Tolstoy Leo

A Russian Proprietor, and Other Stories

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A Russian Proprietor, and Other Stories:

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A Russian Proprietor, and Other Stories

PREFACE

The following tales are, with one exception, taken from the second volume of Count L. N. Tolstoï's collected works, and are representative of his literary activity between 1852 and 1859.

The first story, though only a fragment of a projected novel to be called "A Russian Proprietor," is perfect and complete in itself. One cannot help feeling that it is autobiographical; Count Tolstoï himself, it will be remembered, having suddenly quitted the University of Kazan, in spite of the entreaties of his friends, and retired to his paternal estate of Yasnaya Polyana, near Tula. The aunt whose letter is quoted in the first chapter must have been Count Tolstoï's aunt, mentioned in the second chapter of "My Confession."

The "Recollections of a Scorer" and "Two Hussars" are both evidently reminiscent of Count Tolstoï's gambling-days. Both must have been suggested by some such terrible experience as that told of the count's gambling-debt in the Caucasus.

"Lucerne" and "Albert" are likewise evidently transcripts

from the author's own experience. The strange benefactor in each, and the shadowy Prince Nekhliudof, are all Count Tolstoï in phases quite distinct from what he is at present.

"The Three Deaths," written in 1859, has little of the sombre power of "Iván Ilyitch." The scalpel which was so remorselessly applied to the soul in the latter is wholly hidden. It is realism pure and simple; and the contrast between the death of the peasant and of the lady is left to inference, made all the stronger by the unexpected and grandiose finale in the death of the tree.

In interesting contrast to these characteristic stories is the little gem entitled "A Prisoner in the Caucasus," which is found in Vol. IV. of the Count's works under the heading "Tales for Children." The style is perfectly simple and lucid; the pictures of life in the Tatar village among the mountains are intensely vivid, painted with strong and masterly touches; and the reader will not soon forget the little laughing maiden Dina, with the rubles jingling in her braided hair. She stands forth as one of the most fascinating of the author's creations.

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

Boston, Dec. 5, 1887.

A RUSSIAN PROPRIETOR

I

Prince Nekhliudof was nineteen years of age when, at the end of his third term at the university, he came to spend his summer vacation on his estate. He was alone there all the summer.

In the autumn he wrote in his unformed, boyish hand, a letter to his aunt, the Countess Biéloretskaïa, who, according to his notion, was his best friend, and the most genial woman in the world. The letter was in French, and was to the following effect: —

> "Dear Auntie, – I have adopted a resolution upon which must depend the fate of my whole existence. I have left the university in order to devote myself to a country life, because I feel that I was born for it. For God's sake, dear auntie, don't make sport of me. You say that I am young. Perhaps I am still almost a child; but this does not prevent me from feeling sure of my vocation, from wishing to accomplish it successfully, and from loving it.
>
> "As I have already written you, I found our affairs in indescribable confusion. Wishing to bring order out of chaos, I made an investigation, and discovered that the principal trouble was due to the most wretched miserable condition of the peasants, and that this trouble could be

remedied only by work and patience.

"If you could only see two of my peasants, David and Iván, and the way that they and their families live, I am convinced that one glance at these two unfortunates would do more to persuade you than all that I can tell you in justification of my resolve. Is not my obligation sacred and clear, to labor for the welfare of these seven hundred human beings for whom I must be responsible to God? Would it not be a sin to leave them to the mercy of harsh elders and overseers, so as to carry out plans of enjoyment or ambition? And why should I seek in any other sphere the opportunity of being useful, and doing good, when such a noble, brilliant, and paramount duty lies right at hand?

"I feel that I am capable of being a good farmer;[1] and in order to make myself such an one as I understand the word to mean, I do not need my diploma as B.A., nor the rank which you so expect of me. Dear auntie, do not make ambitious plans for me: accustom yourself to the thought that I am going on an absolutely peculiar path, but one that is good, and, I think, will bring me to happiness. I have thought and thought about my future duties, have written out some rules of conduct, and, if God only gives me health and strength, I shall succeed in my undertaking.

"Do not show this letter to my brother Vásya: I am afraid of his ridicule. He generally dictates to me, and I am accustomed to give way to him. Whilst Vanya may not approve of my resolve, at least he will understand it."

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[1] *khozyáïn*.

The countess replied to her nephew in the following letter, also written in French: —

"Your letter, dear Dmitri, showed nothing else to me than that you have a warm heart; and I have never had reason to doubt that. But, my dear, our good tendencies do us more harm in life than our bad ones. I will not tell you that you are committing a folly, that your behavior annoys me; but I will do my best to make one argument have an effect upon you. Let us reason together, my dear.

"You say you feel that your vocation is for a country life; that you wish to make your serfs happy, and that you hope to be a good farmer.

"In the first place, I must tell you that we feel sure of our vocation only when we have once made a mistake in one; secondly, that it is easier to win happiness for ourselves than for others; and thirdly, that, in order to be a good master, it is necessary to be a cold and austere man, which you will never in this world succeed in being, even though you strive to make believe that you are.

"You consider your arguments irresistible, and go so far as to adopt them as rules for the conduct of life; but at my age, my dear, people don't care for arguments and rules, but only for experience. Now, experience tells me that your plans are childish.

"I am now in my fiftieth year, and I have known many fine men; but I have never heard of a young man of good family and ability burying himself in the country under the pretext of doing good.

"You have always wished to appear original, but your originality is nothing else than morbidly developed egotism. And, my dear, choose some better-trodden path. It will lead you to success; and success, if it is not necessary for you as success, is at least indispensable in giving you the possibility of doing good which you desire. The poverty of a few serfs is an unavoidable evil, or, rather, an evil which cannot be remedied by forgetting all your obligations to society, to your relatives, and to yourself.

"With your intellect, with your kind heart, and your love for virtue, no career would fail to bring you success; but at all events choose one which would be worth your while, and bring you honor.

"I believe that you are sincere, when you say that you are free from ambition; but you are deceiving yourself. Ambition is a virtue at your age, and with your means it becomes a fault and an absurdity when a man is no longer in the condition to satisfy this passion.

"And you will experience this if you do not change your intention. Good-by, dear Mitya. It seems to me that I have all the more love for you on account of your foolish but still noble and magnanimous plan. Do as you please, but I forewarn you that I shall not be able to sympathize with you."

The young man read this letter, considered it long and seriously, and finally, having decided that his genial aunt might be mistaken, sent in his petition for dismissal from the university, and took up his residence at his estate.

II

The young proprietor had, as he wrote his aunt, devised a plan of action in the management of his estate; and his whole life and activity were measured by hours, days, and months.

Sunday was reserved for the reception of petitioners, domestic servants, and peasants, for the visitation of the poor serfs belonging to the estate, and the distribution of assistance with the approval of the Commune, which met every Sunday evening, and was obliged to decide who should have help, and what amount should be given.

In such employments passed more than a year, and the young man was now no longer a novice either in the practical or theoretical knowledge of estate management.

It was a clear July Sunday when Nekhliudof, having finished his coffee and run through a chapter of "Maison Rustique," put his note-book and a packet of bank-notes into the pocket of his light overcoat, and started out of doors. It was a great country-house with colonnades and terraces where he lived, but he occupied only one small room on the ground floor. He made his way over the neglected, weed-grown paths of the old English garden, toward the village, which was distributed along both sides of the highway.

Nekhliudof was a tall, slender young man, with long, thick, wavy auburn hair, with a bright gleam in his dark eyes, a

clear complexion, and rosy lips where the first down of young manhood was now beginning to appear.

In all his motions and gait, could be seen strength, energy, and the good-natured self-satisfaction of youth.

The serfs, in variegated groups, were returning from church: old men, maidens, children, mothers with babies in their arms, dressed in their Sunday best, were scattering to their homes; and as they met the bárin they bowed low and made room for him to pass.

After Nekhliudof had walked some distance along the street, he stopped, and drew from his pocket his note-book, on the last page of which, inscribed in his own boyish hand, were a number of names of his serfs with memoranda. He read, "*Iván Churis asks for aid*;" and then, proceeding still farther along the street, entered the gate of the second hut[2] on the right.

Churis's domicile consisted of a half-decayed structure, with musty corners; the sides were rickety. It was so buried in the ground, that the banking, made of earth and dung, almost hid the two windows. The one on the front had a broken sash, and the shutters were half torn away; the other was small and low, and was stuffed with flax. A boarded entry with rotting sills and low door, another small building still older and still lower-studded than the entry, a gate, and a barn were clustered about the principal hut.

All this had once been covered by one irregular roof; but now

[2] *izbá*.

only over the eaves hung the thick straw, black and decaying. Above, in places, could be seen the frame-work and rafters.

In front of the yard were a well with rotten curb, the remains of a post, and the wheel, and a mud-puddle stirred up by the cattle where some ducks were splashing.

Near the well stood two old willows, split and broken, with their whitish-green foliage. They were witnesses to the fact that some one, some time, had taken interest in beautifying this place. Under one of them sat a fair-haired girl of seven summers, watching another little girl of two, who was creeping at her feet. The watch-dog gambolling about them, as soon as he saw the bárin, flew headlong under the gate, and there set up a quavering yelp expressive of panic.

"Iván at home?" asked Nekhliudof.

The little girl seemed stupefied at this question, and kept opening her eyes wider and wider, but made no reply. The baby opened her mouth, and set up a yell.

A little old woman, in a torn checkered skirt, belted low with an old red girdle, peered out of the door, and also said nothing. Nekhliudof approached the entry, and repeated his inquiry.

"Yes, he's at home," replied the little old woman in a quavering voice, bowing low, and evincing timidity and agitation.

After Nekhliudof had asked after her health, and passed through the entry into the little yard, the old woman, resting her chin in her hand, went to the door, and, without taking her eyes off the bárin, began gently to shake her head.

The yard was in a wretched condition, with heaps of old blackened manure that had not been carried away: on the manure were thrown in confusion a rotting block, pitchforks, and two harrows.

There were pent-houses around the yard, under one side of which stood a wooden plough, a cart without a wheel, and a pile of empty good-for-nothing bee-hives thrown one upon another. The roof was in disrepair; and one side had fallen in so that the covering in front rested, not on the supports, but on the manure.

Churis, with the edge and head of an axe, was breaking off the wattles that strengthened the roof. Iván was a peasant, fifty years of age. In stature, he was short. The features of his tanned oval face, framed in a dark auburn beard and hair where a trace of gray was beginning to appear, were handsome and expressive. His dark blue eyes gleamed with intelligence and lazy good-nature, from under half-shut lids. His small, regular mouth, sharply defined under his sandy thin mustache when he smiled, betrayed a calm self-confidence, and a certain bantering indifference toward all around him.

By the roughness of his skin, by his deep wrinkles, by the veins that stood out prominently on his neck, face, and hands, by his unnatural stoop and the crooked position of his legs, it was evident that all his life had been spent in hard work, far beyond his strength.

His garb consisted of white hempen drawers, with blue patches on the knees, and a dirty shirt of the same material,

which kept hitching up his back and arms. The shirt was belted low in the waist by a girdle, from which hung a brass key.

"Good-day," said the bárin, as he stepped into the yard. Churis glanced around, and kept on with his work; making energetic motions, he finished clearing away the wattles from under the shed, and then only, having struck the axe into the block, he came out into the middle of the yard.

"A pleasant holiday, your excellency!" said he, bowing low and smoothing his hair.

"Thanks, my friend. I came to see how your affairs[3] were progressing," said Nekhliudof with boyish friendliness and timidity, glancing at the peasant's garb. "Just show me what you need in the way of supports that you asked me about at the last meeting."

"Supports, of course, sir, your excellency, sir.[4] I should like it fixed a little here, sir, if you will have the goodness to cast your eye on it: here this corner has given way, sir, and only by the mercy of God the cattle didn't happen to be there. It barely hangs at all," said Churis, gazing with an expressive look at his broken-down, ramshackly, and ruined sheds. "Now the girders and the supports and the rafters are nothing but rot; you won't see a sound timber. But where can we get lumber nowadays, I should like to know?"

"Well, what do you want with the five supports when the one

---

[3] *khozyáïstvo.*

[4] *bátiushka.*

shed has fallen in? the others will be soon falling in too, won't they? You need to have every thing made new, – rafters and girders and posts; but you don't want supports," said the bárin, evidently priding himself on his comprehension of the case.

Churis made no reply.

"Of course you need lumber, but not supports. You ought to have told me so."

"Surely I do, but there's nowhere to get it. Not all of us can come to the manor-house. If we all should get into the habit of coming to the manor-house and asking your excellency for every thing we wanted, what kind of serfs should we be? But if your kindness went so far as to let me have some of the oak saplings that are lying idle over by the threshing-floor," said the peasant, making a low bow and scraping with his foot, "then, maybe, I might exchange some, and piece out others, so that the old would last some time longer."

"What is the good of the old? Why, you just told me that it was all old and rotten. This part has fallen in to-day; to-morrow, that one will; the day after, a third. So, if any thing is to be done, it must be all made new, so that the work may not be wasted. Now tell me what you think about it. Can your premises[5] last out this winter, or not?"

"Who can tell?"

"No, but what do you think? Will they fall in, or not?"

Churis meditated for a moment. "Can't help falling in," said

[5] *dvor.*

he suddenly.

"Well, now you see you had better have said that at the meeting, that you needed to rebuild your whole place,[5] instead of a few props. You see, I should be glad to help you."

"Many thanks for your kindness," replied Churis, in an incredulous tone and not looking at the bárin. "If you would give me four joists and some props, then, perhaps, I might fix things up myself; but if any one is hunting after good-for-nothing timbers, then he'd find them in the joists of the hut."

"Why, is your hut so wretched as all that?"

"My old woman and I are expecting it to fall in on us any day," replied Churis indifferently. "A day or two ago, a girder fell from the ceiling, and struck my old woman."

"What! struck her?"

"Yes, struck her, your excellency: whacked her on the back, so that she lay half dead all night."

"Well, did she get over it?"

"Pretty much, but she's been ailing ever since; but then she's always ailing."

"What, are you sick?" asked Nekhliudof of the old woman, who had been standing all the time at the door, and had begun to groan as soon as her husband mentioned her.

"It bothers me here more and more, especially on Sundays," she replied, pointing to her dirty lean bosom.

"Again?" asked the young master in a tone of vexation, shrugging his shoulders. "Why, if you are so sick, don't you come

and get advice at the dispensary? That is what the dispensary was built for. Haven't you been told about it?"

"Certainly we have, but I have not had any time to spare; have had to work in the field, and at home, and look after the children, and no one to help me; if I weren't all alone"…

III

Nekhliudof went into the hut. The uneven smoke-begrimed walls of the dwelling were hung with various rags and clothes; and, in the living-room, were literally covered with reddish cockroaches clustering around the holy images and benches.

In the middle of this dark, fetid apartment, not fourteen feet square, was a huge crack in the ceiling; and in spite of the fact that it was braced up in two places, the ceiling hung down so that it threatened to fall from moment to moment.

"Yes, the hut is very miserable," said the bárin, looking into the face of Churis, who, it seems, had not cared to speak first about this state of things.

"It will crush us to death; it will crush the children," said the woman in a tearful voice, attending to the stove which stood under the loft.

"Hold your tongue," cried Churis sternly; and with a slight smile playing under his mustaches, he turned to the master. "And I haven't the wit to know what's to be done with it, your excellency, – with this hut and props and planks. There's nothing to be done with them."

"How can we live through the winter here? *Okh, okh!* Oh, oh!" groaned the old woman.

"There's one thing – if we put in some more props and laid a new floor," said the husband, interrupting her with a calm,

practical expression, "and threw over one set of rafters, then perhaps we might manage to get through the winter. It is possible to live; but you'd have to put some props all over the hut, like that: but if it gets shaken, then there won't be any thing left of it. As long as it stands, it holds together," he concluded, evidently perfectly contented that he appreciated this contingency.

Nekhliudof was both vexed and grieved that Churis had got himself into such a condition, without having come to him long before; since he had more than once, during his sojourn on the estate, told the peasants, and insisted upon it, that they should all apply directly to him for whatever they needed.

He now felt some indignation against the peasant; he angrily shrugged his shoulders, and frowned. But the sight of the poverty in the midst of which he found himself, and Churis's calm and self-satisfied appearance in contrast with this poverty, changed his vexation into a sort of feeling of melancholy and hopelessness.

"Well, Iván, why on earth didn't you tell me about this before?" he asked in a tone of reproach, as he took a seat on the filthy, unsteady bench.

"I didn't dare to, your excellency," replied Churis with the same scarcely perceptible smile, shuffling with his black, bare feet over the uneven surface of the mud floor; but this he said so fearlessly and with such composure, that it was hard to believe that he had any timidity about going to his master.

"We are mere peasants; how could we be so presuming?"

began the old woman, sobbing.

"Hush up," said Churis, again addressing her.

"It is impossible for you to live in this hut: it's all rotten," cried Nekhliudof after a brief silence. "Now, this is how we shall manage it, my friend"[6]…

"I am listening."

"Have you seen the improved stone cottages that I have been building at the new farm, – the one with the undressed walls?"

"Indeed I have seen them," replied Churis, with a smile that showed his white teeth still unimpaired. "Everybody's agog at the way they're built. Fine cottages! The boys were laughing and wondering if they wouldn't be turned into granaries; they would be so secure against rats. Fine cottages," he said in conclusion, with an expression of absurd perplexity, shaking his head, "just like a jail!"

"Yes, they're splendid cottages, dry and warm, and no danger of fire," replied the bárin, a frown crossing his youthful face as he perceived the peasant's involuntary sarcasm.

"Without question, your excellency, fine cottages."

"Well, then, one of these cottages is just finished. It is twenty-four feet square, with an entry, and a barn, and it's entirely ready. I will let you have it on credit if you say so, at cost price; you can pay for it at your own convenience," said the bárin with a self-satisfied smile, which he could not control, at the thought of his benevolence. "You can pull down this old one," he went

[6] *bratets*, brother.

on to say; "it will make you a granary. We will also move the pens. The water there is splendid. I will give you enough land for a vegetable-garden, and I'll let you have a strip of land on all three sides. You can live there in a decent way. Now, does not that please you?" asked Nekhliudof, perceiving that as soon as he spoke of moving, Churis became perfectly motionless, and looked at the ground without even a shadow of a smile.

"It's as your excellency wills," he replied, not raising his eyes.

The old woman came forward as though something had stung her to the quick, and began to speak; but her husband anticipated her.

"It's as your excellency wills," he repeated resolutely, and at the same time humbly glancing at his master, and tossing back his hair. "But it would never do for us to live on a new farm."

"Why not?"

"Nay, your excellency, not if you move us over there: here we are wretched enough, but over there we could never in the world get along. What kind of peasants should we be there? Nay, nay, it is impossible for us to live there."

"But why not, pray?"

"We should be totally ruined, your excellency."

"But why can't you live there?"

"What kind of a life would it be? Just think! it has never been lived in; we don't know any thing about the water, no pasture anywhere. Here we have had hemp-fields ever since we can remember, all manured; but what is there there? Yes, what is

there there? A wilderness! No hedges, no corn-kilns, no sheds, no nothing at all! Oh, yes, your excellency; we should be ruined if you took us there; we should be perfectly ruined. A new place, all unknown to us," he repeated, shaking his head thoughtfully but resolutely.

Nekhliudof tried to point out to the peasant that the change, on the contrary, would be very advantageous for him; that they would plant hedges, and build sheds; that the water there was excellent, and so on: but Churis's obstinate silence exasperated him, and he accordingly felt that he was speaking to no purpose.

Churis made no objection to what he said; but when the master finished speaking, he remarked with a crafty smile, that it would be best of all to remove to that farm some of the old domestic servants, and Alyósha the fool, so that they might watch over the grain there.

"That would be worth while," he remarked, and smiled once more. "This is foolish business, your excellency."

"What makes you think the place is not inhabitable?" insisted Nekhliudof patiently. "This place here isn't inhabitable, and hasn't been, and yet you live here. But there, you will get settled there before you know it; you will certainly find it easy"…

"But, your excellency, kind sir,[7] how can it be compared?" replied Churis eagerly, as though he feared that the master would not accept a conclusive argument. "Here is our place in the world; we are happy in it; we are accustomed to it, and the road and

[7] *bátiushka.*

the pond – where would the old woman do her washing? where would the cattle get watered? And all our peasant ways are here; here from time out of mind. And here's the threshing-floor, and the little garden, and the willows; and here my parents lived, and my grandfather; and my father gave his soul into God's keeping here, and I too would end my days here, your excellency. I ask nothing more than that. Be good, and let the hut be put in order; we shall be always grateful for your kindness: but no, not for any thing, would we spend our last days anywhere else. Let us stay here and say our prayers," he continued, bowing low; "do not take us from our nest, kind sir."[8]

All the time that Churis was speaking, there was heard in the place under the loft, where his wife was standing, sobs growing more and more violent; and when the husband said "*kind sir*," she suddenly darted forward, and with tears in her eyes threw herself at the bárin's feet.

"Don't destroy us, benefactor; you are our father, you are our mother! Where are you going to move us to? We are old folks; we have no one to help us. You are to us as God is," lamented the old woman.

Nekhliudof leaped up from the bench, and was going to lift the old woman; but she, with a sort of passionate despair, beat her forehead on the earth floor, and pushed aside the master's hand.

"What is the matter with you? Get up, I beg of you. If you don't wish to go, it is not necessary. I won't oblige you to," said

[8] *bátiushka.*

he, waving his hand, and retreating to the door.

When Nekhliudof sat down on the bench again, and silence was restored in the room, interrupted only by the sobs of the old woman, who was once more busy under the loft, and was wiping away her tears with the sleeves of her shirt, the young proprietor began to comprehend what was meant for the peasant and his wife by the dilapidated little hut, the crumbling well with the filthy pool, the decaying stalls and sheds, and the broken willows which could be seen before the crooked window; and the feeling that arose in him was burdensome, melancholy, and touched with shame.

"Why didn't you tell the Commune last Sunday, Iván, that you needed a new hut? I don't know, now, how to help you. I told you all at the first meeting, that I had come to live in the country, and devote my life to you, that I was ready to deprive myself of every thing to make you happy and contented; and I vowed before God, now, that I would keep my word," said the young proprietor, not knowing that such a manner of opening the heart is incapable of arousing faith in any one, and especially in the Russian, who loves not words but deeds, and is reluctant to be stirred up by feelings, no matter how beautiful they may be.

But the simple-hearted young man was so pleased with this feeling that he experienced, that he could not help speaking.

Churis leaned his head to one side, and slowly blinking, listened with constrained attention to his master, as to a man to whom he must needs listen, even though he says things not

entirely good, and absolutely foreign to his way of thinking.

"But you see I cannot do all that everybody asks of me. If I did not refuse some who ask me for wood, I myself should be left without any, and I could not give to those who really needed. When I made this rule, I did it for the regulation of the peasants' affairs; and I put it entirely in the hands of the Commune. This wood now is not mine, but yours, you peasants', and I cannot any longer dispose of it; but the Commune disposes of it, as you know. Come to the meeting to-night. I will tell the Commune about your request: if they are disposed to give you a new hut, well and good; but I haven't any more wood. I wish with all my soul to help you; but if you aren't willing to move, then it is no longer my affair, but the Commune's. Do you understand me?"

"Many thanks for your kindness," replied Churis in some agitation. "If you will give me some lumber, then we can make repairs. What is the Commune? It's a well-known fact that"…

"No, you come."

"I obey. I will come. Why shouldn't I come? Only this thing is sure: I won't ask the Commune."

IV

The young proprietor evidently desired to ask some more questions of the peasants. He did not move from the bench; and he glanced irresolutely, now at Churis, now at the empty, unlighted stove.

"Well, have you had dinner yet?" he asked at last.

A mocking smile arose to Churis's lips, as though it were ridiculous to him for his master to ask such foolish questions; he made no reply.

"What do you mean, – dinner, benefactor?" said the old woman, sighing deeply. "We've eaten a little bread; that's our dinner. We couldn't get any vegetables to-day so as to boil some soup,[9] but we had a little kvas, – enough for the children."

"To-day was a fast-day for us, your excellency," remarked Churis sarcastically, taking up his wife's words. "Bread and onions; that's the way we peasants live. Howsomever, praise be to the Lord, I have a little grain yet, thanks to your kindness; it's lasted till now; but there's plenty of our peasants as ain't got any. Everywheres there's scarcity of onions. Only a day or two ago they sent to Mikháïl the gardener, to get a bunch for a farthing: couldn't get any anywheres. Haven't been to God's church scarcely since Easter. Haven't had nothing to buy a taper for Mikóla [St. Nicholas] with."

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[9] *shchets* for *shchi*.

Nekhliudof, not by hearsay nor by trust in the words of others, but by the evidence of his own eyes, had long known the extreme depth of poverty into which his peasantry had sunken: but the entire reality was in such perfect contrast to his own bringing-up, the turn of his mind, and the course of his life, that in spite of himself he kept forgetting the truth of it; and every time when, as now, it was brought vividly, tangibly, before him, his heart was torn with painful, almost unendurable melancholy, as though some absolute and unavoidable punishment were torturing him.

"Why are you so poor?" he exclaimed, involuntarily expressing his thought.

"How could such as we help being poor, sir,[10] your excellency? Our land is so bad, you yourself may be pleased to know, – clay and sand-heaps; and surely we must have angered God, for this long time, ever since the cholera, the corn won't grow. Our meadows and every thing else have been growing worse and worse. And some of us have to work for the farm, and some detailed for the manor-lands. And here I am with no one to help me, and I'm getting old. I'd be glad enough to work, but I hain't no strength. And my old woman's ailing; and every year there's a new girl born, and I have to feed 'em all. I get tired out all alone, and here's seven dependent on me. I must be a sinner in the eyes of the Lord God, I often think to myself. And when God takes me off sudden-like, I feel it would be easier for me; just as it's better for them than to lead such a dog's life here"…

[10] *bátiushka.*

"Oh, *okh*!" groaned the old woman, as a sort of confirmation of her husband's words.

"And this is all the help I have," continued Churis, pointing to the white-headed, unkempt little boy of seven, with a huge belly, who at this moment, timidly and quietly pushing the door open, came into the hut, and, resting his eyes in wonder and solemnity on the master, clung hold of Churis's shirt-band with both hands.

"This is all the assistance I have here," continued Churis in a sonorous voice, laying his shaggy hand on the little lad's white hair. "When will he be good for any thing? But my work isn't much good. When I reach old age I shall be good for nothing; the rupture is getting the better of me. In wet weather it makes me fairly scream. I am getting to be an old man, and yet I have to take care of my land.[11] And here's Yermilof, Demkin, Zabref, all younger than I am, and they have been freed from their land long ago. Well, I haven't any one to help me with it; that's my misfortune. Have to feed so many; that's where my struggle lies, your excellency."

"I should be very glad to make it easier for you, truly. But how can I?" asked the young bárin in a tone of sympathy, looking at the serf.

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[11] The lands belonging to the Russian commune, or *mir*, were periodically distributed by allotment, each full-grown peasant receiving as his share a *tiagló* representing what the average man and his wife were capable of cultivating. When the period was long – ten years for instance – it sometimes happened that a serf, by reason of illness, laziness, or other misfortune, would find it hard to cultivate his share, pay the tax on it, and also do the work required of him on his bárin's land. Such was Churis's complaint.

"How make it easier? It's a well-known fact, if you have the land you must do enforced labor also;[12] that's the regulation. I expect something from this youngster. If only you'd be good enough to let him off from going to school. But just a day or two ago, the officer[13] came and said that your excellency wanted him to go to school. Do let him off; he has no capacity for learning, your excellency. He's too young yet; he won't understand any thing."

"No, brother, you're wrong there," said the bárin. "Your boy is old enough to understand; it's time for him to be learning. Just think of it! How he'll grow up, and learn about farming; yes, and he'll know his a-b-c's, and know how to read; and read in church. He'll be a great help to you if God lets him live," said Nekhliudof, trying to make himself as plain as possible, and at the same time blushing and stammering.

"Very true, your excellency. You don't want to do us an injury, but there's no one to take care of the house; for while I and the old woman are doing the enforced labor, the boy, though he's so young, is a great help, driving the cattle and watering the horses. Whatever he is, he's a true muzhík;" and Churis, with a smile, took the lad's nose between his fat fingers, and deftly removed the mucus.

"Nevertheless, you must send him to school, for now you are at home, and he has plenty of time, – do you hear? Don't you fail."

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[12] *barshchina*: work on the master's land.

[13] *zemski.*

Churis sighed deeply, and made no reply.

V

"There's one other thing I wished to speak to you about," said Nekhliudof. "Why don't you haul out your manure?"

"What manure, sir,[14] your excellency? There isn't any to haul out. What cattle have I got? One mare and colt; and last autumn I sold my heifer to the porter, – that's all the cattle I've got."

"I know you haven't much, but why did you sell your heifer?" asked the bárin in amazement.

"What have I got to feed her on?"

"Didn't you have some straw for feeding the cow? The others did."

"The others have their fields manured, but my land's all clay. I can't do any thing with it."

"Why don't you dress it, then, so it won't be clay? Then the land would give you grain, and you'd have something to feed to your stock."

"But I haven't any stock, so how am I going to get dressing?"

"That's an odd *cercle vicieux*," said Nekhliudof to himself; and he actually was at his wits' ends to find an answer for the peasant.

"And I tell you this, your excellency, it ain't the manure that makes the corn grow, but God," continued the peasant. "Now, one summer I had six sheaves on one little unmanured piece of land, and only a twelfth as much on that which was manured well.

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[14] *bátiushka.*

No one like God," he added with a sigh. "Yes, and my stock are always dying off. Five years past I haven't had any luck with 'em. Last summer one heifer died; had to sell another, hadn't any thing to feed her on; and last year my best cow perished. They were driving her home from pasture; nothing the matter, but suddenly she staggered and staggered. And so now it's all empty here. Just my bad luck!"

"Well, brother, since you say that you have no cattle to help you make fodder, and no fodder for your cattle, here's something towards a cow," said Nekhliudof, reddening, and fetching forth from his pocket a packet of crumpled bank-notes and untying it. "Buy you a cow at my expense, and get some fodder from the granary: I will give orders. See to it that you have a cow by next Sunday. I shall come to see."

Churis hesitated long; and when he did not offer to take the money, Nekhliudof laid it down on the end of the table, and a still deeper flush spread over his face.

"Many thanks for your kindness," said Churis, with his ordinary smile, which was somewhat sarcastic.

The old woman sighed heavily several times as she stood under the loft, and seemed to be repeating a prayer.

The situation was embarrassing for the young prince: he hastily got up from the bench, went out into the entry, and called to Churis to follow him. The sight of the man whom he had been befriending was so pleasant that he found it hard to tear himself away.

"I am glad to help you," said he, halting by the well. "It's in my power to help you, because I know that you are not lazy. You will work, and I will assist you; and, with God's aid, you will come out all right."

"There's no hope of coming out all right, your excellency," said Churis, suddenly assuming a serious and even stern expression of countenance, as though the young man's assurance that he would come out all right had awakened all his opposition. "In my father's time my brothers and I did not see any lack; but when he died, we broke all up. It kept going from bad to worse. Perfect wretchedness!"

"Why did you break up?"

"All on account of the women, your excellency. It was just after your grandfather died; when he was alive, we should not have ventured to do it: then the present order of things came in. He was just like you, he took an interest in every thing; and we should not have dared to separate. The late master did not like to look after the peasants; but after your grandfather's time, Andréï Ilyitch took charge. God forgive him! he was a drunken, careless man. We came to him once and again with complaints, – no living on account of the women, – begged him to let us separate. Well, he put it off, and put it off; but at last things came to such a pass, the women kept each to their own part; we began to live apart; and, of course, what could a single peasant do? Well, there wasn't no law or order. Andréï Ilyitch managed simply to suit himself. 'Take all you can get.' And whatever he could extort

from a peasant, he took without asking. Then the poll-tax was raised, and they began to exact more provisions, and we had less and less land, and the grain stopped growing. Well, when the new allotment was made, then he took away from us our manured land, and added it to the master's, the villain, and ruined us entirely. He ought to have been hung. Your father[15]– the kingdom of heaven be his! – was a good bárin, but it was rarely enough that we ever had sight of him: he always lived in Moscow. Well, of course they used to drive the carts in pretty often. Sometimes it would be the season of bad roads,[16] and no fodder; but no matter! The bárin couldn't get along without it. We did not dare to complain at this, but there wasn't system. But now your grace lets any of us peasants see your face, and so a change has come over us; and the overseer is a different kind of man. Now we know for sure that we have a bárin. And it is impossible to say how grateful your peasants are for your kindness. But before you came, there wasn't any real bárin: every one was bárin. Ilyitch was bárin, and his wife put on the airs of a lady,[17] and the scribe from the police-station was bárin. Too many of em! *ukh!* the peasants had to put up with many trials."

Again Nekhliudof experienced a feeling akin to shame or remorse. He put on his hat, and went on his way.

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[15] *bátiushka.*

[16] *raspútitsa.*

[17] *báruinya.*

VI

"Yukhvanka the clever[18] wants to sell a horse," was what Nekhliudof next read in his note-book; and he proceeded along the street to Yukhvanka's place.[19] Yukhvanka's hut was carefully thatched with straw from the threshing-floor of the estate; the frame-work was of new light-gray aspen-wood (also from stock belonging to the estate), had two handsome painted shutters for the window, and a porch with eaves and ingenious balustrades cut out of deal planks.

The narrow entry and the cold hut were also in perfect order; but the general impression of sufficiency and comfort given by this establishment was somewhat injured by a barn enclosed in the gates, which had a dilapidated hedge and a sagging pent roof, appearing from behind it.

Just as Nekhliudof approached the steps from one side, two peasant women came up on the other carrying a tub full of water. One was Yukhvanka's wife, the other his mother.

The first was a robust, healthy-looking woman, with an extraordinarily exuberant bosom, and wide fat cheeks. She wore a clean shirt embroidered on the sleeves and collar, an apron of the same material, a new linen skirt, peasant's shoes, a string of beads, and an elegant four-cornered head-dress of embroidered

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[18] *Yukhvánka-Mudr'yónui.*

[19] *dvor.*

red paper and spangles.

The end of the water-yoke was not in the least unsteady, but was firmly settled on her wide and solid shoulder. Her easy forcefulness, manifested in her rosy face, in the curvature of her back, and the measured swing of her arms and legs, made it evident that she had splendid health and rugged strength.

Yukhvanka's mother, balancing the other end of the yoke, was, on the contrary, one of those elderly women who seem to have reached the final limit of old age and decrepitude. Her bony frame, clad in a black dilapidated shirt and a faded linen skirt, was bent so that the water-yoke rested rather on her back than on her shoulder. Her two hands, whose distorted fingers seemed to clutch the yoke, were of a strange dark chestnut color, and were convulsively cramped. Her drooping head, wrapped up in some sort of a clout, bore the most monstrous evidences of indigence and extreme old age.

From under her narrow brow, perfectly covered with deep wrinkles, two red eyes, unprotected by lashes, gazed with leaden expression to the ground. One yellow tooth protruded from her sunken upper lip, and, constantly moving, sometimes came in contact with her sharp chin. The wrinkles on the lower part of her face and neck hung down like little bags, quivering at every motion.

She breathed heavily and hoarsely; but her bare, distorted legs, though it seemed as if they would have barely strength to drag along over the ground, moved with measured steps.

VII

Almost stumbling against the prince, the young wife precipitately set down the tub, showed a little embarrassment, dropped a courtesy, and then with shining eyes glanced up at him, and, endeavoring to hide a slight smile behind the sleeve of her embroidered shirt, ran up the steps, clattering in her wooden shoes.

"Mother,[20] you take the water-yoke to aunt Nastásia," said she, pausing at the door, and addressing the old woman.

The modest young proprietor looked sternly but scrutinizingly at the rosy woman, frowned, and turned to the old dame, who, seizing the yoke with her crooked fingers, submissively lifted it to her shoulder, and was about to direct her steps to the adjacent hut.

"Your son at home?" asked the prince.

The old woman, her bent form bent more than usual, made an obeisance, and tried to say something in reply, but, suddenly putting her hand to her mouth, was taken with such a fit of coughing, that Nekhliudof without waiting went into the hut.

Yukhvanka, who had been sitting on the bench in the "red corner,"[21] when he saw the prince, threw himself upon the oven, as though he were anxious to hide from him, hastily thrust

[20] *mátushka.*

[21] Where the holy images and the lighted taper are to be found.

something away in the loft, and, with mouth and eyes twitching, squeezed himself close to the wall, as though to make way for the prince.

Yukhvanka was a light-complexioned fellow, thirty years of age, spare, with a young, pointed beard. He was well proportioned, and rather handsome, save for the unpleasant expression of his hazel eyes, under his knitted brow, and for the lack of two front teeth, which immediately attracted one's attention because his lips were short and constantly parted.

He wore a Sunday shirt with bright red gussets, striped print drawers, and heavy boots with wrinkled legs.

The interior of Vanka's hut was not as narrow and gloomy as that of Churis's, though it was fully as stifling, as redolent of smoke and sheep-skin, and showing as disorderly an array of peasant garments and utensils.

Two things here strangely attracted the attention, – a small damaged samovár standing on the shelf, and a black frame near the *ikon*, with the remains of a dirty mirror and the portrait of some general in a red uniform.

Nekhliudof looked with distaste on the samovár, the general's portrait, and the loft, where stuck out, from under some rags, the end of a copper-mounted pipe. Then he turned to the peasant.

"How do you do, Yepifán?" said he, looking into his eyes.

Yepifán bowed low, and mumbled, "Good-morning, 'slency,"[22] with a peculiar abbreviation of the last word, while his

[22] *vaciaso* for *vashe siátelstvo* (your excellency).

eyes wandered restlessly from the prince to the ceiling, and from the ceiling to the floor, and not pausing on any thing. Then he hastily ran to the loft, dragged out a coat, and began to put it on.

"Why are you putting on your coat?" asked Nekhliudof, sitting down on the bench, and evidently endeavoring to look at Yepifán as sternly as possible.

"How can I appear before you without it, 'slency? You see we can understand"…

"I have come to ask you why you need to sell a horse? Have you many horses? What horse do you wish to sell?" said the prince without wasting words, but propounding questions that he had evidently pre-considered.

"We are greatly beholden to you, 'slency, that you do not think it beneath you to visit me, a mere peasant," replied Yukhvanka, casting hasty glances at the general's portrait, at the stove, at the prince's boots, and every thing else except Nekhliudof's face. "We always pray God for your 'slency."

"Why sell the horse?" repeated Nekhliudof, raising his voice, and coughing.

Yukhvanka sighed, tossed back his hair (again his glance roved about the hut), and noticing the cat that lay on the bench contentedly purring, he shouted out to her, "Scat, you rubbish!" and quickly addressed himself to the bárin. "A horse, 'slency, which ain't worth any thing. If the beast was good for any thing, I shouldn't think of selling him, 'slency."

"How many horses have you in all?"

"Three horses, 'slency."
"No colts?"
"Of course, 'slency. There is one colt."

VIII

"Come, show me your horses. Are they in the yard?"[23]

"Indeed they are, 'slency. I have done as I was told, 'slency. Could we fail to heed you, 'slency? Yakof Ilyitch told me not to send the horses out to pasture. 'The prince,' says he, 'is coming to look at them,' and so we didn't send them. For, of course, we shouldn't dare to disobey you, 'slency."

While Nekhliudof was on his way to the door, Yukhvanka snatched down his pipe from the loft, and flung it into the stove. His lips were still drawn in with the same expression of constraint as when the prince was looking at him.

A wretched little gray mare, with thin tail, all stuck up with burrs, was sniffing at the filthy straw under the pent roof. A long-legged colt two months old, of some nondescript color, with bluish hoofs and nose, followed close behind her.

In the middle of the yard stood a pot-bellied brown gelding with closed eyes and thoughtfully pendent head. It was apparently an excellent little horse for a peasant.

"So these are all your horses?"

"No, indeed, 'slency. Here's still another mare, and here's the little colt," replied Yukhvanka, pointing to the horses, which the prince could not help seeing.

"I see. Which one do you propose to sell?"

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[23] *dvor.*

"This here one, 'slency," he replied, waving his jacket in the direction of the somnolent gelding, and constantly winking and sucking in his lips.

The gelding opened his eyes, and lazily switched his tail.

"He does not seem to be old, and he's fairly plump," said Nekhliudof. "Bring him up, and show me his teeth. I can tell if he's old."

"You can't tell by one indication, 'slency. The beast isn't worth a farthing. He's peculiar. You have to judge both by tooth and limb, 'slency," replied Yukhvanka, smiling very gayly, and letting his eyes rove in all directions.

"What nonsense! Bring him here, I tell you."

Yukhvanka stood still smiling, and made a deprecatory gesture; and it was only when Nekhliudof cried angrily, "Well, what are you up to?" that he moved toward the shed, seized the halter, and began to pull at the horse, scaring him, and getting farther and farther away as the horse resisted.

The young prince was evidently vexed to see this, and perhaps, also, he wished to show his own shrewdness.

"Give me the halter," he cried.

"Excuse me. It's impossible for you, 'slency, – don't"…

But Nekhliudof went straight up to the horse's head, and, suddenly seizing him by the ears, threw him to the ground with such force, that the gelding, who, as it seems, was a very peaceful peasant steed, began to kick and strangle in his endeavors to get away.

When Nekhliudof perceived that it was perfectly useless to exert his strength so, and looked at Yukhvanka, who was still smiling, the thought most maddening at his time of life occurred to him, – that Yukhvanka was laughing at him, and regarding him as a mere child.

He reddened, let go of the horse's ears, and, without making use of the halter, opened the creature's mouth, and looked at his teeth: they were sound, the crowns full, so far as the young man had time to make his observations. No doubt the horse was in his prime.

Meantime Yukhvanka came to the shed, and, seeing that the harrow was lying out of its place, seized it, and stood it up against the wattled hedge.

"Come here," shouted the prince, with an expression of childish annoyance in his face, and almost with tears of vexation and wrath in his voice. "What! call this horse old?"

"Excuse me, 'slency, very old, twenty years old at least. A horse that"…

"Silence! You are a liar and a good-for-nothing. No decent peasant will lie, there's no need for him to," said Nekhliudof, choking with the angry tears that filled his throat.

He stopped speaking, lest he should be detected in weeping before the peasant. Yukhvanka also said nothing, and had the appearance of a man who was almost on the verge of tears, blew his nose, and slowly shook his head.

"Well, how are you going to plough when you have disposed

of this horse?" continued Nekhliudof, calming himself with an effort, so as to speak in his ordinary voice. "You are sent out into the field on purpose to drive the horses for ploughing, and you wish to dispose of your last horse? And I should like to know why you need to lie about it."

In proportion as the prince calmed down, Yukhvanka also calmed down. He straightened himself up, and, while he sucked in his lips constantly, he let his eyes rove about from one object to another.

"Lie to you, 'slency? We are no worse off than others in going to work."

"But what will you go on?"

"Don't worry. We will do your work, 'slency," he replied, starting up the gelding, and driving him away. "Even if we didn't need money, I should want to get rid of him."

"Why do you need money?"

"Haven't no grain, 'slency; and besides, we peasants have to pay our debts, 'slency."

"How is it you have no grain? Others who have families have corn enough; but you have no family, and you are in want. Where is it all gone?"

"Ate it up, 'slency, and now we haven't a bit. I will buy a horse in the autumn, 'slency."

"Don't for a moment think of selling your horse."

"But if we don't then what'll become of us, 'slency? No grain, and forbidden to sell any thing," he replied, turning his head to

one side, sucking in his lips, and suddenly glancing boldly into the prince's face. "Of course we shall die of starvation."

"Look here, brother," cried Nekhliudof, paling, and experiencing a feeling of righteous indignation against the peasant. "I can't endure such peasants as you are. It will go hard with you."

"Just as you will, 'slency," he replied, shutting his eyes with an expression of feigned submission: "I should not think of disobeying you. But it comes not from any fault of mine. Of course, I may not please you, 'slency; at all events, I can do as you wish; only I don't see why I deserve to be punished."

"This is why: because your yard is exposed, your manure is not ploughed in, your hedges are broken down, and yet you sit at home smoking your pipe, and don't work; because you don't give a crust of bread to your mother, who gave you your whole place,[24] and you let your wife beat her, and she has to come to me with her complaints."

"Excuse me, 'slency, I don't know what you mean by smoking your pipe," replied Yukhvanka in a constrained tone, showing beyond peradventure that the complaint about his smoking touched him to the quick. "It is possible to say any thing about a man."

"Now you're lying again! I myself saw"…

"How could I venture to lie to you, 'slency?"

Nekhliudof made no answer, but bit his lip, and began to walk

[24] *khozyáïstvo.*

back and forth in the yard. Yukhvanka, standing in one place, and not lifting his eyes, followed the prince's legs.

"See here, Yepifán," said Nekhliudof in a childishly gentle voice, coming to a pause before the peasant, and endeavoring to hide his vexation, "it is impossible to live so, and you are working your own destruction. Just think. If you want to be a good peasant, then turn over a new leaf, cease your evil courses, stop lying, don't get drunk any more, honor your mother. You see, I know all about you. Take hold of your work; don't steal from the crown woods, for the sake of going to the tavern. Think how well off you might be. If you really need any thing, then come to me; tell me honestly, what you need and why you need it; and don't tell lies, but tell the whole truth, and then I won't refuse you any thing that I can possibly grant."

"Excuse me, 'slency, I think I understand you, 'slency," replied Yukhvanka smiling as though he comprehended the entire significance of the prince's words.

That smile and answer completely disenchanted Nekhliudof so far as he had any hope of reforming the man and of turning him into the path of virtue by means of moral suasion. It seemed to him hard that it should be wasted energy when he had the power to warn the peasant, and that all that he had said was exactly what he should not have said.

He shook his head gravely, and went into the house. The old woman was sitting on the threshold and groaning heavily, as it seemed to the young proprietor as a sign of approbation of his

words which she had overheard.

"Here's something for you to get bread with," said Nekhliudof in her ear, pressing a bank-note into her hand. "But keep it for yourself, and don't give it to Yepifán, else he'll drink it up."

The old woman with her distorted hand laid hold of the door-post, and tried to get up. She began to pour out her thanks to the prince; her head began to wag, but Nekhliudof was already on the other side of the street when she got to her feet.

IX

"Davidka Byélui[25] asks for grain and posts," was what followed Yukhvanka's case in the note-book.

After passing by a number of places, Nekhliudof came to a turn in the lane, and there fell in with his overseer Yakof Alpátitch, who, while the prince was still at a distance, took off his oiled cap, and pulling out a crumpled bandanna handkerchief began to wipe his fat red face.

"Cover yourself, Yakof! Yakof, cover yourself, I tell you."

"Where do you wish to go, your excellency?" asked Yakof, using his cap to shield his eyes from the sun, but not putting it on.

"I have been at Yukhvanka's. Tell me, pray, why does he act so?" asked the prince as he walked along the street.

"Why indeed, your excellency!" echoed the overseer as he followed behind the prince in a respectful attitude. He put on his cap, and began to twist his mustache.

"What's to be done with him? He's thoroughly good for nothing, lazy, thievish, a liar; he persecutes his mother, and to all appearances he is such a confirmed good-for-nothing that there is no reforming him."

"I didn't know, your excellency, that he displeased you so."

"And his wife," continued the prince, interrupting the overseer, "seems like a bad woman. The old mother is dressed

[25] Little David White.

worse than a beggar, and has nothing to eat; but she wears all her best clothes, and so does he. I really don't know what is to be done with them."

Yakof knit his brows thoughtfully when Nekhliudof spoke of Yukhvanka's wife.

"Well, if he behaves so, your excellency," began the overseer, "then it will be necessary to find some way to correct things. He is in abject poverty like all the peasants who have no assistance, but he seems to manage his affairs quite differently from the others. He's a clever fellow, knows how to read, and he's far from being a dishonest peasant. At the collection of the poll-taxes he was always on hand. And for three years, while I was overseer he was bailiff, and no fault was found with him. In the third year the warden took it into his head to depose him, so he was obliged to take to farming. Perhaps when he lived in town at the station he got drunk sometimes, so we had to devise some means. They used to threaten him, in fun, and he came to his senses again. He was good-natured, and got along well with his family. But as it does not please you to use these means, I am sure I don't know what we are to do with him. He has really got very low. He can't be sent into the army, because, as you may be pleased to remember, two of his teeth are missing. Yes, and there are others besides him, I venture to remind you, who absolutely haven't any"…

"Enough of that, Yakof," interrupted Nekhliudof, smiling shrewdly. "You and I have discussed that again and again. You

know what ideas I have on this subject; and whatever you may say to me, I still remain of the same opinion."

"Certainly, your excellency, you understand it all," said Yakof, shrugging his shoulders, and looking askance at the prince as though what he saw were worthy of no consideration. "But as far as the old woman is concerned, I beg you to see that you are disturbing yourself to no purpose," he continued. "Certainly it is true that she has brought up the orphans, she has fed Yukhvanka, and got him a wife, and so forth; but you know that is common enough among peasants. When the mother or father has transferred the property[26] to the son, then the new owners get control, and the old mother is obliged to work for her own living to the utmost of her strength. Of course they are lacking in delicate feelings, but this is common enough among the peasantry; and so I take the liberty of explaining to you that you are stirred up about the old woman all for nothing. She is a clever old woman, and a good housewife;[27] is there any reason for a gentleman to worry over her? Well, she has quarrelled with her daughter-in-law; maybe the young woman struck her: that's like a woman, and they would make up again while you torment yourself. You really take it all too much to heart," said the overseer looking with a certain expression of fondness mingled with condescension at the prince, who was walking silently with long strides before him up the street.

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[26] *khozyáïstvo.*

[27] *khozyáïka.*

"Will you go home now?" he added.

"No, to Davidka Byélui's or Kazyól's – what is his name?"

"Well, he's a good-for-nothing, I assure you. All the race of the Kazyóls are of the same sort. I haven't had any success with him; he cares for nothing. Yesterday I rode past the peasant's field, and his buckwheat wasn't even sowed yet. What do you wish done with such people? The old man taught his son, but still he's a good-for-nothing just the same; whether for himself or for the estate, he makes a bungle of every thing. Neither the warden nor I have been able to do any thing with him: we've sent him to the station-house, and we've punished him at home, because you are pleased now to like"…

"Who? the old man?"

"Yes, the old man. The warden more than once has punished him before the whole assembly, and, would you believe it? he would shake himself, go home, and be as bad as ever. And Davidka, I assure your excellency, is a law-abiding peasant, and a quick-witted peasant; that is, he doesn't smoke and doesn't drink," explained Yakof; "and yet he's worse than the other who gets drunk. There's nothing else to do with him than to make a soldier of him or send him to Siberia. All the Kazyóls are the same; and Matriushka who lives in the village belongs to their family, and is the same sort of cursed good-for-nothing. Don't you care to have me here, your excellency?" inquired the overseer, perceiving that the prince did not heed what he was saying.

"No, go away," replied Nekhliudof absent-mindedly, and turned his steps toward Davidka Byélui's.

Davidka's hovel[28] stood askew and alone at the very edge of the village. It had neither yard, nor cornkiln, nor barn. Only some sort of dirty stalls for cattle were built against one side. On the other a heap of brush-wood and logs was piled up, in imitation of a yard.[29]

Tall green steppe-grass was growing in the place where the court-yard should have been.

There was no living creature to be seen near the hovel, except a sow lying in the mire at the threshold, and grunting.

Nekhliudof tapped at the broken window; but as no one made answer, he went into the entry and shouted, "Holloa there!"[30]

This also brought no response. He passed through the entry, peered into the empty stalls, and entered the open hut.

An old red cock and two hens with ruffs were scratching with their legs, and strutting about over the floor and benches. When they saw a man they spread their wings, and, cackling with terror, flew against the walls, and one took refuge on the oven.

The whole hut, which was not quite fourteen feet[31] square, was occupied by the oven with its broken pipe, a loom, which in spite of its being summer-time was not taken down, and a most filthy

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[28] *izbá*.

[29] *dvor*.

[30] *khozyáeva*; literally, "master and mistress."

[31] Six *arshin*.

table made of a split and uneven plank.

Although it was a dry situation, there was a filthy puddle at the door, caused by the recent rain, which had leaked through roof and ceiling. Loft there was none. It was hard to realize that this was a human habitation, such decided evidence of neglect and disorder was impressed upon both the exterior and the interior of the hovel; nevertheless, in this hovel lived Davidka Byélui and all his family.

At the present moment, notwithstanding the heat of the June day, Davidka, with his head covered by his sheep-skin,[32] was fast asleep, curled up on one corner of the oven. The panic-stricken hen, skipping up on the oven, and growing more and more agitated, took up her position on Davidka's back, but did not awaken him.

Nekhliudof, seeing no one in the hovel, was about to go, when a prolonged humid sigh betrayed the sleeper.[33]

"Holloa! who's there?" cried the prince.

A second prolonged sigh was heard from the oven.

"Who's there? Come here!"

Still another sigh, a sort of a bellow, and a heavy yawn responded to the prince's call.

"Well, who are you?"

Something moved slightly on the oven. The skirt of a torn

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[32] *polushubok.*

[33] *khozyáïn.*

sheep-skin[34] was lifted; one huge leg in a dilapidated boot was put down, then another, and finally Davidka's entire figure emerged. He sat up on the oven, and rubbed his eyes drowsily and morosely with his fist.

Slowly shaking his head, and yawning, he looked down into the hut, and, seeing the prince, began to make greater haste than before; but still his motions were so slow, that Nekhliudof had time to walk back and forth three times from the puddle to the loom before Davidka got down from the oven.

Davidka Byélui or David White was white in reality: his hair, and his body, and his face all were perfectly white.

He was tall and very stout, but stout as peasants are wont to be, that is, not in the waist alone, but in the whole body. His stoutness, however, was of a peculiar flabby, unhealthy kind. His rather comely face, with pale-blue good-natured eyes, and a wide trimmed beard, bore the impress of ill health. There was not the slightest trace of tan or blood: it was of a uniform yellowish ashen tint, with pale livid circles under the eyes, quite as though his face were stuffed with fat or bloated.

His hands were puffy and yellow, like the hands of men afflicted with dropsy, and they wore a growth of fine white hair. He was so drowsy that he could scarcely open his eyes or cease from staggering and yawning.

"Well, aren't you ashamed of yourself," began Nekhliudof,

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[34] *tulup.*

"sleeping in the very best part of the day,[35] when you ought to be attending to your work, when you haven't any corn?"

As Davidka little by little shook off his drowsiness, and began to realize that it was the prince who was standing before him, he folded his arms across his stomach, hung his head, inclining it a trifle to one side, and did not move a limb or say a word; but the expression of his face and the pose of his whole body seemed to say, "I know, I know; it is an old story with me. Well, strike me, if it must be: I will endure it."

He evidently was anxious for the prince to get through speaking and give him his thrashing as quickly as possible, even if he struck him severely on his swollen cheeks, and then leave him in peace.

Perceiving that Davidka did not understand him, Nekhliudof endeavored by various questions to rouse the peasant from his vexatiously obstinate silence.

"Why have you asked me for wood when you have enough to last you a whole month here, and you haven't had any thing to do? What?"

Davidka still remained silent, and did not move.

"Well, answer me."

Davidka muttered something, and blinked his white eyelashes.

"You must go to work, brother. What will become of you if you don't work? Now you have no grain, and what's the reason of it? Because your land is badly ploughed, and not harrowed, and

[35] Literally, "middle of the white day."

no seed put in at the right time, – all from laziness. You asked me for grain: well, let us suppose that I gave it to you, so as to keep you from starving to death, still it is not becoming to do so. Whose grain do I give you? whose do you think? Answer me, – whose grain do I give you?" demanded Nekhliudof obstinately.

"The Lord's," muttered Davidka, raising his eyes timidly and questioningly.

"But where did the Lord's grain come from? Think for yourself, who ploughed for it? who harrowed? who planted it? who harvested it? The peasants, hey? Just look here: if the Lord's grain is given to the peasants, then those peasants who work most will get most; but you work less than anybody. You are complained about on all sides. You work less than all the others, and yet you ask for more of the Lord's grain than all the rest. Why should it be given to you, and not to the others? Now, if all, like you, lay on their backs, it would not be long before everybody in the world died of starvation. Brother, you've got to labor. This is disgraceful. Do you hear, David?"

"I hear you," said the other slowly through his teeth.

X

At this moment, the window was darkened by the head of a peasant woman who passed carrying some linen on a yoke, and presently Davidka's mother came into the hovel. She was a tall woman, fifty years old, very fresh and lively. Her ugly face was covered with pock-marks and wrinkles; but her straight, firm nose, her delicate, compressed lips, and her keen gray eyes gave witness to her mental strength and energy.

The angularity of her shoulders, the flatness of her chest, the thinness of her hands, and the solid muscles of her black bare legs, made it evident that she had long ago ceased to be a woman, and had become a mere drudge.

She came hurrying into the hovel, shut the door, set down her linen, and looked angrily at her son.

Nekhliudof was about to say something to her, but she turned her back on him, and began to cross herself before the black wooden *ikon*, that was visible behind the loom.

When she had thus done, she adjusted the dirty checkered handkerchief which was tied around her head, and made a low obeisance to the prince.

"A pleasant Lord's day to you, excellency," she said. "God spare you; you are our father."

When Davidka saw his mother he grew confused, bent his back a little, and hung his head still lower.

"Thanks, Arína," replied Nekhliudof. "I have just been talking with your son about your affairs."[36]

Arína or Aríshka Burlák,[37] as the peasants used to call her when she was a girl, rested her chin on the clinched fist of her right hand, which she supported with the palm of the left, and, without waiting for the prince to speak further, began to talk so sharply and loud that the whole hovel was filled with the sound of her voice; and from outside it might have been concluded that several women had suddenly fallen into a discussion.

"What, my father, what is then to be said to him? You can't talk to him as to a man. Here he stands, the lout," she continued contemptuously, wagging her head in the direction of Davidka's woe-begone, stolid form.

"How are *my* affairs, your excellency? We are poor. In your whole village there are none so bad off as we are, either for our own work or for yours. It's a shame! And it's all his fault. I bore him, fed him, gave him to drink. Didn't expect to have such a lubber. There is but one end to the story. Grain is all gone, and no more work to be got out of him than from that piece of rotten wood. All he knows is to lie on top of the oven, or else he stands here, and scratches his empty pate," she said, mimicking him.

"If you could only frighten him, father! I myself beseech you: punish him, for the Lord God's sake! send him off as a soldier, – it's all one. But he's no good to me, – that's the way it is."

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[36] *khozyáïstvo.*

[37] clod-hopper.

"Now, aren't you ashamed, Davidka, to bring your mother to this?" said Nekhliudof reproachfully, addressing the peasant.

Davidka did not move.

"One might think that he was a sick peasant," continued Arína, with the same eagerness and the same gestures; "but only to look at him you can see he's fatter than the pig at the mill. It would seem as if he might have strength enough to work on something, the lubber! But no, not he! He prefers to curl himself up on top of the oven. And even when he undertakes to do any thing, it would make you sick even to look at him, the way he goes about the work! He wastes time when he gets up, when he moves, when he does any thing," said she, dwelling on the words, and awkwardly swaying from side to side with her angular shoulders.

"Now, here to-day my old man himself went to the forest after wood, and told him to dig a hole; but he did not even put his hand to the shovel."

She paused for a moment.

"He has killed me," she suddenly hissed, gesticulating with her arms, and advancing toward her son with threatening gesture. "Curse your smooth, bad face!"

She scornfully, and at the same time despairingly, turned from him, spat, and again addressed the prince with the same animation, still swinging her arms, but with tears in her eyes.

"I am the only one, benefactor. My old man is sick, old: yes, and I get no help out of him; and I am the only one at all. And this fellow hangs around my neck like a stone. If he would only

die, then it would be easier; that would be the end of it. He lets me starve, the poltroon. You are our father. There's no help for me. My daughter-in-law died of work, and I shall too."

XI

"How did she die?" inquired Nekhliudof, somewhat sceptically.

"She died of hard work, as God knows, benefactor. We brought her last year from Baburin," she continued, suddenly changing her wrathful expression to one of tearfulness and grief. "Well, the woman[38] was young, fresh, obliging, good stuff. As a girl, she lived at home with her father in clover, never knew want; and when she came to us, then she learned to do our work, – for the estate and at home and everywhere… She and I – that was all to do it. What was it to me? I was used to it. She was going to have a baby, good father; and she began to suffer pain; and all because she worked beyond her strength. Well, she did herself harm, the poor little sweetheart. Last summer, about the time of the feast of Peter and Paul, she had a poor little boy born. But there was no bread. We ate whatever we could get, my father. She went to work too soon: her milk all dried up. The baby was her first-born. There was no cow, and we were mere peasants. She had to feed him on rye. Well, of course, it was sheer folly. It kept pining away on this. And when the child died, she became so down-spirited, – she would sob and sob, and howl and howl; and then it was poverty and work, and all the time going from bad to worse. So she passed away in the summer, the sweetheart,

[38] *baba.*

at the time of the feast of St. Mary's Intercession. He brought her to it, the beast," she cried, turning to her son with wrathful despair. "I wanted to ask your excellency a favor," she continued after a short pause, lowering her voice, and making an obeisance.

"What?" asked Nekhliudof in some constraint.

"You see he's a young peasant still. He demands so much work of me. To-day I am alive, to-morrow I may die. How can he live without a wife? He won't be any good to you at all. Help us to find some one for him, good father."

"That is, you want to get a wife for him? What? What an idea!"

"God's will be done! You are in the place of parents to us."

And after making a sign to her son, she and the man threw themselves on the floor at the prince's feet.

"Why do you stoop to the ground?" asked Nekhliudof peevishly, taking her by the shoulder. "You know I don't like this sort of thing. Marry your son, of course, if you have a girl in view. I should be very glad if you had a daughter-in-law to help you."

The old woman got up, and began to rub her dry eyes with her sleeves. Davidka followed her example, and, rubbing his eyes with his weak fist, with the same patiently-submissive expression, continued to stand, and listen to what Arína said.

"Plenty of brides, certainly. Here's Vasiutka Mikheïkin's daughter, and a right good girl she is; but the girl would not come to us without your consent."

"Isn't she willing?"

"No, benefactor, she isn't."

"Well, what's to be done? I can't compel her. Select some one else. If you can't find one at home, go to another village. I will pay for her, only she must come of her own free will. It is impossible to marry her by force. There's no law allows that; that would be a great sin."

"*E-e-kh!* benefactor! Is it possible that any one would come to us of her own accord, seeing our way of life, our wretchedness? Not even the wife of a soldier would like to undergo such want. What peasant would let us have his daughter?[39] It is not to be expected. You see we're in the very depths of poverty. They will say, 'Since you starved one to death, it will be the same with my daughter.' Who is to give her?" she added, shaking her head dubiously. "Give us your advice, excellency."

"Well, what can I do?"

"Think of some one for us, kind sir," repeated Arína urgently. "What are we to do?"

"How can I think of any one? I can't do any thing at all for you as things are."

"Who will help us if you do not?" said Arína, drooping her head, and spreading her palms with an expression of melancholy discontent.

"Here you ask for grain, and so I will give orders for some to be delivered to you," said the prince after a short silence, during which Arína sighed, and Davidka imitated her. "But I cannot do any thing more."

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[39] *dyevka*, marriageable girl.

Nekhliudof went into the entry. Mother and son with low bows followed the prince.

XII

"O-okh! alas for my wretchedness!" exclaimed Arína, sighing deeply.

She paused, and looked angrily at her son. Davidka immediately turned around, and, clumsily lifting his stout leg incased in a huge dirty boot over the threshold, took refuge in the opposite door.

"What shall I do with him, father?" continued Arína, turning to the prince. "You yourself see what he is. He is not a bad man;[40] doesn't get drunk, and is peaceable; wouldn't hurt a little child. It's a sin to say hard things of him. There's nothing bad about him, and God knows what has taken place in him to make him so bad to himself. You see he himself does not like it. Would you believe it, father,[41] my heart bleeds when I look at him, and see what suffering he undergoes. You see, whatever he is, he is my son. I pity him. Oh, how I pity him!.. You see, it isn't as though he had done any thing against me or his father or the authorities. But, no: he's a bashful man, almost like a child. How can he bear to be a widower? Help us out, benefactor," she said once more, evidently desirous of removing the unfavorable impression which her bitter words might have left upon the prince. "Father, your excellency, I" – She went on to say in a confidential whisper, "My

[40] *muzhík.*

[41] *bátiushka.*

wit does not go far enough to explain him. It seems as though bad men had spoiled him."

She paused for a moment.

"If we could find the men, we might cure him."

"What nonsense you talk, Arína! How can he be spoiled?"

"My father, they spoil him so that they make him a no-man forever! Many bad people in the world! Out of ill-will they take a handful of earth from out of one's path, or something of that sort; and one is made a no-man forever after. Isn't that a sin? I think to myself, Might I not go to the old man Danduk, who lives at Vorobyevka? He knows all sorts of words; and he knows herbs, and he can make charms; and he finds water with a cross. Wouldn't he help me?" said the woman. "Maybe he will cure him."

"What abjectness and superstition!" thought the young prince, shaking his head gloomily, and walking back with long strides through the village.

"What's to be done with him? To leave him in this situation is impossible, both for myself and for the others and for him, – impossible," he said to himself, counting off on his fingers these reasons.

"I cannot bear to see him in this plight; but how extricate him? He renders nugatory all my best plans for the management of the estate. If such peasants are allowed, none of my dreams will ever be realized," he went on, experiencing a feeling of despite and anger against the peasant in consequence of the ruin of his

plans. "To send him to Siberia, as Yakof suggests, against his will, would that be good for him? or to make him a soldier? That is best. At least I should be quit of him, and I could replace him by a decent peasant."

Such was his decision.

He thought about this with satisfaction; but at the same time something obscurely told him that he was thinking with only one side of his mind, and not wholly right.

He paused.

"I will think about it some more," he said to himself. "To send him off as a soldier – why? He is a good man, better than many; and I know… Shall I free him?" he asked himself, putting the question from a different side of his mind. "It wouldn't be fair. Yes, it's impossible."

But suddenly a thought occurred to him that greatly pleased him. He smiled with the expression of a man who has decided a difficult question.

"I will take him to the house," he said to himself. "I will look after him myself; and by means of kindness and advice, and selecting his employment, I will teach him to work, and reform him."

XIII

"That's the way I'll do," said Nekhliudof to himself with a pleasant self-consciousness; and then, recollecting that he had still to go to the rich peasant Dutlof, he directed his steps toward a lofty and ample establishment, with two chimneys, standing in the midst of the village.

As he passed a neighboring hut on his way thither, he stopped to speak with a tall, disorderly-looking peasant-woman of forty summers, who came to meet him.

"A pleasant holiday, father,"[42] she said, with some show of assurance, stopping at a little distance from him with a pleased smile and a low obeisance.

"Good-morning, my nurse. How are you? I was just going to see your neighbor."

"Pretty well, your excellency, my father. It's a good idea. But won't you come in? I beg you to. My old man would be very pleased."

"Well, I'll come; and we'll have a little talk with you, nurse. Is this your house?"

"It is, sir."[42]

And the nurse led the way into the hut. Nekhliudof followed her into the entry, and sat down on a tub, and began to smoke a cigarette.

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[42] *bátiushka.*

"It's hot inside. It's better to sit down here, and have our talk," he said in reply to the woman's invitation to go into the hut.

The nurse was a well-preserved and handsome woman. In the features of her countenance, and especially in her big black eyes, there was a strong resemblance to the prince himself. She folded her hands under her apron, and looking fearlessly at him, and incessantly moving her head, began to talk with him.

"Why is it, father? why do you wish to visit Dutlof?"

"Oh, I am anxious for him to take thirty desiatins[43] of land of me, and enlarge his domain; and moreover I want him to buy some wood from me also. You see, he has money, so why should it be idle? What do you think about it, nurse?"

"Well, what can I say? The Dutlofs are strong people: he's the leading peasant in the whole estate," replied the nurse, shaking her head. "Last summer he built another building out of his own lumber. He did not call upon the estate at all. He has horses, and yearling colts besides, at least six troïkas, and cattle, cows, and sheep; so that it is a sight worth seeing when they are driven along the street from pasture, and the women of the house come out to get them into the yard. There is such a crush of animals at the gate that they can scarcely get through, so many of them there are. And two hundred bee-hives at the very least. He is a strong peasant, and must have money."

"But what do you think, – has he much money?" asked the prince.

[43] eighty-one acres.

"Men say, out of spite of course, that the old man has no little money. But he does not go round talking about it, and he does not tell even his sons, but he must have. Why shouldn't he take hold of the woodland? Perhaps he is afraid of getting the reputation for money. Five years ago he went into a small business with Shkalik the porter. They got some meadow-land; and this Shkalik, some way or other, cheated him, so that the old man was three hundred rubles out of pocket. And from that time he has sworn off. How can he help being forehanded, your excellency, father?" continued the nurse. "He has three farms, a big family, all workers; and besides, the old man – it is hard to say it – is a capital manager. He is lucky in every thing; it is surprising, – in his grain and in his horses and in his cattle and in his bees, and he's lucky in his children. Now he has got them all married off. He has found husbands for his daughters; and he has just married Ilyushka, and given him his freedom. He himself bought the letter of enfranchisement. And so a fine woman has come into his house."

"Well, do they live harmoniously?" asked the prince.

"As long as there's the right sort of a head to the house, they get along. Yet even the Dutlofs – but of course that's among the women. The daughters-in-law bark at each other a little behind the oven, but the old man generally holds them in hand; and the sons live harmoniously."

The nurse was silent for a little.

"Now, the old man, we hear, wants to leave his eldest son,

Karp, as master of the house. 'I am getting old,' says he. 'It's my business to attend to the bees.' Well, Karp is a good peasant, a careful peasant; but he doesn't manage to please the old man in the least. There's no sense in it."

"Well, perhaps Karp wants to speculate in land and wood. What do you think about it?", pursued the prince, wishing to learn from the woman all that she knew about her neighbors.

"Scarcely, sir,"[44] continued the nurse. "The old man hasn't disclosed his money to his son. As long as he lives, of course, the money in the house will be under the old man's control; and it will increase all the time too."

"But isn't the old man willing?"

"He is afraid."

"What is he afraid of?"

"How is it possible, sir, for a seignorial peasant to make a noise about his money? And it's a hard question to decide what to do with money anyway. Here he went into business with the porter, and was cheated. Where was he to get redress? And so he lost his money. But with the proprietor he would have any loss made good immediately, of course."

"Yes, hence,"… said Nekhliudof, reddening. "But good-by, nurse."

"Good-by, sir, your excellency. Greatly obliged to you."

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[44] *bátiushka.*

XIV

"Hadn't I better go home?" mused Nekhliudof, as he strode along toward the Dutlof enclosure, and felt a boundless melancholy and moral weariness.

But at this moment the new deal gates were thrown open before him with a creaking sound; and a handsome, ruddy fellow of eighteen in wagoner's attire appeared, leading a troïka of powerful-limbed and still sweaty horses. He hastily brushed back his blonde hair, and bowed to the prince.

"Well, is your father at home, Ilya?" asked Nekhliudof.

"At the bee-house, back of the yard," replied the youth, driving the horses, one after the other, through the half-opened gates.

"I will not give it up. I will make the proposal. I will do the best I can," reflected Nekhliudof; and, after waiting till the horses had passed out, he entered Dutlof's spacious yard.

It was plain to see that the manure had only recently been carried away. The ground was still black and damp; and in places, particularly in the hollows, were left red fibrous clots.

In the yard and under the high sheds, many carts stood in orderly rows, together with ploughs, sledges, harrows, barrels, and all sorts of farming implements. Doves were flitting about, cooing in the shadows under the broad solid rafters. There was an odor of manure and tar.

In one corner Karp and Ignát were fitting a new cross-bar to a large iron-mounted, three-horse cart.

All three of Dutlof's sons bore a strong family resemblance. The youngest, Ilya, who had met Nekhliudof at the gate, was beardless, of smaller stature, ruddier complexion, and more neatly dressed, than the others. The second, Ignát, was rather taller and darker. He had a wedge-shaped beard; and though he wore boots, a driver's shirt, and a lamb's-skin cap, he had not such a festive, holiday appearance as his brother had.

The eldest, Karp, was still taller. He wore clogs, a gray kaftan, and a shirt without gussets. He had a reddish beard, trimmed; and his expression was serious, even to severity.

"Do you wish my father sent for, your excellency?" he asked, coming to meet the prince, and bowing slightly and awkwardly.

"No, I will go to him at the hives: I wish to see what he's building there. But I should like a talk with you," said Nekhliudof, drawing him to the other side of the yard, so that Ignát might not overhear what he was about to talk about with Karp.

The self-confidence and degree of pride noticeable in the deportment of the two peasants, and what the nurse had told the young prince, so troubled him, that it was difficult for him to make up his mind to speak with them about the matter proposed.

He had a sort of guilty feeling, and it seemed to him easier to speak with one brother out of the hearing of the other. Karp seemed surprised that the prince took him to one side, but he

followed him.

"Well, now," began Nekhliudof awkwardly, – "I wished to inquire of you if you had many horses."

"We have about five troïkas, also some colts," replied Karp in a free-and-easy manner, scratching his back.

"Well, are your brothers going to take out relays of horses for the post?"

"We shall send out three troïkas to carry the mail. And there's Ilyushka, he has been off with his team; but he's just come back."

"Well, is that profitable for you? How much do you earn that way?"

"What do you mean by profit, your excellency? We at least get enough to live on and bait our horses, thank God for that!"

"Then, why don't you take hold of something else? You see, you might buy wood, or take more land."

"Of course, your excellency: we might rent some land if there were any convenient."

"I wish to make a proposition to you. Since you only make enough out of your teaming to live on, you had better take thirty desiatins of land from me. All that strip behind Sapof I will let you have, and you can carry on your farming better."

And Nekhliudof, carried away by his plan for a peasant farm, which more than once he had proposed to himself, and deliberated about, began fluently to explain to the peasant his proposition about it.

Karp listened attentively to the prince's words.

"We are very grateful for your kindness," said he, when Nekhliudof stopped, and looked at him in expectation of his answer. "Of course here there's nothing very bad. To occupy himself with farming is better for a peasant than to go off as a whip. He goes among strangers; he sees all sorts of men; he gets wild. It's the very best thing for a peasant, to occupy himself with land."

"You think so, do you?"

"As long as my father is alive, how can I think, your excellency? It's as he wills."

"Take me to the bee-hives. I will talk with him."

"Come with me this way," said Karp, slowly directing himself to the barn back of the house. He opened a low gate which led to the apiary, and after letting the prince pass through, he shut it, and returned to Ignát, and silently took up his interrupted labors.

XV

Nekhliudof, stooping low, passed through the low gate, under the gloomy shed, to the apiary, which was situated behind the yard.

A small space, surrounded by straw and a wattled hedge, through the chinks of which the light streamed, was filled with bee-hives symmetrically arranged, and covered with shavings, while the golden bees were humming around them. Every thing was bathed in the warm and brilliant rays of the July sun.

From the gate a well-trodden footway led through the middle to a wooden side-building, with a tin-foil image on it gleaming brightly in the sun.

A few orderly young lindens lifting, above the thatched roof of the neighboring court-yard, their bushy tops, almost audibly rustled their dark-green, fresh foliage, in unison with the sound of the buzzing bees. All the shadows from the covered hedge, from the lindens, and from the hives, fell dark and short on the delicate curling grass springing up between the planks.

The bent, small figure of the old man, with his gray hair and bald spot shining in the sun, was visible near the door of a straw-thatched structure situated among the lindens. When he heard the creaking of the gate, the old man looked up, and wiping his heated, sweaty face with the flap of his shirt, and smiling with pleasure, came to meet the prince.

In the apiary it was so comfortable, so pleasant, so warm, so free! The figure of the gray-haired old man, with thick wrinkles radiating from his eyes, and wearing wide shoes on his bare feet, as he came waddling along, good-naturedly and contentedly smiling, to welcome the prince to his own private possessions, was so ingenuously soothing that Nekhliudof for a moment forgot the trying impressions of the morning, and his cherished dream came vividly up before him. He already saw all his peasants just as prosperous and contented as the old man Dutlof, and all smiling soothingly and pleasantly upon him, because to him alone they were indebted for their prosperity and happiness.

"Would you like a net, your excellency? The bees are angry now," said the old man, taking down from the fence a dirty gingham bag fragrant of honey, and handing it to the prince. "The bees know me, and don't sting," he added, with the pleasant smile that rarely left his handsome sunburned face.

"I don't need it either. Well, are they swarming yet?" asked Nekhliudof, also smiling, though without knowing why.

"Yes, they are swarming, father, Mitri Mikolayévitch,"[45] replied the old man, throwing an expression of peculiar endearment into this form of addressing his bárin by his name and patronymic. "They have only just begun to swarm; it has been a cold spring, you know."

"I have just been reading in a book," began Nekhliudof,

[45] *bátiushka*; Mitri Mikolayévitch, rustic for Dmitri Nikolayévitch.

defending himself from a bee which had got entangled in his hair, and was buzzing under his ear, "that if the wax stands straight on the bars, then the bees swarm earlier. Therefore such hives as are made of boards … with cross-b – "

"You don't want to gesticulate; that makes it worse," said the little old man. "Now don't you think you had better put on the net?"

Nekhliudof felt a sharp pain, but by some sort of childish egotism he did not wish to give in to it; and so, once more refusing the bag, continued to talk with the old man about the construction of hives, about which he had read in "Maison Rustique," and which, according to his idea, ought to be made twice as large. But another bee stung him in the neck, and he lost the thread of his discourse and stopped short in the midst of it.

"That's well enough, father, Mitri Mikolayévitch," said the old man, looking at the prince with paternal protection; "that's well enough in books, as you say. Yes; maybe the advice is given with some deceit, with some hidden meaning; but only just let him do as he advises, and we shall be the first to have a good laugh at his expense. And this happens! How are you going to teach the bees where to deposit their wax? They themselves put it on the cross-bar, sometimes straight and sometimes aslant. Just look here!" he continued, opening one of the nearest hives, and gazing at the entrance-hole blocked by a bee buzzing and crawling on the crooked comb. "Here's a young one. It sees; at its head sits the queen, but it lays the wax straight and sideways,

both according to the position of the block," said the old man, evidently carried away by his interest in his occupation, and not heeding the prince's situation. "Now, to-day, it will fly with the pollen. To-day is warm; it's on the watch," he continued, again covering up the hive and pinning down with a cloth the crawling bee; and then brushing off into his rough palm a few of the insects from his wrinkled neck.

The bees did not sting him; but as for Nekhliudof, he could scarcely refrain from the desire to beat a retreat from the apiary. The bees had already stung him in three places, and were buzzing angrily on all sides around his head and neck.

"You have many hives?" he asked as he retreated toward the gate.

"What God has given," replied Dutlof sarcastically. "It is not necessary to count them, father; the bees don't like it. Now, your excellency, I wanted to ask a favor of you," he went on to say, pointing to the small posts standing by the fence. "It was about Osip, the nurse's husband. If you would only speak to him. In our village it's so hard to act in a neighborly way; it's not good."

"How so?.. Ah, how they sting!" exclaimed the prince, already seizing the latch of the gate.

"Every year now, he lets his bees out among my young ones. We could stand it, but strange bees get away their comb and kill them," said the old man, not heeding the prince's grimaces.

"Very well, by and by; right away," said Nekhliudof. And having no longer strength of will to endure, he hastily beat a

retreat through the gate, fighting his tormentors with both hands.

"Rub it with dirt. It's nothing," said the old man, coming to the door after the prince. The prince took some earth, and rubbed the spot where he had been stung, and reddened as he cast a quick glance at Karp and Ignát, who did not deign to look at him. Then he frowned angrily.

XVI

"I wanted to ask you something about my sons, your excellency," said the old man, either pretending not to notice, or really not noticing, the prince's angry face.

"What?"

"Well, we are well provided with horses, praise the Lord! and that's our trade, and so we don't have to work on your land."

"What do you mean?"

"If you would only be kind enough to let my sons have leave of absence, then Ilyushka and Ignát would take three troïkas, and go out teaming for all summer. Maybe they'd earn something."

"Where would they go?"

"Just as it happened," replied Ilyushka, who at this moment, having put the horses under the shed, joined his father. "The Kadminski boys went with eight horses to Romen. Not only earned their own living, they say, but brought back a gain of more than three hundred per cent. Fodder, they say, is cheap at *Odest*."

"Well, that's the very thing I wanted to talk with you about," said the prince, addressing the old man, and anxious to draw him shrewdly into a talk about the farm. "Tell me, please, if it would be more profitable to go to teaming than farming at home?"

"Why not more profitable, your excellency?" said Ilyushka, again putting in his word, and at the same time quickly shaking back his hair. "There's no way of keeping horses at home."

"Well, how much do you earn in the summer?"

"Since spring, as feed was high, we went to Kief with merchandise, and to Kursk, and back again to Moscow with grits; and in that way we earned our living. And our horses had enough, and we brought back fifteen rubles in money."

"There's no harm in taking up with an honorable profession, whatever it is," said the prince, again addressing the old man. "But it seems to me that you might find another form of activity. And besides, this work is such that a young man goes everywhere. He sees all sorts of people, – may get wild," he added, quoting Karp's words.

"What can we peasants take up with, if not teaming?" objected the old man with his sweet smile. "If you are a good driver, you get enough to eat, and so do your horses; but, as regards mischief, they are just the same as at home, thank the Lord! It isn't the first time that they have been. I have been myself, and never saw any harm in it, nothing but good."

"How many other things you might find to do at home! with fields and meadows" —

"How is it possible?" interrupted Ilyushka with animation. "We were born for this. All the regulations are at our fingers' ends. We like the work. It's the most enjoyable we have, your excellency. How we like to go teaming!"

"Your excellency, will you not do us the honor of coming into the house? You have not yet seen our new domicile," said the old man, bowing low, and winking to his son.

Ilyushka hastened into the house, and Nekhliudof and the old man followed after him.

XVII

As soon as he got into the house, the old man bowed once more; then using his coat-tail to dust the bench in the front of the room, he smiled, and said, —

"What do you want of us, your excellency?"

The hut was bright and roomy, with a chimney; and it had a loft and berths. The fresh aspen-wood beams, between which could be seen the moss, scarcely faded, were as yet not turned dark. The new benches and the loft were not polished smooth, and the floor was not worn. One young peasant woman, rather lean, with a serious oval face, was sitting on a berth, and using her foot to rock a hanging cradle that was suspended from the ceiling by a long hook. This was Ilya's wife.

In the cradle lay at full length a suckling child, scarcely breathing, and with closed eyes.

Another young woman, robust and rosy-cheeked, with her sleeves rolled up above her elbows, showing strong arms and hands red even higher than her wrists, was standing in front of the oven, and mincing onions in a wooden dish. This was Karp's wife.

A pock-marked woman, showing signs of pregnancy, which she tried to conceal, was standing near the oven. The room was hot, not only from the summer sun, but from the heat of the oven; and there was a strong smell of baking bread.

Two flaxen-headed little boys and a girl gazed down from the loft upon the prince, with faces full of curiosity. They had come in, expecting something to eat.

Nekhliudof was delighted to see this happy household; and at the same time he felt a sense of constraint in presence of these peasants, men and women, all looking at him. He flushed a little as he sat down on the bench.

"Give me a crust of hot bread: I am fond of it," said he, and the flush deepened.

Karp's wife cut off a huge slice of bread, and handed it on a plate to the prince. Nekhliudof said nothing, not knowing what to say. The women also were silent, the old man smiled benevolently.

"Well, now why am I so awkward? as though I were to blame for something," thought Nekhliudof. "Why shouldn't I make my proposition about the farm? What stupidity!" Still he remained silent.

"Well, father Mitri Mikolayévitch, what are you going to say about my boys' proposal?" asked the old man.

"I should advise you absolutely not to send them away, but to have them stay at home, and work," said Nekhliudof, suddenly collecting his wits. "You know what I have proposed to you. Go in with me, and buy some of the crown woods and some more land" —

"But how are we going to get money to buy it, your excellency?" he asked, interrupting the prince.

"Why, it isn't very much wood, only two hundred rubles' worth," replied Nekhliudof.

The old man gave an indignant laugh.

"Very good, if that's all. Why not buy it?" said he.

"Haven't you money enough?" asked the prince reproachfully.

"*Okh!* Sir, your excellency!" replied the old man, with grief expressed in his tone, looking apprehensively toward the door. "Only enough to feed my family, not enough to buy woodland."

"But you know you have money, – what do you do with it?" insisted Nekhliudof.

The old man suddenly fell into a terrible state of excitement: his eyes flashed, his shoulders began to twitch.

"Wicked men may say all sorts of things about me," he muttered in a trembling voice. "But, so may God be my witness!" he said, growing more and more animated, and turning his eyes toward the ikon, "may my eyes crack, may I perish with all my family, if I have any thing more than the fifteen silver rubles which Ilyushka brought home; and we have to pay the poll-tax, you yourself know that. And we built the hut" —

"Well, well, all right," said the prince, rising from the bench. "Good-by, friends."[46]

[46] *Proshchaïte, khozyáeva.*

XVIII

"My God! my God!" was Nekhliudof's mental exclamation, as with long strides he hastened home through the shady alleys of his weed-grown garden, and, absent-mindedly, snapped off the leaves and branches which fell in his way.

"Is it possible that my dreams about the ends and duties of my life are all idle nonsense? Why is it hard for me, and mournful, as though I were dissatisfied with myself because I imagined that having once begun this course I should constantly experience the fulness of the morally pleasant feeling which I had when, for the first time, these thoughts came to me?"

And with extraordinary vividness and distinctness he saw in his imagination that happy moment which he had experienced a year before.

He had arisen very early, before every one else in the house, and feeling painfully those secret, indescribable impulses of youth, he had gone aimlessly out into the garden, and from there into the woods; and, amid the energetic but tranquil nature pulsing with the new life of Maytime, he had wandered long alone, without thought, and suffering from the exuberance of some feeling, and not finding any expression for it.

Then, with all the allurement of what is unknown, his youthful imagination brought up before him the voluptuous form of a woman; and it seemed to him that was the object of his

indescribable longing. But another, deeper sentiment said, *Not that*, and impelled him to search and be disturbed in mind.

Without thought or desire, as always happens after extra activity, he lay on his back under a tree, and looked at the diaphanous morning-clouds drifting over him across the deep, endless sky.

Suddenly, without any reason, the tears sprang to his eyes, and God knows in what way the thought came to him with perfect clearness, filling all his soul and giving him intense delight, – the thought that love and righteousness are the same as truth and enjoyment, and that there is only one truth, and only one possible happiness, in the world.

The deeper feeling this time did not say, *Not that*. He sat up, and began to verify this thought.

"That is it, that is it," said he to himself, in a sort of ecstasy, measuring all his former convictions, all the phenomena of his life, by the truth just discovered to him, and as it seemed to him absolutely new.

"What stupidity! All that I knew, all that I believed in, all that I loved," he had said to himself. "Love is self-denying; this is the only true happiness independent of chance," he had said over and over again, smiling and waving his hands.

Applying this thought on every side to life, and finding in it confirmation both of life and that inner voice which told him that this was *it*, he had experienced a new feeling of pleasant agitation and enthusiasm.

"And so I ought to do good if I would be happy," he thought; and all his future vividly came up before him, not as an abstraction, but in images in the form of the life of a proprietor.

He saw before him a huge field, conterminous with his whole life, which he was to consecrate to the good, and in which really he should find happiness. There was no need for him to search for a sphere of activity; it was all ready. He had one out-and-out obligation: he had his serfs…

And what comfortable and beneficent labor lay before him! "To work for this simple, impressionable, incorruptible class of people; to lift them from poverty; to give them pleasure; to give them education which, fortunately, I will turn to use in correcting their faults, which arise from ignorance and superstition; to develop their morals; to induce them to love the right… What a brilliant, happy future! And besides all this, I, who am going to do this for my own happiness, shall take delight in their appreciation, shall see how every day I shall go farther and farther toward my predestined end. A wonderful future! Why could I not have seen this before?

"And besides," so he had thought at the same time, "who will hinder me from being happy in love for a woman, in enjoyment of family?"

And his youthful imagination portrayed before him a still more bewitching future.

"I and my wife, whom I shall love as no one ever loved a wife before in the world, we shall always live amid this restful,

poetical, rural nature, with our children, maybe, and with my old aunt. We have our love for each other, our love for our children; and we shall both know that our aim is the right. We shall help each other in pressing on to this goal. I shall make general arrangements; I shall give general aid when it is right; I shall carry on the farm, the savings bank, the workshop. And she, with her dear little head, and dressed in a simple white dress, which she lifts above her dainty ankle as she steps through the mud, will go to the peasants' school, to the hospital, to some unfortunate peasant who in truth does not deserve help, and everywhere carry comfort and aid… Children, old men, women, will wait for her, and look on her as on some angel, as on Providence. Then she will return, and hide from me the fact that she has been to see the unfortunate peasant, and given him money; but I shall know all, and give her a hearty hug, and rain kisses thick and fast on her lovely eyes, her modestly-blushing cheeks, and her smiling, rosy lips."

XIX

"Where are those dreams?" the young man now asked himself as he walked home after his round of visits. "Here more than a year has passed since I have been seeking for happiness in this course, and what have I found? It is true, I sometimes feel that I can be contented with myself; but this is a dry, doubtful kind of content. Yet, no; I am simply dissatisfied! I am dissatisfied because I find no happiness here; and I desire, I passionately long for, happiness. I have not experienced delight, I have cut myself off from all that gives it. Wherefore? for what end? Does that make it easier for any one?

"My aunt was right when she wrote that it is easier to find happiness than to give it to others. Have my peasants become any richer? Have they learned any thing? or have they shown any moral improvement? Not the least. They are no better off, but it grows harder and harder every day for me. If I saw any success in my undertakings, if I saw any signs of gratitude, … but, no! I see falsely directed routine, vice, untruthfulness, helplessness. I am wasting the best years of my life."

Thus he said to himself, and he recollected that his neighbors, as he heard from his nurse, called him "a mere boy;" that he had no money left in the counting-room; that his new threshing-machine, which he had invented, much to the amusement of the peasants, only made a noise, and did not thresh any thing when it

had been set in motion for the first time in presence of numerous spectators, who had gathered at the threshing-floor; that from day to day he had to expect the coming of the district judge for the list of goods and chattels, which he had neglected to make out, having been engrossed in various new enterprises on his estate.

And suddenly there arose before him, just as vividly as, before, that walk through the forest and his ideal of rural life had arisen, – just as vividly there appeared his little university room at Moscow, where he used to sit half the night before a solitary candle, with his chum and his favorite boy friend.

They used to read for five hours on a stretch, and study such stupid lessons in civil law; and when they were done with them, they would send for supper, open a bottle of champagne, and talk about the future which awaited them.

How entirely different the young student had thought the future would be! Then the future was full of enjoyment, of varied occupation, brilliant with success, and beyond a peradventure sure to bring them both to what seemed to them the greatest blessing in the world, – to fame.

"He will go on, and go on rapidly, in that path," thought Nekhliudof of his friend; "but I"…

But by this time he was already mounting the steps to his house; and near it were standing a score of peasants and house-servants, waiting with various requests to the prince. And this brought him back from dreams to the reality.

Among the crowd was a ragged and blood-stained peasant-

woman, who was lamenting and complaining of her father-in-law, who had been beating her. There were two brothers, who for two years past had been going on shares in their domestic arrangements, and now looked at each other with hatred and despair. There was also an unshaven, gray-haired domestic serf, with hands trembling from the effects of intoxication; and this man was brought to the prince by his son, a gardener, who complained of his disorderly conduct. There was a peasant, who had driven his wife out of the house because she had not worked any all the spring. There was also the wife, a sick woman, who sobbed, but said nothing, as she sat on the grass by the steps, – only showed her inflamed and swollen leg, carelessly wrapped up in a filthy rag.

Nekhliudof listened to all the petitions and complaints; and after he had given advice to one, blamed others, and replied to still others, he began to feel a sort of whimsical sensation of weariness, shame, weakness, and regret. And he went to his room.

XX

In the small room occupied by Nekhliudof stood an old leather sofa decorated with copper nails, a few chairs of the same description, an old-fashioned inlaid extension-table with scallops and brass mountings, and strewn with papers, and an old-fashioned English grand with narrow keys, broken and twisted.

Between the windows hung a large mirror with an old carved frame gilded. On the floor, near the table, lay packages of papers, books, and accounts.

This room, on the whole, had a characterless and disorderly appearance; and this lively disorder presented a sharp contrast with the affectedly aristocratic arrangement of the other rooms of the great mansion.

When Nekhliudof reached his room, he flung his hat angrily on the table, and sat down in a chair which stood near the piano, crossed his legs, and shook his head.

"Will you have lunch, your excellency?" asked a tall, thin, wrinkled old woman, who entered just at this instant, dressed in a cap, a great kerchief, and a print dress.

Nekhliudof looked at her for a moment or two in silence, as though collecting his thoughts.

"No: I don't wish any thing, nurse," said he, and again fell into thought.

The nurse shook her head at him in some vexation, and sighed.

"Eh! Father, Dmitri Nikolayévitch, are you melancholy? Such tribulation comes, but it will pass away. God knows"…

"I am not melancholy. What have you brought, Malanya Finogenovna?" replied Nekhliudof, endeavoring to smile.

"Ain't melancholy! can't I see?" the old woman began to say with warmth. "The whole livelong day to be all sole alone! And you take every thing to heart so, and look out for every thing; and besides, you scarcely eat any thing. What's the reason of it? If you'd only go to the city, or visit your neighbors, as others do! You are young, and the idea of bothering over things so! Pardon me, little father, I will sit down," pursued the old nurse, taking a seat near the door. "You see, we have got into such a habit that we lose fear. Is that the way gentlemen do? There's no good in it. You are only ruining yourself, and the people are spoiled. That's just like our people: they don't understand it, that's a fact. You had better go to your auntie. What she wrote was good sense," said the old nurse, admonishing him.

Nekhliudof kept growing more and more dejected. His right hand, resting on his knee, lazily struck the piano, making a chord, a second, a third.

Nekhliudof moved nearer, drew his other hand from his pocket, and began to play. The chords which he made were sometimes not premeditated, were occasionally not even according to rule, often remarkable for absurdity, and showed that he was lacking in musical talent; but the exercise gave him a certain indefinable melancholy enjoyment.

At every modification in the harmony, he waited with muffled heart-beat for what would come out of it; and when any thing came, he, in a dark sort of way, completed with his imagination what was missing.

It seemed to him that he heard a hundred melodies, and a chorus, and an orchestra simultaneously joining in with his harmony. But his chief pleasure was in the powerful activity of his imagination; confused and broken, but bringing up with striking clearness before him the most varied, mixed, and absurd images and pictures from the past and the future.

Now it presents the puffy figure of Davidka Byélui, timidly blinking his white eyelashes at the sight of his mother's black fist with its net-work of veins; his bent back, and huge hands covered with white hairs, exhibiting a uniform patience and submission to fate, sufficient to overcome torture and deprivation.

Then he saw the brisk, presuming nurse, and, somehow, seemed to picture her going through the villages, and announcing to the peasants that they ought to hide their money from the proprietors; and he unconsciously said to himself, "Yes, it is necessary to hide money from the proprietors."

Then suddenly there came up before him the fair head of his future wife, for some reason weeping and leaning on his shoulder in deep grief.

Then he seemed to see Churis's kindly blue eyes looking affectionately at his pot-bellied little son. Yes, he saw in him a helper and savior, apart from his son. "That is love," he

whispered.

Then he remembered Yukhvanka's mother, remembered the expression of patience and conciliation which, notwithstanding her prominent teeth and her irregular features, he recognized on her aged face.

"It must be that I have been the first during her seventy years of life, to recognize her good qualities," he said to himself, and whispered "Strange;" but he continued still to drum on the piano, and to listen to the sounds.

Then he vividly recalled his retreat from the bees, and the expressions on the faces of Karp and Ignát, who evidently wanted to laugh though they made believe not look at him. He reddened, and involuntarily glanced at the old nurse, who still remained sitting by the door, looking at him with silent attention, occasionally shaking her gray head.

Here, suddenly, he seemed to see a troïka of sleek horses, and Ilyushka's handsome, robust form, with bright curls, gayly shining, narrow blue eyes, fresh complexion, and delicate down just beginning to appear on lip and chin.

He remembered how Ilyushka was afraid that he would not be permitted to go teaming, and how eagerly he argued in favor of the work that he liked so well. And he saw the gray early morning, that began with mist, and the smooth paved road, and the long lines of three-horse wagons, heavily laden and protected by mats, and marked with big black letters. The stout, contented, well-fed horses, thundering along with their bells, arching their backs,

and tugging on the traces, pulled in unison up the hill, forcefully straining on their long-nailed shoes over the smooth road.

As the train of wagons reached the foot of the hill, the postman had quickly dashed by with jingling bells, which were echoed far and wide by the great forest extending along on both sides of the road.

"*A-a-aï!*" in a loud, boyish voice, shouts the head driver, who has a badge on his lambskin cap, and swings his whip around his head.

Beside the front wheel of the front team, the redheaded, cross-looking Karp is walking heavily in huge boots. In the second team Ilyushka shows his handsome head, as he sits on the driver's seat playing the bugle. Three troïka-wagons loaded with boxes, with creaking wheels, with the sound of bells and shouts, file by. Ilyushka once more hides his handsome face under the matting, and falls off to sleep.

Now it is a fresh, clear evening. The deal gates open for the weary horses as they halt in front of the tavern yard; and one after the other, the high mat-covered teams roll in across the planks that lie at the gates, and come to rest under the wide sheds.

Ilyushka gayly exchanges greetings with the light-complexioned, wide-bosomed landlady, who asks, "Have you come far? and will there be many of you to supper?" and at the same time looks with pleasure on the handsome lad, with her bright, kindly eyes.

And now, having unharnessed the horses, he goes into the

warm house[47] crowded with people, crosses himself, sits down at the generous wooden bowl, and enters into lively conversation with the landlady and his companions.

And then he goes to bed in the open air, under the stars which gleam down into the shed. His bed is fragrant hay, and he is near the horses, which, stamping and snorting, eat their fodder in the wooden cribs. He goes to the shed, turns toward the east, and after crossing himself thirty times in succession on his broad brawny chest, and throwing back his bright curls, he repeats "Our Father" and "Lord have mercy" a score of times, and wrapping himself, head and all, in his cloak, sleeps the healthy, dreamless sleep of strong, fresh manhood.

And here he sees in his vision the city of Kief, with its saints and throngs of priests; Romen, with its merchants and merchandise; he sees *Odest*, and the distant blue sea studded with white sails, and the city of Tsar-grad,[48] with its golden palaces, and the white-breasted, dark-browed Turkish maidens; and thither he flies, lifting himself on invisible wings.

He flies freely and easily, always farther and farther away, and sees below him golden cities bathed in clear effulgence, and the blue sky with bright stars, and a blue sea with white sails; and smoothly and pleasantly he flies, always farther and farther away…

"Splendid!" whispers Nekhliudof to himself; and the thought,

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[47] *izbá*.

[48] Constantinople.

"Why am I not Ilyushka?" comes to him.

LUCERNE

FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS OF PRINCE NEKHLIUDOF

July 20,1857.

Yesterday evening I arrived at Lucerne, and put up at the best inn there, the Schweitzerhof.

"Lucerne, the chief city of the canton, situated on the shore of the Vierwaldstätter See," says Murray, "is one of the most romantic places of Switzerland: here cross three important highways, and it is only an hour's distance by steamboat to Mount Righi, from which is obtained one of the most magnificent views in the world."

Whether that be true or no, other Guides say the same thing, and consequently at Lucerne there are throngs of travellers of all nationalities, especially the English.

The magnificent five-storied building of the Hotel Schweitzerhof is situated on the quay, at the very edge of the lake, where in olden times there used to be the crooked covered wooden bridge[49] with chapels on the corners and pictures on the roof. Now, thanks to the tremendous inroad of Englishmen, with

[49] Hofbrücke, torn down in 1852.

their necessities, their tastes, and their money, the old bridge has been torn down, and in its place has been erected a granite quay, straight as a stick. On the quay are built the long, quadrangular five-storied houses; in front of the houses two rows of lindens have been set out and provided with supports, and between the lindens are the usual supply of green benches.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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