sooner or later, you know, the gendarmes may not believe he is there. So it would be a good thing if you could convince them of it. Your son would be benefited by it very much.”

Yossl took fire.

“On my part let him go to all the black ghosts!” he burst out. “‘The educated people of these days,’ indeed! First he will play with fire and then he wants me to fight his battles! Would he have his old father go to prison on account of him? He is not in Paris, then? I am as clever as you, young woman. I, too, understand a thing or two, though I am not of ‘the educated people of these days!’ It is not enough that he has got in trouble himself; he wants to drag me in, too. Is that the kind of ‘education’ he has got? Is that what he has broken with his wife and father for? The ghost take him!”

“Don’t be excited, Reb Yossl,” Clara pleaded, earnestly. “It’s a treasure of a son you have and you know it. As to the education he has acquired, it is the kind that teaches one to struggle against injustice and oppression, things which I know you hate as deeply as your son does.” A tremour came into her voice, and a slight blush into her cheeks, as she added: “Your son is one of those remarkable men who are willing to die for the suffering people.”

“But who are you?” he asked with a frown, “How did you get here? If you, too, are one of those people you had better leave this town at once. I don’t want to get in trouble on account of you.” [1784]

They reached the inn, and he paused in front of it, leaning against a waggon.

“Never mind who I am,” she returned.

“But where is he? Has he been arrested? Good God, what has he been doing to himself? What does he want of my old bones? Is he sorry his father is still alive?”

“You don’t want your son to perish, do you?” she said rather pugnaciously. “If you don’t, you had better get the

gendarmes off his track."

She went on arguing with renewed ardour. As he listened, a questioning look came into his face. Instead of following her plea he scrutinised her suspiciously.

"But why should you pray for him so fervently," he asked significantly. "Why should you run risks for his sake? What do you get out of it?"

"Must one get something 'out of it' to do what is right?"

"Ah, may the ghost take the whole lot of you!" Yossl said, with a wave of his hand, and walked away. He felt sure that this young woman and his son were in love, and he was shocked for the sake of Miriam, Makar's divorced wife, as well as for his own.

He made for a slushy narrow lane, but turned back, retracing his steps in the direction of the house which was the Good Jew's headquarters, as also the home of Miriam. It was the house of her uncle, Arye Weinstein, the richest Pietist in Zorki.

The Good Jew occupied two expensively furnished rooms which were always kept sacred to his use. They were known as "the rabbi's chambers" and although the Righteous Man visited Zorki only once a year, nobody was ever [1881] allowed so much as to sit down in his easy chair. One day, when Weinstein caught his little girl playing in the "rabbi's bed room" with a skull-cap which the holy man had left there, he flew into one of the savage fits of temper for which he was dreaded, and slapped the child's face till it bled. The rabbi's chambers were never swept or dusted until a day or two before his arrival, and then half a dozen people worked day and night to make things worthy of the exalted guest. The "rabbi's parlour" opened into a vast room, by far the largest in the house, which on Saturdays was usually turned into a synagogue, and was known in town as "Weinstein's salon."

Miriam was a very bright, quick-witted little woman, but she was not pretty—a pale, sickly, defenceless-looking creature of the kind who have no enemies even among their own sex. Her separation from Makar was only a nominal affair, in fact, the divorce having been brought about against the will of the young couple by her iron-willed uncle, who had succeeded in embroiling Yossl with his son as well as with himself soon after the true character of Makar's visits to Pani Oginska's house had been discovered; but Makar and Miriam had become reconciled, through a letter from him, and they had been in secret correspondence ever since. Yossl never lost hope of seeing them remarried, and, in order to keep the memory of his son fresh in Miriam's mind, he had obeyed the Good Jew and made peace with the wealthy Pietist.

Yossl was in charge of the town's weight-house and was commonly known as "Yossl the weight-house man." When Feivish (Makar's real first name) was old enough to be started on the Talmud, he left the weight-house to his wife, devoting himself to the spiritual education of the boy. Every time they sat down to the huge book he would pin the edge [1882] of Feivish's shirt to his collar, leaving the child's back bare to the strap in his hand. Whenever his wife protested he would bring her to terms by threatening to tell the Good Jew that she would have her son brought up as a dunce. He was going to make a "fattened scholar" of him. He was going to fatten him on divine Law by main force, even as his wife fattened her geese for Passover. He was going to show those fish-blooded, sneering Oppositionists that they had no monopoly of the Talmud. Often during his lesson a distracted look would come into Feivish's dark little eyes, and Yossl's words fell on deaf ears. Then it was that the thong would descend on the bare back. Feivish never cried. As the blow fell, he would curl himself up with a startled look, that haunted Yossl for hours after. Feivish turned out to be a most ardent Pietist. Once, for example, in a very cold wintry night, after the Good Jew had crossed a snow-covered lawn, Feivish, in a burst of devotion, took off his boots and "followed in the foot-steps of the man of righteousness" barefoot.

For four years the young couple lived happily, their only woe being the death of both children that had been born to them. But the Good Jew said "God will have mercy," and Feivish "served his Lord with gladness." But this did not last. Feivish was initiated into the world of free thought, and gradually the fervent Pietist was transformed into a fervent atheist. It was during that period that he first met Pavel and that his wife's despotic uncle extorted a divorce from him.

While Yossl was twitting the red-headed Oppositionist in front of Weinstein's house, Bathsheba, a daughter-in-law [1851] of the man of substance, a plump, black-eyed beauty of the kind one's mind associates with a Turkish harem, beckoned Miriam aside, in one of the rooms within, offering her a piece of cake.

"It's from a chunk the Good Jew has tasted," she said, triumphantly. "Eat it, and your heart will be lighter."

"It will help me as much as blood-letting helps a dead man," Miriam answered with a smile.

"Eat it, I say. You'll get letters more often if you do." For a woman to exchange love letters with the man from whom she has been divorced is quite a grave sin for a daughter of Israel to commit. The remedy Bathsheba recommended was therefore something like the prayer of a thief that the Lord may bless his business. But then Miriam questioned the power of the rabbi's "leavings" to bring a blessing upon any business. She smiled.

"How do you know it is nonsense? Maybe it isn't, after all," Bathsheba urged.

"You're a foolish little dear."

"If I were you I should eat it. What can you lose by it?"

Maria, a Gentile servant who had been longer in the house than Bathsheba, came in. She spoke Yiddish excellently and was almost like a member of the family.

"Take a bite and you will be blessed, Maria," Miriam joked, holding out the cake to her. "It's from a piece the Good Jew has tasted."

"If I was a Jewess I would," Maria retorted reproachfully. "It's a sin to make mock of a Good Jew."

The other two burst into a laugh.

Left alone, Miriam was about to throw the cake away, but had not the heart to do so. She sat eyeing it for some minutes and then, making fun of herself, she bit off a morsel. She acted like the Jewess of the anecdote, who, to be [1852] on the safe side, would kiss the cross and the Hebrew prayer book at once.

An hour later Yossl was flaunting his son's Paris letter and cursing him to a new crowd in front of the Good Jew's headquarters.

"The ghost take him!" he said. "Indeed, the ghost is a well-travelled fellow. He can get to Paris just as readily as he does to Zorki."

CHAPTER XXI.

MAKAR'S FATHER.

ON Saturday morning Weinstein's salon was crowded with worshippers, all married men in their praying shawls and skull-caps. A Good Jew is exempt from praying with the congregation, his transports of religious fervour being too sacred a proceeding for common mortals to intrude upon. Accordingly, the Man of Righteousness was making his devotions in the seclusion of the adjoining parlour.

To a stranger unfamiliar with Pietist prayer meetings the crowd here gathered would have looked for all the world like the inmates of the violent ward in an insane asylum. Most of the worshippers were snapping their fingers; the others were clapping their hands, clenching their fists with all their might or otherwise gesticulating savagely. They were running or jumping about, shrieking, sighing or intoning merrily, while here and there a man seemed to be straining every bit of his strength to shut his eyes as tightly as possible or to distort his face into some painful or grotesque expression. The Gentiles of the province called the Pietists Jumping Jacks.

Some of the worshippers gesticulated merely because it was "correct form"; others did so from force of habit, or by way of fighting off the intrusion of worldly thoughts; still others for the same reason for which one yawns when others do. But all these formed a small minority. The bulk of the Pietists present, including several people of questionable honesty in business matters, were honestly convulsed with a contagion of religious rapture. The invisible proximity of the Man of Righteousness, the sight of the door that concealed his holy presence, keyed them up to the highest pitch of exaltation. Their ears followed the "master of prayers" at the Stand, but their minds beheld the Good Jew of Gornovo. All hearts converged at the mysterious spot behind that door. That which sounded and looked like a pandemonium of voices and gestures was in reality a chorus of uplifted souls with the soul of the concealed man of God for a "master of prayers."

Weinstein was slapping the wall with both hands. His large figure was enveloped in the costliest praying-shawl in the room. All that was seen of him were two wrists overgrown with red hair. Now and then he would face about and fall to striding up and down meditatively. He was a well-fed, ruddy-necked Jew of fifty with a sharp hooked nose sandwiched in between two plump florid cheeks, and a small red beard. His unbuttoned coat of a rich broadcloth reached down to his heels; his trousers were tucked into the tops of well-polished boots. Once or twice an unkempt, underfed little man in a tattered shawl and with a figure and gait which left no doubt that he was a tailor by trade, barred Weinstein's way, snapping his fingers at him; then the two took to pacing the room together, shouting and chuckling in rapturous duet as they moved along, as is written: "Serve the Lord with gladness, come before His presence with singing," or "Because thou servedst not thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies." That the little tailor did not enjoy an "abundance of all things" was evident from his pinched face and broken shoes. He did not rank high enough in his trade to have even Weinstein's clerk for a customer, yet at the Pietist gatherings he addressed Weinstein himself by the familiar diminutive of his first name and sometimes helped to spank him or to pelt him with burrs out of his "gladness of heart."

Yossl Parmet—Makar's father—was tiptoeing about the crowded room, smiling and whispering fondly, as though confiding glad news to himself, but his heart was not in his prayer. He was thinking of his son and the young woman who had come to plead for him. Indeed, Yossl's piety had deserted him long since. He clung to the Pietists for the sake of the emotional atmosphere that enveloped it and from his sincere admiration of the Good Jew's personality rather than from faith. He was fond of Miriam and his heart was now torn between jealousy in her behalf and anxiety about his son.

The services over, silence fell upon the congregation. The Pietists were folding up their shawls, or eyeing the floor expectantly. The minutes were passing slowly. The stillness seemed to be growing in intensity. Presently a song broke from somebody in a corner. It was a song without words, a new tune especially composed for the occasion. Like most "Gornovo melodies" it was meant to be gay, and like all of them it was pervaded by the mixed sadness of the Exiled People and the brooding, far-away plaint of their Slavic neighbours. There is a mingling of fire and tears in the Pietist "hop." It isn't without reason that the most rabid Oppositionist of Lithuania will sing them on the Rejoicing of the Law.

The others in the room had never heard the song before, yet several of them fell to at once, seizing the tune by intuition. The rest joined in gradually, until the whole assemblage was united in chorus. The import of this kind of singing while the Good Jew is in the privacy of his room is a plea that he may issue forth and grace the crowd with his presence and "some law." They went through the tune again and again, gathering zest as they mastered its few simple bars. The melody seemed to be climbing up and down, or diving in and out; expostulating with somebody as it did so, bewailing somebody or something, appealing in the name of some dear event in the past or future. Unable to tell definitely what their tune was saying or doing, the singers craved to see the speechless song, to make out the words it seemed to be uttering, and because that was impossible their hearts were agitated with objectless sympathy and longing, and the rabbi was forgotten for awhile. They pitied the unknown man who seemed to be climbing or diving all the more because it was in their own voices that his incomprehensible words were concealed.

Little by little, however, as the novelty of the air wore off, the consciousness that they were beseeching the Man of Righteousness to come out to them blent with their yearning sympathy for their melody. They ardently believed that the Good Jew's soul had ascended on the wings of his ecstasy to the Divine Presence. All eyes were on his door. An indescribable ring of solemnity, of awe, of love and of prayer came into their voices. Their faces were transfixed with it. The melody was pouring out its very heart to the holy man.

Suddenly it all died away. The door flew open and, preceded by a stout "supervisor," appeared an elderly man with a flabby-lipped mouth and a hooked little nose. He wore a long-skirted coat of black silk with a belt of the same material wound several times round his waist, and a round cap of sable and velvet. The crowd fell apart in breathless excitement. As he advanced through the lane thus formed he was flushed and trying to conceal his embarrassment in a look of grief. He seated himself at a long table and shut his eyes. Now and then he heaved a sigh, swaying his head silently, with absorbed mien. He was supposed to be in a trance of lofty meditation, abandoned to thoughts and feelings which were to bear his soul to heaven.

The crowd was literally spellbound. Yossl Parmet was pale with unuttered sobs. He was perhaps the only man in the room who perceived that the holy man was ill at ease, and this gave him a sense of the Good Jew's childlike purity which threw him into a veritable frenzy of reverence. More than thirty years the master of multitudes and still blushing! When Yossl was a young man he had changed his Good Jews several times. He had adored them all, but he had not liked

them. His soul had found no rest until he moved to Zorki and met this Good Jew of Gornovo. Then he felt himself in the presence of absolute sincerity, of unsophisticated warmth of heart. This Good Jew was a naïve man, timid and unassertive. He had an unfeigned sense of his own supernatural powers, and was somewhat in awe of them. He felt as though there was another, a holier being within him and he feared that being in the same way as one possessed fears the unholy tenant of his soul.

Finally the Good Jew opened his eyes and began to speak. It was a simple sermon on a text taken at random from the Bible before him, but his listeners sought a hidden meaning, a mystical allusion, in the plainest of his words or [1892] gestures. Yossl could have instructed him in every branch of holy lore, yet he seized upon the exposition thirstily. In the first place, he had seen Good Jews who were even less at home in the Law than the Good Jew of Gornovo was, so that he felt grateful to him for not being a downright ignoramus. In the second place, he knew that he actually believed his own words to be inspired.

A few minutes after the sermon the Good Jew beckoned Yossl to a seat by his side. Makar's father accepted the invitation in a quiver of obsequious gratitude.

"How are you, Yossl? Any news of Feivish?"

"He's in Paris now," Yossl answered with a gesture of disrelish and speaking aloud, so that the entire crowd might hear him. He hated to tell the holy man a lie, yet he did so readily, the occasion being his best opportunity for giving the story wide circulation.

"In Paris!"

"Yes, he has been there since the beginning of summer. I have letters from him."

"Letters from Feivish!"

"He wanted to show off I suppose. Wanted his father to see he's in Paris. On my part he may go to perdition."

"What is he doing there? Studying medicine in French?"

"That's what he says in his letter. Yes, he has quite broken with Judaism, rabbi, quite a Gentile. All that is required to make the transformation complete is that he should extort bribes from Jews for allowing them to breathe. One Jew he prevents from breathing already"—pointing at himself.

The rabbi swayed his head sympathetically.

"What a misfortune! What a misfortune! Men like him could not be had for the picking."

"He has left a wound in my heart and it will not heal, rabbi. If this is the kind of doctor he is going to be, he won't [1893] make much headway. 'I had a vineyard,' rabbi," he went on in a lugubrious sing-song, quoting from Isaiah, "'I fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof and planted it with the choicest vine. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?'"

"Don't grieve, my son, I forbid you, do you hear?" the Good Jew said, limply. He was deeply touched. "Better give us a song, boys!"

The song burst forth and was taken up by the glad crowd on the lawn, some Gentiles, standing at a respectful distance, listening reverently.

Yossl had uncovered to the rabbi only part of his heart's wound. Since his son's compulsory divorce Weinstein had personified the cruelties and injustices of the whole world to him. When a couple applies for a writ of divorcement it is the duty of the rabbi to persuade them from the step. God wants no severance of the marriage bond. "When a man divorces his first wife, the altar weeps," says the Talmud. Yet Weinstein, who had so brutally extorted such a divorce from Feivish, continued to be looked upon as a pillar of the faith. All this had stirred a novel feeling, a novel trend of thought in Yossl.

The next morning Weinstein's salon was jammed with people begging for admission to the Good Jew, who was in the next room.

The scribes were busy writing applications, praying the rabbi to "awaken the great mercy of the Master of Mercies."

"My wife is ill, her name is Sarah, daughter of Tevye," one man besought. "Do be so kind. If I don't get in at once it [1894] may be too late."

Another applicant, with a crippled boy in his arms, sought a blessing for the child and himself. One father, whose son had been declared a blockhead by his teachers, wanted the Good Jew to pray that the boy might get "a good head." A white-haired man was picking a quarrel with two other Pietists who were trying to get in front of him. The old man's married daughter was childless and her husband did not care for her, so he wanted the rabbi to "give her children and grace in the eyes of her spouse." Several others wanted dowries for their marriageable daughters. That the Master of Mercies would grant the Good Jew's prayer in their daughters' behalf was all the more probable because in cases of this sort either the Good Jew himself or some of his well-to-do followers usually came to the poor man's assistance.

Yossl sat at the corner of the table watching the scene pensively when Clara entered the room. The blood rushed to his face as he recognised her, and he hastened to take her out into the road.

"What are you doing in this town so long?" he then asked, in a rage. "I thought you had left long since. What do you want of us all? Do you want to get everybody in trouble?"

"How will I get you in trouble? Am I the only Jewish woman who has come to Zorki these few days? Have I no right to be here like everybody else? Besides, it's to bid you good-bye that I want to see you now. I am going away."

Her few words, uttered with simple earnestness, had a softening effect on him.

"You look like a good girl," he said, frowning at her amicably. "Tell me frankly: are you and my son having a love [1895] affair?"

Clara coloured literally to the roots of her brown hair. She paused to regain her self-possession and then said, with a smile at once shamefaced and amused:

"It is not true, Reb Yossl. What is more, your son and I are not even acquainted."

"Can that be possible!"

"It's the absolute truth I am telling you, Reb Yossl."

He shrugged his shoulder and proceeded to question her on his son's case, on his mode of life before he was arrested, on the meaning of the struggle to which he had dedicated himself.

CHAPTER XXII.

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FROM CELLAR TO PALACE.

MEANWHILE Pavel, Mme. Shubeyko, Masha, Mlle. Andronoff and her fiancé, the near-sighted judge with the fluffy hair, went on with their plot. A considerable sum was needed to bribe the warden, the head keeper (a bustling little man who was known in the conspiracy as the Sparrow), and others. The plotters had five thousand rubles, and in order to obtain the rest without delay Pavel went so far as to take his mother into the secret. The countess received his story with a thrill of gratitude and of a sense of adventure. After a visit to the bank, she handed him ten thousand rubles in crisp rainbow-coloured one hundred ruble notes. She was pale with emotion as she did so. Her heart was deeper in his movement than he supposed. It was as if every barrier standing between her and her son had been removed. She was a comrade of his now.

"The only thing that worries me," she said for something to say, "is uncle's visits. He has not been here for some time, but if he comes, I shan't be able to look him in the face. He is a very good man at heart, Pasha."

"Still, you had better make no haste about trying to convert him," Pavel answered, with a smile, struggling with the pile of notes.

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The bulk of the sum—eight thousand rubles—was to be paid by Mme. Shubeyko to the warden, half of it in advance and the other half upon the carrying out of the project. Rodkevich pretended to receive the four thousand rubles as a loan. He barred all frank discussion of the scheme, hinting that he was scarcely a master in his own prison and that all he could do was to "overlook things under pressure of business at times." As a matter of fact, he scarcely incurred any risks.

Pavel missed Clara keenly. A feverish yearning feeling had settled in him, often moving him to tears, but he fought it bravely. Once or twice he went to the Beak and indulged in a feast of self-torture, but otherwise he worked literally day and night, seeing people, deliberating, scheming. The only manifestation of his nervousness was an exaggerated air of composure, and as this was lost on his fellow plotters, nothing was farther from their thoughts than that he experienced a sensation as though his heart were withering within his breast and that the cause of it was Clara Yavner.

When he received word of her return he said to himself, in a turmoil of joy, terror and impatience, that he could not bear it any longer and that he would tell her all the next time they were alone.

He saw her the very next day, at the trunk shop. Both blushed violently. The first minutes of their conversation were punctuated with nervous pauses, like the first talk of people who have been reconciled after a long estrangement. He said to himself: "Now is the time," and vaguely felt confident of success, yet he was still in awe of her and all he managed to do was to turn the conversation upon his mother.

"I should like you to meet her," he said. "She has heard of you."

"Your mother?" she asked in shamefaced astonishment.

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"She is a very good woman," Pavel observed, gravely. "She is in sympathy with the movement, you know, although it was only the other day I brought her the first few things to read. If it isn't asking too much I should like to introduce you to her, Clara Rodionovna. She would be delighted."

He paused, but she maintained her air of respectful curiosity, so he went on. "She is very enthusiastic. She would like to know some of the Miroslav radicals, and I took the liberty of telling her about you. I need not tell you that I spoke in a very, very general way about you."

One afternoon the Palace, which the trunk-dealer's daughter had known all her life as a mysterious, awe-inspiring world whose threshold people of her class could never dream of crossing, the Palace threw open its imposing doors to her, and she was escorted by Pavel up the immense staircase and into the favorite room of Countess Anna Nicolayevna Varoff. As it was an unheard-of thing for a Jewish girl to visit the Palace, it was agreed, as a safeguard against the inquisitiveness of the servants, that she should be known to them by such a typically Russian name as Daria Ivanovna Morosoff (Morosova).

Barring the two great statues and an ancient cabinet inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, the room was rather below her undefined anticipations. Her preconceived notion of the place soon wore off, however, under a growing sense of venerable solidity, of a quiet magnificence that was a revelation to her.

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"I'm awfully glad to know you, Clara Rodionovna, awfully," the countess said when the first formalities of greeting were over, and they were all seated. This Jewish girl was the first Nihilist she had ever met (indeed, Pavel was only "Pasha" after all), and she identified her in her mind with every revolutionary assassination and plot she had read about. She was flushed with excitement and so put out that she was playing with Pavel's fingers as she spoke, as a mother will do with those of her little boy. As to Clara, she had an oppressive feeling as though the pair of big musty statues, graceful, silent, imposing, were haughtily frowning on her presence under this roof. Pavel seemed to be a different young man. She scarcely seemed to be acquainted with him. Only the sight of Anna Nicolayevna fondling his fingers warmed her heart to both. On the other hand, her own smile won the hostess.

The countess released Pavel's hand, moved over to the other end of the sofa and huddled herself into the corner, thrusting out her graceful elbows and great pile of auburn hair. The presence of Pavel kept her ill at ease. Finally she said: "I think you had better leave us two women to ourselves, Pasha. We shall understand each other much better then, won't we, Clara Rodionovna?"

"I hope so," Clara answered, awkwardly.

Pavel withdrew. In his absence their embarrassment only increased.

The next time Clara and Pavel met, in the trunk-shop, he asked her when she would call on his mother again.

"Oh, I don't know. The point is I don't know what to do with my hands there," she said, with a laugh. "I can't seem to shake off the feeling that I am in the house of—in 'the Palace,' don't you know."

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It was a hot day, but the air in the basement was quite cool. Motl was silently painting a trunk, and Pavel was

conscious of the oppressive smell of the paint and of the impact of the brush against the wood as he answered, with pained stress in his voice.

"But my mother does not feel like a countess. She is above and beyond all such things."

"I know she is. Only I somehow don't manage to feel at home there."

"But it's only a matter of habit I am sure. You'll get over it. You won't feel that way next time. You must promise me to call to-morrow." It was as if Clara's was a superior position in life and as if that superiority lay in this, that her home was a squalid trunk-shop, while his was a palace.

"If I do, my mind will be in a whirl again," she laughed.

"Oh, it isn't as bad as all that. You must promise me to call on her."

"Can't we put it off—indefinitely?"

"Clara Rodionovna!"

His imploring voice threatened to draw from him the great yearning plea that was waiting to be heard, but this same entreating voice of his thrilled her so that she hastened to yield.

"Very well," she said.

"Will you come? Oh, it's so kind of you. I am ever so much obliged to you—but I declare I am raving like a maniac," he interrupted himself with a queer smile that forthwith lapsed into an expression of rage. "What I really want to say is that I love you."

The lines of her face hardened. Her rich complexion burst into flame. She looked gravely at nothing, as he proceeded:

"It seems to me as though I had felt that way ever since that Pievakin episode, Clara Rodionovna. I owe so much to you. If it had not been for you I might still be leading the life of a knave and an idiot. What you did on that occasion served to open my eyes and showed me the difference between light and darkness. And now it seems to me that if you were mine, it would infuse great energy and courage into me. I have got so used to seeing you, I hate to think of being apart from you for a single moment. Oh, you are so dear to me, I am so happy to sit by your side, to be allowed to say all this to you."

"You are dear to me, too," she said in great embarrassment.

He grasped her hand in silence, his face a burning amorous red.

On their way to the Beak, after another outburst from him, she spoke in measured accents, firm and sad, like the voice of fate.

"I don't know where this will lead us, for either of us or both may be arrested at any time, and then this happiness would add so much poison to the horrors of prison life. Besides, even if we are not arrested, as long as present conditions prevail our love would have to remain hidden underground, like our dear movement——"

"My mother will know it. I want her to know it; and if it is possible to tell your parents, too——"

"Oh, it would kill them. Theirs is an entirely different world."

"Then, for the present, let them be none the wiser for it. As to my mother, she likes you very, very much already and when she hears of it she will love you to distraction, Clara Rodionovna. My friends of the party will know it, too, of course, and what do we care for the rest of this wretched world? But oh, I do wish you could tell your mother, or could I speak to her?"

"Oh, that's absolutely impossible," she said in a voice vibrant with a suggestion of tears and the music of love at once. "Your mother may understand me. We can speak in the same language at least, but my poor parents—one might as well tell them I am dead. Well, when the Will of the People has scored its great victory and Russia is free, then, if we are alive, we shall announce it to my poor parents."

He picked up a stone and flung it with all his might. He was in a fidget of suppressed exultation. Now that his suspense was over, they changed parts, as it were. The gnawing gloom which had tantalised him during the past few weeks had suddenly burst forth in torrents of sunshine; whereas in her case the quiet light-hearted happiness which had been the colour of her love had given way to an infatuated heart filled with anguish.

He told his mother the news the very next morning. The explanation took place in the immense ball-room. It was a windy morning outside, and they were marching up and down the parquette of polished light oak, arm in arm. Presently they paused at one of the windows facing the garden. They could faintly hear the soughing of the wind in the trees. They stood gazing at the fluttering leaves, when he said, musingly:

"I have something to tell you, mother. I told Mlle. Yavner I loved her and I want you to congratulate me."

"Mlle. Yavner?" she asked, with a look of consternation.

"Yes, Mamma dear, I love her and she loves me and she is the dearest woman in the world and you are not going to look upon it in a manner unworthy of yourself, are you, dear little mamma mine?" He seized her fingers and fell to kissing them and murmuring: "My dear little mamma, my dear little mamma." His endearments were too much for her.

"Pasha, Pasha! What are you doing with yourself," she sobbed bitterly.

"Mamma darling! Mamma darling!" he shouted fiercely. "You are not going to give way to idiotic, brutal, Asiatic notions that are not really yours. Another year or two, perhaps less, and all Russia will be free from them and from all her chains, and then one won't have to be shocked to hear that a man and a woman who love each other and belong to each other are going to marry. Mamma dear, my darling little mamma! You are the noblest woman to be found. You are not going to go back on your son because he is trying to live like a real human being and not like a hypocrite and a brute."

She dared not cry any more.

When Clara came, the countess, turning pale, clasped her vehemently, as though pleading for mercy. Clara felt bewildered and terror-stricken, and after some perfunctory kisses she loosened her arms, but the Gentile woman detained her in an impetuous embrace, as she said: "Be good to me, both of you. He is all I have in the world." As she saw an embarrassed smile on Clara's beautifully coloured face, she bent forward with a sudden impulse and drew her to her bosom again, as though she had just made the discovery that the Jewish girl was not unlike other girls after all, that there was nothing preternatural about her person or speech. Whereupon Clara kissed her passionately and burst into tears.

The countess caressed her, poured out the innermost secrets of her heart to her. This Jewish girl whom she had

only seen once before heard from her the story of her past life, of her childhood, of her two unhappy marriages, of her thirst for comradeship with her son, of her conversion. The two women became intimate friends, although Clara spoke comparatively little.

Nevertheless, that night Anna Nicolayevna vainly courted sleep. Her heart was in her mouth. She wished she could implore her son to break the engagement, to sever connection with the movement, to abandon all his perilous and unconventional pursuits. But she knew that she would never have the courage to do so.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UNFORESEEN SUGGESTION.

PAVEL'S prediction concerning Yossl came true, but the identity of the province to which the missing medical student belonged and the one in which the unknown Nihilist had been arrested escaped the notice of the secret service, and the Zorki gendarme officer contented himself with appropriating the Paris letter. Chance, however, soon solved the riddle for the authorities: a prisoner from Zorki, a drunkard charged with petty larceny, recognised Makar in the prison yard.

It was Masha who brought the news to Pavel and Clara.

"The general of gendarmes was there, the assistant procureur, my brother and the warden," she said, describing the scene when Parmet was first addressed by his name in prison. "It was in the office. When he was brought in, my brother says his heart—my brother's heart, I mean—began to beat fast. The assistant procureur offered him a chair." She paused, with an appealing smile, her hand to her bosom. "My heart, too, is beating fearfully at this minute, as I picture the scene. I am too imaginative, I am afraid. Well, he pulled up a chair, the assistant procureur and said: 'Be seated, Monsieur Parmet.' The prisoner started a little, just a little, don't you know, and then he smiled and began to rub his eyes, as if he had just been awakened. The general got angry and said now there was no use for him to make [206] believe and to keep his mouth shut and the assistant procureur said very politely he might as well tell them a little more about himself and the people he knew in Miroslav, as they were well known to the gendarmes anyhow. They coaxed him and coaxed him and coaxed him until he shouted: 'As to myself I have the honour of being a member of the Party of the Will of the People. As to those I know in Miroslav, I assure you I don't know anybody here.' But didn't he tease them! 'I hoped to form some connections here,' he said, 'but then you were foolish enough to arrest me without giving me a chance. The St. Petersburg gendarmes will laugh at you when they hear of the kind of job you have made of it.'"

Pavel roared. He thought Makar's taunting answer would induce the local gendarme office to detain him in the hope of discovering his prospective "connections."

"Only why should he have said he was a member of the Party of the Will of the People? That will aggravate his case," Clara said.

"That was the dream of his life—to say that, and to say it triumphantly, to some gendarme officers. At any rate, we have no time to lose."

That afternoon Pavel had a talk with Makar from the top of the hill overlooking the prison yard.

"Hurrah!" Makar's handkerchief flashed back in answer to his first "hello." "They know my name. I had some fun with them."

"It was all right, only for the sake of everything that is noble, don't aggravate your case. Otherwise everything looks bright. Answer no more of their questions."

"Crazy to wag my tongue. Have not spoken so long. I am trying to make a convert of my guard. Pastime."

"Don't, for God's sake don't, or you'll ruin it all. Promise to keep silent. Do you?" [207]

"Don't get angry. I can see your handkerchief gnashing its teeth. Only one thing more. May I?"

"Hurry up."

"Here, in prison I am openly a citizen of the Social Republic, and the Czar is powerless to subdue me. I am in a cell. What more can he do with me? But here, in this cell, where his power is most complete, I openly defy him, all his gendarmes and army notwithstanding."

Pavel went away, cursing and laughing.

Every scheme of the conspirators turned out to be beset with insurmountable difficulties. Clara did not tell Pavel all she knew and made light of those obstacles with which he was acquainted, but in her own heart she was extremely uneasy.

One evening Pavel sat on a bench in front of a public house, smoking a cheap pipe. He had a loaded pistol in his pocket and a dagger under his vest. The prison was a short distance round the third corner. When one of the customers of the public house seated himself by his side Pavel engaged him in conversation, talking garrulously in the manner of a humble, careworn government clerk.

At last a way had been found for the provision man to take Makar out of the prison yard. This was what kept Pavel in this out-of-the-way spot. In the near vicinity of the inn stood a droshky. The appearance of the provision waggon, full of empty sacks and some barrels, at a corner diagonally across the street was to serve as a signal for Pavel to walk up to a deserted ditch-bridge, where the runaway was expected to emerge from under the sacks and to put on a military cap. Then Makar and Boulatoff would gain the droshky, mount it, and be driven to the Palace—the best hiding place one [208] could find in all Miroslav.

Pavel was calm, determined, ready to shoot and to be shot at. By degrees he grew fidgety. Presently Clara passed along. He rose to his feet and went off in the opposite direction, the two meeting in the next street.

"It was a fizzle to-day, but it'll be all right, Pasha," she said in a cheery, matter-of-fact voice. "As ill luck would have it, there were some people about."

Pavel's brows contracted. "He'll try again, of course."

"Certainly. He will be there in four days."

"Four days! Couldn't he make it sooner?"

"I'll let you know."

"Wait, dearest. Are you sure the people in the prison are not getting suspicious about you?" He had asked the question and she had answered it more than once before.

"I don't think they are. Mme. Shubeyko and the Sparrow are the only ones who know all about it. As to Rodkevitch, he understands it all, of course, but he pretends not to. The Sparrow has his 'bosom friend' among the keepers, but that man does not know anything about me. I am quite sure of it."

"The fewer who know what you are doing there the better, of course. Don't be foolhardy, my charming one. Oh, I do wish it was all over. Mother wants you to go to the country with her, and I should join you two for some time."

With a passionate handshake they parted, Clara directing her steps to the prison building. The tremulous solicitude of his warning, his tender concern for her safety left a glow of happiness and devotion in her. She visioned him with his pistol and dagger and her heart was crushed with anxiety. With his hot-blooded temerity he was apt to act rashly, to use violence and stake his own life and Makar's before it was necessary. Pavel's mode of taking away the prisoner had never appealed to her strongly, and now the idea was growing on her of stealing a march on Pavel, of bringing about Makar's liberation when her lover was not on hand. And the more she thought of thus repaying his loving care for herself the keener became her joy in the plan. [210]

Still, the general situation looked so discouraging, that with all her thrills of amorous delight, she was in a state of black despair. The truth of the matter was that the provision man, who was eager to earn a few hundred rubles and to be plucky, had proved to be a most unreliable, boastful coward. Clara was cudgelling her brain for some new scheme, for some new line of action, when an important suggestion came from an unforeseen quarter. Mme. Shubeyko arrived at the prison, all in a flutter with a discovery: Father Michail, the prison priest, bore considerable resemblance to Makar.

"That's so, but what of it?" Clara said between irritation and agreeable surprise.

"What of it! Why,—I have thought it all out, you may be sure of that. It all occurred to me only an hour ago. Even less," she said with that silly smile of hers which usually so annoyed Pavel and which at this moment exasperated Clara even more than it would her quick-tempered lover.

"What did occur to you?" Clara asked, with the least bit of venom on the "did."

Mme. Shubeyko started to explain, but her listener divined the rest herself: Makar might pass out in the disguise of a priest, while Father Michail was with the prisoners. [211]

"It's an excellent idea!" she murmured gravely. She could scarcely bring herself to believe that the plan had emanated from an absurd brain like that of the woman before her.

"Someone could detain Father Michail until it was all safely over," Mme. Shubeyko went on. "He's awfully fond of card-playing, and if a pretty young lady like yourself was his partner he would never have the heart to get up from the table, I know he wouldn't."

The Sparrow, however, overruled the whole plan. Father Michail had been connected with the prison for twenty years and the two gatemen knew him as they did their own wives. What was more, the day gateman and the priest were particularly fond of each other and often exchanged jokes.

Clara's hands dropped to her sides. Then she clenched a fist and said: "Oh, nonsense. He'll never know. If Father Michail did not speak to him he wouldn't think it strange, would he?"

"No, but the gateman might speak to him. Besides, you'll have to get up early to fool him, lady." Every officer in the prison building had his nickname, and this vigilant gateman who was a very fat man was known as Double Chin. He seemed to be dozing half the time; but the Sparrow assured Clara that when his little eyes were shut they saw even better than when they were open.

"Nonsense. Your imagination carries you too far. Anyhow, nothing venture, nothing have. We must get that man out."

"Ready to serve you, young lady, only if I may say so, I don't like the plan at all, young lady."

CHAPTER XXIV.

VLADIMIR FINDS HIS CAUSE.

THE next morning, as Clara walked along Kasimir Street, she saw Volodia Vigdoroff, her cousin, talking and laughing exuberantly to two elderly men in front of the flashy window of a drug store. One of his listeners wore a military uniform. It was Dr. Lipnitzky (Jewish physicians had not yet been proscribed from the Russian army)—a grey-haired, smooth-shaven, pudgy little man with three medals across his breast. It was at the Turkish war that he had won these decorations. Clara could never look at him without feeling a taste of sickness in her mouth like the one she had felt one day shortly after the war, when she was sick in bed and the little doctor, bending over, shouted to her to open her mouth wider. The best physician in town, he was the terror of his uneducated co-religionists. When a Jewish housewife paid him his fee in copper instead of silver, or neglected to wrap it up in paper, he would make an ugly scene, asking the poor woman at the top of his voice when she and others like her would learn to live like human beings. Sometimes, when a family failed to pay him altogether, pleading poverty, he would call them a lot of prevaricating knaves with a snug little hoard in the old woman's stocking, and carry off a copper pan or brass candlestick. In every case of this sort, however, the pan or the brass candlestick was sure to come back, sometimes with a ruble or two into the bargain. [212]

The other man to whom Vigdoroff was speaking was Paul Zundel, the musical autocrat of the province. He was as small of stature and as irascible as Dr. Lipnitzky—a grey-haired dandy with a Mexican complexion and a pair of long black side whiskers tipped with white. He was a graduate of a German conservatory and spoke several languages with illiterate fluency.

They were both bachelors and both were frequent visitors at the governor's house, where they were liked as much for the money they usually lost in cards (although in other houses they were known as sharp players) as for their professional services. They spent large sums on the education of Jewish children and were particularly interested in the spread of modern culture among their people. In other words, they advocated and worked for the assimilation of their people with the "deep-rooted" population. When a Talmud boy was ambitious to give up his divine studies for "Gentile books" and his old-fashioned garb for a gymnasium uniform, the two eccentric bachelors were his two stars of hope.

Vigdoroff overtook Clara as she turned the next corner. They had not met since the night when they quarrelled in front of Boyko's court.

"I didn't see you until I happened to turn round," he said.

"He is trying to prove that he is not afraid of being seen in my company," she thought to herself, as she said aloud: "I saw you talking to Dr. Lipnitzky and Zundel."

They walked in silence a few steps. Then he uttered with a smile:

"Have you taken a vow to give us a wide berth?"

"Not at all." [213]

"Father and mother are always at me for it. They think I am to blame for your sudden estrangement."

"Nobody is to blame, and there is no estrangement. Why use such words?"

"Is it only a matter of words? They are accustomed to look upon you and me as brother and sister. Do you deny that our roads have parted?"

"If they have, then, what need is there of writing at the bottom of the picture: 'This is a lion?'" she asked testily. "If it's a lion it's a lion."

"Would it be better to shut one's eyes to the truth? As for me, common ordinary mortal that I am, I try to call a spade a spade."

He spoke with venom, but it was all perfunctory and they were both aware of it. Then he described, with exaggerated ardour, the successes achieved by the Pupils' Aid Society in which he was now actively interested.

Since their talk on the bench in front of Boyko's Court he had been longing for some humanitarian cause, for one unassociated with the hazards of the revolutionary movement. He would prove to Clara that he was no inferior creature. Her taunt that he had seized upon the Jewish question, in the course of their debate, merely as a drowning man seizes at a straw, and the implication that no phase of the problem of human suffering made the slightest appeal to him had left a cruel sting in his heart. Since then his thoughts had often turned upon the Jewish question, until he found his "cause" in the dissemination of Russian culture among his people. Formerly he had been contented with being "assimilated" himself. Now he was going to dedicate his best energies to the work of lessening that distance between Jew and Gentile, which was, so he argued, the source of all the woes of his race. As good luck would have it, there was such a thing as difference of opinion. "It is not anxiety about my 'precious skin,'" he would picture himself saying to Clara, "that keeps me from reading underground prints. Did I believe in them I should do as you do. But if you think I live for myself only you don't know me. I have another cause, one to which my convictions call me and to which I am going to give all that is in me." [214]

"And you?" he asked. "Still planting a paradise on earth?"

She smiled.

"Well, as for me, I content myself with working on such a humble beginning as a little bridge across the gap between Jew and Gentile."

He consciously led the way past a Gentile of enormous bulk, who stood in the doorway of a furrier's shop. It was Rasgadayeff, the landlord of the Vigdoroffs' residence, he himself occupying the inner building on the same courtyard. He was a wealthy merchant with the figure of a barrel and arms that looked as though they had been hung up to dry, an impetuous Great-Russian, illiterate and good-hearted, shrewd in making money, but with no sense of its value when it came to spending it. Every other week he went off on a hideous spree, and then, besides smashing costly mirrors, which is the classical sport of the drunken Great-Russian merchant, he would indulge in such pastimes as offering a prize to every ten-year-old boy who would drain a tumbler of vodka, setting fire to live horses or wrecking the furniture in his own house. On such days his wife often sought shelter with the Vigdoroffs for fear of being beaten to death. Until a few years ago he had stood at the head of the fur trade. Since then a Jewish dealer, who went off on no sprees, had been a formidable competitor to him. Rasgadayeff now hated Jews in general as he had never done before. The Vigdoroffs were an exception. He was sincerely fond of the whole family, and entrusted the old man with some of his most important business secrets. [215]

"Our humblest regards to Clara Rodionovna!" he said, with gay suavity, taking off his hat. "As also to Vladimir

Alexandrovich!”

They returned the salute, and were about to pass on, but he checked them.

“A rose of a girl, I tell you that,” he went on, addressing himself to Vladimir, while he looked at the girl with rather offensive admiration. “Young men are fools nowadays. If I were one of them I should take no chances with a lassie like that. A plum, a bouquet, a song-bird of a mademoiselle. I should propose and get her and waste no time, or—one, two, three, and the lovey-dovey may be snapped up by some other fellow.”

Clara, who was accustomed to this sort of pleasantry from him, scarcely heard what he said. She was smilingly making ready to bow herself away, when her cousin asked of the Great-Russian:

“And how is her Illustriousness? Have you seen her lately?”

“She was here yesterday. Quite stuck on you, Vladimir Alexandrovich. Sends humblest regards. ‘When is your learned young friend going to call,’ she says. You have a sage of a cousin, Clara Rodionovna, an eagle of a fellow, a cabinet minister!”

“All right,” Vladimir returned, with an amused smile, yet reddening with satisfaction.

[2416] Clara remarked to herself that her cousin was flaunting his successes with Gentiles before her. When they resumed their walk she inquired reluctantly:

“Who is ‘her Illustriousness’?”

“Oh, that’s that lame tramp of a woman, Princess Chertogoff,” he rejoined, with gestures of contempt and amusement, yet inwardly tingling with vanity at his acquaintance with her impecunious “Illustriousness.” The wealthy Great-Russian was a large holder of Princess Chertogoff’s promissory notes, and it was at his house where Vladimir had met her on several occasions. The lame noblewoman knew that Rasgadayeff was fond of the Vigdoroffs. When she saw the young man last she had, by way of currying favour with her creditor, asked the educated son of his “favourite Jew” to call on her whenever he was in the mood for it, and to “let her hear what was going on among wise men and authors.”

Vladimir and Clara passed on. He spoke of Rasgadayeff’s latest escapades and Clara listened with little bursts of merriment, but their voices did not ring true. Presently they exchanged greetings with Ginsburg, the notorious money-lender of Miroslav, a small, red-headed man with crumpled cheeks and big bulging eyes.

“Here is another treat for you!” Vladimir said, in high spirits. “Another specimen of moral perfection. Some gigantic hand must have grabbed him by the head, squeezing it like a paper ball till the eyes started from their sockets, and then thrown him into a waste basket. That’s the way he looks.” She smiled awkwardly.

He then called her attention to two bewigged old women, both of them apparently deaf, who were talking into each other’s ear, and then to the picturesque figure of a dumpy little shoemaker with a new, carefully-shined pair of topboots in his hand. Clara had never been interested in things of this sort, but this time, in her eagerness to get away, added to a growing sense of awkwardness, his observations literally grated on her nerves. At last, when they reached a crossing, she stopped, putting out her hand. [2417]

“Somebody is waiting for me,” she said. “Remember me to uncle and aunt, will you?”

“I will. Won’t you look in at all?” As she turned to take the side street, he added: “Our roads do part, then.”

Her appointment was with Orlovsky. She had not attended the gatherings of the Circle at his house for a considerable time. He conjectured that she was engaged in some revolutionary undertaking of importance. He had missed her so abjectly that he had finally decided to avow his love. This was what he had made the appointment for. When she came, however, he cowed before her rich complexion and intelligent eyes and talked of the affairs of the Circle. A similar attempt at a love declaration was made that evening by Elkin, with similar results. By way of opening the conversation he indulged in a series of virulent taunts upon her long absence and the great revolutionary secrets that he said were written on her face, after which his efforts to turn the conversation into romantic channels proved futile. He came away agonised with jealousy. He was jealous of the girl and he was jealous of the mysterious conspiracy in which she seemed to be engaged and into which he, her revolutionary sponsor, had not been initiated.

As to Vigdoroff, he was seized with a desire to avail himself of Princess Chertogoff’s invitation, not merely to gratify his personal ambition, but also, so he assured himself, as part of his “cause.” On his way thither he paused once or twice in front of shop windows to ascertain whether his face was not strikingly Semitic. “Not offensively so, anyhow,” he concluded before a mirror at the entrance to a furniture store. The mirror reflected a well-made, athletic-looking young man one could have told for a college man through a veil. The picturesque irregularity of his features, somewhat flat in the middle of the face, drew an image of culture, of intellectual interest. He felt on his mettle. He would make a favourable impression, and that impression was to be another step across the distance not only between Gentile society and himself, but between all Jews and all Gentiles. His visit to the noblewoman was a mission. He was in an exalted mood. [2418]

At the house of Princess Chertogoff he found a cavalry officer and an officer of the imperial guards. He was received with patronising urbanity. The hostess introduced the two young officers as her sons, come from St. Petersburg to take a glimpse at their old mother, and Vigdoroff as “one of the brilliant young intellects of our town.” This was her excuse before her sons for having invited a Jew to the house and Vigdoroff was not unaware of it. The cavalryman’s face was round and stern, while his brother’s was oblong and smiling. When they were drunk, which happened quite often, their faces would swap expressions. It was chiefly owing to their expensive escapades that their mother’s fortune had passed into the coffers of usurers. The two uniformed men left almost immediately, pleading a pressing engagement.

The welcome Vladimir found at this house was one extended by a patroness of the fine arts to a devotee of letters. It was not long before Vigdoroff found himself fully launched on a favourite subject. Russia’s supremacy in modern literature and her false modesty became clearer to him with every new work of fiction that came from the foreign masters. The best models of the German, French or English novel were tainted with artificiality. Russia alone produced stories that were absolutely free from powder and rouge. He dwelt on Zola’s *L’Assommoir* and Daudet’s *Nabob*, both of which had appeared a short time before, and each of which was looked upon as its author’s masterpiece. He saw that his hostess neither understood nor cared for these things; that he was making a fool of himself; yet, being too ill at ease to stop, he went sliding down hill. He spoke by heart as it were, the sound of his own voice increasing his embarrassment. [2419]

The princess was listening with an air of pompous assent, barely following the general drift of his talk. Her majestic crutches terrified him.

A man servant brought in a silver samovar and a tray of Little-Russian cookies. As Vigdoroff took up his glass of tea the princess said:

“I did not know you were so much of a Russian patriot. Quite an unusual thing in an educated young man these days. I certainly agree with you that Turgeneff is a good writer. He is perfectly charming.”

Later on she asked, with lazy curiosity and in her pampered enunciation:

“Do you really think our novelists greater than the great writers of France?”

“I certainly do.”

“That’s interesting,” she said, preparing to get rid of him.

“You see, the average Russian represents a remarkable duality. He is simple-hearted and frank, like a child, yet he is possessed of an intuitive sense of human nature that would be considered marvellous in a sage. In addition, he is the most soulful fellow in the world, and to turn his soul inside out, to himself as well as to others, is one of his ruling passions. That accounts for the inimitable naturalness and the ardent human interest of our literature. Whether Russia knows how to construct machinery or not, she certainly knows how to write.”

“You do love Russia, and literature, too”—yawning demonstratively. “I had an idea Hebrews were only interested in money matters.” She smiled, an embarrassed smile in which there was as much malice as apology, and dismissed him quite unceremoniously.

He got into the street with his face on fire. It was as if he had been subjected to some brutal physical indignities. “‘I didn’t know you were so much of a Russian patriot,’” he recalled in his agony. “Of course, I’m only a Jew, not a Russian. It makes no difference how many centuries my people have lived and suffered here. And I, idiot that I am, make a display of my love for Gogol, Turgeneff, Dostoyevski, as if I, ‘a mere Jew,’ had a right to them! She must have thought it was all affectation, Jewish cunning. As if a Jew could care for anything but ‘money matters.’ The idea of one of my race caring for books, and for Gentile books, too!”

He was as innocent of the world of money as was Clara’s father. As to the great Russian writers, they were not merely favourite authors with him. They were saints, apostles, of a religion of which he was a fervent devotee. This, in fact, was the real “cause” which he had mutely served for the past six or seven years. Their images, the swing and rhythm of their sentences, the flavour of their style, the odour of the pages as he had first read them—all this was a sanctuary to him. Yet he had always felt as if he had no right to this devotion, as if he were an intruder. This was the unspoken tragedy of his life.

Since a boy of ten, when he entered the gymnasium, he had been crying out to Russia, his country, to recognise a child in him—not a step-child merely. And just because he was looked upon as a step-child he loved his native land even more passionately than did his fellow-countrymen of Slavic blood.

Alexander, or Sender, Vigdoroff, Vladimir’s father, was known among his co-religionists as Sender the Arbitrator. His chief source of income was petition-writing and sundry legal business, but the Jews of Miroslav often submitted their differences to him. These he settled by the force of an imperturbable and magnetic disposition rather than through any special gift of judgment and insight. He was full of anecdotes and inaggressive humour. It was said of him that people who came to his house obdurate and bitter “melted like wax” in his sunny presence. As a rule, indeed, it was the contending parties themselves who then found a way to an amicable solution of the point at issue, but the credit for it was invariably given to Sender the Arbitrator, and his reputation for wisdom brought him some Gentile patrons in addition to his Jewish clientele. His iron safe always contained large sums in cash or valuables entrusted to him by others. When a young couple were engaged to be married the girl’s marriage-portion was usually deposited with Sender the Arbitrator. When security was agreed upon in connection with some contract the sum was placed in the hands of Sender the Arbitrator.

His stalwart figure, blond, curling locks and toothless smile; his frilled shirt-front, everlasting brown frock-coat and huge meerschaum cigar-holder—all this was as familiar to the Jews of Miroslav as the public buildings of their town. The business of petition-writing was gradually passing into the hands of younger and better educated men, graduated lawyers regularly admitted to the bar, and his income was dwindling. “I could arbitrate any misunderstanding under the sun except the one between Luck and myself,” he used to say, smiling toothlessly. Still, he made a comfortable income, and money was spent freely not only on his household but on all sorts of hangers-on. Vladimir’s education cost him more than his means warranted. Besides keeping him at the gymnasium and then at the university he had hired him private teachers of French, German and music. “There are a thousand Gentiles to every Jew,” was one of his sayings. “That’s why every Jew should possess as much intelligence as a thousand Gentiles. Else we shall be crushed.” He was something like a connecting link between the old world and the new. He had a large library, mostly made up of German and Hebrew books. His house was the haunt of “men of wisdom,” that is, people who wrote or thought upon modern topics in the language of Isaiah and Jeremiah, free-thinkers whose source of inspiration were atheistic ideas expounded in the Holy Tongue; yet on Saturday nights his neighbours would gather in his drawing room to discuss foreign politics and to chant psalms in the dark. He had the head of an agnostic and the heart of an orthodox Jew.

It was late in the afternoon when Vladimir reached home. His father was in the library, which was also his office, conversing with his copyist—a dapper little man whom his employer described as “an artistic penman and an artistic fool.” The windows were open. The room was filled with twilight and with warm air that seemed to be growing softer and more genial every minute.

“Is that you, Volodia?” the old man asked.

Volodia only nodded. It was easy to see that he was dejected. His father became interested and dismissed the clerk.

“Anything the matter, Volodia?” he asked.

“Nothing is the matter.” An answer of this sort usually indicated that the young man was burning to unbosom himself of something or other and that he needed some coaxing to do so. Intellectually the mutual relations of father and son were of a rather peculiar nature. Each looked up to the other and courted his approbation without the other being aware of it. Their discussions often had the character of an epigram-match.

When Volodia had told his father of his experience at the house of the lame princess, the old man said:

“I see you are quite excited over it. As for me, that penniless spendthrift reminds me of the pig that mistook the

nobleman's backyard for the interior of his mansion. The backyard was all the pig had seen of the place, and money-lenders are the only kind of Jews that lame drone has ever had an occasion to know. That she should mistake a handful of usurers for the whole Jewish people is the most natural thing in the world."

"Oh, but they are all like that, father. Unfortunately the Jewish people are just the opposite of women in this respect. Women have a knack of flaunting all that is prepossessing and of concealing that which is unattractive in them. If the Gentiles see none but the worst Jews there are we have ourselves to blame."

"But they don't care to see any other Jews. As a rule, the good Jew has no money to lend. They have no use for him. [224] More than half of our people are hard-working mechanics on the verge of starvation. Do you expect an ornament like your Princess Chertogoff and her precious sons to make *their* acquaintance? Of the rest the great majority are starving tradesmen, teachers, Talmudists, dreamers. Would you have a Gentile reprobate go to these for a loan?"

Vladimir sat silent awhile, gazing through the open window at the thickening dusk. Then he said, listlessly at first, but gathering ardour from the relish he took in his own point:

"You are as unjust to the good Gentiles as they are to the good Jews. What is needed is more understanding between the two. If the dreamers and scholars you refer to could speak Russian and looked less antediluvian than they do the prejudice that every Jew is a money-lender would gradually disappear. As it is, Jew and Gentile are like two apples that come in mutual contact at a point where they are both rotten."

"The Jewish apple was originally sound, Volodia. It's through association with their Gentile neighbours that they have been demoralised—at the point of contact; our faults are theirs; our virtues are our own."

"Oh, this is a very one-sided view to take of it, father," Volodia rejoined, resentfully. What he coveted was consolation, not an attack on everything that he held dear, that was the soul of his best years and ambitions. His father's light-hearted derision of the entire Russian people irritated him. "If some Jews become demoralised through contact with Gentile knaves, other Jews are uplifted, ennobled, sanctified by coming under the influence of the great Russian thinkers, poets, friends of the people," he went on, emphasising his words with something like a feeling of [225] spite. "Yours is an extremely one-sided view to take, father."

The elder Vigdoroff was cowed. He felt himself convicted of narrow-mindedness, of retrogression, of fogyism, and by way of disproving the charge he put up a defence that was disguised in the form of an attack. Vladimir replied bitterly, venting his misery on his father. The two found themselves on the verge of one of those feuds which sometimes divided them for days without either having the courage to take the first step toward a reconciliation, but their discussion was broken by the appearance of a servant carrying a lamp. She was followed by Vladimir's mother, a mountain of shapeless, trembling flesh with a torpid, wide-eyed look. In the yellow light the family likeness between father and son came pleasingly into view. Only the face of the one had a touch of oriental quaintness in it, while the other's was at once mellowed and intensified by the tinge of modern culture. Clara's mother was a sister of the elder Vigdoroff, but she resembled him only slightly. The girl's features suggested her uncle far more than they did her mother.

"Never mind the lamp," the Arbitrator said somewhat irately.

"Never mind the lamp!" his wife said, fixing her torpid eyes on him. "Are you crazy? Don't mind him"—to the servant girl. The servant girl set the lamp down on the table and withdrew, her big fleshy mistress taking a seat by her son's side.

"Go about your business," her husband said, good-naturedly. "You are disturbing our discussion. I was just getting started when you came in and spoiled the job. Go. There may be some beggar-woman waiting for you in the kitchen."

She made a mocking gesture without stirring, and her husband resumed his argument. [226]

She was one of a very small number of Jewish women who attended divine service on week-days. She was the game of every woman pedlar and beggar in town, with whom she usually communed when her husband was out. When not thus occupied, buying useless bargains or listening to some poor woman's tale of woe, she would spend much of her time in her big easy chair, dozing over a portly psalter. Her husband was perpetually quizzing her on her piety and her surreptitious bargains. On Fridays, when beggars came in troops for their pennies, the Arbitrator would sometimes divert himself by encouraging some of them to fall into line more than once.

CHAPTER XXV.

CLARA BECOMES “ILLEGAL.”

LATE the next afternoon Mme. Shubeyko called at the warden’s house with a blue silk handkerchief round her face, apparently suffering from a swollen cheek or toothache.

An hour or more later, while she and Rodkevich were absorbed in a game of cards in the parlour and a solitary star shone out of the semi-obscurity of a colorless sky, Makar, clean-shaven and clad as a woman, with a blue handkerchief round his face, advanced toward the gate. Clara stood in the doorway of the warden’s office, watching the scene. “Double Chin,” the gateman, was still on duty, and as the disguised prisoner approached him the impersonation struck her as absurdly defective. Another second and all would be lost with a crash. Her heart stood still. She shut her eyes with a sick feeling, but the next instant she sprang forward, bonnetless, addressing Makar by Mme. Shubeyko’s name.

“You must not forget to let us know, dear,” she said aloud, placing herself between him and the gateman and shutting the disguised man from view. “A swollen gum is a dangerous thing to neglect, you know. Yes, figs and milk. I’ll see you down the road, dear.”

The heavy key groaned in the lock, the ponderous gate swung open and Makar and Clara walked out into the twilight of the street—he with a rush of joy, she in a turmoil of triumph and despair. It seemed as if he had never vividly hoped to see liberty, and now, suddenly, he had found himself breathing the very breath of it; while she who, a minute ago, could have walked freely through the streets, was now the quarry of that terrible force called government. [226]

As soon as they reached the ditch, a short distance from the prison building, Makar pulled off his feminine attire, threw it under the little foot-bridge, and put on a government official’s cap. Masha, the gendarme officer’s sister, was to await him round the corner; her house was within easy reach from here, and Makar was to be taken there to change his disguise and then to be driven to the Palace; but it had all come about much sooner than they had expected, and she had not yet arrived.

“Never mind. Hire a cab to Cucumber Market,” Clara said. “There you can cross some streets in the opposite direction and then take another cab direct for Theatre Square. A very short walk will bring you to the Palace. Don’t forget the names: First Cucumber Market and then Theatre Square,” she repeated, coolly.

He nodded with a reassuring smile, shook her hand warmly, and they parted.

Double Chin was soon to be relieved. Had he left his post before the guards missed Makar, the connection existing between Mme. Shubeyko’s toothache and Makar’s escape would never have been discovered, and Clara would have come out uncompromised. But Clara was too slow in returning, and the fat gateman was an impressionable, suspicious man, so he presently made inquiry. He found that Mme. Shubeyko was still in the warden’s parlour, nursing her cheek with one hand and holding her cards with the other. [227]

In the commotion that followed the discovery Rodkevich wept hysterically and beat the gateman, while Mme. Shubeyko went about invoking imprecations upon the sly prisoner for stealing her new spring cloak, bonnet and parasol.

Meanwhile Clara stood at a point of vantage, watching developments. Had Double Chin left the building at the usual hour, without the prison betraying any signs of disquiet, she would have returned to her room in the warden’s house at once, and thus saved her legal existence. Otherwise she would have been forced to escape and join the army of the “ne-legalny” (illegal), of political outlaws like the majority of Pavel’s intimate friends in St. Petersburg. About twenty minutes had elapsed from the time she had parted from Makar, when she saw human figures burst from the prison-gate, accompanied by the violent trill of a police whistle. Her heart sank at the sound. From this minute on Miroslav would be forbidden ground to her. A *ne-legalny* is something neither dead nor alive, the everlasting prey of gendarmes, policemen, spies—of the Czar himself, it seemed; a “cut-off slice;” an outcast without the right of being either an outcast or a member of the community, a creature without name, home or identity. She was appallingly forbidding to herself. But then in the underground world *ne-legalny* is a title of indescribable distinction, and at this moment Clara seemed to feel in her own person the sanctity which she had been wont to associate with the word.

By ridding herself of her starched collar and ribbon and hastily rearranging her hair into a coarse, dishevelled knot she was sufficiently transformed to look like a young woman of the masses to strangers. She could not go to the Palace without a hat, however, and buying one at this hour would have attracted undesirable attention. So she first went to the house of Beile, her uneducated sister. Her father’s address or full name being unknown at the prison, it would be some time before the police came to look for her at her sister’s. [228]

Beile was a little woman of thirty with glowing dark eyes and a great capacity for tears and nagging. She resembled her parents neither in looks nor in character, and her mother often wondered “whence she came into the family.” Her husband, a man learned in the Talmud, was absorbed day and night in an effort to build up a small business in hides. As a consequence, the space under Beile’s bed was usually occupied with raw skins and the two-room apartment which they shared with a tailor was never free from odours of putrefaction.

Clara entered the room with a smile. The first thing she did was to kiss and slap Ruchele, her sister’s little girl, and to tickle her baby brother under the chin.

“Why, where is your hat?” Beile screamed in amazement.

Her own hat was a matronly bonnet which she never wore except on Saturdays, when she would put it on over her wig, tying its two long, broad ribbons under her chin.

“It blew off into the river as I was crossing the bridge,” Clara replied. “That’s what brings me here. I want you to get me a hat, Beile, but you must do it quickly.”

“Are you crazy? Whatever is the matter with you, Clara? Whoever heard of a girl taking so little care of her hat that it should drop into the water? You don’t think you are a daughter of Rothschild, do you? Did you ever!”

“That’s all right, Beile. We’ll talk it all over some other time. Every minute is of great value to me.” [231]

Beile thought her sister was in a hurry to attend a lesson, so she started. As she reached the door, with the baby in her arms, she couldn’t help facing about again.

“Didn’t you go down the bank to look for it?” she asked.

“But I am telling you I have not a moment’s time now.”

The more irritation she betrayed, the more the other was tempted to nag her.

“But somebody must have picked it up. It cost you five rubles and you’ve not worn it ten times.”

“Beile! Beile!” Clara groaned.

“Tell me where it is. I’ll go and look for it myself. Maybe it is not yet too late. Lord of the World, five rubles!”

Clara was left with Ruchele, but she changed her mind.

“I think I’ll wait at Motl’s house,” she said, overtaking her sister, with the child by her side. “It’s nearer to my lesson.”

Motl, the trunk-finisher employed by their mother, lived a considerable distance from here. Beile gave her a look full of amazement and dawning intelligence.

“At Motl’s!” she whispered, sizing up Clara’s dishevelled appearance. “Where is your collar? A rend into my heart! What have you been doing to yourself? Anyhow, go to Motl’s. Or, no, go to Feige’s. That’s much better. I’ll bring you a hat in ten minutes.” Feige was a poor old relative of Beile’s by marriage.

When Clara, in a large shepherdess hat and genteel looking, bade her sister a hurried good-bye and made for the open gate, Ruchele ran after her, yelling so that her mother had to catch her in her arms and carry her gagged indoors. That was the only adventure Clara encountered on her way to the Palace.

Makar was not there.

She told Pavel of the rescue in general outline, explaining that an unexpected opportunity had presented itself and that there had been no time for sending word to him. He flew into a rage. So far from being the central figure in the affair for which he had been priming himself these many weeks he had been left out of it altogether, left out like a ninny caught napping. But this was no time for wounded pride. Clara had unexpectedly become a *ne-legalny* and—what was of more immediate concern—what had become of Makar?

“I hope he was not taken in the street,” he whispered.

“Masha might know. Could you send Onufri?”

Pavel disliked to use the old hussar for errands of this nature, but in the present juncture there seemed to be no way out of it.

Onufri brought back a note in which the words were all but leaping with excitement.

“No! No! No!” Masha wrote. “He has not been caught. My brother has not yet been home. Everybody is nearly crazy! But I can almost see my brother chuckling—in his heart of course! Hurrah! Hurrah! Long live the revolution!”

“Thank God!” said Clara, shutting her eyes, in a daze of relief.

“He’s a trump, after all. If they haven’t caught him so far I don’t see why he should be caught now. He may come in at any moment. But where can he be?”

The next morning, at about ten o’clock, when the countess heard the doorbell she declared, with intense agitation, that something told her it was the governor, and so it was. Clara went into her room.

“Don’t leave me for a moment, Pasha,” Anna Nicolayevna entreated her son. “I am afraid to face him alone. I should be sure to put my foot in it, if I did.”

“Just leave uncle to me,” said Pavel.

The old man looked wan and haggard, and was blinking harder than ever. He began by joking Pasha on the rarity of his visits at the gubernatorial mansion, but the young man cut him short.

“By the way, uncle, is it true that that fellow, the Nihilist, has escaped?” he asked.

“How did it reach you so soon?” the governor asked. “The town must be full of it.”

“I heard it from a cab-driver last night. It’s awful. But how did he get out? Say what you will, they are a clever set, those Nihilists.”

“Clever nothing! Our gendarmes are the most stupid lot on God’s earth. That’s where the trouble comes in. There was a governess at the warden’s house. It was she who seems to have managed the whole affair. Of course, the warden is a scoundrel, but what does he know of these things? It’s for the gendarme office to scent a bird of that variety, but then the gendarme office is made up of rogues and blockheads. To clip one’s wings, that’s all they are good for. Wherever one turns, he bumps his head against the ‘independent power’ of the gendarmerie. It’s a government within a government, that’s what it is. Else one would be able to show St. Petersburg that Miroslav was not the kind of place for Nihilists and all sorts of ragamuffins to play the mischief with. Those swaggering gendarmes go around poking their noses everywhere, smelling nothing but their own grand epaulets, and yet they are beyond the control of civil authorities. The consequence is that when something happens somebody else is held responsible, because the prisons, forsooth, are under the Department of the Interior! To set an example of idleness and stupidity is all they seem to be needed for, the gendarmes; that’s all, that’s all.”

Pavel agreed with him.

Another week passed. The police and the gendarmes were still searching for Makar and the governess, as much in the dark as ever.

Yossl Parmet, Makar’s father, was brought to Miroslav a prisoner, but he was soon discharged. He was proud of his son. He now fully realised that his Feivish belonged to a secret society made up of educated people who preached economic equality and universal brotherhood as well as political liberty, and that they were ready to go to prison for their ideas. This made a strong appeal to his imagination and sympathies, and the fact that his Feivish had outwitted the authorities and escaped from prison inclined him to shouts of triumphant laughter. He searched the Talmud for similar sentiments, and he found no stint of passages which lent themselves to favourable interpretation. A new vista of thought and feeling had opened itself to Yossl.

CHAPTER XXVI.

[235]

ON SACRED GROUND.

IN 1648, when Chmyelnicki's Cossacks slaughtered 40,000 Jews, Miroslav was among the cities that fell into their blood-dripping hands. It was a small town then; the Jewish population did not exceed eight hundred, but these unanimously decided to be slain rather than abandon their faith. Not a man, woman or child was spared. The scene of the slaughter, a small square in the vicinity of Cucumber Market, is sacred ground to the Jews of Miroslav. The Bloody Spot they call it reverently. A synagogue stands there and ten recluses find shelter under its roof, so that the Word of God may be heard with unbroken continuity within its walls. If this house of prayer and divine study were to fall silent for a single minute, say the children of the town, the blood of the slain Jews would burst into a roar of sobbing that could be heard for seven miles.

But the ten recluses were not the only Talmudists in the place. The Old Synagogue, as it was generally called, was the favourite haunt of scholars. It was here where Rabbi Rachmiel, Clara's father, spent every day and evening in the week except Saturdays and holidays.

It was about eight o'clock of a warm evening, several days after the disappearance of the political prisoner. The Old Synagogue was filled with people. The evening service was over. Candles flickered on gaunt, tallow-stained reading-desks and blazing oil-lamps dangled from the ceiling. The recluses were freely gossiping or snoozing; there were so many others to do the holy work—a medley of voices and melodies—from the enthusiastic soprano of the schoolboy to the dignified drone of the elderly merchant; from the conscious, over-elaborate intonation of the newly-married young man to the absorbed murmur of the tattered old scholar. As to the Talmudists themselves, they found stimulating harmony in this chaos. To them it was as if the synagogue itself were singing in a hundred voices, an inspired choir that quickened one's intellectual passions and poured fire into one's gesticulations.

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One of the younger men in the crowd was Makar. Seated in a snug corner, with his reading-desk tilted against his breast, he was sincerely absorbed in a passage on the slaying of cattle. The treatise is one of the most intricate in the Talmud, and he had taken it up as he might a game of chess. The lower part of his face was buried in the sloping surface of a huge long book, the handle of a tin candlestick hooked to the top of the folio. The flame of a guttering candle threw a stream of light upon his dusky high forehead and heavy black eyebrows. Slightly rocking the desk, he intoned the Chaldaic text and the Yiddish interpretations, listening to his own sing-song as one listens, at some distance, to a familiar voice.

Rabbi Rachmiel, Clara's father, was studying quietly in a corner, in peaceful ignorance of the mad hunt that was going on for his daughter at this moment. That this red-bearded little man was the father of the Nihilist girl who had brought about his escape Makar had not the least idea.

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After bidding Clara good-bye on the evening of his rescue, he had taken the first cab he came across, getting off at Cucumber Market, as directed. After zig-zagging about for five minutes, he was going to hail another cab, but checked himself because the man proved to be the same who had brought him to Cucumber Market. A boy stopped to look at him, whereupon he made up his mind that the official cap which he wore (and which had been expected to give him the appearance of a teacher in a government school for Jews) scarcely went well with his face, and that it must be this cap of his which had attracted the boy's attention. He therefore went to a capmaker's shop and bought an ordinary cap, such as is worn by the average old-fashioned Jew, explaining to the artisan that it was for his father, who had his size. This part of the town he knew well, for it was in the centre of the Jewish quarter, not many minutes' walk from his former lodgings. The Old Synagogue was in the same neighbourhood, and it flashed upon him to seek temporary refuge in the celebrated house of worship and learning. Living in such a place was like hiding in the depths of the Fourth Century—the age of the Talmud, which was still the soul of the Ghetto, still the fountain-head of the spiritual and intellectual life of the orthodox Jew. He would be in his native element there, at any rate, and would certainly feel more comfortable than amid the imposing interiors of a noblewoman's mansion. On his way to the synagogue he twisted the hair at his temples till he looked as he used to, before he left Zorki. As to his shave, he prepared an explanation: he was subject to a species of skin disease that made shaving unavoidable.

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The assistant beadle at the Old Synagogue was a man with a luxurious white beard. He was not learned in the Talmud himself, but he had served in the great "house of study" so long that he was familiar with the titles of the various volumes and sections in the same way as an old servant at a medical college is familiar with anatomical nomenclature. He danced attendance on every diligent scholar, and was the terror of every boy who romped or talked "words of daily life" over his holy book. He was in charge of the synagogue library and the candle supply. His salary was no larger than that of a street labourer, yet he had the appearance of a stern, prosperous merchant.

When Makar first applied for a book and a candle the assistant beadle cast a knowing look at his smooth-shaven face, and then, handing him the volume, said:

"You are in the army, aren't you?"

"How do you know, by my shaved face?" Makar asked, sadly.

The assistant beadle smiled assent. The skin-disease story proved unnecessary.

"There is many a Talmudist among soldiers nowadays," the old man said. "To think of a Child of Law having to live in military bondage, to wear a uniform, to shave and to handle a gun!" He regarded Makar as a martyr. When he saw him reading his book in a pleasing, absorbed sing-song, he paused and watched him with a look of paternal admiration.

"Do you belong here?" he asked later.

"No." He named the first town that came to his tongue.

"Have you relatives here?"

"No. But I have obtained a furlough and am going home. I am waiting for a letter and some money. I have left my uniform with a friend."

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The assistant beadle asked Makar for news—whether there were any rumours of some new war, or of some fresh legislation affecting the condition of Jews. The query was made on the supposition that Makar, as a member of the Czar's army and one who saw so many officers, could not be unfamiliar with what was going on "up above"; and Makar appeased the old man's curiosity with some suitable bits of information. The assistant beadle was particularly interested in the story of a certain colonel, a bitter anti-Semite, who used to beat the Jews in his regiment because a Jewish money-lender had him under his thumb. Now this "Jews' enemy" lay in bed, stricken with paralysis—a clear case of divine reckoning. Did Makar know him? Makar said he did.

The discussion was interrupted by the appearance of a bewigged woman with a pound of candles, in commemoration of the anniversary of a death. She wanted to make sure that they were going to be used for diligent study and not to be thrown away on loafers, and the assistant beadle told her that it would be all right and that she had better go home and put the children to bed. Another woman, whose boy was studying in a corner, was watching his gesticulations with beaming reverence. She had an apple for him and a copper coin for the assistant beadle, and when she saw Makar looking at her son, she said, nodding her head blissfully:

"Praised be the Master of the World. It is not in vain that I am toiling. The boy will be an adornment to my old age."

Later in the evening a woman burst into the synagogue, lamenting and wringing her hands. She besought the recluses to pray for her newly-married daughter, who was on her death-bed. Makar was deeply touched. He felt like a foreigner amid these scenes that had once been his own world, and the consciousness of it filled him with melancholy. [240]

He slept at the synagogue. After the service next morning he sent out a boy for some bread, butter and pot cheese, and at two o'clock a devout widow brought him, at the assistant beadle's recommendation, a pot of soup and boiled meat. He ate his dinner with Talmudistic bashfulness, the woman looking on piously, and mutely praying to heaven that her dinner might agree with the holy man and give him strength for the study of God's laws.

Toward evening he ventured out on a stroll through the spacious courtyard which lay between the Old Synagogue and several other houses of worship. In this yard was a great octagonal basin, celebrated for its excellent tea water, with moss-grown spouts and chained wooden dippers. He watched the water-bearers with their pails and the girls with their jugs—a scene that seemed to have sprung to life from certain passages in the Talmud—until he came within a hair's breadth of being recognised by his former landlady.

Rabbi Rachmiel was absent from the synagogue that day. When Makar returned to the house of study he noticed signs of excitement. The recluses and other students were absorbed in whispered, panic-stricken conversation. They dared not discuss the news in groups, some even pretending to be engrossed in their books, as much as to say: "In case it comes to the knowledge of the police that you people are talking about it, I want you to remember that I took no part in your gossip." The meaning of Clara's disappearance was not quite clear to them. They knew in a very dim way that there were people, for the most part educated people, who wanted to do away with czars in general, and now it appeared that Rabbi Rachmiel's daughter was one of those mysterious persons. Those of the Talmudists who knew [241] Clara were trying to imagine her as something weird, preternatural, and when her familiar face came back to them they uttered subdued exclamations of amazement.

When the news reached Makar he wondered whether it would not be advisable for him to decamp at once. But he was so snugly established in his present berth that he was loath to abandon it.

Some of the worshippers who dropped in to read a page or two of an evening would gather in groups, bandying gossip or talking foreign politics, of which, indeed, they had the most grotesque conceptions. Here Makar picked up many a side-splitting story illustrative of the corruption, intemperance and childlike ineptitude of government officials. His attention seized with special eagerness upon a description of the demoralised state of things in the printing shop connected with the governor's office. There is not an article of merchandise over which the Russian authorities maintain a more rigorous control than they do over type, every pound, almost every letter of it, used in the empire being registered and supposedly kept track of; yet the foreman of that shop often offered some of the Czar's own supply for sale, and in default of buyers (the licensed private printers of the town being too timid to handle this most dangerous species of stolen goods) he had once molten a large quantity of new type and sold it for scrap lead. Makar could not help picturing the revolutionists in regular communication with this man. Nor did his fancy stop there. Gradually all the typesetters under that foreman would be supplanted by revolutionists, and the Czar's printing office would print the *Will of the People*!

Two days elapsed before Rabbi Rachmiel returned. When he did he scarcely spoke to anybody. Naturally a man [242] of few words, he now spent every minute reading his book with ferocious absorption.

The next day was Friday. In the evening the turmoil of Talmudic accents gave way to an ancient chant, at once light-hearted and solemn—the song of welcome to Sabbath the Bride. The brass chandeliers, brightly burnished, were filled with blazing candles. About half of the seats were occupied by worshippers, freshly bathed and most of them in their Sabbath clothes. Rabbi Rachmiel wore a beaming face, "in honour of the Sabbath," that was plainly the result of effort. As Maker watched him chant his Sabbath-eve psalms, the heart of the escaped Nihilist was contracted with sympathy and something like a sense of guilt.

Meanwhile Count Loris-Melikoff had abolished the Third Section, transferring the secret service to the Interior Department, and while the change had not displaced the Dandy from office, yet it materially impaired his usefulness to his party.

When Makar returned to St. Petersburg Pavel met him with kisses and hugs and punches. The Janitor, whom he saw the next day, shook his hand heartily.

"It's all right," he said, looking Makar over with an amused air.

"What are you smiling at?" Parmet demanded, colouring.

"At you. I can't get myself to believe it was really you who made such a neat job of it."

"I!" Makar protested, exultingly. "Any idiot would know how to be arrested. It's Clara that carried the scheme through."

"Still, there is better stuff in you than I gave you credit for." [243]

Makar was quivering to know something of the use that had been made of his arrest, but conspirators ask no questions. Indeed, to try to know as little as possible, to avoid information upon anything except that in which one was personally participating was (or was supposed to be) an iron law of the movement; and now Makar was more jealous of his reputation as a conspirator than ever.

"Well, it's all right," the Janitor said, reading his thoughts. "Something has been done and it's all right; only under the new system it's rather slow work."

Makar did not understand. The abolition of the Third Section had taken place while he was in prison. When he heard of the change he said in dismay: "Will that affect my scheme?"

"Your scheme? I don't think it will," the Janitor answered mysteriously. "Of course, we'll first have to see how the new system works. We must do some sounding and watching and studying before we know how to go about things.

Can’t you wait a month or two?”

Makar was silent, then his face broke into a roguish smile.

“I will if you get me into an underground printing office for the interval,” he returned.

The Janitor took fire. “What has that got to do with your cursed scheme?” he said with a slight stutter. “As if I had printing jobs to give away!”

CHAPTER XXVII.

A POSTPONED WEDDING.

IN June of that year, shortly before Makar escaped from prison, the unhappy Empress of Russia died after a long illness that was generally ascribed to her many years of jealousy and anguish. The Czar signified his intention to enter into morganatic wedlock with Princess Dolgoruki at once. His sons and brothers remonstrated with him, pleading for a postponement of the marriage until the end of a year's mourning; but he was passionately devoted to the princess, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy for the past few years; he was determined to have these relations legitimatised, and, in view of the unrelenting campaign of the Terrorists, he felt that he could not do so too soon. Several members of the imperial family then went on a foreign tour, and the wedding was quietly solemnised on July 31 in Livadia, Crimea, where the Czar and his bride remained for a long honeymoon.

Pavel's and Clara's wedding was to take place in the early part of October. The relations of the sexes among the Nihilists were based upon the highest ideals of purity, and the marriage bond was sacred in the best sense of the word, but they were not given to celebrating their weddings. When a couple became man and wife the fact was recognised as tacitly as it was made known, the adoption by the bride of her husband's name being out of the question in a world [245] in which passports and names were apt to be changed every day. Still, there were exceptions, and Pavel insisted upon being one of these. In his overflowing bliss he often cast the spartanism of the movement to the winds, and now he was bent upon indulging himself in the "romanticism" of having his wedding proclaimed at a gathering of his most intimate friends. This was to be done at the close of an important revolutionary meeting, at the same lodgings where we once saw Pavel, Zachar and My Lord at a gathering of military officers. A high government official who occupied the first floor of the same building was giving an elaborate reception which kept the house porters busy and the street in front crowded with carriages and idlers; so the central organisation of the Party of the Will of the People took advantage of the occasion and held one of its general meetings under cover of the excitement. The assemblage, which was made up of about sixty or seventy persons of both sexes, comprised nearly every member of the Executive Committee in town, and some candidates for admission to the Executive who were allowed to participate in its deliberations without a vote. Most of the revolutionists present had taken part in attempts on the life of the Czar, as also in some of the recent assassinations. One man, a southerner, was the hero of the most sensational rescue during the past few years, having snatched from the Kieff prison, in which he had contrived to obtain the position of head keeper, three leaders of an extensive revolutionary plot. This man, the Janitor and Purring Cat now constituted the Governing Board (a sub-committee clothed with dictatorial powers) of the Terrorists' Executive.

The police were hunting for the people here gathered throughout the empire. Had the present meeting been [246] discovered by spies the whole movement would have been seriously crippled for a considerable time. Indeed, the complex conspiracies of the Will of the People were an element of fatal weakness as well as a manifestation of fascinating strength. The Terror absorbed the best resources of the party, necessitating highly centralised organisation, with the threads of a scattered national propaganda in the hands of a few "illegals" who were liable to be seized at any moment.

The street was full of police, but these had all they could do to salute the distinguished guests of the first floor and to take care of the carriages and the crowd of curiosity seekers.

Partly through Pavel's influence and partly because she was an "illegal" and had produced a very favourable impression, Clara had made the acquaintance of many of the revolutionary leaders and been admitted as a probationary member of the Executive Committee. The present gathering was the first general meeting of the central body she had attended.

"So this is the Executive Committee!" she was saying to herself. This, then, was the mysterious force that people were talking about in timid whispers; that the Czar dreaded; that was going to make everybody free and good and happy. This was it, and she was attending its meeting. She could scarcely believe her senses that she actually was there. She knew many of the members, but she had never seen several of them together. The present meeting almost benumbed her with a feeling of reverence, awe, and gratitude. Even those she had met often since her arrival in St. Petersburg seemed different beings now, as though spiritualised into that mysterious force that seemed mightier than the Czar and holier than divinity. An overpowering state of exaltation, of something akin to the ecstasy of a woman upon [247] taking the veil, came over her. Pavel was dearer than ever to her, but in her present mood their love impressed her as a jarring note. Self-sacrifice, not personal happiness, was what appealed to her, and by degrees she keyed herself up to a frame of mind in which her prospective married life seemed a gross profanation of the sanctuary to which she had been admitted.

"Let us postpone it, Pasha dear," she whispered to him, with a thrilling sense of sacrificing her happiness to the cause.

"Why?" he demanded in perplexity.

They went into the adjoining room. "What is the trouble? What's the trouble?" he demanded, light-heartedly.

"No trouble at all, dearest," she answered affectionately. "You are dearer than ever to me, but pray let us postpone it."

"But there must be some reason for it," he said with irritation.

"Don't be vexed, Pashenka. There is really no special reason. I simply don't feel like being married—yet. I want to give my life to the movement, Pasha. I am enjoying too much happiness as it is." She uttered it in grave, measured, matter-of-fact accents, but her hazel eyes reflected the uplifted state of her soul.

"Oh!" he exclaimed with a mixed sense of relief and adoration. "If that's what you mean, all I can say is that I am not worthy of you, Clara; but of course, the question of giving our lives to the cause has nothing to do with the question of our belonging to each other. Or, rather, it's one and the same thing."

She made no reply. The very discussion of the subject jarred on her. [248]

"You are in a peculiar mood now, and you are an angel, anyhow, but to-morrow you'll see the matter in a different light."

"At any rate, let us postpone it, Pashenka." And she led the way back to the meeting room.

Many of the company knew of the expected announcement, and when they heard that it was not to take place they felt sorely disappointed. When the business of the meeting had been disposed of, a Terrorist named Sablin waggishly drank the health of Mlle. Yavner and the social revolution, to the accompaniment of the rapturous band of the first floor,

and then he began to improvise burlesque verses on her as a newcomer, with allusions to her power over Pavel. This revolutionist was one of the “twin poets” of the party, his muse, which had a weakness for satire, being the gayer of the two. The “grave bard,” whose name was Morosoff, was in Switzerland now. The two were great chums. As always, Sablin was the great convivial spirit of the company. When he was not versifying, he was making jokes, telling anecdotes or trying to speak Little-Russian to Purring Cat, who, being from Little Russia, answered his questions with smiling passivity. Some of his rhymes related to Purring Cat’s interminable side-whiskers, Zachar’s habit of throwing out his chest as he walked, the reticence of the tall man with the Tartarian face, and, above all, the Janitor’s explosions of wrath when one “was not continually leering around for spies.”

The Janitor cursed him good-humouredly, without stuttering, and resumed his discussion with a man who looked like the conventional image of Christ, and with Urie, the tall blond man with typical Great-Russian features who had [249] introduced Pavel to the Nihilist world and whom he still called “Godfather.” The gay poet then took to versifying on the “three blond beards” of this trio.

Zachar made the most noise, dancing cossack hops till the floor shook under his feet, singing at the top of his lungs, filling the large room with deafening guffaws. Baska, the light complexioned “housewife” of the dynamite shop, who looked like a peasant woman, was the greatest giggler of all the women present. Grisha, her passport husband at that shop, and her real husband—a thin man with Teutonic features, known among the revolutionists as “the German”—were also there.

Sophia, the daughter of the former governor of St. Petersburg, sat by Clara’s side, smiling her hearty good wishes upon her. She looked like a happy little girl, Sophia, her prominent cheeks aglow, and her clear blue self-possessed eyes full of affection and sweet-spirited penetration. She was engaged to Zachar, and Pavel’s courtship had enlisted her tender interest. There were several other women at the gathering, two or three of them decidedly good-looking.

There was an unpublished poem, “Virgin Soil,” by the “gay bard,” which Clara had heard him recite and which portrayed, among other things, a Nihilist woman becoming a mother in her isolated cell. Her child is wrested from her arms to perish, and she goes insane. The episode, which is part of a bitter satire on a certain official, is based on fact. As Clara now thought of it and beheld the demented woman nursing a rag, a shudder passed through her frame.

“Cheer up, Clara! Cheer up!” Zachar thundered. “We don’t want any long faces to-night.”

Clara smiled, a sorry smile, and Zachar went on hopping and laughing. But when Sophia stroked her hand, [250] smilingly, Clara buried her face in her bosom and gave way to a quick sob.

“What does it mean?” Pavel asked.

“Nothing,” Clara answered, gleaming through her tears.

There were four or five Jews in the assemblage, but Makar was not among them. His cherished dream had been realised at last. He was working in a secret printing office. Establishments of this sort were guarded with special solicitude, so in view of his absent-mindedness, Makar never left the place for fear of bringing back some spy. The other revolutionists who worked in the same printing shop and who were registered at the police station as residents of the house had each his or her day off. Makar alone was not registered. The porters of the house had never seen him, and the composing room was his prison.

The only other Jewess in the room was a dark insignificant looking woman named Hessia Helfman. She was touchingly bashful, so that at one time Clara had offered to befriend her. She had soon discovered, however, that the dark little Jewess was in charge of a most important conspiracy station. On closer acquaintance Hessia had proved to be quite talkative and of an extremely affectionate nature. Clara’s attachment to her had become greater still when she had learned that Purring Cat was her husband. The great thing was that he was a Gentile and a nobleman, although not a prince. Clara had told herself that the equality of Jew and Gentile and their intermarriage among socialists was a matter of course and that the circumstance attracted no special attention on her part, but she knew that it did.

As she now looked at Hessia and her husband, she said to herself, with a great sense of relief: “She is as good as I, [251] anyhow. If she could marry the man she loves I can.”

But her joy in this absolution from her self-imposed injunction soon faded away. To sacrifice her happiness seemed to her the highest happiness this evening. She would surpass Hessia. If there was a world in which platonic relations were called for theirs was that world. The image of a demented woman fondling a rag in her prison cell came back to her.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SECOND COURTSHIP.

THE Czar was still in Livadia with his bride, abandoning himself to his second youth with a passion that was tinged with the pathos of imminent tragedy, when Count Loris-Melikoff telegraphed to him a plea for the lives of two revolutionists who had been sentenced to death, one of these being Alexandre, the man in whose lodgings the gendarmes had found a diagram of the Imperial dining hall. The distinguished Armenian was contemplating reforms which he expected to leave no room for terrorism, and it was for the sake of these measures as well as of the Emperor himself, that he was averse to having the bitterness of the revolutionists quickened by new executions. If they only let the Czar live until those projects had been carried out, he thought, their conspiracies would lose all reason of existence; at any rate, the surreptitious support which they received from men of high social position would be withdrawn.

But his despatch was followed by one from the Czarowitz, who, echoing the views of the anti-Melikoff party at court, urged his father not to show signs of weakness, and the sentence was allowed to stand.

At about nine o'clock in the morning of a cold autumn day, a fortnight after the meeting of the Executive Committee which Clara attended, Pavel stood on a chair nailing a clothes rack to the wall. The room was Clara's. It was on the fifth floor of a house near a corner, with windows commanding the two intersecting streets, where her window signals could be seen at a considerable distance. She rented it furnished, with samovar service, but the curtains and some bits of bric-à-brac had been bought by Pavel who took more interest in these things and was handier about the house than she. He himself lived in the house of a distant relative, an elderly widow, who took great pride in him and had no doubt that he led the life of the average young man of his class, that is to say, he spent his nights and his mamma's rubles on an endless crop of wild oats. To Clara's landlady he was known as a brother of hers. On the present occasion he had found his fiancée out, but a mark on the door had told him that she would soon be back. Presently she came in. She wore a tall fur cap and her cheeks gleamed, exhaling the freshness of girlish health and of the cold weather of the street, but she looked grave. Pavel threw away his hammer and pounced down upon her with open arms. She repulsed him gently.

"Stop," she whispered, drearily, unbuttoning her cloak and drawing a newspaper from its inner pocket. "There is terrible news this morning."

The execution of Alexandre and the other revolutionist had taken place the day before, and the newspapers were allowed to print a very brief account of it—how they bade each other good-bye on the scaffold and how, when Alexandre saw the death-shroud on his friend, his eyes filled with tears. The two condemned men had been great chums for several years, Alexandre having once wrested the other from a convoy. Now they died together.

As Pavel read the account of the double execution, standing by the window, a flush of overpowering despair shot into his chest and diffused itself through his legs.

"They have choked them after all," he gasped out.

Clara, who sat at a table watching him, dropped her head on her folded arms, in a paroxysm of quick, bitter sobbing.

The few details in the newspaper report gave vividness to the grewsome scene. The two executed men had been among Pavel's most intimate friends. The image of Alexandre, his arms pinioned, looking on with tears while a white shroud was being slipped over his fellow-prisoner, was tearing at his heart with cruel insistence.

"Oh, it's terrible, Clarochka!" he moaned, dropping by her side, nestling to her, and bursting into tears in her bosom. Then, getting up, he took to walking back and forth, vehemently. "They have choked them, the blood-drinkers," he muttered. "They have done it after all." He fell silent, pacing the floor in despair, and then burst out once again: "They have choked them, the vampires."

"But war is war," she said, for something to say to him, her own face distorted with her struggle against a flow of tears.

"Oh, I don't know. All I do know is that they have been murdered, that they are no more." A minute or two later he turned upon her with a look full of ghastly malice. "War did you say? The government can't have enough of it, can it? Well, it shall have all the war it wants. The party has only shown it the blossoms; the berries are still to come."

The world seemed to be divided into those who had known the two executed men personally and those who had not. For the moment there seemed to be little in common between him and Clara. She strained him to a seat by her side on the sofa again, clasping one of his hands in both of hers, and kissed him on the cheek, wetting his temple with her tears.

"Do you know, dearest, I really had a lurking hope they would be spared," he said. "I was ashamed to say so, but I did. But no! they choked them. They choked them. Idiots that they are. They imagine they can hang every honest man in the country."

"Loris-Melikoff is even worse than the Czar. His liberalism is nothing but hypocrisy. There can no longer be any question about it."

"He is a rogue of the deepest dye. He is a bungling hypocrite, an abominable liar and a mangy coward, that's what he is. But to the devil with him! This is not the point. Oh, nothing is the point. Nothing except that they have been murdered."

He went to see some of the revolutionists with whom he had shared the intimacy of the dead men.

Left alone, Clara began to pace the floor slowly. Not having known either Alexandre or the man who had died with him, she was exempt from that acute agony of grief which was her lover's; but there was the image of two men in death-shrouds, a stirring image of martyrdom, before her vision. Pity, the hunger of revenge and a loftier feeling—the thirst of self-sacrifice to the cause of liberty—swelled her heart. Back and forth she walked, slowly, solemnly, her hands gently clasped behind her, her soul in a state of excitement that was coupled with a peculiar state of physical tranquillity, her mind apparently seeing things with a perspicacity the like of which it had never enjoyed before. Her future, her duties, her relation to the rest of the world, her whole life—all was wonderfully clear to her, and in spite of her anguish over the death of the two men she felt singularly happy. It seemed to be a matter of course that her party would now undertake some new plot, one exceeding in boldness and magnitude all its predecessors. Many lives would have to be staked. She would offer hers. Matrimony was out of the question at a time like this. She conjured that image

of the insane woman clasping a rag to her bosom in support of her position. She longed to be near Pavel again. In her mind she embraced him tenderly, argued with him, opened her soul to him. It was all so clear. Her mind was so firmly made up. She fondly hoped she would make Pavel see it all in the same light.

The explanation took place the next time he called on her, a few days later.

"Oh, we shall all have to offer our lives," he replied. "But for God's sake love me, Clanya. It will drive me crazy if you don't."

"But I do, I do. I love you with every fibre of my being, Pasha. What has put it in your head to doubt it?"

"Oh, I don't know. All I do know is that as long as my life is mine I cannot exist without you. I am frightfully lonely and that stands in the way of my work. Dash it, I feel just as I did last summer before I took courage to tell you that I was insanely in love with you."

She drew him to her, with a smile at once of happiness and amusement.

"Poor boy! It's enough to break one's heart. Poor little dear!" she joked affectionately.

"I knew you would be making fun of me," he said, yearning upon her. "Love me, Clanya, do love me, with all your heart. I cannot live apart from you, I cannot, upon my word I cannot," he concluded piteously, like a child. [257]

"Do you imagine it's easy for me to be away from you?" she retorted earnestly. "I can't be a single hour without you without missing you, without feverishly waiting to see you again. As if you did not know it! But what can we do? Is this the only sacrifice we are ready to make?"

A fortnight had passed. Unknown to her lover, Clara had spoken to the Janitor, intimating her readiness to offer her life, and asking for one of the most dangerous assignments the Governing Board could give her. She was waiting for an answer, when the startling news spread among the revolutionists that the Janitor was in the hands of the enemy and that the capture of that maniac of caution had been the result of a most insane piece of recklessness.

His arrest was one of the heaviest losses the party had yet sustained. At the same time the government found a new source of uneasiness in it. A large quantity of dynamite and some other things confiscated at his lodgings pointed to a vigorous renewal of terroristic activity. Another plot on the life of the Emperor seemed to be hatching in the capital, yet all efforts of the police and the gendarmes in this connection were futile. Indeed, the circumstances of the Janitor's arrest only furnished new proof of the ineptitude and shiftlessness of those whose business it was to ferret out Nihilism.

A few days before the Janitor was taken the police received word about two portraits which had been left for reproduction at a well-known photograph gallery and in which the photographer had recognised the two Nihilists who [258] had recently been hanged. Instead of a detective being detailed, however, to lie in wait for the unknown man, the proprietor of the gallery was simply ordered to notify the police when he came for his pictures. The unknown man was the Janitor. When he called for the photographs, an awkward attempt was made to detain him which aroused his suspicion. He pleaded haste and made for the door. When a porter barred his way he scared him off by thrusting his hand into an empty pistol-pocket. A similar order for photographs of the two executed Terrorists had been given by him to another well-known photographer next door to the former place, and it was when he called there, a day or two after his narrow escape at the adjoining gallery, that he was seized by detectives.

When his landlady heard that her "star" lodger, the punctilious government official and retired army officer, was neither an official nor a retired officer, but a leading Nihilist, she fainted. The gendarmes had been hunting for him since he broke away from his captors on his way to prison one evening more than two years before. They had heard that it was he who subsequently organised the railroad plot near Moscow; also that he had been connected with the assassination of the chief of gendarmes and with the shooting at the Czar in front of the Winter Palace. Yet he had freely moved about the streets of St. Petersburg these two years, the busiest agitator and conspirator in the city, until, in a moment of morbid foolhardiness, he practically surrendered himself to the police.

When Clara heard of his arrest, she clapped her hands together, Yiddish fashion. "If the Janitor has been arrested as a result of carelessness," she exclaimed, "then everyone of us ought to hold himself in readiness to be taken at any [259] moment."

She repeated the remark the next time she saw Pavel, adding:

"The idea of being a married woman under such conditions!"

"Oh, that's an *idée fixe* of yours," he said, testily.

She gave him a look and dropped her eyes, resentfully.

The peace-offering came from him.

"Whew, what a cloud!" he said, pointing at her glum face. "Won't there be a single rift in it? Not a wee bit of a one for a single ray to come through?"

She smiled, heartily.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A HUNTED MONARCH.

THE ministers were reporting to the Czar who had recently returned from Livadia. They were admitted one at a time. As they sat chatting under breath in the blue waiting room, with the white reflection of the snow that was falling outside, upon their faces, these elderly men, whose names were associated in millions of minds with the notion of infinite dignity and power, looked like a group of anxious petitioners in the vestibule of some official.

An exception was made for Count Loris-Melikoff, who was with the Czar during the audiences of all his colleagues. The Supreme Executive Commission over which he had presided had been abolished some four months before. Nominally he was now simply in charge of the Department of the Interior, but in reality he continued to play the part of premier, a position he partly owed to Princess Dolgoruki, the Czar's young wife, who set great store by his liberal policy. She was said to be a woman of a rather progressive turn of mind, but whether she was or not, her fate hung on the life of her imperial husband and every measure that was calculated to pacify the Nihilists found a ready advocate in her. Indeed, she and the Count were united by a community of personal interests; for he had as many enemies at court as she, and his position depended upon the life of Alexander II. as much as hers. [261]

The Czar was receiving the ministers in a chamber of moderate size, finished in sombre colours, with engaged columns of malachite, book-cases of ebony and silver, with carvings representing scenes from Russian history, and a large writing table to match. Statues of bronze and ivory stood between the book-cases and a striking life-size watercolour of Nicholas I. hung on the wall to the right of the Czar's chair. The falling snow outside was like a great impenetrable veil without beginning or end, descending from some unknown source and disappearing into some equally mysterious region. The room, whose high walls, dismally imposing, were supposed to hold the destinies of a hundred millions of human beings, was filled with lustreless wintry light. The Emperor, tall, erect, broad-shouldered, the image of easy dignity, but pale and with a touch of weariness in his large oval face, wore the undress uniform of a general of infantry. He was sixty-two and he was beginning to look it. He listened to the ministers with constrained attention. He showed exaggerated interest in the affairs of their respective departments, but they could see that his heart was not in their talk, and with unuttered maledictions for the upstart vice-Emperor, they made short work of their errands. They knew that the Interior Department was the only one that commanded the Czar's interest in those days.

At last the Emperor and his chief adviser were left alone. Both were silent. Loris-Melikoff was as strikingly oriental of feature as Alexander II. was European. Notwithstanding his splendid military career and uniform he had the appearance of a sharp-witted scientist rather than of a warrior. His swarthy complexion, shrewd oriental eyes and huge energetic oriental nose, flanked by greyer and longer side-whiskers than the Czar's, made him look like a representative of some foreign power. [262]

There was pathos in both. Alexander II. had that passion for life which comes to an old man upon marrying a pretty young woman. Yet foreigners who saw him during this period said that he looked like a hunted man. As to Count Melikoff, his advance had been so rapid, he was surrounded by so many enemies at court, and the changes by which he was trying to save the Czar's life and his own power, were beset by so many obstacles, that he could not help feeling like the peasant of the story who was made king for one day.

Naturally talkative and genially expansive, the Czar's manner toward people who were admitted to his intimacy was one of amiable informality. The chief pathos of his fate sprang from the discrepancy between the Czar and the man in him, between a vindictive ruthlessness born of a blind sense of his autocratic honour and an affectionate, emotional nature with less grit than pride. Had he been a common mortal he would have made far more friends than enemies.

Count Loris-Melikoff had become accustomed to feel at home in his presence. At this minute, however, as the Czar was watching the snow flakes, with an air of idle curiosity, the Armenian had an overbearing sense of the distance between them. He knew that the Czar was anxious to talk about the revolutionists and that he hated to do so. His heart contracted with common human pity, yet in the silence that divided them it came over him that the man in front of him was the Czar, and a feeling of awe seized him like the one he used to experience at sight of the Emperor long before he was raised to his present position. This feeling passed, however, the moment the Czar began to speak. [263]

"Well?" he said, with sudden directness. "Anything new about that Michailoff fellow?" Alexandre Michailoff was the real name of the Janitor.

"Nothing new so far, your Majesty," Loris-Melikoff answered obsequiously, yet with something like triumph, as if the powerlessness of the police were only too natural and substantiated his views on the general state of things. "He is one of their chief ringleaders."

"And this has been known all along," the Emperor remarked with sad irony. "Such a thing would be inconceivable in any other capital in Europe."

"Quite so. But I feel that in other countries, the capture of miscreants like ours would be due less to the efficiency of the police than to the cordial coöperation of the public. The trouble is that our police is thrown on its own resources, Sire. It is practically fighting those wretches single-handed."

The Czar had a fit of coughing, the result of asthma. When it had subsided, he said with an air of suffering:

"Well, that's your theory. But then their public is not ours. The average Russian is not wide-awake enough to coöperate with the authorities." He had in mind his own address at Moscow in which he had appealed to the community at large for this very assistance in ferreting out sedition. The Will of the People had come into existence since then.

"Still, if our public were drawn into active coöperation with the Government, if it became habituated to a sense of the monarch's confidence in itself, it seems reasonable to suppose that the indolence of the community would then disappear. No people is capable of greater loyalty to the throne than your Majesty's. All that is needed is to lend to this devotion tangibility. This and this alone would enable your Majesty to cure the evil. What the body politic needs is judicious internal treatment. Surgical operations have proven futile. These are my sincerest convictions, your Majesty." [264]

"I know they are," the Czar answered musingly.

"And the great point is, that with the intelligent classes actively interested in the preservation of law and order, criminal societies of any sort would find themselves without any ground to stand upon."

The Czar had another cough, and then he said, flushing:

"There is a simpler way to leave them without ground to stand upon, surgical operations or no surgical operations. Call it what you will. There is no sense in pampering them, Melikoff. Why, in western Europe they execute common murderers. As to a gang of assassins like that, death would be regarded a mild punishment." He lighted a cigarette, but

forthwith extinguished it and went on with emphasis: “We handle them with kid gloves, Melikoff. That’s why they take chances.”

He spoke with subdued anger, citing the republican uprising led by aristocratic army officers in 1825, which his father (the man whose portrait was on the right wall) quelled by means of field guns. Loris-Melikoff demurred to the comparison, tactfully hinting that there would be no betrayal of weakness in inviting the public to participate in the extermination of crime by showing it signs of increased imperial confidence, and the Czar softened again. He felt that the Armenian knew how to save him and he willingly submitted to his and Princess Dolgoruki’s influence. But Fate was bent on tragedy.

Alexander II. lacked anything but courage. Still, this continuous living under fire had gradually unnerved him. The [265] soldier on the battlefield finds moral support in the presence of thousands of comrades, all facing the same fate as he; whereas he was like a lone man on top of a dynamite pile. And if his perils were shared by those about him, this only added the agonising consciousness that his person carried the shadow of destruction with it, endangering the life of every living being that came near him. He knew, for example, that when he was at the theatre candles were kept ready, in case the lights were blown out by an explosion; that many people stayed away from the playhouse on such occasions for fear of being destroyed along with their sovereign. His pride would not let him feel low-spirited. He very often forced himself to disdain caution, to act with reckless courage. Nevertheless he had a dreary, jaded look. The notion that he, the most powerful of men, the image of grandeur and human omnipotence, should tremble at every sound, wounded his common human pride acutely. The consequence was that this mightiest monarch in the world, the gigantic man of sixty-two, every bit of him an Emperor, was at heart a terror-stricken infant mutely imploring for help. He continued to appear in the streets of the capital, accompanied by his usual escort and to return the salutes of passers-by with his usual air of majestic ease. Now and then he went to the theatre, and occasionally even beyond the scenes for a flirtation with the actresses. But the public knew that besides his large uniformed escort, his carriage was watched by hordes of detectives in citizen’s clothes, and that every inch of the ground which he was to traverse was all but turned inside out for possible signs of danger. And those who were admitted to his presence knew that underneath his grand, [266] free-and-easy bearing was a sick heart and a crushed spirit. That the enemy was an unknown quantity was one of the sources of his growing disquiet. The organised movement might be very large and it might be ridiculously small, but with a latent half-Nihilist in the heart of every subject. He was beginning to realise at last that he knew his people scarcely better than he did the French or the English. He was anxious to make peace with that invisible enemy of his, provided it did not look as if he did.

He was willing to be deceived, and Loris-Melikoff was about to help him deceive himself. But destiny was against them both. He was an honest man, Loris-Melikoff, serious-minded, public-spirited, one of the few able statesmen Russia ever had; but his path was strewn with thorns.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE MYSTERY OF A SHOP.

A TALL man with a reddish beard called at one of the police stations of the capital about a cheese store which he was going to open on Little Garden Street. He gave his name as Koboseff. When he had gone the Captain of the station said to one of his roundsmen:

"That fellow doesn't talk like a tradesman. I asked him a few questions, and his answers were rather too polished for a cheese dealer." And taking up his pen, he added, with a preoccupied air, "Keep an eye on him, will you?"

Little Garden Street was part of a route which the Emperor often took on his way to or from his niece's residence, the Michaïl Palace, and received the special attention of the police.

The roundsman spoke to the agent of the house where Koboseff had rented a basement for his projected shop and dwelling room; whereupon the agent recalled that cheesemonger's handwriting had struck him as being too good for a man of his class. Inquiry at the town at which Koboseff's passport was dated brought the information that a document corresponding in every detail to the one in question had actually been issued by the local authorities. Koboseff was thus no invented name, and as the description in the passport agreed with the appearance of the man who had rented the basement, the St. Petersburg police saw no ground for further suspicion.

The cheese shop was opened in the early part of January, Koboseff having moved in with a fair-complexioned woman whom he introduced as his wife. Some three or four weeks later the head porter of the house notified the police that Koboseff had boasted of the flourishing state of his business, whereas in reality his shop attracted but very scant custom. At the same time it was pointed out that there was a well-established and prosperous cheese store close by, that the basement occupied by the Koboseffs was scarcely the place one would naturally select for the purpose, and that the rent was strikingly too high for the amount of business Koboseff could expect to do there. To cap the climax, there was some lively gossip among the neighbours about Mme. Koboseff, who had been seen smoking cigarettes—a habit quite unusual for a woman of the lower classes—and who often stayed out all night.

"Koboseff" was Uric Bogdanovich, Pavel's "Godfather," and "Mme. Koboseff" was Baska, formerly "housewife" of the dynamite shop and a year previous to that in charge of a house in the south near which Zachar and others attempted to blow up an imperial train.

The cheese shop was often visited by Zachar, Purring Cat, the reticent stalwart man with the Tartarian features, Pavel and other revolutionists. The police kept close watch on the place, but, according to all reports, no suspicious persons were ever seen to enter it. Upon the whole the Koboseffs seemed to be real tradesmen, and as the information concerning their passport was satisfactory, they were not disturbed. A slim little man named Kurilloff who had played the part of errand boy at the cheese shop had been arrested, but his detention had nothing to do with the Koboseffs, and the police of Little Garden Street had no idea of the arrest, while the officers who had made it were unaware of the prisoner's connection with a suspicious shop.

"If I were you I'd make missus behave," the head porter of the house once said to Koboseff, speaking of his "wife."

"Right you are," the cheesemonger replied. "Only my old woman is a tough customer to handle, you know. I do tell her she had better mind the house and ought to be ashamed of herself to smoke cigarettes, but she doesn't care a rap, not she."

"I would teach her if she was *my* wife."

The cheesemonger made a gesture of despair, and the porter said to himself that there was nothing suspicious about him; that he was simply a fellow without backbone and a fool, qualities which seemed to account for Koboseff's incompetence as a business man.

"Well, Clanya," Pavel said to Mlle. Yavner, lazily addressing her in the diminutive of his own coining. "I am afraid I shall have to exile you for some time."

"Exile me?" she asked absently without lifting her eyes from a heap of type she was sorting and putting up in packages. She sat across the table from the sofa upon which he was cuddling himself drowsily as a cat does before a fireside.

"Yes, that's what I'll have to do—pack you off, put you in a box, nail you up tight, stick a label on it and ship you somewhere. 'To places not so very distant,'" he added, mocking the official phrase used in transporting people to eastern Siberia.

She raised her eyes from her work, her fingers stiff and black with lead dust. "What are you driving at, Pasha? Anything up? Or is it merely one of those jokes under which one must write in big letters: 'This is a joke?'"

"Is *that* a joke?" he asked, and burst into laughter.

She resumed her work. The type she was sorting was intended for a revolutionary printing office, having been sent to St. Petersburg by Masha Safonoff, who had bought it of the foreman of the government's printing office in Miroslav.

"Oh, to all the diabolical devils with that type of yours, Clanya. Can't you sit down by a fellow's side for a minute or two?"

She got up, washed her hands and complied with his wish. As she played with his hand she noticed the trace of blisters on his palm. Her face darkened; but she asked no questions. After a little she demanded: "What did you mean by 'exiling' me?"

"Oh dash it all, Clanya. It's something serious. I'll tell it to you some other time. I'm too lazy to be serious." He would have preferred to be sprawling like this with her hands in his; luxuriating in the gleam of her intelligent blue eyes and in the feminine atmosphere of her person; but his excuse that it was "too serious" only sharpened her determination to know what it was without delay.

"What is it, Pasha?"

"There you are," he said peevishly. "One can't have a minute's rest from business, not a minute's rest."

"Why did you hasten to speak of 'exiling' me, then?" she retorted tartly. "Why didn't you keep it to yourself until you were again in a mood for 'business'?"

He had not kept it to himself simply because it was not easy for him to keep anything from her. He was more apt to

fly into a temper with her than she with him, but in their mutual relations she was the stronger vessel of the two and, [275] in an imperceptible, unformulated way, he was considerably under her thumb. When he heard or saw something new, received some new impression, his first impulse was to share it with her. If an opinion was formed in his mind he wondered, sometimes timidly, whether she would concur with it. Timidly, because in many instances, when he came bubbling over with enthusiasm over some scheme of his own, she had cruelly dampened his fervour by merely extricating the vital point of his argument from a surrounding tangle of roseate phraseology. His great intellectual feast was to be in her room, discussing theories, books, people with her. These discussions, which sometimes lasted for hours, often called forth a snappish, bitter tone on both sides, but they were at once an expression and a fostering agency of that spiritual unity which was one of the chief sources of their happiness in one another.

"Well, there is very little to tell about," he said at last. "Something is under way, and it has been decided to notify all illegals not in it to vacate St. Petersburg until it's all over."

The lines of her fresh-tinted face hardened into an expression of extreme gravity and her fingers grew limp in his grasp. She withdrew them.

"Look at her!" he squeaked in a burst of merriment.

"There is nothing to look at. I am not going." She dropped her glance. She divined that his blisters had something to do with the digging of a mine in which he took part.

"Is it all settled?"

"Oh, Pasha! Your jesting is so out of place," she returned sullenly. "I am not going."

"But the air is getting hot in St. Petersburg. Whew! The police are suspicious, of course; they won't leave a stone [276] unturned."

He took hold of her tender girlish hand, but she withdrew it again, with a gesture of impatience.

"There will be something to do for you too later on," he comforted her, guiltily. "It's going to be a big thing, the biggest of all. You'll come back in a month or so."

She made no answer.

The two intersecting streets outside reeked and creaked and glittered with the crispness of a typical St. Petersburg frost. It was about ten in the morning, in the early part of January. The little parlour was delightfully warm, with a dim consciousness of sleigh-furs, hack drivers in absurd winter caps, pedestrians huddling themselves and wriggling and grunting for an effeminating background to one's sense of shelter. The even heat of the white glazed oven seemed to be gleaming and stirring over the surface of the tiles like something animate, giving them an effect of creamy mellowness that went to one's heart together with the delicious warmth they radiated. Ever and anon a sleigh bell would tinkle past and sink into Pavel's mood. There was a rhythm to the warm stillness of the room. But Clara's silence tormented him.

"We'll discuss it later on, Clanya. I'm too tired now. My brain won't work. Let us play school," he pleaded fawningly, in burlesque Russian, mimicking the accent of the Czech who taught Latin at the Miroslav gymnasium.

"Stop that, pray."

He made a sorry effort to obey her, and finally she yielded, with a smile and a Jewish shrug. He played a gymnasium teacher and she a pupil. He made her conjugate his name as she would a verb; made puns on Clanya, which is an [277] unfinished Russian word meaning to bow, to greet, to convey one's regards; mocked and laughed at her enunciation till his eyes watered. Gradually he drifted into an impersonation of old Pievakin and flew into a passion because her hearty laughter marred the illusion of the performance.

"You do need rest, poor thing," she said, looking at his haggard, worn face.

"Well, another few weeks and we shall be able to get all the rest we want, if not in a cell, or in a quieter place still, in some foreign resort, perhaps. I really feel confident we are going to win this time."

"It's about time the party did."

"It will this time, you may be sure of it. And then—by George, the very sky will feel hot. Everything seems ready for a general uprising. All that is needed is the signal. I can see the barricades going up in the streets." He gnashed his teeth and shook her by the shoulders exultantly. "Yes, ma'am. And then, Clanya, why, then we won't have to go abroad for our vacation. One will be able to breathe in Russia then. Won't we give ourselves a spree, eh? But whether here or abroad, I must take you for a rest somewhere. Will you marry your love-lorn Pashka then? I dare you to say no."

"But I don't want to say no," she answered radiantly.

They went to dinner together and then they parted. As they shook hands he peered into her face with a rush of tenderness, as though trying to inhale as deep an impression of her as possible in case either of them was arrested before they met again. And, indeed, there was quite an eventful day in store for her.

One of the persons she was to see later in the afternoon was a man with a Greek name. As she approached the [278] house in which he had his lodgings, she recognised in the gas-lit distance the high forehead and the boyish face of Sophia, the ex-Governor's daughter. Sophia, or Sonia, as she was fondly called, was bearing down upon her at a brisk, preoccupied walk. As she swept past Clara, without greeting her, she whispered:

"A trap."

The lodging of the man with the queer name had been raided, then, and was now held by officers in the hope of ensnaring some of his friends. Clara had been at the place several times and she was afraid that the porter of the house, in case he stood at his post in the gateway at this minute, might recognise her.

The dim opening of the gate loomed as a sickly quadrangular hole exhaling nightmare and ruin. Turning sharply back, however, might have attracted notice; so Clara entered the first gate on her way, four or five houses this side of her destination, and when she reappeared a minute or two later, she took the opposite direction. As she turned the next corner she found herself abreast of a man she had noticed in the streets before. He was fixed in her mind by his height and carriage. Extremely tall and narrow-shouldered, he walked like a man with a sore neck, swinging one of his long arms to and fro as he moved stiffly along. The look he gave her made a very unpleasant impression on her. He let her gain on him a little and then she heard his soft rubber-shod footsteps behind her.

It is a terrible experience, this sense of being dogged as you walk along. It is tantalising enough when your desire to take a look at the man at your heels is only a matter of curiosity which for some reason or other you cannot gratify. [279] Imagine, then, the mental condition of an "illegal" shadowed by a spy or by a man he suspects of being one. He tingles with a desire to quicken pace, yet he must walk on with the same even, calm step; every minute or two he is seized with an impulse to turn on the fellow behind him, yet he must not show the least sign of consciousness as to his existence. It is the highest form of torture, yet it was the daily experience of every active man or woman of the secret organisation; for if the political detectives were spying upon pedestrians right and left, the revolutionists, on their part, were apt to be suspicious with equal promiscuity. Small wonder that some of them, upon being arrested, hailed their prison cell as a

welcome place of rest, as a relief from the enervating strain of liberty under the harrowing conditions of underground life. As a matter of fact this wholesale shadowing seldom results in the arrest of a revolutionist. Thousands of innocent people were snuffed to one Nihilist, and the Nihilists profited by the triviality of suspicion. Most arrests were the result of accident.

At the corner of the next large thoroughfare she paused and looked up the street for a tram-car. While doing so Clara glanced around her. The tall man had disappeared. A tram-car came along shortly and she was about to board it when she heard Sonia's voice once more.

"You're being shadowed. Follow me."

Sonia entered a crowded sausage shop, and led the way to the far end of it in the rear of an impatient throng. Pending her turn to be waited on, she took off her broad-brimmed hat, asking Clara to hold it for her, while she adjusted her hair.

"Put it on, and let me have your fur cap," she gestured.

The homely broad-brimmed hat transformed Clara's appearance considerably. It made her look shorter and her face seemed larger and older.

"I saw a tall fellow turn you over to one with a ruddy mug. The red man is waiting for you outside now, but I don't think he had a good look at your face. There is a back door over there."

Clara regained the street through the yard, and sure enough, a man with a florid face was leisurely smoking a cigarette at the gate post. He only gave her a superficial glance and went on watching the street door of the shop. She took a public sleigh, ordered the driver to take her to the Liteyny Bridge, changed her destination in the middle of the journey, and soon after she got off she took another sleigh for quite another section of the city. In short, she was "circling," and when she thought her trail completely "swept away," she went home on foot.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A REASSURING SEARCH.

THE capture of the man with the Greek name proved disastrous to the Executive Committee. It was the first link in a chain of most important arrests. The trap set at his house caught the very tall man with the Tartarian features; this led to the arrest of Purring Cat, and the residence of Purring Cat, in its turn, ensnared a pretentiously dressed man, in whom the superior gendarme officers were amazed to find their own trusted secretary, the man whom Makar knew as "the Dandy." Makar's arrest at Miroslav had tended to strengthen the Dandy's position somewhat, but now that he was in the hands of the enemy himself, it seemed as if the medical student's sweeping system of "counter-espionage" had burst like a bubble. Makar was in despair. He spoke of new plans, of new sacrifices, until Zachar silenced him.

"All in due time, my dear romanticist," he said to him. "A month or two later I shall be delighted to be entertained with the fruit of your rich fancy; not now, my boy."

The four arrests were a severe blow to the undertaking of which Zachar had been placed in charge. He was overworked, dejected, yet thrilling with nervous activity. But his own days were numbered. An air of impending doom hung over the Czar and his "internal enemies" alike.

[2780] Good fortune seemed to attend the state police. While the gendarmes of the capital were celebrating their unexpected haul an intellectual looking man was locked up in a frontier town as a "vagrant," that is, as a man without a passport, who subsequently proved to be one of the active Terrorists the detectives had long been looking for. He was the "grave bard," one of the twin poets of the party. Shortly after his arrest the Russian government received word from the police of the German capital that a prominent Russian Nihilist known among his friends as "My Lord," a sobriquet due to his elegance of personal appearance and address, had spent some time in Berlin and was now on his way to St. Petersburg. A German detective followed the man to the frontier and then, shadowed by Russian spies, he was tracked to a house on the Neva Prospect, the leading street of St. Petersburg. There it was decided to arrest him Friday, March 23.

A little after 4 o'clock of that day Zachar and the ex-Governor's daughter left their home, where they were registered as brother and sister, and took a sleigh, alighting in front of the Public Library, in the very heart of the city. Instead of entering the library, however, which the sleigh-driver thought to be their destination, they parted, continuing their several journeys on foot.

It was an extremely cold afternoon. The beards of pedestrians and sleigh-drivers and the manes of horses were glued with frost; their breath came in short painful puffs. It was getting dark. The sky was a spotless, almost a warm blue. To look at it you would have wondered where this sharp, all-benumbing cold came from. There was an air of insincerity about the crimson clearness of the afternoon light.

[2791] Zachar wore a tall cap of Persian lamb, flattened at the top, and a tight-fitting fur coat. He walked briskly, his chest thrown out, his full pointed beard hoary with frost, his cheeks red with the biting cold.

Presently he found himself shadowed by a man in civilian clothes whom he knew to be a gendarme in disguise. It was evident, however, that the spy was following him merely as a suspicious person without having any idea what sort of man his quarry was, and Zachar, with whom a hunt of this kind was a daily occurrence, had no difficulty in "thrashing his trail." He was bound for the cheese shop on Little Garden Street. This was within a short walk from the Public Library, yet on this occasion it took him an hour's "circling" to reach the place.

About ten minutes after Zachar entered the cheesemonger's basement, the head porter of the house met two police officers round the corner. One of them was the captain of the precinct and the other, one of his roundsmen. The Czar was expected to pass through this street in two days, so one could not be too watchful over a suspicious place like this.

"There is somebody down there now," the head porter said to the captain, with servile eagerness. "A big fellow with a long pointed beard. I have seen him go down several times before. He looks like a business man, but before he started to go down he stopped to look round."

This stopping to look round was, according to a printed police circular, one of the symptoms of Nihilism, so the roundsman was ordered to watch until the suspicious man should re-emerge from the cheese shop.

When the captain had gone the roundsman brushed out his icicled moustache with his finger nails, and said with an air of authority:

[2801] "Well, you take your post at the gate and I'll just go and change my uniform for citizen's clothes in case it's necessary to see where that fellow is going. Keep a sharp lookout on that cursed basement until I get back, will you?"

When he returned, in citizen's clothes, he found that the suspicious man had left the store and that the head porter had set out after him, leaving his assistant in his place.

"There is another man down there now," the assistant porter whispered. Presently the new visitor came out of the basement. As he mounted the few steps and then crossed over, through the snow, to a sleigh standing near by, he kept mopping his face with a handkerchief, thus preventing the two spies from getting a look at his features. Seeing that he boarded a hackney-sleigh, the roundsman did the same, ordering the driver to follow along as closely as possible, but at this he lost time in persuading the hackman that he was a policeman in disguise. The two sleighs were flying through the snow as fast as their horses could run. The policeman was far in the rear. For some ten minutes his eyes were riveted to the suspicious man. Presently, however, the vehicle he was shadowing turned a corner, and by the time he reached that point it was gone. All sorts of sleighs, their bells jingling, were gliding along in every direction, but the one he wanted was not among them.

The head porter, who had started after the first man, in the absence of the roundsman, had met with a similar defeat. After awhile the hackman who had driven the second suspicious man returned to his stand. In answer to inquiry he told how his fare had twice changed his destination, finally alighted on a street corner, and turned into a narrow alley.

[2811] Meanwhile Zachar had called on My Lord. It was about seven o'clock. The two revolutionists sat chatting in a cheerful gas-lit room, when the host was called out into the corridor. As he was long in coming back, Zachar went to the door, prepared for the worst. He found the corridor full of gendarmes and police. It was evident that they had fought shy of raiding My Lord's apartments for fear of violence, and had been patiently waiting until his visitor should come out of his own accord. Several of the gendarmes made a dash at Zachar, seizing him by both arms. One of these was the spy from whom he had "circled" away near the Public Library, soon after he had taken leave from the ex-Governor's

daughter three hours ago. Zachar's presence here was a surprise to this gendarme, but the full importance of the man was still unknown to him. The officer in command, however, knew who his prisoner was.

"What is your name?" he addressed himself to Zachar, with the exaltation of a man come upon a precious find. He knew but too well how anxious the government was to capture him, but he had come here to arrest My Lord without the remotest idea of finding this revolutionary giant in the place.

"Krasnoff," Zachar answered with dignity, in his deep-chested voice.

"I beg your pardon," the officer returned, with a twinkle in his eye. "I once had the pleasure of arresting you. Your name is Andrey Ivanovitch Jeliaboff."

"Oh, in that case I am pleased to meet you," the prisoner said with playful chivalry.

Jeliaboff's arrest made a joyous stir not only in the gendarmerie, but also at court. Apart from the attempt to blow up an imperial train in the south, in which he had played the leading part, he had been described to the authorities [1283] as the most gifted and effective agitator in the movement.

The police at Little Garden Street were unaware of all this, but the conduct of the two men who had visited the cheese shop that afternoon seemed decidedly suspicious and lent a glare of colour to the irrelevancies that seemed to enfold the place.

The next morning Pavel called on the Koboseffs. As he entered the cheese store he saw that the adjoining room was crowded with police officers. In his first shock he was only conscious of the gleam of uniforms, of Urie's and somebody else's voice and of his own sick despair. But the sick feeling ebbed away, leaving him in a state of desperate, pugnacious tranquillity, his mind on the revolver in his pocket.

"Hello there!" he shouted, with the self-satisfied disrespect of a man of the better classes addressing one of the lower, and at this he surveyed the store with an air of contempt, as much as to say: "What a den I did strike!"

"Wife," he heard Urie's voice, "there is a gentleman in the shop."

Baska, who had been calmly emptying a barrel of cheese into some boxes, wiped her hands upon her apron and stepped behind the counter.

"Is your Holland cheese any good?" Pavel asked, sniffing. "Are you sure you can give me a pound of decent stuff?"

She waited on him, simply, and after some more sniffing, at the wrapping paper as well as the cheese, he let her make up the package. As he walked toward the door his heart stood still for an instant.

He was allowed to go. Whether he was followed by spies he did not know. At all events, when he approached his [1283] "legal" residence at the house of his high-born relative, after an hour's "circling," he felt perfectly free from shadowing. He was greatly perplexed to think of the way Urie and Baska had been allowed to continue in their rôle of a cheesemonger couple; but, at all events, even if the true character of their shop had not yet been discovered by the police officers he had seen there, it seemed to be a matter of minutes when it would be.

In the morning of that day, a few hours before Pavel called on the Koboseffs, the police captain of the Little Garden Street precinct had asked the prefect of St. Petersburg to have the cheese shop examined under the guise of a sanitary inspection. He was still uninformed of the arrest of the big fellow with the pointed beard, much less of the fact that he had proved to be one of the chieftains of the revolutionary organisation, but the story of the two suspicious-looking visitors at the cheese shop and their "circling" had made him uneasy. The Czar was expected to pass through Little Garden Street on Sunday, which was the next day, and one could not ascertain the real character of the Koboseffs and their business too soon. Nevertheless the prefect was slow to appreciate the situation. Indeed, it is quite characteristic of the despotic chaos of a regime like Russia's that on the one hand people are thrown into jail to perish there on the merest whim of some gendarme, and, on the other, action is often prevented by an excess of red tape and indolence in cases where there is ground for the gravest suspicion. While hundreds of schoolboys and schoolgirls were wasting away in damp, solitary cells because they had been suspected of reading some revolutionary leaflet, the occupants of this [1284] basement, in whose case suspicion was associated with the idea of a plot on the life of the Czar, had not even been subjected to the summary search and questioning to which every resident in Russia is ever liable.

Finally, after considerable pleading on the part of the police captain, General Mrovinsky, a civil engineer of the Health Department, an elderly man with a kindly, genial face, was assigned to make the feigned inspection.

"Your Excellency will please see if they are not digging a mine there," the police captain said to him, respectfully. "The Emperor often passes that shop when he goes to the Riding Schools or to the Michaïl Palace, and that cheese dealer and his wife are quite a suspicious-looking couple. His Majesty is expected to pass the place to-morrow."

The general entered the cheese shop accompanied by the police captain, the captain's lieutenant and the head porter of the house. Koboseff came out of the inner rooms to meet them. He turned pale, but this seemed natural.

"His Excellency represents the Health Department," said the captain. "There is dampness in the next house, and His Excellency wishes to see if your place is all right."

"I am sorry to trouble you," said General Mrovinsky, kindly. "But dampness is a bad thing to have in one's house, you know."

"There is none here that I know of, sir," Koboseff replied deferentially, "but, of course, a fellow must not be too sure, sir."

Baska stood in a corner of the shop, bending over a barrel. While the officers talked to Urie she threw a glance at the visitors over her shoulder and resumed her work.

The uniformed civil engineer made a close examination of the walls. The one facing the street was covered with [1285] planking, and Koboseff explained that he had had it done as a safeguard against dampness, but that there was none.

"But then cheese crumbs are apt to get into the cracks," urged General Mrovinsky, taking hold of one of the shelves along that wall. "They would decay there, don't you know, and that would be almost as bad as dampness, wouldn't it?" He then inspected the two living rooms. In the second of these he found a pile of hay.

"It's from our cheese barrels," Koboseff explained; and pointing at another pile he added: "And that's coke, sir."

General Mrovinsky picked up a coal, examined it, threw it back and wiped his fingers with some of the hay.

"Everything is all right," he said to the police officers, with a look of intelligence. He led the way back to the store and then back again to the middle room. Here he took a firm hold of the planking that lined the wall under the street window. He tried to wrench it off, but it would not yield, and he let it go.

"Everything is all right," he said to the captain, seating himself on a sofa. A trunk and some pieces of furniture were

moved from their places and then put back. The general knew a merchant by the name of Koboseff, so he asked the cheese dealer if he was a relative of his. Urie said no, and after some conversation about the cheese business in general the officials went away.

"There is no mine in that place. You can make yourself perfectly easy about it," Mrovinsky said to the captain, as they made their way to the adjoining basement.

It was while they were conversing leisurely, the old general seated on the lounge, that Pavel came in. He was watched narrowly, but he played his part well, and as the engineer had already intimated to the police officers that there was nothing suspicious about the premises he was not even shadowed. [286]

Thus reassured, the police of the locality set to work preparing Little Garden Street for the Czar's drive to the Riding School. This included an investigation as to the character of the occupants of all the other shops and residences facing the street, as well as getting the pavement in good repair.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE RED TERROR.

MEANWHILE a reform measure which subsequently became known as “the constitution of Loris-Melikoff” had been framed and submitted to the Czar by the Minister of the Interior. The project called for the convocation of a semi-representative assembly to be clothed with consultative powers. It was framed in guarded language, great pains having been taken to keep out anything like an allusion to parliamentary government.

“But it looks like the States-General,” the Czar said to Loris-Melikoff. The resemblance which the measure bore to the opening chapter in the history of the French revolution, where representatives of the three estates are convened in consultative parliament, made a disagreeable impression on him. Still, the project was ingeniously worded as a measure tending to “enhance the confidence of the monarch in his loyal subjects”; so, upon a closer reading, the Czar warmed to it, and returned the draft to Loris-Melikoff with his hearty approval. This took place at 12 o’clock on Sunday, March 13, 1881, one day after the search at the cheese store. It was decided to have the document read before the cabinet on Wednesday, after which it was to be published over the imperial signature in the *Official Messenger*.

[288] The Czar was dressed in the uniform of the Sappers of the Guards, whose review he was about to attend at the Michaïl Riding Schools.

“I pray your Majesty to forego the trip,” Loris-Melikoff said, solicitously.

The Czar smiled. Princess Dolgoruki had made a similar request, and by accentuating his danger they both only succeeded in challenging his courage. He felt as if in the light of their appeal staying at home would mean hiding. Instead of pleading with him for caution Loris-Melikoff should have made an effort to secure a suspension of hostilities in the enemy’s camp. Had the revolutionists been aware of what was coming a truce on their part would have been assured. And then, little as the project to be divulged resembled a constitution in the western sense of the word, it was yet the first approach to representative legislation in the history of modern Russia. The Nihilists were pledged to abandon their Terror the moment free speech had been granted, and although no reference to questions of this character was made in the “constitution,” certain liberties in that direction might have followed as a matter of course, as an offspring of the new spirit which the measure was expected to inaugurate. A distinguished revolutionary writer has pointed out how easy it would have been for Loris-Melikoff to bring his expectations to the knowledge of the Executive Committee of the Nihilists by setting a rumour on foot among the professional and intellectual classes, many of whose representatives, as the Vice-Emperor knew but too well, were in touch with the central organization of the Will of the People. Perhaps this method of communicating with the revolutionists had not occurred to Loris-Melikoff; perhaps the iron-clad secrecy that enclosed his project was a necessary protection against the enemies of reform at court. However it may have been, neither the revolutionists nor their liberal allies had any inkling as to the document about to be published in the *Official Messenger*. Instead, they saw the police and the gendarmerie continuing their riot of administrative violence; instead, they heard of an order by virtue of which a number of revolutionists who had served their term within prison walls at Kara, Siberia, and been admitted to partial freedom in the penal colony outside, had suddenly been put in irons and thrown back into their cells; whereupon some of them had committed suicide rather than return to the tortures of their former life. All of which had added gall to the bitterness of the revolutionists at large and whetted their distrust of the “crafty Armenian,” as they called Loris-Melikoff.

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The Czar’s favourite coachman, a stalwart, handsome fellow, with a thick blond beard and clear blue eyes, sat on the box of the closed imperial carriage, waiting in the vast courtyard of the Winter Palace. An escort of six lusty Cossacks, two gendarme officers and one of the several chiefs of police of the capital held themselves in readiness near by, the Cossacks on their mounts, the other three in their open sleighs. Presently a great door flew open and the Emperor appeared, accompanied by an adjutant and a sergeant of the page corps. He wore a military cape-cloak and a helmet. While the page held the carriage door open, the Czar said to the coachman:

“By Songsters’ Bridge!”

This was not his habitual route to the Riding Schools. Not that he was aware of the suspicions which the cheese shop on Little Garden Street had aroused. He had not the least idea of the existence of such a shop. He had decided on the new route merely as a matter of general precaution, in case there was a mine somewhere. As to pistol shots he was sufficiently screened by the walls of his carriage as well as by the bodies of his cossacks and their horses.

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That calm feeling of reverent affection with which the average Englishman hails his sovereign is unknown in Russia. But whether with reverence or mute imprecations, the coach of a Czar disseminates thrills of fright as it proceeds. The cavalcade of horsemen and sleighs, with the great lacquered carriage in the centre, was sailing and galloping along like a grim alien force, diffusing an atmosphere of terror. To those who saw it approaching the fiery cossacks on their fiery horses looked like a ferocious band of invaders, their every fibre spoiling for violence, rushing onward on an errand of conquest and bloody reckoning.

It was a cloudy day. The streets were covered with discoloured, brownish snow; the snow on the roofs, window-sills, cornices, gate-posts, was of immaculate whiteness, apparently devoid of weight, smooth and neat, as though trimmed by some instrument. There were few people along the route followed by the little procession and most of these were in their Sunday clothes. Now a civilian snatched off his cap spasmodically, now a soldier drew himself up with all his might, as though trying to lift himself off his feet. Here and there a drunken citizen was staggering along. Every person the carriage passed was scrutinised by every member of the escort, by the cossacks as well as by the chief of police and the gendarme officers. The Riding Schools were soon reached.

[291] The Emperor left the building less than an hour later. He was accompanied by Grand Duke Michaïl, his brother, the two going to the Michaïl Palace, where they were to have lunch with the Czar’s niece.

Sophia, the ex-governor’s daughter, was watching the imperial carriage from a point of vantage. Presently she turned into a neighbouring street, and passing a fair-complexioned young man in a dark overcoat, who held a white package in his hand, she raised her handkerchief to her nose. The young man then hurried away toward Catharine Canal. Three other men, one of them a gigantic looking fellow, stood at so many different points, and at sight of Sophia with her handkerchief to her nose, they all started in the same direction as the first man, while the young woman

walked over to the Neva Prospect from which she crossed a bridge to the opposite side of Catharine Canal.

It was half past two when the imperial carriage, surrounded by the six cossacks and followed by the gendarme officers and the chief of police, set out on their homebound journey. The handsome coachman let out his horses. The group was scudding along at top speed. The chief of police stood up in his sleigh, one of his gloved hands on the shoulder of his driver, as he strained his eyes now to the right now to the left, after the manner of the human figure on the face of a certain kind of clocks. The carriage turned to the right, passing a detachment of marines who saluted the Czar by presenting arms. The carriage was now on one of the banks of the Catharine Canal, an iron railing to the right, a row of buildings to the left. An employe of a horse-car company, who was levelling off a ridge of caked snow at this moment, hastily rested his crowbar against the iron railing and bared his head. Some distance in front of him a young man in a dark overcoat, and with a white package in his hand, was trudging along the canal side of the street. He was [294] passed and left in the rear by a man in the uniform of a hospital nurse of the guards. On the sidewalk to the left of the Czar, another man, also in military uniform, was moving rapidly along, while from the opposite direction, in the middle of the snow-covered street, came a boy pulling a little sled with a basket of meat on it. Sophia was looking on from the other side of the canal.

Colonel Dvorzhitzky (the chief of police) was scanning the sidewalk to the left, when a terrific crash went up from under the Czar's carriage. It was as if a mass of deafening sound had lain dormant there, in the form of a vast closed fan, and the fan had suddenly flown open. The colonel's horses reared violently, hurling him over the shoulder of his coachman. While he was surveying the left side of the street, the employe of the tramway company and several military people, coming up alongside the railing, had seen the young man in the dark overcoat lift his white package and throw it under the Czar's carriage. The carriage came to a sudden halt amid a cloud of smoke and snow dust. A second or two passed before any of them could realise what it all meant. The young man turned about and broke into a run.

"Catch him! Hold him!" the pedestrians shrieked frantically, dashing after the running man.

He had reached a point some thirty feet back of the imperial carriage when he was hemmed in. One of the cossacks and the boy lay in the snow shrieking. One of the rear corners of the carriage was badly shattered. The rest of it was uninjured, but during the first minute or two its doors remained closed, so that the bystanders could not tell whether [295] the Czar was hurt or not. Then the chief of police rushed up to the vehicle and flung the right door open. The Czar was unhurt, but ghastly pale. He sat bending slightly forward, his feet on the bearskin covering the floor, a gilt ash receiver on a shelf in front of him.

"The guilty man has been caught, your Imperial Majesty!" Colonel Dvorzhitzky burst out.

"Has he?" the Emperor asked, in intense agitation.

"He has, your Imperial Majesty. They are holding him. May I offer you to finish the journey in my sleigh?"

"Yes, but I first want to see the prisoner."

Pervaded by the conviction that another plot on his life had failed, the Czar stepped out of the carriage, and accompanied by a group of officers, some from his escort and others from among the passers-by, he crossed over to the sidewalk that ran along the canal railing, erect and majestic as usual, but extremely pale with excitement, and then turning to the right he walked toward where a group of uniformed men were holding a fair-complexioned beardless young fellow against the railing. People, mostly in military uniforms, came running from every direction.

Somebody asked: "How is the Emperor?"

"Thank God," answered the Czar, "I have escaped, but——" and he pointed at the wounded cossack and boy.

"It may be too soon to thank God," said the prisoner.

"Is this the man who did it?" the Czar asked, advancing toward him. "Who are you?"

"My name is Glazoff."

The Czar turned back. He had made a few steps, when a man who stood no more than three feet from him raised [296] a white object high over his head and dashed it to the ground, between the Emperor and himself.

There was another explosion, still more violent and deafening than the first. The air was a turmoil of smoke, snow-dust and shreds of uniforms, concealing everything else from view. Sophia hurried away.

More than half a minute later, when the chaos had partly cleared away, the Czar was seen in a sitting posture on the snow-covered sidewalk, leaning against the railing, his large oval head bare, his cape-cloak gone. He was breathing hard. His face was in blood, the flesh of his bared legs lacerated, the blood gushing from them over the snow. A heap of singed, smoking tatters nearby was all that had been left of his cloak.

With cries of horror and of overpowering pity the bystanders rushed forward. Among them was a man with a bomb under his coat like the two which had just exploded. He was one of the four men who had shifted their posts when they saw Sophia raising her handkerchief to her nose. Had the second bomb failed to do its bloody work, this Terrorist would have thrown his missile when the imperial carriage came by his corner. As he beheld the Czar on the ground and bleeding, however, he instinctively flung himself forward to offer help to the suffering man.

At sight of the prostrated Czar the men who held the author of the first explosion, began to shower blows on him.

"Don't," he begged them, shielding his head and face. "I meant the good of the people."

Two yards from the Czar lay bleeding the unconscious figure of a civilian. Further away were several other prostrated men, in all sorts of uniforms.

"Help!" the Czar uttered in a faint voice. [297]

Somebody handed him a handkerchief, which he put to his face, muttering "Cold, cold." Several of the marines who had saluted him a few minutes ago and two guardsmen placed him on Colonel Dvorzhitzky's sleigh.

When Grand Duke Michaïl appeared on the scene he found his brother rapidly sinking.

"Sasha,[C] do you hear me?" he asked him, with tears in his eyes.

The bystanders, who had never before heard their Czar addressed in the form of affectionate familiarity, were thrilled with a feeling of heart-tearing pity and of the most fervent devotion. Most of them had sobs in their throats.

"Yes," the Czar answered faintly.

"How do you feel, Sasha?"

"To the Palace—quick," the Czar whispered. And upon hearing somebody's suggestion that he be taken to the nearest house for immediate relief, he uttered:

"Bear me to the palace—there—die——."

He reclined between two cossacks, with a gendarme officer facing him and supporting his legs. This is the way he returned home. Pedestrians met him with gestures of horrified perplexity and acute commiseration now.

The crowd at one corner of Catharine Canal was a babel of excitement and violence. In their mad rush for the man who threw the second bomb, the bystanders were accusing each other, grabbing at each other, quarrelling, fighting. As

Nihilists were for the most part people of education, every man who looked college-bred was in danger of his life. Among those who were beaten to a pulp in this wild mêlée were two political spies who had the appearance of university students. A shout went up that the thrower of the fatal bomb had vaulted over the fence of the Michaïl gardens nearby, and then the mob broke down part of that fence, and ruined the gardens in a wild but vain search for the Terrorist. People were seized and hustled off to the station houses by the hundred.

The heir apparent, a fair-complexioned Hercules, was on his way to the Winter Palace surrounded by a strong escort of mounted men. It was the first time he had appeared in the streets so accompanied. The cluster of horsemen and sleighs that had left the palace three hours before never returned; this one was coming in its place; but the effect of grim detachment, of fierce challenge was the same.

An hour had elapsed. The flag over the Winter Palace which denotes Imperial presence was put at half-mast. Church bells were tolling the death of Alexander II. and the accession of Alexander III.

The new Czar was by his father's bedside. He was even more powerfully built than he, but he lacked his grace and the light of his intelligent eyes—a physical giant with a look of obtuse honesty on a fair, bearded round face. An English diplomatist who understood him well has said that "he had a mind not only commonplace, but incapable of receiving new ideas." When he saw his father breathe his last, he exclaimed: "This is what we have come to!"—a celebrated ejaculation which an archbishop uttered at the funeral of Peter the Great in 1725. This was his first utterance as Emperor of Russia. Its puerile lack of originality was characteristic of the man.

Princess Dolgoruki fainted, and she had no sooner been brought to than the packing of her trunks was ordered by the sons of her dead husband.

The palace was surrounded by a strong cordon of cossacks. Palace Square was thronged, the neighbouring streets were tremulous with subdued excitement. Some people were sincerely overcome with grief and horror; others were struggling to conceal their exultation. There were such as wept and cursed the Nihilists by way of displaying their own loyalty, and there were such as burst into tears from the sheer solemnity and nervousness of the moment. But the great predominating feeling that pervaded these crowds, eclipsing every other sentiment or thought, was curiosity. "What is going to happen next?"—this was the question that was uppermost in the minds of these people in their present fever of excitement. Had a republic been proclaimed with the Executive Committee of the Nihilists as a provisional government, they would have sworn their allegiance to the bomb-throwers as readily as they did, on the morrow, to the son of the assassinated Emperor. Had the Terrorists succeeded, the same bearded bishops who blessed and sounded the praises of the new Czar would have blessed and sounded the praises of those who had killed his father.

Pavel was in a suburb of the capital, when he first heard the melancholy tolling of the church bells.

"What's the matter?" he asked an elderly man who was walking with a sleigh-load of bricks, the reins in his hands.

"They say our little father, the Czar, has been killed," the other answered, making the sign of the cross with his free hand. "People say the Czarowitz is going to cut down the term of military service. Is it true, sir?"

"What is true?" Pavel asked. He was literally dazed with excitement.

"A son of mine is in the army, sir," the other explained reverently. "So I wonder if the new Czar will be easier on the soldiers, sir."

Pavel hailed the first hackman he came across. He was burning to know the details of the assassination and to tell Clara that the first man he accosted on the great news of the hour had shown indifference to the death of the monarch.

When his sleigh reached the Neva Prospect, he saw the new Czar, surrounded by a cohort of officers in dazzling uniform, passing along the thoroughfare. The crowds were greeting him with wild cheers. They cheered their own emotions at sight of the man whose father had come to so tragic a death, and they cheered their own servility to the master of the situation.

These shouts filled Pavel with a mixed sense of defeat and triumph. The gloomier feeling predominated. The world looked as usual. It did not look as if this cheering, servile, stolid mob would ever rise against anything.

That evening placards bearing the name of the Executive Committee appeared on the walls of public buildings. They announced the death of Alexander II. and admonished his successor to adopt a liberal policy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE REVELATION.

EVERY resident in the capital was being scanned and spied after, and every house-porter was kept peeking and seeking and reporting at the police station of his precinct. The railway stations were teeming with spies and a system was introduced by which every hack-driver was expected to spy on his fare. The effect of it all was that the great majority of St. Petersburg's population was in a state of unspeakable terror. Curiosity, pity and everything else had given way to a nervous feeling of self-preservation. People walked through the streets hastily. The sight of a policeman was enough to send a twinge of fright into the heart of the most loyal government clerk; everybody was afraid of everybody else. One avoided to utter such words as "Czar," "police," "government." As to the Nihilists, one literally dreaded to think of them. People who had never had a liberal thought in their brain were tremulous with distrust of their own souls.

And through all this all-pervading panic Clara was busy posting revolutionary proclamations in the streets, distributing tracts among students and working-people, keeping "business" appointments with her "illegal" friends. Pavel, in his turn, had all he could do to attend to the needs of some of the out-of-town "circles." The revolutionists throughout the country were clamouring for information, for proclamations, for speakers; so that the seventy or eighty men and women who formed the innermost organisation were as feverishly busy in their way as the police and the gendarmes were in theirs. [300]

The authorities were ransacking the capital for Nihilists in general and for the cheesemonger couple in particular, but during the first few hours following the two explosions their eagerness was centered on the man who had thrown the fatal bomb. The search for that man soon proved superfluous, however.

The civilian who was picked up unconscious near where the Czar was stricken down had been taken to a hospital. Late in the evening he had a brief interval of consciousness.

"Who are you?" an officer then asked him.

"I don't know," he answered. He had a relapse from which he never awoke. The front of his body, particularly the inner side of one arm, was covered with ghastly wounds, from which experts inferred that at the time of the explosion he could not have stood more than three feet from the Czar. This, according to some eye-witnesses of the catastrophe, was the distance between the deceased monarch and the man who threw the second bomb. After two days of searching and sniffing the police discovered the unknown man's lodging, where they found some revolutionary literature and other evidence that pointed to him as the author of the fatal explosion. He had stood so close to the Czar that it was impossible for him to make a target of his victim without making one of himself. His real name still remained unknown.

As to the first bomb-thrower, he proved to be a college student named Rysakoff. In the hands of the gendarme officers and the procureur he broke down and told all he knew; but it appeared that he knew very little. He had been one of a number of volunteers who offered to attack the Emperor under the command of Zachar. When Zachar's arrest became known to the Executive Committee things had begun to be rushed. Sophia Perovskaya, the ex-governor's daughter, had taken his place, and it was decided to make the assault without delay. Zachar had been arrested on Friday evening. As it was known to Sophia that the Czar would visit the Riding Schools on the next Sunday, the attempt was fixed for that occasion. The Terrorists immediately connected with the plot held their gatherings at a "conspiracy lodgings" kept by a man and woman Rysakoff did not know. There the volunteers met Sophia and one of the inventors of the self-igniting shell (the man with the priestly face whom we saw at the meeting of the Executive Committee at which Clara's wedding was to be celebrated). On Sunday morning (the day of the assassination) the volunteers—three college men and an artisan—called at the same gathering place. They found two finished bombs there and soon Sophia arrived with two more. Where the bomb factory was Rysakoff did not know. Sophia explained that it took a whole night to make the four portable machines and that more than four volunteers could not be accommodated. She then drew a rough map of the Czar's expected route, with four dots for the posts of the four bomb-throwers. There were two sets of dots on the diagram. In case the Czar failed to include Little Garden Street in his route, the Terrorists were to shift their positions to Catharine Canal and two neighbouring streets. [301]

That afternoon, as Rysakoff stood on his post near Little Garden Street, Sophia passed by him, her handkerchief to her nose (the same sort of signal which the same young woman had given a year and a half before to the man who fired the mine which blew up the imperial train near Moscow). That meant that the Czar was not passing through Little Garden Street. Accordingly, Rysakoff hastened over to Catherine Canal. There, after he had thrown the bomb and while the Czar was speaking to him, he saw the three other volunteers each on his post. [302]

The second bomb-thrower was known to Rysakoff under the name of "the Kitten." His real name he did not know.

He also gave the police the address of the "conspiracy lodgings," which were located on the sixth floor of a house on Waggon Street, and an hour or two later, at midnight, two days after the killing of the Czar, the procureur, accompanied by gendarmes and police, knocked at one of the doors of that apartment.

"Who is there?" a masculine voice asked from within.

"Police and the procureur."

"What do you want?"

"Open the door at once or we'll break it down."

While they were raining blows on the door, a succession of pistol shots was heard within. Another door flew open, at the end of the corridor, and a woman made her appearance.

"We surrender," she said. "Pray send for a doctor. Look out, don't pass through this door. There are explosives there."

Inside they found the fresh corpse of a man lying in a pool of blood. It was the gay poet; and the woman was Hessia Helfman, the dark little Jewess with the frizzled hair who was married to Purring Cat. It was she and the man now lying dead from his own pistol shots who had been in charge of this "conspiracy lodgings." Among the things found in the apartment were the two bombs which had been brought back from the scene of the assassination; the rough map made by Sophia on the morning before the attack and a large quantity of revolutionary literature. [303]

The former "conspiracy lodgings" were now a police trap, and on the very next morning it caught a big burly man whom Rysakoff identified as Timothy Michailoff, the one mechanic among the four men who had been armed with bombs on the fatal morning. Michailoff's memorandum book furnished the police some important addresses, but the great surprise of that eventful week did not come until the following day, March 17th, and when it did it was anything

but a source of self-congratulation to the authorities.

About ten o'clock in the morning of that day the porters of the house on Little Garden Street where the Koboseffs kept their shop reported to the roundsman that the cheese dealer and his wife had not been home since the previous evening, and that their shop was still closed. The roundsman, who, like every member of the St. Petersburg police during those days, was overworked and badly in need of rest, made no reply. An hour later the porter accosted him again:

"The shop is still closed. Customers have been around and there is nobody in."

"Oh, I have no time to bother about it."

"But I think I saw something in that store, some strange looking tools," pleaded the porter.

"The devil you did," the roundsman said, as much with irritation as with amazement.

[304] The statement was reported to the captain, who communicated it to his superiors, until finally an order was obtained to raid the shop. A search was made, more thorough than the first, and with quite different results. The lounge in the living room upon which General Mrovinsky had sat while speaking to Koboseff was found to contain a heap of earth, and when the planks under the window of the middle room were removed—the very ones which General Mrovinsky had made a feeble attempt to detach in the presence of Koboseff and the police—a large yawning hole presented itself to view. When this part of the wall had been torn down, the aperture proved to be the mouth of a subterranean passage enclosed in wood. Seven feet from the shop began a charge of a hundred pounds of dynamite with an electric battery near by and wires running along the gallery back to the middle room. Everything was in complete readiness. All that was necessary to explode the mine was to connect the wires.

As was learned subsequently, this mine had been the leading feature of the plot, the bombs having been added in case the Czar left Little Garden Street out of his route or the mine failed of its deadly purpose for some other reason. Of the existence of such a mine Rysakoff had not the remotest idea until he heard of it at the trial.

On the Friday afternoon immediately preceding the arrest of Jeliaboff (Zachar) the porter of the house where he and Sophia were registered as brother and sister met them at the gate as they were leaving the house together; and later, at 9 o'clock in the evening, he saw Sophia return alone. The next morning, after Jeliaboff had spent his first night in prison, the police, in their effort to discover his residence, ordered every porter in the city to ascertain who of his tenants had been absent from home that night. When the porter rang Sophia's bell that morning there was no response. [305] He reported it at the police station where he was told to try again. At 2 o'clock he saw Sophia.

"I have received some blanks from the police," he said. "Every tenant must state his occupation and place of business."

"My brother is working now," Sophia answered. "When he comes home I'll tell him about it."

Two hours later she went out again, and in order to avoid passing the porter at the gate, she gained the street through a little dry goods shop that had a rear door into that yard, buying something for a pretext. She came back, by way of the same dry goods shop, at 9 o'clock in the evening and that was the last that was ever seen of her in that neighbourhood. The next morning the porter reported the disappearance of the couple.

When the police searched the deserted apartment they found a number of revolutionary publications, several tin boxes like those which formed the shells of the two exploding machines seized at the "conspiracy house" kept by Hessia and the "gay poet," and several cheeses bearing the same trade-mark as those in Koboseff's shop.

Meanwhile Jeliaboff had heard the solemn tolling of the bells in his prison cell. In the excitement of the hour a gendarme on duty in the prison corridor answered his questions through the peep-hole, in violation of regulations. Jeliaboff at once sent word to the procureur, assuming responsibility for the entire plot, as an agent of the Executive Committee.

Sophia knew through a certain high official all that transpired between Jeliaboff and the procureur. She knew that the authorities were turning the capital inside out in their search for the woman who had lived with Jeliaboff as his [306] sister and for the Koboseff couple, yet in spite of all the pressure the Nihilists brought to bear on her, persuading her to seek temporary retirement, she, like Urie and Baska, remained in the heart of St. Petersburg, in the very thick of her party's activity. Clara saw her at a meeting during that week.

"You need rest, Sonia. You look tired."

"Do I?" Sophia answered with a smile. "So do you. Everybody does these days."

Her smile was on her lips only. Her blue eyes were inscrutably grave, but Clara saw a blend of lofty exaltation and corroding anguish in them. She knew how dear Jeliaboff was to her. She had been craving to speak to her of him, of Hessia and of the "gay poet," who had committed suicide at the time of Hessia's arrest; but at this moment it was Sophia herself who filled her mind.

"Sonia!" Clara said, huskily.

"What is it, child?" the other asked, kindly.

For an answer Clara looked her in the face, smiling shame-facedly. She did feel like an infant in her presence, although Sophia, with her small stature and fresh boyish face, looked the younger of the two. She did not know herself what she wanted to say. She was burning to cover her with kisses and to break into sobs on her breast, but Sophia was graver and more taciturn than usual to-day, so she held herself in check. Her passion for tears was subdued. She sat by Sophia's side absorbed in her presence without looking her in the face, tingling with something like the feeling of people in a graveyard, in a moment of solemn ecstasy.

Clara came away burdened with unvoiced emotion. She said to herself that when she saw Pavel she would find relief in telling him how she adored Sophia and how thirsty her heart was because she had not unbosomed herself [307] of these feelings to her; but when she and Pavel were alone she said nothing.

The porters of the house from which Sophia had vanished were asked at the police station whether they would be able to single her out in a street crowd. They had to admit that they were not sure whether they would. She had lived under their eye for eight months, but she had always managed to pass through the gate, where they were usually on duty, so as to leave no clear impression of her features on their minds. Finally, on the sixth day, it was discovered that

the proprietress of the little dry goods store had a clear recollection of her face. This woman, accompanied by a police officer, then spent hours driving about through the busiest streets, until, with a shout of mixed joy and fright, she pointed out Sophia in a public sleigh.

It was not many days before Kibalchich, the man with the Christlike face, who was one of the inventors and makers of the four bombs, and another revolutionist were arrested in a café, through an address found in Timothy Michailoff's note-book.

The trial of the six regicides so far captured, Jeliaboff, Sophia, Kibalchich, Hessia, Rysakoff, and Timothy Michailoff, was begun by a special Court of the Governing Senate for Political Cases, on April 8. That Purring Cat and the man with the Tartarian face, both of whom were in prison now, had taken part in the digging of the Koboseff mine, was still unknown to the police. Nor had the authorities as yet been informed of the fact that another "political" in their hands—the undersized man who had played the part of shop-boy to the cheese-dealer—had had something to do with the same conspiracy. [309]

Complete reports of the trial appeared in the newspapers, and the testimony and speeches of the accused were read and read again.

Jeliaboff ("Zachar") declined a lawyer, taking his defence in his own hands. His legal battles with the presiding judge, his resource, his tact and his eloquence, made him the central figure of the proceedings. He began by challenging the court's jurisdiction in the case. "This court represents the crown, one of the two parties concerned," he said, "and I submit that in a contention between the government and the revolutionary party there could be only one judge—the people; the people either by means of a popular vote, or through its rightful representatives in parliament assembled, or, at least, a jury representing public conscience." Declarations of this kind, Kibalchich's narrative as to how the blind brutality of the government had transformed peaceful social workers into Terrorists, and the effect of simple, dignified sincerity which marked the conduct of all the prisoners produced such a profound impression, that at the time of the next important political trial scarcely any reports were allowed to be published.

The six regicides were sentenced to death, the execution of Hessia Helfman, who was about to become a mother, being postponed and later commuted. When the parents of Kolotkevich (Purring Cat) asked to be allowed to bring up their son's child, the request was refused on the ground that it was the child of two regicides and should be brought up under special care. The result of this special care was that the child, like its pardoned mother, soon died.

Sophia and the four condemned men died on the gallows, on a public square. They were taken to their death on two [309] "shame waggons," dressed in convict clothes, each with a board inscribed with the words "criminal of state" across his or her breast. The procession was accompanied by a force of military large enough to conquer a country like Belgium. Sophia was the first woman executed on Russian soil since 1719.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CZAR TAKES COURAGE.

ALEXANDER III. and his court moved to the long-deserted imperial palace at Gatchina, a village 28 English miles from St. Petersburg. The young Czar and his entourage were in a state of nervous tension. Economically, the country was in the throes of hard times. Districts rich in the potentialities of industry and prosperity were in the grip of famine. Driven by bad crops and extortionate taxes, thousands of village families were abandoning their homes to go begging. Cities were crowded with such mendicants from surrounding villages, and the industrial centres were full of workmen out of employment. Politically, a demoralising feeling of suspense hung over the empire. The masses had seen one Czar—the ward of a vigilant guardian angel—prostrated. The crown's prestige was shaken, and the Czar's seeking refuge in a secluded village did anything but retrieve it. The number of *lèse majesté* cases had suddenly grown so large that by a special imperial ukase these offences were transferred from the publicity of the courts to the obscure depths of "justice by administrative order." From several places came reports of riots against the police, while the universities manifested their hostility to the throne quite openly. Subscription lists for a monument to the assassinated Czar were torn to pieces and those who circulated them were publicly hissed and insulted. The portents of turbulence were in the air. [5111]

Loris-Melikoff submitted to the new Czar the "constitution" of which Alexander II. had approved an hour before his violent death. Alexander III. read it and wrote on the margin of the paper: "Very well conceived"; and two days later, after the project had been carried at a cabinet meeting by a vote of eight against five, the Czar, while conversing with his brother, Grand Duke Vladimir, on the measure to be introduced, said, joyfully:

"I feel as though a mountain had rolled off my shoulders."

But the conservative party at court had the support of a new power behind the throne. M. Pobiedonostzeff, formerly tutor of the present Czar and now his favourite adviser, was a man of much stronger purpose than Loris-Melikoff. He fought against the innovation tooth and nail, and the publication of it in the *Official Messenger* was postponed from day to day. The leader of the Panslavists was invited from Moscow; every conservative influence was brought to bear upon a Czar who was absolutely incapable of forming his own opinion. All this was done in the strictest secrecy from Loris-Melikoff.

Meanwhile, during Easter week, seven days after the approval of the "constitution" by a majority of the ministers and twelve days subsequent to the execution of the regicides, a furious anti-Jewish riot broke out in Elisavetgrad, a prosperous city in the south. A frenzied drink-crazed mob had possession of the town during two days, demolishing and pillaging hundreds of houses and shops, covering whole streets with debris and reducing thousands of people to beggary. [5112] And neighbouring towns and villages followed the example of the larger city.

The Czar took alarm. It looked like the prelude to a popular upheaval.

"It's only an anti-Semitic disturbance, your Imperial Majesty," Pobiedonostzeff reassured him. "There was one like that ten years ago, in Odessa."

The Elisavetgrad outbreak was, indeed, a purely local affair, but it happened at a time that was highly favourable to occurrences of that nature. Originally organised by some high-born profligates, victims of a gang of Jewish usurers, it had nothing to do with the general situation save in so far as there was in the hungry masses a blind disposition to attack somebody; a disposition coupled with a feeling that the usual ties of law and order had been loosened. When, in addition, the target of assault happened to be the stepchild in Russia's family of peoples, the one forever kicked and cuffed by the government itself, the rioters' sense of security was complete. Moreover, among the victims of Jewish usurers were hundreds of army officers and civil officials who lived beyond their means, and from these came a direct hint at impunity. The attack had been carefully planned, but the imbruted mob acted on its own logic, with the result that thousands of artisans, labourers, poor tradesmen, teachers, rabbis, dreamers, were plundered and ill-treated while the handful of usurers escaped.

The promise of impunity was fulfilled. Neighbouring towns and villages followed the example of Elisavetgrad, and ten days later, May 8-9, similar atrocities, but with a far greater display of fury and bestiality, occurred in Kieff, where a dozen murders and an enormous list of wounded and of outraged women was added to the work of devastation and plunder. [5113] The Kieff authorities encouraged all this in a thousand ways, while individual officers and men took part in the pandemonium of havoc and rape.

"Easy, boys," said the governor of the province, with an amused smile, as he drove past the busy rioters at the head of a procession of fashionable spectators.

Loris-Melikoff was scarcely to be held responsible for these occurrences. He had his own cares to worry him. The reins were fast slipping out of his hands. Indeed, the attitude of governors, chiefs of police, military officers, toward the spreading campaign against the Jews was a matter of instinct. The "spirit of the moment," as it had become customary to denote the epidemic of anti-Jewish feeling in official circles, gleamed forth clear and unequivocal, and local authorities acted upon it on their own hook. The real meaning of this "spirit of the moment" lay in the idea that if there was a state of general unrest threatening the safety of the throne, it was spending itself on anti-Semitic ferocity; that if a storm-cloud was gathering over the crown, an electric rod had been found in the Chosen People.

The Czar took courage.

Two days after the Kieff riot he promulgated a manifesto, framed by Pobiedonostzeff, and proclaiming the continuance of unqualified iron-handed absolutism. The "constitution" went into the archives. Loris-Melikoff's public career had come to a close. General Ignatyeff, a corrupt time-server, was appointed Minister of the Interior and a policy of restriction and repression was adopted that brought back the days of Nicholas I.

Ignatyeff encouraged the "spirit of the moment" with all the means at his command. One of the very first things he did was to order the expulsion of thousands of Jews from Kieff. At the trial of some of the rioters the state attorney unceremoniously acted as advocate for the defendants. [5114]

The effect of all this upon the public mind was a foregone conclusion. The general inference was that anti-Jewish riots met with the government's approval. The outrages passed from Kieff to neighbouring cities; from there to Odessa;

from Odessa to other sections of the south. They were spreading throughout the region in which Miroslav is located with the continuity of a regular crusade and with a uniformity of detail that was eloquent of a common guiding force.

It was a new phase of White Terrorism.

To Pavel the crusade against Clara's race was a source of mixed encouragement and anxiety.

"Hurrah, old fellow," he said to Godfather one morning. "It does look as though the Russian people could kick, doesn't it?"

"Yes, if they can attack Jewish usurers, I don't see why they could not turn upon the government some day."

"And, while they are at it, upon the land-plundering nobility, upon fellows like you and me, eh?" He poked Urie in the ribs gleefully.

In his conversations with Clara, however, the subject was never broached, and this gave him a sense of guilt and uneasiness. He could not help being aware that instead of usurers the chief target of attack in every riot, without a single exception, were Jewish artisans, labourers, teachers and the poorest tradesmen. And this, so far as Clara was concerned, meant that the common people of Pavel's race, for whose sake she was facing the solitary cell and the gallows, that these Christian people were brutally assaulting and pillaging, reducing to beggary and murdering poor [1915] honest, innocent people of her own blood, Jews like her father, mother, sister, like herself.

But this bare fact did not fit in with Nihilist theory. That golden halo which had been painted about the common Christian people by the ecstasies of the anti-serfdom movement of twenty years ago had not yet faded. The Gentile masses were still deified by the Nihilists. Whatever the peasant or workman of Slavic blood did was still sacred,—an instinctive step in the direction of liberty and universal happiness. The Russian masses were rioting; could there be a better indication of a revolutionary awakening? And if the victims of these riots happened to be Jews, then the Jews were evidently enemies of the people.

That the crusade was part and parcel of the "white terror" of the throne had not yet dawned upon the revolutionists.

As to Clara, she was so completely abandoned to her grief over the death of Sophia and the four men that so far the riots (no unheard-of thing in the history of the Jews by any means) had made but a feeble appeal to her imagination. Centuries seemed to divide her from her race and her past. The outbreaks seemed to be taking place in some strange, distant country.

The execution of the five regicides had been described quite fully in the *Official Messenger* and the account had been copied in all other newspapers. Clara kept the issue of the *Voice* containing the report in a book, and although she knew its salient passages by heart, she often consulted the paper, now for this paragraph, now for that. There was a sacred mystery in the letters in which the description was printed.

"The five prisoners approached the priests almost at the same moment and kissed the cross; after which they were [1917] taken by the hangmen each to his or her rope." Clara beheld the ropes dangling and Sophia placed under one of them, but her aching heart coveted more vividness. Her imagination was making desperate efforts to reproduce the scene with the tangibility of life. Each time she read how the hangman, dressed in a red shirt, slipped the noose about Sophia's neck amid the roll of drums, and how he wrenched the stool from under her feet, so that she plunged with a jerk, and how the next instant her body hung motionless in the air, each time Clara read this she was smitten with an overpowering pang of pity and of helpless, aimless, heart-tearing affection. Sometimes she would fancy Sophia and her four comrades rescued from the hangman's hands a second before their execution, and carried triumphantly through the streets by an army of victorious revolutionists, but the next moment it would come back to her that this had not been the case, and then the re-awakening to reality was even more painful than the original shock. If a rescuing force were now ready to attack the hangman and the thousand-bayoneted guard around him, it would be too late. Sophia was dead, irretrievably dead; there was nobody to rescue. And Clara's heart sank in despair. At such moments she would seek relief in those passages of the report where the calmness of the condemned revolutionists was depicted. "Jeliaboff whispered to his priest, fervently kissed the cross, shook his hair and smiled. Fortitude did not forsake Jeliaboff, Sophia and particularly Kibalchich (the man with the face of Christ) to the very moment of donning the white-hooded death-gown"—these passages gave Clara thrills of religious bliss.

Pavel often talked to her about the execution, raved, cursed the government; but Clara usually remained gloomily [1917] taciturn. The wound in her soul was something too sacred to be talked about. Words seemed to her like sacrilege. Their hearts understood each other well enough, why, then, allow language to intrude upon their speechless communion? Some of his effusions and outbursts jarred on her. On the other hand, her silences made him restless.

"You'll go insane if you keep this up," he once said, irascibly.

"I don't care if I do," she answered. "Don't nag me, Pashenka, pray."

"But the thing is becoming an *idée fixe* in your mind, upon my word it is. Can't you try and get back to your senses? What is death after all? Absolute freedom from suffering, that's all. There is nothing to go crazy over anyhow. There is nothing but a dear, a glorious, a beautiful memory of them, and that will live as long as there is such a thing as history in the world."

She made no reply. She tried to picture Sophia free from suffering, but this only sharpened her pain. Sophia not existing? The formula was even more terrible than death. In reality, however, her atheism was powerless to obliterate her visions. Sophia existed somewhere, only she was solemnly remote, as though estranged from her. Clara could have almost cried to her, imploring for recognition.

But this mood of hers could not last forever. Sooner or later she would awaken to the full extent of the riots and to the fact that they were raging in the vicinity of Miroslav, threatening the safety of her nearest relatives. How would she [1918] take it then? The question intruded upon Pavel's peace of mind again and again.

For the present, however, she was taken up with her thoughts of Sophia, Zachar or Hessia. Poor Hessia! They had robbed her of her baby, the thugs, even as they had that woman of the "gay bard's" poem. "To lead a married life under conditions such as ours *is* pure madness," she said to herself.

One afternoon, as she and her lover sat on the lounge, embracing and kissing deliriously, she suddenly sprang to

her feet, her cheeks burning, kissed Pavel on his forehead and crossed over to the window.

He shrugged his shoulders resentfully.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A HUNTED PEOPLE.

IT was Friday night at the Old Synagogue, but the cheery voices of Sabbath Eve were not there. The air of having cast one's cares aside was missing. Instead of a light-hearted turmoil of melody there was a hushed murmur that betrayed suspense and timidity. Ever and anon some worshipper would break off his hymn and strain his ears for a fancied sound outside. The half hour spent away from home seemed many hours. Very few people were present and none of these wore their Sabbath clothes. Most of the other synagogues were closed altogether. Rabbi Rachmiel, Clara's father, and several others were abandoned to an ecstasy of devotion, but their subdued tones had in them the fervent plea of Atonement Day, the tearful plea for an enrolment in the Book of Life rather than the joyous solemnity that proclaims the advent of the Higher Soul. The illumination in honour of Sabbath the Bride was a sorry spectacle. The jumble of brass chandeliers hung unburnished and most of them were empty. The synagogue had a troubled, a cowed look. It dared not shine brightly, nor burst into song merrily lest it should irritate the Gentiles. Here and there a man sat at his prayer book weeping quietly.

Members of the congregation who had not been on speaking terms for years had made peace, as a matter of course. [3210] The spreading frenzy of the Gentile population impressed them as an impersonal, elemental force. They were clinging to each other with the taciturnity of ship-passengers when the vessel shudders in the grip of danger. And not only did they nestle to each other, but the entire present generation felt drawn to all the former generations of their hunted race. The terrors of the Inquisition, the massacres, the exiles, the humiliations, of which one usually thought as something belonging to the province of books exclusively, had suddenly become realities. The Bloody Spot, the site of the present synagogue, where 800 Jews had been slain more than two centuries ago, gleamed redder than ever in every mind. It was both terrifying and a spiritual relief to beseech the souls of those eight hundred martyrs to pray for their panic-stricken descendants. The Russian Jews of 1881 felt themselves a living continuation of the entire tearful history of their people.

When the service was over, at last, the usual "Good Sabbath! Good Sabbath!" always so full of festivity, was uttered in lugubrious whispers, which really meant: "May God take pity upon us." Nor was there a rush for the door. Quick, noisy movements were carefully avoided in these days.

Some of the worshippers had slowly filed out, when there was a stir, and the crowd scrambled back with terrified faces.

"Two Gentiles are coming, an army officer and a man in civilian clothes," said some of those who came running back.

The look of terror gave way to one of eager curiosity. The appearance of two refined Gentiles was not the way an anti-Jewish riot was usually ushered in.

The "two Gentiles" turned out to be Dr. Lipnitzky and Vladimir Vigdoroff, the one in his military uniform, and the [3211] other in a summer suit of rough duck. When they were recognised they were greeted with looks of affection and expectancy. The pious old-fashioned people who had hitherto regarded Dr. Lipnitzky despairingly as more Gentile than Jew, now thought of him tenderly as an advocate of Israel in the enemy's camp.

"Don't be so scared," the little doctor said with friendly acerbity, as he paused in the centre of the synagogue. "We are Jews like yourselves—the same kind of Jews all of us. We were passing by, so we thought we would look in. We saw the synagogue was almost dark, though it is still so early. The lights could not yet have gone out. It's enough to break one's heart." He was choking with embarrassment and emotion and his words produced a profound effect. People of his class were not in the habit of attending divine service. The doctor's military uniform, in fact, had never been seen in a synagogue before. But the great point was that instead of Russian or Germanised Yiddish which he habitually affected with uneducated Jews he was now speaking in the plain, unembellished vernacular of the Ghetto. His listeners knew that he was the son of a poor illiterate brick-maker, a plain "Yiddish Jew" like themselves, yet they could scarcely trust their ears. They eyed his shoulder-straps and sword-hilt, and it seemed incredible that the man who wore these things was the man who was speaking this fluent, robust Yiddish. His halo of inaccessible superiority had suddenly faded away. Everybody warmed to him.

"We'll be here to-morrow, we'll attend the service. And next Saturday, too. Every Saturday. We're Jews." He could not go on. Some of his listeners had tears in their eyes. Vladimir was biting his lips nervously.

"Still, it is not to see you cry that we have come to you," the doctor resumed: but he was interrupted by Clara's [3212] father, who, advancing toward him with glaring eyes, said, in a voice shrill with rage:

"Now that Jewish blood is flowing in rivers you people come to do penance! It is too late. It is the sins of men like yourselves that have brought this punishment upon us. A Gentile Jew is even worse than a born Gentile." He put up his fists to his temples and gasped: "Better become Christians! Better become Christians!"

The crowd had listened with bated breath, but at last somebody said: "Oh shut up!" and similar shouts burst from forty or fifty other men.

"We are all Jews, all brethren."

"We'll settle old scores some other time."

"A good heart is as good as piety."

"Yes, but why don't you give the doctor a chance to speak?" Vladimir stepped up to his uncle and pleaded with him.

"Who is he?" said Dr. Lipnitzky with a smile. "Is he crazy?" And flying into a passion, he was about to address Rabbi Rachmiel, but held himself in check. A feeble old man of eighty with a very white beard was arguing from the Talmud with Clara's father.

"'The sinner who returns to God may stand upon ground upon which the righteous are not allowed to stand,'" he quoted. "Again, 'Through penance even one's sins are turned to good deeds.'"

When Rabbi Rachmiel tried to reply, he was shouted down by the crowd. They were yelling and gesticulating at him, when somebody mounted a bench and fell to swishing his arms violently. "Hush!" he said in a ferocious whisper. "Do you want to attract a mob?" His words had an immediate effect, and then Rabbi Rachmiel said to his nephew, in much [3213] milder but deeply grieved accents:

"Do you know what the Talmud says? 'As long as you shall do the will of God no strange people shall domineer over you, but if you don't do the will of God, God will hand you over to a low people, and not merely to a low people, but to the beasts of a low people.'"

“All right, rabbi. This is not the time for argument,” the doctor said, kindly. “I have some important information for you all, for all of us. There won’t be any rioting in this town. You may be sure of it. That’s what my young friend and I have dropped in to tell you. I have seen the governor”—his listeners pressed eagerly forward—“there will be plenty of protection. The main point is that you should not tempt the Gentiles to start a riot by showing them that you dread one. Don’t hide, nor keep your shops closed, as that would only whet one’s appetite for mischief. Do you understand what I say to you? This is the governor’s opinion and mine too. Everybody’s.”

His auditors nodded vigorous and beaming assent.

“He particularly warns the Jews not to undertake anything in the way of self-defence. That would only arouse ill-feeling. Besides, it’s against the law. It could not be tolerated. Do you understand what I am saying or do you not? Every precaution has been taken and there is really no danger. Do you understand? There is no danger, and if you go about your business and make no fuss it will be all right. I have spoken to several officers of my regiment, too. Of course, you wouldn’t have to look hard to find a Jew-hater among them, but they spoke in a friendly way and some of them are really good-natured fellows. They assured me that if the troops were called out they would protect our people with all their hearts.” [324]

Every man in the group looked like a prisoner when the jury announces an acquittal. Some, in a flutter of joy, hastened to carry the news to their wives and children. The majority hung about the uniformed man, as if ready to stay all night in his salutary presence, while one man even ventured to say quite familiarly: “May you live long for this, doctor. Why, you have put new souls into us.” Whereupon he was told by another man, through clenched teeth, that it was just like him to push himself forward.

Each man had his own tale of woe to tell, his own questions to ask. One man, whose appearance and manner indicated that he was a tin-smith, had a son at the gymnasium and a Gentile neighbour whose wife became green with envy as often as she saw the Jewish boy in his handsome uniform. She was much better off than the tin-smith yet her children were receiving no education.

“But why should you pay any attention to her?” Dr. Lipnitzky asked.

“I don’t, but my wife does. You know how women are, doctor. They take everything hard. Last week the Gentile woman said aloud that it was impudent on the part of Jews to dress their boys up in gymnasium uniforms, as if they were noblemen, and that it was time Miroslav did like all God-fearing towns and started a riot against the Jews. So my wife is afraid to let the boy wear the uniform, and I think she is right, too. Let the eyes of that Gentile woman creep out of their sockets without looking at the child’s uniform. It is vacation time anyhow. But the boy, he cried all day and made a rumpus and said the school authorities would punish him if he was seen in the street without his uniform. Is it true, doctor? I am only an ignorant workman. What do I know?” [325]

“Yes, it is true, and tell your wife not to mind that woman,” answered Dr. Lipnitzky, exchanging a woebegone look with Vladimir.

“I have some goods lying at the railroad station for me,” said a little man with a puckered forehead. “It has been there about a month. ‘Shall I take it to the shop so that the rioters may have some more goods to pillage?’ I thought to myself. Would you really advise me to receive it, doctor?”

Dr. Lipnitzky took fire. “Do you want me to sign a guarantee for it?” he said. “Do you want me to be responsible for the goods? You people are an awful lot.”

“I was merely asking your advice, doctor,” the man with the puckered forehead answered, wretchedly. “You can’t do much business these days, anyhow. The best Gentiles won’t pay. One has nothing but a book full of debts. Besides, when the door flies open one’s soul sinks. And when a Gentile customer comes in you pray God that he may leave your shop as soon as possible. For who knows but his visit may be a put-up job and that all he wants is to pick a quarrel as a signal for a lot of other rowdies to break in?”

“And the Gentile sees your cowardice,” the doctor cut in with an effect of continuing the man’s story, “and becomes arrogant, and this is the way a riot is hatched.” By degrees he resumed his superior manner and his Germanised Yiddish, but his tone remained warm.

“Arrogant!” said a tall, stooped, neatly-dressed jeweller. “You have told us of some honest officers, doctor. Well, the other day an army officer came into my place with a lady. He selected a ring for her, and when I said it was forty rubles, he made no answer, but sent the lady away with the ring, and then—you should have seen him break out at me. I had put him to shame before a lady, he said. He was good for forty times forty dollars, and all the Jews were a lot of cut-throats and blood-suckers; that all we were good for was to ask officers to protect us against rioters, and that my shop was made up of ill-gotten wealth anyhow. I had never seen the man before and I insisted upon being paid; but he made such a noise, I was afraid a crowd might gather. So I let him go, but I sent out my salesman after him and he found out his name. Then I went before his colonel” (the jeweller named the regiment), “but what do you think the colonel said: ‘He’s a nice fellow. I shall never believe it of him. And if he owes you some money, he’ll pay you. At a time like this you Jews oughtn’t to press your claims too hard.’ That’s what the colonel said.” [326]

When a shabby cap-maker with thick bloodless lips told how he had let a rough-looking Gentile leave his shop in a new cap without paying for it, the doctor flew into a passion.

“Why did you? Why did you?” he growled, stamping his feet, just as he would when the relatives of a patient neglected to comply with his orders. “It is just like you people. I would have you flayed for this.”

This only encouraged the cap-maker to go into the humour of the episode.

“I was poking around the market place, with a high pile of caps on either hand,” he said, “when I saw a Gentile with a face like a carrot covered full of warts. ‘Aren’t you ashamed to wear such a cap?’ says I. ‘Aren't you ashamed to spoil a handsome face like yours by that rusty, horrid old thing on your head?’”

“Oh, I would have you spanked,” the little doctor snarled smilingly. Whereupon several of the bystanders also smiled. [327]

“Hold on, doctor. I spanked myself. Well, the Gentile was not hard to persuade, though when we got at my place he was rather hard to please. He kept me plucking caps from the ceiling until the very pole in my hand got tired of the job. At last he was suited. I thought he would ask how much. He didn’t. He did say something, but that was about anti-Jewish riots. ‘This cap will do,’ he then said, ‘Good-bye old man,’ and made for the door. And when I rushed after him and asked for the money he turned on me and stuck the biggest fig[D] you ever saw into my face. Since then when I see the good looks of a Gentile spoiled by a horrid old cap I try not to take it to heart.”

The doctor laughed. “And you let him go without paying?” he asked.

“I should say I did. I was glad he didn’t ask for the change.”

Another man confessed to having had an experience of this kind, a customer having exacted from him change from

a ruble which he had never paid him.

"He was a tough looking customer, and he made a rumpus, so I thought to myself, 'Is this the first time I have been out of some cash? Let him go hang himself.' And the scoundrel, he gave me a laugh, called me accursed Jew into the bargain and went his way."

"Did you ask him to call again?" the cap-maker demanded, and noticing Clara's father by his side, he added: "This is not the way Rabbi Rachmiel's wife does business, is it? She would make him pay her the dollar and the change, too."

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The doctor burst into laughter, the others echoing it noisily. Only Vladimir's face wore a look of restless gravity. It was the restlessness of a man who is trying to nerve himself up to a first public speech. His heart was full of something which he was aching to say to these people, to unburden himself of, but his courage failed him to take the word. Presently a man too timid to seek information in the centre of the assembly addressed a whispered inquiry to Vladimir and Vladimir's answer attracted the attention of two or three bystanders. Gradually a little colony branched off from the main body. He was telling them what he knew from the newspapers about the latest anti-Jewish outbreaks in various towns; and speaking in a very low voice and in the simplest conversational accents, he gradually passed to what weighed on his heart. He knew Yiddish very well indeed, yet he had considerable difficulty in speaking it, his chief impediment lying in his inability to render the cultured language in which he thought into primitive speech. His Yiddish was full of Russian and German therefore, but some of his listeners understood it all, while the rest missed but an occasional phrase.

"People like myself—those who have studied at the gymnasia and universities"—he went on in a brooding, plaintive undertone, "feel the misery of it all the more keenly because we have been foolish enough to imagine ourselves Russians, and to keep aloof from our own people. Many of us feel like apologising to every poor suffering Jew in Russia, to beg his forgiveness, to implore him to take us back. We were ashamed to speak Yiddish. We thought we were Russians. We speak the language of the Gentiles, and we love it so dearly; we have adopted their ways and customs, we love their literature; everything Russian is so dear to us; why should it not be? Is not this our birthplace? But the more we love it, the more we try to be like Russians, the more they hate us. My uncle, Rabbi Rachmiel, says it is too late to do penance. Well, I do feel like a man who comes to confess his sins and to do penance. It is the blood and the tears of our brothers and sisters that are calling to us to return to our people. And now we see how vain our efforts are to be Russians. There was a great Jew whose name was Heinrich Heine." (Two of the men manifested their acquaintance with the name by a nod.) "He was a great writer of poetry. So he once wrote about his mother—how he had abandoned her and sought the love of other women. But he failed to find love anywhere, until ultimately he came to the conclusion that the only woman in whom he was sure of love was his own dear mother. This is the way I feel now. I scarcely ever saw the inside of a synagogue before, but now I, like the doctor, belong here. It is not a question of religion. I am not religious and cannot be. But I am a Jew and we all belong together. And when a synagogue happens to stand on a site like this——"

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He broke off in the middle of the sentence. His allusion to the massacre of two centuries before inspired him with an appalling sense of the continuity of Jewish suffering. The others stood about gazing solemnly at him, until the scholarly old man of eighty with the very white beard broke silence. He raised his veined aged little hands over Vladimir's head and said in a nervous treble:

"May God bless you, my son. That's all I have to say."

Vladimir was literally electrified by his words.

"But what do they want of us?" asked a man with a blueish complexion. "You say they are good-natured. Do you call it good-natured when one acts like a wild beast, bathing in the blood of innocent people?"

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"Well, this is the Gentile way of being good-natured," somebody put in, with a sneer, before Vladimir had time to answer.

"They have been turned into savages," Vigdoroff then said. He maintained the low, mournful voice, though he now put a didactic tone into it. "They are blind, ignorant people. They are easily made a catspaw of."

The man with the blueish complexion interrupted him. He spoke of Gentile cruelty, of the Inquisition, the Crusades, massacres, and almost with tears of rage in his eyes he defied Vladimir to tell him that Jews were capable of any such brutalities. Vladimir said no, Jews were not capable of any bloodshed, and went on defending the Russian people. The man with the sneer was beginning to annoy him. He was an insignificant looking fellow with very thin lips and a very thin flat blond beard. Even when his face was grave it had a sneering effect. He said very little. Only occasionally he would utter a word or two of which nobody else took notice. Yet it was chiefly to him that Vladimir was addressing himself. But the assembly was soon broken up. Rabbi Rachmiel's wife came in at the head of several other women who were not afraid to walk through the streets after sundown in these days. They had grown uneasy about their husbands' delay.

Vladimir saluted his aunt warmly. They exchanged a few words, but nothing was said of Clara. An "illegal" person like her could not be mentioned in public.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A PAPER FROM THE CZAR.

A LARGE crowd of peasants, in tall straw hats, many of them with their whips in their hands, congregated in front of the bailiff's office at Zorki. It was a sultry afternoon in August. A single shirt of coarse white linen and a pair of trousers of the same material were all the clothes the men wore. The trousers were very wide and baggy but drawn tight at the bottom by means of strings, so that they dropped at the ankles blouse-fashion, and the loose-fitting shirt fell over the trousers with a similar effect. Most of the shirts were embroidered in red and blue. Sometimes, as a result of special rivalry among the young women, one village will affect gaudier embroidery and more of it than its neighbours. This could be seen now at one corner of the crowd where a group of peasants, all from the same place, defined itself by the flaming red on the upper part of their sleeves. There were women, too, in the crowd, the girls in wreaths of artificial flowers and all of them in ribbons and coral beads, though some of them were barefoot.

A strong smell of primitive toil emanated from their bodies; primitive ideas and primitive interests looked out of their eyes. The northern moujik—the Great, or "real," Russian—who speaks the language of Turgeneff and Tolstoy, has less poetry than the Little-Russian, but he also has less cunning and more abandon. To be sure, the cunning of the Zorki [332] peasant is as primitive as his whole mind. Very few men in the crowd now standing in front of the bailiff's office could have managed to add such two numbers as six and nineteen, or to subtract the weight of an empty pail from the weight of a pail of honey. Their book-keeping consists of notches on the door-jamb, and their armour in the battle of life is a cast-iron distrustfulness.

At last the bailiff made his appearance, adjusted the straps of his sword across his breast, and asked what they wanted. A tall old fellow with a drooping steel-grey moustache came out of the crowd, hat in hand, and bowed deeply, as he said:

"It's like this, your nobleness. We wish to know when that paper from the Czar about the Jews will be read to us?"

"What paper from the Czar?" the bailiff asked. "What are you talking about?" He was a dry-boned man, but ruddy-faced and with very narrow almond-shaped eyes. As he now looked at the crowd through the sharp afternoon glare his eyes glistened like two tiny strips of burnished metal.

"Your nobleness need not be told what paper. It's about beating the Jews and taking away their goods."

The scene was being watched by several Jews, plucky fellows who had come in the interests of their people at the risk of being the first victims of mob fury. Among these was Yossl, Makar's father, at once the most intellectual and strongest looking man in the delegation. In the meantime the other Jews, stupefied and sick with fear, had closed their shops and dwellings and were hiding in cellars and in garrets, in the ruins of an old church and in the woods. [333] Two women gave birth to stillborn children during the commotion, one of these at the bedside of her little boy who was too sick to be moved.

"You are a fool," the bailiff said to the spokesman, with a smile, as he raised his narrow eyes in quest of some Gentile with whom he might share the fun. "You are a lot of fools. Better go home. There is no such paper in the world. Whoever told you there was?"

"Why, everybody says so. In most places they finished the job long ago. Only we are a lot of slow coaches, people say. And then, when the higher authorities find out about it, who will be fined or put in jail? We, poor peasants. As if we did not have troubles enough as it is."

"What will you be put in jail for?" asked the bailiff, chuckling to himself.

Here a younger peasant whispered in the spokesman's ear not to let himself be bamboozled.

Speaking with unwonted boldness, born of the conviction that the bailiff was suppressing a document of the Czar, the tall fellow said:

"You can't fool us, your nobleness. We are only peasants, but what we know we know." And he went on to enumerate villages where, according to rumour, the paper had already been read and acted upon. "Although uneducated, yet we are not such fools as your nobleness takes us for. If it is a ukase direct from the Czar we aren't going to take chances, sir. Not we, sir. Better read it to us and let's be done with it. We have no time to waste, sir."

One of the Jews was going to make a suggestion, but he was shouted down and waved aside.

The bailiff made a gesture of amused despair and turned to go back, when the peasants stepped forward, and chattering excitedly, they gave him to understand that they would not let him go until he had shown them the imperial [334] ukase. The purport of their remonstrance was to the effect that the Jews had bribed him to suppress the document. The bailiff took it all good-naturedly. In his heart of hearts he was looking forward to the sport of an anti-Jewish outbreak with delight; but the noise brought the local priest upon the scene—a kindly elderly man with the face of a whimpering peasant girl. He was a victim of official injustice himself and he implored the crowd to listen to reason. His face, at once comic and piteous, was the main cause of his failures. He was a well-educated priest, yet he was kept in this obscure town. His sacerdotal locks, meant to be long and silken, hung in stiff, wretched little clumps. Nevertheless, as he now stood in his purple broad-sleeved gown, appealing to the multitude of white figures, his cross sparkling in the sun, the spectacle was like a scene of the early days of Christianity.

"It is a great sin to circulate wicked falsehoods like that and it is just as much of a sin to credit them," he said in a pained heartfelt voice. "Ours is a good Czar. He does not command his children to do violence to human beings."

"Oh, well, little father," one peasant broke in. "You don't seem to have heard of it. That's all. If the Czar has not ordered it, then why do they beat the Jews everywhere else and the police and soldiers stand by and see to it that they do the work well?"

The bailiff burst into a horse-laugh and slapped his knees violently. The priest's face bore a look of despair.

"Can it be that you believe such foolishness?" he said.

"What do we know? We are only common people. All we do know is that whatever happens it is our skin that [335] is peeled off. If we can't get the paper we'll do our duty without it."

"That's it, without it!" the others chimed in in excited chorus.

Further parleying made it clear that many of them had no inclination to do any personal harm to the Jews or to their property. They were on friendly terms with their Jewish neighbours, and all they wanted was to get rid of a disagreeable duty. The rest, about half of the entire crowd, had had their heads turned with stories of lakes of vodka and fabulous piles of loot, but even these proved susceptible to argument.

"Here," Yossl shouted at the top of his voice and with great fervour. "I have a scheme, and what will you lose by it if

you hear me out? If you don't like it, I'll take it back and it won't cost you a cent." The intensity of his manner took them by storm. He was allowed to finish. "My scheme amounts to this: The Jews will sign a paper taking upon themselves all responsibility for your failure to smash their shops and houses, so that if the authorities call you to account for violating the imperial ukase, we will answer and you will come out clear."

First there was perplexed stillness, then a murmur of distrust, and finally a tumult of rejection.

"Crafty Jew! There must be some trick in it!" they yelled sneeringly.

The priest was wiping the perspiration from his forehead. Finally he shouted huskily:

"Very well, I'll sign such a paper."

After some more arguing, the plan, in its amended form, was adopted. The older men flaunted their experience by insisting upon a formal "certificate" bearing the priest's official seal and signature, so that when the Czar's inspectors [1330] arrived the peasants might have something tangible to present. When all this had been complied with, there was some portentous talk about the Jews sprinkling the bargain with vodka; but having followed the "little father's" advice in the main point the peasants were now in a yielding mood toward him generally, and the vodka shops being closed, he had no difficulty in getting them to go home sober.

A large number of them had to cross the river. To occupy their minds while they were waiting for the ferry—a small antediluvian affair which could only accommodate about one-fifth of the crowd at a time—the priest asked them for a song. And then the quiet evening air resounded with those pensive, soulful strains which for depth of melancholy have scarcely an equal in the entire range of folk-music. Thus the men who might now have been frenzied with the work of pillage, devastation and, perhaps, murder, stood transfixed with the poetry of anguish and pity. Race distinctions and ukases—how alien and unintelligible these things were to the world in which their souls dwelt at this minute! The glint of the water grew darker every second. The men on the ferry continued their singing. Then somebody on the other side joined in and the melody spread in all directions. The fresh ringing treble of a peasant girl, peculiarly doleful in its high notes, came from across the water. A choir of invisible choirs, scattered along both banks, sang to the night of the sadness of human existence.

The Jews returned from their hiding-places, but very few of them went to bed that night. The tragedy in many houses was intensified by the circumstance that the heads of these families were absent from the town, having gone to the Good Jew for prayer and advice as to the spreading calamity. Weinstein's spacious rooms were full of neighbours [1331] and their families. The presence of the man whom one had been accustomed to regard as a monument of worldly power had a special attraction for the poorer Pietists this evening. Besides, one dreaded the hallucinations of solitude and in Weinstein's house one was sure to find company. Most of them sat in the large prayer room, keeping close to each other, conversing in subdued, melancholy voices, comfortable in the community of their woe, as though content to remain in this huddle until the end of time. Yossl was curling his black side-locks morosely. The other people in the room importuned him for details of the scene in front of the bailiff's office, but he was not in the mood for speaking. Weinstein was snapping his fingers at his own florid neck, as he walked backward and forward. Presently Maria, his Gentile servant, who spoke good Yiddish, addressed him, with sad, sympathetic mien:

"Master dear," she said in Yiddish. "Will you let me break a couple of windows?"

He did not understand.

"You see," she explained bursting into tears. "If they get at me because I did not smash things in your house, I'll be able to swear that I did." For an instant he stood surveying her, then, in a spasm of rage and misery, he shrieked out:

"Why, certainly! Go ahead! Break, smash, everything you set your eye on. You are the princess, we are only Jews. Go smash the whole house." And in his frenzy he went breaking windows and chairs, shrieking as he did so:

"Here! Look and let your heart rejoice."

"Madman," Yossl said calmly, "you'll alarm the town. They'll think it's a riot and the Gentiles will join in."

Weinstein sat down pale and panting. "Go and tell your people to come and delight in the sight of a Jew's broken [1332] windows," he said to the Gentile woman.

She put her hands to her face and left the room sobbing.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

THE little man who played the part of errand boy at the cheese shop and who was arrested before the work on the mine was well advanced had ultimately turned state's evidence. Among the revolutionists he betrayed was Pavel, but the prince was known to him under a false name. Still, the information furnished by his man, added to some addresses found on other captured Nihilists, led to a series of new arrests. The ranks of the Will of the People were being rapidly decimated. Grisha, the dynamiter, and several other members of the innermost circle were seized shortly after the killing of the Czar. The few surviving leaders withdrew to the provinces, in some cases only immediately to fall into the hands of the police there. Thus in April, after a Jewish student girl was arrested in Kieff, the "trap" at her lodgings caught a woman and a man who proved to be Baska, the "wife" of the "cheesemonger" couple, and her real husband, "the German." Urie (the "cheesemonger"), Makar and several other active revolutionists were in Moscow.

One late afternoon Clara was slowly pacing the painted floor of her room, her hands clasped behind her, while her lover lay on the lounge, watching her through the gathering dusk.

"St. Petersburg *is* too hot now," he said, breaking a long silence. "Everybody is going away." [340]

"There is really no use staying here just at present," she assented, sadly, without pausing.

They grew silent again. The gloom of the little parlour was thickening so rapidly that it seemed as though the outline of Clara's face, as she walked back and forth, became vaguer every time she turned in Pavel's direction.

Presently, with a burst of amorous tenderness, he got up, saying:

"Clanya! Let us go for a rest somewhere. You know you need it."

"You need it even more than I do, poor boy," she replied, stepping up close to him. "I do wish you would go home for a month or two—or somewhere else. As to myself, I should first like to see my parents. The riots may strike Miroslav at any moment. If any harm came to them, I should never forgive myself. I must get them away from there. That's all I can think of." There was an obvious blank in her words. She left something unsaid, and the consciousness of it made him uncomfortable.

"But that's easily arranged," he urged. "You can send them money and invite them to some safe place."

"That's what I have been thinking of. I am so restless I wish I could start to-morrow. It couldn't be arranged too soon. There are persistent rumors that a riot is coming there. I shan't be gone long, dearest."

He had it at the tip of his tongue to force a discussion of their party's attitude toward the riots and to have it out once for all. In his imagined debates with her on the subject he had often exclaimed: "I happen to belong to a class of land-robbers and profligates; now, suppose the revolution breaks out and my class is attacked by the people, will that affect me? A nice revolutionist I should be if it did!" This and other arguments were all ready; what he lacked, however, was the courage to bring up the topic. As to her promise to marry him when the great conspiracy was out of the way, her redeeming it now, while she was so tremulously absorbed in the question of her parents' safety, could not be thought of. [341]

He gathered her to him and kissed her, at once sympathetically and appealingly.

"Go home, Pasha," she besought. "But not to Miroslav. You won't rest there. Go to some of your mother's country places, or, perhaps some other place would be safer for you. Go and take good care of yourself. It would be too terrible if I found you arrested when I got back."

"Will you marry me then?" he asked, impersonating a pampered child.

She nodded, in the same playful spirit, and again her reticence brought disquiet to his heart. "Something tells me she'll never be mine," he thought with a sigh.

While the government was actively fomenting the riots, making an electric rod of the Jews, the Nihilists persisted in mistaking them for revolutionary kindling wood. While the "Chronicle of Arrests" in the revolutionary organ included a large number of Jewish names, several of them of persons conspicuous in the movement and noted for their pluck, another page of the same issue contained a letter from the riot-ridden district that was strongly flavoured with anti-Semitism. Moreover, a proclamation, addressed to the peasantry, was printed on an "underground" press, naming the Czar, the landlords and the Jews as enemies of the people. This proclamation met with a storm of disapproval, however, on the part of Gentiles and Jews alike, and was withdrawn from circulation. Chaos reigned in the minds of the Nihilists. [342] Their party was disorganised, their thinkers for the most part buried, dead or alive, the editorial management of their publications in the hands of the weakest man on the Executive Committee, of one who several years later sent, from Paris, a most servile petition to the Czar, abjuring his former views and begging permission to return home as an advocate of unqualified absolutism and panslavism.

The attitude of the Nihilists toward the Jewish population in general was thus anything but sympathetic; and yet, so far as the higher strata of the movement were concerned, the personal relations between Jew and Gentile were not affected by this circumstance in the slightest degree. The feeling of intimate comradeship and mutual devotion between the two elements was left unmarred, as if one's views on the Jewish question were purely a matter of abstract reasoning without any bearing on the Jew of flesh and blood one happened to know.

More than this, in their blind theorising according to preconceived formulas, most of the active Jewish Nihilists shut their eyes to the actual state of things and joined their Gentile comrades in applauding the riots as an encouraging sign of the times, as "a popular revolutionary protest."

Pavel longed to discuss the riots with Makar. When he saw him, however, he found him far more interested in the "new revolutionary program" upon which he was engaged than in the anti-Semitic crusade.

"As if it was the first time Jewish blood had been shed," he said, answering a question from Pavel, half-heartedly. "The entire history of the Jews is one continuous riot. Indeed, the present outbreaks are a mere flea-bite to what they have undergone before. So, what has happened to make one revise one's views on the movement? One might as well stay away from the *Will of the People* because, forsooth, Jews were burned by Gentiles in the 15th century. Nonsense." [343]

"Clara doesn't seem to take it quite so easy," Pavel thought to himself.

"Clara has gone to meet her parents," he said, thirsting to talk of her.

“Has she? There may be a riot in Miroslav at any time. I wonder how Zorki is getting along. But then my father will be able to take care of himself,—and of Miriam, too,” he added, lukewarmly. The only thing of which he could have spoken with enthusiasm in these days was his program.

Pavel came away hankering for more conversation about his fiancée and about the riots. Instead of seeking rest and safety, as he had promised Clara to do, he coveted a new sort of excitement and danger. He felt that there was something wrong about that crusade, and he had a sportsmanlike craving to see it for himself. Lacking the courage to criticise his party, he accused himself of allowing his revolutionary convictions to be affected by the interests of his love; yet he continued to pray in his heart that the Jews of Miroslav, at least, might be spared. He read all he found in the newspapers about the atrocities, and on taking up a paper he would tremble lest it should contain news of a riot in his birthplace.

When he read of the Miroslav panic he went there at once.

“If it’s really a riot she’ll never come back to me,” he brooded, wretchedly.

The rumours of an impending catastrophe were assuming definite outline in Miroslav. A date was mentioned and [1441] tall Great-Russians in red shirts—specialists at the business—were said to have been seen about town. Great-Russia is and has always been strictly without the pale of Jewish settlement, it being one of the characteristic features of the anti-Semitic riots of the period that their leaders were imported from the rabble in those districts in which very few people had an idea what a Jew looked like.

The Jews of Miroslav sent a snug bribe to Pavel’s uncle, but their agent came back with the money. The governor had commissioned him to assure them that everything would be done to make an outbreak impossible, but “gratitude” he would not accept. The Jews took alarm. “If he doesn’t eat honey,” they said, in the phrase of a current proverb, “then it looks bad indeed.” When a deputation of representative men called on him he lost his temper.

“You Jews are too intense, that’s what’s the trouble with you,” he said, blinking his eyes. “I have let you know twice that there is no cause for alarm, yet it seems that it is not enough for you.” When he had softened down he talked quite at length, although in a haughty tone of authority and immeasurable aloofness, of the steps he had taken. The main point was that the Jews should not tempt people to lawlessness by betraying anxiety. He delivered quite a lecture on the point. The deputation came away greatly encouraged. They knew of the extensive business relations which the managers of his estates had with Jewish merchants, and they argued, among themselves, that a riot, involving as it usually did the wholesale destruction of Jewish property and a general demoralisation of business, could not but entail serious financial losses upon himself. This was in keeping with declarations made by the boards of trade at Moscow, [1445] Warsaw and Kharkoff, the three chief centres of Russian commerce, regarding the anti-Jewish crusade. These bodies had pointed out the importance of the Jews of the south as the prime movers of local industry, as almost the exclusive connecting link between the south of Russia and the world markets of Germany and England; accordingly, they had protested against the anti-Semitic campaign as a source of ruin to the economic interests of the whole empire. All this the members of the deputation were aware of, so they saw no reason to doubt the sincerity of the governor’s pledges. His advice not to put the thought of a riot in the popular mind by a demonstration of timidity produced a strong impression.

The upshot was that the Jews of Miroslav were afraid to be afraid. A singular mood took hold of them. Everybody made an effort to act upon the presumption that Miroslav was immune, that it was in an exceptional position, and at the same time everyone read suspense and mortal fear in the eyes of everyone else. It was like walking in one’s stocking feet with a spectacular effect of making a noise. Jewish women still avoided the proximity of Christian men, and a Jewish face that did not look Jewish was still eyed enviously as a shield against violence. The only tangible manifestation of the spirit advocated by the governor was a slight lengthening of business hours. Since the beginning of the panic Jewish tradesmen had been closing their shops before it was quite dark—three or four hours earlier than usual. Now they compromised on keeping them open until the street lamps were lit. Nevertheless those of them who depended on Christian trade continued to treat their customers with a gentleness and a fawning attention that had nothing to do with [1446] the ordinary blandishments of the counter. Inveterate rogues among Jewish tradesmen became honest men. On the other hand a most respectable Gentile often yielded to temptation that amounted to downright robbery, while the license of “shady Christian characters” was asserting itself more portentously every day.

A queer story came from one of the suburbs. When three Gentiles wearing red shirts entered an out-of-the-way house to inquire the road, their appearance frightened the two Jewish women they found there out of the place, whereupon one of these, in a frenzy of terror, jumped into a well and was drowned. Meanwhile the three strangers, finding themselves alone, stripped the house of its valuables—a finale which struck the fancy of a notorious thief and his gang, who then put on red shirts and made a practice of plundering Jewish houses after scaring away their occupants. The thief was known as Petroucha Sivoucha, which, foregoing the rhyme, may be rendered as Cheap Vodka Pete. When he was arrested at last he said, impersonating a simple-minded peasant:

“But it was only Jewish stuff and everybody says a Gentile is welcome to it nowadays, that such is the will of our little father, the Czar.”

The riots continued to spread, and while they did, General Ignatyeff, the new Minister of the Interior, announced measure after measure against the Jews. In a country where every official is perpetually craning his neck toward the capital, it was only natural that an attitude like this on the part of the Minister of the Interior should create an atmosphere of anti-Semitic partiality amid which justice to the Jew became impossible. Ignatyeff knew of the widespread rumour as to the existence of an imperial ukase ordering the peasantry to plunder and commit violence [1451] upon the Jews. Apart from his official sources of information, the newspapers were full of instances showing the effect of that rumour, yet he did nothing to stop it or to disabuse the minds of the peasantry in that connection. This was interpreted by the officials as a sign that the rumour was not meant to be stopped, and it was not.

Governor Boulatoff’s encouraging answers to the Jews of his province brought to Miroslav hundreds of people from other towns. Some of these were victims of former atrocities, left without shelter in their native places; others had not yet been through an anti-Semitic outbreak, but dreaded one.

While people from other provinces were flocking to Miroslav in quest of safety the leading Miroslav families were quietly sending their wives and children abroad and taking their valuables to the government bank. The offices of Dr. Lipnitzky and of Sender the Arbitrator, Vladimir’s father, were visited by scores of panic-stricken people daily.

“The rich people put their money and their plate in the bank,” said a teamster’s wife to Vladimir and his father, “but what shall we do with our traps?”

“Don’t worry, my dear woman, there will be no riot in Miroslav,” the Arbitrator reassured her.

“It’s all very well to say don’t worry,” the woman retorted sharply. “You people can afford to say it, because your house is safe. But if they kill my husband’s horse and destroy his truck, we’ll have to go begging. It did not come easy, I can assure you.” She burst into tears. “The years that it has taken to save it all up, the pinching, the scrimping—all in order that a thousand ghosts might have something to grab. And what are we going to do with ourselves? Where shall we hide? As to my husband and myself, well, all they can do is to kill us, but how about the children?” And again she burst into sobs. [348]

When an old woman who had two unmarried daughters, “both as handsome as a tree,” described her despair concerning them, Vladimir’s mother invited the girls to stay with her until the storm was over. And then scores of other mothers begged her, with heart-breaking lamentations and kisses, to take pity on their daughters also; which she could not do for sheer lack of room.

The Vigdoroffs felt reasonably safe because Rasgadayeff, their Gentile landlord and friend, was sure to keep the marauders away. Indeed, the example of all previous outbreaks had shown that in most cases it was enough for any Gentile to tell the rioters that he was the proprietor of the house and that there were no Jews on his premises for them to pass cordially on, and Rasgadayeff was one of the conspicuous and popular figures in the Gentile community of the town. It is true that he was looking forward to an anti-Semitic upheaval with joy himself, but his liking for the Vigdoroffs was sincere.

Vladimir’s father went about among his depositors asking to be relieved of their money, jewelry or silver spoons. They refused to accept it. Finally he moved his iron safe to Rasgadayeff’s apartment.

Vladimir was in despair. He felt it quite likely that the panic should be father to a catastrophe, as the governor had said. Once when he spoke in this strain at his father’s table, his mother remarked with light irony:

“Look at the brave man. Look at the Cossack of straw.”

The retort struck cruelly home. He knew that his heart grew faint every time the anti-Semitic mobs pictured [349] themselves vividly in his brain, although often, indeed, he had a queer feeling as if it would be disappointing to see Miroslav left out of the list of towns that were sharing in the tragic notoriety of the year, and visioned himself going through the experiences of a most brutal outbreak without facing its dangers. The tragedy of his people filled his heart. He watched them in their terror, in their misery, in their clinging despairing love of their children; he studied their frightened look, their shrinking, tremulous attitudes. Every Jewish woman he met struck him as a hunted bird, on the alert for the faintest sound, trembling over the fate of her nest. He saw many of them packing their things to flee, they did not know whither. Indeed, the whole historical life of his race seemed to have been spent in packing, in moving, in fleeing without knowing whither. “Oh, my poor, my unhappy people!” Vladimir said to himself, in a spasm of agony, yet with a glow of pleasure in calling them his people. In his heart of hearts he knew that while he told everybody to take courage his own mind was barren of conviction as to what was the best thing to do. He felt crushed. He lost his head.

One day, as Vladimir walked along the street, his attention was arrested by a rough-looking young man who was circling round him, and scrutinising him now on this side, now on that. He felt annoyed. He was not sure that the young man was a Jew, and as he asked him sternly, “What are you looking at?” he was conscious of a little qualm of timidity.

“Excuse me, sir,” the other answered, in Yiddish. “I saw you at the synagogue that Friday night. Do you remember?”

They paused. The young man had the manner of a Jewish horse-driver or blacksmith. He was robust and broad- [350] shouldered with small very sparse teeth, somewhat bow-legged and somewhat cross-eyed. His coat was literally in tatters and gave off a strong smell of herring.

“Well?” asked Vladimir.

“I have been wanting to see you, sir, only I have been too bashful.” He gave a smile, his tongue showing between his sparse teeth.

Vigdoroff rather liked his manner and invited him to his father’s house. On their way thither the young man said that his name was Zelig and that he was a cooper by trade, making a specialty of herring barrels. When they found themselves alone in Vladimir’s room, Zelig grew still more bashful, and after surveying the room, to make sure that they were not overheard, he said:

“I want to belong to the committee.”

“What committee?”

“You need not be on the lookout with me, sir; I am no babbler.”

It appeared that there was a defence committee in town, with educated young men at the head, and that in case of a riot it was expected to fight “to the last drop of a fellow’s blood,” as Zelig phrased it. That there should be such a thing in Miroslav without him being so much as aware of its existence hurt Vladimir keenly.

“I don’t know anything about it,” he said, blankly.

“Don’t you really?” said Zelig. “I was sure you were in it and that you could get me in, too. Why, everybody knows about it. Only the committee is strict, because if the police hears of it, they’ll all be arrested. It’s against the law.” As he offered him more detail of the matter he became patronisingly enthusiastic and confided to him the names of Elkin and of several university students now on their vacation as the organisers and leaders of the movement. Vladimir knew [351] these young men and his pain became sharper still.

“But what good will it do?” he said, drily. “It will only lead to trouble.”

“Trouble! The idea of an educated man speaking like that! Can there be more trouble than the Jews are in now? I don’t see why we should sell ourselves so cheap. Once we are going to be licked, why act like a lot of sticks? Let us pay them for their bother at least. Come what may, when they attack us, let us go to work and crack their skulls at least—with lumps of iron, clubs or even pistols. Let us fondle them so that a ghost may get into every bone of theirs.” His words were accompanied with mighty swings of his shoulders and arms and these gesticulations of his had a peculiar effect on Vladimir. They stirred his blood, they hypnotised him. “What is the danger? They’ll kill us? Let them. As if the life of a Jew were worth living! Besides, aren’t they killing and maiming us anyhow?”

“But look here,” Vigdoroff said seriously. “The governor has promised us protection and he is perfectly sincere about it. Now if he learns that our people take the law in their own hands, it may do us great harm. It is a very serious matter.”

“Spit upon him, sir! I’m an uneducated man, but the governor—a ghost into his father’s father!—may all he wishes the Jews befall his own head.”

“That’s all true enough, but now he has promised us protection, and an organisation of that kind is against the law

and may lead to trouble," Vigdoroff said with perfunctory irritation.

"And an organisation of rioters is not against the law? And robbing and killing innocent people is not against the law? Long life to you, sir; you're so wise, so educated and yet you are speaking like a baby. Look here, sir! If the governor—a plague take him—is as good as his word, and he does not allow the riot to get started, well and good. Then we'll call the bargain off. But suppose he proves to be neither better nor worse than all governors?"

Zelig knew of a number of other Jewish artisans who were anxious to join the "committee," and he urged Vigdoroff to visit their gathering and to give them a talk like the one Zelig had heard from him at the Synagogue on that Friday night. "Oh, that was sweet as sugar," he said, kissing two of his dirty fingers. "You see, when it comes to striking a scoundrel's snout such a blow as will set his eyes raining sparks, we want no help. That we can manage ourselves, but we are only common people, and when a smart man like you says a couple of words, they simply go melting in a fellow's bones."

"But I don't know anything about the 'committee.'"

Zelig laughed familiarly. "Sender-the-Arbitrator's son doesn't know! If you only had the desire, you could belong to it yourself and introduce us fellows, too."

"Very well. I'll consider it. And I should advise you men to do the same."

"Consider it! We are only plain uneducated people, but we aren't going to do any considering. I have a sister, sir, and if a Gentile lays a finger on her he'll be a dead man, I can tell you that. Jewish blood is being spilled by the bucket and here you are talking of 'considering.'" He insisted that Vladimir should attend the meeting of his informal society, and Vladimir, completely in his power, promised to do so.

That evening, in a spacious barn, half of which was crowded with barrels of herring, Vladimir found Zelig and some fifteen chums of his. Zelig was playing with a huge iron key. He was employed here and the meeting was held by his employer's permission. For more than nine persons to assemble without a police permit is a crime; so it gave Vigdoroff satisfaction to reflect that he was now incurring risks similar to those incurred by Clara and her friends. The gathering seemed to be made up of mechanics and labourers exclusively. One of the men present was the sneering fellow whom Vigdoroff had seen at the synagogue. Of the others Vladimir's attention was attracted by two big burly young butchers with dried-up blood about their finger-nails, a chimney-sweep, who looked like a jet-black negro, with white teeth and red lips, and three men with medals from the late war which they apparently expected to act as an amulet against Gentile rowdies. The chimney-sweep sat apart, cracking sunflower seeds. Now and again he made as though to throw his sooty arms round somebody's neck and then burst into laughter over his own joke. All the others looked grave. They showed Vigdoroff much respect and attention. Even the sneering man made a favourable impression on him to-night. Only he himself was so ill at ease he could scarcely take part in the conversation. Other men came. When one of these proved to be Motl, the trunk-maker in his aunt's employ, Vigdoroff felt somewhat more at home.

One of the retired soldiers took to bragging of the courage he and his two comrades had shown at the taking of Plevna, and when one of the other two signed to him to stop boasting, he said, with a blush:

"I am saying all this because—because—what good did it do us? Does the Czar pat us on the head for it? We risked our lives and many of our people died under Plevna, and yet if we tried to settle in Great-Russia we would be kicked out neck and crop, wouldn't we?"

"Indeed we would, war record, medal and all," one of the other two chimed in.

"And why? Because we are Jews. We were not chased home from the firing line because we were Jews, were we?"

"Talk of Great-Russia," somebody put in. "As if in a place like Miroslav we were allowed to live in peace."

Another man assented with a sigh, adding: "If a thousandth part of the courage shown by the Jews in the war was shown in our self-defence against Gentiles, the Gentiles would have more respect for us."

The conversation turned on the subject of pistols, but the proposition was overruled.

"Before we get pistols and learn to use them we'll be asleep under a quilt of earth," said Zelig. "Why, what ails my cooper's hatchet, or a hammer, or a plain crowbar?"

Every time Vigdoroff opened his mouth the faces of the others would become tense with expectation. But he had nothing to say except to ask an occasional question, and every time Zelig, playing with his enormous iron key, pressed him for a speech, he would adjure him, in a flutter of embarrassment, to let it go this time.

They talked of the prospective fight in phrases like "forwarding a remittance to one's snout" or "pulling up sharp under a fellow's peeper," which amused and jarred on him at once. For the rest, there was a remarkable flow of common sense, humour and feeling. The gathering cast a spell over him. He had come with the partial intention of speaking against their scheme, yet now he felt that he could much more readily face a gang of armed Gentiles than betray a faint heart to these Jewish artisans. Moreover—and this was the great point with him at the present moment—he felt that with these men by his side he could fling himself into the very thick of the hottest fight. A peculiar sense of solemnity and of gratification came over him. He followed their talk reverentially. He humbly offered to call on one of the leaders of the Defence Committee and to apply for the admission of this group with himself as one of its members.

His first dawn of consciousness as he opened his eyes next morning was of something exceedingly important and solemn which somehow had the flavour of herring. The active participation of a man like Elkin in the work of the Defence Committee was a source of disappointment to him. He usually kept out of Elkin's way, as much for his venomous pleasantry as for his revolutionary affiliations which he divined from his friendship with Clara. He wondered whether he meant to give the affair a revolutionary character. "He must have warned the other members against me as a silk stocking and a coward," Vigdoroff said to himself bitterly. "That's probably the way Clara describes me."

The next morning he was surprised by a visit from Elkin himself. The revolutionist frowned as he spoke, but this was clearly a disguise for his embarrassment.

"Look here, Vigdoroff," he said. "There has not been much love lost between you and me, but that's foolish—at a time like this anyhow. We must all work together. We are all Jews. I understand you have organised a number of good fellows. Let them join the others."

Vigdoroff's heart beat fast, with emotion as well as with a sense of flattered pride. He would never have expected Elkin capable of such soulful talk. Moreover his speaking of himself as a Jew seemed to imply that he had abandoned Nihilism. "So we 'cowards' were not so very wrong after all," he thought to himself triumphantly.

"In the first place," he answered, "it wasn't I who organised them. It was just the other way, in fact."

“Well, anyhow, let them join the rest.”

“Of course we will. Only look here, Elkin. You have been frank with me——”

“I know what you mean, but you need not worry. I won’t get you in trouble,” Elkin replied with his usual venom in his lozenge-shaped sneer. And then, kindly: “It is not as a Russian revolutionist that I have gone into this thing. I am one, as much as ever; I have not changed my views a bit, in fact. But that’s another matter. All I want to say is that in this thing I am as a Jew, as a child of our unhappy, outraged, mud-bespattered people.”

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE NIHILISTS' GUARD.

PAVEL'S mother, the countess, had not been in Miroslav since March. She lived in retirement on one of her estates in another province, in a constant tremour of fear and compunction. The image of Alexander II. bleeding in the snow literally haunted her. She took it for granted that Pavel had had a hand in the bloody plot, and she felt as though she, too, had been a party to it.

To ascertain the situation with regard to the riot rumours Pavel called on his uncle, the governor. He found him dozing on a bench in his orchard, a stout cane in one hand and a French newspaper in the other. The old satrap was dressed in a fresh summer suit of Caucasian silk, which somehow emphasised the uncouth fleshiness of his broad nose. He was overjoyed to see his nephew, and he plunged into the subject of the riots at once and of his own accord. It was evidently one of those situations upon which he usually had to unburden his mind to somebody.

"Can you tell me what they are up to in that great city of yours?" he said, referring to St. Petersburg and the higher government circles and blinking as he spoke. "There is an administration for you! Perhaps you younger fellows are smarter than we oldsters. Perhaps, perhaps." He took out a golden cigarette case, lit a cigarette and went on blinking, sneeringly.

His words implied that Pavel, being one of the younger generation, was, morally at least, identified with the administration of the young Czar. 1581

"What do you mean, uncle?" he inquired.

"What do I mean? Why, I mean that they don't want those riots stopped. That's plain enough, isn't it?"

This was a slap at the doctrine of Pavel's party concerning the outrages, and he resented it as well as he could.

"But you have no evidence for such an accusation, uncle," he said. "That's a mere theory of yours."

"I knew you would stick up for your generation. Ha, ha, ha! Quite commendable in a young chap, too. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But where is your evidence?"

"You want to know too much, Pasha. Too young for that. If they wanted the riots stopped, it would be a case of one, two, three, and there she goes! That's as much as I can tell you, and if you are really clever you can understand the rest yourself."

"He is in league with his fellow fleecers, the Jewish usurers," Pavel remarked inwardly. "He simply cannot afford an anti-Jewish demonstration, the old bribe-taker."

"Neither can you," a voice retorted from Pavel's heart, "though for quite different reasons."

Prince Boulatoff called on Orlovsky, the government clerk in whose house the local revolutionists held their meetings. The first thing that struck him was Orlovsky's loss of girth.

"Hello, Aliosha," he said heartily, meeting him at the gate.

"Why, Pasha!" The clerk flung himself upon him, and they exchanged three prolonged kisses.

"By Jove," Pavel went on, "you are so changed I came near letting you pass. Why, what has become of your bulk, old boy? Have you been ill?" 1591

"Not exactly," the other answered, leading the way indoors; then, as his face broke into an expression of wan joy, he added: "Been in love, devil wrench it. I take these things rather too hard, I suppose, but that's a small matter. How have you been? Climbing upward in the service of the revolution, aren't you?"

The room was the same. The huge tin samovar stood on the floor.

"Well, and how is your Circle? First-rate fellows all of them," Pavel said.

"Yes, indeed. Only we miss Clara now more than ever."

"Anything specially the matter?" Pavel asked, colouring slightly.

"Well, it really used to be a splendid circle—in our humble way, that is—but those riots have had a bad effect on us, deuce take it. Remember Elkin? It was he who got us together, and now it's he who has brought discord into our ranks. He is organising people who want to go to America. This is his hobby now."

"Why, have the riots knocked all his socialism out of him?" Pavel asked, grimly.

"Oh, no," Orlovsky answered with something like dismay. "I wouldn't say that. It's as an organiser of communistic colonies that he is going to emigrate. Only he says the Jewish people have a more direct claim upon him than Russia."

"There is a revolutionist for you!" Pavel roared, bitterly. "I never did attach much importance to that fellow. The sooner he goes the better. God speed him."

"You're too hard on him, Pasha. He's a good fellow. If we had Clara here she would straighten it all out. We miss her very much. As a matter of fact, it was she—indeed, I don't see why I shouldn't tell it to you—it was she with whom I was in love." 1601

"Was it?" Pavel asked, colouring.

He paused, in utter confusion, and resumed, without looking at him. "Well, you must excuse me, Aliosha, but I fear your frankness goes a bit too far. Such things are not meant to be published that way."

"Why? Why? What a funny view you do take of it, Pasha! Suppose a fellow's heart is full and he meets an intimate old friend of his, is it an indiscretion on his part if he opens his mind to him?"

"I certainly am a friend of yours, and a warm one, too, old boy," Pavel replied with a smile. "But still, things of that sort are usually kept to oneself."

Several other members came in. The gigantic samovar, the improvised sugar bowl, a huge loaf of rye bread, some butter and a lamp made their appearance on the table. Elkin dropped in later in the evening. He and Pavel had not been conversing five minutes when they quarrelled.

"What you are trying to do is to blend the unblendable—to mix socialism with Jewish chauvinism," Boulatoff said in an ill-concealed rage.

"Am I?" the other retorted with one of the most virulent of his sneers. "Can socialism be mixed with the welfare of the Russian people only?—the welfare of the Russian people with a pailful or two of Jewish blood thrown in; in plainer language, socialism can only be mixed with anti-Semitism. Is that it?"

"Oh, nonsense!" Pavel hissed. "There are other Jews in the movement, lots of them, and one does not hear that kind of stuff from them. They have not sickened of the bargain on account of the riots." [361]

"I don't know whom you mean. Perhaps some of them are still under the spell of the fact that a Gentile or two will speak to them or even call them by their first names."

"Calm down, Elkin," the judge with the fluffy hair and the near-sighted eyes interposed. "Come, you won't say that of Clara, for instance?"

"No, not of Clara. But, then, you have not yet heard from her. Sooner or later she, too, will open her eyes and come to the conclusion that it is wiser to be a socialist for her own people than for those who will slaughter and trample upon them. I am sure she will give it all up and join the emigration—sooner or later."

"The devil she will," Pavel said quietly, but trembling with fury.

"Yes, she will," Elkin jeered.

Pavel felt like strangling him.

"She is too good a revolutionist to sneak away from the battlefield," snapped Ginsburg, the red-headed son of the usurer, without raising his eyes from the table. "Of course, America is a safer place to be a socialist in. There are no gendarmes there."

Elkin chuckled. "You had better save your courage for the time the riot breaks out in this town," he said. "You know it is coming. It may burst out at any moment, and when it does we'll have a chance to see how a hero like you behaves himself when the 'revolutionary instincts of the people are aroused.'"

"Very well, then, let him go back to the synagogue," Pavel shouted to the others, losing all his self-control. "But in that case, what's the sense of his hanging around a place like this?"

"Oh, I see, you are afraid I'll send spies to this house, are you? Well, there is less danger of that than that you should take a hand in the slaughter of Jewish shoemakers, blacksmiths or water-bearers as a bit of practical 'equality and fraternity,' I can assure you. But then, after all, you may be right. Good-bye, comrades! Don't judge me hard." [362]

Tears stood in Orlovsky's eyes. He, the judge, and Mlle. Andronoff, the judge's fiancée, were for running after him, but the others stopped them.

Left to themselves, the group of Nihilists began to discuss the coming outbreak. Everyone felt, in view of Elkin's charge, that whatever else was done, no effort should be spared to keep the mob from attacking the Jewish poor. Much was said about "directing the popular fury into revolutionary channels," and "setting the masses upon the government," but most of those who said these things knew in their hearts that they might as well talk of directing the ocean into revolutionary channels or of setting a tornado upon the Russian government. Orlovsky alone took it seriously:

"It begins to look something like, by Jove," he said beamingly. "We'll go out, and when the mob gets going, when the revolutionary fighting blood is up in them, we'll call out to them that Jewish usurers are not the only enemies of the toiling people; that the Czar is at the head of all the enemies of the nation. And then, by Jove, Miroslav may set the pace to all Russia. See if it doesn't."

The son of the usurer called attention to the extreme smallness of their number, but he thought it enough to keep the mob from assaulting working people. He knew that his own relatives were all safe personally. As to his father's property, he said he would be glad if it was all destroyed by the "revolutionary conflagration," and he meant it. [363]

Pavel took no hand in the discussion. Instead, he was pacing to and fro mopingly.

At last, after some more speeches, including one by the gawky seminarist, who came late and who disagreed with everybody else, it was decided that in case of a riot every Gentile member of the Circle should be out in the streets, "on picket duty," watching the mob, studying its mood and "doing everything possible to lend the disturbance a revolutionary character."

Eight Jewish women, including three little girls, were brought to the Jewish hospital of Miroslav from a neighbouring town, where they had been outraged in the course of an anti-Semitic outbreak. The little girls and the prettiest of the other five died soon after they arrived. The next day the Gentile district bubbled with obscenity. To be sure, there were expressions of horror and pity, too, but the bulk of the Christian population, including many an educated and tender-hearted woman, treated the matter as a joke. Where a Jew was concerned the moral and human point of view had become a reeling blur. The joke had an appalling effect. While the stories of pillaged shops kindled the popular fancy with the image of staved vodka barrels and pavements strewn with costly fabrics, the case of the eight Jewish women gave rise to a hideous epidemic of lust. There were thousands of Gentiles for whom it became no more possible to pass a pretty Jewish woman than to look into the display window of a Jewish shop without thinking of an anti-Semitic outbreak.

The storm was gathering. The mutterings of an approaching riot were becoming louder and louder. Many Jewish shops were closed. Taverns serving as stations for stage lines were crowded with people begging to be taken away from the city before it was too late. [364]

The Defence Committee did not rest. The volunteers of the several Jewish districts were organised into so many sections, and a signal system was perfected by which the various sections were to communicate with each other. The raiders were sure to be drunk, it was argued, while the Defence Guard would be sober and acting according to a well-considered plan. The Guard was spoiling for a fight.

The Nihilists "on picket duty" were strolling around the streets.

Troops were held in readiness and placards had been posted forbidding people to assemble in the streets. Having ordered this, Governor Boulatoff announced himself ill and in need of a fortnight's leave of absence. When a delegation implored him to postpone the journey, he replied curtly that all had been done to insure order. He was in bad spirits and treated them with unusual rudeness.

He left Miroslav in the morning. At about noontime of the same day the town was full of sinister rumours. One of these was about the poisoning of twelve Christian wells by Jews.

A few yards off a retired government clerk, in dilapidated though carefully shined boots and with a red nose, stood in front of one of the governor's placards forbidding people to congregate in the streets, with a crowd of illiterate Gentiles about him.

"'So by an All High ukase,'" he pretended to read, "'all people of the orthodox Christian faith are hereby ordered to attack the Jews, destroy their homes and shops, tear their pillows and drink their vodka and wine, take from them all [365]

they have plundered from Christians and administer a drubbing to them.'"

As he proceeded he worked himself up to a tone of maudlin solemnity.

"Aye, the day of reckoning hath come," he went on. "Let not a man of that unchristian tribe escape. Let the blood of Jesus and of his followers be avenged." Here, however, he spoiled it all by suddenly breaking off with a grin of inebriate roguishness.

The revolutionary seminarist was watching this man philosophically.

Similar scenes occurred in other neighbourhoods. When in one instance they had led to an attack upon a rabbinical looking old man who was left bleeding and unconscious on the pavement, the troops were ordered out. Then there was a scramble for rooms in Gentile hotels. Twenty-five rubles a day was charged for a ruble room, and there were a dozen applicants for each room. Still, those who had money contrived to find shelter. Much greater difficulty was encountered in many cases in getting a Christian cabman to take a Jew to a place of refuge. Many a Gentile rented part of his dwelling to Jews at an enormous price, a guarantee of safety being included in the bargain. Then, too, there was a considerable number of Gentiles who received some of their prosperous Jewish neighbours into their houses without accepting any offer of payment. Prosperous, because the poorer Jews for the most part lived huddled together in the Ghetto and were far removed from the Gentile population. At Pavel's instance Orlovsky went to take Clara's sister and her family to the house of a relative of his, but he found their door locked. They were taking refuge with the Vigdoroffs.

Toward five o'clock, when the crimson sunlight was playing on the gold steeple of the Church of Our Saviour and [366] the dazzling blue and white of hussars' uniforms, a small crowd of men and boys came running to the square in front of the sacred structure.

"We want to carry out the holy vessels and banners," said a spokesman to an officer. "We hear the Jews have decided to set fire to God's temple."

"We won't let them, you may be sure of that," the hussar officer answered. "You can safely go home."

The crowd was slowly dispersing, when a man in a red shirt shouted:

"Boys, I know a Jewish cellar where twenty-five Christian corpses are kept in empty vodka casks. Come on!"

The officer did not interfere, and the crowd followed the red-shirt round the corner to a closed drink-shop. Half an hour later the streets in that locality rang with a drunken sing-song: "Death to the Jews! Death to the Christ-killers!"

The shop was the property of a Jew, who was hiding with his family somewhere, but the street was inhabited by Gentiles. Meanwhile on a little square near Nicholas Street, the best street running through the Jewish quarter, a mob of five hundred men and boys, mostly from the scum of the population, had seemingly dropped from the sky. A savage "Hee-hee-hee!" broke loose, scattered itself, died away, and was taken up again with redoubled energy. All over the district Jews, men and women, most of them with children clasped in their arms, were running along the middle of the streets as people run at the sound of a volcano. Some were fleeing from their shops to their homes and some from their homes to the hiding places which they had prepared for themselves. The eyes of most of them had the hollow look of mortal fear. They ran in family groups, holding close to each other. Here and there a man, his feet giving way under [367] him, sick and dizzy with fright, would slacken pace for a minute, as if giving himself up for lost; then, wiping the cold sweat from his face, he would break into a fresh run, more desperate than before. Some simply walked quickly, a look of grim determination on their faces. Here and there an aged man or woman, too feeble to run, were making a pitiful effort to keep up with the younger members of their families, who were urging them on with a look of ghastly impatience. Often a frail little woman with two or three children in her arms could be seen running as she might down a steep hill.

Christians stood on the sidewalks, jeering and mimicking their fright and making jokes.

Pavel watched the spectacle in a singular state of mental agitation. His heart leaped at sight of that chaotic mob as it paraded through the streets. Visions of the French Revolution floated through his brain, quickening his pulse. "So our people are *not* incapable of rising!" he felt like exclaiming. "The idea of a revolution is *not* incompatible with the idea of Russia!" It was as if all the sacrifices he had been making during the past few years had finally been indorsed by life itself, as if they were once for all insured against proving to be the senseless sacrifices of a modern Don Quixote. He could have embraced this mass of human dregs. And while his mind was in this state, the panic-stricken men, women and children with oriental features who were running past him were stranger than ever to him. He simply could not rouse himself to a sense of their being human creatures like himself at this moment. It was like a scene on a canvas. Clara did not seem to belong to these people; and when it came fully home to him that she did, and how these scenes [368] were apt to stand between him and her, his heart grew faint within him; whereupon he felt like a traitor to his cause, and at the same time he was overcome with a sense of his inward anarchy and helplessness.

Within the Jewish houses and on their courtyards there was a rush for sub-cellars, garrets, barrels. As they ran, clambered, tiptoed, scrambled, they smothered the cries of their frightened babies with several cases of unconscious infanticide as a result. Christians hastened to assert the immunity of their houses by placing the image of the Virgin (a Jewess!) in their windows; and so did many a Jew who had procured such images for the purpose. Some smashed their own windows and piled up fragments of furniture in front of their doors, to give their homes or shops the appearance of having already been visited by mob fury. Here and there a man was chalking crosses on his gate or shutters.

While this was in progress several hundred Jews burst from gateways on and about Nicholas Street and bore down on the enemy with frantic yells in Russian and in Yiddish. They were armed with crowbars, axes, hammers, brass knuckles, clubs and what-not. As to the rioters they were mostly unarmed. Following the established practice of the crusade, they had expected to begin with some hardware store and there to arm themselves with battering rams and implements of devastation—an intention which they had not yet had time to carry out. At sight of this armed multitude, therefore, they were taken aback. Resistance was not what they had anticipated. Indeed, for some seconds many of them were under the impression that the crowd now descending on them was but another horde of hoodlums. They wavered. A crowd of Jewish butchers, lumberers, blacksmiths, truck-drivers—the advance guard of the Defence—made [369] a dash at them, jeering and howling at the top of their lungs, in Yiddish:

"Let's hack them to pieces! Lively boys! Let's drive right into their lungs and livers! Let's make carrot-pudding of them! Bravely, fellows, they're drunk as swine!"

At this point Orlovsky and the seminarist instinctively joined the rioters. Elkin and Vigdoroff were on the other side. Pavel was looking on from the sidewalk.

The Defence was mistaken. The rioters were almost as sober as they, for, indeed, it was another part of the stereotyped program of anti-Semitic riots that drink-shops should be among the very first targets of attack, so that the invaders might fit themselves for the real work of the riot by filling themselves full of Jewish vodka. But the Jews, as we have seen, descended upon them before they had torn down a single door. What the outcome would have been had the

two opposing crowds been left to themselves is unknown, for a troop of hussars whose commander had been watching the scene charged on both when they were a few inches apart, and dispersed them both. Some fifty arrests were made, more than two-thirds of the prisoners being Jews. The arrested Gentiles went to police headquarters singing an anti-Semitic refrain and mimicking the frightened cry of Jewish women. Bystanders, some of the Nihilist “pickets” among them, shouted:

“Don’t fear, boys. You’ll soon go home.” And the answer was:

“Sure we will, and then we’ll give them a shaking-up, the scurvy Jews, won’t we?”

[370]

On another business street some boys threw a few tentative stones at a shop window. There being no interference on the part of the military, a mob of grown men sprang up. Doors were burst in and rolls of silk and woollen stuffs came shooting to the pavement.

“Don’t, boys; you had better go home,” said a handsome young lieutenant, affecting the basso of a general.

The raiders did not desist. While some went on emptying the shop into the street others were slashing, tearing or biting at the goods. They did it without zest and somewhat nervously, as if still in doubt as to the attitude of the authorities. A servant girl unrolled a piece of blue velvet over a filthy spot on the cobblestones before a lieutenant of the hussars, saying:

“Here, sir! Why dirty the dear little feet of your horse? Here is Jewish velvet for them.”

“Thank you, my dear girl, but you had better go home,” the lieutenant answered, smiling. A crumpled mass of unrolled fabrics, silk, woollen, velvet, satin, cotton, lay in many-coloured heaps on the pavement and in the gutter. The rioters, whose movements were still amateurish and lacked snap, soon wearied of the job. Several of them then broke into a grocery store and brought forth a barrel of kerosene.

“What are you going to do?” asked the lieutenant.

“We’ll pour it over the stuff and set fire to it, your high nobleness.”

“That you can’t do,” the officer returned decisively. “You’ll have to go home now.”

The rioters obeyed at once, many of them taking rolls of silk or velvet along.

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE RIOT.

THE next morning the Police Master, “in order to avoid bloodshed,” issued a proclamation forbidding Jews to leave their houses. The order was copied from one that had been issued in other riot-ridden towns where, as the Miroslav Police Master knew but too well, it meant that the Jews were prevented from uniting for their self-defence and forced to await the arrival of the mob, each family in its own isolated lodgings. At the same time every soldier of the Jewish faith was called back to barracks, none of their number being included in the patrol, “for fear of embittering the Christian population.”

A peculiar air hung about the city, an air at once of festive idleness and suppressed bustle. It looked as it might on the eve of some great fair. Gentile workmen, staying away from their shops, were parading the streets, many of them shouldering axes, sledge-hammers, bores, chisels—their tools of useful toil to be turned to weapons of demolition and pillage; peasants from neighbouring villages were arriving with sacks, pails, tubs, spades, axes, pitchforks, their waggons otherwise empty and ready to be laden with booty. Among the people in the streets were gangs of trained rioters, come from towns where their work was at an end. The Jews were in their hiding places where they had passed the night. Pavel went about alone, avoiding company, asking himself questions to which his mind had no answer. He was filled with the excitement of a sportsman a few minutes before the beginning of a great race; with mental chaos and anxiety.

At one corner of Cucumber Market a group of peasants took off their coarse straw hats and bowed to two policemen.

“We are only ignorant peasants,” they said. “Will your High Nobleness tell us when his Excellency the Police Master will give the order to start in?”

“There won’t be any order to start in,” answered one of the policemen. “Move along, move along.”

The large market place became white with country people. They were getting restive. Their sacks and tubs were hungry for the goods of “Christ-killers.” Four years ago many of these very people, dressed like soldiers, had been driven to the Balkans by a force known to them as the Czar, to fire at Turks without having the least idea what sort of creatures those people called Turks were or what they had done to be fired at. Now they had come here, in obedience to the same force, to rob and do violence to Jews. Among the out-of-town looters were two tramps who had it whispered about that they were two well-known generals in disguise, personal emissaries of the Emperor sent to direct the attack upon the Jews. These two were soon put in gaol, but that which they personified, the idea that the anti-Jewish riots met with the Czar’s approval, was left at large. It seized upon soldier and civilian alike. People who usually kept at a timid distance from everything in the shape of a uniform, were now bandying jests with army lieutenants and police captains. The question this morning was not whether one wore the Czar’s uniform or citizen’s clothes, but whether one was a Jew or not. An unusual feeling of kinship linked them all together, and the source of that feeling was the consciousness that they were not Jews.

It was about nine o’clock when a large seedy-looking man with a bloated, sodden face, stepped out of a vast crowd on Cucumber Market, and walked jauntily up to a deserted fruit stand. Snatching a handful of hickory nuts, he flung it high in the air, then thrust his two index fingers into his mouth and blew a loud piercing blast, puffing himself up violently as he did so. The sound was echoed by similar sounds in many parts of the crowded market place.

“Hee-ee-eeee!” came from a thousand frantic throats.

A long stick was raised with a battered hat for a flag, a hundred human swarms rushed in all directions, rending the air with their yells, and pandemonium was loose.

There was a scramble for hardware shops, vodka shops and places where Jewish women were said to be secreted. Another few minutes and the streets were streaming with spirits. The air was filled with the odour of alcohol, with the din of broken glass, with the clatter of feet, with the impact of battering rams against doors; and coming through this general clang, thud and crash of destruction, were smothered groans of agony, shrieks of horror and despair, the terror-stricken cry of children, the jeers of triumph and lust. Here a row of shops, their doors burst in, was sending forth a shower of sugar, kerosene, flour, spices, coats, bonnets, wigs, dry goods, crockery, cutlery, toys; there a bevy of men were tearing up the street, piling up the cobble-stones which others were hurling at shop windows. Some men and women were carrying away bucketsful of vodka. Others were bending over casks, scooping out the liquid with their caps, hands or even boots; others were greedily crouching before barrels, their mouths to the bungholes. Here and there a man leaning over a broken cask was guzzling at its contents in a torpor of drunkenness. One rioter, holding a sealed bottle in his hand and too impatient to look for a corkscrew, smashed its neck against the sidewalk, while another man, by his side, broke two similar bottles against each other, and then cursed the Jews as he licked wine mixed with his own blood off his fingers. Nearby a woman carrying a shoe full of vodka toward a four-year-old boy who was seated on a pile of logs, yelled frantically:

“Here, my darling! Taste it, precious one, so that when you grow up you may say you remember the day when the ill-gotten wealth of Jews was smashed by people of the True Faith.”

Women and children were serving vodka to the soldiers in cans, teapots, saucers, ladles, paper boxes.

Orlovsky mounted a cask and began to shout, wildly:

“Don’t drink too much, boys! Don’t befog your minds! For this is a great historical moment! Only why attack Jews alone? Behold, the Czar is at the head of all the blood-suckers in the land!”

Scarcely anybody listened to him. The crowd was too deeply absorbed in its orgy. His voice was drowned by a thousand other sounds; his flashing eyes and his air-pounding fists were part of a nightmare of brutalised faces, attitudes of greed, gesticulations of primitive humanity run amuck. Presently, however, a group of belated rowdies came along in search of drink. They stopped in front of Orlovsky, eyeing the cask under his feet hopefully, the appearance of the bung showing that its contents were still intact.

“Who are you, anyhow?” one of them said to the speaker. “It must be the Jews who sent you here to talk like that to good Christian people.”

“It isn’t true. You’re mistaken, old boy,” Orlovsky answered hoarsely and breathing hard, but with a kindly, familiar smile on his flushed, perspiring face. “I am one of the best friends you and all the people ever had, I mean the good of all of you fellows. What’s the use attacking Jews only, I say. We had better turn upon the authorities, the flunkeys of the Czar——”

“Do you hear what he says?” one of his listeners said, in perplexity, nudging the fellow by his side.

“He wants to get us in trouble, the sly fox that he is,” somebody remarked.

“Sure, he does. And it was by the Jews he was hired to come here. I know what I am talking about,” growled the man who had spoken first. “Down with him, boys!”

“Down with him!” the others echoed, thirstily.

Orlovsky was pulled off and the group of belated rioters, re-enforced by some others, rushed at the cask savagely.

Pavel was in another section of the same street. An old little Jewess whom he saw run out of a gate struck him as the most pathetic figure he had seen that day. Her fright gave her pinched little face something like a pout, an air of childlike resentment, as it were. A Gentile boy snatched off her wig and held it up, jeering to some bystanders, whereupon she covered her gray head with her bony hands, her faith forbidding her to expose her hair, and ran on with the same childlike pout. A sob of pity caught Pavel in the throat. He was about to offer to take her to a place of safety, when an elderly rowdy, apparently provoked by her outlandish anxiety about her bare hair, struck her a vicious blow on the head, accompanying it with profanity.

“Cur!” Pavel shrieked, springing up to him and landing a smart whack in his face. [376]

The rioter looked round with surprise, muttered something and joined the looters.

“Come with me, don’t be afraid of the scoundrels,” Pavel said, taking her by the hand. His heart was melting with pity for all the Jews at this moment. He felt a rush of yearning tenderness for Clara, and he wished she could see him taking care of this woman of her race.

When he saw two marauders hand out gold and silver watches—the spoils of a raid—to the patrol, his blood was up again.

“Is that what you are here for, thieves, vermin that you are?” he shouted.

“Who is that fellow? Run him in!” somebody said.

He fought desperately, cursing the authorities and calling to the mob to turn upon the soldiers, but he was overpowered and carried away half dead. When his identity was discovered at Police Headquarters, it caused a panic among the officials of the place. He was reverently placed in a carriage and taken to the Palace.

The Defence Guard gave the rioters fight in two places, and a desperate encounter it was, but it was not to last long. Troops fell upon them, beat them with the butts of their rifles and hurled execrations at them for violating the police ordinance. Every Jew who was armed and every Jew who looked educated, Elkin among them, was arrested. The others were driven indoors. Vladimir was brought to police headquarters unconscious, with blood gushing from his head.

When the first stack of bedding was pitched out on the sidewalk at Nicholas Street, from a residence over a tobacco shop, a man with watery eyes and a beautiful Great-Russian beard, one of the leaders, selected a big, plump, tempting [377] feather-bed, and opened his pocket-knife with dignified deliberation. A crowd of about one thousand stood about in breathless silence, as though attending a religious ceremony of great solemnity. In order to prolong the spell, the man with the golden beard played with the feather-bed awhile, kneading, patting, punching it, brandishing his knife over it, like a barbaric high priest performing some mystic rite over a captive about to be sacrificed. Then, grasping it with sudden ferocity, his teeth a-glitter amid his enormous whiskers, his watery eyes flashing murder, he cut a quick, long gash, rent the pillow-case apart and hurled its snow-white entrails to the breeze.

“Hurrah! Hurrah!” the mob yelled savagely, as the breeze seized the down and flung it in a thousand directions. “Hurrah! Hurrah!”

The other feather-beds and pillows were ripped up, disemboweled and emptied by some of the other rioters. The summer-baked street seemed to be in the grasp of a snow-storm.

It is one of the characteristics of the housewife of the Ghetto that she will put up with a poor meal rather than with an uncomfortable bed. The destruction of pillows and featherbeds is therefore the most typical scene of anti-Semitic riots in Russia. An Anglo-Saxon crowd viewing a prize-fight is not thrilled more deeply at sight of “first-blood” than were the rioters of Miroslav at sight of the first cloud of Jewish down. Now the outbreak was in full swing. Some of the men came out in fashionable clothes, their pockets bulging with plunder. The same work of devastation and pillage was going on in many places at once. About ten thousand raiders, most of them covered with down, were skirmishing about in groups of fifty to one hundred, preceded by one or two leaders and accompanied, in some cases, with a band of toy- [378] drums and whistles. They went from street to street reconnoitering for houses or shops that had not yet been visited. Now it looked like a real anti-Jewish riot. Hurrah! Hurrah!

After the pillows came the furniture and other household goods, every bit of it either shivered to flinders or carried off. While some were busy smashing things or throwing them out of the windows, others were stripping off their own clothes and arraying themselves in the best coats, trousers, dresses, bonnets, the raided houses contained. A frowzy drunken scrub-woman emerged in a gorgeous ball dress, a costly fur cap on her head, with two gold watches dangling from her neck. One of these gangs was led by a man who wore a woman’s jacket of brown plush and a high hat. Another leader was decked out in a fashionable summer suit and a new straw hat, but his feet were bare and encrusted with dirt. A third gang was preceded by a flag consisting of the torn skirt of an outraged Jewish woman, the flag-bearer celebrating the exploit as he marched along.

Following the looters were dense crowds of spectators, many of them well dressed and with the stamp of education and refinement on their faces. These included some well known families, members of the aristocracy, who watched the scenes of the day from their fashionable equipages. Officials, merchants, people of the middle class were out in their best clothes. Miroslav made a great gala day of it. The aristocracy was in a complacent, race-track mood. Occupants of carriages were exchanging greetings and pleasantries. Cavaliers were interpreting to their ladies the bedlam of sound, odour and colour. The appearance of a drunken jade in a ball dress, strutting with her arms akimbo, in besotted imitation of a lady, brought forth bursts of facetious applause. The well-dressed spectators tried to steer clear of down [379] and feathers, but that was almost impossible. Many streets were so thickly covered with it that it deadened the sound of traffic. But then to catch some of the Jewish down on one’s dress or bonnet or coat was part of the carnival. Where the street was strewn with jewelry, silverware or knicknacks, costly carpets, fabrics, many a noblewoman scanned the ground with the haze of temptation in her eye. “Isn’t that cameo perfectly lovely!” And in many, many instances the cameo, or the silver tray, or the piece of tapestry found its way into the lady’s carriage. This was during the early stage of the riot. Later on, when all restraint had been cast off, phaetons with crests on their sides were filled with plunder. The lame princess took home one carriage-load and hurried back for more. At every turn one saw a cavalier offering his lady some piece of finery as he might a rose or a carnation, and in most cases it was accepted, on the cogent ground that if left on the pavement it would be destroyed. On the other hand many of the rioters themselves disdained to

appropriate anything that was not theirs. Very often when a Jew offered his assailants all the money he had about him as a ransom the paper money was torn to pieces and silver or coppers was flung out into the street, whereupon the crowd outside would fall over each other in a wild scramble for shreds of the paper or the metal. In one place a man offered the mob all he had in the world as a ransom for his daughter's honour, but his money was destroyed, his daughter assaulted and he himself mortally wounded. When a peasant woman was seen carrying an armful of linen and ribbons out of a small shop, she was stopped by one of the rioters.

"Drop that, you old hag," he shouted. "We are no robbers, are we?" He added a torrent of unprintable Russian and kicked the woman into a swamp of syrup, whisky and flour. A short distance from this spot other peasant women were stuffing their sacks lustily, whereupon some of them preferred loud linen to black silk and cheap spoons to silver ones. In several places large sums of money were plundered. As the bank and check system was (and still is) in its very infancy in Miroslav, this meant in most cases that people of means were literally reduced to beggary. One family was saved from personal violence as well as from the loss of its fortune by an iron safe which the looters spent the whole day in vainly trying to open. But then, while they were at work on the safe, the mother of the family went insane with fright.

Marching side by side with the leaders of the various bands were the competitors of Jewish tradesmen or mechanics who acted as guides, each pointing out the stores or workshops of his rivals. Thus Rasgadayeff, after instructing his wife and servants to see to it that no harm was done to his tenants, the Vigdoroffs, had gone to the scene of the outbreak, where he directed a crowd of rowdies to the store of his most formidable business opponent. The place was raided. A wealth of costly furs was cut to pieces and flung into the street, where cans of kerosene and pails of tar were emptied over the pile, while more than half as much again was carried off intact.

"Boys, no stealing," Rasgadayeff said, in a drunken gibberish, when it was too late. All he could save from the marauders for the slashers was a sable muff over which two women rioters were fighting desperately.

In the meantime Rasgadayeff's tenants and the people who sought shelter in their house,—the family of Clara's sister and the two or three strangers—had had a narrow escape from coming face to face with an infuriated band of hoodlums. Their presence had been indicated by a Gentile woman across the street. Mme. Rasgadayeff had tearfully begged the rioters to desist and after some parleying it had been agreed that the Vigdoroffs and their guests should be allowed to escape to their landlord's apartments before the mob invaded their rooms. From an attic window commanding the street Vladimir's parents then saw their household effects and their celebrated library—the accumulations of thirty years—flung out on the pavement where it was hacked, torn, slashed, trampled upon, flooded with water, mixed with a stream of preserves, brine, kerosene, vinegar, until the contents of eight rooms and cellar, all that for the past thirty years had been their home, were turned into two mounds of pulp. The Vigdoroffs watched it all with a peculiar sense of remoteness, with a sort of lethargic indifference. When old Vigdoroff saw the rioters struggling with the locked drawer of his desk, he remarked to his wife:

"Idiots! Why don't they knock out the bottom?" When one of the mob hurt his fingers trying to rend an old parchment-bound folio, he emitted a mock sigh, quoting the Yiddish proverb: "Too much hurry brings nothing but evil." Only when Clara's little niece began to shake and cry in a paroxysm of childish anguish, upon seeing her doll in the hands of a little girl from across the street, did the whole family burst into tears.

"I'm going to kill them. Let them kill me!" the old man said, leaping to his feet. But his wife and daughters hung to him, and held him back.

Later on, when the rioters had gone, the family returned to their nest. The eight rooms were absolutely empty, as though their occupants had moved out.

Gradually the various bands of rioters got into the swing of their work and did it with the system and method of an established trade. First the pavement was torn up, the cobblestones being piled up and then crashed into the windows; the padlocks were then knocked off by means of crowbars, hammers or axes and the doors battered down or broken in. Next the contents of pillows were cast to the wind, after which, the street having thus received its baptism of Jewish down, the real business of the rioters was begun by the wreckers and the looters. If the shop raided was a clothier's and the freebooters had not yet prinked themselves they would do so to begin with, some of them returning to the streets in two pairs of trousers, two coats and even two hats. After a house or a shop had been gutted and its contents wrecked or plundered it would be left to children who would then proceed to play riot on its ruins. Here and there a committee followed in the wake of some band, ascertaining whether some Jewish dwelling or shop had not been passed over, or whether a roll of woollen or a piece of furniture had not been left undestroyed. Not a chair, not a pound of candles was allowed to remain unshattered. Kerosene was poured over sugar, honey was mixed with varnish, ink or milk. It was hard, slow work, this slashing and rending, smashing and grinding. Some raiders toiled over a single article till they panted for breath. A common sight was a man or a woman tearing at a piece of stuff with broken finger-nails and bleeding fingers, accompanying their efforts with volleys of profanity at the expense of the Jews whose wares seemed as hard to destroy as their owners. In one place the mob was blaspheming demoniacally because a heap of ground pepper from a wrecked grocery store had thrown them into a convulsion of sneezing.

The most hideous delirium of brutality was visited upon Paradise,—upon that district of narrow streets and lanes in the vicinity of Cucumber Market which was the seat of the hardest toil and the blackest need, the home of the poorest mechanics, labourers and tradesmen. As though enraged by the dearth of things worth destroying, the rioters in this section took it out of the Jews in the most bestial forms of cruelty and fiendishness their besotted minds could invent. The debris here was made up of the cheapest articles of furniture and mechanics' tools. It was here that several Jewish women were dragged out into the street and victimised, while drunken women and children aided their husbands and fathers in their crimes. One woman was caught running through a gale of feathers and down, her child clasped in her arms. Another woman was chuckling aloud in a fit of insanity, as she passed through the district in a cab, when she was pulled off the vehicle. A good-looking girl tried to elude the rioters by disguising herself as a man, but she was recognised and the only thing that saved her was a savage fight among her assailants. A middle-aged woman came out of a house with shrieks of horror, imploring an intoxicated army officer to go to the rescue of her daughter. The officer followed her indoors, but instead of rescuing the younger woman the only thing that saved her own honour was his drunken condition. One woman who broke away from two invaders and was about to jump out of her window, was driven back at the point of the bayonet by one of the soldiers in front of the house.

“We are under orders not to allow any Jews to get out,” he explained to her, good-naturedly.

“Take pity, oh, do take pity,” she was pleading, when her voice was choked off by somebody within.

Every synagogue in town was sacked, the holy ark in many cases being desecrated in the most revolting manner; while the Scrolls of the Law were everywhere cut to ribbons, some of which were wound around cats and dogs. One woman met her awful fate upon scrolls from the Old Synagogue at the hands of a ruffian who had once heard it said that that was the way Titus, the Roman emperor, desecrated the Temple upon taking Jerusalem. Two strong Jews who risked their lives in an attempt to rescue some of the scrolls were seen running through the streets, their precious and rather heavy burden hugged to their hearts. The mob gave chase.

“‘Hear, O Israel!’” one of the two men shrieked, “‘God is God. God is one.’”

But the verse, which will keep evil spirits at a respectful distance from every Jew who utters it, failed to exercise its powers on the rioters. The two men were overtaken and beaten black and blue and the scrolls were cut to pieces.

A white-haired musician, venturing out of his hiding place, begged the mob to spare his violin which he said was older than he; whereupon the instrument was shattered against the old man’s head. On another street in the same section of the city another Jewish fiddler was made to play while his tormentors danced, and when they had finished he had to break the violin with his own hands. Pillows were wrenched from under invalids to be ripped up and thrown into the street. In one tailoring shop a consumptive old man, too feeble to be moved, was found with a bottle of milk in his trembling hands, his only food until his children should find it safe to crawl back to the house.

“You have drunk enough of our milk, you scabby Christ-killer!” yelled a rioter as he knocked the bottle out of the tailor’s hand and hit his head with a flat-iron.

Little Market in front of Boyko’s Court, the home of Clara’s father and mother, glistened with puddles of vodka, in which cats and dogs, overcome by the alcoholic evaporations, lay dead or half-dead. Now and then a drunken rioter would crouch before one of these puddles, dip up a handful of the muddy stuff with his hands and gulp it thirstily, with an inebriate smile of apology to the bystanders. The corner of a lane nearby was piled with brass dust and with broken candle-stick moulds. A horse trough in the rear of the police booth was full of yolks and egg-shells. When the goose market next door to Boyko’s Court was raided some of the fowls were stabbed or had their necks wrung on the spot, while others were driven into the vodka ponds on the square. A hundred geese and ducks went splashing through the intoxicating liquid, fluttering and cackling. A number of rioters formed a cordon preventing them from waddling out and then fell to stabbing them with knives and pitchforks, till every pool of vodka was red.

“Jewish geese, curse them! Jewish geese, curse them!” they snarled.

Not very far off, hard by a wall, a Jewish woman was giving birth to a child. Presently a Gentile woman with a basket half filled with loot took pity on the child and took it home, giving the policeman her address, while the mother was left bleeding to death.

It was also in this district of toil and squalor where the most desperate fighting was done by the Jews. One lane was held by five of them against a mob of fifty for more than half an hour until the five men were lugged off to jail, and then the remaining inhabitants of the lane became the victims of the most atrocious vengeance in the history of the day. A mother defended a garret against a crowd of rioters by brandishing a heavy crowbar in front of them. The maddened Gentiles then scaled the wall and charged the roof with axes and sledge-hammers. Part of the roof gave way. The woman continued to swing the crowbar until she fell in a swoon.

The houses of the richest Jews were closely guarded by the soldiery and, barring one exception, rioters were kept at a safe distance from them. Even the house of Ginsburg, the most repugnant usurer in town, was taken care of. Some army officers, indeed, directed various bands of roughs to the place on the chance of having their promissory notes destroyed, but the roughs failed to get near it. There was an instinct in official circles that the wrecking of wealthy Jewish homes was apt to develop in the masses a taste for playing havoc with “seats of the mighty.” For after all a man like Ginsburg and a titled plunderer of peasant lands are not without their bonds of affinity. The great point was that in dealing with Jewish magnates Popular Fury was liable to confuse the Jew with the magnate, the question of race with the question of class.

As to the Gentile magnates their attitude toward the rioters was one which seemed to say: “You fellows and we are brothers, are we not?” And their mansions were safe. Members of the gentry openly joined the rioters, some out of sheer hatred of the race, others for the sport of the thing, still others honestly succumbing to the contagion of beastliness. In the horrid saturnalia of pillage, destruction and rapine many a peaceful citizen was drawn into the vortex. A man stands looking on curiously, perhaps even with some horror, and gradually he becomes restless as do the legs of a dancer when the floor creaks under a medley of sliding feet. But then there was a large number of Gentiles who acted like human beings. Among these were members of the priesthood, although there were holy “little fathers” who pointed out the houses of their Jewish neighbours to the mob.

The best friend of the Jews during that day of horrors was Vodka. The sons of Israel were made a safety valve of by the government and Vodka rendered a similar service to the sons of Israel. It saved scores of lives and the honour of scores of women. Hundreds of the fiercest rioters were so many tottering wrecks before the atrocities were three hours old, while by sundown the number of dead and wounded looters was as large as the number of murdered and maimed Jews. Two men were found drowned in casks of spirits into which they had apparently let their heads sink in a daze of intoxication. A handsome young rioter in a crimson blouse staggered over the balustrade of a balcony, hugging a Jewish vase, and was killed on the spot. One man was killed in a struggle over a Jewish woman and several others had simply drunk themselves to death, while a countless number were bruised and disabled in the general mêlée, falling, fighting, injuring themselves with their own weapons of destruction.

Toward evening some of the streets had the appearance of a battlefield after action. Hundreds of men and women, swollen, bleeding, were wallowing in the gutters, in puddles, on the sidewalks, between piles of debris, in a revolting stupor of inebriety. Some of them slept several hours in this condition and then struggled to their feet to resume drinking. The trained rioters had thoughtfully seen to it that some casks of vodka, as also some accordions, should be reserved for the closing scenes of the bacchanalia.

The moon came out. Her soft mysterious light streamed through the rugged holes of shattered unlit windows; over muddy pavements carpeted with silks, velvets, satins; over rows and rows of debris-mounds on streets snowed under with down; over peasants driving home with waggons laden with plunder; over the ghastly figures of sprawling drunkards and the beautiful uniforms of patrolling hussars. Silence had settled over most of the streets. For blocks and blocks, east and west, north and south, there was not an unbroken window pane to be seen, not a light to glitter in the distance. The Jewish district, the liveliest district in town, had been turned into a “city of death.” In other places one often saw a single illuminated house on a whole street of darkness and ruin. The illuminated house was invariably the abode of Christians. Officers on horseback were moving about musingly, the hoofs of their horses silenced by thick layers of down. Most streets were impassable for the debris. Here and there the jaded sounds of revelry were heard, but there were some peasants who had come out of the day’s rioting in full control of their voices.

Seated on empty boxes and barrels, their fingers gripping new accordions, their eyes raised to the moon, a company of rioters on Little Market were playing and singing a melancholy, doleful tune. The Jews were in their hiding places.

CHAPTER XL.

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS.

CLARA was with her parents in a White-Russian town. The inn at which they were stopping was entered through a vast yard, partly occupied by fruit-barns. It was the height of the fruit season. The barns and part of the yard were lined with straw upon which rose great heaps of apples and pears of all sizes and colours. Applewomen, armed with baskets, were coming and going, squatting by the juicy mounds, sampling them, haggling, quarrelling mildly. Now and then a peasant waggon laden with fruit would come creaking through the open gate, attracting general attention. A secluded corner of the yard was Clara's and her mother's favourite spot for their interminable confidences, a pile of large bulky logs serving them as a sofa. The people they saw here and in the streets were much shabbier and more insignificant-looking than those of their native town and the south in general. The Yavners lived here unregistered, as did most of the guests at the inn, the local police being too lazy and too "friendly" with the proprietor to trouble his patrons about having their passports vised at the station house.

The town was a stronghold of Talmudic learning, and Rabbi Rachmiel felt as a passionate art student does on his first visit to Italy. When the first excitement of the meeting was over the local scholars were of more interest to him [3209] than his daughter. His joy was marred by his fear of being sent to Siberia in case Clara's (to her parents she was still Tamara) identity was discovered by the local police; but he had a rather muddled idea of the situation and his wife assured him that there was no danger. As to Hannah, she was not the woman to flee from her daughter for fear of the police. She could not see enough of Clara. She catechised her on her political career and her personal life, and Clara, completely under the spell of the meeting and in her mother's power, told her more than she had a mind to. What she told her was, indeed, as foreign to Hannah's brain as it was to her husband's; but then, in her practical old-fashioned way, she realised that her daughter was working in the interests of the poor and the oppressed, though she never listened to Clara's expositions without a sad, patronising smile.

One day, during one of their intimate talks on the wood-pile, the old woman demanded:

"Tell me, Clara, are you married?"

"What has put such an idea in your mind?" Clara returned, reddening. "If I were I would have told you long ago."

"Tamara, you are a married woman," Hannah insisted, looking hard at her daughter.

"I tell you I am not," Clara said testily.

"Then why did you get red in the face when I said you were? People don't get red without reason, do they?"

The young woman's will power seemed to have completely deserted her. "I am engaged," she said, "but I am not married, and—let me alone, mamma, will you?"

"If you are engaged, then why were you afraid to say so? Is it anything to be ashamed of to be engaged? Foolish girl [3210] that you are, am I a stranger to you? Why don't you tell me who he is, what he is?"

"He is a nice man and that's all I can tell you now, and pray don't ask me any more questions, mamma darling."

After a pause the old woman gave her daughter a sharp look and said in a whisper: "He must be a Christian, then. Else you wouldn't be afraid to tell me who he is."

"He is not," Clara answered lamely, her eyes on a heap of yellow apples in the distance.

"He *is* a Christian, then," Hannah said in consternation. "May the blackest ill-luck strike you both."

"Don't! Don't!" Clara entreated her, clapping her hand over her mother's mouth, childishly.

"What! You *are* going to marry a Christian? You *are* a convert-Jewess?" Hannah said in a ghastly whisper.

"No, no, mamma! I have not become a Christian, and I never will. I swear I won't. As to him, he is the best man in the world. That's all I can tell you for the present. Oh, the young generation is so different from the old, mamma!" she snuggled to her, nursing her cheek against hers and finding intense pleasure in a conscious imitation of the ways of her own childhood; but she was soon repulsed.

"Away from my eyes! May the Black Year understand you. I don't," the old woman said. Her face wore an expression of horrified curiosity. Had Clara faced her fury with a pugnacious front, it might have led to an irretrievable rupture; but she did not. While her mother continued to curse, she went on fawning and pleading with filial self-abasement, although not without an effect of trying to soothe an angry baby. Hannah's curses were an accompaniment to further interrogations and gradually became few and far between. Her daughter's engagement and her whole [3211] mysterious life appealed to an old-fashioned sense of romance and adventure in the elderly Jewess; also to a vague idea of a higher altruism. Her motherly pride sought satisfaction in the fact that her daughter was so kind-hearted as to stake her life for the poor and the suffering, and so plucky that she braved the Czar and all his soldiers. "It's from me she got all that benevolence and grit," Hannah said to herself. As to Rabbi Rachmiel, he asked no questions and his wife was not going to disturb his peace of mind.

"There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile among us," Clara said in the course of her plea.

"No, there is not," her mother returned. "Only the Gentiles tear the Jews to pieces." And at this Clara remembered that circumstance which lay like a revolting blemish on her conscience—the attitude of the revolutionists toward the riots.

However, these matters got but little consideration from her now. She was taken up with her parents. The peculiar intonation with which her father chanted grace interested her more than all the "politics" of the world. She recognised these trifles with little thrills of joy, as though she had been away from home a quarter of a century. When her mother took out a pair of brass-rimmed spectacles on making ready to read her prayers, Clara exclaimed, with a gasp of unfeigned anguish:

"Spectacles! Since when, mamma darling, since when?"

"Since about six months ago. One gets older, foolish girl, not younger. When you are of my age you'll have to use spectacles, too, all your Gentile wisdom notwithstanding."

Another day or two and her communions with her mother and the odour of apples and pears began to pall on her. [3212] She missed Pavel. Her mind was more frequently given over to musings upon that atmosphere amid which he and she were a pair of lovers than to the fascination of being with her father and mother again. She felt the centuries that divided her world from theirs more keenly every day. Once, after a long muse by the side of her mother, who sat darning stockings in her spectacles, she roused herself, with surprise, to the fact that Sophia was no more, that she had been hanged. It seemed incredible. And then it seemed incredible that she, Clara, was by her mother's side at this moment. She took solitary walks, she sought seclusion indoors, she was growing fidgety. The change that had come

over her was not lost upon her mother.

"You have been rather quick to get tired of your father and mother, haven't you?" Hannah said to her one day. "Grieving for your Christian fellow? A break into your bones, Tamara!"

Clara blushed all over her face. She was more than grieving for Pavel. She pictured him in the hands of the gendarmes or shot in a desperate fray with them; she imagined him the victim of the ghastliest catastrophes known to the movement, her heart was torn by the wildest misgivings.

One afternoon, when her mother was speaking to her and she was making feeble efforts to disguise her abstraction, Hannah, losing patience, flamed out:

"But what's the use talking to a woman whose mind has been bedeviled by a Gentile!"

"Don't, then," Clara snapped back, with great irritation.

"The Black Year has asked you to arrange this meeting. Why don't you go back to your Gentile? Go at once to him or your heart will burst."

Clara was cut to the quick, but she mastered herself.

When she read in the newspapers and in a letter from her sister accounts of the Miroslav outbreak, her agony was far keener than that of her father and mother. The most conspicuous circumstance in every report of the riot was the bestial ferocity with which the mob had let itself loose on the homes of the poorest and hardest working population in those districts of Miroslav known as Paradise and Cucumber Market. She knew that neighbourhood as she knew herself. She had been born and bred in it. The dearest scenes of her childhood were there. Tears of homesickness and of a sense of guilt were choking her.

For the first time it came home to her that these thousands of Jewish tailors, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, lumber-drivers, capmakers, coopers, labourers, who toiled from fourteen to fifteen hours a day and lived literally on the verge of starvation, were as much at least entitled to that hallowed name, "The People," as the demonised Russians who were now committing those unspeakable atrocities upon them. Yet the organ of her party had not a word of sympathy for them! Nay, it treated all Jews, without distinction, as a race of fleecers, of human leeches! Russian literature of the period was teeming with "fists," or village usurers, types of the great Russian provinces in which Jews were not allowed to dwell. Drunkenness in these districts was far worse than in those in which the liquor traffic was in Jewish hands. And the nobility—was it not a caste of spongers and land-robbers? Yet who would dare call the entire Russian people a people of human sharks, liquor-dealers and usurers, as it was customary to do in the case of the Jews? A Russian peasant or labourer was part of the People, while a Jewish tailor, blacksmith or carpenter was only a Jew, one of a race of profit-mongers, sharpers, parasites.

And this "People," for whose sake she was staking her liberty and her life, was wreaking havoc on Jews because they were Jews like her father, like her mother, like herself.

People at the inn were talking of the large numbers of Jews that were going to America. "America or Palestine?" was the great subject of discussion in the three Russian weeklies dedicated to Jewish interests. One day Hannah said, gravely:

"I tell you what, Tamara. Drop your Gentile and the foolish work you are doing and let us all go to America."

Clara smiled.

"Will it be better if you are caught and put in a black hole?"

Clara smiled again. There was temptation in what her mother said. Being in Russia she was liable to be arrested at any moment; almost sure to perish in a solitary cell or to be transported to the Siberian mines for twenty years. And were not the riots enough to acquit her before her own conscience in case she chose to retire from a movement that was primarily dedicated to the interests of an anti-Semitic people; from a movement that rejoiced in the rioters and had not a word of sympathy for their victims?

But an excuse for getting out of the perils of underground life was not what she wanted. Rather did she wish for a vindication of her conduct in remaining in the Party of the Will of the People in spite of all "the People" did against her race. She was under the sway of two forces, each of them far mightier than any temptation to be free from danger. One of these two forces was Pavel. The other was Public Opinion—the public opinion of underground Russia. According to the moral standard of that Russia every one who did not share in the hazards of the revolutionary movement was a "careerist," a self-seeker absorbed exclusively in the feathering of his own nest; the Jew who took the special interests of his race specially to heart was a narrow-minded nationalist, and the Nihilist who withdrew from the movement was a renegade. The power which this "underground" public opinion exerted over her was all the greater because of the close ties of affection which, owing to the community of the dangers they faced, bound the active revolutionists to each other. Pavel and Clara were linked by the bonds of love, but she would have staked her life for every other member of the inner circle as readily as she would for him.

They were all particularly dear to her because they were a handful of survivors of an epidemic of arrests that had swept away so many of their prominent comrades. The notion of these people thinking of her as a renegade was too horrible to be indulged in for a single moment. Besides, who would have had the heart to desert the party now that its ranks had been so decimated and each member was of so much value? Still more revolting was such an idea to Clara when she thought of the Nihilists who had died on the scaffold or were dying of consumption or scurvy or going insane in solitary confinement. Sophia, strangled on the gallows, was in her grave. Would she, Clara, abandon the cause to which that noble woman had given her life?

The long and short of it is that it would have required far more courage on her part to go to America and be safe from the Russian gendarmes than to live under constant fire as an active "illegal" in her native country.

This was the kind of thoughts that were occupying her mind at this minute. While her mother was urging her to go to America, she exclaimed mutely: "No, Sophia, I shan't desert the cause for which they have strangled you. I, too, will die for it." It seemed easy and the height of happiness to end one's life as Sophia had done. She saw her dead friend vividly, and as her mind scanned the mysterious, far-away image, the dear, familiar image, her bosom began to heave and her hand clutched her mother's arm in a paroxysm of suppressed tears.

"Water! Water!" Hannah cried into the open doorway. When the water had been brought and Clara had gulped down a mouthful of it and fixed a faint, wistful smile on her mother, Hannah remarked fiercely:

"The ghost knows what she is thinking of while people talk to her."

Clara went out for a long walk over the old macadamised road that ran through the White-Russian town on its way to St. Petersburg. She loved to watch the peasant wagons, and, early in the morning and late in the evening, the incoming and outgoing stage-coaches. She knew that she was going to stay in the thick of the struggle, come what might. Yet the riots—more definitely the one of Miroslav—lay like a ruthless living reproach in her heart. She wanted to

be alone with this Reproach, to plead with it, to argue with it, to pick it to pieces. She walked through the shabby, narrow streets and along the St. Petersburg highway, thinking a thousand thoughts, but she neither pleaded with that Reproach, nor argued with it, nor tried to pick it to pieces. Her mind was full of Pavel and of Sophia and of her other comrades, living or dead. “It is all very well for me to think of going to America and be free from danger,” she said to herself. “But can Sophia go there? or Hessia?” [398]

At one moment it flashed through her brain that to be true to the people was to work for it in spite of all its injustices, even as a mother did for her child, notwithstanding all the cruelties it might heap on her. The highest bliss of martyrdom was to be mobbed by the very crowd for whose welfare you sacrificed yourself. To be sure, these thoughts were merely a reassertion of the conflict which she sought to settle. They offered no answer to the question, Why should she, a Jewess, stake her life for a people that was given to pillaging and outraging, to mutilating and murdering innocent Jews? They merely made a new statement of the fact that she was bent upon doing so. Yet she seized upon the new formulation of the problem as if it were the solution she was craving for. “I shall bear the cross of the Social Revolution even if the Russian people trample upon me and everybody who is dear to me,” she exclaimed in her heart, feeling at peace with the shade of Sophia.

She walked home in a peculiar state of religious beatitude, as though she had made a great discovery, found a golden key to the gravest problem of her personal life. Then, being in this uplifted frame of mind, she saw light breaking about her. Arguments were offering themselves in support of her position. When Russia was free and the reign of fraternity and equality had been established the maltreatment of man by man in any form would be impossible. Surely there would be no question of race or faith then. Anti-Jewish riots were now raging? All the more reason, then, to work for Russia’s liberty. Indeed, was not the condition of the Jews better in free countries than in despotic ones? And the Russian peasant, would he in his blind fury run amuck the way he did if it were not for the misery and darkness in which he was kept by his tyrants? Her heart went out to the mob that was so ignorant as to attack people who had done them no harm. And then, once the great Reproach had been appeased in her mind, the entire Jewish question, riots, legal discriminations and all, appeared a mere trifle compared to the great Human Question, the solution of which constituted the chief problem of her cause. [399]

The next time her mother indulged in an attack upon Gentiles in general and Clara’s “Gentile friends” in particular the young woman begged her, with tears in her voice, to desist:

“Look at her! I have touched the honour of the Impurity,” the old woman said, sneering.

“Oh, they are not the Impurity, mamma darling,” Clara returned ardently. “They are saints; they live and die for the happiness of others. If you only knew what kind of people they were!”

“She has actually been bedeviled, as true as I am a daughter of Israel. Jews are being torn to pieces by the Gentiles; a Jew isn’t allowed to breathe, yet she——”

“Oh, they are a different kind of Gentiles, mamma. When that for which they struggle has been realised the Jew will breathe freely. Our people have no trouble in a country like England. Why? Because the whole country has more freedom there. Besides, when the demands of my ‘Gentile friends’ have been realised the Christian mobs won’t be so uneducated, so blind. They will know who is who, and Jew and Gentile will live in peace. All will live in peace, like brothers, mamma.”

Hannah listened attentively, so that Clara, elated by the apparent effect of her plea, went on, going over aloud the answer that she gave her own conscience. When she paused, however, Hannah said with a shrug of her shoulders and a mournful nod of her head: [400]

“So you are bound to rot away in prison, aren’t you?”

“Don’t talk like that, mamma, dear, pray.”

“Why shouldn’t I? Has somebody else given birth to you? Has somebody else brought you up?”

“But why should you make yourself uneasy about me? I *won’t* rot away in prison, and if I do, better people than I have met with a fate of that kind. I wish I were as good as they were and died as they did.”

“A rather peculiar taste,” Hannah said with another shrug which seemed to add: “She has gone clear daft on those Gentile books of hers, as true as I live.”

Clara remained in the White-Russian town two days longer than her parents. At the moment of parting her mother clung to her desperately.

“Will I ever see you again?” Hannah sobbed. “Daughter mine, daughter mine! Will my eyes ever see you again?”

The old Talmudist was weeping into a blue bandanna.

As Clara walked back to her lodging alone the streets of the strange town gave her an excruciating sense of desolation.

CHAPTER XLI.

PAVEL BECOMES “ILLEGAL.”

A MONTH had elapsed. Clara was in a train, bound for Moscow, where her lover was awaiting her arrival. The nearer she drew to her destination the more vivid grew his features in her mind and the more violent was her fidget. “I am madly in love with him,” she said to herself, and the very sound of these words in her mind were sweet to her. The few weeks of separation seemed to have convinced her that the power of his love over her was far greater than she had supposed. Things that had preyed upon her mind before now glanced off her imagination. She wept over the fate of Hessia and her prison-born child, yet she felt that if Pavel asked her to marry him at once she would not have the strength to resist him. Nay, to marry him was what her heart coveted above all else in the world.

Being an “illegal,” she had to slip into the big ancient city quietly. As she passed through the streets, alone on a droshky, she made a mental note of the difference in general pictorial effect between Moscow and St. Petersburg, but she was too excited to give her mind to anything in particular.

Her first meeting with Pavel took place in a large café, built something like a theatre, with two tiers of stalls, a gigantic music box sending up great waves of subdued sound from the main floor below. He waited for her in front [402] of the building. When she came they just shook hands smilingly, and he led the way up one flight of stairs to one of the stalls—a fair-sized, oblong private room, its walls covered with red plush, with upholstered benching to match.

“I am simply crazy, Clanya!” he whispered, pressing her to him tremulously.

At first they both experienced a sense of desuetude and awkwardness, so that in spite of his stormy demonstrations he could not look her full in the face. But this soon wore off. They were overflowing with joy in one another.

A waiter, all in white, suave and hearty as only Great-Russian waiters know how to be, brought in “a portion of tea,” served in attractive teapots of silver, with a glass for the man and a cup for the lady, and retired, shutting the door behind him, which subdued the metallic melody that filled the room still further and added to the sense of mystery that came from it. They talked desultorily and brokenly, of her parents and of the revolutionists gathered in Moscow. The subject of the Miroslav riot was tactfully broached by Clara herself, but she strove to give this part of their incoherent conversation the tone in which people usually discuss some sad but long-forgotten event, and she passed to some other topic as quickly and imperceptibly as she could. That he had seen that riot he did not tell her, though he once caught himself on the point of blurting it all out.

When she asked him about the general state of the movement he gradually warmed up. The outlook was brilliant, he said.

Urie, the tall blond nobleman with the strikingly Great-Russian features, who had played the part of cheesemonger [403] on Little Garden Street, St. Petersburg, was in Moscow now, mending the shattered organisation. He was the centre of a busy group of revolutionists, Jews as well as Slavs. Several well-known veterans of both nationalities, who had been living in foreign countries during the past year or two, were expected to return to Russia. Everybody was bubbling with enthusiasm and activity.

“And your fiery imagination is not inclined to view things in a rather roseate light, is it?” she asked, beaming amorously.

“Not a bit,” he replied irascibly. “Wait till you have seen it all for yourself. The reports from the provinces are all of the most cheerful character. New men are springing up everywhere. The revolution *is* a hydra-headed giant, Clanya.”

“But who says it isn’t?” she asked, with a laugh.

She got up, shot out her arms, saying:

“Now for something to do. I feel like turning mountains upside down. Indeed, the revolution is a hydra-headed giant, indeed it is. And you are a little dear,” she added, bending over him and pressing her cheek against his.

They had been married less than a month when he learned from a ciphered letter from Masha Safonoff that the gendarmes were looking for him.

“Well, Clanya,” he said facetiously, as he entered their apartment one afternoon, “you are a princess no longer.”

Her face fell.

“Look at her! Look at her! She is grieving over the loss of her title.”

“Oh, do stop those silly jokes of yours, Pasha. Must you become illegal?”

“Yes, ma’am. I am of the same rank as you. That puts a stop to the airs you have been giving yourself.” It was in [404] the course of the same conversation that he told her of his trip to Miroslav and of all that had happened to him there.

They were known here as brother and sister, his legal residence being in another place, but now both these residences were abandoned, and they moved into a new apartment, in another section of the town, which he took great pains to put in tasteful shape. Indeed, so elaborately fitted up was it that he fought shy of letting any of his fellow Nihilists know their new address. A table against one wall was piled with drawings, while standing in a conspicuous corner on the floor were a drawing-board and a huge portfolio—accessories of the rôle of a russified German artist which he played before the janitor of the house. Before he let her see it he had put a vase of fresh roses in the centre of the table.

When he and Clara entered their new home, he said in French, with a gallant gesture:

“Madame, permit me to introduce you.”

He helped her off with her things and slid into the next room, where he busied himself with the samovar. She had with her a fresh copy of the *Will of the People*—a sixteen page publication of the size of the average weekly printed on fine, smooth paper; so she took it up eagerly. Its front page was in mourning for President Garfield. An editorial notice signed by the revolutionary executive committee tendered an expression of grief and sympathy to the bereaved republic, condemning in vigorous language acts of violence in a land “where the free will of the people determines not only the law but also the person of the ruler.” “In such a land,” the Nihilist Executive Committee went on to explain, [405] “a deed of this sort is a manifestation of that spirit of despotism the effacement of which in Russia is the aim of our movement. Violence is not to be justified unless it be directed against violence.”

The declaration made an exceedingly pleasant impression on Clara.

“Bravo! Bravo!” she called out to her husband, as she peered into the inside pages of the paper.

“What’s the matter?” he asked her from the next room, distractedly, choking with the smoke of his freshly lit samovar.

She made no answer. The same issue of her party’s organ devoted several columns to the anti-Jewish riots. She began to read these with acute misgivings, and, sure enough, they were permeated by a spirit of anti-Semitism as puerile as it was heartless. A bitter sense of resentment filled her heart. “As long as it does not concern the Jews they have all the human sympathy and tact in the world,” she thought. “The moment there is a Jew in the case they become cruel, short-sighted and stupid—everything that is bad and ridiculous.”

“What’s that you said, Clanya?” Pavel demanded again.

She had difficulty in answering him. “He is a Gentile after all,” she said to herself. “There is a strain of anti-Semitism in the best of them.” She was in despair. “What is to be done, then?” she asked herself. “Is there no way out of it?” The answer was: “I will bear the cross,” and once again the formula had a soothing effect on her frame of mind. And because it had, the cross gradually ceased to be a cross.

She warmed to her husband with a sense of her own forgiveness, of the sacrifices she was making. She felt a new glow of tenderness for him. And then, by degrees, things appeared in milder light. Pavel’s rapture over her was [406] so genuine, his devotion so profound, and the general relations between Jew and Gentile in the movement were marked by intimacies and attachments so sincere, that the anti-Semitic article could not have sprung from any personal taste or sentiment in the author. It was evidently a mere matter of revolutionary theory. Justly or unjustly, the fact was there: in the popular mind the Jews represented the idea of economic oppression. Now, if the masses had risen in arms against them, did not that mean that they were beginning to attack those they considered their enemies? In the depth of her heart there had always lurked some doubt as to whether the submissive, stolid Russian masses had it in them ever to rise against anybody. Yet here they had! Misguided or not, they had risen against an element of the population which they were accustomed to regard as parasites. Was not that the sign of revolutionary awakening she had fervently been praying for?

She went so far as to charge herself with relapsing into racial predilections, with letting her feelings as a Jewess get the better of her devotion to the cause of humanity. She was rapidly arguing herself into the absurd, inhuman position into which her party had been put by the editor of its official organ.

And to prove to herself that her views were deep-rooted and unshakable, she said to herself: “If they think in Miroslav I am the only person who could restore harmony to their circle, I ought to go there and try to persuade Elkin to give up those foolish notions of his.” What they were saying about her in that town flattered her vanity. The thought of appearing in her revolutionary alma mater, in the teeth of the local gendarmes and police, an “illegal” known [407] to underground fame, was irresistible. Her thirst of adventure in this connection was aroused to the highest pitch.

At eight o’clock the next morning she sat in a chair, looking at her husband, who was still in bed, sleeping peacefully. He had an early appointment, but she could not bring herself to wake him. She was going to do so a minute or two later, she pleaded with herself, and then they would have tea together. The samovar was singing softly in the next room. It was of her love and of her happiness it seemed to be singing. Her joy in her honeymoon swelled her heart and rose to her throat. “I am too happy,” she thought. As she remembered her determination to go to her native place, she added: “Yes, I am too happy, while Sophia is in her grave and Hessia is pining away in her cell. I may be arrested at any moment in Miroslav, but I am going to do my duty. I must keep Elkin and the others from abandoning the revolution.”

CHAPTER XLII.

OMINOUS FOOTSTEPS.

CLARA alighted from the train at a station immediately preceding Miroslav. She was met by Olga, the girl with the short hair and sparse teeth who was engaged to the judge, the two reaching the city partly on a peasant's waggon, partly on foot. At sight of the familiar landscape Clara seemed weird to herself. It was her own Miroslav, yet she was worse than a stranger in it. She felt like a ghost visiting what was once his home. On the other hand, the unmistakable evidences of the recent riot contracted her heart with pain and brought back that Reproach.

Olga took her to a "conspiracy house." This was a basement in the outskirts of the town, whose squatty windows faced the guardhouse of military stores and commanded a distant view of the river. The only other tenants of that courtyard were three sisters, all of them deaf and in a state of semi-idiocy. The basement had been rented soon after Clara's flight. It consisted of three rooms, all very meagrely furnished. Lying under the sofa of the middle room was a wooden roller, which had once been intended for a secret printing office. One of the walls was hung with a disorderly pile of clothes of both sexes—the shed disguises of passing conspirators.

But very few members were allowed to visit her. Those who were saluted her with admiring looks and generally [409] treated her as a heroine, which caressed her vanity most pleasantly. With a temerity born of an acquired habit of danger, not unmixed with some bravado, Clara was burning to visit her parents, her sister and her mother-in-law, and to take a look at her native neighbourhood. Her friends made an effort to keep her indoors. She would not be restrained, assuring them that she was going to take good care of herself, but she finally offered to compromise on a meeting with her sister, provided she brought her little girl with her.

"I am crazy to see her," she said, meaning the child.

"See little Ruchele! Why you *are* crazy, Clara!" Olga declared. "If you do all Miroslav will know the very next day that 'Aunt Clara' is in town."

"Nonsense. She won't know me. She has not seen me for more than a year. Besides, I'll wear my veil. Oh, I must see her; don't oppose me, Olga, dear."

The meeting took place on a secluded bit of lawn under a sky suffused with the lingering gold of a dying sunset. And sure enough, Ruchele was extremely shy of the lady in black. When Clara caught her in her arms passionately she set up a scream so loud that her mother wrenched her from her aunt's embrace for fear of attracting a crowd from a neighboring lane.

A debate between Clara and Elkin was to take place in Orlovsky's house the next evening. A few hours before the time set for the gathering Clara received an unexpected call from Elkin. This was their first meeting since her arrival, and she welcomed him with sincere cordiality. She respected him as her first teacher of socialism. As to his love for her, [410] which could still be read in his eyes, it flattered her now.

"Well," he said, trying to take a light tone, but betraying agitation. "There is some news in town. Clara Yavner has been seen about."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Clara Yavner has been seen about," he repeated with sarcastic articulation. And by way of putting a period to the sentence, he opened his lips into a lozenge-shaped sneer and leaned his head against the mass of hung-up clothes under which he sat on an oblong stool.

She was seated on another tabouret, with her back to the low window. His manner exasperated her. "But I have been out only once," she retorted calmly, controlling her anger, "and then I was heavily veiled."

"Well, could not some people have recognised you by your figure and carriage? I am sure I could. At any rate your cousin, Vigdoroff, was to see me a little while ago, for the express purpose of conveying this message to you, Clara. The gossips of Cucumber Market are whispering about your having been seen in town, 'and in addition to truths no end of fibs are being told.' Your mother is quite uneasy about it, and—well, Clara, at the risk of having it set down to a desire on my part to slip out of the debate, I should suggest that you take no further chances and leave Miroslav at once."

"Oh, nonsense. Am I not safe in this basement at least?"

"Yes, I think you are, but if the police should get wind of your presence in town, why, they would not leave a stone unturned. They have been itching for a chance to tone down their reputation for stupidity ever since your disappearance."

She smiled and frowned at once. [411]

"Besides," he went on, leaning back against the clothes and gazing at the ceiling, "if that debate is your chief mission here I am willing to capitulate in advance. You know I cannot debate with you, Clara. I am still in your power. My brain is in a whirl in your presence. It is at this moment. If that debate took place I should simply not know what I was talking about. You would not wish me to make an exhibition of the abject helplessness that comes over me when I see you, would you?"

His words, uttered in monotonous accents, contrasted so sharply with the air of mockery that had attended his former attempts at an avowal; they sounded so forlornly simple, his spirit was so piteously broken that he seemed a changed man. She was touched.

"Don't speak like that," she said kindly. "I'll do as you say. I'll leave Miroslav at once."

"Is there absolutely no hope for me, Clara?"

"I am no longer free, Elkin. I am a married woman," she said, flushing violently. "Let us change the subject. Tell me something about your Americans."

He dropped his eyes, and after a rather long pause he said, blankly:

"Well, pardon me, then. You have my best wishes, Clara. I say it from my heart. I shall be your warmest friend as long as I live. I confess I dreamed of your joining our party, so that I might be near you, and hoped that some day you

would become mine."

"The right place for a revolutionist is here, in Russia, Elkin."

"Nobody is going to try to persuade you to leave the movement," he said, levelling a meek, longing look at her. "The Russian people act like wild beasts toward our poor Jews, Clara; yet they and the Russian revolution will ever be dear to our hearts. We appreciate that it is their blindness which makes such brutes of them. We shall always think of those who are in the fight here; we shall adore you; we shall worship you, Clara; and perhaps, too, we shall be able to do something for Russian liberty from there. But if you condemn us for joining the emigrants, I wish to say this, that if you had been in Miroslav during the riot you would perhaps take a more indulgent view of our step. So many Jewish revolutionists have sacrificed their lives by 'going to the people'—to the Russian people. It's about time some of us at least went to our own people. They need us, Clara." [412]

"Look here, Elkin," she said with ardent emphasis, striving to deaden the consciousness of his love-lorn look that was breaking her heart, "you must not think I am so soulless as to take no interest in the victims of those horrors, for I do. I do. I can assure you I do. I have been continually discussing this question in my mind. I have studied it. My heart is bleeding for our poor Jews, but even if it were solely a question of saving the Jews, even then one's duty would be to work for the revolution. How many Russian Jews could you transport to America and Palestine? Surely not all the five million there are. The great majority of them will stay here and be baited, and the only hope of these is a liberated Russia. All history tells us that the salvation of the Jews lies in liberty and in liberty only. England was the first country to grant them the right to breathe because she was the first country where the common people wrested rights for themselves. The French revolution emancipated the Jews, and so it goes. If there were no parliamentary governments in Western Europe, the Jews of Germany, Austria, or Belgium would still be treated as they are in Russia. When Russia has some freedom at least, her Jews, too, will be treated like human beings." [413]

"But we are not like the Palestinians, Clara. We don't propose to estrange ourselves from the revolutionary movement. We shall support it with American money, and we hope to fit out expeditions to rescue important prisoners from Siberia, and to take them across the Pacific Ocean to our commune."

"Dreams!" she said, laughing good-naturedly.

The discussion lasted about an hour longer. He had not the strength to get up, and she had not the heart to cut him short. They listened to each other's arguments with rapt attention, yet they were both aware of the unspoken other discussion—on the pathos of his love—that went on between them all the while they talked of the great exodus.

And while she commiserated Elkin and felt flattered by her power over him, her heart was full of yearning tenderness for her husband, of joy in him and in her honeymoon with him.

When Elkin rose from his seat at last he said:

"By the way, I came near forgetting it—your cousin wants to see you."

"Volodia? Volodia Vigdoroff? I thought he would dread to come near me."

Time being short, the meeting was set for an early hour the very next morning. Elkin had made his adieux, but he still lingered. There was an extremely awkward stillness which was broken by the appearance of Olga. Then he left.

Disclosing the location, or, indeed, the existence, of a "conspiracy house" to one uninitiated into underground life was impossible. Accordingly, Vladimir was to meet Clara in a scanty pine grove near the Nihilists' basement. On his way thither Vladimir was continually looking over his shoulder, lest he was being followed by spies. He was flurried and the sight of every policeman he met gave him a moment or two of abject terror. But the part he had taken in the fight of the Defence Guard had left him with a sense of his own potential courage; so he was trying to live up to it by keeping this appointment with his "illegal" cousin, whom he was so thirsting to see. That she was married he did not know. He was going to persuade her to join his American party. At this minute, in the high-strung state of his mind, the result of recent experiences, he felt as though she were not merely his "second sister," which is Russian for cousin, but a real one. His chief object for seeking this interview, however, had been to celebrate his own vindication. By her enthusiasm for the revolutionary movement from which he stayed away she had formerly made him feel like a coward and a nonentity; now, however, that in his judgment the riots plainly meant the moral bankruptcy of that movement, so far at least as it concerned revolutionists of Jewish blood, he mentally triumphed over her. [414]

The meeting had been fixed for an early hour. The air in the woods was cold and piquant with the exhalations of young evergreens. The grass, considerably yellowed and strewn with cones, was still beaded with dew, save for a small outlet of the clearing which was being rapidly invaded by the sun.

They met with warm embraces and kisses.

"Clara, my sister! If you only knew what we have gone through!" he said, with the passion of heartfelt tragedy in his subdued voice.

"How is uncle? How is auntie?" she asked with similar emotion. [415]

His kiss and embrace had left an odd sensation in him. He had never had an occasion to kiss her before; and now that he had not seen her for about a year the contact of his lips with the firm, though somewhat faded, cheek of this interesting young woman had revealed to him what seemed to be an unnatural and illicit fact that she was not a sister to him, but—a woman.

They seated themselves in a sunny spot.

"Are you really going to America, Volodia?" she inquired with a familiar smile, carefully hiding her grief.

"I certainly am, and what is more, I want you to come along with us," he answered, admiring her figure and the expression of her face as he had never done before. "Oh, I am quite in earnest about it, Clara. You see, the fist of the rioter has driven it home to me that I am a Jew. I must go where my people go. Come, Clara, you have staked your life for the Russians long enough, and how have they repaid you? Come and let us do something for our own poor unfortunate Jews."

She listened with the attention of one good-naturedly waiving a discussion.

"And what has become of that bridge you were building?" she asked.

"And what has become of that gallows, of the martyr's scaffold, which you said united Jew and Gentile? Has *that* done anybody any good? As to the bridge I was building across the chasm that divides us from the Christians, I admit that it has been wrecked to splinters; wrecked unmercifully by that same fist of the rioter. I dreamed of the brotherhood of Jew and Gentile and that fist woke me. The only point of contact between Jew and Gentile possible to-day is this"—pointing at a scar slightly back of his ear, his badge of active service as a member of the Defence Committee. [416]

"Why, did you get it in the riot?" she asked with a gesture of horror.

"It's a trifle, of course. Others have been crippled for life, but such as this bit of a scar is it will stand me in good stead as a reminder that I am a Jew. The fact is now everlastingly engraven on my flesh. There is no effacing it now. But

joking aside, Clara, I love the Russian people as much as I ever did. My heart breaks at the thought of leaving Russia. I don't think the Russians themselves are capable of loving their people as I do. But it can't be helped. There is an impassable chasm between us."

He was conscious of being on his mettle, as though the fiascoes he had sustained in his last year's talks with her were being retrieved. As to her, there was a look of curiosity and subtle condescension in her eye as she listened. But she was thoroughly friendly and warm-hearted, so for the moment he saw nothing but encouragement to his flow of conversation. From time to time he would be seized with mortal fear lest they should be pounced upon by gendarmes, but he never betrayed it.

At one point, when he had put a question to her and paused, she said, instead of answering it:

"Really, Volodia, I somehow can't get it into my head that you are actually going to America."

"Oh, I am, I am. I am going to that land 'where one's wounded feelings are sure of shelter.' Come along, Clara. Haven't you taken risks enough in Russia? Come and serve your own people, your poor, trodden people. Have not the riots been enough to open your eyes, Clara?"

"As if those were the only riots there were," she returned, pensively. "All humanity is in the hands of rioters."[417]

"But our homes are being destroyed, Clara," he urged in an impassioned undertone. "Our people are being plundered, maimed, their every feeling is outraged, their daughters are assaulted."

"Is there anything new in that?" she asked, in the same pensive tone. "Are not the masses robbed of the fruit of their toil? Are they not maimed in the workshops or in the army? Are not their daughters reduced to dishonour by their own misery and by the lust of the mighty? Are not the cities full of human beings without a home? All Russia is riot-ridden. The whole world, for that matter. The riots that you are dwelling upon are only a detail. Do away with *the* riot and all the others will disappear of themselves."

A note of animation came into her melancholy voice.

"What you 'Americans' propose to do," she continued, "is to clasp a handful of victims in your arms and to flee to America with them. Well, I have no fault to find with you, Volodia. I wish you and your party success. But the great, great bulk of victims, Gentiles as well as Jews, remain here, and the rioters—the throne, the bureaucracy, the drones—remain with them."

She struck him as amazingly beautiful this morning and she seemed to speak as one inspired. He listened to her with a feeling of reverence.

"But you have done enough, Clara," he said when she finished. "You have faced dangers enough. Sooner or later you will be taken, and then—" (he threw up his hands sadly). "You have a perfect right to save your life and liberty now."

She shook her head.

"You are a wonderful woman, Clara. By George, you are! Therefore, if you are arrested, it will be a great loss[418] not only to your relatives, but to all the Jews. Haven't the Gentiles robbed us enough?"

"Would you have them rob us of our sacred principles, too?" she retorted, with a faint smile. "Indeed, the right to die for liberty is the only right the government cannot take away from the Jew."

"Come to America, Clara."

"Oh, that's utterly impossible, Volodia," she answered, gazing at the cones.

The discovery that Prince Boulatoff was prominently connected with the underground movement, which originated in the confession of one of his revolutionary pupils, had created considerable excitement in St. Petersburg. The secret service had no difficulty in securing his photograph, and when it was shown to the little man who had acted as an errand boy at the celebrated cheese-shop he at once identified him as one of those who dug the mine. That Pavel had recently been in Miroslav was known to the whole town. Accordingly, the central political detective office at St. Petersburg despatched several picked men there to scent for his underground trail. These practically took the matter out of the hands of the local gendarmes, whom they treated with professional contempt. They gradually learned that Pavel had been a frequent visitor at Orlovsky's house, and then they took to shadowing Orlovsky and those in whose company he was seen. They made discovery after discovery.

One of these imported spies was the fellow who once shadowed Clara in St. Petersburg—the tall man with the swinging arm and the stiff-looking neck whom she met on the day when the revolutionist with the Greek name[419] was arrested.

It was about 8 o'clock in the evening, some ten minutes before train time, when this spy saw an uneducated Jewish woman in blue spectacles crossing the square in front of the station. She seemed familiar to him, yet not enough so to attract serious attention.

It was Clara. Her disguise, in addition to the blue spectacles, consisted of a heavy Jewish wig, partly covered by a black kerchief, and an old-fashioned cloak. To spare her the risk of facing the gendarmes of the station, her ticket had been bought for her by somebody else, her intention being to slip into her car at the last moment. Having reached the place too early, however, she was now trying to kill the interval by sauntering about. This time the spy escaped her notice, but a little later, less than a minute before the third bell was sounded and while she was scurrying through the third class restaurant, she caught sight of him, as he stood half leaning against the counter drowsily.

Here he had a much better look at her. She certainly was familiar to him, but he was still unable to locate her, and before he knew his own mind he let her pass. It was not until the train had pulled out, and its rear lights were rapidly sinking into the vast gloom of the night, that it dawned upon him that she looked like the girl he used to spy upon in St. Petersburg. Blue spectacles as a means of concealing one's identity are quite a commonplace article, so he called himself names for not having thought of it in time and hastened to telegraph to the gendarmes at the next station to arrest the young woman, giving a description of Clara's disguise and general appearance.

Some three quarters of an hour later an answer came from the next station that the train had been detained for[420] a careful search, but that no such woman could be found on it.

While that search was in progress Clara, her disguise removed, entered the "conspiracy house," where Olga had

been waiting for her, in case she should have found it inconvenient to board the train.

"There you are!" Olga said, in despair, as she beheld her friend's smiling face in the doorway. "What has happened?"

"It's a fizzle, that's all. But it might have been worse than that. There is a St. Petersburg fellow at the station. He knows me."

"Did he see you?" Olga demanded breathlessly.

"I should say he did," Clara replied with another smile. "Well, I thought it was all up. Gracious! didn't my feet grow weak under me. But my star has not gone back on me yet, it seems. I got into one of the cars just as the third bell was heard. I was sure he was close behind me, but, when I turned around, looking for a seat, I saw he was not there. He must have gone to another car for the moment, or something. Anyhow, I tried to get out again. I thought I had nothing to lose, and—here I am. But look here, Olya[E], are you sure there is nobody outside?"

"I think I am," Olga answered firmly. "Why?"

"I thought I saw a queer looking individual as I turned into this street. I must have been mistaken. Still, I confess, the presence of that fellow in this town is anything but a pleasant surprise to me. I don't like it at all. I wonder why we have not heard from Masha about him."

[421]

The reason they had not heard from her was simply this, that the invasion of the St. Petersburg detectives had had such an overbearing effect on everybody in the local gendarmerie that her brother had become unusually reticent on the affairs of his office even at home.

Two or three hours had passed, when Clara and Olga heard an ominous confusion of footsteps in the vestibule. The next moment the room was crowded with men, some in uniforms, others in citizens' clothes. One of the St. Petersburg officers rushed to a window where a blue medicine bottle—Clara's "window signal"—stood on the sill, to prevent either of the two Nihilist girls from removing it by way of warning to their friends.

"You here!" the tall, baronial-looking procureur, Princess Chertogoff's son-in-law, said to Olga, in amazement. He bowed to her most chivalrously, but she turned away from him with a contemptuous gesture.

"And may I ask for *your* name, Miss," a gendarme officer accosted Clara.

"I decline to answer," she returned, simply. Her eyes were on a pistol which she saw in the hand of one of the gendarmes.

"You live in Miroslav, don't you?"

Instead of answering this question she sprang at the man who held the pistol, seized it from him and began firing at the wall. This was her substitute for a removal of the safety signal from the window.

The weapon was instantly knocked out of her hand by a blow with the flat of a gleaming sword, and she was forced into a seat, two men holding her tightly by the arms, while a third was tying a handkerchief around her bleeding hand.

"I merely wanted to alarm the neighbourhood," she said calmly. "But, of course, you people will turn it into a case of armed resistance."

[422]

When Orlovsky learned of Clara's and Olga's arrest, one of his first thoughts was about notifying Pavel, of whose relations toward Clara he had by this time been informed. It appeared that the only man he knew who had "underground" connections in the two capitals and was in a position to communicate with Boulatoff was the former leader of the Miroslav Circle, Elkin. This, however, did not stop Orlovsky. To Elkin he went and explained the situation to him.

"Elkin, darling, you know you are a soul of a fellow," he implored him. "Pavel is either in St. Petersburg or in Moscow, and you are the only man who could get at him."

Elkin stood, thinking glumly, at the window for a few minutes, and then said:

"Very well, I am going."

He started on the same day, accompanied by a spy. That evening Orlovsky, the judge and several other members of the Miroslav Circle, were arrested at Orlovsky's house, and a few days later news came from Moscow that Pavel and Elkin had been taken in a café, while Makar had fallen into a "trap" at the house of an old friend of Elkin's, who had been seized several hours before.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A MESSAGE THROUGH THE WALL.

MONTHS had passed. Spring was three or four weeks old, but cell No. — on the first floor of the Trubetzkoy Bastion, Fortress of Peter and Paul, had not yet tasted its caressing breath. It was a rather spacious, high-ceiled vault, but being quite close to the stone fence outside, it was practically without the range of sunshine and breeze. Its window, which was high overhead, at the top of a sloping stretch of sill, sent down twilight at noonday and left it in the grip of night two or three hours after. The chill, damp air was laden with a stifling odour of must. The lower part of the walls was covered with a thick layer of mould which looked like a broad band of heavy tapestry of a dark-greenish hue.

The solitary inmate of this pit was walking back and forth diagonally, from corner to corner. He wore a loose, shapeless cloak of coarse but flimsy material, which he was continually wrapping about his slim, emaciated figure. He was shivering. As he walked to and fro, his head was for the most part thrown back, his eyes raised to the window, whose sloping sill he could have scarcely touched with the tips of his fingers. Now and then he paused and turned toward one of the walls, as though listening for some sounds, and then, with an air of nerveless disappointment, he would resume his walk.

It was Pavel. [424]

The spy who accompanied Elkin from Miroslav to Moscow had shadowed him in the ancient city until he saw him with Prince Boulatoff and then with Makar and a university student, in whose room the four revolutionists were arrested, shortly after, in the course of a heated debate between Makar and Elkin on the riots and the question of emigration to America.

During the first few weeks of Pavel's stay in the fortress the guards, who had been converted to revolutionary sympathies by a celebrated political prisoner named Nechayeff, had carried communications not only from prisoner to prisoner, but also from them to the revolutionists at large; so that the *Will of the People* was at one time partly edited from this fortress, and a bold plot was even planned by Nechayeff to have the Czar locked up in a cell while he visited its cathedral. But these relations between the guards and the revolutionists, which lasted about a year, had finally been disclosed, and since then Pavel and the inmates of the other cells had been treated with brutal stringency.

Pavel's trial was not likely to take place for another year or two, but his fate was clear to him: death, probably commuted to life-imprisonment, which actually amounted to slow death in a spacious grave like this vault, or in the mines of Siberia, was the usual doom of men charged with "crimes" like his. His future yawned before him in the form of a black, boundless cavern charged with dull, gnawing pain, like the pain that was choking him at this moment. The worst part of his torture was his solitude. The most inhuman physical suffering seemed easier to bear than this speechless, endless, excruciatingly monotonous solitude of his. "Oath-men" as the sworn-in attendants of the prison [425] were called (under-sized, comical looking fellows, most of them) came into his cell three or four times a day—with food, or to put things to rights hastily—but neither they nor the gendarmes who invariably accompanied them ever answered his questions. One morning, in an excess of self-commiseration and resentment at their stolid taciturnity, he had spat in the face of a gendarme. He had done so, at the peril of being flogged, in the hope of hearing him curse, at least; but the gendarme merely wiped his bewhiskered face and went on watching the "oath-man" silently.

Whenever Pavel was taken out for his 15-minute walk in a secluded little yard, which was once in two days, the sentinels he met would turn their backs on him, lest he should see more faces than was absolutely necessary. The warden and the prison doctor were the only human beings whose voices he could hear, and these were brutally laconic and brutally rude or ironical with him. To be taken to the prison office for an examination by the procureur was the one diversion which the near future held out to him; but then his near future might be a matter of weeks and might be a matter of months.

Back and forth he walked, at a spiritless, even pace, as monotonous as his days of gloom and misery, as that dull pain which was ceaselessly choking his throat and gnawing at his heart. At one moment he paused and felt his gums with his fingers. Were they swollen? Was he developing scurvy? Or was it mere imagination? He also passed his hand over his cheeks, and it seemed to him that they were sunken a little more than they had been the day before. But the great subject of his thoughts to-day was his mother, and tantalising, heart-crushing thoughts they were. Where was she? How was she? Was she alive at all? He pictured her committing suicide because of his doom, and the cruel vision [426] persisted. And if she was not dead, her life was little better than death. He tried to think of something else, but no, the appealing, reproachful image of his mother, of his poor dear mother who had scarcely had a day of happiness since she married, would not leave his mind. As a matter of fact, his efforts to think of something else were scarcely sincere. He would not shake that image out of his brain if he could. It was tearing his heart to pieces, yet he would rather stand all these tortures than shut his mother out of his thoughts. To talk to somebody was the only thing that could have saved him from the terrible pang that was harrowing him at this moment; but the chimes of the cathedral, which played the quarter-hours as well as the hours, and the crash of iron bolts at the opening of cells at meal-time were the only sounds that he could expect to hear to-day. His heart was writhing within him. Something was clutching at his brain. He seemed to feel himself going mad. He was tempted to cry at the top of his voice; to cry like a wild beast; but, of course, he was not going to give such satisfaction to the enemy.

He gazed at the sloping window-sill. For the thousandth time a desire took hold of him to mount it and take a look through the glass; and for the thousandth time he cast a hopeless glance at his bed, at the table, the chair, the wash-stand: they were all nailed to the floor, a large earthen water-cup and a salt-cellar made of lead being the only movable things in his room.

Four months ago there had been a prisoner in the adjoining cell with whom he carried on long conversations by rapping out his words on the wall, but one day their talk had been interrupted in the middle of a sentence, after which that man had been removed. The cell had long remained empty, as could be inferred from the fact that Pavel never [427] heard its door opened at meal-time. Since a week ago it had been tenanted again, but all his attempts at conversation with his new neighbour had so far been futile. His taps on the wall had been left unanswered.

Suddenly, as he was now pacing his floor, his heart melting with homesickness and anguish at the thought of his mother, he heard a rapid succession of fine, dry sounds on the right wall. He started, and, breathless and flushed with excitement, he listened. "Who are you?" the mould-grown wall demanded.

Pavel cast a look at the peephole in the heavy door, and seeing no eye in it, he took a turn or two up and down the

room and stopped hard by the wall, upon which he rapped out his reply:

"Boulatoff. Who are you?"

"The Emperor of all Africa," came the answer.

"What?" Pavel asked in perplexity. "You have not finished your sentence, what were you saying?"

"Begone!" the wall returned. "How dare you doubt my title? I am the Emperor of all Africa. How dare you speak to me? Away with you!"

Pavel's heart sank. It was apparently some political prisoner who had gone insane in a damp, cold, isolated cell.

"Dear friend, dear comrade!" he implored. "Can't you try and remember your name?"

"Begone, or I'll order your arrest, mean slave that you are!" This was followed by some incoherencies. Pavel went away from the wall with tears in his eyes.

In the afternoon of the third day he was striding to and fro, in excellent spirits. He had been in this mood since he opened his eyes that morning. Nothing but the most encouraging moments in the history of his connection with the movement would come to his mind to-day. He felt as though he and all his revolutionary friends were looking at each other, and conversing mentally, all as cheerful and happy as he was now. Everything pointed toward the speedy triumph of their cause. He beheld barricades in the streets of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa; he saw the red flag waving; he heard the Marseillaise. He recalled Makar's vision of the time when victorious revolutionists would break into the fortress of Peter and Paul and take its prisoners out to celebrate the advent of liberty with the people. He thought of Clara, and his heart went out to her and to their interrupted honeymoon; he imagined her on his arm marching with others, he did not know whither, and whispering words of love and exultation to her, and once more his heart leaped with joy. He recalled jokes, comical situations. He felt like bursting into a roar of merriment, when there came a shower of taps on the wall. [428]

"Who are you?"

"Boulatoff," Pavel answered, with sadness in his heart. He expected other absurdities from his insane neighbour. "And you?"

"Bieliayeff. I am not well. But I feel much better to-day. My lucid interval, perhaps. I remember everything."

Pavel had met him two years before. They talked of themselves, of their mutual friends, of the last news that had reached Bieliayeff through his other wall. It appeared that Bieliayeff's neighbour on that side of his cell was Elkin.

Pavel received the information with a thrill of pleasure. He was going to ask Bieliayeff to convey a message to his fellow townsman; but at this he had an instinctive feeling that there was an eye at the peephole and he dropped his hand to his side, pretending to be absorbed in thought.

They resumed their conversation a quarter of an hour later. [429]

"Tell Elkin I love him; he is dear to me," Pavel tapped out. "I feel guilty and miserable. If it were not for me he would be in America now. Besides, I have been unjust to him. This oppresses me more than anything else."

These communications through the wall are the most precious things life has to offer in living graves like those of the fortress of Peter and Paul. The inmate of such a grave will listen to the messages of his neighbours with the most strenuous attention, with every faculty in his possession, with every fibre of his being; and he will convey every word of a long message as if reading it from a written memorandum.

After a lapse of five or ten minutes Bieliayeff came back with Elkin's answer.

"He says he loves you," the tap-tap said, "and that it is he who ought to apologise. It was he who was unjust. As to his American scheme, he is happy to be here. It is sweet to be suffering for liberty, he says."

Makar was at the other end of the same corridor, and a message from him reached Pavel by way of a dozen walls.

"Hello, old boy!" it said. "At last I have completed the revolutionary programme I have been so long engaged upon. It's a dandy! It is not the same I spoke to you about in Moscow. It covers every point beautifully. It would save the party from every mistake it has ever made or is liable to make."

One day Pavel learned that Clara had arrived in the fortress, after a long confinement and no end of examinations in Miroslav. She was in another part of the building and communicating with her was impossible. Pavel scarcely ever thought of anything else. Could it be true that she was in the building and he would not even have a chance to see her? He was fidgeting and writhing like a bird in a cage. [430]

At last, on a morning, the wall brought him a message from her. It had come through walls, floors and ceilings.

"Clanya sends her love," it ran, "and tells him to keep away from the damp walls as much as possible."

"Tell Clanya I think of her day and night," he rapped back.

Then a footstep sounded at his door, and with a heart swelling with emotion he threw himself upon his bed and buried his face in his hands.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] A classical Russian high school modelled after its German namesake.
[B] Affectionate diminutive of Vladimir.
[C] Diminutive of Alexander.
[D] A sign of contempt and defiance consisting in the thumb being put between the next two fingers.
[E] Diminutive of Olga.

Transcriber's Note:

Most inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation found in the original text were retained, including:

"assistant procureur" and "assistant-procureur"
"ball-room" and "ball room"
"bedroom" and "bed-room"
"candlestick" and "candle-stick"
"capmaker" and "cap-maker"
"Catherine" and "Catharine"
"Chernishevsky" and "Chernyshevsky"
"cobblestones" and "cobble-stones"
"colour" and "color"
"drily" and "dryly"
"favourite" and "favorite"
"featherbeds" and "feather-beds"
"fiascos" and "fiascoes"
"footsteps" and "foot-steps"
"grey" and "gray"
"heartfelt" and "heart-felt"
"homebound" and "home-bound"
"laborer" and "labourer"
"market place" and "market-place"
"neighbour" and "neighbor"
"odour" and "odor"
"organisation" and "organization"
"parlour" and "parlor"
"pedlar" and "peddlar"
"peephole" and "peep-hole"
"realise" and "realize"
"regime" and "régime"
"reverie" and "revery"
"Rodkevitch" and "Rodkevich"
"rumour" and "rumor"
"side whiskers" and "side-whiskers"
"stepchild" and "step-child"
"topboots" and "top-boots"
"tramcar" and "tram-car"
"trunkmaker" and "trunk-maker"
"undersized" and "under-sized"
"Vice-Emperor" and "vice-Emperor"
"wagons" and "waggons"
"waiting room" and "waiting-room"
"woolen" and "woollen"

The following is a list of corrections made to the original. The first passage is the original passage, the second the corrected one.

Page 5:
Don’t take it ill, ma chere.” She
Don’t take it ill, ma chère.” She

Page 8:
the present Czar, then still Czarowitch,
the present Czar, then still Czarowitz,

Page 15:
pulling at his waistcoast as though
pulling at his waistcoat as though

Page 16:
and in his ecstacy over
and in his ecstasy over

Page 23:
Venus de Medicis—and the
Venus de Medici—and the

Page 34:
their essence? For the
their essence?” For the

Page 36:
who saw Alexander Alexandrovich off
who saw Alexandre Alexandrovich off

Page 44:
myterious air of the “radicals”
mysterious air of the “radicals”

Page 44:
one number of *Forward* and another
one number of *Forward!* and another

Page 47:
nunnish face She made quite
nunnish face. She made quite

Page 65:
restrain the “idotic breadth” of his
restrain the “idiotic breadth” of his

Page 68:
trimmed whiskers a lá Alexander II.,
trimmed whiskers à la Alexander II.,

Page 95:
on the part of Alexandre II.
on the part of Alexander II.

Page 104:
beaming at sight of the
beaming at the sight of the

Page 104:
in turning the cosversation
in turning the conversation

Page 114:
Pavel Vassilyevitch. Everything
Pavel Vassilyevich. Everything

Page 130:
“Exactly,” Paval assented,
“Exactly,” Pavel assented,

Page 137:
as many as three fourths of them
as many as three-fourths of them

Page 145:
view of it. At this
view of it.” At this

Page 146:
Olga, the Judge, and the
Olga, the judge, and the

Page 151:
house for tête-a-tête purposes.
house for tête-à-tête purposes.

Page 163:
imprisoned army officer, slipped away
imprisoned army officer slipped away

Page 166:
Their immediate surrounding were
Their immediate surroundings were

Page 167:
minature garden between
miniature garden between

Page 186:
well-travelled fellow He can
well-travelled fellow. He can

Page 215:
she says. “You have a
she says. You have a

Page 219:
dwelt on Zola’s L’Assomoir and
dwelt on Zola’s L’Assommoir and

Page 231:
a hurried bood-bye and made for
a hurried good-bye and made for

Page 242:
Meanwhile Count Loris Melikoff had
Meanwhile Count Loris-Melikoff had

Page 248:
speak Littlie-Russian to Purring Cat,
speak Little-Russian to Purring Cat,

Page 248:
from Littlie Russia, answered
from Little Russia, answered

Page 249:
by the the “gay bard,” which Clara
by the “gay bard,” which Clara

Page 252:
still in Lavadia with his bride,
still in Livadia with his bride,

Page 254:
his heart with cruel insistance.
his heart with cruel insistence.

Page 267:
residence, the Michail Palace,
residence, the Michaïl Palace,

Page 275:
your fur cap” she gestured.
your fur cap,” she gestured.

Page 283:
the Little Garden street precinct
the Little Garden Street precinct

Page 286:
Garden street for the Czar's
Garden Street for the Czar's

Page 288:
A distinquished revolutionary writer
A distinguished revolutionary writer

Page 289:
cheese shop on Little Garden street
cheese shop on Little Garden Street

Page 294:
“Don’t” he begged them,
“Don’t,” he begged them,

Page 305:
the prison corridor, answered his
the prison corridor answered his

Page 326:
such a cap?” says I.
such a cap?’ says I.

Page 333:
whispered in the spokeman’s ear
whispered in the spokesman’s ear

Page 335:
Finally he shouted huskily.
Finally he shouted huskily:

Page 366:
near Nicholas street, the best
near Nicholas Street, the best

Page 368:
about Nicholas street and bore down
about Nicholas Street and bore down

Page 373:
crowd on Cucumber market, and
crowd on Cucumber Market, and

Page 374:
primitive humanity ran amuck
primitive humanity run amuck

Page 376:
Nicholas street, from a residence
Nicholas Street, from a residence

Page 380:
the maurauders for the slashers
the marauders for the slashers

Page 382:
crowbars, banners or axes
crowbars, hammers or axes

Page 387:
revolting stupour of inebriety.
revolting stupor of inebriety.

Page 391:
trying to sooth an angry baby.
trying to soothe an angry baby.

Page 395:
One day Hannah said, gravely.
One day Hannah said, gravely:

Page 403:
street, St. Petersburg, was
Street, St. Petersburg, was

Page 415:
in a sunny spot
in a sunny spot.

Page 420:
There is a St Petersburg
There is a St. Petersburg

Page 425:
in an access of self-commiseration
in an excess of self-commiseration

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