Diary of a Superfluous Man

Ivan Turgenev

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THE doctor has just left me. At last I have got at something definite! For all his cunning, he had to speak out at last. Yes, I am soon, very soon, to die. The frozen rivers will break up, and with the last snow I shall, most likely, swim away . . . whither? God knows! To the ocean too. Well, well, since one must die, one may as well die in the spring. But isn't it absurd to begin a diary a fortnight, perhaps, before death? What does it matter? And by how much are fourteen days less than fourteen years, fourteen centuries? Beside eternity, they say, all is nothingness yes, but in that case eternity, too, is nothing. I see I am letting myself drop into metaphysics; that's a bad sign am I not rather faint−hearted, perchance? I had better begin a description of some sort. It's damp and windy out of doors. I'm forbidden to go out. What can I write about, then? No decent man talks of his maladies; to write a novel is not in my line; reflections on elevated topics are beyond me; descriptions of the life going on around me could not even interest me; while I am weary of doing nothing, and too lazy to read. Ah, I have it, I will write the story of all my life for myself. A first−rate idea! Just before death it is a suitable thing to do, and can be of no harm to any one. I will begin.

I was born thirty years ago, the son of fairly well−to−do landowners. My father had a passion for gambling; my mother was a woman of character . . . a very virtuous woman. Only, I have known no woman whose moral excellence was less productive of happiness. She was crushed beneath the weight of her own virtues, and was a source of misery to every one, from herself upwards. In all the fifty years of her life, she never once took rest, or sat with her hands in her lap; she was for ever fussing and bustling about like an ant, and to absolutely no good purpose, which cannot be said of the ant. The worm of restlessness fretted her night and day. Only once I saw her perfectly tranquil, and that was the day after her death, in her coffin. Looking at her, it positively seemed to me that her face wore an expression of subdued amazement; with the half−open lips, the sunken cheeks, and meekly−staring eyes, it seemed expressing, all over, the words, 'How good to be at rest!' Yes, it is good, good to be rid, at last, of the wearing sense of life, of the persistent, restless consciousness of existence! But that's neither here nor there.

I was brought up badly and not happily. My father and mother both loved me; but that made things no better for me. My father was not, even in his own house, of the slightest authority or consequence, being a man openly abandoned to a shameful and ruinous vice; he was conscious of his degradation, and not having the strength of will to give up his darling passion, he tried at least, by his invariably amiable and humble demeanour and his unswerving submissiveness, to win the condescending consideration of his exemplary wife. My mother certainly did bear her trial with the superb and majestic long−suffering of virtue, in which there is so much of egoistic pride. She never reproached my father for anything, gave him her last penny, and paid his debts without a word. He exalted her as a paragon to her face and behind her back, but did not like to be at home, and caressed me by stealth, as though he were afraid of contaminating me by his presence. But at such times his distorted features

were full of such kindness, the nervous grin on his lips was replaced by such a touching smile, and his brown eyes, encircled by fine wrinkles, shone with such love, that I could not help pressing my cheek to his, which was wet and warm with tears. I wiped away those tears with my handkerchief, and they flowed again without effort, like water from a brimming glass. I fell to crying, too, and he comforted me, stroking my back and kissing me all over my face with his quivering lips. Even now, more than twenty years after his death, when I think of my poor father, dumb sobs rise into my throat, and my heart beats as hotly and bitterly and aches with as poignant a pity as if it had long to go on beating, as if there were anything to be sorry for!

My mother's behaviour to me, on the contrary, was always the same, kind, but cold. In children's books one often comes across such mothers, sermonising and just. She loved me, but I did not love her. Yes! I fought shy of my virtuous mother, and passionately loved my vicious father.

But enough for to−day. It's a beginning, and as for the end, whatever it may be, I needn't trouble my head about it. That's for my illness to see to.

March 21.

To−day it is marvellous weather. Warm, bright; the sunshine frolicking gaily on the melting snow; everything shining, steaming, dripping; the sparrows chattering like mad things about the drenched, dark hedges. Sweetly and terribly, too, the moist air frets my sick chest. Spring, spring is coming! I sit at the window and look across the river into the open country. O nature! nature! I love thee so, but I came forth from thy womb good for nothing not fit even for life. There goes a cock−sparrow, hopping along with outspread wings; he chirrups, and every note, every ruffled feather on his little body, is breathing with health and strength. . . .

What follows from that? Nothing. He is well and has a right to chirrup and ruffle his wings; but I am ill and must die that's all. It's not worth while to say more about it. And tearful invocations to nature are mortally absurd. Let us get back to my story.

I was brought up, as I have said, very badly and not happily. I had no brothers or sisters. I was educated at home. And, indeed, what would my mother have had to occupy her, if I had been sent to a boarding−school or a government college? That's what children are for that their parents may not be bored. We lived for the most part in the country, and sometimes went to Moscow. I had tutors and teachers, as a matter of course; one, in particular, has remained in my memory, a dried−up, tearful German, Rickmann, an exceptionally mournful creature, cruelly maltreated by destiny, and fruitlessly consumed by an intense pining for his far−off fatherland. Some−times, near the stove, in the fearful stuffiness of the close ante−room, full of the sour smell of stale kvas, my unshaved man−nurse, Vassily, nicknamed Goose, would sit, playing cards with the coachman, Potap, in a new sheepskin, white as foam, and superb tarred boots, while in the next room Rickmann would sing, behind the partition

> 'Herz, mein Herz, warum so traurig?
> Was bekümmert dich so sehr?
> 'Sist ja schön im fremden Lande
> Herz, mein Herz was willst du mehr?'

After my father's death we moved to Moscow for good. I was twelve years old. My father died in the night from a stroke. I shall never forget that night. I was sleeping soundly, as children generally do; but I remember, even in my sleep, I was aware of a heavy gasping noise at regular intervals. Suddenly I felt some one taking hold of my shoulder and poking me. I opened my eyes and saw my nurse. 'What is it?' 'Come along, come along, Alexey

Mihalitch is dying.' . . . I was out of bed and away like a mad thing into his bedroom. I looked: my father was lying with his head thrown back, all red, and gasping fearfully. The servants were crowding round the door with terrified faces; in the hall some one was asking in a thick voice: 'Have they sent for the doctor?' In the yard outside, a horse was being led from the stable, the gates were creaking, a tallow candle was burning in the room on the floor, my mother was there, terribly upset, but not oblivious of the proprieties, nor of her own dignity. I flung myself on my father's bosom, and hugged him, faltering: 'Papa, papa . . .' He lay motionless, screwing up his eyes in a strange way. I looked into his face an unendurable horror caught my breath; I shrieked with terror, like a roughly captured bird they picked me up and carried me away. Only the day before, as though aware his death was at hand, he had caressed me so passionately and despondently.

A sleepy, unkempt doctor, smelling strongly of spirits, was brought. My father died under his lancet, and the next day, utterly stupefied by grief, I stood with a candle in my hands before a table, on which lay the dead man, and listened senselessly to the bass sing−song of the deacon, interrupted from time to time by the weak voice of the priest. The tears kept streaming over my cheeks, my lips, my collar, my shirtfront. I was dissolved in tears; I watched persistently, I watched intently, my father's rigid face, as though I expected something of him; while my mother slowly bowed down to the ground, slowly rose again, and pressed her fingers firmly to her forehead, her shoulders, and her chest, as she crossed herself. I had not a single idea in my head; I was utterly numb, but I felt something terrible was happening to me. . . . Death looked me in the face that day and took note of me.

We moved to Moscow after my father's death for a very simple cause: all our estate was sold up by auction for debts that is, absolutely all, except one little village, the one in which I am at this moment living out my magnificent existence. I must admit that, in spite of my youth at the time, I grieved over the sale of our home, or rather, in reality, I grieved over our garden. Almost my only bright memories are associated with our garden. It was there that one mild spring evening I buried my best friend, an old bob−tailed, crook−pawed dog, Trix. It was there that, hidden in the long grass, I used to eat stolen apples sweet, red, Novgorod apples they were. There, too, I saw for the first time, among the ripe raspberry bushes, the housemaid Klavdia, who, in spite of her turned−up nose and habit of giggling in her kerchief, aroused such a tender passion in me that I could hardly breathe, and stood faint and tongue−tied in her presence; and once at Easter, when it came to her turn to kiss my seignorial hand, I almost flung myself at her feet to kiss her down−trodden goat−skin slippers. My God! Can all that be twenty years ago? It seems not long ago that I used to ride on my shaggy chestnut pony along the old fence of our garden, and, standing up in the stirrups, used to pick the two−coloured poplar leaves. While a man is living he is not conscious of his own life; it becomes audible to him, like a sound, after the lapse of time.

Oh, my garden, oh, the tangled paths by the tiny pond! Oh, the little sandy spot below the tumbledown dike, where I used to catch gudgeons! And you tall birch−trees, with long hanging branches, from beyond which came floating a peasant's mournful song, broken by the uneven jolting of the cart, I send you my last farewell! . . . On parting with life, to you alone I stretch out my hands. Would I might once more inhale the fresh, bitter fragrance of the wormwood, the sweet scent of the mown buckwheat in the fields of my native place! Would I might once more hear far away the modest tinkle of the cracked bell of our parish church; once more lie in the cool shade under the oak sapling on the slope of the familiar ravine; once more watch the moving track of the wind, flitting, a dark wave over the golden grass of our meadow! . . . Ah, what's the good of all this? But I can't go on to−day. Enough till to−morrow.

March 22.

To−day it's cold and overcast again. Such weather is a great deal more suitable. It's more in harmony with my task. Yesterday, quite inappropriately, stirred up a multitude of useless emotions and memories within me. This shall not occur again. Sentimental outbreaks are like liquorice; when first you suck it, it's not bad, but afterwards

it leaves a very nasty taste in the mouth. I will set to work simply and serenely to tell the story of my life. And so, we moved to Moscow. . . .

But it occurs to me, is it really worth while to tell the story of my life?

No, it certainly is not, . . . My life has not been different in any respect from the lives of numbers of other people. The parental home, the university, the government service in the lower grades, retirement, a little circle of friends, decent poverty, modest pleasures, unambitious pursuits, moderate desires kindly tell me, is that new to any one? And so I will not tell the story of my life, especially as I am writing for my own pleasure; and if my past does not afford even me any sensation of great pleasure or great pain, it must be that there is nothing in it deserving of attention. I had better try to describe my own character to myself. What manner of man am I? . . . It may be observed that no one asks me that question admitted. But there, I'm dying, by Jove! I'm dying, and at the point of death I really think one may be excused a desire to find out what sort of a queer fish one really was after all.

Thinking over this important question, and having, moreover, no need whatever to be too bitter in my expressions in regard to myself, as people are apt to be who have a strong conviction of their valuable qualities, I must admit one thing. I was a man, or perhaps I should say a fish, utterly superfluous in this world. And that I propose to show to−morrow, as I keep coughing to−day like an old sheep, and my nurse, Terentyevna, gives me no peace: 'Lie down, my good sir,' she says, 'and drink a little tea.' . . . I know why she keeps on at me: she wants some tea herself. Well! she's welcome I Why not let the poor old woman extract the utmost benefit she can from her master at the last . . . as long as there is still the chance?

March 23.

Winter again. The snow is falling in flakes. Superfluous, superfluous. . . . That's a capital word I have hit on. The more deeply I probe into myself, the more intently I review all my past life, the more I am convinced of the strict truth of this expression. Superfluous that's just it. To other people that term is not applicable, . . . People are bad, or good, clever, stupid, pleasant, and disagreeable; but superfluous . . . no. Understand me, though: the universe could get on without those people too . . . no doubt; but uselessness is not their prime characteristic, their most distinctive attribute, and when you speak of them, the word 'superfluous' is not the first to rise to your lips. But I . . . there's nothing else one can say about me; I'm superfluous and nothing more. A supernumerary, and that's all. Nature, apparently, did not reckon on my appearance, and consequently treated me as an unexpected and uninvited guest. A facetious gentleman, a great devotee of preference, said very happily about me that I was the forfeit my mother had paid at the game of life. I am speaking about myself calmly now, without any bitterness. . . . It's all over and done with!

Throughout my whole life I was constantly finding my place taken, perhaps because I did not look for my place where I should have done. I was apprehensive, reserved, and irritable, like all sickly people. Moreover, probably owing to excessive self−consciousness, perhaps as the result of the generally unfortunate cast of my personality, there existed between my thoughts and feelings, and the expression of those feelings and thoughts, a sort of inexplicable, irrational, and utterly insuperable barrier; and whenever I made up my mind to overcome this obstacle by force, to break down this barrier, my gestures, the expression of my face, my whole being, took on an appearance of painful constraint. I not only seemed, I positively became unnatural and affected. I was conscious of this myself, and hastened to shrink back into myself. Then a terrible commotion was set up within me. I analysed myself to the last thread, compared myself with others, recalled the slightest glances, smiles, words of the people to whom I had tried to open myself out, put the worst construction on everything, laughed vindictively at my own pretensions to 'be like every one else,' and suddenly, in the midst of my laughter, collapsed utterly into gloom, sank into absurd dejection, and then began again as before went round and round, in fact, like a squirrel on its wheel. Whole days were spent in this harassing, fruitless exercise. Well now, tell me, if you please, to

whom and for what is such a man of use? Why did this happen to me? what was the reason of this trivial fretting at myself? who knows? who can tell?

I remember I was driving once from Moscow in the diligence. It was a good road, but the driver, though he had four horses harnessed abreast, hitched on another, alongside of them. Such an unfortunate, utterly useless, fifth horse fastened somehow on to the front of the shaft by a short stout cord, which mercilessly cuts his shoulder, forces him to go with the most unnatural action, and gives his whole body the shape of a comma always arouses my deepest pity. I remarked to the driver that I thought we might on this occasion have got on without the fifth horse, . . . He was silent a moment, shook his head, lashed the horse a dozen times across his thin back and under his distended belly, and with a grin responded: 'Ay, to be sure; why do we drag him along with us? What the devil's he for?' And here am I too dragged along. But, thank goodness, the station is not far off.

Superfluous. . . . I promised to show the justice of my opinion, and I will carry out my promise. I don't think it necessary to mention the thousand trifles, everyday incidents and events, which would, however, in the eyes of any thinking man, serve as irrefutable evidence in my support I mean, in support of my contention. I had better begin straight away with one rather important incident, after which probably there will be no doubt left of the accuracy of the term superfluous. I repeat: I do not intend to indulge in minute details, but I cannot pass over in silence one rather serious and significant fact, that is, the strange behaviour of my friends (I too used to have friends) whenever I met them, or even called on them. They used to seem ill at ease; as they came to meet me, they would give a not quite natural smile, look, not into my eyes nor at my feet, as some people do, but rather at my cheeks, articulate hurriedly, 'Ah! how are you, Tchulkaturin!' (such is the surname fate has burdened me with) or 'Ah! here's Tchulkaturin!' turn away at once and positively remain stockstill for a little while after, as though trying to recollect something. I used to notice all this, as I am not devoid of penetration and the faculty of observation on the whole I am not a fool; I sometimes even have ideas come into my head that are amusing, not absolutely commonplace. But as I am a superfluous man with a padlock on my inner self, it is very painful for me to express my idea, the more so as I know beforehand that I shall express it badly. It positively sometimes strikes me as extraordinary the way people manage to talk, and so simply and freely. . . . It's marvellous, really, when you think of it. Though, to tell the truth, I too, in spite of my padlock, sometimes have an itch to talk. But I did actually utter words only in my youth; in riper years I almost always pulled myself up. I would murmur to myself: 'Come, we'd better hold our tongue.' And I was still. We are all good hands at being silent; our women especially are great in that line. Many an exalted Russian young lady keeps silent so strenuously that the spectacle is calculated to produce a faint shudder and cold sweat even in any one prepared to face it. But that's not the point, and it's not for me to criticise others. I proceed to my promised narrative.

A few years back, owing to a combination of circumstances, very insignificant in themselves, but very important for me, it was my lot to spend six months in the district town O −. This town is all built on a slope, and very uncomfortably built, too. There are reckoned to be about eight hundred inhabitants in it, of exceptional poverty; the houses are hardly worthy of the name; in the chief street, by way of an apology for a pavement, there are here and there some huge white slabs of rough−hewn limestone, in consequence of which even carts drive round it instead of through it. In the very middle of an astoundingly dirty square rises a diminutive yellowish edifice with black holes in it, and in these holes sit men in big caps making a pretence of buying and selling. In this place there is an extraordinarily high striped post sticking up into the air, and near the post, in the interests of public order, by command of the authorities, there is kept a cartload of yellow hay, and one government hen struts to and fro. In short, existence in the town of O is truly delightful. During the first days of my stay in this town, I almost went out of my mind with boredom. I ought to say of myself that, though I am, no doubt, a superfluous man, I am not so of my own seeking; I'm morbid myself, but I can't bear anything morbid. . . . I'm not even averse to happiness indeed, I've tried to approach it right and left. . . . And so it is no wonder that I too can be bored like any other mortal. I was staying in the town of O on official business.

Terentyevna has certainly sworn to make an end of me. Here's a specimen of our conversation:

TERENTYEVNA. Oh oh, my good sir! what are you for ever writing for? it's bad for you, keeping all on writing.

I. But I'm dull, Terentyevna.

SHE. Oh, you take a cup of tea now and lie down. By God's mercy you'll get in a sweat and maybe doze a bit.

I. But I'm not sleepy.

SHE. Ah, sir! why do you talk so? Lord have mercy on you! Come, lie down, lie down; it's better for you.

I. I shall die any way, Terentyevna!

SHE. Lord bless us and save us! . . . Well, do you want a little tea?

I. I shan't live through the week, Terentyevna!

SHE. Eh, eh! good sir, why do you talk so? . . . Well, I'll go and heat the samovar.

Oh, decrepit, yellow, toothless creature! Am I really, even in your eyes, not a man?

March 24. *Sharp frost.*

On the very day of my arrival in the town of O , the official business, above referred to, brought me into contact with a certain Kirilla Matveitch Ozhogin, one of the chief functionaries of the district; but I became intimate, or, as it is called, 'friends' with him a fortnight later. His house was in the principal street, and was distinguished from all the others by its size, its painted roof, and the lions on its gates, lions of that species extraordinarily resembling unsuccessful dogs, whose natural home is Moscow. From those lions alone, one might safely conclude that Ozhogin was a man of property. And so it was; he was the owner of four hundred peasants; he entertained in his house all the best society of the town of O , and had a reputation for hospitality. At his door was seen the mayor with his wide chestnut−coloured droshky and pair€an exceptionally bulky man, who seemed as though cut out of material that had been laid by for a long time. The other officials, too, used to drive to his receptions: the attorney, a yellowish, spiteful creature; the land surveyor, a wit of German extraction, with a Tartar face; the inspector of means of communication a soft soul, who sang songs, but a scandalmonger; a former marshal of the district a gentleman with dyed hair, crumpled shirt−front, and tight trousers, and that lofty expression of face so characteristic of men who have stood on trial. There used to come also two landowners, inseparable friends, both no longer young and indeed a little the worse for wear, of whom the younger was continually crushing the elder and putting him to silence with one and the same reproach. 'Don't you talk, Sergei Sergeitch! What have you to say? Why, you spell the word cork with two k's in it, . . Yes, gentlemen,' he would go on, with all the fire of conviction, turning to the bystanders, 'Sergei Sergeitch spells it not cork, but kork.' And every one present would laugh, though probably not one of them was conspicuous for special accuracy in orthography, while the luckless Sergei Sergeitch held his tongue, and with a faint smile bowed his head. But I am forgetting that my hours are numbered, and am letting myself go into too minute descriptions. And so, without further beating about the bush, Ozhogin was married, he had a daughter, Elizaveta Kirillovna, and I fell in love with this daughter.

Ozhogin himself was a commonplace person, neither good−looking nor bad−looking; his wife resembled an aged chicken; but their daughter had not taken after her parents. She was very pretty and of a bright and gentle disposition. Her clear grey eyes looked out kindly and directly from under childishly arched brows; she was

almost always smiling, and she laughed too, pretty often. Her fresh voice had a very pleasant ring; she moved freely, rapidly, and blushed gaily. She did not dress very stylishly, only plain dresses suited her. I did not make friends quickly as a rule, and if I were at ease with any one from the first which, however, scarcely ever occurred it said, I must own, a great deal for my new acquaintance. I did not know at all how to behave with women, and in their presence I either scowled and put on a morose air, or grinned in the most idiotic way, and in my embarrassment turned my tongue round and round in my mouth. With Elizaveta Kirillovna, on the contrary, I felt at home from the first moment. It happened in this way.

I called one day at Ozhogin's before dinner, asked, 'At home?' was told, 'The master's at home, dressing; please to walk into the drawing−room.' I went into the drawing−room; I beheld standing at the window, with her back to me, a girl in a white gown, with a cage in her hands. I was, as my way was, somewhat taken aback; however, I showed no sign of it, but merely coughed, for good manners. The girl turned round quickly, so quickly that her curls gave her a slap in the face, saw me, bowed, and with a smile showed me a little box half full of seeds. 'You don't mind?' I, of course, as is the usual practice in such cases, first bowed my head, and at the same time rapidly crooked my knees, and straightened them out again (as though some one had given me a blow from behind in the legs, a sure sign of good breeding and pleasant, easy manners), and then smiled, raised my hand, and softly and carefully brandished it twice in the air. The girl at once turned away from me, took a little piece of board out of the cage, began vigorously scraping it with a knife, and suddenly, without changing her attitude, uttered the following words: 'This is papa's parrot. . . . Are you fond of parrots?' 'I prefer siskins,' I answered, not without some effort. 'I like siskins, too; but look at him, isn't he pretty? Look, he's not afraid.' (What surprised me was that I was not afraid.) 'Come closer. His name's Popka.' I went up, and bent down. 'Isn't he really sweet?' She turned her face to me; but we were standing so close together, that she had to throw her head back to get a look at me with her clear eyes. I gazed at her; her rosy young face was smiling all over in such a friendly way that I smiled too, and almost laughed aloud with delight. The door opened; Mr. Ozhogin came in. I promptly went up to him, and began talking to him very unconstrainedly. I don't know how it was, but I stayed to dinner, and spent the whole evening with them; and next day the Ozhogins' footman, an elongated, dull−eyed person, smiled upon me as a friend of the family when he helped me off with my overcoat.

To find a haven of refuge, to build oneself even a temporary nest, to feel the comfort of daily intercourse and habits, was a happiness I, a superfluous man, with no family associations, had never before experienced. If anything about me had had any resemblance to a flower, and if the comparison were not so hackneyed, I would venture to say that my soul blossomed from that day. Everything within me and about me was suddenly transformed! My whole life was lighted up by love, the whole of it, down to the paltriest details, like a dark, deserted room when a light has been brought into it. I went to bed, and got up, dressed, ate my breakfast, and smoked my pipe differently from before. I positively skipped along as I walked, as though wings were suddenly sprouting from my shoulders. I was not for an instant, I remember, in uncertainty with regard to the feeling Elizaveta Kirillovna inspired in me. I fell passionately in love with her from the first day, and from the first day I knew I was in love. During the course of three weeks I saw her every day. Those three weeks were the happiest time in my life; but the recollection of them is painful to me. I can't think of them alone; I cannot help dwelling on what followed after them, and the intensest bitterness slowly takes possession of my softened heart.

When a man is very happy, his brain, as is well known, is not very active. A calm and delicious sensation, the sensation of satisfaction, pervades his whole being; he is swallowed up by it; the consciousness of personal life vanishes in him he is in beatitude, as badly educated poets say. But when, at last, this 'enchantment' is over, a man is sometimes vexed and sorry that, in the midst of his bliss, he observed himself so little; that he did not, by reflection, by recollection, redouble and prolong his feelings . . . as though the 'beatific' man had time, and it were worth his while to reflect on his sensations! The happy man is what the fly is in the sunshine. And so it is that, when I recall those three weeks, it is almost impossible for me to retain in my mind any exact and definite impression, all the more so as during that time nothing very remarkable took place between us, . . . Those twenty days are present to my imagination as something warm, and young, and fragrant, a sort of streak of light in my dingy, greyish life. My memory becomes all at once remorselessly clear and trustworthy, only from the instant

when, to use the phrase of badly−educated writers, the blows of destiny began to fall upon me.

Yes, those three weeks. . . . Not but what they have left some images in my mind. Sometimes when it happens to me to brood a long while on that time, some memories suddenly float up out of the darkness of the past like stars which suddenly come out against the evening sky to meet the eyes straining to catch sight of them. One country walk in a wood has remained particularly distinct in my memory. There were four of us, old Madame Ozhogin, Liza, I, and a certain Bizmyonkov, a petty official of the town of O , a light−haired, good−natured, and harmless person. I shall have more to say of him later. Mr. Ozhogin had stayed at home; he had a headache, from sleeping too long. The day was exquisite; warm and soft. I must observe that pleasure−gardens and picnic−parties are not to the taste of the average Russian. In district towns, in the so−called public gardens, you never meet a living soul at any time of the year; at the most, some old woman sits sighing and moaning on a green garden seat, broiling in the sun, not far from a sickly tree and that, only if there is no greasy little bench in the gateway near. But if there happens to be a scraggy birchwood in the neighbourhood of the town, tradespeople and even officials gladly make excursions thither on Sundays and holidays, with samovars, pies, and melons; set all this abundance on the dusty grass, close by the road, sit round, and eat and drink tea in the sweat of their brows till evening. Just such a wood there was at that time a mile and a half from the town of O . We repaired there after dinner, duly drank our fill of tea, and then all four began to wander about the wood. Bizmyonkov walked with Madame Ozhogin on his arm, I with Liza on mine. The day was already drawing to evening. I was at that time in the very fire of first love (not more than a fortnight had passed since our first meeting), in that condition of passionate and concentrated adoration, when your whole soul innocently and unconsciously follows every movement of the beloved being, when you can never have enough of her presence, listen enough to her voice, when you smile with the look of a child convalescent after sickness, and a man of the smallest experience cannot fail at the first glance to recognise a hundred yards off what is the matter with you. Till that day I had never happened to have Liza on my arm. We walked side by side, stepping slowly over the green grass. A light breeze, as it were, flitted about us between the white stems of the birches, every now and then flapping the ribbon of her hat into my face. I incessantly followed her eyes, until at last she turned gaily to me and we both smiled at each other. The birds were chirping approvingly above us, the blue sky peeped caressingly at us through the delicate foliage. My head was going round with excess of bliss. I hasten to remark, Liza was not a bit in love with me. She liked me; she was never shy with any one, but it was not reserved for me to trouble her childlike peace of mind. She walked arm in arm with me, as she would with a brother. She was seventeen then. . . . And meanwhile, that very evening, before my eyes, there began that soft inward ferment which precedes the metamorphosis of the child into the woman. . . . I was witness of that transformation of the whole being, that guileless bewilderment, that agitated dreaminess; I was the first to detect the sudden softness of the glance, the sudden ring in the voice and oh, fool! oh, superfluous man! For a whole week I had the face to imagine that I, I was the cause of this transformation!

This was how it happened.

We walked rather a long while, till evening, and talked little. I was silent, like all inexperienced lovers, and she, probably, had nothing to say to me. But she seemed to be pondering over something, and shook her head in a peculiar way, as she pensively nibbled a leaf she had picked. Sometimes she started walking ahead, so resolutely . . . then all at once stopped, waited for me, and looked round with lifted eyebrows and a vague smile. On the previous evening we had read together *The Prisoner of the Caucasus.* With what eagerness she had listened to me, her face propped in both hands, and her bosom pressed against the table! I began to speak of our yesterday's reading; she flushed, asked me whether I had given the parrot any hemp−seed before starting, began humming some little song aloud, and all at once was silent again. The copse ended on one side in a rather high and abrupt precipice; below coursed a winding stream, and beyond it, over an immense expanse, stretched the boundless prairies, rising like waves, spreading wide like a table−cloth, and broken here and there by ravines. Liza and I were the first to come out at the edge of the wood; Bizmyonkov and the elder lady were behind. We came out, stood still, and involuntarily we both half shut our eyes; directly facing us, across a lurid mist, the vast, purple sun was setting. Half the sky was flushed and glowing; red rays fell slanting on the meadows, casting a crimson reflection even on the side of the ravines in shadow, lying in gleams of fire on the stream, where it was not hidden

under the overhanging bushes, and, as it were, leaning on the bosom of the precipice and the copse. We stood, bathed in the blazing brilliance. I am not capable of describing all the impassioned solemnity of this scene. They say that by a blind man the colour red is imagined as the sound of a trumpet. I don't know how far this comparison is correct, but really there was something of a challenge in this glowing gold of the evening air, in the crimson flush on sky and earth. I uttered a cry of rapture and at once turned to Liza. She was looking straight at the sun. I remember the sunset glow was reflected in little points of fire in her eyes. She was overwhelmed, deeply moved. She made no response to my exclamation; for a long while she stood, not stirring, with drooping head, . . . I held out my hand to her, she turned away from me, and suddenly burst into tears. I looked at her with secret, almost delighted amazement. . . . The voice of Bizmyonkov was heard a couple of yards off. Liza quickly wiped her tears and looked with a faltering smile at me. The elder lady came out of the copse leaning on the arm of her flaxen−headed escort; they, in their turn, admired the view. The old lady addressed some question to Liza, and I could not help shuddering, I remember, when her daughter's broken voice, like cracked glass, sounded in reply. Meanwhile the sun had set, and the afterglow began to fade. We turned back. Again I took Liza's arm in mine. It was still light in the wood, and I could clearly distinguish her features. She was confused, and did not raise her eyes. The flush that overspread her face did not vanish; it was as though she were still standing in the rays of the setting sun, . . . Her hand scarcely touched my arm. For a long while I could not frame a sentence; my heart was beating so violently. Through the trees there was a glimpse of the carriage in the distance; the coachman was coming at a walking pace to meet us over the soft sand of the road.

'Lizaveta Kirillovna,' I brought out at last, 'what did you cry for?'

'I don't know,' she answered, after a short silence. She looked at me with her soft eyes still wet with tears her look struck me as changed, and she was silent again.

'You are very fond, I see, of nature,' I pursued. That was not at all what I meant to say, and the last words my tongue scarcely faltered out to the end. She shook her head. I could not utter another word. . . . I was waiting for something . . . not an avowal how was that possible? I waited for a confiding glance, a question. . . . But Liza looked at the ground, and kept silent. I repeated once more in a whisper: 'Why was it?' and received no reply. She had grown, I saw that, ill at ease, almost ashamed.

A quarter of an hour later we were sitting in the carriage driving to the town. The horses flew along at an even trot; we were rapidly whirled along through the darkening, damp air. I suddenly began talking, more than once addressing first Bizmyonkov, and then Madame Ozhogin. I did not look at Liza, but I could see that from her corner in the carriage her eyes did not once rest on me. At home she roused herself, but would not read with me, and soon went off to bed. A turning−point, that turning−point I have spoken of, had been reached by her. She had ceased to be a little girl, she too had begun . . . like me . . . to wait for something. She had not long to wait.

But that night I went home to my lodgings in a state of perfect ecstasy. The vague half presentiment, half suspicion, which had been arising within me, had vanished. The sudden constraint in Liza's manner towards me I ascribed to maidenly bashfulness, timidity. . . . Hadn't I read a thousand times over in many books that the first appearance of love always agitates and alarms a young girl? I felt supremely happy, and was already making all sorts of plans in my head.

If some one had whispered in my ear then: 'You're raving, my dear chap! that's not a bit what's in store for you. What's in store for you is to die all alone, in a wretched little cottage, amid the insufferable grumbling of an old hag who will await your death with impatience to sell your boots for a few coppers . . .'!

Yes, one can't help saying with the Russian philosopher 'How's one to know what one doesn't know?'

Enough for to−day.

March 25. *A white winter day.*

I have read over what I wrote yesterday, and was all but tearing up the whole manuscript. I think my story's too spun out and too sentimental. However, as the rest of my recollections of that time presents nothing of a pleasurable character, except that peculiar sort of consolation which Lermontov had in view when he said there is pleasure and pain in irritating the sores of old wounds, why not indulge oneself? But one must know where to draw the line. And so I will continue without any sort of sentimentality.

During the whole of the week after the country excursion, my position was in reality in no way improved, though the change in Liza became more noticeable every day. I interpreted this change, as I have said before, in the most favourable way for me. . . . The misfortune of solitary and timid people who are timid from self−consciousness is just that, though they have eyes and indeed open them wide, they see nothing, or see everything in a false light, as though through coloured spectacles. Their own ideas and speculations trip them up at every step. At the commencement of our acquaintance, Liza behaved confidingly and freely with me, like a child; perhaps there may even have been in her attitude to me something more than mere childish liking, . . . But after this strange, almost instantaneous change had taken place in her, after a period of brief perplexity, she felt constrained in my presence; she unconsciously turned away from me, and was at the same time melancholy and dreamy. . . . She was waiting . . . for what? She did not know . . . while I . . . I, as I have said above, was delighted at this change. . . . Yes, by God, I was ready to expire, as they say, with rapture. Though I am prepared to allow that any one else in my place might have been deceived, . . . Who is free from vanity? I need not say that all this was only clear to me in the course of time, when I had to lower my clipped and at no time over−powerful wings.

The misunderstanding that had arisen between Liza and me lasted a whole week€and there is nothing surprising in that: it has been my lot to be a witness of misunderstandings that have lasted for years and years. Who was it said, by the way, that truth alone is powerful? Falsehood is just as living as truth, if not more so. To be sure, I recollect that even during that week I felt from time to time an uneasy gnawing astir within me . . . but solitary people like me, I say again, are as incapable of understanding what is going on within them as what is taking place before their eyes. And, besides, is love a natural feeling? Is it natural for man to love? Love is a sickness; and for sickness there is no law. Granting that there was at times an unpleasant pang in my heart; well, everything inside me was turned upside down. And how is one to know in such circumstances, what is all right and what is all wrong? and what is the cause, and what the significance, of each separate symptom? But, be that as it may, all these misconceptions, presentiments, and hopes were shattered in the following manner.

One day€it was in the morning about twelve o'clock I had hardly entered Mr. Ozhogin's hail, when I heard an unfamiliar, mellow voice in the drawing−room, the door opened, and a tall and slim man of five−and−twenty appeared in the doorway, escorted by the master of the house. He rapidly put on a military overcoat which lay on the slab, and took cordial leave of Kirilla Matveitch. As he brushed past me, he carelessly touched his foraging cap, and vanished with a clink of his spurs.

'Who is that?' I asked Ozhogin.

'Prince N.,' the latter responded, with a preoccupied face; 'sent from Petersburg to collect recruits. But where are the servants?' he went on in a tone of annoyance; 'no one handed him his coat.'

We went into the drawing−room.

'Has he been here long?' I inquired. 'Arrived yesterday evening, I'm told. I offered him a room here, but he refused. He seems a very nice fellow, though.'

'Has he been long with you?'

'About an hour. He asked me to introduce him to Olimpiada Nikitishna.'

'And did you introduce him?'

'Of course.'

'And Lizaveta Kirillovna, too, did he . . .'

'He made her acquaintance, too, of course.'

I was silent for a space.

'Has he come here for long, do you know?'

'Yes, I believe he has to be here for a fortnight.'

And Kirilla Matveitch hurried away to dress. I walked several times up and down the drawingroom. I don't recollect that Prince N.'s arrival made any special impression on me at the time, except that feeling of hostility which usually possesses us on the appearance of any new person in our domestic circle. Possibly there was mingled with this feeling something too of the nature of envy of a shy and obscure person from Moscow towards a brilliant officer from Petersburg. 'The prince,' I mused, 'is an upstart from the capital; he'll look down upon us, . . .' I had not seen him for more than an instant, but I had had time to perceive that he was good−looking, clever, and at his ease. After pacing the room for some time, I stopped at last before a looking−glass, pulled a comb out of my pocket, gave a picturesque carelessness to my hair, and, as sometimes happens, became suddenly absorbed in the contemplation of my own face. I remember my attention centred anxiously about my nose; the soft and undefined outlines of that feature afforded me no great satisfaction, when suddenly in the dark depths of the sloping mirror, which reflected almost the whole room, the door opened, and the slender figure of Liza appeared. I don't know why I did not stir, and kept the same expression on my face. Liza craned her head forward, looked intently at me, and raising her eyebrows, biting her lips, and holding her breath as any one does who is glad at not being noticed, she cautiously drew back and stealthily drew the door to after her. The door creaked slightly. Liza started and stood rooted to the spot . . . I still kept from stirring . . . she pulled the handle again and vanished. There was no possibility of doubt: the expression of Liza's face at the sight of my figure, that expression in which nothing could be detected except a desire to get away again successfully, to escape a disagreeable interview, the quick flash of delight I had time to catch in her eyes when she fancied she really had managed to creep away unnoticed it all spoke too clearly; that girl did not love me. For a long, long while I could not take my eyes off that motionless, dumb door, which was once more a patch of white in the looking−glass. I tried to smile at my own long face dropped my head, went home again, and flung myself on the sofa. I felt extraordinarily heavy at heart, so much so that I could not cry . . . and, besides, what was there to cry about . . .? 'Is it possible?' I repeated incessantly, lying, as though I were murdered, on my back with my hands folded on my breast 'is it possible?' . . . Don't you think that's rather good, that 'is it possible?'

March 26. *Thaw.*

When, next day, after long hesitation and with a low sinking at my heart, I went into the Ozhogins' familiar drawing−room, I was no longer the same man as they had known during the last three weeks. All my old peculiarities, which I had begun to get over, under the influence of a new feeling, reappeared and took possession

of me, like proprietors returning to their house. People of my sort are usually guided, not so much by positive facts, as by their own impressions: I, who no longer ago than the day before had been dreaming of the 'raptures of love returned,' was that day no less convinced of my 'unhappiness,' and was absolutely despairing, though I was not myself able to find any rational ground for my despair. I could not as yet be jealous of Prince N., and whatever his qualities might be, his mere arrival was not sufficient to extinguish Liza's good−will towards me at once. . . . But stay, was there any good−will on her part? I recalled the past. 'What of the walk in the wood?' I asked myself. 'What of the expression of her face in the glass?' 'But,' I went on, 'the walk in the wood, I think . . . Fie on me! my God, what a wretched creature I am!' I said at last, out loud. Of such sort were the unphrased, incomplete thoughts that went round and round a thousand times over in a monotonous whirl in my head. I repeat, I went back to the Ozhogins' the same hypersensitive, suspicious, constrained creature I had been from my childhood up. . . .

I found the whole family in the drawingroom; Bizmyonkov was sitting there, too, in a corner. Every one seemed in high good−humour; Ozhogin, in particular, positively beamed, and his first word was to tell me that Prince N. had spent the whole of the previous evening with them. Liza gave me a tranquil greeting. 'Oh,' said I to myself; 'now I understand why you're in such spirits.' I must own the prince's second visit puzzled me. I had not anticipated it. As a rule fellows like me anticipate everything in the world, except what is bound to occur in the natural order of things; I sulked and put on the air of an injured but magnanimous person; I tried to punish Liza by showing my displeasure, from which one must conclude I was not yet completely desperate after all. They do say that in some cases when one is really loved, it's positively of use to torment the adored one; but in my position it was indescribably stupid. Liza, in the most innocent way, paid no attention to me. No one but Madame Ozhogin observed my solemn taciturnity, and she inquired anxiously after my health. I replied, of course, with a bitter smile, that I was thankful to say I was perfectly well. Ozhogin continued to expatiate on the subject of their visitor; but noticing that I responded reluctantly, he addressed himself principally to Bizmyonkov, who was listening to him with great attention, when a servant suddenly came in, announcing the arrival of Prince N. Our host jumped up and ran to meet him; Liza, upon whom I at once turned an eagle eye, flushed with delight, and made as though she would move from her seat. The prince came in, all agreeable perfume, gaiety, cordiality, . . .

As I am not composing a romance for a gentle reader, but simply writing for my own amusement, it stands to reason I need not make use of the usual dodges of our respected authors. I will say straight out without further delay that Liza fell passionately in love with the prince from the first day she saw him, and the prince fell in love with her too€partly from having nothing to do, and partly from a propensity for turning women's heads, and also owing to the fact that Liza really was a very charming creature. There was nothing to be wondered at in their falling in love with each other. He had certainly never expected to find such a pearl in such a wretched shell (I am alluding to the God−forsaken town of O), and she had never in her wildest dreams seen anything in the least like this brilliant, clever, fascinating aristocrat.

After the first courtesies, Ozhogin introduced me to the prince, who was very affable in his behaviour to me. He was as a rule very affable with every one; and in spite of the immeasurable distance between him and our obscure provincial circle, he was clever enough to avoid being a source of constraint to any one, and even to make a show of being on our level, and only living at Petersburg, as it were, by accident.

That first evening, . . . Oh, that first evening! In our happy days of childhood our teachers used to describe and set up before us as an example the manly fortitude of the young Spartan, who, having stolen a fox and hidden it under his tunic, without uttering one shriek let it devour all his entrails, and so preferred death itself to disgrace. . . . I can find no better comparison for my indescribable sufferings during the evening on which I first saw the prince by Liza's side. My continual forced smile and painful vigilance, my idiotic silence, my miserable and ineffectual desire to get away €all that was doubtless something truly remarkable in its own way. It was not one wild beast alone gnawing at my vitals; jealousy, envy, the sense of my own insignificance, and helpless hatred were torturing me. I could not but admit that the prince really was a very agreeable young man, . . . I devoured him with my eyes; I really believe I forgot to blink as usual, as I stared at him. He talked not to Liza alone, but all he said was

of course really for her. He must have felt me a great bore. He most likely guessed directly that it was a discarded lover he had to deal with, but from sympathy for me, and also a profound sense of my absolute harmlessness, he treated me with extraordinary gentleness. You can fancy how this wounded me! In the course of the evening I tried, I remember, to smooth over my mistake. I positively (don't laugh at me, whoever you may be, who chance to look through these lines€especially as it was my last illusion I, positively, in the midst of my different sufferings, imagined all of a sudden that Liza wanted to punish me for my haughty coldness at the beginning of my visit, that she was angry with me and only flirting with the prince from pique. . . . I seized my opportunity and with a meek but gracious smile, I went up to her, and muttered 'Enough, forgive me, not that I'm afraid . . .' and suddenly, without awaiting her reply, I gave my features an extraordinarily cheerful and free−and−easy expression, with a set grin, passed my hand above my head in the direction of the ceiling (I wanted, I remember, to set my cravat straight), and was even on the point of pirouetting round on one foot, as though to say, 'All is over, I am happy, let's all be happy,' I did not, however, execute this manoeuvre, as I was afraid of losing my balance, owing to an unnatural stiffness in my knees. . . . Liza failed absolutely to understand me; she looked in my face with amazement, gave a hasty smile, as though she wanted to get rid of me as quickly as possible, and again approached the prince. Blind and deaf as I was, I could not but be inwardly aware that she was not in the least angry, and was not annoyed with me at that instant: she simply never gave me a thought. The blow was a final one. My last hopes were shattered with a crash, just as a block of ice, thawed by the sunshine of spring, suddenly falls into tiny morsels. I was utterly defeated at the first skirmish, and, like the Prussians at Jena, lost everything at once in one day. No, she was not angry with me! . . .

Alas, it was quite the contrary! She too I saw that was being swept off her feet by the torrent. Like a young tree, already half torn from the bank, she bent eagerly over the stream, ready to abandon to it for ever the first blossom of her spring and her whole life. A man whose fate it has been to be the witness of such a passion, has lived through bitter moments if he has loved himself and not been loved. I shall for ever remember that devouring attention, that tender gaiety, that innocent self−oblivion, that glance, still a child's and already a woman's, that happy, as it were flowering smile that never left the half−parted lips and glowing cheeks. . . . All that Liza had vaguely foreshadowed during our walk in the wood had come to pass now and she, as she gave herself up utterly to love, was at once stiller and brighter, like new wine, which ceases to ferment because its full maturity has come. . . .

I had the fortitude to sit through that first evening and the subsequent evenings . . . all to the end! I could have no hope of anything. Liza and the prince became every day more devoted to each other . . . But I had absolutely lost all sense of personal dignity, and could not tear myself away from the spectacle of my own misery. I remember one day I tried not to go, swore to myself in the morning that I would stay at home, and at eight o'clock in the evening (I usually set off at seven) leaped up like a madman, put on my hat, and ran breathless into Kirilla Matveitch's drawing−room. My position was excessively absurd. I was obstinately silent; sometimes for whole days together I did not utter a sound. I was; as I have said already, never distinguished for eloquence; but now everything I had in my mind took flight, as it were, in the presence of the prince, and I was left bare and bereft. Besides, when I was alone, I set my wretched brain working so hard, slowly going over everything I had noticed or surmised during the preceding day, that when I went back to the Ozhogins' I scarcely had energy left to observe again. They treated me considerately, as a sick person; I saw that. Every morning I adopted some new, final resolution, for the most part painfully hatched in the course of a sleepless night. At one time I made up my mind to have it out with Liza, to give her friendly advice . . . but when I chanced to be alone with her, my tongue suddenly ceased to work, froze as it were, and we both, in great discomfort, waited for the entrance of some third person. Another time I meant to run away, of course for ever, leaving my beloved a letter full of reproaches, and I even one day began this letter; but the sense of justice had not yet quite vanished in me. I realised that I had no right to reproach any one for anything, and I flung what I had written in the fire. Then I suddenly offered myself up wholly as a sacrifice, gave Liza my benediction, praying for her happiness, and smiled in meek and friendly fashion from my corner at the prince. But the cruel−hearted lovers not only never thanked me for my self−sacrifice, they never even noticed me, and were, apparently, quite ready to dispense with my smiles and my blessings. . . . Then, in wrath, I suddenly flew into quite the opposite mood. I swore to myself, wrapping my cloak

about me like a Spaniard, to rush out from some dark corner and stab my lucky rival, and with brutal glee I imagined Liza' s despair. . . . But, in the first place, such corners were few in the town of O ; and, secondly €the wooden fence, the street lamp, the policeman in the distance. . . . No! in such corners it was somehow far more suitable to sell buns and oranges than to shed human blood. I must own that, among other means of deliverance, as I very vaguely expressed it in my colloquies with myself, I did entertain the idea of having recourse to Ozhogin himself . . . of calling the attention of that nobleman to the perilous situation of his daughter, and the mournful consequences of her indiscretion, . . I even once began speaking to him on a certain delicate subject; but my remarks were so indirect and misty, that after listening and listening to me, he suddenly, as it were, waking up, rubbed his hand rapidly and vigorously all over his face, not sparing his nose, gave a snort, and walked away from me. It is needless to say that in resolving on this step I persuaded myself that I was acting from the most disinterested motives, was desirous of the general welfare, and was doing my duty as a friend of the house, . . . But I venture to think that even had Kirilla Matveitch not cut short my outpourings, I should in any case not have had courage to finish my monologue. At times I set to work with all the solemnity of some sage of antiquity, weighing the qualities of the prince; at times I comforted myself with the hope that it was all of no consequence, that Liza would recover her senses, that her love was not real love . . . oh, no! In short, I know no idea that I did not worry myself with at that time. There was only one resource which never, I candidly admit, entered my head: I never once thought of taking my life. Why it did not occur to me I don't know. . . . Possibly, even then, I had a presentiment I should not have long to live in any case.

It will be readily understood that in such unfavourable circumstances my manner, my behaviour with people, was more than ever marked by unnaturalness and constraint. Even Madame Ozhogin that creature dull−witted from her birth up began to shun me, and at times did not know in what way to approach me. Bizmyonkov, always polite and ready to do services, avoided me. I fancied even at that time that I had in him a companion in misfortune that he too loved Liza. But he never responded to my hints, and altogether showed a reluctance to converse with me. The prince behaved in a very friendly way to him; the prince, one might say, respected him. Neither Bizmyonkov nor I was any obstacle to the prince and Liza; but he did not shun them as I did, nor look savage nor injured and readily joined them when they desired it. It is true that on such occasions he was not conspicuous for any special mirthfulness; but his good−humour had always been somewhat subdued in character.

In this fashion about a fortnight passed by. The prince was not only handsome and clever: he played the piano, sang, sketched fairly well, and was a good hand at telling stories. His anecdotes, drawn from the highest circles of Petersburg society, always made a great impression on his audience, all the more so from the fact that he seemed to attach no importance to them, . . .

The consequence of this, if you like, simple accomplishment of the prince's was that in the course of his not very protracted stay in the town of O he completely fascinated all the neighbourhood. To fascinate us poor dwellers in the steppes is at all times a very easy task for any one coming from higher spheres. The prince's frequent visits to the Ozhogins (he used to spend his evenings there) of course aroused the jealousy of the other worthy gentry and officials of the town. But the prince, like a clever person and a man of the world, never neglected a single one of them; he called on all of them; to every married lady and every unmarried miss he addressed at least one flattering phrase, allowed them to feed him on elaborately solid edibles, and to make him drink wretched wines with magnificent names; and conducted himself, in short, like a model of caution and tact. Prince N. was in general a man of lively manners, sociable and genial by inclination, and in this case incidentally from prudential motives also; he could not fail to be a complete success in everything.

Ever since his arrival, all in the house had felt that the time had flown by with unusual rapidity; everything had gone off beautifully. Papa Ozhogin, though he pretended that he noticed nothing, was doubtless rubbing his hands in private at the idea of such a son−in−law. The prince, for his part, managed matters with the utmost sobriety and discretion, when, all of a sudden, an unexpected incident . . .

Till to−morrow. To−day I'm tired. These recollections irritate me even at the edge of the grave. Terentyevna noticed to−day that my nose has already begun to grow sharp; and that, they say, is a bad sign.

March 27. *Thaw continuing.*

Things were in the position described above: the prince and Liza were in love with each other; the old Ozhogins were waiting to see what would come of it; Bizmyonkov was present at the proceedings there was nothing else to be said of him. I was struggling like a fish on the ice, and watching with all my might, I remember that at that time I set myself the task of preventing Liza at least from falling into the snares of a seducer, and consequently began paying particular attention to the maidservants and the fateful 'back stairs' though, on the other hand, I often spent whole nights in dreaming with what touching magnanimity I would one day hold out a hand to the betrayed victim and say to her, 'The traitor has deceived thee; but I am thy true friend . . . let us forget the past and be happy!' when sudden and glad tidings overspread the whole town. The marshal of the district proposed to give a great ball in honour of their respected guest, on his private estate Gornostaevka. All the official world, big and little, of the town of O received invitations, from the mayor down to the apothecary, an excessively emaciated German, with ferocious pretensions to a good Russian accent, which led him into continually and quite inappropriately employing racy colloquialisms, . . . Tremendous preparations were, of course, put in hand. One purveyor of cosmetics sold sixteen dark − blue jars of pomatum, which bore the inscription *a la jesmin.* The young ladies provided themselves with tight dresses, agonising in the waist and jutting out sharply over the stomach; the mammas put formidable erections on their heads by way of caps; the busy papas were half dead with the bustle. The longed−for day arrived at last. I was among those invited. From the town to Gornostaevka was reckoned between seven and eight miles. Kirilla Matveitch offered me a seat in his coach; but I refused. . . In the same way children, who have been punished, wishing to pay their parents out, refuse their favourite dainties at table. Besides, I felt that my presence would be felt as a constraint by Liza. Bizmyonkov took my place. The prince drove in his own carriage, and I in a wretched little droshky, hired for an immense sum for this solemn occasion. I am not going to describe that ball. Everything about it was just as it always is. There was a band, with trumpets extraordinarily out of tune, in the gallery; there were country gentlemen, greatly flustered, with their inevitable families, mauve ices, viscous lemonade; servants in boots trodden down at heel and knitted cotton gloves; provincial lions with spasmodically contorted faces, and so on and so on. And all this little world was revolving round its sun€round the prince. Lost in the crowd, unnoticed even by the young ladies of eight−and−forty, with red pimples on their brows and blue flowers on the top of their heads, I stared incessantly, first at the prince, then at Liza. She was very charmingly dressed and very pretty that evening. They only twice danced together (it is true, he danced the mazurka with her); but it seemed, to me at least, that there was a sort of secret, continuous communication between them. Even while not looking at her, while not speaking to her, he was still, as it were, addressing her, and her alone. He was handsome and brilliant and charming with other people for her sake only. She was apparently conscious that she was the queen of the ball, and that she was loved. Her face at once beamed with childlike delight and innocent pride, and was suddenly illuminated by another, deeper feeling. Happiness radiated from her. I observed all this. . . . It was not the first time I had watched them. . . . At first this wounded me intensely; afterwards it, as it were, touched me; but, finally, it infuriated me. I suddenly felt extraordinarily wrathful, and, I remember, was extraordinarily delighted at this new sensation, and even conceived a certain respect for myself. 'We'll show them we're not crushed yet,' I said to myself. When the first inviting notes of the mazurka sounded, I looked about me with composure, and with a cool and easy air approached a long−faced young lady with a red and shiny nose, a mouth that stood awkwardly open, as though it had come unbuttoned, and a scraggy neck that recalled the handle of a bass−viol. I went up to her, and, with a perfunctory scrape of my heels, invited her to the dance. She was wearing a dress of faded rosebud pink, not full−blown rose colour; on her head quivered a striped and dejected beetle of some sort on a thick bronze pin; and altogether this lady was, if one may so express it, soaked through and through with a sort of sour ennui and inveterate lack of success. From the very commencement of the evening she had not once stirred from her seat; no

one had thought of asking her to dance. One flaxen−headed youth of sixteen had, through lack of a partner, been on the point of addressing this lady, and had taken a step in her direction, but had thought better of it, stared at her, and hurriedly dived into the crowd. You can fancy with what joyful amazement she agreed to my proposal! I led her in triumph right across the ballroom, picked out two chairs, and sat down with her in the ring of the mazurka, among ten couples, almost opposite the prince, who had, of course, been offered the first place. The prince, as I have said already, was dancing with Liza. Neither I nor my partner was disturbed by invitations; consequently, we had plenty of time for conversation. To tell the truth, my partner was not conspicuous for her capacity for the utterance of words in consecutive speech; she used her mouth principally for the achievement of a strange downward smile such as I had never till then beheld ; while she raised her eyes upward, as though some unseen force were pulling her face in two. But I did not feel her lack of eloquence. Happily I felt full of wrath, and my partner did not make me shy. I fell to finding fault with everything and every one in the world, with especial emphasis on town−bred youngsters and Petersburg dandies; and went to such lengths at last, that my partner gradually ceased smiling, and instead of turning her eyes upward, began suddenly from astonishment, I suppose to squint, and that so strangely, as though she had for the first time observed the fact that she had a nose on her face. And one of the lions, referred to above, who was sitting next me, did not once take his eyes off me; he positively turned to me with the expression of an actor on the stage, who has waked up in an unfamiliar place, as though he would say, 'Is it really you!' While I poured forth this tirade, I still, however, kept watch on the prince and Liza. They were continually invited; but I suffered less when they were both dancing; and even when they were sitting side by side, and smiling as they talked to each other that sweet smile which hardly leaves the faces of happy lovers, even then I was not in such torture; but when Liza flitted across the room with some desperate dandy of an hussar, while the prince with her blue gauze scarf on his knees followed her dreamily with his eyes, as though delighting in his conquest; then, oh! then, I went through intolerable agonies, and in my anger gave vent to such spiteful observations, that the pupils of my partner's eyes simply fastened on her nose! Meanwhile the mazurka was drawing to a close. They were beginning the figure called *la confidente.* In this figure the lady sits in the middle of a circle, chooses another lady as her confidant, and whispers in her ear the name of the gentleman with whom she wishes to dance. Her partner conducts one after another of the dancers to her; but the lady, who is in the secret, refuses them, till at last the happy man fixed on beforehand arrives. Liza sat in the middle of the circle and chose the daughter of the host, one of those young ladies of whom one says, 'God help them!' . . . The prince proceeded to discover her choice. After presenting about a dozen young men to her in vain (the daughter of the house refused them all with the most amiable of smiles), he at last turned to me. Something extraordinary took place within me at that instant; I, as it were, twitched all over, and would have refused, but got up and went along. The prince conducted me to Liza, . . . She did not even look at me; the daughter of the house shook her head in refusal, the prince turned to me, and, probably incited by the goose−like expression of my face, made me a deep bow. This sarcastic bow, this refusal, transmitted to me through my triumphant rival, his careless smile, Liza's indifferent inattention, all this lashed me to frenzy. . . . I moved up to the prince and whispered furiously, 'You think fit to laugh at me, it seems?'

The prince looked at me with contemptuous surprise, took my arm again, and making a show of re−conducting me to my seat, answered coldly, 'I?'

'Yes, you!' I went on in a whisper, obeying, however that is to say, following him to my place; 'you; but I do not intend to permit any empty−headed Petersburg upstart '

The prince smiled tranquilly, almost condescendingly, pressed my arm, whispered, 'I understand you; but this is not the place; we will have a word later,' turned away from me, went up to Bizmyonkov, and led him up to Liza. The pale little official turned out to be the chosen partner. Liza got up to meet him.

Sitting beside my partner with the dejected beetle on her head, I felt almost a hero. My heart beat violently, my breast heaved gallantly under my starched shirt front, I drew deep and hurried breaths, and suddenly gave the local lion near me such a magnificent glare that there was an involuntary quiver of his foot in my direction. Having disposed of this person, I scanned the whole circle of dancers. . . . I fancied two or three gentlemen were

staring at me with some perplexity; but, in general, my conversation with the prince had passed unnoticed. . . . My rival was already back in his chair, perfectly composed, and with the same smile on his face. Bizmyonkov led Liza back to her place. She gave him a friendly bow, and at once turned to the prince, as I fancied, with some alarm. But he laughed in response, with a graceful wave of his hand, and must have said something very agreeable to her, for she flushed with delight, dropped her eyes, and then bent them with affectionate reproach upon him.

The heroic frame of mind, which had suddenly developed in me, had not disappeared by the end of the mazurka; but I did not indulge in any more epigrams or 'quizzing.' I contented myself with glancing occasionally with gloomy severity at my partner, who was obviously beginning to be afraid of me, and was utterly tongue−tied and continuously blinking by the time I placed her under the protection of her mother, a very fat woman with a red cap on her head. Having consigned the scared maiden lady to her natural belongings, I turned away to a window, folded my arms, and began to await what would happen. I had rather long to wait. The prince was the whole time surrounded by his host surrounded, simply, as England is surrounded by the sea, to say nothing of the other members of the marshal's family and the rest of the guests. And besides, he could hardly go up to such an insignificant person as me and begin to talk without arousing a general feeling of surprise. This insignificance, I remember, was positively a joy to me at the time. 'All right,' I thought, as I watched him courteously addressing first one and then another highly respected personage, honoured by his notice, if only for an 'instant's flash,' as the poets say; 'all right, my dear . . . you'll come to me soon I've insulted you, anyway.' At last the prince, adroitly escaping from the throng of his adorers, passed close by me, looked somewhere between the window and my hair, was turning away, and suddenly stood still, as though he had recollected something. 'Ah, yes!' he said, turning to me with a smile, 'by the way, I have a little matter to talk to you about.'

Two country gentlemen, of the most persistent, who were obstinately pursuing the prince, probably imagined the 'little matter' to relate to official business, and respectfully fell back. The prince took my arm and led me apart. My heart was thumping at my ribs.

'You, I believe,' he began, emphasising the word *you,* and looking at my chin with a contemptuous expression, which, strange to say, was supremely becoming to his fresh and handsome face, 'you said something abusive to me?'

'I said what I thought,' I replied, raising my voice.

'Sh . . . quietly,' he observed; 'decent people don't bawl. You would like, perhaps, to fight me?'

'That's your affair,' I answered, drawing myself up.

'I shall be obliged to challenge you,' he remarked carelessly, 'if you don't withdraw your expressions, . . .'

'I do not intend to withdraw from anything,' I rejoined with pride.

'Really?' he observed, with an ironical smile. 'In that case,' he continued, after a brief pause, 'I shall have the honour of sending my second to you to−morrow.'

'Very good,' I said in a voice, if possible, even more indifferent.

The prince gave a slight bow.

'I cannot prevent you from considering me empty−headed,' he added, with a haughty droop of his eyelids; 'but the Princes N cannot be upstarts. Good−bye till we meet, Mr, . . . Mr. Shtukaturin.'

He quickly turned his back on me, and again approached his host, who was already beginning to get excited.

Mr. Shtukaturin! . . . My name is Tchulkaturin, . . . I could think of nothing to say to him in reply to this last insult, and could only gaze after him with fury. 'Till to−morrow,' I muttered, clenching my teeth, and I at once looked for an officer of my acquaintance, a cavalry captain in the Uhlans, called Koloberdyaev, a desperate rake, and a very good fellow. To him I related, in few words, my quarrel with the prince, and asked him to be my second. He, of course, promptly consented, and I went home.

I could not sleep all night from excitement, not from cowardice. I am not a coward. I positively thought very little of the possibility confronting me of losing my life that, as the Germans assure us, highest good on earth. I could think only of Liza, of my ruined hopes, of what I ought to do. 'Ought I to try to kill the prince?' I asked myself; and, of course, I wanted to kill him€not from revenge, but from a desire for Liza's good. 'But she will not survive such a blow,' I went on. 'No, better let him kill me!' I must own it was an agreeable reflection, too, that I, an obscure provincial person, had forced a man of such consequence to fight a duel with me.

The morning light found me still absorbed in these reflections; and, not long after it, appeared Koloberdyaev.

'Well,' he asked me, entering my room with a clatter, 'where's the prince's second?'

'Upon my word,' I answered with annoyance, 'it 's seven o'clock at the most; the prince is still asleep, I should imagine.' 'In that case,' replied the cavalry officer, in nowise daunted, 'order some tea for me. My head aches from yesterday evening, . . . I've not taken my clothes off all night. Though, indeed,' he added with a yawn, 'I don't as a rule often take my clothes off.'

Some tea was given him. He drank off six glasses of tea and rum, smoked four pipes, told me he had on the previous day bought, for next to nothing, a horse the coachman refused to drive, and that he was meaning to drive her out with one of her fore legs tied up, and fell asleep, without undressing, on the sofa, with a pipe in his mouth. I got up and put my papers to rights. One note of invitation from Liza, the one note I had received from her, was on the point of putting in my bosom, but on second thoughts I flung it in a drawer. Koloberdyaev was snoring feebly, with his head hanging from the leather pillow, . . . For a long while, I remember, I scrutinised his unkempt, daring, careless, and good−natured face. At ten o'clock the man announced the arrival of Bizmyonkov. The prince had chosen him as second.

We both together roused the soundly sleeping cavalry officer. He sat up, stared at us with dim eyes, in a hoarse voice demanded vodka. He recovered himself, and exchanging greetings with Bizmyonkov, he went with him into the next room to arrange matters. The consultation of the worthy seconds did not last long. A quarter of an hour later, they both came into my bedroom. Koloberdyaev announced to me that 'we're going to fight to−day at three o'clock with pistols.' In silence I bent my head, in token of my agreement Bizmyonkov at once took leave of us, and departed. He was rather pale and inwardly agitated, like a man unused to such jobs, but he was, nevertheless, very polite and chilly. I felt, as it were, conscience−stricken in his presence, and did not dare look him in the face. Koloberdyaev began telling me about his horse. This conversation was very welcome to me. I was afraid he would mention Liza. But the good−natured cavalry officer was not a gossip, and, moreover, he despised all women, calling them, God knows why, green stuff. At two o'clock we had lunch, and at three we were at the place fixed upon the very birch copse in which I had once walked with Liza, a couple of yards from the precipice.

We arrived first; but the prince and Bizmyonkov did not keep us long waiting. The prince was, without exaggeration, as fresh as a rose; his brown eyes looked out with excessive cordiality from under the peak of his cap. He was smoking a cigar, and on seeing Koloberdyaev shook his hand in a friendly way. Even to me he bowed very genially. I was conscious, on the contrary, of being pale, and my hands, to my terrible vexation, were slightly trembling . . . my throat was parched. . . . I had never fought a duel before. 'O God!' I thought; 'if only that ironical gentleman doesn't take my agitation for timidity!' I was inwardly cursing my nerves; but glancing, at last,

straight in the prince's face, and catching on his lips an almost imperceptible smile, I suddenly felt furious again, and was at once at my ease. Meanwhile, our seconds were fixing the barrier, measuring out the paces, loading the pistols. Koloberdyaev did most; Bizmyonkov rather watched him. It was a magnificent day as fine as the day of that ever−memorable walk. The thick blue of the sky peeped, as then, through the golden green of the leaves. Their lisping seemed to mock me. The prince went on smoking his cigar, leaning with his shoulder against the trunk of a young lime−tree, . . .

'Kindly take your places, gentlemen; ready,' Koloberdyaev pronounced at last, handing us pistols.

The prince walked a few steps away, stood still, and, turning his head, asked me over his shoulder, 'You still refuse to take back your words, then?'

I tried to answer him; but my voice failed me, and I had to content myself with a contemptuous wave of the hand. The prince smiled again, and took up his position in his place. We began to approach one another. I raised my pistol, was about to aim at my enemy's chest but suddenly tilted it up, as though some one had given my elbow a shove, and fired. The prince tottered, and put his left hand to his left temple a thread of blood was flowing down his cheek from under the white leather glove. Bizmyonkov rushed up to him.

'It's all right,' he said, taking off his cap, which the bullet had pierced; 'since it's in the head, and I've not fallen, it must be a mere scratch.'

He calmly pulled a cambric handkerchief out of his pocket, and put it to his blood−stained curls.

I stared at him, as though I were turned to stone, and did not stir.

'Go up to the barrier, if you please!' Koloberdyaev observed severely. I obeyed.

'Is the duel to go on?' he added, addressing Bizmyonkov.

Bizmyonkov made him no answer. But the prince, without taking the handkerchief from the wound, without even giving himself the satisfaction of tormenting me at the barrier replied with a smile, 'The duel is at an end,' and fired into the air. I was almost crying with rage and vexation. This man by his magnanimity had utterly trampled me in the mud; he had completely crushed me. I was on the point of making objections, on the point of demanding that he should fire at me. But he came up to me, and held out his hand.

'It's all forgotten between us, isn't it?' he said in a friendly voice.

I looked at his blanched face, at the blood−stained handkerchief, and utterly confounded, put to shame, and annihilated, I pressed his hand.

'Gentlemen!' he added, turning to the seconds, 'everything, I hope, will be kept secret?'

'Of course!' cried Koloberdyaev; 'but, prince, allow me . . .'

And he himself bound up his head.

The prince, as he went away, bowed to me once more. But Bizmyonkov did not even glance at me.
Shattered morally shattered I went homewards with Koloberdyaev.

'Why, what's the matter with you?' the cavalry captain asked me. 'Set your mind at rest; the wound's not serious. He'll be able to dance by to−morrow, if you like. Or are you sorry you didn't kill him? You're wrong, if you are;

he's a first−rate fellow.'

'What business had he to spare me!' I muttered at last.

'Oh, so that's it!' the cavalry captain rejoined tranquilly. . . . 'Ugh, you writing fellows are too much for me!'

I don't know what put it into his head to consider me an author.

I absolutely decline to describe my torments during the evening following upon that luckless duel. My vanity suffered indescribably. It was not my conscience that tortured me; the consciousness of my imbecility crushed me. 'I have given myself the last decisive blow by my own act!' I kept repeating, as I strode up and down my room. The prince, wounded by me, and forgiving me, . . . Yes, Liza is now his. Now nothing can save her, nothing can hold her back on the edge of the abyss.' I knew very well that our duel could not be kept secret, in spite of the prince's words; in any case, it could not remain a secret for Liza.

'The prince is not such a fool,' I murmured in a frenzy of rage, 'as not to profit by it.' . . . But, meanwhile, I was mistaken. The whole town knew of the duel and of its real cause next day, of course. But the prince had not blabbed of it; on the contrary, when, with his head bandaged and an explanation ready, he made his appearance before Liza, she had already heard everything, . . . Whether Bizmyonkov had betrayed me, or the news had reached her by other channels, I cannot say. Though, indeed, can anything ever be concealed in a little town? You can fancy how Liza received him, how all the family of the Ozhogins received him! As for me, I suddenly became an object of universal indignation and loathing, a monster, a jealous bloodthirsty madman. My few acquaintances shunned me as if I were a leper. The authorities of the town promptly addressed the prince, with a proposal to punish me in a severe and befitting manner. Nothing but the persistent and urgent entreaties of the prince himself averted the calamity that menaced me. That man was fated to annihilate me in every way. By his generosity he had shut, as it were, a coffin−lid down upon me. It's needless to say that the Ozhogins' doors were at once closed against me. Kirilla Matveitch even sent me back a bit of pencil I had left in his house. In reality, he, of all people, had no reason to be angry with me. My 'insane' (that was the expression current in the town) jealousy had pointed out, defined, so to speak, the relations of the prince to Liza, Both the old Ozhogins themselves and their fellow−citizens began to look on him almost as betrothed to her. This could not, as a fact, have been quite to his liking. But he was greatly attracted by Liza; and meanwhile, he had not at that time attained his aims. With all the adroitness of a clever man of the world, he took advantage of his new position, and promptly entered, as they say, into the spirit of his new part. . . .

But I! . . . For myself, for my future, I renounced all hopes, at that time. When suffering reaches the point of making our whole being creak and groan, like an overloaded cart, it ought to cease to be ridiculous . . . but no! laughter not only accompanies tears to the end, to exhaustion, to the impossibility of shedding more it even rings and echoes, where the tongue is dumb, and complaint itself is dead. . . . And so, as in the first place I don't intend to expose myself as ridiculous, even to myself, and secondly as I am fearfully tired, I will put off the continuation, and please God the conclusion, of my story till to−morrow. . .

March 29.
A slight frost; yesterday it was thawing.

Yesterday I had not the strength to go on with my diary; like Poprishtchin, I lay, for the most part, on my bed, and talked to Terentyevna. What a woman! Sixty years ago she lost her first betrothed from the plague, she has outlived all her children, she is inexcusably old, drinks tea to her heart's desire, is well fed, and warmly clothed; and what do you suppose she was talking to me about, all day yesterday? I had sent another utterly destitute old woman the collar of an old livery, half moth−eaten, to put on her vest (she wears strips over the chest by way of

vest) . . . and why wasn't it given to her? 'But I'm your nurse; I should think . . . Oh . . . oh, my good sir, it's too bad of you . . . after I've looked after you as I have!' . . . and so on. The merciless old woman utterly wore me out with her reproaches. . . . But to get back to my story.

And so, I suffered like a dog, whose hindquarters have been run over by a wheel. It was only then, only after my banishment from the Ozhogins' house, that I fully realised how much happiness a man can extract from the contemplation of his own unhappiness. O men! pitiful race, indeed! . . . But, away with philosophical reflections. . . − I spent my days in complete solitude, and could only by the most roundabout and even humiliating methods find out what was passing in the Ozhogins' household, and what the prince was doing. My man had made friends with the cousin of the latter's coachman's wife. This acquaintance afforded me some slight relief, and my man soon guessed, from my hints and little presents, what he was to talk about to his master when he pulled his boots off every evening. Sometimes I chanced to meet some one of the Ozhogins' family, Bizmyonkov, or the prince in the street, . . . To the prince and to Bizmyonkov I bowed, but I did not enter into conversation with them. Liza I only saw three times: once, with her mamma, in a fashionable shop; once, in an open carriage with her father and mother and the prince; and once, in church. Of course, I was not impudent enough to approach her, and only watched her from a distance. In the shop she was very much preoccupied, but cheerful. . . . She was ordering something for herself, and busily matching ribbons. Her mother was gazing at her, with her hands folded on her lap, and her nose in the air, smiling with that foolish and devoted smile which is only permissible in adoring mothers. In the carriage with the prince, Liza was . . . I shall never forget that meeting! The old people were sitting in the back seats of the carriage, the prince and Liza in the front. She was paler than usual; on her cheek two patches of pink could just be seen. She was half facing the prince; leaning on her straight right arm (in the left hand she was holding a sunshade), with her little head drooping languidly, she was looking straight into his face with her expressive eyes. At that instant she surrendered herself utterly to him, intrusted herself to him for ever. I had not time to get a good look at his face the carriage galloped by too quickly, but I fancied that he too was deeply touched.

The third time I saw her in church. Not more than ten days had passed since the day when I met her in the carriage with the prince, not more than three weeks since the day of my duel. The business upon which the prince had come to O was by now completed. But he still kept putting off his departure. At Petersburg, he was reported to be ill. In the town, it was expected every day that he would make a proposal in form to Kirilla Matveitch. I was myself only awaiting this final blow to go away for ever. The town of O had grown hateful to me. I could not stay indoors, and wandered from morning to night about the suburbs. One grey, gloomy day, as I was coming back from a walk, which had been cut short by the rain, I went into a church. The evening service had only just begun, there were very few people; I looked round me, and suddenly, near a window, caught sight of a familiar profile. For the first instant, I did not recognise it: that pale face, that spiritless glance, those sunken cheeks could it be the same Liza I had seen a fortnight before? Wrapped in a cloak, without a hat on, with the cold light from the broad white window falling on her from one side, she was gazing fixedly at the holy image, and seemed striving to pray, striving to awake from a sort of listless stupor. A red−cheeked, fat little page with yellow trimmings on his chest was standing behind her, and, with his hands clasped behind his back, stared in sleepy bewilderment at his mistress. I trembled all over, was about to go up to her, but stopped short. I felt choked by a torturing presentiment. Till the very end of the evening service, Liza did not stir. All the people went out, a beadle began sweeping out the church, but still she did not move from her place. The page went up to her, said something to her, touched her dress; she looked round, passed her hand over her face, and went away. I followed her home at a little distance, and then returned to my lodging.

'She is lost!' I cried, when I had got into my room.

As a man, I don't know to this day what my sensations were at that moment. I flung myself, I remember, with clasped hands, on the sofa and fixed my eyes on the floor. But I don't know in the midst of my woe I was, as it were, pleased at something. . . . I would not admit this for anything in the world, if I were not writing only for myself. . . . I had been tormented, certainly, by terrible, harassing suspicions . . . and who knows, I should,

perhaps, have been greatly disconcerted if they had not been fulfilled. 'Such is the heart of man!' some middle−aged Russian teacher would exclaim at this point in an expressive voice, while he raises a fat forefinger, adorned with a cornelian ring. But what have we to do with the opinion of a Russian teacher, with an expressive voice and a cornelian on his finger?

Be that as it may, my presentiment turned out to be well founded. Suddenly the news was all over the town that the prince had gone away, presumably in consequence of a summons from Petersburg; that he had gone away without making any proposal to Kirilla Matveitch or his wife, and that Liza would have to deplore his treachery till the end of her days. The prince's departure was utterly unexpected, for only the evening before his coachman, so my man assured me, had not the slightest suspicion of his master's intentions. This piece of news threw me into a perfect fever. I at once dressed, and was on the point of hastening to the Ozhogins', but on thinking the matter over I considered it more seemly to wait till the next day. I lost nothing, however, by remaining at home. The same evening, there came to see me in all haste a certain Pandopipopulo, a wandering Greek, stranded by some chance in the town of O , a scandalmonger of the first magnitude, who had been more indignant with me than any one for my duel with the prince. He did not even give my man time to announce him; he fairly burst into my room, warmly pressed my hand, begged my pardon a thousand times, called me a paragon of magnanimity and courage, painted the prince in the darkest colours, censured the old Ozhogins, who, in his opinion, had been punished as they deserved, made a slighting reference to Liza in passing, and hurried off again, kissing me on my shoulder. Among other things, I learned from him that the prince, *en vrai grand seigneur*, on the eve of his departure, in response to a delicate hint from Kirilla Matveitch, had answered coldly that he had no intention of deceiving any one, and no idea of marrying, had risen, made his bow, and that was all, . . .

Next day I set off to the Ozhogins'. The shortsighted footman leaped up from his bench on my appearance, with the rapidity of lightning. I bade him announce me; the footman hurried away and returned at once. 'Walk in,' he said; 'you are begged to go in.' I went into Kirilla Matveitch's study. . . The rest to−morrow.

March 30. *Frost.*

And so I went into Kirilla Matveitch's study. I would pay any one handsomely, who could show me now my own face at the moment when that highly respected official, hurriedly flinging together his dressing−gown, approached me with outstretched arms. I must have been a perfect picture of modest triumph, indulgent sympathy, and boundless magnanimity. . . . I felt myself something in the style of Scipio Africanus. Ozhogin was visibly confused and cast down, he avoided my eyes, and kept fidgeting about. I noticed, too, that he spoke unnaturally loudly, and in general expressed himself very vaguely. Vaguely, but with warmth, he begged my forgiveness, vaguely alluded to their departed guest, added a few vague generalities about deception and the instability of earthly blessings, and, suddenly feeling the tears in his eyes, hastened to take a pinch of snuff, probably in order to deceive me as to the cause of his tearfulness. . . . He used the Russian green snuff, and it's well known that that article forces even old men to shed tears that make the human eye look dull and senseless for several minutes.

I behaved, of course, very cautiously with the old man, inquired after the health of his wife and daughter, and at once artfully turned the conversation on to the interesting subject of the rotation of crops. I was dressed as usual, but the feeling of gentle propriety and soft indulgence which filled me gave me a fresh and festive sensation, as though I had on a white waistcoat and a white cravat. One thing agitated me, the thought of seeing Liza, . . . Ozhogin, at last, proposed of his own accord to take me up to his wife. The kind−hearted but foolish woman was at first terribly embarrassed on seeing me; but her brain was not capable of retaining the same impression for long, and so she was soon at her ease. At last I saw Liza . . . she came into the room, . . .

I had expected to find in her a shamed and penitent sinner, and had assumed beforehand the most affectionate and reassuring expression of face. . . . Why lie about it? I really loved her and was thirsting for the happiness of

forgiving her, of holding out a hand to her; but to my unutterable astonishment, in response to my significant bow, she laughed coldly, observed carelessly, 'Oh, is that you?' and at once turned away from me. It is true that her laugh struck me as forced, and in any case did not accord well with her terribly thin face . . . but, all the same, I had not expected such a reception. . . . I looked at her with amazement . . . what a change had taken place in her! Between the child she had been and the woman before me, there was nothing in common. She had, as it were, grown up, straightened out; all the features of her face, especially her lips, seemed defined . . . her gaze had grown deeper, harder, and gloomier. I stayed on at the Ozhogins' till dinner−time. She got up, went out of the room, and came back again, answered questions with composure, and designedly took no notice of me. She wanted, I saw, to make me feel that I was not worth her anger, though I had been within an ace of killing her lover. I lost patience at last; a malicious allusion broke from my lips, . . . She started, glanced swiftly at me, got up, and going to the window, pronounced in a rather shaky voice, 'You can say anything you like, but let me tell you that I love that man, and always shall love him, and do not consider that he has done me any injury, quite the contrary.' . . . Her voice broke, she stopped . . . tried to control herself, but could not, burst into tears, and went out of the room. . . . The old people were much upset. . . . I pressed the hands of both, sighed, turned my eyes heavenward, and withdrew.

I am too weak, I have too little time left, I am not capable of describing in the same detail the new range of torturing reflections, firm resolutions, and all the other fruits of what is called inward conflict, that arose within me after the renewal of my acquaintance with the Ozhogins. I did not doubt that Liza still loved, and would long love, the prince . . . but as one reconciled to the inevitable, and anxious myself to conciliate, I did not even dream of her love. I desired only her affection, I desired to gain her confidence, her respect, which, we are assured by persons of experience, forms the surest basis for happiness in marriage, . . . Unluckily, I lost sight of one rather important circumstance, which was that Liza had hated me ever since the day of the duel. I found this out too late. I began, as before, to be a frequent visitor at the house of the Ozhogins. Kirilla Matveitch received me with more effusiveness and affability than he had ever done. I have even ground for believing that he would at that time have cheerfully given me his daughter, though I was certainly not a match to be coveted. Public opinion was very severe upon him and Liza, while, on the other hand, it extolled me to the skies. Liza's attitude to me was unchanged. She was, for the most part, silent; obeyed, when they begged her to eat, showed no outward signs of sorrow, but, for all that, was wasting away like a candle. I must do Kirilla Matveitch the justice to say that he spared her in every way. Old Madame Ozhogin only ruffled up her feathers like a hen, as she looked at her poor nestling. There was only one person Liza did not shun, though she did not talk much even to him, and that was Bizmyonkov. The old people were rather short, not to say rude, in their behaviour to him. They could not forgive him for having been second in the duel. But he went on going to see them, as though he did not notice their unamiability. With me he was very chilly, and strange to say I felt, as it were, afraid of him. This state of things went on for a fortnight. At last, after a sleepless night, I resolved to have it out with Liza, to open my heart to her, to tell her that, in spite of the past, in spite of all possible gossip and scandal, I should consider myself only too happy if she would give me her hand, and restore me her confidence. I really did seriously imagine that I was showing what they call in the school reading−books an unparalleled example of magnanimity, and that, from sheer amazement alone, she would consent. In any case, I resolved to have an explanation and to escape, at last, from suspense.

Behind the Ozhogins' house was a rather large garden, which ended in a little grove of lime−trees, neglected and overgrown. In the middle of this thicket stood an old summerhouse in the Chinese style: a wooden paling separated the garden from a blind alley. Liza would sometimes walk, for hours together, alone in this garden. Kirilla Matveitch was aware of this, and forbade her being disturbed or followed; let her grief wear itself out, he said. When she could not be found indoors, they had only to ring a bell on the steps at dinner−time and she made her appearance at once, with the same stubborn silence on her lips and in her eyes, and some little leaf crushed up in her hand. So, noticing one day that she was not in the house, I made a show of going away, took leave of Kirilla Matveitch, put on my hat, and went out from the hall into the courtyard, and from the courtyard into the street, but promptly darted in at the gate again with extraordinary rapidity and hurried past the kitchen into the garden. Luckily no one noticed me. Without losing time in deliberation, I went with rapid steps into the grove. In

a little path before me was standing Liza. My heart beat violently. I stood still, drew a deep sigh, and was just on the point of going up to her, when suddenly she lifted her hand without turning round, and began listening, . . From behind the trees, in the direction of the blind alley, came a distinct sound of two knocks, as though some one were tapping at the paling. Liza clapped her hands together, there was heard the faint creak of the gate, and out of the thicket stepped Bizmyonkov. I hastily hid behind a tree. Liza turned towards him without speaking. . . . Without speaking, he drew her arm in his, and the two walked slowly along the path together. I looked after them in amazement. They stopped, looked round, disappeared behind the bushes, reappeared again, and finally went into the summer−house. This summer−house was a diminutive round edifice, with a door and one little window. In the middle stood an old one−legged table, overgrown with fine green moss; two discoloured deal benches stood along the sides, some distance from the damp and darkened walls. Here, on exceptionally hot days, in bygone times, perhaps once a year or so, they had drunk tea. The door did not quite shut, the window−frame had long ago come out of the window, and hung disconsolately, only attached at one corner, like a bird's broken wing. I stole up to the summerhouse, and peeped cautiously through the chink in the window. Liza was sitting on one of the benches, with her head drooping. Her right hand lay on her knees, the left Bizmyonkov was holding in both his hands. He was looking sympathetically at her.

'How do you feel to−day?' he asked her in a low voice.

'Just the same,' she answered, 'not better, nor worse. The emptiness, the fearful emptiness!' she added, raising her eyes dejectedly.

Bizmyonkov made her no answer.

'What do you think,' she went on: 'will he write to me once more?'

'I don't think so, Lizaveta Kirillovna!'

She was silent.

'And after all, why should he write? He told me everything in his first letter. I could not be his wife; but I have been happy . . . not for long . . . I have been happy . . .'

Bizmyonkov looked down.

'Ah,' she went on quickly, 'if you knew how I loathe that Tchulkaturin . . . I always fancy I see on that man's hands . . . his blood.' (I shuddered behind my chink.) 'Though indeed,' she added, dreamily, 'who knows, perhaps, if it had not been for that duel. . . . Ah, when I saw him wounded I felt at once that I was altogether his.'

'Tchulkaturin loves you,' observed Bizmyonkov.

'What is that tome? I don't want anyone's love.' . . . She stopped and added slowly, 'Except yours. Yes, my friend, your love is necessary to me; except for you, I should be lost. You have helped me to bear terrible moments . . .'

She broke off . . . Bizmyonkov began with fatherly tenderness stroking her hand.

'There's no help for it! What is one to do! what is one to do, Lizaveta Kirillovna!' he repeated several times.

'And now indeed,' she went on in a lifeless voice, 'I should die, I think, if it were not for you. It's you alone that keep me up; besides, you remind me of him. . . . You knew all about it, you see. Do you remember how fine he was that day. . . . But forgive me; it must be hard for you. . . .'

'Go on, go on! Nonsense! Bless you!' Bizmyonkov interrupted her.

She pressed his hand.

'You are very good, Bizmyonkov,' she went on; 'you are good as an angel. What can I do! I feel I shall love him to the grave. I have forgiven him, I am grateful to him. God give him happiness! May God give him a wife after his own heart ' and her eyes filled with tears ' if only he does not forget me, if only he will sometimes think of his Liza! Let us go,' she added, after a brief silence.

Bizmyonkov raised her hand to his lips.

'I know,' she began again hotly, 'every one is blaming me now, every one is throwing stones at me. Let them! I wouldn't, any way, change my misery for their happiness . . . no! no! . . . He did not love me for long, but he loved me! He never deceived me, he never told me I should be his wife; I never dreamed of it myself. It was only poor papa hoped for it.

'And even now I am not altogether unhappy; the memory remains to me, and however fearful the results . . . I'm stifling here . . . it was here I saw him the last time, . . . Let's go into the air.'

They got up. I had only just time to skip on one side and hide behind a thick lime−tree. They came out of the summer−house, and, as far as I could judge by the sound of their steps, went away into the thicket. I don't know how long I went on standing there, without stirring from my place, plunged in a sort of senseless amazement, when suddenly I heard steps again. I started, and peeped cautiously out from my hiding−place. Bizmyonkov and Liza were coming back along the same path. Both were greatly agitated, especially Bizmyonkov. I fancied he was crying. Liza stopped, looked at him, and distinctly uttered the following words: 'I do consent, Bizmyonkov. I would never have agreed if you were only trying to save me, to rescue me from a terrible position, but you love me, you know everything and you love me. I shall never find a trustier, truer friend. I will be your wife.'

Bizmyonkov kissed her hand: she smiled at him mournfully and moved away towards the house. Bizmyonkov rushed into the thicket, and I went my way. Seeing that Bizmyonkov had apparently said to Liza precisely what I had intended to say to her, and she had given him precisely the reply I was longing to hear from her, there was no need for me to trouble myself further. Within a fortnight she was married to him. The old Ozhogins were thankful to get any husband for her.

Now, tell me, am I not a superfluous man? Didn't I play throughout the whole story the part of a superfluous person? The prince's part . . . of that it's needless to speak; Bizmyonkov's part, too, is comprehensible. . . . But I with what object was I mixed up in it?

. . A senseless fifth wheel to the cart! . . . Ah, it's bitter, bitter for me! . . . But there, as the barge−haulers say, 'One more pull, and one more yet,' one day more, and one more yet, and there will be no more bitter nor sweet for me.

March 31.

I'm in a bad way. I am writing these lines in bed. Since yesterday evening there has been a sudden change in the weather. To−day is hot, almost a summer day. Everything is thawing, breaking up, flowing away. The air is full of the smell of the opened earth, a strong, heavy, stifling smell. Steam is rising on all sides. The sun seems beating, seems smiting everything to pieces. I am very ill, I feel that I am breaking up.

I meant to write my diary, and, instead of that, what have I done? I have related one incident of my life. I gossiped on, slumbering reminiscences were awakened and drew me away. I have written, without haste, in detail, as though I had years before me. And here now, there's no time to go on. Death, death is coming. I can hear her menacing crescendo. The time is come . . . the time is come! . . .

And indeed, what does it matter? Isn't it all the same whatever I write? In sight of death the last earthly cares vanish. I feel I have grown calm; I am becoming simpler, clearer. Too late I've gained sense! . . . It's a strange thing! I have grown calm certainly, and at the same time . . . I'm full of dread. Yes, I'm full of dread. Half hanging over the silent, yawning abyss, I shudder, turn away, with greedy intentness gaze at everything about me. Every object is doubly precious to me. I cannot gaze enough at my poor, cheerless room, saying farewell to each spot on my walls. Take your fill for the last time, my eyes. Life is retreating; slowly and smoothly she is flying away from me, as the shore flies from the eyes of one at sea. The old yellow face of my nurse, tied up in a dark kerchief, the hissing samovar on the table, the pot of geranium in the window, and you, my poor dog, Tresór, the pen I write these lines with, my own hand, I see you now . . . here you are, here. . . . Is it possible . . . can it be, to−day . . . I shall never see you again! It's hard for a live creature to part with life! Why do you fawn on me, poor dog? why do you come putting your forepaws on the bed, with your stump of a tail wagging so violently, and your kind, mournful eyes fixed on me all the while? Are you sorry for me? or do you feel already that your master will soon be gone? Ah, if I could only keep my thoughts, too, resting on all the objects in my room! I know these reminiscences are dismal and of no importance, but I have no other. 'The emptiness, the fearful emptiness!' as Liza said.

O my God, my God! Here I am dying. . . . A heart capable of loving and ready to love will soon cease to beat, . . . And can it be it will be still for ever without having once known happiness, without having once expanded under the sweet burden of bliss? Alas! it's impossible, impossible, I know, . . . If only now, at least, before death for death after all is a sacred thing, after all it elevates any being if any kind, sad, friendly voice would sing over me a farewell song of my own sorrow, I could, perhaps, be resigned to it. But to die stupidly, stupidly. . . .

I believe I'm beginning to rave.

Farewell, life! farewell, my garden! and you, my lime−trees! When the summer comes, do not forget to be clothed with flowers from head to foot . . . and may it be sweet for people to lie in your fragrant shade, on the fresh grass, among the whispering chatter of your leaves, lightly stirred by the wind. Farewell, farewell! Farewell, everything and for ever!

Farewell, Liza! I wrote those two words, and almost laughed aloud. This exclamation strikes me as taken out of a book. It's as though I were writing a sentimental novel and ending up a despairing letter, . . .

To−morrow is the first of April. Can I be going to die to−morrow? That would be really too unseemly. It's just right for me, though . . . How the doctor did chatter to−day!

April 1.

It is over, . . . Life is over. I shall certainly die to−day. It's hot outside . . . almost suffocating . . . or is it that my lungs are already refusing to breathe? My little comedy is played out. The curtain is falling.

Sinking into nothing, I cease to be superfluous . . .

Ah, how brilliant that sun is! Those mighty beams breathe of eternity . . .

Farewell, Terentyevna! . . . This morning as she sat at the window she was crying . . . perhaps over me . . . and perhaps because she too will soon have to die. I have made her promise not to kill Tresór.

It's hard for me to write, . . . I will put down the pen. . . . It's high time; death is already approaching with ever−increasing rumble, like a carriage at night over the pavement; it is here, it is flitting about me, like the light breath which made the prophet's hair stand up on end.

I am dying. . . . Live, you who are living,

'And about the grave
May youthful life rejoice,
And nature heedless
Glow with eternal beauty.

Note by the Editor. Under this last line was a head in profile with a big streak of hair and moustaches, with eyes en face, and eyelashes like rays; and under the head some one had written the following words:

'This manuscnpt was read
And the Contents of it Not Approved
By Peter Zudotyeshin
My My My
My dear Sir,
Peter Zudotyeshin,
Dear Sir.'

But as the handwriting of these lines was not in the least like the handwriting in which the other part of the manuscript was written, the editor considers that he is justified in concluding that the above lines were added subsequently by another person, especially since it has come to his (the editor's) knowledge that Mr. Tchulkaturin actually did die on the night between the 1st and 2nd of April in the year 18 , at his native place, Sheep's Springs.

1850.